

# SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR STUDENTS MATRICULATED BEFORE JAN. 1, 2014

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## (formerly known as Social Theory, Social Structure and Change)

Social science (Social theory, social structure and change) encompasses a variety of academic disciplines. Students who choose to develop a concentration in this area explore theories, methods and problems addressed by fields such as sociology, political science and anthropology. Students may choose to work within the boundaries of a single academic discipline or engage in a study which crosses disciplinary lines, such as criminal justice.

Concentrations in areas such as women's studies, communications, ethnic studies and African-American studies which necessarily rely upon a dominantly social (rather than literary, artistic, historical or psychological) perspective also belong in this area of study.

In formulating their degree programs, students should address the following developmental goals which define the aims of study in this area. Concentrations in social science (social theory, social structure and change) should be planned to develop:

- **A broad social perspective:** familiarity with institutions, systems of belief, cultural patterns, or political and economic structures of society and how these are interrelated.
- **A historical perspective:** ability to locate social issues within a historical context, and appreciate the forces which bring about change in values, ideas, customs, institutions or political and economic systems.
- **A comparative perspective:** examination of the similarities and differences between one set of social rules, institutions, mores, political or economic structures and others of the same or different times, places, cultures, nations and states; ability to address causes of such differences or similarities and to evaluation of their significance; understanding of race, class and gender within social groups.
- **A theoretical perspective:** identification, understanding and use of general theories and conceptual schemes to define and approach topics, questions or problems.
- **Critical ability:** analysis, criticism and evaluation of key concepts, assumptions and theories of particular field of study; development of writing abilities and research skills appropriate to individual interests.

Students may meet these objectives in many ways, including thematic, issue- or problem-oriented studies which need not be focused on a single objective, but can respond to a number of the aims described above.

In order to assist faculty who review the programs, students should describe their research and thinking regarding their concentration studies in light of these objectives in their degree program rationales.

Students who plan disciplinary approaches to fields within this area of study will be expected to be aware of the standard expectations for academic study within that field.