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**Cc:** [Vankeerbergen, Bernadette](#)  
**Subject:** AEE 342 GEC Review  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 07, 2010 10:42:54 AM

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Jill Pfister:

The sciences subcommittee of the CCI reviewed the proposal to have AEE 342 count in the Social Sciences: Individuals and Groups category. Unfortunately, the committee determined that the course does not yet meet the expected learning outcomes of this category. For expected learning outcome #1, addressing theories and methods of social science inquiry, the committee felt that the readings and topics did not address the selection and application of social science methods and the rationale and criteria for applying selected methods to any given line of inquiry. It didn't show that students were learning a variety of methods and learning that each method was applicable in a range of situations to answer certain kinds of questions. One member nominated Psych 100 as a model of this. For expected learning outcome #2, addressing the study of individuals and groups, the committee felt that the focus of the course remained primarily upon the individual (the leader) and addressed the formation, evolution, functions, and kinds of groups only indirectly. Finally, the assessment plan, while useful and clear, seemed to be addressed more to the student's assessment of the leaders they were studying, and of their own leadership skills and strengths, and of how they are doing in the class, but not primarily to the assessment of the course itself, how well it fulfills the expected learning outcomes (of the course and of the GEC category), and how the course might be changed in response to assessment data. Though this proposal was more detailed and clear than the earlier version, the committee felt that it seemed more clearly than before a course primarily about individual self-improvement as a leader, and not so much a scholarly course on social science methods on individuals and groups.

If you have any questions about this, I'd be happy to talk to you or Robert Birkenholz more about it.

Thank you much,

Jim Fredal

Chair, Sciences Subcommittee, CCI

## 2. AEE 342 (Seeking Social Science: Individuals and Groups)--Return

- This course is coming back. However, the content of the course has not changed much.
- J. Fredal met with Professor Robert Birkenholz. He told him that the course was not addressing theories and methods of social sciences and did not address individuals and groups. He also told him the assessment plan did not connect with expected learning outcomes well.
- **The revised syllabus has not changed much.** Course assignments: shadow leader, write report, present personal leadership philosophy, create a personal development plan etc. Those assignments are very personal. This still looks like a self-improvement course. Leadership is a relational concept to a group.
- Another member agrees that the focus is still very much on the individual.
- This is a good course but not a GEC course for this particular category. This is more self-evaluation than real scholarship in the field.

- Chapter titles are not given in course outline. Carmen readings are not specified. Providing that information would help the subcommittee make a more informed decision.
- **The first expected learning outcome for this GEC category** “Students understand the theories and methods of social scientific inquiry as they are applied to the study of individuals and groups” **is not present in this course**. There is nothing in the syllabus that says why the methodology used is valid and why it is going to be used. The various methods are used but there is no explanation of why those methods work in this context. Why are those social science methodologies? Are the students reading about these methods? Are the students discussing the methods? Psychology 100 would be a good model to look at.
- **It is not clear that the second expected learning outcome is fulfilled:** “Students understand the behavior of individuals, differences and similarities in social and cultural contexts of human existence, and the processes by which groups function.” They might cover it but it is not clear that it is there.
- Third expected learning outcome is present in the course: “Students develop abilities to comprehend and assess individual and group values, and recognize their importance in social problem solving and policy making.”
- **Assessment plan: The plan is looking at how students are doing in the class rather than assessing the success of the class.** The revised assessment goes further away from what we are looking for. The plan does mention expected learning outcomes but does not explain how assessment information will be used to improve the course. The plan uses the term assessment to refer to assessment of individual students’ strengths.

**Sent back** (see comments in bold above)

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