

“Human Behavior and Social Institutions” (HBSI) courses allow students to explore different theories, modes of inquiry and methods used in the social sciences. Students will examine the complexity of human behavior and/or social institutions and draw conclusions from empirical research through the theoretical approaches of at least two social science disciplines, using both qualitative and quantitative data. The course will focus on one specific social institution and provide students with in depth knowledge for how to analyze human behavior in relation to this institution.

HBSI courses will enable students to:

- Understand the ethical values involved in studying human behavior and social institutions.
- Apply approaches from at least two social science disciplines.
- Employ social scientific tools to identify and analyze social problems.

SYLLABUS GUIDELINES for HBSI:

All HBSI courses should:

- include readings from at least two social science disciplines
- include both qualitative and quantitative data
- consider human behavior and social institutions from a comparative perspective
- devote significant attention to social diversity

When preparing your syllabus, please keep in mind the following:

- No more than 50% of the final grade should be determined by exams.
- Attendance in Core courses is mandatory. We encourage instructors to count class participation in some way towards the final grade.

Proposed syllabi should include:

- all formal assignments and tests, and how much each will count towards a final grade
- approximate page numbers for assigned reading; page/word count for written assignments

Reading Range:

Textbooks, trade books: up to 150 pages per week

academic articles: up to 50 pages per week

OR, some combination thereof

Please keep in mind that Core courses should privilege in-depth study of texts and deep knowledge over coverage of a given body of knowledge. It is more important for students to learn critical thinking skills and tools for analysis than to cover an area of study in its entirety. We encourage instructors to carefully consider the pacing of their classes with this in mind, with attention to what students who are non-specialists can reasonably be expected to accomplish.

Writing range:

- 2-3 formal written assignments, 10-20 pages total; these assignments should assess different modalities**
- an in-class exam may substitute for one of the writing assignments
- a class presentation requiring outside research may substitute for one of the writing assignments
- Some form of final tool of assessment, in the form of a final exam or culminating paper

**The expectation is that students will receive instructor feedback in the form of multiple graded assignments paced throughout the semester. By mid-semester, students should have had graded feedback on at least one of these assignments.

Please note: while Core courses may address Jewish texts and cultures, they must do so in comparative perspective. Core courses may not have Jewish texts and cultures as their central or exclusive focus.

NOTE: Determination of “Honors” designation for Core courses occurs after a course has been approved in a given category. Designated Honors sections will then be asked to include: more challenging writing assignments, with increased length; additional critical readings; opportunities for revision of written work; increased emphasis on class participation; whenever possible, opportunities to continue the learning outside of the classroom.