

GE SLO: Ethnic-Multicultural Studies – Results

Background: This study was designed to assess the following College's Ethnic/Multicultural Studies General Education SLO.

Upon completion of this GE requirement the student will have satisfied all of the following:

- A. Students will become effective citizens of a diverse and multicultural society, will demonstrate thoughtful consideration of divergent points of view, and will develop a foundation for cultural democracy based on a respect for cultural diversity.
- B. Students will critically analyze cultural issues to recognize tendencies towards bias and stereotyping, understand the implications of bias on societal and individual health, and will stand up for themselves or others in the face of bias.
- C. Students will recognize, appreciate and understand intra-cultural diversity and the cultural practices of historically underrepresented groups in the United States as well as the contributions of non-Eurocentric cultures to world civilization or the United States.
- D. Students will demonstrate verbally and in writing an understanding of the various aspects of culture beyond race and ethnicity.
- E. Students will demonstrate comfortable, empathetic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.
- F. Students will construct a knowledgeable and confident self-identity, and will exhibit through their actions, speech, or writing, a foundation of cultural understanding and respect.

Methodology: The sample included 477 students enrolled in a course that satisfies the College's GE Ethnic/Multicultural graduation requirement. Courses included:

- ANTH 310 (2 sections)
- COMM 325(2 sections)
- ECE 430 (2 sections)
- GEOG 320 (2 sections)
- MUFHL 330 (2 sections)
- PHIL 352(2 sections)
- PSYC 368
- SOC 321 (2 sections)

The survey was administered during the last 4 weeks of class. Students were asked to rate 12 different statements based on their experiences in the class using the following scale:

- A = You **Strongly Agree** with the statement
- B = You **Agree** with the statement
- C = You are **Neutral** with respect to the statement
- D = You **Disagree** with the statement
- E = You **Strongly Disagree** with the statement.
- F = **Not Applicable**

Quantitative Results

1. Taking this class provided me with the opportunity to interact with students from diverse backgrounds. **(70% agree/25% neutral)**

2. Taking this class clarified the differences between the terms of culture, race and ethnicity. **(91% agree/8% neutral)**
3. Taking this class increased my awareness of process of stereotyping. **(82% agree/15% neutral)**
4. Taking this class increased my understanding of the impact of stereotyping and bias on societal and individual health. **(76%/agree/ 20% neutral)**
5. Taking this class increased my confidence to stand up for myself when confronted with bias. **(53% agree/ 34% neutral)**
6. Taking this class has increased my awareness of the diversity within various ethnic groups. **(90% agree/10% neutral)**
7. Taking this class increased my awareness of the cultural practices of a variety of ethnic groups (e.g. African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian-American, Native American, etc.). **(87% agree/11% neutral)**
8. Taking this class has increased my knowledge of the contributions of different ethnic groups to the American or global community. **(80% agree/17% neutral)**
9. Taking this class has helped me understand how my cultural background impacts who I am. **(72%agree/21% neutral)**
10. Taking this class has increased my understanding of the value of diversity. **(85% agree/15% neutral)**
11. Taking this class has increased my respect for cultural diversity. **(89% agree/10% neutral)**
12. Taking this class has encouraged me to be confident about my self-identity. **(69% agree/24% neutral)**

Qualitative Results

Open ended responses were collected from a sub-sample of students for two questions and example responses, organized by theme, are listed below (See appendix for all responses):

Applying course knowledge to daily life:

“This class has not only enlightened my perspectives on cultural diversity, but has helped me to reach out to others. Knowing particular beliefs and customs within other cultures has allowed me to build better relationships and dialogs with those around me. Since everyone in this world is unique, it is important to be knowledgeable and considerate of others’ views. Ultimately, I have a

much broader and accepting knowledge base for working well with others. This quality improves the day-to-day functioning for everyone. Thank you for offering this class.”

“The text gave me an insight into how professional mental health providers consider behavior problems. The fact that a lot of research and treatment is focused on white Americans and does not consider cultural difference is a little disturbing. The authors spent a lot of time explaining new terminology and provided me with research information. Being a substance abuse counselor who has had specific cultural training to deal with African American parolees with substance use disorders, this class has increased by desire to learn more about how different cultures view and support family members with mental health issues. The videos were a helpful tool in seeing the cultural differences rather than just reading about how people behave.”

Respect for Cultural Diversity

“Taking this class has helped increase my respect for cultural diversity because it’s shown me how different yet similar we all are. Cultural diversity allows us to be more open-minded and move forward as a whole. I’ve learned that culture really does have an impact on the health of individuals, and there really is no need for prejudice and discrimination since all it does is have a negative effect on society. The more culturally diverse our society is, the less room there is for a standard way of being, which I believe will allow people to be comfortable with who they are and be more confident about who they identify as. The videos in this class have shown me so many different cultural beliefs and how each makes sense in their own way, proving there is no right or wrong when it comes to culture.”

“Taking this class has increased my respect for cultural diversity in several ways. First, it has increased my understanding of the impact and extent of said impact that cultural diversity has on almost every aspect of American life. Secondly, this course has allowed me to define the benefits cultural diversity has in organizations, institutions, and all groups of people. Lastly, this course has really opened my eyes to the real extend to which a lack of cultural diversity in our organization and institutions can indirectly or directly harm, disparage, or hinder the growth and development of so many people in this country.”

Enhanced cultural knowledge and pride

“I have always, more or less, been very proud of my heritage and where I come from. This class has only reinforced my personal calling to keep reading about and studying more about my own culture. I come from a family of natural healers. In Mexico my great-grandmother was the person everyone would go to for remedies. My grandmother, like her mother, had her own special remedies. When my father came here he was very interested in medicine and healing powers of plants and pills (He read to book of pills for fun). I now, because of this class, feel a greater calling to continue in my family’s footsteps and learn more about natural Mexican herbs and remedies.”

“The greatest way that taking this class encouraged me to be confident about my self-identity is that it included a lot of material and included data and information on the multiracial perspective. As a person of mixed racial heritage, this is important to me, and I can safely say that this is the first time in an educational setting that I have seen some of my own experiences of culture and ethnicity reflected in course material.”

“This course has helped me become more aware of how I am affected by my cultural heritage and my fluctuating gender identity. As a result, I am less ashamed of these things and I am striving to preserve them, despite the corresponding marginalization. I am grateful for this knowledge and the increased self-love that it has brought me.”

“This class gave me confidence about my self-identity. Before, I didn’t know much about what my parents went through to bring us here, the little knowledge I know about my people. I wasn’t proud of who I am. I would get embarrassed if my parents spoke to me in my language in public. Now, all I do is question them about my heritage and where they came about. I’m not ashamed who I am inside and out, and I have this class and _____ to thank for.”

“Because I didn’t grow up with my bio family, I don’t know much about my ethnicity or culture. I only know about the culture that my adopted parents have. This class has encouraged me to find out about my bio family, to find out about their culture, and what ethnicity I really am. I have noticed a change in myself. I’m more self-confident (body wise). Learning that there are cultures out there that like women who are not always the smallest helped me like how I am.”

“At 37 I am pretty confident about my identity already, but as a mother it has encouraged me to teach and learn more with my kids about their cultures so that they will be proud and self-confident as they grow up.”

Stand up for self in face of bias

“This class has encouraged me to be confident about my self-identity by giving me the strength to stand proud of my culture. Growing up, I wasn’t too fond of discovering what my background is and where my identity came from; but as I looked into my own background, I had a new-found respect for it and all of the many others.”

“After learning about how characteristics that I have are celebrated and embraced in other cultures, it made me feel better about myself. Seeing how other cultures embrace things, or how they don’t let the thoughts of others influence how they think about themselves, like African Americans, has helped me to also ignore what others think about me”

“Taking this class helped me be confident about my self-identity by helping me see that being different is not a bad thing. It’s a good thing to be different. Throughout life I might face prejudism or racism, but I know that it’s because of that person’s ignorance and has nothing to do with me. I am very proud of being who I am and looking the way I do, regardless of people’s opinions or ignorance.

Reflections on the Results:

These preliminary results provide evidence that students who complete courses that meet the College's Ethnic Multicultural requirement are achieving most of the College's outcomes in this area. In particular, it appears that a high percentage of students (85% or more) who complete a class that meets this requirement reported that they perceived an increase in understanding, knowledge, awareness and perceived value of culture, race, ethnicity, diversity and bias. In addition, a majority of students (between 69% and 76%) indicated that they had gained a better understanding about the impact of bias and stereotyping and how culture has contributed to their own identity.

The only area that may need to be addressed more fully in the courses that satisfy the College's Ethnic-Multicultural GE category is in the areas of increasing students' confidence to stand up for themselves when confronted by bias since only about 50% of the sample agreed with the item. Although some respondents indicated that the course had strengthened their ability to reframe bias when it was encountered, it appears that further discussion with regard to this GE Multicultural SLO needs to occur. In particular, a review of the SLOs for the courses in the sample revealed that there were no course level SLOs that addressed the ability to stand up for oneself when confronted with bias. It would appear, therefore, that this GE Multicultural SLO and/or the course SLOs need to be modified to ensure that the SLOs are properly aligned.

For this reason, we are recommending that the GE Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee (who are responsible for the GE Outcomes) work with professors who teach courses that satisfy the multicultural requirement to assess whether this behavioral outcome is appropriate and can be addressed in lecture courses focused on content/knowledge/critical thinking. If it is determined that this outcome is warranted and appropriate, we may need to provide resources (such as instructional materials and/or professional development) to help faculty and staff successfully address this outcome within their courses.

GE Social and Behavioral Science SLO

Background: This study was designed to assess the College's Social and Behavioral Sciences GE SLO, which states the following:

Upon completion of this GE requirement the student will have satisfied all of the following:

- A. Students will accurately apply the basic vocabulary and concepts of at least one social or behavioral science discipline verbally and in writing.
- B. Students will examine the possible causes and suggest solutions to introductory problems of a conceptual nature using the methods of at least one social or behavioral scientific discipline.
- C. Students will recognize the use and misuse of social and behavioral science concepts in society including politics and the media.

Methodology: The sample included 301 students enrolled in a course that satisfies the College's GE Social/ Behavioral Sciences graduation requirement. Courses included:

- ANTH 310 (2 sections)
- COMM 325(2 sections)
- GEOG 320 (2 sections)
- PSYC 368
- SOC 321 (2 sections)

The survey was administered during the last 4 weeks of class. Students were asked to rate 12 different statements based on their experiences in the class using the following scale:

- A = You **Strongly Agree** with the statement
- B = You **Agree** with the statement
- C = You are **Neutral** with respect to the statement
- D = You **Disagree** with the statement
- E = You **Strongly Disagree** with the statement.
- F = **Not Applicable**

Preliminary Quantitative Results

1. Taking this class has increased my ability to recognize the appropriate application in the use and misuse of social or behavioral science concepts in **politics. (65% agree/28% neutral)**
2. Taking this class has increased my ability to recognize the appropriate application in the use and misuse of social or behavioral science concepts in the **media. (74% agree/22% neutral)**
3. Taking this class has increased my ability to use social science methods to examine the **causes** of social or behavioral science issues. **(71%agree/23% neutral)**
4. Taking this class has increased my ability to use social science methods to examine the **solutions** of social or behavioral science issues. **(69%/27% neutral)**

5. Taking this class has provided an opportunity to apply social or behavioral science concepts **in writing. (76% agree/21% neutral)**
6. Taking this class has provided an opportunity to apply social or behavioral science concepts **verbally. (77% agree/19% neutral)**

Reflections on the Results:

These preliminary results provide evidence that students who complete courses that meet the College's Social and Behavioral Science requirements perceive that they are achieving the College's outcomes in this area. In particular, a majority of respondents (between 65% and 77%) indicated an improved ability to recognize and apply social or behavioral science concepts in various contexts and settings.

Although all items received endorsement from at least 65% of the participants, initial dialogs in the research office indicate that there were some **methodology issues** that may have impacted the results. In particular,

- The sample included classes that met the social science AND multicultural requirements. This may have introduced bias, particularly with respect to the questions that specified politics and the media. These courses may place a greater emphasis on ethnic/multicultural issues which may result in less time for other social/behavioral science topics.
- There are broad disciplinary differences within this GE category. As a result, students may not have understood the generalized social science terminology used in the questions. As a result, students may not have been able to identify that the concepts they learned in their courses were specific examples of social science methods or concepts.
- Social science methodology concepts are very difficult to understand and a greater focus on using social science methods to examine social solutions often occurs at upper division courses. Thus, it is not surprising that about 30% of students may still struggle with this process.

In conclusion, there may be a need to:

- Rewrite the Social and Behavioral Science GE SLO. In particular, the current SLO specifically references two particular disciplines in the social sciences (politics and the media), which may have been confusing to students who were fulfilling this requirement by courses in Anthropology, Business, Economics, Philosophy, Psychology or Sociology.
- Modify the assessment instrument (by changing the terminology in the question, creating multiple versions of the form, or by more clearly defining the terminology used in the questions).
- Ensure a more diverse sample of classes that meet the Social and Behavioral Science requirement.

- Modify instruction so students understand the larger general education context for the course so they can better relate the specific concepts learned in the course to their more general social and behavioral science concepts.