

General Education Submission Form

Electronic submissions are required.

- A. GE component for which course is being proposed:
- B. Submitted by _____
- C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.
 ~~Chair has reviewed and approved the course.~~ _____
- D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus):
- E. This course
- Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
 - Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course's contribution to GE
 - Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
 - Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement
- F. This course is being submitted as
- ~~**A Template.** Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the GE Committee for record keeping purposes.~~
 - ~~**An Individual Course.** Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.~~
- G. Statement of rationale:
(Include a list of the area certification criteria (former called GE objectives) and GE Student Learning Outcomes (if applicable). These certification criteria and GE SLOs are listed in the [GE Committee Combined](#) document. After each certification criterion and GE SLO, list several course activities (lectures, readings, assignments, etc.) that address it. If it is not completely obvious, explain how the activities relate to the certification criterion or outcome. Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated to identify the corresponding activities. Electronic annotations are required. Please use the *comment* feature in Word to annotate electronic copies).



3/20/2025

TO: GE Committee

RE: Adding Understanding Society GE credit for SOC 200

Dear members of the GE Committee,

Nursing Program Director Dianthe Hoffman requested that I submit SOC 200—the required sociology nursing course—for Understanding Society credit. Currently, this GE is met via a required Intro to Sociology course prior to entering the program. However, at my recommendation, this requirement is being dropped. In my experience with the first eight cohorts, students were taking online intro to sociology courses and arriving in my classroom having failed to master even basic sociological concepts. Therefore the requirement seemed a waste of time and resources, especially as I am able to offer the appropriate sociological education needed in our existing course, SOC 200.

Thank you for reviewing this request.

Blake Victor Kent, PhD
Associate Professor of Sociology

**Statement of Rationale
SOC 200 GE Certification for
Understanding Society**

Certification Criteria

Students will be able to:

1. Identify foundational theories that offer explanations of social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena

- Readings: Johnson, *The Forest and the Trees* (selected chapters); Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (selected chapters); Turner, “The Social Construction of Knowledge”; Carel, “Phenomenology in Medicine”; Link & Phelan, “Conceptualizing Stigma”; Mirowsky & Ross, *Education, Status & Health* (selected chapter); Desmond & Emirbayer, “What is Racial Domination?”; Bradshaw et al., “Subjective Social Status, Life Course SES, and BMI in Young Adulthood”; Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, “The Gender System and Interaction”
- Daily reading responses: Students will respond to every class reading helping them identify and interact with key theories in assigned readings.

2. Apply foundational theories to analyze contemporary problems or controversies

- Readings: Turner, “Disease and Culture”; Gladwell, “The Roseto Mystery”; VanderWeele, “Positive Epidemiology?”; Keyes, “Promoting and Protecting Mental Health as Flourishing”; Barr, “Why Does Race/Ethnicity Affect the Way Physicians Treat Patients?”; Cottom, “Dying to be Competent”; Manandahr et al., “Gender, Health and the 2030 Agenda”; Lim et al. “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Health: Fundamentals for Nursing Education”; Boyce, *The Orchid and the Dandelion: Why Sensitive Children Face Challenges and How All Can Thrive* (selected chapters); Marmot, *The Health Gap* (selected chapter)
- Semester-long project: Students will produce an 1,800 word research paper on the interface between a social/environmental topic and health topic. They will ground this paper in appropriate theory and scientific evidence.
- Exam: Students will take an in-class essay exam that requires evaluation of social histories and the links between various social statuses (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, religion, occupation, education, etc.) and risk of morbidity and mortality.

3. Make personal and social application of various theories—informed by a biblical perspective.

- Readings: Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (selected chapter); Berger, “The Hospital: On the Interface Between Secularity and Religion”; Idler, *Religion as a Social Force in Health* (selected chapter); Squires & Lathrop, *How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick* (full book)

- Semester-long project: Students identify and investigate a local or national organization seeking to address the social/health problem being analyzed.
- Discussion leadership: Each student participates in leading discussion for one class block, bringing their own experiences and commitments to bear on the course material.
- Book response: Students produce a 1,000 word response to *How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick*, a text published by InterVarsity Press discussing themes of neighborhood, environment, and health from a Christian perspective. Students have ample opportunity to “imagine” themselves in the role of the two authors, who tell their own story of seeking to change health outcomes in an Atlanta neighborhood.

Student Learning Outcome

Students will apply appropriate foundational theories to analyze social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.

- Daily reading responses; Students will apply various theoretical perspectives and tools to questions of social status, environment, and health (e.g., social constructionism, phenomenology, social capital, stigma, labeling theory, racial fallacies, etc.).
- Semester long paper: Students will apply key theoretical frameworks in sociology to analyze and discuss a contemporary health problem using a sociological (i.e., structural, political, economic, religious, cultural, etc.) perspective.
- Class presentation: Students will communicate their theoretical insight and scientific findings via a class presentation.

SOC 200: Understanding My Neighbor: Society, Culture, and Health (3 credits)

Spring 2025

Westmont College

January 6-10 & 14-17 (8:00-11:30), February 6 & February 13 (8:00-10:30)

Instructor

Blake Victor Kent, PhD

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Office: Deane Hall 209

Hours: After class or by appointment via Zoom

“Every single session I have in my clinic I see the downstream effects of social factors. I think about my patient with diabetes whose blood glucose levels I haven’t been able to get under control because he can’t take the insulin I prescribe because he lives in a homeless shelter and has no place to refrigerate it. Or the person with advanced liver disease related to alcohol use exacerbated by his sporadic employment. When you trace back to the causes of the causes of illness, in so many cases you see how our social fabric itself is in need of mending.”

- Dave A. Chokshi, chief population health officer for NYC Health + Hospitals

Course Description

This course introduces students to the sociological study of health in society. Students will explore a variety of topics related to sociology and health, including the social factors that influence health, modern health in developed and developing countries, the meaning and experience of living in poor health, and health care in the United States. In addition to key social factors like race, class, gender, and sexuality, we will examine the role of religion and spirituality in health, including health benefits and the so-called “dark side of religion,” where religion and spirituality can be associated with negative outcomes. Throughout the course students will learn to adopt a sociological lens in cultivating a deeper understanding of the social world. This is a Liberal Arts course that supports and prepares nursing students to provide informed, patient-centered care in a variety of healthcare settings. SOC200 has a frontloaded two-week intensive following by a short period of independent research.

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

- Exhibit Christian character and servant leadership while caring for a diverse population in communities across state, national, and global settings.
- Evidence-based best practices, critical thinking, and clinical reasoning, inform clinical judgement for the provision of patient-centered, safe, quality care.

- Create patient education plans that are culturally specific to the patient and that incorporate the family support system.
- Communicate effectively with the inter-professional team to ensure a holistic approach to patient-centered care.
- Continue inquisitive learning by using the Electronic Medical Record and Informatics to meet quality metrics in a variety of healthcare and geographic settings.
- Advocate for healthcare policies for the underserved, vulnerable populations to ensure equity with access to care for prevention, remedial, supportive, and rehabilitative nursing care regionally, nationally, and globally.

Understanding Society GE Learning Outcome

Understanding Society engages students in the task of understanding the interplay among individuals, groups, institutions, cultural norms, public policies, and more. Students will be taught to examine society from different theoretical viewpoints and identify how social structure shapes individual attitudes, beliefs, and values – and vice versa. The Understanding Society GE employs the following student learning outcome:

- *Students will apply appropriate foundational theories to analyze social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.*

Commented [b1]: Added to existing syllabus

JRD GE Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the Justice, Reconciliation, and Diversity on Biblical and Theological Grounds (JRD) GE. JRD engages students in the task of understanding historical and structural patterns that have created and sustained a variety of injustices in our society, particularly the injustice of structured racism. Students will be encouraged to develop a biblical and theological framework enabling them to imagine and embody possible individual and communal responses. The JRD GE holds the following student learning outcomes:

- Students will analyze issues of justice and injustice involving race and racism in the United States in biblically and theologically grounded ways.
- Students will identify Christian responsibilities to pursue justice and reconciliation in diverse relationships, practices, and structures according to the character of God's loving reign expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Other Course Learning Outcomes

- Develop an understanding of foundational concepts, perspectives, and theories in the field of sociology as they relate to the fields of nursing and public health.
 - Essentials: I, III, V, VI, VII, VIII
 - QSEN: Patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, Quality improvement, evidence-based practice
 - IPEC: Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4
- Display reflective and critical thinking skills regarding health in contemporary society.
 - Essentials: I, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX
 - QSEN: Patient-centered care, teamwork and collaboration, quality improvement, evidence-based practice, informatics, safety

- IPEC: Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4
- Demonstrate acquisition of sociological insight by applying course topics to a health inequity research project.
 - Essentials: I, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX
 - QSEN: Patient-centered care, safety, Evidence-based practice, quality improvement
 - IPEC: Competencies 1 and 2

Required Resources

- Squires, Veronica & Breanna Lathrop. *How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick: Restoring Health and Wellness to Our Communities*. InterVarsity Press.
- Additional readings supplied on Canvas

Course Assessments

Attendance and Participation

Participation and attendance are two different things, and both will count significantly toward your final grade. A participating student is one who is actively engaged in the collective learning process; an attending student shows up. Please do both. For full credit you must *volunteer* thoughts during class discussion from time to time (but I will still call on people regularly – we’re all learning together and I want to hear from you).

Reading Journal

You will provide a written response to all assigned daily readings (about 500-700 words total for all readings). These are due prior to class and no late work is permitted. Suggested prompts for response include (but are not limited to) the following:

- What is your overall evaluation?
- How can the piece be summarized in 3 or 4 sentences?
- What is so obvious it almost doesn’t need saying?
- What is so hidden it needs illumination?
- What remains unclear or confusing?
- What is motivating the writer?
- What theoretical or practical insight is the writer driving home?
- Where does the argument work?
- Where does the argument falter?
- How does this piece tie into your existing knowledge?
- What holes in your knowledge does the piece reveal?
- What connections can you make with other readings, courses, etc.?
- What kind of theoretical or practical implications are raised?
- How are cultural, social, political, and structural factors are involved?
- How does this piece align or misalign with your own history, perspective, values, etc.?
- What does your gut tell you about the subject matter? Your brain?

Commented [b2]: Certification Criteria 1 and 2

- How this does this reading engage your faith and/or your understanding of the Bible?

NB: Try to be concise with your writing so you don't waste a lot of words on fluff. The journals should show clear evidence of having read all the pieces. This could mean naming core arguments, raising important questions, interacting with other readings, etc.

Book Response

A response of 1,000 words will be produced for *How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick*. This can be similar to the journal responses but will be structured in a more formal manner.

Commented [b3]: Certification Criteria 3

Discussion Leadership

You will compose a response for all reading assignments, but in addition you will be responsible to further prepare for one of the day's readings. We will assign these on the first day. Be ready with five to six solid questions that will help to introduce the reading(s) as well as unearth its treasures. I will still play a role in leading discussion, but we will work together. Please email me your questions and discussion points in advance of class.

Commented [b4]: Certification Criteria 1, 2, and 3

Examination

One exam will provide an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and application of all materials covered in class lectures, readings, discussion, films, etc. It will take the form of an open note essay to be done in class.

Commented [b5]: Certification Criteria 2

Research Paper

A research project (1,800 words) will be developed focusing on a subject of your choosing (for example, intersection of health with disability, childhood trauma, environment, education, etc.). More details will be shared in class, but it will include seeking out academic articles on the topic as well as researching local, national, and global agencies/entities which address the problem you identify.

Commented [b6]: Certification Criteria 2 and 3

Grading

Participation/Attendance	20%	A = 93-100%	C+ = 77-79%
Reading Journals:	20%	A- = 90-92%	C = 73-76%
Book Response:	10%	B+ = 87-89%	C- = 70-72%
Discussion Leadership	10%	B = 83-86%	D = 60-69%
Examination:	20%	B- = 80-82%	F = below 60%
Research Paper:	20%		

Policies

Class Preparation

This course will combine lecture and discussion, but will lean toward the latter. That means that in order to fully engage in class, you must thoroughly read assigned articles, chapters, etc. Each time we meet, bring paper, a writing utensil, and your reading materials. A laptop is not necessary but may be used from time to time (see policy on electronic technology).

Make-up Work

Please make every effort to get assigned work in on time. Reading journals are not accepted late. Other projects will be penalized one letter grade per weekday.

Academic Integrity & Artificial Intelligence Tools

Westmont College holds all students responsible for maintaining academic integrity. Plagiarism, lying, unauthorized use of AI assistance, & cheating are all examples of academic integrity violations. In the event of any violation, I reserve the right to assign whatever grade for the course I deem appropriate, including F, without regard to the student's accumulated points. Violations of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the College's policies. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the policies of the College regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating these policies. You will likely find this website helpful:

<http://www.westmont.edu/offices/provost/Plagiarism/PlagiarismStudentInformation.html>.

Regarding AI-generated text, it is unacceptable to submit this in the place of original academic work. By and large, AI circumvents the intellectual labor which produces independent and thoughtful citizens. Finally, in Christian higher education we approach language-based labor (such as reading, writing, and speaking) as a *God-given resource to be stewarded* rather than a *commodity to be consumed and produced*. This is an extension of so many other values we hold in the Christian community (e.g., money is a resource to use wisely for the Kingdom of God, not a commodity to pave our way through the world without heed for consequences).

NB: All writing for this course must be conducted in Google docs (docs.google.com) in the Chrome browser using the "Draftback" extension installed. No additional tools may be used in any way (e.g., Grammarly). Every assignment for this course must be shareable with me, with edit permission granted. Failure to provide edit access if requested may result in a score of zero. Papers will be automatically checked for integrity violations by Turnitin.

Electronic Technology

Laptops, phones, and tablets are helpful tools...in some contexts. Research shows, however, that they actually decrease engagement in learning and comprehension (Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014). For this reason, and because they can prove distracting (internet, email, etc.), I typically do not permit them in class. There will be times, however, where it will appropriate to use them (for example, if you need them to access a reading for discussion).

Accessibility and Accommodations

Westmont is committed to ensuring equal access to academic courses and college programs. In keeping with this commitment under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008, individuals with diagnoses that impact major life activities are protected from discrimination and are entitled to reasonable accommodations. Students who choose to disclose a disability are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Resource Office (ARO) as early as possible in the semester to discuss potential accommodations for this course. Accommodations are designed to ensure equal access to programs for all students who have a disability that impacts their participation in college activities. Email aro@westmont.edu or see westmont.edu/accessibility-resources for more information.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading
January 6	Introduction, Social Capital	Gladwell, "Roseto Mystery" Johnson, <i>Forest and Trees</i> Intro, Ch 1 Putnam, <i>Bowling Alone</i> Ch 1, 20
January 7	Social Construction, Stigma, Phenomenology	Turner, "Social Construction" Carel, "Phenomenology" Link & Phelan, "Conceptualizing Stigma"
January 8	Culture, Social Definitions	Johnson, <i>Forest and Trees</i> Ch 2 Turner, "Disease and Culture" VanderWeele, "Positive Epidemiology" (choose this) Keyes, "Promoting Flourishing" (or this)
January 9	Education, Income, Status	Mirowsky & Ross, <i>Education, Status & Health</i> , Ch 3 Bradshaw et al. "Subjective Social Status"
January 10	Race/Ethnicity	Desmond & Emirbayer, "What is Racial Domination?" Barr, <i>Health Disparities</i> , Ch 9 Cotton, "Dying to be Competent"
January 13	Day off – no class	
January 14	Gender, Sexuality	Manandahr et al. "Gender, Health and 2030 Agenda" Ridgeway & Smith-Lovin, "Gender System & Interaction" Lim et al. "LGBT Health"
January 15	Religion and Spirituality	Stark, <i>The Rise of Christianity</i> , Ch 4 Berger, "The Hospital" Idler, <i>Religion as a Social Force in Health</i>
January 16	Life Course (& paper prep)	Boyce, <i>The Orchid and the Dandelion</i> , Ch 2 (Ch 1 optional) Marmot, <i>The Health Gap</i> , Ch 7
January 17	Exam	
January 20	Paper topic due	(not a class)
January 24	Citations & outline due	(not a class)
February 3	Paper due	(not a class)
February 7	Project presentations	
February 14	Book discussion	Squires & Lathrop, <i>How Neighborhoods Make Us Sick</i>

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Note: All reading (journal, book) responses are due the day they are discussed in class.