**New York City College of Technology**

**Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Course Review Form**

**DATE:** *May 4, 2015*

**REVIEWER:** *Amanda Almond, PhD, Social Sciences Dept.*

**COURSE TITLE & NUMBER:** *SBS 2000 Research Methods for the Behavioral and Social Sciences*

**PROPOSED BY:** *Hans Tokke*

**CREDIT HOURS:** 3

**PREREQUISITES:** *Any Introductory ANTH, ECON, GEOG, GOV, HIS, PSY, SOC, or, any AFR or LTAM 1400 series course, or AFR 1501, 1502, 2402 or 3000, or COMM 2402, or 3401 and MAT 1180 or higher; ADGA students will also need the prerequisite of PSY 3407 Psychology of Perception.*

**COURSE IS: X** Existing New In development

**PROPOSED COURSE DESIGNATION**: **X** College Option elective Capstone other:

**DEPARTMENT HOUSED IN:** *Social Science*

**PROPOSED STRUCTURE (e.g., co-taught, guest lecture, LC, other):**  *Guest Lecturers*

**CREDIT DISTRIBUTION** (if co-taught): ***N/A***

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** *An introduction to the research methodologies utilized in the social and behavioral sciences, beginning with the fundamentals of research design, through data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the final reporting of results. Both quantitative and qualitative designs are examined using software to aid in inquiry and analysis.*

**DESCRIBE & EVALUATE HOW COURSE MEETS INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITERIA?**

*There seems to be minimal focus on the question of community/neighborhood analysis that might be considered interdisciplinary. This should be the heart of the course. As it appears now, it seems no different from a typical of a research methods course, with the exception of the final project which focuses on a question that could be considered interdisciplinary. The idea that all students live in an urban neighborhood might pose as problematic; as a number of our students do not live in urban areas (consider those from Long Island, New Jersey, or elsewhere). The connections that could be drawn from numerous disciplines seem to be absent. The structure of the course appears to be that of a similar Research Methods class, with little specification of what each of the multiple disciplines has to offer to the study of methodology. It would be best if methods were covered according to their use in a particular field. The writer states numerous times that the disciplines considered are both social and behavioral sciences. There is a tremendous amount of overlap in these two fields—especially when considering the methods, design, and analyses used. (For example, a class on ‘voting’ that looks at both social and behavioral science might be more interdisciplinary because each would approach the topic different with varied lenses. Methodologically—they are too similar). It is less clear which disciplines are being combined to create this course. The writer provides an example of how a student’s final project might implement research methods in numerous ways (i.e., qualitative data like an ethnographer; correlations like a psychologists; or impact factors as an economist). There is no specification, however, that a student is required to identify or even know which disciplines’ contribute to aspects of their methodology use as from multiple, related fields. The structure would appear to be more interdisciplinary if perhaps organized by the discipline that the writer intends to draw methods from. The guest lecturers do not appear to represent the views of multiple disciplines, but instead social/behavioral disciplines in which methods are shared. It appears that there needs to be room made in the course for an explanation of how each discipline has contributed to our knowledge of a particular method/design/analysis (e.g., modelling from behavioral psychologists, ethnography from sociology/nursing, between group differences from economy or health, ethics from philosophy or history/government.) It is strongly recommended that the write identify guest lecturers from more varied fields. Similarly, a lecture consisting of a clearer description as to why the course and one’s community/neighborhood are related is needed. What is the goal of the research project? Its purpose is clear (i.e., to exemplify and practice methods learned in the course), but is it being proposed that methodology is essential to understanding a community? Improving a community? Describing a neighborhood? Funding acquisition for a neighborhood? For what purpose (paradigm) is the project taking place? Is there any initial assessment as to the role the student feels they play in their community? What if a student wants to research a neighborhood that they do not live in, such as neighborhoods currently in the news or where the student had previously lived? (e.g., a project on Baltimore, Ferguson, Philadelphia) Would that be possible? This course would be more interdisciplinary, and beneficial to the student, if there was an equal amount of time spent explaining the multiple disciplinary contributions to the huge field of behavioral and social research as well as developing the final project more organically. The assumption-- that all students’ neighborhoods are urban and in need of improvement—appears to be limiting. If that is not the case, than it would be best to clearly state the goal of the project as well as how multiple disciplines are involved. Understanding how the type of research they are being asked to conduct is necessary to fill out the larger picture regarding the role of research in bringing about social change (or describing a neighborhood, or assessing the needs of a neighborhood—again, more clarity and emphasis on the project.). Examples of good and bad research of this type might also be helpful. An example of the research you are expecting from the students as a backdrop to how multiple disciplines work together to achieve a similar goal would be ideal. There are data sets and analyses available from urban neighborhoods so that the students might clearly have identified the work they are producing as a replica of how interdisciplinality works in real life.*

**DESCRIBE & EVALUATE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE?**

*The structure of the course, in terms of multiple presenters/lecturers seems appropriate. It is, however, strongly recommended that these guest lecturers are experts in various disciplines that are explicitly stated as being found to rely or use a particular method/design/analysis as a ‘hallmark’ of that field. For example- qualitative lecturer from nursing; odds ratio/group differences lecture from a health discipline; ANOVA from an economist/government; ethics from a philosopher…so on and so forth.*

**DOES COURSE MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION?** *Yes. This is made clear in the course description, assignments, and assessments.*

**STRENGTHS:** *CITI training; end-of-year presentation; use of research methodology in an applied way; course objectives; if more emphasized and developed, the research project; quantity and variety of research methods covered; guest lecture structure.*

**WEAKNESSES:** *Under-emphasizing the project when it might in fact serve as the heart of this interdisciplinary course if each methodology (design or analysis) is presented in the context of its respective discipline as it would serve in a similar, larger scale neighborhood investigation. A greater need for guest lecturers from a variety of fields so that the course is truly interdisciplinary above and beyond its inherently multi-discipline content is what is being suggested by this reviewer. (i.e., math is used by multiple fields, but a math course is not deemed as interdisciplinary solely in that vein unless its main question or research project component is explicitly defined/expressed and taught from multiple, related discipline sources)*