



Memorandum

To: Dean Darryl Ahner

From: Dean Gary Schmidt and Dean Ayşe Şahin

Date: December 5, 2024

Re: CS 1000

Dean Ahner,

We call your attention to the following concerns regarding the request for inclusion of CS 1000 in the Wright State University Core Curriculum as a social/behavioral science class.

I. Process Concerns:

Before addressing our substantive concerns with the proposal to include CS 1000 in the core as a social/behavioral science, I would like first to address a serious flaw in the process that has made it necessary for the current intervention. For this reason, I am also including Dawn Wooley on this message. There should be a mechanism to alert stakeholders to curricular proposals that have potential impact on their units and these stakeholders should be invited to committee meetings to provide feedback. In this particular case, it is clear that the judgment of individuals familiar with the social and behavioral sciences is necessary to evaluate the proposal. To my knowledge, no feedback was requested from any social or behavioral scientists. For other changes in curriculum, we are required to complete an impact report in curriculum, but it seems that in the current case this step was omitted.

II. Substantive Concerns:

1. Presence of a course in a previous core category is not justification for inclusion in a new core category.

The fact that the Global Traditions category will no longer exist in the new core is not in and of itself a sufficient argument to claim that a class previously housed in that category should move to the new core in a different category. The elimination of the Global Traditions category has also had a negative impact on CoLA, given that we had a large number of courses in that area. However, that is not a justification for us to insert our classes into an area where they do not fit academically. We have a number of courses, for example, that discuss STEM-Related issues (e.g. environment, health, media technologies) but that does not mean they would meet the requirements to fulfill the Natural and Physical Sciences core designation.

2. Inclusion in a core category requires correct disciplinary alignment. The objectives for Social/Behavior Sciences make it quite clear that students must be introduced to terminology, concepts, and research methods of a “specific social and behavioral science discipline.” Computer Science is not a social or behavioral science discipline, so our question would be, which of the following disciplines are incorporated into CS 1000: psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, political science, economics, or communication? In addition, we ask which of the following social/behavioral science methodologies are incorporated into CS 1000: Community surveys, oral histories, ethnographies or other field

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methods, comparative methods (including comparative cultural analysis), discourse analysis, case studies, social attitude surveys, participant observation, polls, cross-sectional studies, longitudinal studies, content analysis, or other qualitative methods. Finally, we ask what are the qualifications of the faculty responsible for teaching these disciplinary methods, given the HLC requirement that all instructors have at least 18 graduate hours in the discipline to be qualified to teach.

3. **Disciplinary alignment must go beyond content to include methodology, theory, concepts, etc.** We must respectfully disagree with the statement that CS 1000 “obviously touches on the social and behavioral science aspects from a technology-oriented focus.” While it is true that the course touches on social and behavioral aspects of technology, it does not touch on social science or behavioral *science* aspects, which would require inclusion of *the concepts, methodologies, terminology, and theoretical approaches* of at least one *social or behavioral science discipline*. For example, it would be possible for CoLA to offer a course on history of information technology in the United States, but we would never suggest that this be designated a computer science class.
4. **Insufficient Course Mappings:** Regarding the mapping of the course objectives to the core outcomes, we respectfully provide the following feedback:
 - **CS 1000 Mapping 1:** To develop an understanding of the scope of technology to realize its potential, societal impact, and limitations. -> maps to Core Social and Behavioral Science outcomes 1, 3.
 - **Response:** Outcomes 1 and 3 require a focus on terminology, concepts, findings, or research methodologies specific to a social/behavioral science discipline, but the course outcome refers only to thematic content.
 - **CS 1000 Mapping 2:** To understand how the Digital Revolution has changed and is continuing to change society.-> maps to Core Social and Behavioral Science outcomes 4, 5.
 - **Response:** Outcomes 4 and 5 refer to information sources and ethical approaches specific to social or behavioral sciences, but we do not see these in your proposal.
 - **CS 1000 Mapping 3:** To analyze and discuss ethical, legal, political, and security issues related to technology. -> maps to Core Social and Behavioral Science outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5
 - **Response:** Same objection as above. While it is true that anyone can discuss such issues in any course, a core course specifically needs a social science theoretical framework to discuss ethical, legal, and political issues. The College of Liberal Arts is home to a number of excellent scholars and teachers in the area of law, politics, and ethics in the social sciences (and the humanities). While these individuals may discuss technology in their courses, we would never presume to state that they are qualified to teach any course that fulfills a technology-based requirement. For example, they would not be

credentialed to teach a Computer Science course even if they had some basic understanding of coding or data analytics.

- **CS 1000 Mapping 4:** To understand how society-from the individual to the workplace to government-has developed a critical dependency on technology and explore the ramifications. -> maps to Core Social and Behavioral Science outcomes 1, 2, 4.
- **Response:** It is not possible to address these questions in a manner adequate to a social or behavioral science approach without advanced training in a social or behavioral science, for example: knowledge of government processes and structures as well as voter behaviors and identities (political science), knowledge of social and institutional structures and processes (sociology), understanding of how culture impacts behavior and identity (anthropology), understanding of human beings' relationship to space and how this impacts behavior and access to resources (geography), impact of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services on human behavior (economics). All of these fields have specific methods, concepts, and theoretical frameworks that produce knowledge following a specific disciplinary model. The purpose of general education at a post-secondary level is not just to familiarize students with content but to provide a basic understanding of how knowledge is produced from different disciplinary perspectives. This distinguishes a university education from a secondary school education. For this reason, our instructors must also be practicing scholars in their disciplines, individuals who themselves produce knowledge using the theories and methodologies of these disciplines. In this context, I remind you again of the HLC accreditation requirements.

5. **OT-36 alignment.** The university's position has been that only under exceptional circumstances would a non-OT-36 course be allowed into the core. We are convinced that a thorough review of this proposal by the OT-36 committee would highlight the very same problems that we have indicated. So we ask what exceptional situation justifies allowing this course in the core under this element.

Checking the following website

https://analytics.das.ohio.gov/t/HigherEdPUB/views/OhioTransfer36Approvals/Dashboard2?%3Adisplay_count=n&%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3AshowVizHome=n,

there are currently no Computer Science classes approved for OT-36 in the state of Ohio. Classes approved in this area are all recognized social or behavioral science

We firmly believe that interdisciplinary innovation in curricular development will best serve the needs of our students as they are increasingly required to think beyond specific disciplinary boundaries and collaborate with colleagues, supervisors, and clients

from diverse educational, social, and cultural backgrounds. Below are a few examples of interdisciplinary certificate programs related to technology and society. Please note that they all include courses from multiple disciplines, including the social sciences and humanities and are advised by multidisciplinary faculty boards that include social scientists:

Ohio University Technology and Society Certificate:

<https://www.ohio.edu/cas/undergraduate/themes/technology-society-theme/technology-society-certificate>.

Princeton University Technology and Society Certificate: <https://ua.princeton.edu/fields-study/certificate-programs/technology-and-society#Program-Offerings>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dean Schmidt".A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dean Şahin".

Dean Schmidt and Dean Şahin

Cc:

Provost Amy Thompson

Vice Provost Bruce Mackh

Dawn Wooley, Faculty President