

## COVER SHEET FOR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE PROPOSAL

**To Submit:** Please place all documents (i.e., cover sheet, proposal form, syllabus, and supporting documents) into a folder named with course subject and number (e.g., PSYC 101) and put in the folder at <http://tiny.utk.edu/VolCoreProposalDrop>. If you have any problems, please contact the chair of the General Education Committee.

### Contact Information (please print or type):

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### Course information:

**Provide full catalog entry for the course** including course subject, number, suffix (if any), course title, credit hours, course description, prerequisites/corequisites, credit restrictions, etc.

#### NOTES:

- *Courses in WC category **must** have the following prerequisite:*  
(RE) Prerequisite(s): English 102, 132, 290, or 298 (*plus any others for this course*).
- *Courses in AOC category: We **strongly encourage** the oral communication general education requirement used in your program serve as a prerequisite for this course (e.g., CMST 210, 240; CE 205; Phil 244).*
- *Courses may apply for either OC or AOC but not both categories.*

#### Catalog entry for course:

ECON 201 – Introductory Economics: A Survey Course

4 Credit Hours

Theory of consumer behavior, theory of firms, supply and demand, costs of production, market models, national income and employment theory, money and banking, monetary and fiscal policy, debt, and international economics.

No prerequisites/corequisites or credit restrictions

#### Frequency of Course Offering (e.g., fall only, spring only):

*fall, spring and summer (summer – online only)*

#### Course Capacity per Semester (*per course & total if multiple sections*):

*Fall 2018: Four separate lecture courses, split into 19 smaller sections, each with roughly 45 students for a total of roughly 820 students.*

*Spring 2019: Four separate lecture courses, split into 17 smaller sections, each with roughly 45 students for a rough total of 720 students.*

*Summer 2019: One lecture course (online), consisting of roughly 100 students.*

*Total students for academic year: roughly 1,640*

#### Course format (e.g., lecture, discussion, lab):

*Lecture with instructor for 3 hours/week, lab/recitation with GTA for 1 hour/week*

How is this class to be staffed (i.e., instructor, GTAs, graders etc.)?

*Nearly all lecture courses are staffed by full-time Ph.D. faculty, with recitation periods and general assistance provided by GTA's:*

*Generally, 1 smaller lecture course per semester is taught by an upper level GTA*

**COVER SHEET  
FOR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL**

**Please check all that apply:**

	Areas in which this course is already approved	Applying for inclusion in these categories for General Education through the 2020-2021 catalog	Applying for inclusion in these categories for Volunteer Core (starting with the 2021-2022 catalog)
Written Communication (WC)			
Verbal Communication (OC)			
Applied Oral Communication (AOC)		N/A	
Arts & Humanities (AH)			
Applied Arts and Humanities (AAH)		N/A	
Natural Sciences (NS) – Lab			
Natural Sciences (NS) – Non-lab			
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)			
Social Sciences (SS)	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
Global Citizenship-International (GCI)		N/A	
Global Citizenship-US (GCUS)		N/A	
Engaged Inquiries (EI)		N/A	
Cultures & Civilization (CC)			N/A

*Please attach proposal forms and materials appropriate to the categories checked above.*

## SOCIAL SCIENCES (SS)

### PROPOSAL FOR GENERAL EDUCATION AND/OR VOLUNTEER CORE COURSE APPROVAL

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**Example form:** For an example completed proposal form, see the [Vol Core SS website](#).

**Course subject, number, suffix (S [service], R [research], N [internship]) and title:**

Economics; ECON 201; Introductory Economics: A Survey Course & Economics; Econ 207; Chancellor's Honors Introductory Economics
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*NOTE:* Courses with an S (service), R (research), or N (internship) designation will be equivalent to their base course for the Effective Communication and Expanded Perspectives Volunteer Core categories. The base course and suffix courses will be considered as different courses for Engaged Inquiries.

**Please check yes or no on each line:**

Yes  No  Course is currently approved as an SS course.

Yes  No  Applying for inclusion in SS for Gen Ed **through the 2020-2021 catalog**

Yes  No  Applying for inclusion in SS for Volunteer Core, which **starts with the 2021-2022 catalog**

Yes  No  This is a new course. (Approval for general education will be contingent on curricular approval.)

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### Social Sciences

Why do people—individually and collectively—do what they do? Answering this question allows us to better understand ourselves, make better decisions, and promote the health and success of individuals and groups. The ability to answer this question requires gaining knowledge about individual and group behavior and political and social systems, as well as understanding the methods by which social scientists collect, create, and evaluate such knowledge.

Courses in this area are expected to produce the following **learning outcomes** for students:

1. Students will identify and critique claims about human behavior and the dynamics of individual, political, and social issues.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of appropriate and ethical methods, technologies, and data that social scientists use to investigate and describe the human condition.

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Answer all questions below with respect to the description and learning outcomes given above.

#### Questions:

- I. Answer both a and b for each learning outcome:
  - a. How does the course **meet each of the learning outcomes** for the appropriate category of the Volunteer Core requirement? **Note:** All Learning Outcomes must be met by every course.
  - b. Provide a short description of how this course will be assessed for the Volunteer Core outcomes. According to the revised General Education guidelines, all approved Volunteer Core courses must be assessed according to the guidelines and timeline set by the General Education Committee. For the review, this course will need to provide quantifiable data and results detailing how successful the students were in mastering each learning outcome. With that in mind, please be as specific as possible in your plan to measure each of the learning outcomes below.\* (You can refer to the Volunteer Core assessment document and rubrics on the [Volunteer Core website](#).)

**Outcome 1:** Students will identify and critique claims about human behavior and the dynamics of individual, political, and social issues.

- a. How does the course meet this learning outcome?

Although sometimes mistaken as a business science, economics is actually a science centered around human behavior. Every individual, business, government and society is confronted with some form of the issue of scarcity, and each must make choices and decisions that require tradeoffs. For example, every society, rich or poor, developed or not, capitalist or socialist, is endowed with a finite amount of resources, and must choose how to best manage those resources in order to provide the goods and services for its people. When a society chooses to produce more of one thing (say build new homes), that takes resources away that could have been used elsewhere (say to build more schools).

This course examines both microeconomics and macroeconomics. In microeconomics, we examine how societies choose to convert resources into goods and services, and how they allocate those items among their citizens. For example, a market-based system utilizes decentralized individual decision makers, guided by maximizing their own gains. Theoretically, it can be shown under certain assumptions that through this system, society can most efficiently manage its resources. However, in reality, the market system can fail in a multiple of instances and often we turn to government intervention to improve the given market outcome. For example, given a failure of negative externalities such as pollution and global climate change, the government may improve the outcome using subsidies and taxes (say on carbon).

While microeconomics examines individual decision makers, macroeconomics 'zooms out' to look at things in the aggregate. However, these aggregate large-scale factors such as total production, inflation, and interest rates, can still have a direct and tremendous impact upon individuals. In this course, we calculate and track several of the most important macroeconomic indicators, such as gross national product, inflation, unemployment and interest rates. These indicators tend to move in cycles over time as an economy expands or contracts, and these cycles can directly affect individual livelihoods. In addition, we examine how a government, through taxes and spending, or the Federal Reserve, through the money supply, can work to smooth out these cycles in an attempt to buffer the most extreme impacts from its citizens. Finally, we can discuss a nation's 'standard of living' – a measure of the economic welfare of the average citizen, and how government and economic policies can impact the rate of improvement of average economic welfare over time.

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b. What is the assessment plan\* for this Volunteer Core outcome?

1. Provide a **description of the (most likely one example of) student work** that will be used to assess this learning objective.

Econ 201 courses are typically set in very large lecture settings (250 to 360 students per lecture), and given limited time and resource constraints, there is very little hand-grading of student assignments. Homework assignments are administered, completed, and graded using an online homework platform, such as MindTap, Sapling, EconLab, etc. However, each instructor is free to choose which platform to use, so this may not be consistent across different sections.

Exams are all multiple choice. Therefore, for assessment purposes, the instructors will identify several multiple-choice questions that pertain to Learning Outcome #1 and administer a set of common questions across all sections.

2. Provide a description of how you will **obtain the sample of student work**.

Instructors will identify several multiple-choice questions that pertain to LO#1 and include these common questions on exams in all sections. We will then collect the results of these questions from a sample of 20% or 50 students (whichever is greater) across all sections of the course and score the results according to the Social Science rubric.

**Outcome 2:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of appropriate and ethical methods, technologies, and data that social scientists use to investigate and describe the human condition.

a. How does the course meet this learning outcome?

Macroeconomist and policy makers depend heavily upon collecting numerous data points in attempts to monitor the 'health' of an economy. For example, we use real GDP per person to provide a rough estimate of the economic well-being of an average person from a country. Some countries may have a very low number, such as \$700 per person per year in Uganda in 2018, or a very high number, such as \$92,000 per person per year in Norway. We say that in countries with a higher real GDP per person, the day-to-day life of the average person is better than that of someone living in a country with a lower number. This simple measure has multiple shortcomings, covered in class. Despite these shortcomings, it has been shown that this number is closely correlated to other, more detailed and specific measures of economic well-being. That is, persons living in a country with a high real GDP per person tend to have longer life expectancies, greater access to clean water and medical care, higher educational attainment, and so on.

In addition to real GDP per capita, we also explore a variety of the other macroeconomic indicators used to describe the overall health of an economy. For example, the unemployment rate gives us an estimate of the portion of the population that is currently out of work, but would like to work. In class, we break down how the Bureau of Labor Statistics collects, calculates and reports this data. Similar to real GDP per person described above, a calculated number such as the overall unemployment rate of a country (e.g. 3.7% in the U.S. as of August, 2019) is not perfect and has several shortcomings. For example, should we count a person who would like a job, but has given up looking for one after becoming discouraged as technically 'unemployed', or something else? We explore these issues in class.

## SOCIAL SCIENCES (SS)

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b. What is the assessment plan\* for this Volunteer Core outcome?

1. Provide a **description of the (most likely one example of) student work** that will be used to assess this learning objective.

For the same reasons as outline in Learning Outcome #1, instructors of the course will identify several multiple-choice questions that pertain to Learning Outcome #2, and then deploy these common questions in all sections of the course.

2. Provide a description of how you will **obtain the sample of student work**.

Instructors will identify several multiple-choice questions that pertain to LO #2, and include those common questions on exams across all sections. We will then collect the results from these questions from a sample of 20% of the class or 50 students (whichever is greater) across all sections of the course and score the results according to the Social Sciences rubric.

II. What process is used to monitor/oversee that each section of this course is meeting the learning outcomes if multiple sections are taught to ensure consistency semester to semester?

Currently, two instructors (Ken Baker and Donna Bueckman) teach the vast majority of students who take Econ 201. For fall of 2018, these two instructors directly administered 18 out of the 19 sections, with a GTA responsible for 1 small section. For spring of 2019, these two again administered 15 out of the 16 sections, with a GTA responsible for 1 small section. Ken is the sole instructor of the summer session.

Econ 201 is not a 'departmental' course, and therefore Ken and Donna have *some* independence in the accompanying textbook, homework platform, exam assessment, topics covered and depth of coverage. This allows each to reflect their own interests and strengths. However, a very large majority of the courses overlap to a significant degree. Ken and Donna work together closely throughout the semester and year discussing topics, assessment and delivery. And the GTA responsible for a single section is mentored by either Ken or Donna. In addition, this course is subject to SACS-COC type assessments that will ensure consistency not only across instructors but also across semesters.

Finally, we would like to include the Honor's version of ECON 201, ECON 207 for consideration for the SS designation. The course currently holds the SS designation under the old general education system and is taught only once in the fall. Econ 207 covers the same material as Econ 201 (both microeconomics and macroeconomics in a single course), albeit in a smaller class setting and in greater depth. We are attaching a syllabus of Econ 207 for consideration.

The assessment process for Econ 207 would work the same as 201, except that given the number of students is below 50, the entire class would be sampled. The instructors will identify questions from the exam that pertain to both Learning Outcomes 1 and 2, score these according to the SS rubric, and report the results to the General Education Assessment subcommittee.

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**Please attach:**

- a representative **course syllabus** (including a clear indication that the course is a General Education and/or Volunteer Core course, and course objectives that include the General Education and/or Volunteer Core student learning outcomes) and
- a sample of at least one **significant assignment** for the course.

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\*The answer to the assessment question should include:

1. A **description of the student work** that will be used to assess each learning objective. The student work may be an exam, an essay, a lab report, a reaction paper, a set of homework problems, a short-answer response provided on a mid-term exam, selected multiple-choice questions from a quiz, etc. More than one learning outcome can be assessed by the same student work. The assignment/exam/paper/etc. does not have to be made specifically for the purpose of this assessment. In fact, it is *preferable* that the student work be an assignment or test that is a normal part of the course.
2. **The sampling method to be used for the assessment.** If it is expected that there will be multiple sections of the course, you may choose to sample 20% of the sections of the course or 20% of the students in each section. This 20% should be at least 50 students. If the course is expected to have one section or a total of 50 students or less, you should collect work from all students.