

Please submit your completed forms and supporting documents to [wqb\\_cert@sfu.ca](mailto:wqb_cert@sfu.ca)

**REQUEST FOR *CERTIFICATION*  
AS A DESIGNATED BREADTH-SOCIAL SCIENCE COURSE**

Thank you for your interest in offering a designated breadth-social science (B-SOC ) course. B-SOC courses will help to meet Simon Fraser University's commitment to General Education, which enhances undergraduate degrees by informing and complementing students' programs of study, encouraging students to develop understandings and skills that equip them for life-long learning, and preparing them to appreciate, critique and contribute ideas and values of diverse, complex, and interdependent local and global communities in an ethical and comprehensive manner.

Completing this form will provide information for assessment by a faculty committee regarding whether your course meets the criteria for B-SOC. Please contact the Director, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison, at [ucildir@sfu.ca](mailto:ucildir@sfu.ca) if you have any questions about completing this form.

**BREADTH CRITERIA**

A **BREADTH** course provides the opportunity for students to enrich the subject matter knowledge in their program(s) of study by exposing them to new theoretical perspectives, forms of thought, and modes of inquiry. Breadth courses encourage students to reflect on their values, beliefs, and commitments and allow them to improve their ability to engage in conversations, debates, and actions that comprise our globally interconnected society.

Additionally, a Breadth course must substantially fulfill AT LEAST ONE of the following conditions:

1. Articulates a framework for organizing and acquiring knowledge in a particular field of study; raises overarching questions and problems within a field of study and investigates how the field generates and validates workable solutions to problems.
2. Develops students' systematic understandings of the historical development and/or the contemporary dynamics of the physical, natural, social, and/or cultural environments that comprise the program of study.

**BREADTH SOCIAL SCIENCE PURPOSE**

\* To build cross-cultural understandings and knowledge of the complexities of social systems and diverse world views; to help students navigate and influence societal challenges in the world.

\* To develop an understanding of how social scientists think, analyze issues, interpret evidence, and draw conclusions, enabling students to recognize and critique the issues that define contemporary society.

\* To prepare students to make connections between their field of study and the broader contexts of human society. To equip students with transferable skills in social critique, evaluation, and the synthesis of knowledge and understanding.

## EXAMPLES

Examples of B-SOC courses can be found on the General Education Curriculum page [here](#).

Please note, you can answer any of the following questions with screenshots, copying and pasting from canvas, or by attaching documents. The attached documents can be in any format (ie PDF, word document). A short paragraph is normally sufficient to answer the questions on this form.

### COURSE TITLE, NUMBER AND DESCRIPTION:

Course #: Geog 161

Course Title: Urban Change: An Introduction to Dynamic Places

Frequency of offering (# / year) 1

Average enrollment per offering: 200

### OTHER INFORMATION:

Please indicate if this course currently has or will have another WQB designation: B-HUM app in progress

Instructor(s) responsible for teaching the course: \_Eugene McCann \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*If multiple instructors are responsible for teaching this course, please list them all and include a course syllabus for each one.

List course pre-requisites: \_NA\_\_\_\_\_

Please give a one-paragraph description of the content and overall format (lecture, seminar, tutorial, etc.) of the course, listing any prerequisites (maximum 200 words).

The course is an introduction to geographical perspectives on urbanized and urbanizing places, spaces, landscapes, and environments. The course focuses on the dynamism that characterizes cities and urban regions. Using a geographical social science approach, it provides an overview of how cities are shaped by humans and how we are shaped by cities.

Format: 3-hours lecture. No prerequisites. Syllabus attached.

### BREADTH RATIONALE:

1. A breadth course exposes students to new theoretical perspectives, forms of thought, and modes of inquiry, and encourages them to reflect on their values, beliefs, and commitments and allow them to improve their ability to engage in conversations, debates, and actions that comprise our globally interconnected society. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course

does this.

Urbanized areas, the places in which most of the world's population resides, are dynamic social-spatial contexts, that both shape and are shaped by human life. They are places of possibility and danger, hope and disappointment, power and powerlessness, glamour and destitution, production and consumption, innovation and degradation. They can only be grasped via a range of theoretical perspectives or types of thought, including spatial, historical, and interdisciplinary approaches—including political economy, political ecology, poststructural, and feminist approaches that highlight the urban economic, social, cultural processes and forces that shape development, planning, urbanism, gentrification, urban agriculture, the climate crisis, inequality, and (in)justice in natural and built environments at scales from the local to the global. A 100-level Breadth course can also expose students to modes of inquiry and strategies for organizing and acquiring knowledge. Geog 161 introduces students to interviews, empirical observation, and textual/discourse analysis as strategies for researching cities. The course provides a broad perspective and encourages students to be engaged citizens who reflect critically on their values, beliefs, and commitments.

2. A breadth course must fulfill one of the two following conditions. Please explain how your course does this.
  - a. Articulates a framework for organizing and acquiring knowledge in a particular field of study; raises overarching questions and problems within a field of study and investigates how the field generates and validates workable solutions to problems.
  - b. Develops students' systematic understandings of the historical development and/or the contemporary dynamics of the physical, natural, social, and/or cultural environments that comprise the program of study.

a. Human geography is defined by its approach: the study of all aspects of social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental life through the lens of spatial relations and the defining characteristics of place as a social product. The course introduces a framework for organizing and acquiring knowledge in urban geography, including what concepts and approaches are, how scholars study cities (tying concepts together with methods, from interviews, to surveys, to mapping), to how to think critically about issues of economic, social-cultural, political, planning, and environmental relevance.

b. "[T]he historical development and/or the contemporary dynamics of the physical, natural, social, and/or cultural environments" could be a direct description of the course (see above and syllabus).

#### BREADTH SOCIAL SCIENCE RATIONALE

1. A B-SOC course builds cross-cultural understandings and knowledge of the complexities of social systems and diverse world views; to help students navigate and influence societal challenges in the world. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course does this.

As a social science discipline, human geography is centred on the spatialities of complex social systems. This course builds on that legacy to emphasize (a) the social and cultural diversity of urban areas and (b) the relationship between individual cities and wider networks of social and environmental forces that change and are changed by urbanism. In doing so, it accounts for historical change and future possibilities for diverse cities.

2. A B-SOC course develops an understanding of how social scientists think, analyze issues, interpret evidence, and draw conclusions, enabling students to recognize and critique the issues that define contemporary society. In approximately one paragraph, please explain how your course does this.

This course and its textbook, *Urban Geography: A Critical Introduction*, which the instructor co-authored, centres a critical perspective on cities, urban change, and the production of knowledge in and about cities. It is framed by discussion of conceptual and methodological approaches to cities and by an emphasis on thinking critically about cities and the discourses about them that are presented to us in academic and popular media.

3. A B-SOC course prepares students to make connections between their field of study and the broader contexts of human society. To equip students with transferable skills in social critique, evaluation, and the synthesis of knowledge and understanding.

Since cities reflect and shape almost all aspects of contemporary society, culture, policy, politics, economics, and environmental change, an urban geography course is an ideal candidate for a B-SOC designation. Indeed, urban geography is a core discipline within the multi-disciplinary field of urban studies. Therefore, by definition, geographical discussions of urban change necessitate a grasp of and tuning to the broader context of society.

4. Other ways in which this course meets the goals and criteria of a Breadth-Social Science course are:

A core goal of the class, stated in the first class and repeated through the semester, is to help student develop their critical thinking skills about cities, to become active and critical consumers of information about urban-social change, and to become engaged urban-global citizens.

PLEASE SUBMIT A CURRENT OR RECENT COURSE SYLLABUS,  
INCLUDING A CLASS SCHEDULE AND GRADING SCHEME WITH THIS FORM.