

# **General Education**

## **Learning Outcome Assessment**

### **Social Sciences**

**(AY 2022-2023)**



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## Executive Summary

The General Education curriculum provides foundational knowledge in academic disciplines, exposing students to diverse learning perspectives and ways of knowing in Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, and Arts and Humanities (University System of Georgia). Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) [General Education](#) (Gen Ed) has six learning outcomes: (1) Communication, (2) Quantitative, (3) Computing, (4) Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics (5), Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology, and (6) Social Sciences. They are assessed in accordance with our established timeline. Nurtured by the Subcommittee on Gen Ed and Policy, the 3-Year [Georgia Tech Gen Ed Assessment Plan](#) (2021-2024) sets the framework for good practice in course delivery and assessment, capitalizing on the good judgment of faculty members regarding students' levels of attainment of Gen Ed learning outcomes. Faculty develop signature assignments in their Gen Ed courses, and the assignments, along with student performance, are collected for review and analysis at the end of each semester. To better understand our students' performance, the Office of Academic Effectiveness (OAE) then partnered with faculty to develop a scale for scoring. The general scale is structured to assess each Gen Ed learning outcome on a continuum: 1-Developing, 2-Meets Expectations, 3-Exceeds Expectations.

This report summarizes the evidence of student learning (n = 1,549) and provides descriptive statistics for the **Social Sciences** Outcome to support conversations regarding Gen Ed learning and opportunities for improvement.

### Highlights

- **94.1%** (n= 1,457) of students met or exceeded the Social Sciences Outcome expectations, which means students demonstrated the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior. Students' performance in the Social Sciences outcomes met or exceeded Georgia Tech's acceptable target (80%).
- Comparing student demographics for the Social Sciences Outcome, the results indicated that all demographic groups met or exceeded the target of 80%.

## Background

An integral part of the delivery of [General Education](#) (Gen Ed) at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) includes the assessment of the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes were approved by the Georgia Tech Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate, and then by the University System of Georgia's (USG) Council on General Education in April 2011:

- **Communication (Core Area A1)**  
**Outcome:** Student will demonstrate proficiency in the process of articulating and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and nonverbal modes, using concrete support and conventional language.
- **Quantitative (Core Area A2)**  
**Outcome:** Student will demonstrate the ability to apply basic elements of differential and integral calculus to solve relevant problems.
- **Computing (Institutional Options B)**  
**Outcome:** Student will be able to develop algorithms and implement them using an appropriate computer language and will understand algorithmic complexity and reasonable versus unreasonable algorithms.
- **Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics (Core Area C)**  
**Outcome:** Student will be able to describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature, ethics, or the arts.
- **Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology (Core Area D)**  
**Outcome:** Student will be able to demonstrate the ability to obtain, analyze, interpret, and criticize qualitative observations and quantitative measurements to explain natural phenomena and to test hypotheses.
- **Social Sciences (Core Area E)**  
**Outcome:** Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

The purpose of this report is to provide assessment results to support conversations regarding General Education learning and opportunities for improvement.

## Methods

Georgia Tech conducted an intensive review of the Gen Ed learning outcomes and how students demonstrate their learning in these areas by engaging faculty in Gen Ed assessment conversations in the following steps: (1) Study course enrollment and identify representative courses. We examined enrollment patterns for students taking courses in Gen Ed for the last five years. Patterns were determined, too, by class size (large class-100 or more students; middle class-50-99 students; small class-20-49 students). This exercise led to the value that all class sizes would be included in the 3-year Gen Ed Assessment Plan, as well as coverage of each discipline that contributes to Gen Ed. A total of 39 courses represented from different colleges were selected (See Appendix A and B). (2) Identify or develop signature assignments that align with the outcome. Faculty identified measures

that are tangible, visible, self-explanatory, and provide compelling evidence of exactly what students have learned. (3) Develop performance scale. Faculty met and developed a scale for scoring. The general scale is structured to assess each Gen Ed learning outcome: 1-Developing, 2-Meets Expectations, 3-Exceeds Expectations. The following image indicates our goal for this step.



Figure 1 Scoring Method from Course Level Assessment to Outcome Level Assessment

This three-step process has become the basic collaboration framework across courses and units for meaningful Gen Ed assessment.

### Sample Size

The following table indicates the representative nature of the sample by comparing the student demographic information of the sample and the undergraduate student population of the Institute.

Table 1 Sample Size by Student Demographics

Student Demographic	Sample N (%)	Institutional Population N(%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	868 (56.0%)	11,178 (60.7%)
Female	681 (44.0%)	7,237 (39.3%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity<sup>1</sup></b>		
White	493 (37.5%)	6,876 (41.5%)
Black or African or American	171 (13.0%)	1,492 (9.0%)
Asian	421 (32.0%)	5,766 (34.8%)
Hispanic or Latino	138(10.3%)	1,696 (10.2%)
Two or More Races	76 (5.8%)	554 (3.3%)
Unknown	16 (1.2%)	232 (1.4%)
<b>First Generation College Student<sup>2</sup></b>		
Continuing Generation	1,193 (90.7%)	14,167 (85.6%)
First Generation	122 (9.3%)	2,384 (14.4%)
<b>Citizenship</b>		
Domestic Student	1,315 (84.9%)	16,561 (89.9%)
International Student	234 (15.1%)	1,864 (10.1%)
<b>Transfer Student Status<sup>3</sup></b>		
Non-Transfer Student	1,205 (77.8%)	17,695 (96.1%)

Transfer Student	344 (22.2%)	720 (3.9%)
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### The Social Sciences Outcome Statement and Representative Courses

INTA 1200, INTA 2030, CP 4020, ECON 2100, HIST 2111, HIST 2112, POL 1101, POL 2101, PSYC 1101, PSYC 2210, PSYC 2230, and SOC 1101 are listed under General Education Core Area E Social Sciences, which is associated with the following outcome:

**Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.**

### Measures and Targets for the Social Sciences Outcome

In INTA 1200 American Government in Comparative Perspective explores the institutions and processes of government and how they influence the lives of their citizens in social, political, and economic areas. In this class, the final exam is used to assess this outcome. On the final exam students must typically display knowledge of electoral system formation and how it influences voter turnout, explore the responsibilities, impact and realities of both political parties and interest groups for shaping public discourse and policy, as well as have competence over various national and state level public policies such as civil liberties, justice systems, and economic policies. Faculty will score students' final exam on a scale.

In INTA 2030, the course learning outcome-- ability of students to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior-- will be assessed in the context of the final exam. For this exam, students will have the option to choose between writing a research paper and taking a cumulative exam consisting of multiple-choice questions. Faculty will score students' final exam on a scale.

CP 4020 provides students an overview of the planning of cities and metropolitan regions and describes how planning influences the design and development of human settlements. Students will be asked to complete an individual project in which students will explore a comprehensive plan and other information that sheds light on the planning processes in the community. This individual project will demonstrate students' ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior. Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

ECON 2100 is structured as an introductory economics course that exposes students to the foundational principles of both microeconomics and macroeconomics. The Core Area E outcome is assessed based on two subsets of exam questions. Questions were chosen such that students would not be required simply to recall the definition of a term or set of terms, but to synthesize and apply their understanding of the concepts themselves. Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

In HIST 2111, the professor will designate three questions on the final examination that will assess students' ability to describe:

- How social forces influence the history of the United States to 1877;
- How political forces influence the history of the United States to 1877; and

- How economic forces influence the history of the United States to 1877.

Each student will receive a score of 0 – 3 from faculty on an index measuring the accuracy of their responses.

In HIST 2112, the professor will designate three questions on the final examination that will assess students' ability to describe:

- How social forces influence the history of the United States since 1877;
- How political forces influence the history of the United States since 1877; and
- How economic forces influence the history of the United States since 1877.

Each student will receive a score of 0 – 3 from faculty on an index measuring the accuracy of their responses.

POL 1101 is an introduction to American government and politics and is a foundational course elective for all Georgia Tech undergraduate students. The class is a combination of exams, policy discussions and assignments. The exam in the class cover the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. Supreme Court, the Georgia Constitution, State Government, Local Government, Political Strategy, U.S. International Policy, and Civic Engagement. Typical policy discussions include gun control/rights, free speech, and drug policy. To assess the Social Sciences learning outcome, faculty will score students' exams and the final policy paper on a scale.

In POL 2101, students gain a hands-on understanding of how the political process of state and local government operates in the United States. POL 2101 is based on problem-based learning principles to provide students the skills and confidence to use their problem-solving skills to address policy problems facing society today. Students have the opportunity to discuss their ideas with elected officials and develop strategies used in policy processes. The major tasks to achieve the course goals are (1) creating a problem definition, (2) writing a policy paper, and (3) discussion of advocacy strategies. The policy paper is used to assess students' progress toward the goals. Faculty will score students' demonstrated understanding and problem-solving skills on a scale.

In PSYC 1101, students are asked to write Concept Papers throughout the course. The goal is to examine a psychology subfield of interest (e.g. social, personality, biopsychology) and summarize an area of research. Students are asked to comment on how social, personality, or biopsychology might influence themselves or someone else. Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

In PSYC 2210, students are asked to read empirical articles on topics such as persuasion, stereotype threat, and social loafing and are asked to submit three article critiques and personal reflections. Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

PSYC 2230 gives an overview of the field of Abnormal Psychology based on the contemporary biopsychosocial perspective and scientific research. The influence of social, political, and economic forces are inherent in considering "environmental" contributions to the interaction of the person and the environment. Case studies are presented in class and analyzed in biopsychosocial terms. Students will write an essay

on the topic and some discussion questions. Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

Graded activities in SOC 1101 include objective tests that allow students to demonstrate their ability to describe how social, political, and economic forces influence the behavior of individuals and larger social groups (e.g., families, organizations, nations). Therefore, to provide an assessment of Core Area E, the professor will designate three questions on the final examination that will assess students' ability to describe:

- How social forces influence the behavior of individuals or social groups;
- How political forces influence the behavior of individuals or social groups; and
- How economic forces influence the behavior of individuals or social groups.

Faculty will score students' responses on a scale.

### Scoring and Data Analysis

For the Social Sciences outcome, students were asked to respond to exams, questions, or write a report. This Social Sciences Outcome report presents the student performance data from 12 classes from Fall 2022 and Spring 2023. The following table indicates the sample size and the scoring methods.

*Table 2 Social Sciences Scoring*

Course Scoring	Signature Assignment	Scoring Method	N
INTA 1200	Final exam	0-110	242
INTA 2030	Final exam	A-F	103
CP 4020	Individual Project	Assignment 1:0-100; Assignment 2: 0-200	42
ECON 2100	Final exam	1-8	60
HIST 2111	Final exam	0-3	133
HIST 2112	Final exam	0-3	307
POL 1101	Exam and paper	0-15	205
POL 2101	1 paper	1-100	22
PSYC 1101	3 Concept papers	1-100	102
PSYC 2210	3 article critique/reflection	1-100	83
PSYC 2230	Essay	1-3	93
SOC 1101	Final exam	1-3	157
Total			1,549

The following table presents student performance by Course and Scale. Faculty determined a common evaluation scale for Social Sciences outcome achievement. The following table presents the score interpretation proposed for understanding students' performance at outcome level assessment:



Table 3 Score Interpretation

Score Interpretation			
Course	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
INTA 1200	<80	80-95	>95
INTA 2030	≤C	B	A
CP 4020	Assignment 1: ≤80 Assignment 2: <190	Assignment 1: 81-95 Assignment 2: 190-194	Assignment 1: 96-100 Assignment 2: 195-200
ECON 2100	<5	5-6	7-8
HIST 2111	≤1	2	3
HIST 2112	≤1	2	3
POL 1101	0-25; 1-70	26-40; 70-90	N/A; 91-100
POL 2101	<80	80-90	91-100
PSYC 1101	<80	80-95	96-100
PSYC 2210	<8	8-9.9	10
PSYC 2230	<90	90-95	96-100
SOC 1101	1	2	3

## Findings

Based on faculty agreement on the score interpretation, the frequency and percentage of achievement were calculated. Overall, **94.1%** (n = 1,457) of students met or exceeded the Social Sciences Outcome expectations, which means students demonstrated their abilities to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

Table 4 Social Sciences Outcome Overall Performance

Score Interpretation	% (n)	Target Achieved?
Developing	5.9% (n = 92)	Yes (94.1%)
Meets Expectations	32.6% (n = 505)	
Exceeds Expectations	61.5% (n = 952)	

The following sections provide more details of students' performance data by different demographic populations. The results indicated that all demographic groups met or exceeded the target of 80%.

Table 5 Social Sciences Outcome Overall Performance by Demographic

(From All Represented Courses)	Developing	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Overall Score	Target (80%) Achieved?
	n (% within subgroup)	n (% within subgroup)	n (% within subgroup)	Mean (SD)	
<b>Gender</b>					
Male (n=868)	49 (5.6%)	293 (33.8%)	526 (60.6%)	2.55 (0.60)	Yes (94.4%)
Female (n=681)	43 (6.3%)	212 (31.1%)	426 (62.6%)	2.56 (0.61)	Yes (93.7%)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>					
White (n=493)	29 (5.9%)	166 (33.7%)	298 (60.4%)	2.55 (0.61)	Yes (94.1%)

Black or African American (n=171)	13 (7.6%)	61 (35.7%)	97 (56.7%)	2.49 (0.64)	Yes (92.4%)
Asian (n=421)	21 (5.0%)	131 (31.1%)	269 (63.9%)	2.59 (0.59)	Yes (95.0%)
Hispanic or Latino (n=138)	7 (5.1%)	51 (37.0%)	80 (58.0%)	2.53 (0.59)	Yes (95.0%)
Two or More Races (n=76)	3 (3.9%)	23 (30.3%)	50 (65.8%)	2.62 (0.57)	Yes (96.1%)
Unknown (n=16)	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.8%)	11 (68.8%)	2.56 (0.73)	Yes (87.6%)
<b>First-Generation College Student</b>					
Continuing Generation (n=1,193)	70 (5.9%)	388 (32.5%)	735 (61.6%)	2.56 (0.60)	Yes (94.1%)
First Generation (n=122)	5 (4.1%)	47 (38.5%)	70 (57.4%)	2.53 (0.58)	Yes (95.9%)
<b>Citizenship</b>					
Domestic Student (n=1,315)	75 (5.7%)	435 (33.1%)	805 (61.2%)	2.56 (0.60)	Yes (94.3%)
International student (n=234)	17 (7.3%)	70 (29.9%)	147 (62.8%)	2.56 (0.63)	Yes (92.7%)
<b>Transfer Student Status</b>					
Transfer Student (n=344)	22 (6.4%)	118 (34.3%)	204 (59.3%)	2.53 (0.62)	Yes (93.6%)
Non-Transfer Student (n=1,205)	70 (5.8%)	387 (32.1%)	748 (62.1%)	2.56 (0.60)	Yes (94.2%)
<b>Class</b>					
Freshman (n=249)	19 (7.6%)	77 (30.9%)	153 (61.4%)	2.54 (0.68)	Yes (92.3%)
Sophomore (n=531)	37 (7.0%)	173 (32.6%)	321 (60.5%)	2.53 (0.62)	Yes (93.1%)
Junior (n=321)	11 (3.4%)	99 (30.8%)	211 (65.7%)	2.62 (0.55)	Yes (96.5%)
Senior (n=442)	24 (5.4%)	155 (35.1%)	263 (59.5%)	2.54 (0.60)	Yes (94.6%)
<b>GA Residence</b>					
GA Residence (n=821)	62 (7.6%)	274 (33.4%)	485 (59.1%)	2.52 (0.82)	Yes (92.5%)
Out of State Residence (n=728)	30 (4.1%)	231 (31.7%)	467 (64.1%)	2.60 (0.57)	Yes (95.8%)

## Appendix A: Represented Courses List

Outcomes	Represented Courses	Total
Communication	ENGL 1101, ENGL 1102	2
Quantitative	MATH 1552, MATH 1712	2
Computing	CS 1301, CS 1315, CS 1371	3
Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics	Large Class: FREN 1002, SPAN 2001, ID 2202, ID 2241, PHIL 3109, ARCH 2111 Middle Class: LMC 3226, ML 2500 Small Class: CHIN 2001, LMC 2100, PHIL 4176	11
Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology	CHEM 1310, BIOS 1207DL, EAS 1600, PHYS 2212, MATH 1554, MATH 1711	6
Social Sciences	Large Class: ECON 2100, HIST 2111, HIST 2112, INTA 1200, 2030, POL 1101, PSYC 1101, PSYC 2210, PSYC 2230, SOC 1101 Small Class: ARCH 3135, CP 4020, POL 2101, PUBP 3000, PUBP 3315	15

## Appendix B: Represented Courses Associated College

Represented course associated college	Number of courses from the represented course list	Associated outcome
Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts	20	Communication, Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics, Social Sciences
College of Sciences	11	Quantitative, Natural Sciences, Math, and Technology, Social Sciences
College of Design	5	Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics, Social Sciences
College of Computing	3	Computing