April 3, 2019

Dear SRP majors who are registering for courses for Fall 2019-Spring 2020:

I thought it might help to direct you to certain information and try to prevent confusion over curricular matters. I wish I had thought to post this message sooner but hope it is still helpful. I write as SRP Field Chair. I try to provide information helpful for all SRP students, but I do not speak for other SRP faculty. Some faculty might have reasonable disagreements on some matters here where there are judgment calls (for instance, in planning for graduate school).

The information I think you must need to know (with more detail listed below):

- The following are SRP selectives ("cluster courses") offered next year. A number of these courses also count for credit in other Madison majors:
  - Fall 2019: MC 319, 334, 335, 337, 364, 369, 482
    - For instance MC 334 is in the process of being listed as an SRP course. (It is taught by CCP faculty.) That should be finalized in plenty of time.
- See more detailed course descriptions of particular sections of SRP courses (and of most MC courses being offered next year).
- See also the See the SRP checklist and the SRP pages (pp. 27-30) in the Madison Student Handbook.
  - Note also that pp. 49-57 of the Madison Student Handbook include brief descriptions of every MC course. This is helpful when you’re looking at checklists which only have course numbers.

Some matters to know about particular courses (especially because the course registration system can often fail to enforce prerequisites):

- MC 364: You should not take this (important) course unless you have first taken a quantitative methods course (such as MC 295, SOC 281, PLS 201, CJ292—there are other examples). Otherwise you will probably be lost in MC 364.
  - Do not confuse SOC 281 (a quantitative research methods course) with the SRP core course MC 281.
- MC 380: There seems a typo in the way the Schedule of Courses lists prereqs for this course. In short, you are required to take either MC 280 or MC 281 before taking MC 380. You ideally also should take a methods course before taking MC 380, but that is not required.
  - And again see course descriptions of particular sections. E.g., the two Burns sections of MC 380 next year will have slightly different emphases. Both have at least 50% US content; but the Fall Burns section will be primarily on the US while the Spring Burns section will be more comparative, with Great Britain probably the primary comparison. And then also see the description for Prof. Sykes’s Spring section.

Planning your SRP curriculum year by year:

- In general, sophomores should take MC 280 and MC 281 and methods. (See the SRP checklist for a list of courses that meet the SRP methods requirement.) Sophomores do
not usually take 300-level SRP courses (that is, selectives/cluster courses), given your requirements in language, integrative studies courses, math, and so forth.

- MC 280 is only offered in the Fall and usually has at least 3 sections; MC 281 is only offered in the Spring and again usually has at least 3 sections.
- Be sure to see you SRP academic advisor in your sophomore year to talk through possible clusters and related area courses. You can change those options later, but it’s good to start thinking through such plans.

- **Juniors** should consider taking MC 380 and one or two selectives/cluster courses. But for instance if there are two selectives you’d like to take and it’s then hard to fit MC 380 into your junior schedule, there’s no problem delaying MC 380 until senior year.
  - MC 380 is always offered in both Fall and Spring, usually with a total of 3 sections (and sometimes 4) across the two semesters.

- **Seniors** should take senior seminar (MC 498) and also make sure they finish all other SRP requirements.
  - MC 498 is always offered in both Fall and Spring, with a total (across the two semesters) usually of 5-6 sections.

**Core courses in SRP next year:**
- MC 280, Social Theory & Social Relations, four sections in Fall 2019
- MC 281, Immigrants, Minorities, & American Pluralism, four sections in Spring 2020
- MC 380, Social Policy (1 section in Fall 2019; 2 sections in Spring 2020)
- MC 498, senior seminar (3 sections in Fall 2019, 2 sections in Spring 2020)
  - Each section has a different topic. See the Schedule of Courses and the link to course descriptions.

**Some long-term information that can affect your short-term plans:**
- In planning your schedules, unfortunately you cannot count on MSU course descriptions which say for instance that an MC course will be offered “Fall of even-numbered years” or “Spring of every year.” This is a bureaucratic problem that applies to many MC courses (not just in SRP): When a course becomes listed in the Schedule of Courses, MSU requires that we choose one such option. But it is impossible to stick to that schedule; faculty qualified to teach a course might for instance have other teaching obligations that conflict in any given semester, or they may be on leave.
  - So, if there’s a selective (that is, a “cluster” course) that you really really want to take, and it’s offered in your junior year, take it when you know it’s offered. It might not be offered your senior year.
  - That said, there are certain courses the college tries to offer most years, including for instance MC 364, 378, 386, and 387. But that’s not an iron-clad guarantee.

- Different sections of **MC 390** are completely different courses. They count in SRP only if the Schedule of Courses specifically says that **that section counts in SRP**.

- There are some courses listed as selectives (=cluster courses) on the SRP checklist that unfortunately we will probably not be able to offer for years, if ever again. In short, the faculty who used to teach them are no longer at the college and/or the courses have not been drawing enough enrollment to make them viable. Those include MC 340, 342, 347, and 389.
• *Don’t confuse selectives (= “cluster courses”) with “related area” courses.*
  o Selectives (=cluster courses) are courses *within* SRP.
  o Related area consists of courses *outside* SRP.
  o Again, see the SRP checklist for more information.
  o Both cluster and related area requirements are not difficult to meet, but talk to your advisor to make sure you understand the requirements.

• For the *methods requirement*, most of the courses SRP accepts are quantitative. But for instance ANP 429 is a qualitative (ethnographic methods) course, especially appropriate for double majors in anthropology.
  o There are multiple career and graduate school options (e.g., History, humanities, law, probably African American Studies) where there’s no need to take a quantitative methods course.
  o However, if you’re considering graduate school in public policy or in political science or sociology (or most social science subjects in general), most schools expect you to have taken one undergraduate quantitative methods course as a bare minimum. You want to be really prepared? Take MC 364 too (or some other higher-level quantitative course offered by another academic unit).
    ▪ And I would note I do tell my senior seminar students that, if they haven’t taken quantitative methods, there are certain research projects that they’re not competent to do. Students sometimes don’t realize that some questions they really care about require knowledge of quantitative methods. That’s true, for instance, of any comparison of two groups looking at a particular measured outcome, such as, ‘do Latinx vs. Black students have better outcomes after attending suburban vs. urban schools?’
  o Next year, MC 295—a methods course that many students prefer to those offered outside the college—is offered each semester. That’s typically true every year, but again, I cannot guarantee that.

Thanks. (And I’m glad you’re in SRP!)

Gene Burns
Professor of Social Relations & Policy
SRP Field Chair
burnsg@msu.edu