

FOCUS FIELD AND PLAN OF STUDY NOTES/CHECKLIST COMMITTEE ON DEGREES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Most focus field titles include both a theme and a region (such as “Inequality in American Education” or “Gender and Health in Latin America”). This may not be necessary, especially for theorists, but it is usually helpful.
2. Make sure that your explanation for why your focus field is academically interesting to you fits with the title of your focus field, your thesis if you are a senior, and with the courses you list.
3. All of the courses you list must be letter-graded, and they must be drawn from at least two disciplines (e.g., history and economics). Your plan of study also must include at least two courses taken in FAS, and should not include introductory language courses, methods courses, or junior tutorials.
4. A single course cannot count for more than one requirement (e.g., a focus field course cannot also fulfill your economics requirement).
5. A historical course is one that is taught in the history or history of science departments or is taught in another department by an instructor with a Ph.D. in history. The Social Studies Board of Instruction will also consider a course a historical course if more than 50% of the content is pre-21st century and the course moves chronologically. If you are asking us to count a course that is not taught in history or history of science and is not taught by a historian, please attach a syllabus so that we can assess the content.
6. A social science or history course is taught in one of our five overlapping disciplines (anthropology, economics, government, history, or sociology) or is taught by someone with a Ph.D. in one of those disciplines. The Social Studies BOI will also consider a course a social science or history course if 50% or more of the content is in history or the social sciences. If you are asking us to count a course that is not taught in one of these departments, please indicate on your focus field form what discipline the instructor’s Ph.D. is in or attach a syllabus so that we can assess the content.

7. We will consider any course from the Harvard Kennedy School, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, or the History of Science department to be a social science course, so if you are petitioning to count a course from one of these programs, you do not need to attach a syllabus.

8. Make sure that your academic advisor has approved your focus field!

