

FOCUS FIELD AND PLAN OF STUDY 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. Focus field courses must be drawn from at least two departments (e.g., history and economics) and include at least one historical course. Your fifth and/or sixth course may be taken for a letter grade at one of Harvard’s professional schools.
4. Focus fields should not include introductory language courses or methods courses.
5. Junior tutorials are a separate requirement and should not be included in a focus field unless you have already taken (or are currently taking) a third junior tutorial. If that is the case, you may use one of the three junior tutorials in your focus field.
6. A single course cannot count for more than one requirement (e.g., a focus field course cannot also fulfill your economics requirement).
7. All of the courses in your focus field must be letter-graded, which means that you cannot include Freshman Seminars or courses from Harvard Law School or the Graduate School of Design, as they are not letter graded.
8. A historical course is typically 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 or is cross-listed by the history department. In unusual circumstances, we will consider whether a course is a historical course based on its content. If you want to petition for such a course, please attach a syllabus and explain why you think it is a historical course.

9. 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. In unusual circumstances, we will assess a course based on its content. If you are asking us to count a course that is not taught in one of these departments AND is not taught by someone with a PhD in the social sciences, please indicate on your focus field form what discipline the instructor's Ph.D. is in or attach a syllabus.
10. 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.
11. Make sure that your academic advisor has approved your focus field! 😊