

March 25, 2008

To: St. Olaf Faculty
From: Curriculum Committee
Re: Proposed Revision to Major in Social Studies Education

At the April Faculty Meeting the Curriculum Committee will move that the faculty approve the following revisions to the major in Social Studies Education.

Proposed Catalog Description of Revised Major

Social Studies Education

[the following general description is unchanged, and is presented for context]

Social studies education is an interdisciplinary major involving seven disciplines: economics, education, history, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology/anthropology. It is a necessary component for a license to teach social studies in middle school and high school.

The purpose of teaching social studies in middle and high school (grades 5-12) is threefold: (1) to provide middle and high school students a broad foundation in what is known about human social experience, interaction, and behavior; (2) to provide students with perspectives which will assist them in understanding self and others; and (3) to provide students a foundation for appreciating and critically evaluating claims of knowledge about human social experiences, interaction, and behavior.

Requirements for the Social Studies Education Major

[the following changed requirements are the subject of the motion]

Social Studies Education is a 12-course major consisting of 10 prescribed courses and two electives. Students may graduate with a social studies education major without completing requirements leading to a license to teach (see additional requirements below).

Courses include History 191 or 195, 199, and a Level II History Area Course on Africa, Asia, or Latin America (not from electives lists); Economics 121; Geography 232; Political Science 111; Psychology 125; Sociology 128, 242, or 264; and Education 290 and 334. The remaining two required courses are electives selected from two areas— (a) human/environmental relationships and (b) global/multicultural studies—consult program director for course choices.

Requirements for the Social Studies Education major with 5-12 Teaching Licensure:

Students must take all twelve courses required for the major described above plus History 198 and a prescribed set of education courses and experiences required for licensure. Students must meet with the Director of Social Studies Education (or the Education Department Chair) to plan

their program. Students are encouraged to double major and/or take additional coursework in economics, history, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Summary and Rationale:

The proposed major preserves rigor while affording students greater flexibility to pursue areas of interest and add depth to selective disciplines. The new requirements include more upper level courses. They also enable students to seek greater depth in economics or political science by taking two electives in either area.

The principles guiding the proposed revisions include maintaining the integrity of the current 12-course major to prepare students to teach in the broad field of social studies while recognizing that history is the primary teaching area for social studies teachers; enabling students to explore two growing areas in education and the social sciences--human/environmental relationships and global/multicultural studies; and increasing the rigor of the program by providing more level II and III courses in the major.

This proposal is consistent with state and national trends in social studies education. It includes feedback from dozens of current social studies students and alumni and it is the net result of several years of discussion within the education department, representatives of each of the departments included in the major (including the Chairs of each), and with the Teacher Education Subcommittee of CEPC.