

SOCIAL SCIENCE PANEL

MINUTES

April 12, 2006
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
TSC 204

I. MINUTES OF 3/22/06 SSP MEETING

➤ **APPROVED.**

DEFERRED ITEMS:

II. LAS: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Req. by Ann Crigler

Add a new minor:

Eff. Fall 2006

Minor in Political Organizing in the Digital Age [20 unit program]

- **3/22/06 SEP MEETING: DEFERRED TO PANEL:** The panel is in favor of establishing such a minor, and wishes to approve it after some streamlining or revisions. The main contact for this minor, Richard Fliegel, is invited to attend the April 12 meeting. The proposal for a new course that will be required for this minor, ITP 304, has not yet been received, although an advance copy of the proposed course syllabus was provided along with the request for the minor. As an Engineering course, it will be reviewed by the Science and Engineering Panel (one week after the April SSP meeting if it is received in time). If Engineering submits a proposal for the course with a significantly different syllabus in advance of the April SSP meeting, the Curriculum office will provide a copy of it for SSP to review in April. The panel noted that in the current ITP 304 syllabus, virtually all readings are identified as “instructor notes,” which is probably due to the fluid and topical nature of the subject matter. One reading is identified as a chapter (Chapter 3), but no textbook title is listed. The requirements for this minor seem diffuse, and not as coherent as they could be. For example, students could select courses which are entirely non-technological (except for the ITP course), but would still be awarded a minor whose title suggests that they are knowledgeable about the ‘digital age.’ Some panel members expressed the view that one could not count on advisement to lead students to take an appropriate set of courses. Some panel members also thought that the two COMM courses in category IV (321 and 489) seemed especially relevant—perhaps one of them should be required. Also, the capstone course will provide a very different experience depending on which one is chosen. The capstone course should be integrative rather than further promoting differentiation, as this set of choices seems to do.
- **ADMINISTRATIVELY DEFERRED.** The required ITP 304 course is on the agenda for the final Science and Engineering Panel meeting of the year, on April 18. Richard Fliegel, who prepared the proposal for this minor, sent a response to the panel’s concerns in advance of the meeting, and attended the meeting in order to answer questions. The concern about the possibility that students may choose broadly disparate courses in such a way as to elude a coherent body of study that focuses on political organizing in the digital age was discussed. It is expected that this minor will have an advisor who will explain options; and that students are likely to choose courses that will represent their genuine interests. The panel was reminded that the minor isn’t necessarily about campaigns in support of electing an individual to public office, but is more broadly defined to include issues of social concerns or global change; therefore the choice of courses can be considered more relevant and cohesive. Richard also explained that he considers multiple options for this minor (and perhaps others) to be more effective, rather than one capstone course. The panel recommends approval of the minor, pending approval of ITP 304 by the Science and Engineering Panel.

FOR INFORMATION ONLY: The Viterbi School of Engineering’s Information Technology Program is proposing the following new course which will be reviewed by the Science and Engineering Panel at its 4/18/06 meeting:

ITP 304x TECHNOLOGIES FOR BUILDING ONLINE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS (4, FaSp)

Key technology components necessary in building a successful online political campaign. Fundamentals of implementing, marketing and managing an online political campaign.

- **DISCUSSION:** The panel noted that this second version of the syllabus satisfactorily addresses their concerns about readings.

NEW ITEMS:

No new items for review

Members present

Frances M. Fitzgerald [*support staff*]
Steven Lamy [*chair*]
Je Hoon Lee
Alice Parker
William M. Rideout
Nitin Sharma [*student*]
Terry Seip
Edwenna Werner [*for Kenneth Servis*]

Members absent

Eugene Bickers [*ex-officio*]
Elizabeth Garrett [*ex-officio*]
David Glasgow [*ex-officio*]
Meg Russett
Dennis Schorr
Kenneth Servis [*ex-officio*]
Peter Starr [*ex-officio*]

Guests

Richard Fliegel