

# Understanding Plural Societies



Each General Education category is grounded in a set of learning outcomes. For the full set of learning outcomes for Understanding Plural Societies courses see: [www.gened.umd.edu](http://www.gened.umd.edu)

This rubric is designed as a tool to assess activities aimed at student gains in the follow learning outcome(s) for the Understanding Plural Societies General Education Category:

*At the completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Demonstrate understanding of the basis of human diversity and socially-driven constructions of difference: biological, cultural, historical, social, economic, or ideological.
2. Demonstrate understanding of fundamental concepts and methods that produce knowledge about plural societies and systems of classification.
3. Explicate the policies, social structures, ideologies or institutional structures that do or do not create inequalities based on notions of human difference.
4. Interrogate, critique, or question traditional hierarchies or social categories
5. Analyze forms and traditions of thought or expression in relation to cultural, historical, political, and social contexts, as for example, dance, foodways, literature, music, and philosophical and religious traditions.
6. Use a comparative, intersectional, or relational framework to examine the experiences, cultures, or histories of two or more social groups or constituencies within a single society or across societies, or within a single historical timeframe or across historical time.

| Criterion for review of student work   | Descriptions of levels of student performance  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|---|
|  | Advanced   | Proficient   | Beginning  | Unacceptable  |
| <p><b>Concepts</b><br/>Can articulate fundamental concepts and one or more bases for human diversity (biological, cultural, historical, social, economic, or ideology).<br/>(Learning outcome 1)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>In addition to</i></b> accurately recalling, defining, and describing key concepts, is able to explain theories underlying key concepts and distinguishes between examples</li> <li>• Can differentiate related concepts that are distinct from each other</li> <li>• Can apply (e.g., complicates, challenges, opens up) key concepts or theories to <i>novel</i> contexts and provides specific examples</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurately recalls, defines and describes many key concepts</li> <li>• Can articulate theories associated with and relationships among key concepts and provides limited examples related to concepts</li> <li>• Can apply concepts in contexts discussed in class or readings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correctly recognizes or defines core concepts but has difficulty recalling key ideas or describing relationships between concepts</li> <li>• Shows some capacity to apply concepts, theories or empirical observations to examples described in course</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot consistently define or describe core concepts when these are presented</li> <li>• Fails to understand many simple relationships among concepts</li> <li>• Relies on peers or instructor to apply concepts even in contexts discussed explicitly in class or readings</li> </ul> |

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|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Methods</b><br/>Can describe or use methodologies (close readings, historical analysis, qualitative interviews, survey research, etc.) that produce knowledge about human diversity and plural societies. (Learning outcome #2)</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explains how to apply methodology and derive a valid interpretation from this application</li> <li>• Can describe rationale underlying methods and their unique benefits and drawbacks</li> <li>• Critically evaluates quality of information or analysis produced, based on methodologies used to generate information</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to describe methods used and type of information or analysis produced</li> <li>• Can explain why a method is used but does not comprehend the full range of benefits and drawbacks</li> <li>• Is able to distinguish stronger from weaker applications of a given method</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes methods used &amp; type(s) of data produced</li> <li>• Does not fully appreciate the rationale underlying use of method(s)</li> <li>• Recognizes that methods can be used well vs. poorly (e.g., that various methods differ in quality of data produced)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot recognize methods used or the type(s) of data produced</li> <li>• Is unable to distinguish acceptable from unsound applications of method</li> <li>• Is unaware of how to determine differences in quality of information or analysis</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Critical evaluation</b><br/>Offers critical analysis:<br/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of social or institutional structures or ideologies that create or disrupt hierarchies,</li> <li>• Of traditional hierarchies or social categories, or</li> <li>• Using comparative, intersectional or relational frameworks</li> </ul> (Learning outcomes #3,4,5, &amp; 6)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently distinguishes evidence from interpretation</li> <li>• Recognizes conditions under which assumptions are and are not defensible</li> <li>• Consistently applies an intersectional or comparative framework to illustrate complex understanding of identity formation</li> <li>• Recognizes that identity formation is relational across groups and that relative power can be an important factor in intergroup relations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to differentiate between evidence and interpretation</li> <li>• Sometimes recognizes assumptions and their role in modifying conclusions (i.e., does not do this consistently)</li> <li>• Is able to apply an intersectional or comparative framework to understand identity formation</li> <li>• Recognizes that identity formation is relational across groups</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes that evidence differs from interpretation but has difficulty applying these concepts correctly</li> <li>• Is able to differentiate stronger from weaker reasoning at a gross level when evaluating argument strength</li> <li>• Can give an example of an intersectional or comparative framework</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fails to identify logical flaws in reasoning or exhibits logical fallacies in own arguments</li> <li>• Fails to identify the ways in which multiple identities might be represented or instituted or how they might inform one another</li> </ul>       |

The Understanding Plural Societies Rubric was developed by the Understanding Plural Societies Faculty Board, supported by the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment with the Understanding Plural Societies instructors upon review of the AAC&U VALUE rubrics and according to standards determined by the Understanding Plural Societies Faculty Board for student performance in the General Education Understanding Plural Societies courses. The rubric defines the standards for student performance in Understanding Plural Societies courses at the University of Maryland.