

CAUSAL EFFECT OF GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

at Public Four-Year Institutions in Texas

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INTRODUCTION

- Across the country, there are many changes being implemented in education
- Universities are changing their core curriculum to align with their ideological beliefs
- How does removing/adding courses to University core curriculum impact student enrollment in those respective departments?

Florida Eliminates Sociology as a Core Course at Its Universities

In December, Florida's education commissioner wrote that "sociology has been hijacked by left-wing activists."



university system approved "a factual
gy. Erich Martin for The New York Times

(Hartocollis, 2024)

California State University now requires ethnic studies

(Zinshteyn, 2020)

GENERAL EDUCATION

- Part of liberal education curriculum shared by all students
- Exposure to multiple disciplines and creates the foundation for intellectual, civic, and practical skills
- Encompasses “introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning” (*Henschel et al, 2018*)
- Constitute ~40 credit hours (one-third of required credits for bachelor's degree) (*Lattuca & Stark, 2014*)

LITERATURE REVIEW - SUPPORTING STUDIES

- *The Shapeless River: Does a Lack of Structure Inhibit Students' Progress at Community Colleges?* (Scott-Clayton, 2015)
 - Relation between structured paths to graduation at Community Colleges and chances of graduating
 - When students lack structure, they make poor self-evaluated decisions that lead to unsound outcomes
- *Timing Matters: Evidence from College Major Decisions* (Patterson et al, 2021)
 - Whether taking elective courses during or after the semester students make choices about majors influences their decision
 - Students are more influenced by courses taking during the semester they make decisions about major – timing is impactful for student curricular pathway choices
- *The Effects of Information Provision on the Gender Gap in Technology: Experimental Evidence From Course Enrollment and Major Decisions* (Brodnax, 2021)
 - Assesses whether female students take more STEM courses if shown a STEM core curriculum pamphlet with female students pictured
 - Students are more likely to take gen ed courses in specific areas if nudged by course advisors, administrators, or departments – more female students enrolled in STEM courses when shown women pictured in brochures

RESEARCH QUESTION

- *How does adding or removing courses from the General Education requirement at 4-year Public Universities in Texas change enrollment in those departments?*
- Adding (removing) a course to the general education requirement will increase (decrease) enrollment in that course, consequently increasing (decreasing) departmental funding and faculty members in that subject area.

TEXAS POLICY CONTEXT & DATA

- **October 2011:** Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board made changes to Texas Core Curriculum to standardize curricular requirements across institutions
- **Fall 2014:** These changes went into effect (reducing General Education Requirements)

- 1) Lamar University
- 2) Angelo State University
- 3) Midwestern State University
- 4) Sul Ross State University
- 5) Texas State University
- 6) Texas Tech University

Table 1*Texas Core Curriculum Credit Hours Before and After 2014 Policy Change*

Institution	Credits 2013-2014	Credits 2014-2015	Dosage
Lamar University	48	42	6
Midwestern State University	47	42	5
Sul Ross State University	46	42	4
Texas State University	46	42	4
Angelo State University	44	42	2
Texas Tech University	44	44	0 ¹

¹ Texas Tech University was given an exception from the overall credit decrease.

Notes: Table displays Texas Core Curriculum Credit Requirements before and after the 2014 Policy Change. Data comes from institution course catalogs posted online.

9 CORE COMPONENT AREAS

- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board changed requirements
- Standardization of credit hours across universities
- Wide range of skills developed through component areas

Component Area	Credits 2013-2014	Credits 2014-2015	Dosage
Communication	6	6	0
Mathematics	3	3	0
Life and Physical Sciences	6	6	0
Language, Philosophy, and Culture	3	3	0
Creative Arts	3	3	0
American History	6	6	0
Government/Political Science	6	6	0
Social/Behavioral Sciences	3	3	0
Component Area Code	6-12	6	0-6

DATA

- Information from course catalogs at 6 Institutions
 - Administrative student transcripts

The cover of the Angelo State University Catalog for the 2014-15 academic year. The title "ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY" is at the top in large, serif capital letters, with "Member, Texas Tech University System" underneath. Below the title is a yellow horizontal bar. The main title "2014-15 CATALOG" is in large, bold, serif capital letters, with "UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE" in smaller serif capital letters below it. The background features a blue and white striped pattern at the top, transitioning to a cloudy sky at the bottom. A small sunburst graphic is in the top right corner.



Multicultural Requirement Effective Fall 2014

more, every student must include at least one 3-hour multicultural course or its equivalent that focuses explicitly on the study of the United States or on the culture of another society. Completion of an approved study abroad course, including Texas Tech University Study Abroad Office, also can fulfill this requirement. Many courses fulfill a core curriculum requirement and also satisfy the multicultural requirement. All students should check with an advisor for appropriate courses. Although the university's multicultural requirement, select Hesters courses also may be available and may vary by semester.

TCCN	TTU Course	
Introduction to Agricultural Education	HIST 3382	Modern Latin America
Agricultural Anthropology	HIST 3395	African Empires and Civilizations
Anthropology	HIST 3396	African Revolution and Nationalism Since 1900s
ANTH 2351		

Introduction to Arab-Muslim Civilization	HIST 3396	Since 1800
Art Appreciation	ARTS 1301	The Modern Middle East, 1800 to Present
Oriency in Community, Family, and Addictive Services	HIST 4329	Race, Identity, and Citizenship in the United States
World of Egypt and the Near East	HIST 4330	History of Lynching and

The World of Greece	HIST 4335	Racial Violence in America
The World of Rome	HIST 4382	The History of Hip Hop
Gender and Sexuality in the Classical World		Walking the Line: The History of
Comparative Mythology		U.S.-Mexico Border Relations
World Dance Forms		since 1886
Archaeological Techniques		

Schools, Society, and Diversity	HIST 4385	Global Islam: Past and Present
Learning in the Preschool	HIST 4386	Slavery in Africa
Seminar	MUSI 1500	Creating the Critical Listener
Schools, Society, and Diversity	NS 2380	Cultural Aspects of Food
Language in a Multicultural America	PPP 1302	Cultural and Gender Diversity in
Modern and Contemporary		Literature
World Literature		Literature

Additional Literatures of America	PHIL 2350	World Religions and Philosophy	POL 2350
Literature and War		Through Literature in Translation	
Human Resources and Diversity		Ethnic Minority Psychology	
Management in Sport	PSY 3398	Russian Culture	
French Culture	RUSN 2304		
Introduction to Human Geography	GBOG 1302	Introduction to Sociology	SOC 1301

Regional Geography of the World Development in Cross-Cultural Perspective	GEOD 1303	SOC 2324 SPAN 3390 SPAN 4332	Race and Ethnicity Hispanic Culture and Civilization Civilización Hispánica: Hispanic Civilizations Social Work with Diverse Populations History of Puerto Rico
African American History to 1877 African American History from 1877 to Present	SW 3331 THA 3338		

Women in Early America Women in Modern America Colonial Latin America	THA 3308 THA 3309 VPA 2301	History of Theatre I History of Theatre II Critical Issues in Arts and Culture
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**Multicultural Requirements for Students Entering under
a Catalog Dated Prior to Fall 2014 at**
www.depts.ttu.edu/officialpublications/catalogs/Academics/Multicultural.php

www.espn.go.com/nba/stats/standings?year=2003&month=11&day=10&league_id=0

100% of the time.

100% of the time.

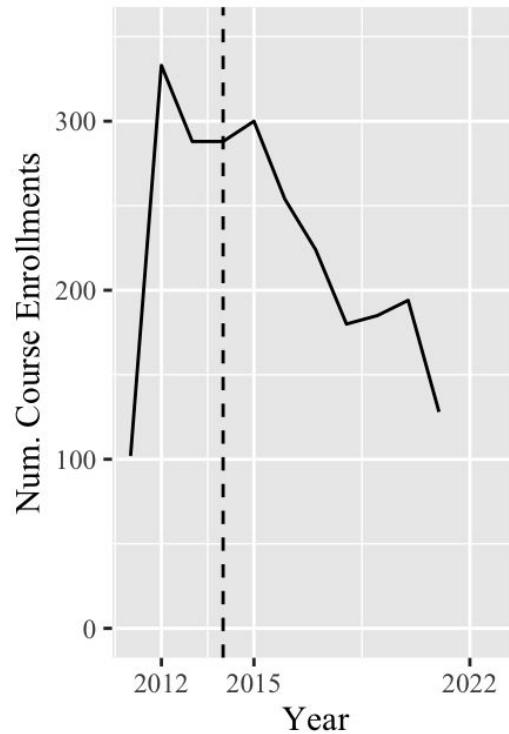
10 of 10 pages

RESULTS

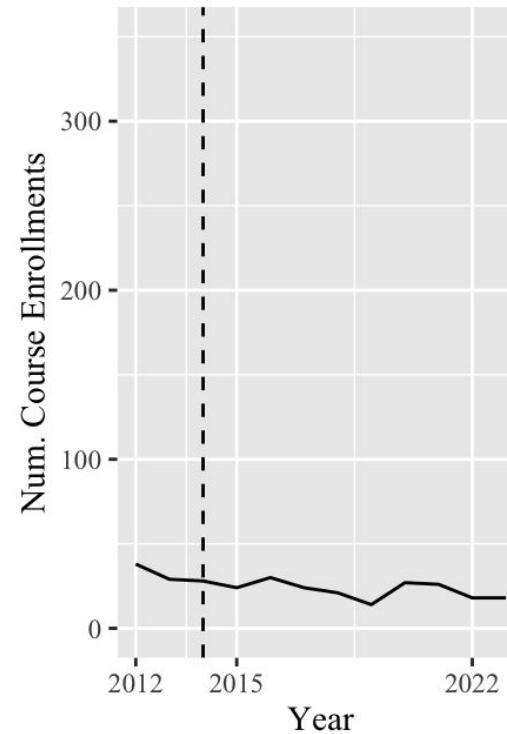
Figure 1

Course Enrollments in Select Courses at Midwestern State University Over Time

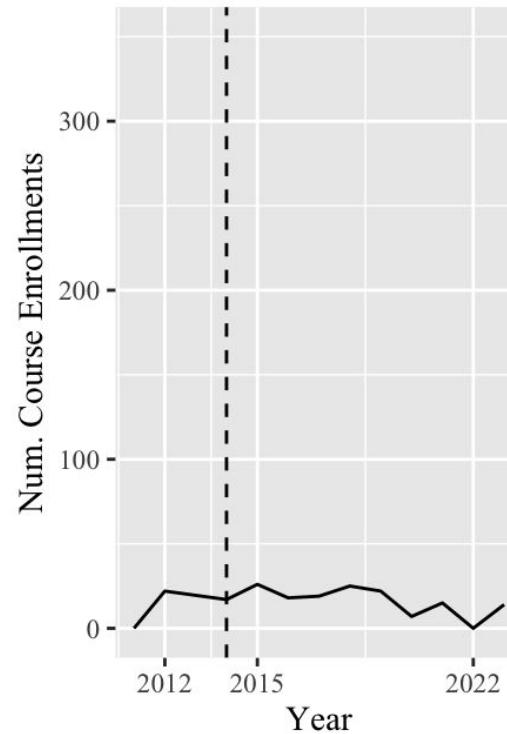
Panel A: SPAN 1234



Panel B: FREN 1234



Panel C: GERM 1234

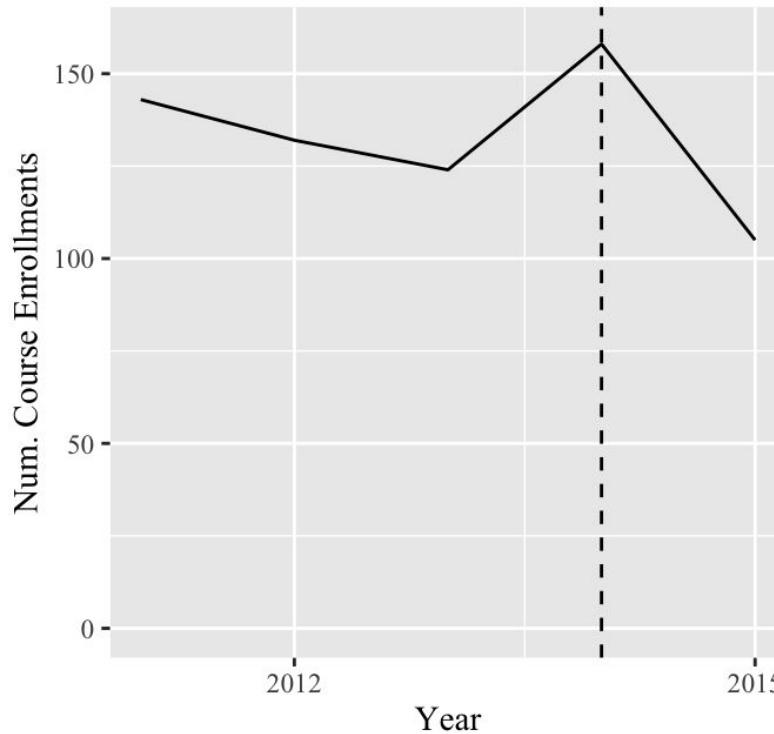


Notes: Figure displays course enrollments in SPAN 1234, FREN 1234, and GERM 1234 at Midwestern State University from the 2011 to 2022 academic years. Data comes from administrative student transcripts housed at the University of Texas at Dallas.

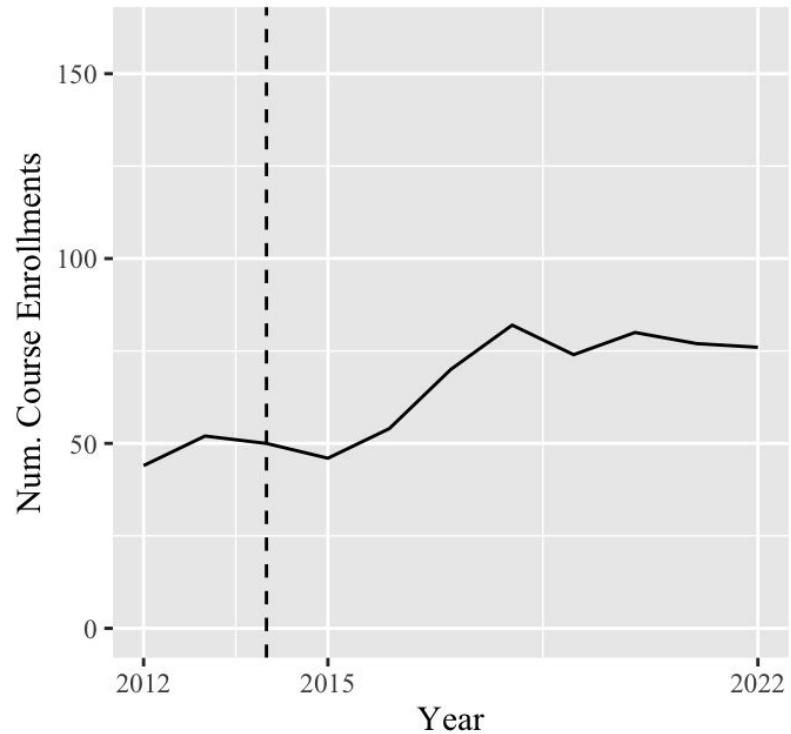
Figure 2

Course Enrollments in Select Courses at Angelo State University Over Time

Panel A: CS 1301



Panel B: CS 1351



Notes: Figure displays course enrollments in CS 1301 and CS 1351 at Angelo State University from the 2011 to 2022 academic years. Data comes from administrative student transcripts housed at the University of Texas at Dallas.

Table 2*Regressing Course Enrollments on General Education Requirements*

Factors	(1)	(2)	(3)
Is Gen Ed	573.562*** (17.2475)	33.6654*** (7.43123)	36.2244*** (7.41919)
R-squared	0.166	0.938	0.938
Observations	206,946	206,946	206,946
Controls for Academic Year	X		X
Controls for Course		X	X

Notes: Standard errors in parenthesis. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$. Table displays results of linear regression tests conducted on several factors related to courses being classified as General Education courses, which are Academic Year and Subject Number. Data comes from administrative student transcripts housed at the University of Texas at Dallas.

LIMITATIONS

- Primarily Quantitative Data: observe course enrollments but not student decision-making
 - Theoretical Mechanism (student decision-making links gen ed courses and course enrollments)
- Lack of a Causal Relationship: confounds causal relationship because there are factors that influence course enrollments left unconsidered
 - i.e. Brodnax (2021) increased female student enrollment in STEM courses by advertising these courses in a brochure featuring female students

THEORETICAL IMPORTANCE

- Students are less likely to take courses removed from General Education curriculum
 - Introductory and “easier” courses
- For incoming students, strategic adding/removal of General Education courses can shift student majors
 - i.e. Adding STEM courses can increase STEM Majors
- Student enrollment in courses can directly increase/decrease funding in those departments
 - Increases when courses are part of General Education Curriculum

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Florida: STOP WOKE Act
- Policies that enforce/remove particular courses from general education requirements impacts student course and career decisions
- Policymakers can create effective curriculum structures to guide undecided students to success

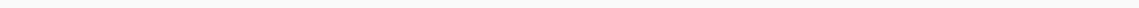


(Suarez et al, 2024)

FUTURE WORK

- Departmental Budgets
- Student Major Choices
- Qualitative research: interviews, surveys, etc.

THANK YOU!



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