

Social Sciences Collection Plan Adult Nonfiction Print

I. Description

- A. **Coverage.** The social sciences areas of adult nonfiction comprise a broad and diverse range of subjects. Included are most of the explosive social issues of the day — race relations, gay and lesbian concerns, role of women, politics, terrorism, role of the military, etc. Materials on educational techniques and theories, home schooling, child rearing advice, true crime, study guides for citizenship, military and educational admissions, and civil service occupations are also in these areas.

Call Numbers	Subject	Size*
150-159	Psychology, self-help	1217
300-319	Social issues, sociology, statistics	1981
320-329	Political science, international relations	624
350-359	Public administration, military science	265
360-363	Social problems and services	831
364-365	Criminology, prisons	643
366-367/69	Associations	15
370-379	Education	747
649	Child rearing	491

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The collection purpose

The major reason for using materials in the Social Sciences is to support life-long learning — in terms of how to understand and cope with society's many problems; how to "get ahead" by utilizing study materials for jobs and college admissions; and applying specific techniques for self-improvement, child-rearing, etc. People read in these areas because they "want to know," and in many cases, want to be involved in solving problems associated with these areas.

Students at high school and college levels use social issues and social problems titles for reports.

The area of true crime has heavy readership, which could be considered of entertainment value.

II. Collection Scope

Throughout the social sciences collection, emphasis is on breadth in order to provide a variety of viewpoints, although in some areas, such as true crime or self-help, a particular title may be purchased in quantity.

The rise of an issue to national prominence, such as an election, occasionally results in demand for materials in an area that has previously seen low or moderate use. After a flurry of interest that area tends to revert to its former activity level.

Due to the high educational level of the community, there is a greater than average need for study guides for college and graduate school admissions. Occasionally, these tests undergo major revisions, so that the whole collection needs to be replaced. This same high level of interest in educational attainment creates a demand for materials by parents who want to acquire parenting skills, while others may wish to prepare their pre-schoolers by introducing them to math, reading and other subjects.

A couple other areas that may be strong, though by no means comprehensive are true crime books, and GLBT materials.

The 350s deal with public administration, and thus has some overlap with our limited government documents collection.

III. Audience

- A. **Independent Learners.** There is a high level of community interest and involvement in issues contained within these areas. Politically aware and active, Iowa Citizens demand greater than usual resource materials for study and discussion of many issues. Current examples include information on charter review, public utilities, incarceration practices, elementary school boundaries, etc. In this context, independent learners can be considered to include citizen action groups as well as the individual seeking information about a particular topic.
- B. **Students.** Junior high and high school students are the preferred audience, but university and Kirkwood students place heavy use on the collection
- C. **Browsers.** Well-educated people want to keep up with current affairs and, particularly in the New Book section, will find materials of interest, many of which have been discussed on public radio or featured in newspapers and weekly newsmagazines

IV. Size and Duplication

This collection was reduced by nearly a third to prepare for tagging and moving, and it is probably time for it to grow again, with an eye to the long-term. Duplication should focus on titles likely to need multiple titles for several years, rather than ephemeral topics.

Many titles throughout the Social Sciences share Reference and Circulating status.

In many areas such as citizenship, job and school study guides, heavy demand will arise several times a year because of a test date, but titles will languish at other times, causing difficulty in determining how many copies are needed. Governmental policies evolve over time, too, so that needs can be created or wither. Civil service tests, for instance, have been partly phased out, so that this collection, which used to get heavy use, no longer does.

V. Selection Plan

- A. **Criteria.** Generally criteria for selection in terms of usefulness, production quality, cost, regional interest, etc., are the same as for all print areas in the library. The Social Sciences differ in some respects because subjectivity of the material in areas such as self help, psychology, child-rearing, and a variety of opinions on social sciences require

“balance” as opposed to “objective accuracy”. For example, a number of child rearing or classroom methods titles may exist side by side on the shelves — none of which is more “accurate” than the other. Thus, breadth of opinion must be represented. Currency is essential for many study guides for education, civil service and military applications.

Poorly reviewed titles of popular authors are purchased to meet demand. Conversely, well-reviewed titles with a primarily academic orientation may be purchased sparsely.

Gifts are an asset; received most heavily in self-help, true crime and best sellers about current social issues.

- B. **Selection Tools.** The standard selection tools are used, supplemented by selector’s reading of a large number of general interest magazines to get specific titles and to maintain awareness of trends and issues that are likely to result in demand for information. Examples of special interest titles which may be excellent supplementary sources for materials in an area are: *The Advocate*, *Essence*, *Psychology Today*, *Ms.*, *The Nation*, etc.

Standing orders are used heavily in the study guide sections.

- VI. **Maintenance Criteria.** Replacement through standing orders is a sizable component in certain areas, e.g., civil service and educational study guides.

Heavy losses due to theft take place in dealing with sexuality and gender orientation. Self checkout may reduce any perceived stigma in reading these books. These materials are also often found hidden in other areas of the stacks. Some types of test guides (ASVAB, GED) also have extremely high loss rates, sometimes disappearing after one or two circulations.

While item purge is the major method for withdrawal, titles that have had multiple copies and then dropped off in popularity are reduced to several copies by attrition, through the mending process, or by walking through the stacks.

The social sciences include topics that may not be used often, but are important to have available, so exceptions to item purge sometimes take place.

Psychology is an area in which “classic” titles and authors are maintained regardless of use.

- VII. **Goals.** The collection should gradually grow in size, now that tagging and moving is complete.

Comprehensive review of standing orders is necessary, with emphasis on titles in education.

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