

Sociology Outcomes Assessment Plan (Draft: October, 2022)

I. Learning Objectives

- **Sociological Concepts and Theoretical Approaches:** Sociology majors will understand key sociological concepts and theoretical approaches that provide insight into social reality, *such that they can:*
 - *Explain essential concepts like culture, socialization, stratification, institutions, deviance, and so forth.*
 - *Identify core concerns and ideas of major theoretical traditions, and discuss their strengths and limitations.*
 - *Apply conceptual and theoretical thinking in sociological analysis.*
- **Evidence-Based Sociological Inquiry:** Sociology majors will develop skills and knowledge to engage in evidence-based sociological inquiry, *such that they can:*
 - *Carry out foundational research tasks, including developing research questions, constructing research strategies, and reviewing the scholarly literature.*
 - *Critically analyze evidence-based claims in published examples of sociological research.*
 - *Demonstrate basic qualitative and quantitative data literacy.*
 - *Describe the role of ethics and equity in research practice.*
- **Social Arrangements and Institutions:** Sociology majors will learn to think critically about social arrangements and institutions, *such that they can:*
 - *Locate institutions and social arrangements in historical context and discuss their development over time.*
 - *Explain the role of institutions in perpetuating and/or challenging social inequalities.*
 - *Discuss how relationships between institutions shape their characteristics and operations.*
- **Social Difference, Diversity, and Change:** Sociology majors will develop frameworks for understanding social difference, diversity, and change, *such that they can:*
 - *Engage productively with unfamiliar and challenging social arrangements, worldviews, and practices.*
 - *Analyze ways that personal identities and experiences are shaped by institutions, power structures, and social inequalities.*
 - *Identify social and cultural forces that shape their own beliefs and convictions.*

- **Extend and Connect Sociological Knowledge:** Sociology majors will extend and connect sociological knowledge to career objectives, analysis of public issues, and civic engagement, *such that they can:*
 - *Discuss applications of sociological knowledge in professional settings.*
 - *Use sociology to think critically about contemporary issues, public policies, and social events.*
 - *Express sociological perspectives in clear, concise, and appropriate ways to public audiences.*
 - *Work collaboratively with diverse publics on projects of collective importance.*

II. Assessment Instruments

- A. Course Assignments**—Our learning outcome curriculum map indicates which SOC courses allow for assessment of SOC learning outcomes via course assignments. Each year the SOC Department Chair will select, with the participation of SOC regular faculty, courses that allow for the assessment of at least two SOC learning outcomes. The faculty member teaching a chosen course will select an assignment from the course to assess the learning outcome in question and then will randomly select ten student assignment submissions or 20% of the student assignment submissions, whichever is larger. These student submissions will be deidentified and then given to another regular SOC faculty member, along with any associated rubrics, descriptions of desired student work, etc., for assessment. At least two SOC learning outcomes will be assessed in this fashion per academic year, with all five SOC learning outcomes assessed in this manner at least once every three years.
- B. Capstone Course Writing Sample**—A random sample of a completed capstone seminar assignment of all SOC students enrolled in the seminar will be submitted to both the capstone instructor and one other faculty member in Sociology for evaluation (normally, this other faculty member will be the department chairperson, unless, they are offering a capstone seminar). This representative sample will be scored on a simple three-point scale, with three representing good, two representing acceptable, and one representing unacceptable. Scores will be awarded on five criteria: (1) Grammar and writing style; (2) Ability to present a thesis statement; (3) Coherence and logic of the argument; (4) Familiarity with and use of secondary literature; where appropriate, familiarity with and use of primary sources; (5) Proper use of citations. The overall rating will be the sum of the scores for the five criteria. Our goal is that no student will have an “unacceptable” score in any of the five categories.
- C. Exit Survey**—All SOC students enrolled in Senior Capstone Seminars will be administered an exit survey, whose intent is to assess student perceptions of the overall learning experience. The exit survey will be mandatory; students will be advised in

course syllabi that this will be a requirement. Results from the exit survey will generate both quantifiable data and qualitative comments and suggestions. The exit survey is included here as Appendix A.

D. Alumni Survey—SOC distributes a regular newsletter to its alumni, via posting on the departmental website, announcement via departmental social media accounts, and an alumni email database updated periodically by the department. Alumni will be asked to complete a survey in each newsletter. The survey will include Part A of the exit survey discussed above and will also include the following questions:

- What are your current professional pursuits?
- How well did your Sociology major prepare you for them?
- Have your career plans changed since graduation? If so, how and why?
- Have you pursued a graduate degree? If so, which degree have you pursued and where?
- Has your assessment of the department changed since you graduated? If so, how and why?
- What do you know now that you wish you had known when you were here?
- Based on these questions, what might the department do differently in the future?

III. Feedback From and Use of Assessment Results—The assessment instruments described above seek to examine the skills students derive from the program, their satisfaction with their program of study, and the degree to which the program results in the desired learning outcomes among our students.

The department chair will be responsible for ensuring that all elements of this assessment plan take place, including but not limited to making sure that learning outcomes are assessed via course assignments, coordinating with the instructor(s) of the Senior Capstone Seminar to ensure that the questionnaire and the assessment of the capstone paper are completed, and including the alumni survey information in the departmental newsletter. The department chair will also be responsible for maintaining appropriate and complete records of all data generated by these assessment instruments. We expect that it may take time for a meaningful body of data to be accumulated. As the body of data does accumulate, it will be presented at least once per year to the faculty in a regular department meeting, so that any potential or actual program weaknesses or other concerns, along with potential remedial actions to deal with them, can be addressed.

Appendix A: Exit Survey

A. Please check the response with which you most agree.

1. My coursework in sociology provided a logical, complete, and appropriate course of instruction.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I was satisfied with the quality of my sociology instruction.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

3. I received enough personal interaction with the sociology faculty, including advising.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

4. I felt like I belonged to a community of sociology majors. That is, I had the chance to interact with my fellow majors, including but not limited to student organizations.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

5. The sociology major improved my writing skills

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

6. The sociology major improved my analytical skills

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

7. The sociology major improved my research skills

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

8. Sociology training will further my career goals

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

B. Please briefly respond to the following:

1. What was the intellectual highlight of the major?

2. What was your favorite course, and why?

3. What was the greatest strength of the program?

4. What was the greatest weakness of the program?