

Sociology Program Assessment 2017-2018

Objective Number 1

PrgObjective: Sociological Discipline Knowledge Application

Students will be able to identify and apply sociological concepts and theories to everyday life, human behavior, and societies.

Measurement Point 1: foundational courses (SOC 100, 150) within the discipline

Assessment: Application Paper

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 1

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students from the sample assessed in these courses achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education/foundational classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 140 papers collected from 6 sections either SOC 100 or SOC 150 offered in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018. 6 papers were sampled from each section for a total sample size of 36 papers asking students to apply various sociological concepts. Within the sample, 28 papers (78%) achieved benchmark level.

Criteria Met: Yes

Measurement Point 2: SOC 281 Socio-Cultural Theory

Assessment: Theory Application Paper

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 2

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Of the 20 students enrolled in the course, 17 (85%) achieved this benchmark

Criteria Met: Yes

Measurement Point 3: Disciplinary Exit Exam

Assessment: Essay questions on the exit exam

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking the exam achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Of the 20 students taking the exit exam, 5 (25%) were able to achieve the benchmark level or higher on the first application question while 10 (50%) were able to achieve at least proficiency/milestone 2 on the same question. On the third exam question, 9 (45%) were able to achieve competent/capstone benchmark while 13 (65%) were able to achieve at least proficiency/milestone 2.

Criteria Met: No

Measurement Point 4: Capstone (if taken)

Assessment: Portfolio

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019

Measurement Point 5: Internship (if taken)

Assessment: Experience artifact

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019 and this artifact collection will be implemented at the same time

Objective Number 2

PrgObjective: Social Stratification

Students will be able to identify, analyze, and explain the factors contributing to and the consequences of social stratification and social inequality across dimensions/statuses and institutions.

Measurement Point 1: foundational courses (SOC 100, 150) within the discipline

Assessment: Paper

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students from the sample assessed in these courses achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education/foundational classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 140 papers collected from 6 sections of either SOC 100 or SOC 150 offered in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018. 6 papers were sampled from each section for a total sample size of 36 papers asking students to address issues of social stratification. Of the random sample, 30 papers (83%) were able to achieve the expected benchmark level.

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 1

Criteria Met: Yes

Measurement Point 2: Analytical paper dealing with structural inequality related to the specific course topic submitted from core program electives: Human Sexuality (SOC 261), Race & Ethnic Relations (SOC 350), Social Stratification (SOC 423), and Sociology of Gender Roles (SOC 483)

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students assessed in these courses achieve benchmark level

Courses assessed in 2017-2018: SOC 261 (FA2017) and SOC 423 (SP2018)

Evidence: Of the 9 students assessed in both classes (SOC 261:7, SOC 423:2), 8 (89%) were able to achieve the expected benchmark level.

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 2

Criteria Met: Yes

Measurement Point 2: Analytical paper dealing with social and cultural connections between inequality and power related to the course topics of non-stratification specific core elective courses: Popular Culture and Society (SOC 260); Self and Society (SOC 330), and Sport and Society (SOC 383)

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 2

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students assessed in these courses achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; none of these courses were offered within the 2017-2018 academic year

Measurement Point 3: Disciplinary Exit Exam

Assessment: Essay questions on the exit exam

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking the exam achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Of the 20 students taking the exam, 3 (15%) achieved benchmark level while only 6 (30%) were able to achieve at least "Proficient/Milestone 2" on the question regarding stratification.

Criteria Met: No

Measurement Point 4: Capstone (if taken)

Assessment: Portfolio

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019

Measurement Point 5: Internship (if taken)

Assessment: Experience artifact

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019 and this artifact collection will be implemented at the same time

Objective Number 3

PrgObjective: Collect and Analyze Data

Students will be able to identify the characteristics of high-quality data and methods in sociological research and be able to effectively explain the results of sociological research to others.

Measurement Point 1: foundational courses (SOC 100, 150) within the discipline

Assessment: Artifact submitted by faculty

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 1

Criteria Met: N/A; students were not assessed for this specific SLO in introductory classes in AY17-18

Measurement Point 2: core required courses of Statistical Reasoning for Social Science (SOC 209) and Methods of Social Research (SOC 410)

Assessment: SOC 209: artifact that demonstrates student's ability to interpret statistics for a lay/public audience

Assessment: SOC 410: completion of research or grant proposal; artifact that demonstrates student completion of research

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 2

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students achieve benchmark level.

Evidence: No assessment occurred in SOC 209 (FA2017) due to the October implementation of the new assessment plan. Of the 10 artifacts analyzed from SOC 410, 6 (60%) achieved benchmark level.

Criteria Met: No

Measurement Point 3: Disciplinary Exit Exam

Assessment: Essay questions on the exit exam

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking the exam achieve benchmark level on questions relevant to methods and statistics.

Evidence: Of the 20 students taking the exit exam, 4 (20%) achieved proficiency and 6 (30%) achieved at least "Proficient/Milestone 2."

Criterial Met: No

Measurement Point 4: Capstone (if taken)

Assessment: Portfolio

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019

Measurement Point 5: Internship (if taken)

Assessment: Experience artifact

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019 and this artifact collection will be implemented at the same time

Objective Number 4

PrgObjective: Verbal and Written Communication Skills

Objective Description: Students will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of contexts.

Measurement Point 1: foundational (SOC 100/150) courses within the discipline

Assessment: Pre-test and Post-test examination (pre-test to occur prior to week three of the semester; post-test to occur within the final week of class)

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 1

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students from the sample assessed in these courses achieve benchmark level

Evidence: Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education/foundational classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 140 papers collected from 6 sections of either SOC 100 or SOC 150 offered in Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018. 6 papers were sampled from each section for a total sample size of 36 papers. Of the random sample, 28 papers (78%) were able to achieve the expected benchmark level.

Criteria Met: Yes

Measurement Point 2: Randomly Selected/Rotated Elective

Assessment: artifact of oral communication

Expected Benchmark Level: Milestone 2

Criteria Met: N/A; students were not assessed for this specific SLO in classes in AY17-18

Measurement Point 4: Capstone (if taken)

Assessment: Portfolio

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019

Measurement Point 5: Internship (if taken)

Assessment: Experience artifact

Expected Benchmark Level: Capstone

Proficiency Criteria: 70 percent of students taking this course achieve benchmark level

Criteria Met: N/A; Capstone will be offered for the first time in AY2018-2019 and this artifact collection will be implemented at the same time

Objective Number 5

PrgObjective: Basic knowledge of Program Specialization Areas

Objective Description: Students can apply the basic concepts of their areas of specialization (e.g., Criminal Justice, Human Services).

Measurement Point 1: Local specialization objective exit exams

Proficiency Criteria: Students must achieve a 70 percent or higher

Criminal Justice (CJ) Evidence: Of the 14 students taking the CJ specialization exam, 13 (93%) were able to reach benchmark proficiency.

Criteria Met: Yes

Human Services (HS) Evidence: Of the 12 students taking the HS specialization exam, 4 (33%) achieved proficiency.

Criteria Met: No

Program Summary:

When reviewing AY2017-2018, especially in light of past results based on the MFT, we can see real differences in our results. In collected and assessed classroom work, students were able to achieve benchmark proficiency for outcomes one, two, and four. Goal 3, regarding the ability to interpret and explain statistical information, judge the appropriate sociological methods for particular projects, and broadly evaluate research and research methods proved more complicated with only 60 percent of students achieving benchmark.

The results of the exit exam were also mixed for several reasons. While students demonstrate the required learning in the classroom, the artificial restraints of the exit exam seem to hamper their performance. There were several overall issues with the administration of the disciplinary exit exam:

(a) Many students misread or misunderstood the questions and this lowered their ability to answer each question comprehensively. For example, one of the questions asking students to display methodological understanding is:

Select one of the following topics and outline how a sociologist might study it and show how different methodologies could be used:

- a. the causes of date rape and how it might be reduced
- b. the causes of low worker morale and how it might be improved
- c. how gender influences “successful” retirement

Instead of exploring one of the three topics extensively, many students actually tried to provide information about all three topics. Similarly, when asked the following question:

Your local politician has contacted you to explain one of the following social problems:

- a. Overcrowding in prisons
- b. Childhood food insecurity
- c. Online bullying of LGBTQ individuals

In your answer, briefly explain the depth of the problem, causes or contributing factors, public perceptions regarding the problem, and evaluate at least two potential remedies for your selected social problem for your local politician to consider voting for or against.

This question received the same sort of treatment. Students would attempt to provide information about all three options instead of just one. This lack of focus often diluted the strength by not allowing them to reach the depth required by a “Capstone” answer.

(b) Related to the first point, many of the answers would demonstrate understanding and knowledge but included little elaboration and depth. Students were largely able to earn a rating of “3,” or “Proficient” on questions that they attempted. Our 5-point rubric is more extensive than the recommended 3-point rubric, indicating that we would be much closer to meeting our criteria at that level, even with the time constraints of an exam placed on students. We will be readjusting our rubric to a 3-point one to reflect this within the 2018-2019 academic year.

(c) Time is demonstratively a factor within the exam results. For example, one of our students received ratings of “5” (“Advanced/Accomplished”) on all of the questions this student finished but, of the 8 total questions, ended up leaving 3 completely blank. This issue of both time and test fatigue can be solved through the use of Capstone (SOC 489) course materials as the final measurement point instead of the exam. This allows students to demonstrate their development through a portfolio and work at their own pace. Further, tying the assessment specifically to a course requirement ensures that students become stakeholders in the assessment process.

Despite the issues with the use of an exam as a culminating measurement point, we were able to glean information about areas of weaknesses. One large weakness at the multiple points students were measured is student understanding of statistics and research methods (i.e., objective 3). Potential remedies of this include more incorporation of research evaluation at all levels of the program, strengthening the research and data analysis offerings of the program, and requiring original research or evaluation projects from students. The last potential remedy will be tested in the new Capstone course (SOC 489) in Spring 2019; Capstone will require an original research project or policy evaluation from students which will be included in their final course portfolio.

The other area of weakness within the program is still in the results for our Human Services specialization. While changing and updating the exam to test bank questions has helped our numbers rise, we are still not seeing a majority of students achieving proficiency on this exam, despite their performance in their Social Work classes (currently taught by a MSW adjunct). Without a way to measure the validity of the exam or some form of compensation to allow an adjunct to create a better measure, we may be forced to continue being unsure if these results reflect a poor exam or a lack of student proficiency.