NSU Academic Assessment Annual Report

Academic Unit/Department	History and Social Science / College of Arts and Sciences
Academic Program	Sociology
Date Range	2018-2019
Completed By	Dr. Kristi Brownfield

Submit this report to the NSU Office of Institutional Research & Assessment via the email address nsuassessment@northern.edu. Also attach to this email a current copy of the assessment plan for the program. The assessment plan should include the rubrics used to assess each learning outcome and a curriculum map showing which required courses focus on and assess each learning outcome.

Learning Objective 1

Objective description	Sociological discipline knowledge application: Students will be able to identify and apply sociological concepts and theories to everyday life, human behavior, and societies.
Method of assessment	Application papers in SOC 100/150; see attachment A for writing prompt
	Application papers in SOC 281; see attachment B for writing prompt
	Capstone Portfolio created within SOC 489; see attachment C for portfolio requirements
	Questions 1, 3, and 6 on the Sociology Disciplinary Exit Exam; see attachment D for Disciplinary Exit Exam questions
Goal for assessment results	70% of sampled students achieve benchmark proficiency

Data and/or evidence

Course Assessed	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
SOC 100	10	23	3
SOC 281	2	20	3
SOC 489	1	6	0
Exit Exam Q 1	4	6	0
Exit Exam Q 3	5	5	1
Exit Exam Q 6	5	3	3
Total	27	63	10

SOC 100/150: No sections of SOC 150 were taught during AY18-19. Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 150 papers collected from 6 sections either SOC 100 offered in Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Summer 2019. 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, 26 papers (72%) achieved benchmark level.

SOC 281: This is the required writing-intensive course for the Sociology program and as part of this requirement all students are offered the opportunity to revise their papers, including the application paper used as an assessment artifact. For the first draft, 13 out of 25 (52%) of students were able to achieve benchmark proficiency. After revisions, 23 out of 25 students (92%) were able to achieve benchmark proficiency.

SOC 489 Capstone Portfolio: Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 were the first semesters in which the Sociology program offered a Capstone course so there are no previous portfolios to use as comparison. Between the two semesters, 6 out of 7 students (86%) were able to achieve benchmark proficiency.

Disciplinary Exit Exam: This will be the last year in which the disciplinary exit exam will be offered or assessed. Sociology will be using the Capstone portfolios to gauge cumulative learning through the degree. Given the complexity of the questions to be answered within the time limit and the lack of student investment in the exams, this exam was only meant to be a stop-gap until the Capstone Portfolios could be instituted. For question 1, 6 out of 11 (55%) of students achieved benchmark proficiency, with 2 students leaving the question entirely blank. For question 3, 6 out of 11 students (55%) achieved benchmark proficiency. Many did only did not score higher because they did not address the question in its entirety. For question 6, 6 out of 11 students (55%) achieved benchmark proficiency.

Goal met? Partially met

Learning Objective 2

Objective description

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.

Method of assessment

Diversity-oriented papers in SOC 100/150; see attachment E for writing prompt

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)

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); see attachment F for SOC 260 writing prompt and attachment G for SOC 383 writing prompt

Capstone Portfolio created within SOC 489

Questions 4 and 5 on the Sociology Disciplinary Exit Exam

Goal for assessment results 70% of sampled students achieve benchmark proficiency

Data and/or evidence

Course Assessed	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
SOC 100	9	24	3
SOC 260	3	9	6
SOC 383	6	9	2
SOC 489	1	6	0
Exit Exam Q 4	7	2	4
Exit Exam Q 5	9	2	0
Total	35	52	15

SOC 100/150: No sections of SOC 150 were taught during AY18-19. Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 142 papers collected from 6 sections either SOC 100 offered in Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Summer 2019. 6

Goal met?	Partially met

Learning Objective 3

Objective description	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.
Method of assessment	SOC 209: artifact that demonstrates student's ability to interpret statistics for a lay/public audience
	SOC 410: completion of research or grant proposal; artifact that demonstrates student completion of research; see attachment H for writing prompt
	Capstone research paper; see attachment I for paper requirements
	Questions 7 and 8 on the Sociology Disciplinary Exit Exam
Goal for assessment results	70 percent of students achieve benchmark level.

Course Assessed	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
SOC 410	1	12	3
SOC 489	2	5	0
Exit Exam Q 7	8	1	2
Exit Exam Q 8	5	6	0
Total	16	24	5

Data and/or evidence

SOC 209: offered in Fall 2018, no artifacts were collected by the instructor

| | SOC 410: Offered Spring 2019, 15 out of 16 students (94%) of students were able to achieve benchmark proficiency.

SOC 489 Capstone Research paper: Portfolio: Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 were the first semesters in which the Sociology program offered a Capstone course so there are no previous papers to use as comparison. Between the 2 semesters, 5 out of 7 students (71%), with 1 student failing to turn in a research paper.

Disciplinary Exit Exam: For question 7, 3 out of 11 students (27%) achieved benchmark proficiency. For question 8, 6 out of 11 (55%) of students achieved benchmark proficiency, with 1 student leaving the question blank. |
| Goal met? | Partially met |

Learning Objective 4

Objective description	Verbal and Written Communication Skills: Students will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of contexts.
Method of assessment	Application papers in SOC 100/150

Randomly selected/rotated elective: artifact of oral communication/presentation skills; see attachment J for presentation requirements

Capstone portfolio |
| Goal for assessment results | 70 percent of students achieve benchmark level. |
| Data and/or evidence | |

Course Assessed	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
SOC 100	12	21	3
SOC 260	2	10	4
SOC 489	2	5	0
Total	16	36	7

SOC 100/150: No sections of SOC 150 were taught during AY18-19. Due to the high number of sections offered in our general education classes, a randomized sample was coded of the 150 papers collected from 6 sections either SOC 100 offered in Fall 2018, Spring 2019, and Summer 2019. 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, 24 papers (67%) achieved benchmark proficiency.

SOC 260 research paper presentations: 14 of 16 students (88%) achieved benchmark proficiency in their presentations. The other two students did not complete the presentation at all.

SOC 489 Capstone Research paper: Portfolio: Spring 2019 and Summer 2019 were the first semesters in which the Sociology program offered a Capstone course so there are no previous papers to use as comparison. Between the 2 semesters, 5 out of 7 students (71%), with 1 student failing to turn in a complete portfolio.

Goal met?	Partially met

Learning Objective 5

Objective description	Basic knowledge of program specialization areas: Students can apply the basic concepts of their areas of specialization (e.g., Criminal Justice, Human Services).
Method of assessment	Local specialization objective exit exams

Goal for assessment results	70 percent of students achieve a 70 percent or higher on the exam.
Data and/or evidence	CJ: 5 out of 8 (63%) students achieved proficiency.
	HS: 2 out of 6 (33%) of students achieved proficiency.
Goal met?	Not met

Summary of strengths and/or areas for improvement

In collected and assessed classroom work, students were able to generally achieve benchmark proficiency in all student leaning outcomes (SLOs), barring the assessment of writing skills within our general education courses (SOC 100/150). However, when we compare the proficiency results of students that are at the beginning of the degree (or not in the degree at all) with students at the end of their careers (e.g., Capstone), we can see improvements in writing. In comparison to AY 17-18, our results for goal 3, regarding the ability to interpret and explain statistical information and sociological methods, we have seen a dramatic improvement. This may be due to the change in assessment artifacts collected. The instructor changed in Spring 2019 and the artifacts were a final research proposal that students had multiple opportunities to draft and revise over the semester. The artifacts from Spring 2018 were a collection of homework assignments and did not provide the same alignment with the SLO.

One thing to note about the classroom assessments was the amount of missing data. Artifacts for SOC 100 were only submitted by one of the two instructors teaching the course (this would be an additional four sections across the academic year) and two upper division courses (including a course required in the major) also did not have artifacts submitted to the program assessment coordinator.

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, in questions with multiple options for students to pick one from, 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 proficient or above proficient answer.

(b) Time is demonstratively a factor within the exam results, given the large number of questions that were left blank this year. Similarly, many of the answers demonstrated understanding and knowledge but included little elaboration and depth.

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). This was a weakness identified in AY17-18 as well but may be mitigated by the classroom assessments as opposed to the test assessments.

Our numbers for goal 5, specialization proficiency, have also dropped. This is the first year in which the CJ specialization students did not meet goal. We also have a smaller than normal number of HS students achieving proficiency. For the CJ exam, the questions that were missed were largely related to criminal procedure. For HS, the exam is currently made of test bank questions taken from SOC 270, 315, and 320. 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. Alternately, as moving forward in AY19-20 the specializations have been removed from the Sociology curriculum, we will need to add a classroom measure for SOC 270, 315, 320.

Action Plans
Action Item 1

Description	Revise assessment plan
Goal	Revise assessment plan to reflect AY2019-2020 curricular changes; remove disciplinary exit exam from assessment plan, work to find a curricular assessment for our social work classes now that the

		specializations have been removed from the program, add assessment of the BOR cross-curricular goals for our program.
	Timeline	Fall 2019
	Individual(s) responsible	Dr. Kristi Brownfield
	Resources needed	None
Action Item 2		
	Description	
	Goal	
	Timeline	
	Individual(s) responsible	
	Resources needed	

Supervisor Response

Attachment A: SOC 100 Application Paper Prompts

Fall 2018: In a minimum of 500 words (2-3 pages):

(a) Describe at least three examples of socialization that occur in the book An Unkindness of Ghosts. Explore how the scenes, interactions, or dialogue you pick are examples of the process of socialization. What norms or values are being learned by the characters?

(b) Discuss the importance of culture in the role of socialization in An Unkindness of Ghosts. What might prompt the creation of the specific norms and values that are shown in the book? Why might the norms and values shown in the book be seen as necessary? Who benefits and who loses because of those norms and values?

(c) How do these norms and values influence the outcomes for different characters? What values and norms encourage or discourage characters from certain paths in their lives?

Your paper should be turned in by 9am Friday September 7 through Dropbox. Your document should be in PDF or Word (.doc/.docx) format. No other formats will be accepted! If you are having problems with your submission email me PRIOR to the due date with a copy of your paper.

Spring/Summer 2019: In a minimum of 500 words, answer ALL of the following questions:

(a) Describe at least three examples of socialization that occur in the book The Marrow Thieves. Explore how the scenes, interactions, or dialogue you pick are examples of the process of socialization. What norms or values are being learned by the characters?

(b) Discuss the importance of culture in the role of socialization in The Marrow Thieves. What might prompt the creation of the specific norms and values that are shown in the book? Why might the norms and values shown in the book be seen as necessary? Who benefits and who loses because of those norms and values?

(c) How do these norms and values influence the outcomes for different characters? What values and norms encourage or discourage characters from certain paths in their lives?

Your paper should be turned in by 9am Friday January 25 through Dropbox. Your document should be in PDF or Word (.doc/.docx) format. No other formats will be accepted! If you are having problems with your submission email me PRIOR to the due date with a copy of your paper.

Attachment B: SOC 281 Application Writing Prompt

In this paper, your job is to apply the ideas of one *theorist* from *four* (4) different theoretical paradigms we have discussed across the semester to the social problem of your choice (e.g., prison overcrowding, global income inequality, high maternal mortality rates, etc.). For example, you would describe how Merton's ideas, Marx's ideas, Mills', and Goffman's ideas could be applied to prison overcrowding. Your paper should discuss the main idea of the theory, apply each theory you choose, and offer counter-arguments or criticism as to why that theory could potentially fail to explain the social problem on which you are writing. Finally, you should compare and contrast the usefulness of each theory to your social problem. For example, are we better off using Davis and Moore's or Marx's ideas of stratification when trying to understand prison overcrowding?

Your paper should be 1000-1250 (4-5 pages) words, spell-checked and proofread. An essay consists of an introduction, a body of evidence and arguments, and a conclusion. In the introduction, you set up a question or debate. In the body, you provide specific arguments and supporting evidence (and deal with any counter-arguments or counter-examples if possible). In the conclusion, you discuss implications, make recommendations, or explore ramifications. Please use the ASA citation format (if you have questions about this style, please let me know). Your document should be in Word (.doc/.docx) format. No other formats will be accepted! If you are having problems with your submission email me PRIOR to the due date with a copy of your paper.

Attachment C: SOC 489 Capstone Portfolio Requirements

Capstone Portfolio:
The Capstone portfolio is used to allow students to demonstrate their growth over the course of achieving their degree. Within the portfolio, students are expected to submit work that: (a) shows their understanding of sociological or criminological concepts, (b) apply research skills associated with social science through the completion of either a policy paper or research paper, and (c) their ability to synthesize the information they have gained within the major in the context of "real world" applications and their future careers. Students are expected to select one artifact from each of the following core required courses:
1. Introduction to Sociology (SOC 100) OR Social Problems (SOC 150)
2. Statistical Reasoning in Social Science (SOC 209)
3. Socio-Cultural Theory (SOC 281)
4. Methods of Social Research (SOC 410)

Students will also select one artifact from each of these major specific courses:

Criminal Justice:
5. Introduction to Criminal Justice (CJUS 201)
6. Criminology (CJUS 351)
7. Criminal Law (CJUS 431)

Sociology/Human Services:
8. Introduction to Social Work (SOC 270)
9. Social Work Practice I (SOC 315)
10. Social Work Practice II (SOC 320)

The portfolio will also include the following artifacts to be completed within the Capstone (SOC 489) course:
11. Capstone Policy or Research paper (3750-5000 words)
12. Capstone Reflective Essay (2500-3000 words)

Finally, students must select artifacts from two (**2)** electives they have taken. Students should select these artifacts as examples of how they have mastered the material within these courses. An initial draft of the portfolio with all artifacts from prior courses and the Capstone Reflective

The capstone reflective essay will ask the student to explain how their artifacts demonstrate their content and skills mastery (20%), reflect on their growth and progress as a sociologist/sociology major (30%), discuss their capstone policy or research paper (20%), and discuss their future ambitions in the context of their degree (30%).

An essay draft will be due the week of Assessment Day. The final Capstone portfolio, including the Capstone Reflective Essay and the Capstone Policy or Research Paper will be due final exam day.

Attachment D: Disciplinary Exit Exam

1. Explain how two theorists approach basic sociological issues and questions and describe the assumptions each uses. Then apply those theories to the modern social problem of your choice. What remedies to that problem might those theorists suggest?
2. Which four concepts or principles that you have learned over the course of your degree do you feel are the most crucial? Why? How are at least two of these concepts or and principals related to each other? In your response, refer to other concepts that you consider less crucial and explain why.
3. Select a controversial event that has attracted news media attention. Explain how a sociologist or criminologist would approach, explain, and understand this issue. Explain how a sociologist or criminologist would propose solutions to this issue. Use specific concepts in your response.
4. Issues of difference and stratification pervade your sociology or criminal justice program, the discipline, and society. Which bases of difference do we examine? Why? Which concepts and theories do we use to analyze differences? Show how both similar and different concepts and theories are used across the bases of difference.
5. Classify the effects of globalization over the last one hundred years. Compare how globalization shaped at least two political, economic, and social institutions.
6. 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.
7. Select one of the following topics and outline how a sociologist or criminologist might study it and show how different **methodologies** could be used to better understand the problem:
    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

Select a topic or substantive area that particularly appeals to you. Try to make it specific, such as gender relations at work rather than just gender. Write the first draft of a talk you will give at an upcoming meeting of professionals working in that area titled "An Update on the State of [your topic]." Describe the relevant issues, concepts, theories, and methodologies, and explain how they could be used to better understand your topic or area.

Attachment E: SOC 100 Diversity Related Writing Prompt
In a minimum of 500 words, answer ALL of the following questions:

(a) Examine how race and the criminal justice (CJ) system are connected in documentary *13th* using specifically analyzed examples. Be sure to address all three parts of the CJ system: policing, courts, and the penal system.

(b) How are gender and class connected to the system of racialized social control described in *13th*? Would the system as described by the documentary have worked if other groups were targeted? Do see any other examples of this in the U.S. or globally? Do you see signs that ones might be developing for different groups?

(c) Explore the role of ideology in creating the system described. What type of beliefs or ways of thinking are required to create such a system?

Your paper should be turned in by 9am Friday October 12 through Dropbox. Your document should be in PDF or Word (.doc/.docx) format. No other formats will be accepted! If you are having problems with your submission email me **PRIOR** to the due date with a copy of your paper. I also **highly encourage** everyone to take a look at the attached document "Paper Rubric," which details more specifically what I am looking for in a paper over four criteria and how those criteria are weighted in your grade while still following the general guidelines set forth by the rubric in the syllabus.

Attachment F: SOC 260 Writing Prompt

For this assignment, you will be working with a partner. You will be analyzing **one aspect of social identity** (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, disability, etc.) that is presented within the novel *The Marrow Thieves*. Your group should choose your aspect and, in a **minimum of 500 words**, write a paper analyzing the following questions **by discussing specific examples**:

(a) What is the representation of that social identity? How is it portrayed or viewed within the novel? What behavioral and cultural norms are associated with that social identity?

(b) How does the representation of your chosen social identity within the novel reflect the lived realities of people with that social identity? Are things better or worse within the novel? Is that identity valued or stigmatized by society? How?

(c) How did your group approach the method of your analysis? What ways did you use to discover how your social identity is presented?

Your paper is due to this Dropbox by **Friday Feb 1, 9am.** If you have any issues uploading your paper to the Dropbox, please **email me** a copy by the deadline. Only one person from each group needs to upload a copy of your final paper however **every member should turn in a short summary sheet of their contribution to the paper. Papers without summary sheets included will remain ungraded.**

Sport and Society
Book Review Instructions

With my guidance and approval, you will be selecting a sports-themed book – a biography, an autobiography, an exposé, or a chronicle of an event in sports history. Choosing a book on a topic you are familiar with is encouraged; in fact, it will only make for a stronger review. I am fine with more than one student reading one particular piece, but as with the film, I do not wish to have too much overlap.

I will be posting a PDF file on D2L that contains suggestions. If you are indecisive, this list can help; however, be advised this lists is not exhaustive and is a "working document," and what may have been appealing to the public in previous times may not be as compelling now. In fact, the link to my friend's virtual bookshelf is continually updated with new selections and new commentary (I am sharing it with her permission). Do not hesitate to ask if a particular title is appropriate – it may take some time for you to finally decide on something you will enjoy reading and writing about (a little trial and error is involved). For example, I enjoy engaging with news and "the happenings" of Chad le Clos, a world-ranked South African swimmer, but I absolutely detested his biography. I am not sure what the intended audience is, and while I could understand what some of the intended vision is, I was left dissatisfied; honestly, I wouldn't be able to write a compelling review of the work. If something similar happens to you, please see me and I can assist you in taking a different direction (thus, start early).

You will want to include a formal scholarly summary of the book to start your paper. This will be **PART 1** of your paper. Your synopsis should not be conversational, and it should be free of jargon and slang (i.e., you would say "the event was the penultimate of the Olympiad; the crowd was engaged and moved by the result" instead of "it all went down at the London Aquatic Center; he zoomed off the wall and smoked him home"). The summary will assist you in collecting and organizing your thoughts. This component of the paper will comprise 20% of your final paper grade.

After you present your summary, you will complete two additional parts of the paper. With these parts, you may adopt as creative an approach as you feel comfortable with.

PART 2 of your paper will allow you to analyze the book, and bridge between the summary (PART 1) and the sociological analysis (PART 3).

Some suggestions for PART 2 (30% of your final paper grade):

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the goal of the book, and was it achieved by the author?
- What prompted the author to write a book about the person/event of focus?
- What sources are used by the author?
- What methods did the author use to gather the core information?
- What value will the book have in 5, 10, or even 20 years from now?

In **PART 3** (50% of your final paper grade), you will complete your sociological analysis; below are some suggestions:

- Choose to use specific examples from your selected book to illustrate concepts discussed in class
- Present social themes that are central to the work
- Compare the subject to other similar persons or events
- Make a comparison to current research that has been published on the topic(s) addressed in your selection
- Discuss social policy that could address issues addressed in the book

PART 2 and PART 3 permits you *a great degree of intellectual freedom; how you choose to articulate your ideas is up to you*. If you have an idea you would like to run past me, by all means, let's discuss.

Target length is 6 pages; papers should also be typed and double spaced.

As your professor, it is my job to guide each person through the process of selecting a book, loaning you materials (if applicable), focusing your efforts, and helping you engage with the material sociologically. If needed, time will be allotted during class to prepare materials and ask questions.

Two points will be deducted for each spelling, grammar, and formatting mistakes. Five points will be deducted for each day the paper is late. No late papers will be accepted after the final exam period has concluded.

Research Proposal Guidelines

Objective: the objectives for this assignment are for you to apply the sociological imagination to a topic of your choosing to produce a research proposal. Your proposal should be 2500-3750 words long (approximately 10-15 pages). In this proposal, you will apply a dominant theoretical approach suitable to your topic from which a set of research hypotheses may be derived. You will also develop a research design describing your plan to gather fata, sample respondents or other units of analysis, and measure concepts central to your hypotheses. This is a complicated project, but you can do it by committing yourself to this assignment, organizing your thoughts, and working diligently throughout the semester. Students cannot pass this course without submitting a completed proposal. By successfully completing this assignment, you will have demonstrated that you are knowledgeable of the research process and can design a research study. Upon completion of this assignment you will know what it means to approach a research problem from the perspective of a social scientist and will have developed a marketable skill.

What is a proposal? A proposal is a comprehensive written plan that describes a research question and details how one plans to answer or investigate that question. It is a researcher's plan or design of the research process up to the point where the researcher would gather data. **You will neither collect nor analyze data for this assignment.**

Your correctly formatted proposal should explain how you would investigate some aspect of social behavior that interests you. Your proposal should be conceptually clear, detailed, organized, and feasible. Your completed proposals should include the following:

1. **Title page** (not part of the word requirement)

2. Table of contents (not part of the word requirement)

3. Summary/Abstract (not part of the word requirement): a paragraph briefly describing what you intend to study and the theory you will likely be testing or utilizing. The summary should also describe the social group you will be studying and how you will sample from that group to object research subjects for your proposed study. This paragraph is generally written after one has completed the research proposal and serves to quickly inform the reviewer of the proposal's contents. The abstract should follow the table of contents.

4. Introduction, statement of the problem/research question, and justification for the research: Here you would describe the issue, problem, or broadly stated research question. Then, you would convey to the reader why this problem is worth investigating. Incorporation of literature (e.g., data from other studies, government statistics, etc.) is extremely important at this early stage since you must support your position by citing the works of others who share your view. After clearly justifying the need to develop a research proposal around your question, you would then clearly articulate a narrower version of the research question that you will pursue in this proposal and explain what is important or unique about this narrow or specific question.

5. Review of literature: this is a critical part of your research proposal. Choose your topic and do a review of current and past scholarly work on the topic. You are expected to use a variety of sources for information to supplement your proposal, but you must include a minimum of 5 articles from recognized academic journals in the literature review section. A minimum of 10 sources is required.

6. Adoption of a theoretical paradigm or theory and statement of hypotheses: a section *describing and explaining* your choice of theoretical paradigm or more specific theory. I expect a clear articulation of the adopted paradigm or theory (i.e., what are the assumptions of the theory?) in this section and a solid explanation of how and why it is applicable to your proposed research. You will also prepare a section detailing your statement(s) of hypothesis. Since hypotheses are theoretically grounded statements that predict a relationship among variables, the logic of your hypotheses should be clear from reading your theory section. You must also clearly describe all your variables and type (e.g., independent, dependent, intervening, control, etc.).

7. Method of data collection and operationalization of variables: This part of the proposal is one of the most important and will describe how you plan to gather data or make your observations. **Remember, you will not actually collect or analyze data in your proposal.** You should describe in detail your study population, how you will sample from the population, what data collection method you will employ, and how you will measure all variables central to your proposed study. Solid measurement entails the inclusion of a set of definitions for each concept/variable as well as a detailed listing of questions you might ask to address each concept. Also, you must include a detailed explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of your selected data collection method over alternative methods.

8. Implications for social policy or action: this will be the concluding section of your proposal. If your data were collected, analyzed, and your hypotheses supported, you will prepare a section describing how your research might influence social policy, law, action, or organizational practices.

Assignment Schedule:

Feb 1 (15 points): submission of research question/topic statement. Here are a few points to assist in the organization of the topic statements:

1. What is your broad research question?

2. Based on your initial review of the literature/studies that have examined similar research questions, what data collection techniques did researchers use to examine this type of research question and what were their findings?

3. Based upon your review of the literature/studies, what theoretical paradigms or theories were tested/developed?

4. What theoretical paradigm or theory is most interesting to you based upon what you have read? Explain how it might/does apply to your proposal.

These ideas must be developed enough so I can ascertain the direction you have taken with your proposal. You are also required to submit a correctly formatted reference page (ASA Style) containing at least four sources from academic journals. These four sources, as well as others you may have used, must be internally cited at least once within the body of the submission.

Feb 22 (15 points): you are to submit a correctly formatted reference page (ASA Style) containing at least 5 articles from sociological or other related academic or professional journals. In addition, you also submit 500-word summaries of each article. Remember, you must have a minimum of 10 sources in your completed proposal.

March 29 (30 points): you are to submit a comprehensive working methods section reflecting each of the issues addressed in part 7.

April 26 (40 points): submit a finalized proposal reflecting a skillfully synthesized "fresh package" of all that was called for (for above parts 1-8) in this assignment including a complete reference page. Questionnaires, interview questions, and other supporting methodological material are to be added to the end of the paper in an appendix and are not included in the paper word count.

Attachment I: Capstone Research Paper Requirements
Capstone Policy or Research Paper:

Students are required to complete either a comprehensive policy analysis paper or an original research paper for this class.

<u>Policy Analysis:</u>

The assignment is to do a focused, evaluative review of a policy on a specific topic pertaining to your future career. For example, you could look at the efficacy of midnight basketball in deterring urban youth from deviant behavior or look at support for mental health programs and mandatory institutionalization through Assisted Outpatient Treatment programs. In essence, this assignment will require you to become a budding "expert" on some very specific subject matter that pertains to the work you expect to do in the future in the forms of policies, programs, and laws as you learn to read, evaluate, and integrate research findings and their implications.

Your finished paper will be written in ASA-format and will consist of a) a title page, b) an abstract, c) the body of the paper, and d) a reference list. The body of your paper itself should be between 3750-5000 words (i.e., not including the title page, abstract, or references). Roughly 1500-2000 words of the body will consist of your evaluative literature review–that is, your discussion of the policy you are reviewing, what research has been done regarding that policy, what the implementation of the policy has uncovered, and what issues/questions it leaves unanswered and/or what weaknesses it contains. The remaining 2250-3000 words will consist of an evaluation of the policy *in practice*. You will ask **one** of the following questions of the policy or program you are evaluating:

- **Implementation:** Were your program's activities put into place as originally intended?

- **Effectiveness:** Is your program achieving the goals and objectives it was intended to accomplish?

- **Efficiency:** Are your program's activities being produced with appropriate use of resources such as budget and staff time?

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Does the value or benefit of achieving your program's goals and objectives exceed the cost of producing them?

- **Attribution:** Can progress on goals and objectives be shown to be related to your program, as opposed to other things that are going on at the same time?

You will need to identify "stakeholders," or groups that have a concern or interest in the implementation of the policy. For example, if we look at the current drinking age within the U.S. as a policy, stakeholders might be parents, health professionals, businesses that sell liquor, police officers, and other members of the criminal justice system. Once you have identified the stakeholders connected to your policy, you will need to collect data on their views of how the policy has been implemented. If you have decided to use quantitative methods, you are required to have a minimum of 50 data points for analysis (e.g., 50 surveys, 50 crime reports, etc.). If you have decided to use qualitative methods, you are required to have a minimum of 15 data points (e.g., 15 observations, 15 interviews, 15 items for content analysis, etc.).

Once you have decided on your methods and collected your data, you can begin to formulate your paper. Your paper should have five distinct sections that include:

Introduction:

Introduces the policy, its history, and what the policy is intended to do; should have some explanation of why you are interested in this topic.

Literature Review:

Explores what other researchers have done in the same/similar topics. This section should include most of the theory/theories you are using as part of your analytical perspective within the research. Explore where you fit

into the existing sociological tradition. Remember, you need at least 15 outside sources for this paper (and many of you will likely end up using more).

Methods:

Describe your sample, sampling frame, and analytical methods you used to gain information about the implementation of that policy. Be as specific as possible in describing your methods. This section is a "roadmap" to how you did your research and should be written as if someone unfamiliar with the project could take the information given in this section and replicate exactly what you did.

Analysis/Results:

Discussion of what you found out about the policy. Tell the reader the results of your research and what you found. An easy way to organize this section is by answers to your research questions. So if you have three research questions, you may have three subsections that deal with each question/hypothesis. This is where you will provide a more substantive answer to one of the five evaluative questions.

Discussion:

Relate your analysis of the policy to the bigger picture; explain the impacts the policy – effective or ineffective – are having. This section reviews, interprets, and evaluates the results of the study. Review your research questions and briefly summarize how your results stack up with your expectations or hypotheses. Compare and contrast your research against other literature available on the same subject (or related fields). Distinguish and discuss weaknesses of your current study (Are the methods weak? Are your measures sound? Does your own particular paradigm affect how you code?). When you find weakness, offer suggestions on how to replicate your research better in the future. Finally, a discussion section usually ends by providing directions for future evaluations or policy changes based on your information.

Choosing and Getting Approval for Your Topic (10 points):

You must submit your topic choice and a proposed policy or program to review to me for approval by **Week 3**. In addition to submitting a Preliminary Topic, you must also submit 3 abstracts of research papers on your topic (you may or may not decide not to use those articles–I simply want to see that your literature search is underway; the 3 abstracts may come from search engines–you do not have to have the actual articles in hand). Once your topic has been approved by me, you may not change topics (although I will allow you to adopt a more narrow focus within the topic domain you have chosen or choose a different policy or program to review). This means you need to make an informed choice early on, and do sufficient scanning of the available research in order to choose a "good" topic. A "good" topic is something that truly interests you, and one for which you will be able to locate and obtain appropriate references in a timely fashion. TAKE CARE TO CHOOSE A TOPIC THAT IS NOT TOO BROAD OR GENERIC – for example, if you try to do a literature search on "deviance," you are going to find yourself absolutely overwhelmed by the number of references available. On the other hand, looking at "gang membership deterrence" or "LGBT stigmatized identity" will provide something more manageable with which to start.

Working Outline and Annotated Reference List (20 points):

A Working Outline and Annotated Reference List for your paper are due on **Week 7**. I would expect your outline to be about 1000-1250 words in length. The purpose of having you do this outline is so that I can provide you with feedback that will help you prepare the final paper, so this outline needs to be fairly detailed. The annotated reference list should provide the ASA-style reference citations for each of the articles you've reviewed thus far (at least 10 of the required 15 references), followed by a short paragraph that summarizes the article and makes clear how you plan to use it in your paper.

Rough Draft (30 points):

You are required to turn in one complete rough draft for comments. Although you are required to do only 1 rough draft, you are strongly encouraged to do multiple rough drafts, and to seek feedback early and regularly.

Writing is a process–not a one-time event! You are also strongly encouraged to seek the services of the Writing Center. Your rough draft is due **Week 9.**

Peer Review (20 points):

Once you have begun making revisions to your rough draft, I will ask you to submit your papers for peer review through D2L. You will be graded on the quality of review you give your fellow student so take care in reading and reviewing; be sure to compliment and highlight the things the student did well and point out the places your fellow student could use improvement. **Your drafts for peer review will be due Week 12.** The drafts will then be redistributed and your peer reviews will be due **Week 14.**

Final Draft (50 points):

Your final draft will be due **the last formal day of class.**

Paper Presentation (20 points):

You will be expected to present your paper to the class in a 15-20 minute presentation. A specific grading rubric for presentations will be provided later in the semester.

Locating References:

As you can tell from the description of the assignment thus far, you will need to conduct a well-thought-out search of the **peer-reviewed** literature. You cannot just take the first dozen references you come across–they may not fit well with one another in your paper. Do not procrastinate! If you can obtain appropriate references on-line (using something like EBSCOHOST) more power to you! However, it is highly likely that many articles you will want/need will have to be obtained through the library's Interlibrary Loan, and that can take a week or more. You must use at least 15 references for your paper (it is likely that you will use a few more than that), and **no more than 5 empirical articles may be dated prior to 2000**. You may use past textbooks as a reference, but it will not count as one of the required 15. I can try to help you with your literature search, and offer advice as to which references from many might be best to emphasize in your paper. You may use information from websites in your paper, but the information you use must be in your own words, cited appropriately, and will not count as one of your 15references. The 15 required references must be empirical research articles (this means that they report on actual studies that were conducted by the authors) from scholarly journals, academic books, or theoretical works from sociology and criminology/criminal justice.

Your paper will be assessed in terms of the following general criteria:

Timely Completion of all Preliminary Assignments: Did you meet all deadlines associated with paper?

Overall Presentation and Mechanics: Is it easy to read? Does it make sense? Does the paper have good logical flow from section to section? Did you follow ASA format? Does it appear that you worked hard on it or slopped through it?

Integrity of Authorship: Have you cited your sources appropriately? If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, ASK. Otherwise if I find you have plagiarized, I will assume you did so willfully.

Strength of Introduction and Clarity of Thesis: Do you make clear the topic you're covering and its significance/relevance/importance? Do you have a coherent, appropriate thesis? Do you support it throughout the paper?

Strength and Depth of Literature Review: Do you leave the reader with a strong understanding of recent research in this area? Have you neglected crucial research or theory? Have you integrated/related studies together, or have you just presented one study after another without sufficient connection between/among them and to your thesis? Have you provided appropriate rationale for the original study you have proposed? That is, based on your literature review, is the need/rationale for your study clear?

Strength of Policy Proposal: Is it clear how your proposed study addresses the limitations you covered in your literature review? Have you given thought to ethical treatment of program participants, budgetary concerns,

provided a plan for further analysis? Have you conveyed a clear hypothesis that is justified or makes sense in light of your literature review?

<u>Research Paper:</u>

For this paper, I want you to investigate a social problem you are concerned with locally, nationally, or globally. From the texts, books, lectures from your prior classes, and your own experiences, you have been and will be exposed to a variety of social problems and social movements. You have also been exposed to an array of explanations generated to account for those phenomena. Due to the sheer number of theories and research available in in the field, we have not been able to cover everything and many questions you may have about a particular topic will go unanswered. This is where your paper will come in: use this opportunity to answer those questions.

The assignment requires you to identify something you find problematic. Once you have a clear statement of your problem (what you want to know), and you have spent time finding relevant research (literature review), you should decide on your research methods and begin collecting the data you will need. If you have decided to use quantitative methods, you are required to have a minimum of 50 data points for analysis (e.g., 50 surveys, 50 crime reports, etc.). If you have decided to use qualitative methods, you are required to have a minimum of 15 data points (e.g., 15 observations, 15 interviews, 15 items for content analysis, etc.).

Once you have decided on your methods and collected your data, you can begin to formulate your paper. Your paper should have five distinct sections that include:

Introduction:

Introduces the topic and your research questions; should have some explanation of why you are interested in this topic.

Literature Review:

Explores what other researchers have done in the same/similar topics. This section should include most of the theory/theories you are using as part of your analytical perspective within the research. Explore where you fit into the existing sociological tradition. Remember, you need at least 15 outside sources for this paper (and many of you will likely end up using more).

Methods:

Describe your sample, sampling frame, and analytical methods. Be as specific as possible in describing your methods. This section is a "roadmap" to how you did your research and should be written as if someone unfamiliar with the project could take the information given in this section and replicate exactly what you did.

Analysis/Results:

Discussion of what you found in your sample. Tell the reader the results of your research and what you found. An easy way to organize this section is by answers to your research questions. So if you have three research questions, you may have three subsections that deal with each question/hypothesis.

Discussion:

Relate your analysis to the bigger picture; tell me why the research you did is important. Answer the question "so what?" This section reviews, interprets, and evaluates the results of the study. Review your research questions and briefly summarize how your results stack up with your expectations or hypotheses. Compare and contrast your research against other literature available on the same subject (or related fields). Distinguish and discuss weaknesses of your current study (Are the methods weak? Are your measures sound? Does your own particular paradigm affect how you code?). When you find weakness, offer suggestions on how to replicate your research better in the future. Finally, a discussion section usually ends by providing directions for future research.

Your finished paper will be written in ASA-format and will consist of a) a title page, b) an abstract, c) the body of the paper, and d) a reference list. The body of your paper itself should be between 3000-3750 words (i.e., not including the title page, abstract, or references).

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Your paper will be assessed in terms of the following general criteria:

Timely Completion of all Preliminary Assignments: Did you meet all deadlines associated with paper?

Overall Presentation and Mechanics: Is it easy to read? Does it make sense? Does the paper have good logical flow from section to section? Did you follow ASA format? Does it appear that you worked hard on it or slopped through it?
Integrity of Authorship: Have you cited your sources appropriately? If you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, ASK. Otherwise if I find you have plagiarized, I will assume you did so willfully.

Strength of Introduction and Clarity of Thesis: Do you make clear the topic you're covering and its significance/relevance/importance? Do you have a coherent, appropriate thesis? Do you support it throughout the paper?

Strength and Depth of Literature Review: Do you leave the reader with a strong understanding of recent research in this area? Have you neglected crucial research or theory? Have you integrated/related studies together, or have you just presented one study after another without sufficient connection between/among them and to your thesis? Have you provided appropriate rationale for the original study you have proposed? That is, based on your literature review, is the need/rationale for your study clear?

Strength of Data Analysis and Conclusion: Is it clear how research addresses the limitations you covered in your literature review? How driven by the data you have collected and existing research are the conclusions you have offered in your paper? In what ways have you proposed future directions based on your data?

Attachment J: SOC 260 Oral Research Presentation Requirements

Your final presentations should be 8-10 minutes long and should include a comprehensive overview of:

(a) Brief research context: what questions did you want to ask about your chosen piece of popular culture (10-15% of presentation).

(b) Research methods: briefly discuss how you approached the research (20% of presentation)

(c) Presentation of research: discuss in-depth what you learned over the course of your research (50% of presentation)

(d) Future directions for research/policy: given what you learned by doing this research, what recommendations do you have for future research (to learn more) or policy changes (e.g., how can we use the information you learned through your content analysis) (20-25% of presentation)

Your presentations will be graded using the following rubric:

Presentation Style: how you convey your information is important! Stay on point, focused, relevant, and make use of time well (i.e., come within the 8-10-minute time limit). 5 points.

Research Design: the level of quality of your research questions; are they theoretically informed? Are they designed to test a theory? Do you methods directly reflect your research question? Have you explained your methodological choices well? How well are you explaining those choices in your presentation? 10 points.

Research Results: the quality of explanation of results; how well you can interpret and "teach" what you found to others. 20 points.

Research Implications: how well you can explain or explore policy implications/changes or potential gaps in knowledge for future research. 15 points.

Total points possible: 50