

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan - Sociology

Department Name: Sociology

Date Submitted and Academic Year: Fall 2009 '09-'10 Academic Year

Department Mission Statement: See below.

Department Assessment Coordinator or Faculty Member Completing this Form:

Heather Sullivan-Catlin

Update on prior years' "Application of Assessment Results:

- Completed program-wide course assessment and refined departmental learning objectives.
- Finalized instrument for senior exit survey.
- Drafted rubric for assessment of senior seminar papers (currently under revision).

Intended Student Learning Outcomes

In the attached document "Sociology Department Mission and Learning Goals for the Sociology Major" (below) there are 12 sets of student learning outcomes. These have been reviewed, discussed, and consolidated into 4 thematic areas:

- Sociological Perspective
- Social Theory
- Methodological/Technical/Application Skills
- Sociological Concepts and Processes

A rubric has been developed and is under review for use in evaluating senior seminar papers for meeting specific measurable outcomes delineated within these four areas.

Connection to Univ/Dept Mission

The sociology program contributes specifically to the following two components of the college mission statement:

1) "prepares students to act as engaged global citizens and to lead lives enriched by critical thought, creativity, and discovery," and

2) "the liberal arts and sciences as an academic foundation for all students."

Our program prepares students for critical thinking, quantitative and qualitative data literacy, and a deep understanding of culture, social structure, and social stratification (especially the intersection of race, class, and gender). The main general education components met by our courses are the critical thinking (FC), social analysis (SA), and cross-cultural (XC) modes.

Links with other programs/departments

- *Gen Ed Component*
See above.
- *Related Courses*
Our courses serve several interdisciplinary programs including Criminal Justice, Environmental Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies.

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Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s)

See draft rubric (attached).

When the final instrument is adopted by the department this semester, the assessment committee will utilize it to evaluate a sample of senior seminar papers submitted in all sections of the course this academic year (typically we offer 4-5 sections per year).

Data Source/Results & Analysis

No data yet - to be collected in this year's SOCI 475: Senior Seminar classes.

<i>Summary of Action Plans for 2009-10</i>
1. Establish Assessment Committee responsible for following:
2. Conduct Senior Exit Survey in all sections of SOCI 475: Senior Seminar
3. Evaluate a sample of Senior Seminar papers using rubric currently in development (under review and revision).
4. Review NSSE data for Sociology.
5. Report findings of 2-4 above in annual departmental assessment meeting.
6. Determine follow-up actions based on assessment data.
7.
8.

Sociology Department Mission and Learning Goals for the Sociology Major*

We affirm the learning objectives outlined in “The Potsdam Graduate.” In addition, the mission of the Department of Sociology is to instill in students what C. Wright Mills dubbed “the sociological imagination” – the ability to see the relationship between individual experiences and larger social and historical forces. We seek to develop in our students the ability and impulse to apply this perspective to their own lives and communities. More specifically the sociology major should study, review, and demonstrate understanding of the following:**

1. The discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences, and give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to a liberal arts, understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles and concepts to her/his own life.

2. The role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations; (c) show how theories reflect the historical context of times and

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cultures in which they were developed; (d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.

3. The role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data; (c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; and (d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved.

4. The technical skills involved in retrieving information and data from the Internet and using computers appropriately for data analysis. The major should also be able to do social scientific professional writing that accurately conveys data findings and to show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist.

5. Basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that the student will be able to define, give examples, demonstrate the relevance of the following: culture; social change; socialization; social structure; stratification; institutions; and race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, sexual orientation and disability.

6. How culture and social structure operate, such that the student will be able to: (a) show how institutions interlink in their effects on each other and on individuals; (b) demonstrate how social change factors such as population or urbanization affect social structures and individuals; (c) demonstrate how culture and social structure vary across time and place, and the effect of such variations; and (d) identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social structural effects.

7. Reciprocal relationships between individuals and society, such that the student will be able to: (a) explain how the self develops sociologically; (b) demonstrate how societal and structural factors influence individual behavior and the self's development; (c) demonstrate how social interaction and the self influences society and social structure; and (d) distinguish sociological approaches to analyzing the self from psychological economic, and other approaches.

8. The macro/micro distinction, such that the student will be able to: (a) compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another; (b) summarize some research documenting connections between the two; and (c) develop a list of research or analytical issues that should be pursued to more fully understand the connections between the two.

9. The internal diversity of American society and its place in the international context such that the student will be able to describe; (a) the significance of variations by race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability; and (b) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.

10. In depth one or more areas within sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) summarize the basic questions and issues in the area; (b) compare and contrast the basic

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theoretical orientation in the area; (c) show how sociology helps understand the area; (d) summarize current research in the area; and (d) summarize current research in the area; and (e) develop policy implications of the research and theory in the area.

Two more generic goals that should be pursued in sociology are:

11. To think critically, such that the student will be able to: (a) move easily from recall analysis and application to synthesis and evaluation; (b) identify underlying assumptions in particular theoretical orientations or arguments; (c) identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches to an issue; (d) show how patterns of thought and knowledge are directly influenced by political-economic social structures; and (e) present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues; and (f) engage in teamwork where many or different viewpoints are presented.

12. To develop values, such that the student will see: (a) the utility of the sociological perspective as one of several perspectives on social reality; and (b) the importance of acting to promote social equality and justice.

*Adopted May 2005.

** Adapted from *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated: Meeting the Challenges of Teaching Sociology in the 21st Century* (American Sociological Association, 2004). Items highlighted were not in 1991 version.

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Senior Seminar Paper Assessment Rubric					
To what extent are the following outcomes demonstrated in the student's senior seminar paper?	EE	ME	AE	DNME	n/a
<u>1. Sociological Perspective</u>					
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences, and give examples of these differences;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) describe how sociology contributes to the understanding of social reality; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles and concepts to her/his own life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>2. Social Theory.</u>					
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a) define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) show how theories reflect the historical context of times and cultures in which they were developed;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another (micro and macro);	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) summarize some research documenting connections between the micro and macro levels; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) develop a list of research or analytical issues that should be pursued to more fully understand the connections between the micro and macro levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>3. Methodological/Technical/Application Skills</u>					
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a) identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) do social scientific professional writing that accurately conveys data findings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) Retrieve information from electronic databases and Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h) develop policy implications of the research and theory in an area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	EE	ME	AE	DNME	n/a
4. Sociological Concepts and Processes					
A) Culture and social structure.					
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :					
i. show how institutions interlink in their effects on each other and on individuals;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ii. demonstrate how social change factors such as population or urbanization affect social structures and individuals;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iii. demonstrate how culture and social structure vary across time and place, and the effect of such variations; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iv. identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social structural effects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B) Reciprocal relationships between individuals and society.					
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :					
i. explain how the self develops sociologically;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ii. demonstrate how societal and structural factors influence individual behavior and the self's development;	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iii. demonstrate how social interaction and the self influences society and social structure; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
iv. distinguish sociological approaches to analyzing the self from psychological, economic, and other approaches.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C). The internal diversity of American society and its place in the international context.					
The sociology major should:					
i. be able to describe the significance of variations by race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation and disability; and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ii. know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Key:

EE- Exceeds Expectations

ME – Meets Expectations

AE – Approaches Expectations

DNME – Does Not Meet Expectations

N/A – not applicable

Underlying assumptions: Each section of senior seminar is unique and the final paper assignment will vary from faculty member to faculty member. This rubric allows for that variation. It assumes that each final senior seminar paper will reflect at least some aspect of each of the four areas above.