

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Department Name: Sociology

Date Submitted and Academic Year: Jul. 2016; '15-'16 Academic Year

Department Mission Statement: See below.

Department Assessment Coordinator or Faculty Member Completing this Form:

David Bugg

Update on prior years' "Application of Assessment Results:

- Focus has been on the department self-study and assessment process and the implementation of recommendations given by the review team.
- Continue design of assessment plan for criminal justice programs.
- There is also a scheduled update to the sociology and later the criminal justice major which reflects feedback from our external program review and internal assessment efforts.

Intended Student Learning Outcomes

In Appendix A, "Sociology Department Mission and Learning Goals for the Sociology Major" (attached) there are 10 sets of student learning outcomes. These have been reviewed, discussed, and consolidated into three thematic areas, the new learning goals were adopted by the department in February 2016:

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

The documents in appendices B, C, and D delineate specific learning outcomes in each of these 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:

- FC/critical thinking - SOCI 102: Contemporary Social Problems
- FM/first-year math- STAT 100
- SA/social analysis - SOCI 101: Introduction to Sociology; SOCI 102: Contemporary Social Problems; SOCI 340: Environment & Society
- XC/cross-cultural – SOCI 313: Global Cultures, SOCI 353: Comparative Criminology; SOCI 395: Global Family Issues
- WI/ writing intensive - SOCI 353: Comparative Criminology; SOCI 475: Senior Seminar
- SI/speaking intensive - SOCI 475: Senior Seminar

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.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Measurable Criteria and Assessment Method(s); Results And Analysis

As noted above in “Intended Student Learning Outcomes,” we have organized our departmental objectives into three key areas: Sociological Perspective and Concepts, Social Theory, and Methodological/Technical/ Application Skills. Each of these areas has been elaborated into subsets of measurable outcomes.

Using the revised senior seminar paper rubric, simplifying and narrowing it down to fewer outcomes (see Appendix B) and we have used the new instrument to assess a sample of seminar papers for 2015-2016 (see results in Appendix E).

For methods and theory we are continuing to use the broader assessment outcomes to the core courses (developed in '09 – '10) in the major focused on those topics: SOCI 300: Sociological Theory and SOCI 315: Research Methods. Appendices C and D are rubrics we adopted for assessing those outcomes. We also agreed to a rotation plan for assessing these SLOs in these three core course (see Appendix F).

We are still using the assessment rubrics developed in 2010-2011 to assess our senior seminar papers.

See rubrics in Appendices B-D. See this past year's data in Appendix E.

The conversation of our assessment continues. Among our current questions are the following:

- How do we assess student learning in the criminal justice program now we are a joint department? While we assess both majors as part of our assessment of both research methods and senior seminar, we do not assess criminal justice majors' theoretical knowledge. Current discussion of the matter suggests that we assess this knowledge set in the Criminology course, SOCI 345.

The process is ongoing and the final touches need to be made to the drafts of the CJ Studies SLO Assessment Plan and Senior Seminar Paper Assessment Rubric.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Summary of Action Plans for 2015-16

1. Senior Exit Survey and NSEE will be administered in all sections of SOCI 475: Senior Seminar
2. Research Methods learning outcomes will be evaluated by faculty teaching SOCI 315 using *Research Methods* rubric. This needs to be updated after the major change is approved to reflect the two new methods courses that will replace SOCI 315.
3. Sociological theory learning outcomes will be evaluated by faculty teaching SOCI 300 using *Social Theory* rubric. We need to finish the rubric for SOCI 345 and begin collecting data from criminal justice majors in this area as well.
4. Findings of 1-3 above will be reported in a series of departmental meetings.
5. Determine follow-up actions based on collected data.
6. Continue to work on plans for assessing Criminal Justice Studies major/minor.
7. Begin planning for alumni survey to be conducted next year.
8. Work on communicating student learning assessment outcomes with interested constituents (such as students) via dept. web page.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report
Appendix A
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 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. 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.
8. 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 theoretical orientation in the area; (c) show

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

how sociology helps understand the area; (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:

9. 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.

10. 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.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Appendix B

Senior Seminar Paper Assessment Rubric						
To what extent are the following outcomes demonstrated in the student's senior seminar paper?	EE	ME	AE	DN ME	n/a	Notes.....
<u>1. Sociological Perspective and Concepts</u> The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :						
a) Demonstrate how sociology contributes to the understanding of social reality; and						
b) apply the sociological approach, sociological principles and concepts to a social issue and/or her/his own life.						
c) Employs one or more of the following sociological concepts: culture; social change; socialization; social structure; stratification; institutions; race/ethnicity; gender; age; class; sexual orientation; disability						
<u>2. Social Theory.</u> The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.						
<u>3. Methodological/Technical/Application Skills</u> The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :						
a) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made						
b) do social scientific professional writing that accurately conveys data findings						
c) show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist (incl. intellectual integrity issues)						
d) retrieve information from electronic databases and Internet						
e) develop policy implications of the research and theory in an area.						

Key:

EE – Exceeds Expectations, ME – Meets Expectations, AE – Approaches Expectations, DNME – Does Not Meet Expectations; N/A – not applicable, not assigned

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.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Adopted Dec. 2011

Appendix C

Instructor: _____ **Semester:** _____

Total Students: ____ **Note assignment/activity used for assessment of each item.**

Assessing Methodological/Technical/Application Skills	MAJ/ MIN	Number of Students:					Notes		
		Soc ____	CJ ____	Both ____	EE	ME		AE	DN ME
The student should <i>be able to:</i>									
a) identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
e) do social scientific professional writing that accurately conveys data findings; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
f) show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
g) retrieve information from electronic databases and Internet; Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								
h) develop policy implications of the research and theory in an area. Activity Used:	Soc								
	CJ								
	Both								

Key: EE – Exceeding Expectations; ME – Meeting Expectations; AE – Approaching Expectations; DNME – Not Meeting Expectations; N/A – not applicable (not taught or not assessed)

Adopted Oct. 2011

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Appendix D

Instructor: _____ **Semester:** _____

Total Students: _____

Assessing Social Theory Skills	Number of Students:					
The sociology major/minor should <i>be able to</i>:	EE	ME	AE	DN ME	n/a	Notes.....
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 cultures in which they were developed;						
d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.						

Key: EE – Exceeding Expectations; ME – Meeting Expectations; AE – Approaching Expectations; DNME – Not Meeting Expectations; N/A – not applicable (not taught or not assessed)

Adopted Oct. 2011

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Appendix E

Spring 2016				
N=15 Sample – Systematic sample of 1/3 of course final papers (in three sections of course)				
Senior Seminar Paper Assessment Rubric				
To what extent are the following outcomes demonstrated in the student's senior seminar paper?	ME	DN ME	n/a	Notes.....
<u>1. Sociological Perspective and Concepts</u>				
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :				
a) Demonstrate how sociology contributes to the understanding of social reality; and	100%			
b) apply the sociological approach, sociological principles and concepts to a social issue and/or her/his own life.	100%			
c) Employs one or more of the following sociological concepts: culture; social change; socialization; social structure; stratification; institutions; race/ethnicity; gender; age; class; sexual orientation; disability	100%			
<u>2. Social Theory.</u>				
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality.				
	93%	7%		
<u>3. Methodological/Technical/Application Skills</u>				
The sociology major should <i>be able to</i> :				
a) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made	7%		93%	
b) do social scientific professional writing that accurately conveys data findings	86%		14%	
c) show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist (incl. intellectual integrity issues)	86%		14%	
d) retrieve information from electronic databases and Internet	100%			
e) develop policy implications of the research and theory in an area.	53%		47%	

Key: ME – Meets 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.

SUNY Potsdam
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report

Appendix F

Sociology Dept. SLO Assessment Rotation Plan

The following plan outlines the major aspects of the Sociology Department programs (Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies), the programs they serve and their schedule for assessment.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Location (Course)	Programs Served	Assessment Schedule
Sociological Perspective and Concepts -Senior Seminar	Soc. major/minor CJ major/minor	Seminar -odd years 2016-2017 2018-2019 2020-2021
Social Theory -Senior Seminar -Social Theory	Soc. major/minor	Seminar (see years above) Social Theory -even years 2017-2018 2018-2020 2019-2022
Methodological/Technical/Application Skills - Senior Seminar -Research Methods	Soc. major/minor CJ major	Seminar (see years above) Research Methods -even years 2017-2018 2018-2020 2019-2022