Program Assessment Plan

Program (Major, Minor, Core): M.A. in Sociology
Department: Sociology & Anthropology
College/School: Arts & Sciences
Person(s) Responsible for Implementing the Plan: Graduate Program Director
Date Submitted: October 30, 2015

Department Mission

The mission of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology is to produce and provide foundational, advanced, and practical knowledge in the Social Sciences and Forensic Science. Students are taught to think critically, discern and reconcile contradictory views, weigh factual evidence and move social discourse in inclusive, nuanced, and rational directions. At the same time, we work to expand knowledge of social behavior and advance public dialogue beyond the academy. We engage the community by teaching students to see communities as interacting social components while developing the professional skills to communicate and collaborate effectively to improve social well-being for all. We offer cutting edge education while serving the University, our professions, and the community in the Jesuit tradition.

Program Objectives

The master’s program in sociology is organized to ensure that students have an understanding of social theories that serve to explain the complexities of social life, particularly as it relates to the urban community. The program strives to provide a number of courses that facilitate a student’s ability to conduct sound, valid, and ethical analysis of issues and problems that occur in society today. The program also attempts to foster students’ ability to think critically, reason logically, present persuasively and apply learned knowledge to the social setting. Finally, the program strives to instill a sense of justice and compassion, based on the Jesuit mission, in each student such that they understand what it means to be “women and men for others.” Together, these skills will provide the student with the ability to operate in the community as a professional or to move on to obtaining a doctoral degree.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Curriculum Mapping</th>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
<th>Use of Assessment Data</th>
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<tr>
<td>What do you expect all students who complete the program to know, or be able to do?</td>
<td>Where is the outcome learned/assessed (courses, internships, student teaching, clinical, etc.)?</td>
<td>How do students demonstrate their performance of the program learning outcomes? How does the program measure student performance? Distinguish your direct measures from indirect measures.</td>
<td>How does the program use assessment results to recognize success and &quot;close the loop&quot; to inform additional program improvement? How/when is this data shared, and with whom?</td>
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<td>Demonstrate an ability to apply sociological theory or concepts and the sociological imagination to social institutions, groups, issues and problems. <em>(Knowledge – theory)</em></td>
<td>SOC 5010 - Organizational Theory&lt;br&gt;SOC 5100 - ProSeminar&lt;br&gt;Coursework in substantive area&lt;br&gt;Research Proposal/Defense&lt;br&gt;Thesis/Research Papers</td>
<td>1. Course-based assessment of examinations, research papers, other writing assignments or projects, and presentations will be done using a rubric scale of 1-5 (1 = unacceptable, 3 = adequate, 5 = excellent) for each of the learning outcomes.¹ [Direct]&lt;br&gt;2. Research Proposal Defense will be evaluated by the committee. The committee chair will produce a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s research proposal. [Direct]&lt;br&gt;3. Exit interviews will solicit self-evaluations of progress on this outcome. [Indirect]&lt;br&gt;4. Assessment survey of program alumni. [Indirect]</td>
<td>Year One: Assessment results will be collected and analyzed by the Graduate Assessment Committee in May. This committee will write a summary report that will be shared with the departmental faculty for discussion at the departmental retreat in August. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices.</td>
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Demonstrate an ability to apply the processes, procedures, analysis, and technological tools of social research to social institutions, groups, issues and problems. *(Knowledge – methods and analysis)*

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<th>Course</th>
<th>Methods and Analysis</th>
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<td>SOC 5050 - Applied Inferential Stat</td>
<td>1. Course-based assessment of examinations, research papers, other writing assignments or projects, and presentations will be done using a rubric scale of 1-5 (1 = unacceptable, 3 = adequate, 5 = excellent) for each of the learning outcomes.¹ [Direct]</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 5600 - Research Methodology</td>
<td>2. Research Proposal Defense will be evaluated by the committee. The committee chair will produce a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s research proposal. [Direct].</td>
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<td>Advanced Methods coursework</td>
<td>3. Exit interviews will solicit self-evaluations of progress on this outcome. [Indirect]</td>
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<td>Research Proposal/Defense</td>
<td>4. Assessment survey of program alumni. [Indirect]</td>
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<td>Thesis/Research Papers</td>
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**Year Two:** Assessment results will be collected and analyzed by the Graduate Assessment Committee in May. This committee will write a summary report that will be shared with the departmental faculty for discussion at the departmental retreat in August. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices.
| Demonstrate an ability to dissect and critically analyze existing social research. **(Critical thinking)** | SOC 5010 - Organizational Theory  
SOC 5100 - ProSeminar  
SOC 5050 - Applied Inferential Stat  
Coursework in substantive area  
Research Proposal/Defense  
Thesis/Research Papers | 1. Course-based assessment of examinations, research papers, other writing assignments or projects, and presentations will be done using a rubric scale of 1-5 (1 = unacceptable, 3 = adequate, 5 = excellent) for each of the learning outcomes.¹  
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4. Assessment survey of program alumni. [Indirect] | **Year One:** Assessment results will be collected and analyzed by the Graduate Assessment Committee in May. This committee will write a summary report that will be shared with the departmental faculty for discussion at the departmental retreat in August. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices. |
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<th>Demonstrate an ability to analyze social science data. <strong>(Analytical)</strong></th>
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| SOC 5050 - Applied Inferential Stat  
SOC 6100 - Regression Analysis  
Advanced Analytical coursework  
Research Proposal/Defense  
Thesis |
| 1. Course-based assessment of examinations, research papers, other writing assignments or projects, and presentations will be done using a rubric scale of 1-5 (1 = unacceptable, 3 = adequate, 5 = excellent) for each of the learning outcomes. ¹  
**[Direct]**  
2. Research Proposal Defense will be evaluated by the committee. The committee chair will produce a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s research proposal.  
**[Direct]**  
3. Exit interviews will solicit self-evaluations of progress on this outcome.  
**[Indirect]**  
4. Assessment survey of program alumni.  
**[Indirect]** |
| **Year Two:** Assessment results will be collected and analyzed by the Graduate Assessment Committee in May. This committee will write a summary report that will be shared with the departmental faculty for discussion at the departmental retreat in August. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices. |
Demonstrate an ability to independently apply the sociological imagination and methodology to community service, research and problem-solving using state of the art methodological techniques and tools in a competent and ethical manner. *(Synthesis)*

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<td>2. Thesis/Research Papers will be evaluated by the committee. The committee chair will produce a written evaluation of the student’s research / writing skills. [Direct]</td>
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<td>4. Exit interviews will solicit self-evaluations of progress on this outcome. [Indirect]</td>
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<td>5. Assessment survey of program alumni. [Indirect]</td>
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**Year Three:** Assessment results will be collected and analyzed by the Graduate Assessment Committee in May. This committee will write a summary report that will be shared with the departmental faculty for discussion at the departmental retreat in August. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices.

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1 Material for assessment (papers, projects, examinations, proposals, theses, resumes, certifications, reflections, etc) will come from a portfolio that each student in the MA in sociology program will be required to maintain. These portfolios will have a defined structure and will operate on a variety of free eportfolio platforms. The instructor of each course will indicate to the students the papers and materials that must be submitted digitally and included in the portfolio under that course. Students will also have these program learning outcomes and will be asked to write a short reflection paper indicating how the work ties back to a particular learning outcome.
1. **It is not recommended to try to assess (in depth) all program learning outcomes every semester.** It is best practice to plan out when each outcome will be assessed and focus on 1 or 2 each semester/academic year. Describe the responsibilities, timeline, and the process for implementing this assessment plan.

The materials for the five outcomes will be collected on an annual basis. The outcomes will be evaluated on a three-year cycle. Theory and critical thinking will be evaluated in year one. Methodological and analytical skills will be evaluated in year two. Synthesis of research ability will be evaluated in year three. An alumni survey will be done every five years; otherwise there would not be sufficient numbers to make the survey valid.

The responsibility for organizing assessment will be given to a MA Assessment Committee that is selected by the faculty at the annual August departmental retreat. This committee will be charged with providing instruction to the students on how they can establish their eportfolio and providing instructions to faculty on what they should be doing in the classroom regarding materials that should be included in the eportfolio. In May of each year, the Assessment Committee will collect materials from the portfolios that are pertinent to the outcomes to be assessed in the given year. The committee will then analyze these materials according to a rubric established by the committee and write a summary report for the department. This summary report will be distributed electronically to all faculty in the department and discussed as an action item at the department’s annual August retreat. Decisions regarding program recommendations for curriculum or program changes and/or assessment process revisions will be made at this retreat. These decisions will be sent to the Graduate Assessment committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices.

Every five years, when enough alumni have been accumulated, the Assessment committee will construct a survey to reflect on how well these outcomes have been utilized beyond the program. In order for this to happen, the department must be able to maintain a viable contact list of all graduating students in the MA program. This survey would take place over the summer period so that the results are available at a subsequent August annual retreat.

2. **Please explain how these assessment efforts are coordinated with Madrid (courses and/or program)?**

These assessment efforts are not coordinated with any other courses or programs in Madrid. There are no MA sociology programs in Madrid.
3. The program assessment plan should be developed and approved by all faculty in the department. In addition, the program assessment plan should be developed to include student input and external sources (e.g., national standards, advisory boards, employers, alumni, etc.). Describe the process through which your academic unit created this assessment plan. Include the following:

   a. **Timeline regarding when or how often this plan will be reviewed and revised. (This could be aligned with program review.)**

      Each year (in May) a Graduate Assessment committee will gather, review and analyze the materials necessary for the outcomes to be reviewed in that year. This committee will produce a summary report and distribute it to all faculty members for review. The entire department will meet at the August retreat to discuss, decide and suggest changes (if needed) in the program, the curriculum, individual courses, the collection of information, the analysis or the items used to indicate mastery. The faculty will also decide on the necessary timeline for implementing any changes. These decisions will be conveyed to the Graduate Assessment Committee for compilation in an annual report to be submitted to all required University offices.

   b. **How students were included in the process and/or how student input was gathered and incorporated into the assessment plan.**

      Graduate students, in the 15-16 cohort of the Master’s in Sociology program, composed a focus group on these learning outcomes. The students reviewed and discussed the document, giving reactions and feedback that did result in the alteration of one of the learning outcomes.

   c. **What external sources were consulted in the development of this assessment plan?**


MA in sociology assessment programs reviewed:
- California State University – East Bay
- Humboldt State University
- Kean University
- Marshall University
- Northern Illinois University
- Oregon State University
- Southern Connecticut State University
- University of Central Missouri
- University of Colorado – Colorado Springs
- University of Missouri – Kansas City
- University of North Dakota
- University of Texas – Pan American
- University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
- Wayne State University
- American University in Cairo
- Liege University, Belgium

d. **Assessment of the manageability of the plan in relation to departmental resources and personnel**

This plan creates additional work for the department faculty as a whole (at least 10 to 15 hours per year for review and for discussion at the department retreat plus working with students in their courses). For faculty members on the assessment committee, this assessment process will involve approximately 30 to 50 hours per year).