Assessment Cycle 2022-23 (Academic Programs)

Sociology BA

Mission

The mission of the department is to foster the discipline of sociology through teaching, research, and service. As an academic unit within a research university, and consistent with the College of Arts and Sciences Strategic Plan, the faculty has a responsibility to discover, develop, preserve, and disseminate sociological knowledge that contributes to public well-being. The Department of Sociology remains committed to providing a strong academic program for our majors and minors while being responsive to the needs of students in Essential Studies courses. This focus has remained consistent for a number of years and reflects our dedication to helping provide a liberal arts education to the students of the university.

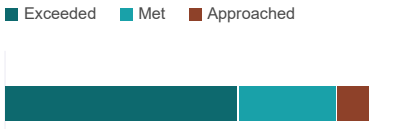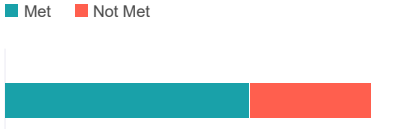Academic Year 2022-23

Sociology BA Learning Outcomes

Outcome 3a Apply Theoretical Concepts MET

How is sociological knowledge produced? Students should be able to: a) Apply theoretical concepts to an issue.

MEASURES	RESULTS	ACTIONS
SOC 301 Basic Sociological Theory -- final paper applying theory to a field site Students selected a field site and analyzed the site using a variety of sociological theories and concepts. There were four aspects assessed in the final paper: (1) choice of theory is appropriate; (2) demonstrates an understanding of the theory, its assumptions and concepts; (3) application of the theory to the field site is well documented with clear examples; and (4) future predictions for this field site are connected to the theory. Direct - Assignment **Target** 80% of students will meet or exceed standards	**MET** SOC 301 Basic Sociological Theory -- final paper applying theory to a field site ■ Exceeded ■ Met ■ Approached 0% 100% Exceeded: 44% Met: 51% Approached: 5% Met Total: 95% Not Met Total: 5% Goal 3a SOC 301 spring 2023.docx **Analysis** Student scores were averaged across the four components of the theory rubric, with the highest achievement in choice of appropriate theory, followed by ability to make future predictions based on the theory. Two students did not meet the benchmark for proficiency.	**Maintain Assessment Strategy** Students performed well on this task with a high level of proficiency. We will maintain existing strategies.
SOC 475 Sociology Capstone -- Final capstone paper Students developed a capstone project for which they selected a research question and analyzed it using an appropriate sociological theory and secondary data. From the theory, hypotheses were derived and tested. Results from statistical analysis were discussed with implications connected to the chosen theory. Students were assessed on: (1) appropriate choice of theory; (2) ability to communicate key assumptions of the theory; (3) hypotheses derived from the chosen theory; (4) statistical results discussed in light of the theory and its predictions. Direct - Project **Target**	**MET** SOC 475 Sociology Capstone -- Final capstone paper ■ Exceeded ■ Met ■ Approached ■ Not Met 0% 100% Exceeded: 50% Met: 17% Approached: 17% Not Met: 16% Met Total: 67% Not Met Total: 33% Goal 3a SOC 475 spring 2023.docx	**Maintain Assessment Strategy** We will continue to assess this goal in Soc 475.

80% of students will be proficient in theoretical application

Analysis

The benchmark for proficiency was met, with students performing well on selecting and reviewing a theory. Students met the benchmark but had a harder time deriving hypotheses from the theory and discussing results in light of the theory.

Senior Survey

Students in the capstone course were asked to respond to an indirect assessment of opportunities within the Sociology major to develop proficiency applying theoretical concepts to social issues. A series of six questions addressed this objective.

Indirect - Survey

Target

80% of students will rate their experiences within the program as good or excellent

MET

Senior Survey

■ Exceeded ■ Met ■ Approached

0%   100%

Exceeded:	64%
Met:	27%
Approached:	9%
Met Total:	91%
Not Met Total:	9%

Goal 3a senior survey fall 2022 spring 2023.docx

Analysis

All students, except for one, rated their skills as being good or very good/excellent in four areas related to applying theoretical concepts to an issue. Specific courses that were noted as being helpful in this regard were: Basic Sociological Theory, Sociology of the Body, Sociology Capstone.

Maintain Assessment Strategy

We will continue to use the senior survey to provide indirect data (in addition to the direct data being collected by other means).

Data Analysis and Essay Assignment

Socio-economic inequality is a foundational concept in the field of Sociology. In this course we explore empirical research and theories on social and economic inequality. The departmental goals and objectives are listed on the first page of the course syllabus so students can see the connection between course assignments and goals. In the last of the course assignments, students are asked to examine actual public opinion data from a national survey of American adults and then write an essay exploring variations in American's attitudes about inequality, explaining why these variations exist, and how they think recent events such as the pandemic have impacted people's perceptions of and tolerance for socio-economic inequalities. Successfully completing this assignment requires students to apply theoretical concepts of inequality to actual public opinion data.

One of the several criteria listed on the grading rubric for this assignment is: "Student explores how we can explain variations in attitudes, including why some people are more adverse to inequality than others." Student work in this area is assessed using a 2 point scale, where "0" = student did not attempt or meet expectations, "1" = student attempted and is approaching meeting expectations, and "2" = student is successful in meeting expectations.

Direct - Assignment

NOT MET

Data Analysis and Essay Assignment

■ Met ■ Not Met

0%   100%

Met:	67%
Not Met:	33%
Met Total:	67%
Not Met Total:	33%

Analysis

The average overall score on this assignment was 90.7% (N=15) and the majority of students, 53.3%, met expectations, earning a "2" on this specific rubric criterion. The remaining 46.7% of students were approaching meeting expectations, with two students earning a "1.5" and five students earning a "1" on this rubric criterion.

Other - [Incorporate more practice of this skill into the course. Provide more examples.]

Not Started

This is a challenging assignment that requires students to use SPSS, a statistical software program, and then interpret those results. This assignment also constitutes the final exam in the class, so I think some students "do the math" and focus on completing the easiest parts of the assignment and neglect the more challenging parts, which involve applying important theoretical concepts. In the future I want to modify the assignment instructions to more explicitly ask students to apply specific theoretical concepts regarding social inequality to the data. In addition, I'd like to include a few practice examples in the lectures following up to this assignment that give students a chance to practice a similar task working with their peers in class.

Social Inequality: SOC 436 **Target** 80% of students will score above a 1 on the criteria being evaluated.		
Theoretical Application Exam Four multiple-choice exams were used to assess students' ability to apply, define, identify, and distinguish theoretical concepts of interest to social psychologists. ONLY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO the goal of applying theoretical concepts are included on the exam. A total of 100 points were possible across all exams. If a student scored less than 70% (a below average score), they were coded as "0" (below expectations). If a student scored 70-79% (an average score), they were coded as "1" (meets expectations). If the student answered 80% or above correctly (an above average score), they were coded as "2" (exceeds expectations). · Only those students who completed the exams are included. Direct - Exam (Course) *Social Psychology: SOC 361* **Target** 75% of students will 1 (meets) or higher 2(exceeds)	**MET** Theoretical Application Exam ■ Exceeded ■ Met ■ Not Met 0%　　　　　　　　　100% Exceeded:　　　　57% Met:　　　　　　　31% Not Met:　　　　　12% Met Total:　　　　88% Not Met Total:　　12% **Analysis** Across the four exams, 57% of students exceeded expectations, 31% of students met expectations, and 12% fell below expectations. It is worth noting that one of the 49 students did not complete the final exam but was on track to have "met" or possibly "exceed" expectations had they completed the final exam and performed as well as they had on the previous three exams. While it is not part of the formal review, the average scores earned by students for their participation in weekly discussions of class content reflected their average and above average level of understanding of class content. The percentages of students receiving average or above average scores on those discussions were comparable to those earned on exams and had a strong correlation.	**Maintain Assessment Strategy** Will continue to use this assessment strategy. Make minor changes in assigned readings to enhance theoretical understanding of key concepts.

Conclusion

This year, The Sociology Department assessed goal 3a of our undergraduate program-- the ability to apply theoretical concepts to an issue. We used both direct and indirect data to assess this goal. Direct data, in alignment with our assessment plan, came from measures used in four different classes-- Soc. 301 (Basic Sociological Theory), Soc. 361 (Social Psychology), Soc. 436 (Social Inequality), and Soc. 475 (Sociology Capstone). Indirect data came from a survey of seniors that asked student perceptions of their ability to apply theoretical concepts to an issue and how well the sociology program helped them to develop this skill. In three out of four of the classes, students met or exceeded the target goal, illustrating that they had developed this skill. In the fourth class, the majority of students met or exceeded expectations on this goal, but the target was slightly missed. The indirect measure, in the form of the student survey, also provided evidence that sociology students have achieved the goal of being able to apply theoretical concepts to an issue. Overall, the evidence shows that the sociology undergraduate program is succeeding in the goal of student developing the skill of applying theoretical concepts to an issue.