Assessment of Student Learning Plan (ASLP): Academic Programs

2019-20 Academic Year

University of Southern Maine

Overview Information:

College College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Department **Sociology**
Degree Program BA in Sociology
Contact Person for the Assessment Plan: Wendy Chapkis (Chair 2019-20)
Cheryl Laz (Chair 2020-21)
Current Date May 31, 2020
Date of most recent academic program review/self-study: 2015

Program Assessment Plan Information:

Do you have a Formal Program Assessment Plan? __X__ Yes ____No

If YES, please attach your Program Assessment Plan/Cycle: Please see Appendix A.

Program Mission Statement:

Sociology is a liberal arts major with particular emphasis on developing students' abilities to think critically about complex issues, to analyze social issues and organizations, to design and carry out research, and to write with clarity and economy. Sociological training provides students with the skills to research, report on, and organize solutions to these problems, transforming social awareness into social change. Central to the study of sociology is an understanding of inequality and a comprehension of the lived experiences of diverse communities. Community engagement is woven into and throughout the sociology curriculum at USM through internships, service learning, and other off-campus learning and engagement activity.

2. How is this aligned with the USM mission

Like the University of Southern Maine as a whole, the Sociology program is dedicated to providing students with a high-quality education. The faculty is committed to fostering a spirit of critical inquiry and civic participation in and outside of the sociology classroom. In alignment with USM's mission, sociology embraces and advocates for diversity in all aspects of life on and off campus.

Assessment of Student Learning: Program Assessment Steps

Step 1: Program-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)

a. Program-level student learning outcomes:

Students graduating with a major in Sociology will be able to:
1. Read critically and think independently about social issues and social policy.
2. Communicate ideas clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentation.
3. Design and execute original qualitative and quantitative research.
4. Understand and use basic statistics and statistical software packages.
5. Understand ethical issues involved in research.
6. Read and comprehend primary sociology texts, including journal articles, and produce a useful literature review.
7. Comprehend the lived experiences of diverse communities.
8. Analyze a social problem, process, or organization from a distinctly sociological perspective.
9. Effectively collaborate as part of a team in the production and evaluation of knowledge.
10. Exercise the "sociological imagination," by applying theory to social issues and in everyday practice, including in internships, service learning, and other off-campus learning and community engagement activity.

b. Curriculum Assessment Map showing where student learning outcomes are assessed and in which courses: See Appendix B

c. Program learning outcomes assessed since the submission of last ALSP (May 2019):

One important focus this year for Sociology in terms assessment involved a development of specific learning outcomes for the capstone course and the discussion of the relationship of those course-level outcomes to the objectives for the major.

Step 2: Assessment Methods Selected and Implemented/Summary of Results

a. Assessment measures (evidence of student learning) used to determine whether students achieved learning outcomes for the degree since last ASLP (May 2019):

Class assignments/exams/papers	Fall, Spring, Summer
Capstone projects	Fall, Spring
Fieldwork (evaluation of performance)	Fall, Spring
Conference Presentation	Spring
Reflection Essays (self-report of outcome attainment)	Fall, Spring
Student Survey Information (student self-reports on outcomes)	Fall, Spring

b. Briefly describe where students were assessed, what courses, what class levels, etc.:

Program level assessment of student learning outcomes in 2019 – 2020 took place in the Sociology capstone course where Professor Laz did a thorough assessment of the extent to which students in the capstone achieved the learning outcomes for the major by examining students' written work/essays. That process was entirely separate from assessing individual students through grading. Please see Appendix C for a short report on this process.

c. Summary of survey data results: See Appendix D

d. Summary of what the program learned or concluded from evidence collected: <u>See Appendix D</u>

Step 3: Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning

    a. Who interpreted or analyzed the results that were collected this past year?

Program faculty: every faculty member does extensive course level assessment and interpretation of student learning. In addition, this year, Professor Cheryl Laz developed a set of specific learning outcomes for the capstone seminar and faculty discussed their relationship to SLOs for the major. All faculty are asked to attend (or in this year's case, view) the Thinking Matters presentations of our advanced students to assess how successfully they are achieving the learning outcome for the program focused on written and oral presentation of student research.

Also this year, two sociology faculty members – Professor Vazquez Jacobus and Professor Everson - collected more survey data on community engagement outcomes in several courses with community engagement activity. That data is currently being analyzed (see Appendix D).

    b. Indicate how the program will use (or has used) the results:

Course changes (course content); course pedagogy (teaching); student out-of-course experiences (co-curricular requirements).

Appendix A – Formal Program Assessment Plan

Sociology has developed a 3-year plan to more systematically examine how well SLOs for the major are being met:

In Year 1 (2020-21), in the fall faculty will *select one or two specific SLO's for the major to discuss in terms of what competence in those two areas might look like.* In spring, *we will examine 2 or 3 samples of student capstone work* (essays or Thinking Matters presentations) with an eye to how well that work reflects competency in those areas.

In Year 2 (2021-22), to add a comparative dimension, faculty *will select 1 or 2 learning outcomes* from *an earlier-career course* (for example, SOC 201 "Critical Thinking about Social Issues") *and consider what progress we would want to see in that area in capstone-level work*. In spring of Year 2, faculty *will examine 2 or 3 examples of student capstone work (essays or Thinking Matters presentations) with an eye to how well that work reflects competency in those areas.*

In Year 3 (2023-2024), based on the conversations from Year 1 and Year 2, *we will discuss what patterns may have emerged, what concerns us if anything, and what we find encouraging. We will also review, and if necessary revise, our learning outcomes at the course and program level.*

Appendix B – Curriculum Map

Map of Student Learning Outcomes

The matrix below maps the learning outcomes for the major on to courses in the major.

I = introduced, R=reinforced, M=mastered

Appendix B – Sociology Student Learning Outcomes SOC 410 Capstone

Cheryl Laz (February 7, 2020)

This report describes the process of assessment, presents findings, draws conclusions, and identifies opportunities for improving the Capstone.

The Data

- SOC 410. Fall 2019. Enrollment was 7 students
- Each student wrote 7 short (2-4 page) essays on assigned prompts; some students chose to revise one or more essays. Data include original essays, revisions, and grading rubrics for each essay.
- Students participated in 10 seminar meetings which included discussion of their writing but which often delved into broader issues. Data include detailed notes from each meeting.

Process of Assessment

Assessment involves addressing 3 key questions:

1. What do we want students to <u>learn, know or be able to do</u> as a result of our course/instruction? These are the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).

2. What will students <u>do</u> that will engage them in these outcomes? These are our assignments or course requirements.

3. <u>How will we know</u> that students have achieved the outcomes? These are our criteria or indicators, sometimes specified in a rubric.

I reviewed all ten of the Student Learning Outcomes for the Sociology major to determine which could effectively be assessed in the capstone, and ultimately assessed 4 outcomes.

SLO	Assessed in Capstone in Fall 2019?	Likely place for Assessmt	Notes
1. Read critically and think independently about social issues and social policy.	Yes		Attached
2. Communicate ideas clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentation.	Yes		Attached
3. Design and execute an original research project, including…	No	SOC 301 SOC 307	

4. Understand and use basic statistics and statistical software packages.	No	SOC 307	
5. Appreciate ethical issues involved in research.	No	SOC 301 SOC 307	Potential to assess in Capst
6. Read and comprehend primary sociology texts, including journal articles, and produce a useful literature review.	No		potential to assess in Capst, but not lit review
7. Appreciate the epistemological groundings of various theories and critically assess and apply theory.	No	SOC 300	
8. Analyze a social problem, process, or organization from a distinctly sociological perspective.	No		Appropriate for Capstone but not assessible at present
9. Effectively collaborate in the production and evaluation of knowledge.	Yes		Attached
10. Exercise the "sociological imagination," by applying sociological concepts in everyday settings and practical situations…	Yes		Attached

SLO 1: Read critically and think independently about social issues and social policy.

Course Assignment: **Prompt 6**

> Write about an "ah" or "a ha!" moment—i.e. an epiphany. Select one source/text you've encountered in your research (or more broadly, in your academic career) that has provided an "ah…" or "a ha!" moment—perhaps because the author has illuminated an angle you hadn't previously considered, or because they provided evidence for something you had suspected, or because they got something spectacularly wrong and identifying why helped you clarify your own thinking. Summarize the piece (who, what, main argument, method, findings) and describe the ah/aha-ness (in other words, what did you learn and how is this new thing useful to you?). Be prepared to present this to your classmates.

How will I know if they've done this?

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Identify source/text & effectively summarize	5	2	
Specify social issue or policy	5	2	

Demonstrate critical thinking (reasoning, evaluation of evidence and assumptions) in describing epiphany	5	1	1
Articulate their own position/independent conclusion	5	1	1

SLO 2: Communicate ideas clearly and effectively in writing and oral presentation.

Course Assignment: Seven essays x 7 students.

How will I know if students have achieved this outcome? Tabulate "Quality of Writing" portion of grading rubric for 48 (of 49 essays; one rubric missing).

Exemplary Writing	Good Writing	Satisfactory Writing	Marginal writing
-writing is well organized, focused, clear and concise -paragraphs are focused, coherent & well-ordered -sentences are well crafted & precise -word choice is appropriate -writing is free of grammatical, typographical, mechanical or other errors	writing is organized, focused & mostly clear -paragraphs are coherent and effective -sentences are mostly well crafted - response has some errors in word choice -writing is relatively free of grammatical, mechanical, typographical and other errors	writing is understandable but -paragraphs are not consistently coherent -transitions or links between paragraphs are not consistently clear and effective -several sentences are unclear -writing contains many grammatical and/or mechanical or other errors, and these sometimes undermine the writing	writing is difficult to understand b/c -it is poorly organized or main point isn't clear -paragraphs are not well connected to one another and to the main point -sentences are not understandable -there are many problems with word choice -writing shows many problems with grammar, punctuation, and/or mechanics -paper has not been carefully proofread and contains many typos
24 essays	14 essays	10 essays	0 essays

SLO 9: Effectively collaborate in the production and evaluation of knowledge.

Course Assignment: Seminar meetings included discussion of collaboration related to companion course projects. Seminar meetings were also the setting for students to demonstrate effective listening and to practice collegial feedback.

How will I know if students have achieved this outcome? Review of my notes from each seminar meeting. Students excelled in this at every single class meeting and in their companion course projects.

SLO 10: Exercise the "sociological imagination," by applying sociological concepts in everyday settings and practical situations…

Course Assignment: **Prompt 8**

> Reflect on sociological practice outside of the academy. What does it mean to "practice" sociology? How will you practice sociology after graduation in your various roles (family member, neighbor, citizen, co-worker)? Be specific and concrete; give examples.

How will I know students have achieved this outcome?

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Describe in concrete detail 1 or more future settings/practices	6	1	0
Articulate what soc imag/soc perspective is	2	4	1
Articulate value/utility of soc imag/perspective	6	0	1

Summary Findings and Conclusions

- Four learning outcomes (1, 2, 9, and 10) were assessed in Fall 2019.
- Students were overwhelmingly satisfactory or excellent in their achievement of the four outcomes.
- This exercise showed the potential for assessing three additional outcomes (5, 6, and 8) in the Capstone and revealed shortcomings in the current set of prompts. At present the course is not designed to address these three outcomes; the absence of #8 seems especially egregious.
- Exercise of trying to align Capstone prompts with SLO illuminated meaningful opportunity for improvement in Capstone course, and highlighted need for the faculty to revisit the outcomes as a whole.

Recommendations

- Develop new Capstone prompt(s) for S2021 to incorporate means of assessing Outcome 8 ("Analyze a social problem, process or organization from a distinctly sociological perspective") .

APPENDIX D – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

In spring 2020, faculty researchers administered the survey in an online format in 6 USM classes in addition to three classes at the University of Maine Orono. Analysis of that data will take place over the summer. Data from spring 2019 and fall 2019 confirm a strong correlation between degree of community engagement and student retention and sense of connection with community. In addition, for non-traditional and minority students (over 25, first generation college, student parents, those with full-time jobs, and students raised in another country or speaking a language other than English), community engagement seems to have particularly positive effects on retention. The researchers hypothesize that this may be because engagement experiences appeal to a differential learning style among these students, award/acknowledge inherent expertise (like life experience) that these students may have, and give such students a chance to feel mastery. In addition, such classes/experiences build powerful relationships with other classmates, faculty, and community members, providing social ties and community connection often vital to perseverance in college.

Informed Consent Form

Research study title: Community Engagement: Impact on Student Retention and Success

Primary investigator: Michelle Vazquez Jacobus, Sociology, University of Southern Maine, michelle.jacobus@maine.edu, 207-780-4603. **Co-Investigators:** David Everson, Sociology, University of Southern Maine, David.Everson@maine.edu Amber Tierney, Sociology, University of Maine, Orono, Amber.Tierney@maine.edu.

Purpose of the Research: You are invited to participate in a survey that will explore the experiences of participating in community engagement as part of undergraduate coursework at the University of Southern Maine (USM) & the University of Maine, Orono (UMaine). Community engagement is considered a high impact educational practice that extends a student's knowledge and experience into the community and in applications outside the immediate classroom. The survey will capture data on students' involvement in engagement activities along a developmental sequence (early, mid and capstone/intensive courses) and in light, medium, and intensive course*. It is also possible that your course did not include engagement outside the classroom this semester.* Even if this is the case, your responses to this survey are still useful. The survey has been reviewed and approved by the Human Subject Research Institutional Board of the University of Southern Maine.

Description of Procedures: This research involves the completion of a survey.

Duration of Participation: 15 minutes to complete the survey.

Location: University of Southern Maine & University of Maine, Orono.

Statement of Participation: You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. You must have participated in a USM or UMaine course during the most recent academic semester for which course you are completing this survey. The topics presented in this survey will include your experiences with engaged learning, community engagement, and the impact of the experience on you.

Participation is voluntary and you will not be paid for your participation. You may discontinue participation or withdraw at any time. If you feel uncomfortable during the survey, you have the right to decline to answer any question or end the survey without any penalty. The data from this survey will be stored in electronic form in a secured, password-protected file maintained by the study team until May 2022.

Risks and Discomforts: Although this study is low risk, potential for stress exists. Potential minimal risk or discomforts include a range of emotional feelings when asked questions about your experiences with the aspects of your coursework.

Benefits: The anticipated benefit of participation is the opportunity to reflect on feelings, perceptions, and concerns related to the experience of participating in community engagement and applied coursework. In addition your input will be used to inform our continued engagement practices.

Statement of Confidentiality: Participation in this research is confidential. Participants will not be asked to use any names on the survey. The results of the research may be published in a professional journal or presented at professional meetings and any reports of study findings will not include any identifying information. *As this survey is being conducted in an online format,* there is a risk of losing anonymity. However, to protect your anonymity, no personal identifying information will be requested or collected, and we ask that you do not do not include any information anywhere on the survey that may individually identify you or anyone else.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Michelle Vazquez Jacobus at the University of Southern Maine (207) 780-4603 or michelle.jacobus@maine.edu or Amber Tierney at the University of Maine, Orono (207) 581.4403 or amber.tierney@maine.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Southern Maine Office of Research Integrity and Outreach usmorio@usm.maine.edu 207-780-4517.

COPY OF SURVEY:

Community Engagement Questionnaire Spring 2020

1. Spring 2020 Course (*circle the course in which you are currently taking this survey)*

   SOC 380 (Youth, Community. . .)   SBS 370 (Toward a Global Ethics)   SOC 210 (Critical Thinking)

   SOC 100/101 (Intro to Soc.)   Other _____

   CAMPUS: USM   UMaine

2. Gender (how do you identify?):

3. Race and Ethnicity (how do you identify?):

4. Number (**approximate – a range is fine**) of college credits completed as of 1/15/20: ____

5. Major(s)_____

6. What is the highest degree you plan to attain?

   Bachelors___   Masters___   Doctorate___   Other___

7. Check all that apply (**if none apply, leave blank**):
   a. ___I am older than 25 years
   b. ___I work more than 29 hours per week while I attend school
   c. ___I grew up in a country other than the US
   d. ___I am a parent
   e. ___I have significant care responsibilities for a family member
   f. ___My first language is not English
   g. ___I am a first-generation college student (a first-generation college student has neither parents nor grandparents who earned a college degree)

8. Please <u>rate your college experience</u>, using the scale: (5= Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=No Opinion, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree; **Please write N/A if not applicable**)

a.	1 2 3 4 5	I have friends at USM/UMaine
b.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel connected to my community
c.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel connected to USM/UMaine faculty
d.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel supported in my education
e.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel confident in my ability to learn in college
f.	1 2 3 4 5	I feel like I have learned valuable skills in college
g.	1 2 3 4 5	I take action to advocate for social issues
h.	1 2 3 4 5	I am able to explore my interests and passions in my college work
i.	1 2 3 4 5	The education I receive at USM/UME will be relevant to my life after graduation
j.	1 2 3 4 5	I expect to graduate from USM/UMaine

k. 1 2 3 4 5   I expect to enroll in classes at USM/UMaine next semester
l. 1 2 3 4 5   I feel that I have value to offer the community
m. 1 2 3 4 5   I understand the needs facing the community in which I live
n. 1 2 3 4 5   I believe I have a responsibility to serve my community

Questions 9-17 use the follow <u>definition</u> in reference to the term "***community-engagement***":
- *Community-engagement* refers to engaged learning experiences that include a range from "light exposure" such as attending a community event for a few hours on one occasion, to more extensive community-based internships or practica that are the focus of a particular course or academic credit.
    - Similar terms that would be considered *community engagement* include "service-learning," "community-based learning" "action research" and "community-based participatory research (CPBR)".
    - To be considered *community engagement*, the experience must involve some <u>applied out-of-classroom experience</u> that is <u>evaluated and included among the graded experiences of the class</u>.
        - It is possible that you have not had any community engagement in *this* class. If so, please write **N/A to Q.s 13-17**.
        - "Volunteering" *outside* of course requirements is not considered *community-engagement* (for the purposes of this survey). **Please write N/A if not applicable.**

9. How many of your courses (this semester) involved ***community-engagement***?
0   1   2   3   4   5   N/A

10. How many college-level community-engagement courses have you taken *before* this semester?

0   1   2   3   4   5   More than 5 ___   Not sure___

11. Did you participate in community-engagement prior to college?

Yes___   No___   Not sure___   If yes, to what extent (# of hours): ____

12. Do you plan to participate in community-engagement in the future?

Yes___   No___   Not sure___

13. Was the community-engagement portion of this course optional or required?

Optional___   Required___   Not sure___   N/A_____

14. Did you know there was a community-engagement component before you enrolled in this course?   Yes____   No___   Not sure__   N/A_____

15. During a typical week this past semester, approximately how many hours (average) did you spend completing community-engagement activities for this course? _____ N/A_____

16. How would you describe the level of involvement of the community-engagement project in this course? (select the most appropriate answer)   N/A
    a. ___Central to the course

b. ___A major assignment in the course
c. ___A minor assignment in the course
d. ___An optional assignment in the course

17. Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the items below, using the scale:

   (5= Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3 =No Opinion, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree). Write N/A if not applicable. Compared to my other courses:

   a. 1 2 3 4 5   I learned more in this course
   b. 1 2 3 4 5   I found myself more motivated to work in this course
   c. 1 2 3 4 5   I found myself devoting more time to this course
   d. 1 2 3 4 5   I found myself reflecting more on the concepts I have been learning
   e. 1 2 3 4 5   I found lectures/discussions intellectually challenging in this course
   f. 1 2 3 4 5   I expect to receive a high grade in this course.

18. Please indicate your level of agreement with each item:
   (5= Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=No Opinion, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree). **Please write N/A if not applicable.**
   Because of THIS Course:

   a. 1 2 3 4 5   I have come to feel more connected to my studies
   b. 1 2 3 4 5   I gained a deeper understanding of the course material
   c. 1 2 3 4 5   I learned about the community
   d. 1 2 3 4 5   I feel more positive about the course offerings at USM
   e. 1 2 3 4 5   I gained a new perspective on the lives of people from
                                      different backgrounds
   f. 1 2 3 4 5   I feel a deeper interest in working with people from
                                      diverse backgrounds
   g. 1 2 3 4 5   I increased my awareness of problems facing the
                                      community
   h. 1 2 3 4 5   I have shifted my career plans
   i. 1 2 3 4 5   I have learned to apply concepts from my course to real
                                      situations
   j. 1 2 3 4 5   I learned to appreciate different cultures
   k. 1 2 3 4 5   I learned to see social problems in a new way
   l. 1 2 3 4 5   I better understand the role of professionals in this field
   m. 1 2 3 4 5   I have an increased commitment to address the causes
                                      of community problems

Please indicate your level of agreement with each item: (5= Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=No Opinion, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree). **Please write N/A if not applicable.**

19. 1 2 3 4 5   Through community engaged learning, I was free to develop and use my ideas.

20. 1 2 3 4 5   My community engagement experience challenged my previous opinions.

21. 1 2 3 4 5   The community work I did in this course helped me to better understand the lectures and readings in this course.

22. 1 2 3 4 5   I feel I would have learned more from this course if more time was spent in the classroom instead of doing community work.

23. 1 2 3 4 5   I would highly recommend that other students take this course.

24. 1 2 3 4 5   Overall, I was very satisfied with the quality of the learning experience in the class.

25. Would you like to make any additional comments about this course?

Thank you for your feedback!

Appendix A: course level learning outcomes

Required Courses

SOC 100, Introduction to Sociology (department policies require that these outcomes be included on all syllabi for SOC 100). Following completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify social structures and processes that shape our everyday lives.
2. Understand basic concepts, theories and methods of sociology.
3. Apply sociological concepts, theories and methods to contemporary social issues.
4. Imagine actions to create a more equitable, democratic and sustainable society.
5. Read and study more critically and effectively.

SOC 210, Critical Thinking About Social Issues

All sections are designed to help students achieve the following learning outcomes. An ability to:

1. Ask relevant questions.

2. Evaluate arguments.

3. Evaluate evidence.

4. Identify and search for missing information.

5. Apply critical thinking skills to listening, reading, and writing in a variety of contexts.

For a specific example of how these learning outcomes are assessed in this course, what follows is from Professor Michelle Jacobus Vazquez who teaches sections of SOC 201

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Recognize when and how to ask the questions which form the core of critical thinking. Assessed through classroom participation, assessment of portfolio of seven written Portfolio assignments.

Participate in discussions which explore the concept of thinking critically. Assessed through regular classroom small group and large group interactive activities.

Write papers developing their own individual ideas about material read or discussed using principles of critical thinking. Assessed through evaluation of final research paper and evaluation of regular Portfolio assignments.

Identify and evaluate reasoning, evidence, and assumptions, as well as evaluate arguments as a whole. Assessed through evaluation of Portfolio assignments.

Formulate a persuasive argument using information from diverse sources. Assessed through evaluation of final research paper on social issue.

Communicate more effectively, both orally and in writing. Assessed through regular evaluation of Portfolio assignments, final research paper, small group community engagement presentations and class participation.

Identify influences on their own thoughts and beliefs and how these contribute to their perspectives as critical thinkers. Assessed in Portfolio assignment on self-perspective and critical thinking, and presentation on self-perspective and assumptions.

Describe substantial perspectives arguing for and against promotion of diversity in public institutions in the U.S. Assessed through evaluation of Portfolio assignment on democracy and diversity, integration into final research paper, and group presentations on community engagement project.

Understand how diversity contributes to democracy in the U.S. Assessed as above.

Apply knowledge of critical thinking skills and analysis to a relevant community project. Assessed through evaluation of group community engagement project final product and presentation.

SOC 300, Sociological Theory

After taking the required course in Sociological Theory, students will be able to:

1. Think theoretically about society.
2. Understand what theory is and how theory is different from opinion, belief, ideology, and perspective.
3. Describe the main traditions of classic and contemporary sociological theories.
4. Locate these traditions in historical, social and political context.
5. Use social theories to better understand themselves, their experiences, and the world.

SOC 301, Qualitative Research Methods

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the types of research questions best addressed using qualitative methods.

2. Recognize ethical concerns in conducting qualitative research and strategies to address them (including the institutional review process).

3. Design and carry out a qualitative research project (including conducting a literature review; constructing an interview guide or other tool for qualitative data collection; collecting, coding, and analyzing primary data).

4. Present research both through writing and oral presentation. current in interpretative social science.

5. Engage in constructive peer review of colleagues' research.

SOC 307, Quantitative Research Methods

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the types of research questions best addressed using quantitative methods and identify the appropriate quantitative technique for testing a given research hypothesis.

2. Identify independent, dependent, and intervening variables and a variable's level of measurement; appropriate measure of central tendency and dispersion.

3. Use SPSS to analyze data.

4. Present quantitative data in tabular and graphical formats.

5. Access and interpret quantitative data in both scholarly writing and everyday life.

SOC 410, Capstone

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Draw on the specialized knowledge of the major to articulate a significant theme, topic, issue or problem.

2. Design and generate a significant oral, written, creative or applied final project;

3. Collaborate or consult with others to research, create or discuss solutions or approaches to the project.

4. Analyze, apply, and integrate multiple sources of information and specialized perspectives to complete the project.

5. Draw on learning in general education and other courses to reflect on and critically interrogate learning within the capstone and the major.

300-level Elective Courses

In all 300-level sociology courses, students engage with and develop higher-level cognitive skills, including analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Students in these courses engage with, and develop, higher-level cognitive skills, including application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Irrespective of thematic focus, students will become familiar with key primary texts in the sociological subfield and produce substantive written work on them.

Here is a specific example of how these learning outcomes are assessed in a sociology elective course, SOC 315 Self and Society taught by Professor Michelle Vazquez Jacobus.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Identify the theoretical significance of some of the central questions and concerns regarding the experience of selfhood in postmodern society. Assessed through evaluation of regular (weekly) applied Self and Society written assignments, and presentation of final self-story narrative.

Appreciate the reciprocal relationships between the social construct of self and the primary social institutions through which we define ourselves. Assessed through participation in applied class activities and discussion.

Develop an integrated understanding of the dynamic relationships that contribute to our sense of self and society. Assessed as above.

Enhance understanding of other selves and societies through considered interaction with others different from one's self. Assessed through class participation and conversation and written assignments regarding interviewing other self and immersion in cultural activity.

Gain perspective of the influence of significant social institutions, such as family, school, community, and technology on the definition and interaction of self with society. Assessed through evaluation of developmental written self-assignments.

Articulate a personal perspective of self and society through the staged authoring and performance of a personal narrative designed to relate to be delivered, and relate to, others. Assessed through process observation, evaluations of drafts and final written product as well as final presentation of Self Story narrative.