

**Outcomes Assessment Model
For
Department of Sociology
2003**

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Introduction

This assessment proposal for the Department of Sociology is a modification of the original proposal that was developed after consultation with the Undergraduate Committee and a representative of the University Assessment Council. The modifications reflect the goals of the department as well as changes made due to difficulties encountered with earlier methods.

1. A select sample of graduating seniors (approximately 30 graduate at the end of the fall term and an equal number in the spring) will be asked to participate in exit interviews. This interview will give information related to skills, knowledge, and attitudes.
2. A transcript analysis will be done for all graduating seniors. This information will give base line data on course sequencing, grade point average, minors taken based on coursework taken.
3. The department will contribute questions to the alumni survey sent by the office of assessment.

The assessment procedures outlined above are viewed by the department as evolving. The department believes the proposed model will be of use as we evaluate our curriculum, course content and teaching styles.

1. **Name of Academic Program: Sociology**
2. **Degree Programs that are assessed in this plan: Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences in Sociology and Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Sciences in Applied Sociology**
3. **Mission, objectives, and goals of the degree programs:**

Note: The learning goals to follow were developed by the American Sociological Association in conjunction with The Association of American Colleges National Review of Arts and Sciences Majors.

Learning Goals for the Sociology Major

The sociology major should study, review, and reflect on:

1. The discipline of sociology and it's 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 his/her own life.
2. The role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) define theory and describe it's 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. Basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that the student will be able to define, give examples and demonstrate the relevance of the following: culture, social change, socialization, stratification, social structure, institutions, and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and class.
5. 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 effects of such variations, and (d) identify examples of specific policy implications using reasoning about social structural effects.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. In-depth at least one area within sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) summarize basic questions and issues in the area, (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations and middle range theories in the area, (c) show how sociology helps understand the area, (d) summarize current research in the area, and (e) develop specific policy implications of research and theories in the area.
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, and age, and (b) will know how to appropriately generalize or resist generalizations across groups.
10. 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 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:

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 hypothesis on various issues
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 reducing the negative effects of social inequality.

4. Expected Student Outcomes for the degree programs:

Most of the goals emphasize knowledge, although some goals reflect to some extent on skills (goals # 1, 6, and 10). Attitude oriented goals are reflected in goals 9, 11, and 12. These goals will be addressed in the exit interview. Exit interviews will also focus on difficulties students had in taking courses and the degree of course substitution taking place. Transcript analysis will help ascertain courses taken and whether courses taken give students opportunities to realize departmental learning goals. Other information will be built into the interview schedule useful for determining skills and attitudes.

5. Methods Used To Evaluate Student Achievement of the Expected Outcome:

- a. Every student graduating in the Fall and Spring semesters will be asked to participate in the exit interview. The exit interview constitutes an internal method of assessment.
- b. Transcript analysis will be done on all graduating students. Required courses for the major will be analyzed, grades received in core courses, grade point average in the major and career tracks emphasized in the major will be analyzed.
- c. Questions will be added to the Alumni Questionnaire sent by the Office of Assessment

Timetable: The exit interviews will be done toward the end of each Fall and Spring semester. Transcript analysis will be completed by the end of the term in May (for both Fall and Spring graduates). The Alumni questions will be done as requested by the Office of University Assessment.

6. How assessment results will be used in curriculum planning and program development:

: A narrative report will be available to all teaching faculty including graduate teaching assistants. In addition, the undergraduate advisor will have access to the assessment narrative. The report will be given to department members at the fall faculty meeting in late August or early September. The undergraduate Committee will make the report an agenda item for action or proposals to be taken up

with the entire department at one or more of the monthly department meetings. If apparent weaknesses in our students are demonstrated in our analysis and interpretation, appropriate steps to correct perceived weaknesses will be taken.

A Proposed Exit Interview for Sociology Majors

Sociology Outcomes Assessment

All academic departments within the university are required to assess their programs on an annual basis through input from graduating seniors. This is an attempt to improve the quality of the academic experience for the future university students. We would like to ask you (as a sociology major near graduation) a number of questions that will help us assess our program from the standpoint of how well we have disseminated knowledge to you, provided you with skills useful to you in the future and met your expectations as a major.

1. Sociology is generally thought to be one of several disciplines included in the broader category of the social sciences. Other disciplines included are psychology, economics, anthropology, geography, history and political science. Have you had the opportunity to take courses in some or all of these social sciences making it unique area of study? In what ways it is like each of the other social sciences?
2. What have you learned to be the major concepts in sociology? How do you define each of these? In what way does your knowledge of each of these concepts help you to more adequately understand the world around you?
3. There are other concepts we as sociologists feel are important in increasing our understanding of the social world. As I identify each of these please respond by what you consider a good definition of each of these and their importance to our understanding? (At this point the interviewer would introduce additional concepts not identified by the interviewee in answer to question 2).
4. In sociology we generally identify several theoretical perspectives, which provide a framework through which we view the social world. What would you identify as the major theoretical perspectives within sociology? What particular sociologist comes to mind as a reflection of each of the perspectives identified? How do the perspectives differ from each other? What are the major assumptions made by each? Which perspective do you find most useful in helping you understand the social world?
5. What is the significance of race, class, gender and age on our society? How are they likely to effect one's position and opportunities in society?
6. You were required to take a research methods course as a part of the core requirements. What do you see as the role of research methods in increasing our knowledge of the social world and refining sociological theory?
7. In what ways will you find your knowledge of social research methods useful to you in the future?
8. You were also required to take a course in statistics. In what way will you find your knowledge of statistics useful to you in the future?
9. What general area of sociology has been most intriguing to you? What makes it intriguing?

10. Why did you choose to major in sociology?
11. In what ways was your major in sociology different from what you expected?
12. In what areas of your life do you feel the knowledge you have gained in sociology will be most useful? In what ways?
13. What were the most useful sociology classes for you? Why?
14. What major skills have you learned during your academic experience that will be useful to you in the future?
15. What do you most like about sociology? Least like?
16. What could be done in the sociology department to improve students' educational experiences?
17. What do you like most about the OSU Sociology Department? Like Least?
18. What do you plan to do after you have completed your bachelor's degree in sociology?
19. Do you feel you received the education you need to move to the next stage of your life?
20. If you had to do it over would you major in Sociology? Why? (Why not? What would you major in? Why?)
21. If you could begin college again what would you do differently?
22. What do you hope to be doing five years from now? Ten years?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns with us. Your input will help us maintain and/or improve the quality of the academic experience students have in the Department of Sociology at OSU.

Additional Ideas:

1. During the interview each student will be evaluated on their verbal skills as well as their knowledge of the subject matter of sociology.