

Department of Sociology

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Student Outcomes Assessment Plan (Soap)

I. Mission Statement

Mission Statement : The mission of the Department of Sociology is to provide students with an understanding of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology, knowledge about the ability to use sociological concepts in the analysis of social phenomena, opportunities to develop critical thinking as well as written and oral communication skills utilizing a sociological perspective, an understanding of socio-cultural diversity within and among societies, and qualitative and quantitative research skills, including the appropriate use of computer technology. This mission aligns with that of the College of Social Sciences as well as that of California State University, Fresno.

II. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

Program Goals and Outcomes

- A. **Students will be provided information in regard to key sociological issues and will be able to comprehend and apply major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives.**
 - 1. Students will be able to define and use meaningfully basic sociological concepts such as: culture, status, role, norm, social structure, social institution and formal organization
 - 2. Students will be able to apply the sociological imagination, connecting personal troubles to larger, social issues, resulting in a deeper understanding of the relationships between personal experience and the social world
 - 3. Students will be able to demonstrate and apply knowledge of major classical and contemporary theoretical perspectives
- B. **The department will improve student research skills so that they can analyze data, examine social phenomena, and create well-organized reports.**
 - 4. Be able to use qualitative and quantitative methodology and research technology and to interpret and communicate results.
 - 5. Be able to demonstrate information literacy and examine social phenomena, making connections between issues and institutions.
 - 6. Be able to write a well-organized report of the findings from sociological data analysis.
- C. **It is a key aim of the Department of Sociology to directly engage students in the community and to enable them to take advantage of service learning opportunities.**
 - 7. Be able to identify a problem within their community and assess possible solutions
 - 8. Be able to apply sociological theory and methods in addressing community issues through academic service-learning, internship, and/or applied research activities

III. Curriculum Map (Matrix of Courses X Learning Outcomes)

Courses	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6	Outcome 7	Outcome 8
Lower Division								
1	I	I	I	I	I		I	
1S	I	I	I	I	I		I	I
3	I	I	I	I		I	I	
125		R		I	R	E		
130W	R	R	R	R	E	E	E	E
130WS	R	R	R	R	E	E	E	E
Upper-Division								
151	E	E	R	R	E	E	I	
153	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	
162	E	E	E	E	E	E		
175			R	E	E	E		
176	E		E	E	E	E	R	E
Electives								
111	E	E	R	E	R	I	E	
122	R		I	E	E	E	I	
131	R	E	E	R			I	
132	R	E	E	R			I	
142	R		R	E	E	E		
143	R	E	R	E	E	E	R	
144	R		R	E	E	R	E	E
145			R	R	E	E		

147	R				R	R	I	
148	R	R	R	R	E	E	E	R
149	R		R	E	E	E	E	
157	R		I	E	E	R	E	
161	R		R	E		E	I	
163	E	E	I	R	R	R		
165	R	E			R	R	I	
168	R	E		R	R		R	R
169	R		R	R	R		R	
174				R				
183, 184				R			E	E
185			R	R			E	E

IV. Assessment Methods

A. Direct Measures:

1. Exam questions – Students will write an essay in response to a specific content question on a final exam and the essays will be scored on a 1-5 scale by several faculty members. Desired results will include students' ability to utilize key sociological terminology correctly, and identify and apply relevant theoretical perspectives as well as craft a clear, coherent report. [Rubric attached]
2. Research paper/project topic – Student papers and/or projects involving questions that require the use of statistical analysis will be evaluated by several faculty members. Faculty members will evaluate the extent to which students have identified and correctly used the appropriate statistical formula and also the extent to which they have analyzed the data used it as the basis to draw conclusions or make arguments.
3. Pretest/Posttest – These tests include both multiple choice and short answer questions and are used to assess content knowledge and critical thinking as well as the extent to which student perspectives or views on issues such as gender change between the beginning and end of the course.

4. ETS Field Test in Sociology (standardized, discipline-specific instrument)

We will use data from the ETS Field Test in Sociology (a standardized test) administered in Fall 2012 and guided by priorities established in our departmental goals and outcome objectives, we will generate topics for exams or papers for the course under review each semester. The data from these direct measures will be evaluated by the SOAP coordinator and at least one other faculty member; recommendations for course curriculum adjustments will be made and reported to the faculty teaching that course to that s/he can design and implement curriculum adjustments. One year (2 semesters) later, that course will be re-evaluated to ascertain whether the curriculum adjustments have had the desired effect on student learning.

B. Indirect Measures:

1. Alumni Survey – Students will fill out a survey that asks them to evaluate the extent to which they were provided content knowledge, assistance in improving or gaining skills such as critical thinking and writing well, and prepared to continue their education or obtain a job in a field related to sociology.
2. Pipeline Study (review of student degree progress reports to identify course failure patterns or retake patterns)

Once in every five-year SOAP cycle, we will administer an alumni survey or a pipeline analysis. These data will then become part of the information we use to produce the direct measures described above.

V. Student Learning Outcomes X Assessment Methods Matrix

Measures	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Outcome 5	Outcome 6	Outcome 7	Outcome 8
Pre-post Test	x		X					
Exam			x	X				
Term Paper		x	x	x	x	x	X	
Alumni Survey					x			X
Pipe-line study		x						x

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VI. Timeline for Implementation of Assessment Methods and Summary Evaluations		
2012-2017 Timeline for Assessment of Student Outcomes		
Academic Yr.	SOAP	GE Course Assessment
Fall 2012	ETS Major Field Test	
Spring 2013	Assess Soc 1	
Fall 2013	Assess Soc 153	Assess Soc 111 (Area MI)
Spring 2014	Assess Soc 1	Assess Soc 142 (Area MI)
Fall 2014	Assess Soc 153	
Spring 2015	Assess Soc 3	
Fall 2015	Assess Soc 130W/WS	
Spring 2016	Assess Soc 3	
Fall 2016	Assess Soc 130W/WS	
Spring 2017	Alumni Survey	

VII. Closing the Loop - Summary Evaluation, Curriculum Adjustment, and Reporting

The Department of Sociology has conducted multiple assessment measures during the last several years and based on the results of these assessment measures, including pre and post tests, exam essays, and surveys, we have revised our assessment plan and also made changes to specific assignments and instruction in certain courses. As a result of the large number of outcomes that we were previously assessing, it was difficult to measure each of these outcomes in a timely enough fashion to utilize the results so we have reduced our number of outcomes and now focus on only those that are our most

important objectives and that can be measured in such a way as to provide specific information in regard to improving our program. While changes to the assessment plan reflect the realization that we were not able to assess all previous outcomes and an awareness of the fact that some of our initial assessment techniques needed refinement, other changes are based on the data and results of our assessment techniques. For example, in Fall of 2010 assessment essays that were part of the students' final exams for Soc 3 and Soc 130W were used to assess the critical thinking, reasoning, and writing skills of students. While a majority of the students did well (an average of 3.53 out of 5.0), four of the fifteen student essays showed an inability by the student to identify the correct statistical procedures or analyze the data. These results suggested that faculty teaching these courses could facilitate learning for the weakest students by identifying them earlier in the semester through minor revisions to the assignment and by requiring these students to meet with the instructor, work with a tutor in the Learning Center or work with a study group of fellow students. An assessment of the Service Learning Internship (Soc 185) in the Fall of 2011 provided specific data that demonstrates that this experience had a direct impact on students and enabled them to utilize sociological theories and perspectives to understand social phenomena. This suggests that this course is extremely valuable and should be continued; it would also be valuable to assess the long-term impact and significance of this experience.

The department keeps a binder with examples of student work and a summary prepared by the faculty who carry out assessment and will continue to analyze and utilize information provided by assessment activities to improve the program. G.E. Assessment data, summary and recommendations are also included in the binder. Using data from the ETS Field Test in Sociology (a standardized test) administered in Fall of 2012 and guided by priorities established in our department goals and outcome objectives, we will generate topics for exams and papers for the course under review each semester. The data from these direct measures will be evaluated by the SOAP coordinator and at least one other faculty member; recommendations for course curriculum adjustments will be made and reported the faculty teaching that course so that (s)he can design and implement curriculum adjustments. One year (2 semesters) later, that course will be re-evaluated to ascertain whether the curriculum adjustments have had the desired effect on student learning. Once in every five-year SOAP cycle, we will administer an alumni survey or pipe-line analysis. These data will then become part of the information we use to produce the direct measures described above.