

# Sociology Assessment Plans

## I. Program's mission

The program mission of the Department of Sociology is to create a learning environment that promotes a scientific understanding of social life. Through teaching, scholarship, and service, the Department of Sociology provides educational experiences that encourage students to think sociologically about the significance of social structures and processes, multicultural perspectives, and emerging interdependencies among members of the global community.

Through a variety of major concentration options for the undergraduate student, both on campus and online, we provide our students with academic programs and varied practical experiences that enhance their understanding and application of sociology and the sociological imagination. The B.A. and B.S. in Sociology serves as a strong foundation for graduate work in Sociology as well as in other professional fields such as social services, health services, community work, law and government, business, teaching, and college services.

As part of a liberal arts education, the Department of Sociology reflects IU Kokomo's broader mission by encouraging the development of critical thinking, effective communication, responsibilities of community membership, and other transferable skills as part of career preparation. By modeling intellectual curiosity and critical thinking, the resulting acquisition of knowledge helps students to become informed and contributing members of society, committed to creating, maintaining and enhancing healthy, just, and sustainable social structures from micro to macro levels.

## II. Program goals and student learning outcomes

The major in sociology is intended to serve as preparation for careers in the delivery and administration of social and health services, urban and environmental studies, law, government service at local, state and federal levels, teaching and related occupations. The major also provides training for advanced graduate work in sociology, social work and other social sciences.

The following learning goals and outcomes identify the means by which core courses provide students with a solid grounding in the fundamentals of the sociology discipline, whereas the preceding intentions for the Sociology major are to be accomplished.

### a. Goal #1 – Apply Sociological Imagination

- i. Outcome #1 – Understand the discipline of sociology and the sociological perspective, and the contribution to our understanding of social reality
  1. Component #1 – Describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and give examples of these differences and similarities.

- ii. Outcome #2 - Apply the sociological imagination and sociological concepts and principles to her/his own life.
      - 1. Component #1 - Participate actively in civic affairs
- b. Goal #2 – Understand Sociological Concepts**
  - i. Outcome #1 - Understand the basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations,
    - 1. Component #1 - define, give examples, show interrelationships, and demonstrate the relevance of sociological concepts
  - ii. Outcome #2 - Show how social issues can be better understood by emphasizing the micro/macro connections
    - 1. Component #1 - Synthesize information by pulling together disparate pieces of the sociology major.
- c. Goal #3 – Understand the Role of Theory in Sociology**
  - i. Outcome #1 - To understand the role of theory in sociology
    - 1. Component #1 - Define theory and describe and illustrate its role in building sociological knowledge
    - 2. Component #2 - and contrast basic theoretical orientations in reference to social phenomena
  - ii. Outcome #2 - Understand the macro-micro emphasis and compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another
    - 1. Component #1 - Understand and show how theories reflect the historical and social contexts of the times and cultures in which they were developed
- d. Goal #4 - Understand the Role of Evidence and Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Sociology**
  - i. Outcome #1 - Identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge
    - 1. Component #1 - Compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering data
  - ii. Outcome #2 - Design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various choices were made
    - 1. Component #1 - Use computers and statistical procedures in gathering, analyzing and interpreting data
    - 2. Component #2 - Critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved
  - iii. Outcome #3 - Understand ethical codes that govern the conduct of sociologists
    - 1. Component #1 – Demonstrate how sociological knowledge may be applied to people and lives.
- e. Goal #5 - Understand how Social Structure Operates**
  - i. Outcome #1 - Show how institutions interconnect in their effects on each other and on individuals.
    - 1. Component #1 - Demonstrate how societal and structural factors influence

- individual behavior and the self's development.
- ii. Outcome #2 - Demonstrate how social change factors, such as population, urbanization, or technology affect social structure and individuals.
    - 1. Component #2 - Demonstrate how social change affects social structure and individuals and show how structure is constantly in a process of becoming
- f. **Goal #6 – Understand and Gain Awareness of Inequality and Diversity**
- i. Outcome #1 – Understand the internal diversity of U.S. society and the significance of variations by race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age
    - 1. Component #1 – Demonstrate the social construction of race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age and class
    - 2. Component #2 - The importance of reducing the negative effects of social inequality
  - ii. Outcome #2 – Understand the cultural diversity among societies.
    - 1. Component #1 – Demonstrate the effects of globalization on inequality and diversity
- g. **Goal #7 – Critical Thinking**
- i. Outcome #1 - Apply critical thinking skills to sociological data and theory.
    - 1. Components #1 - Easily move from memorization to analysis and application to synthesis and evaluation.
    - 2. Component #2 - Identify underlying assumptions in particular theoretical orientations or arguments.
  - ii. Outcome #2 - Identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches to an issue.
    - 1. Component #1 - Show how patterns of thought and knowledge are directly influenced by political-economic social structures.
    - 2. Component #2 - Present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues.

**III. Curriculum map (where in curriculum student learning outcomes occur)**

Outcomes	SOC S-100	SOC S-101	SOC S-125	SOC S-252	SOC S-340	SOC S-355	SOC S-470/S-471	SOC S-494/S-497	SOC S-300/S-400
Understand the discipline of sociology, sociological perspective, and the contribution to our understanding of social reality	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Apply the sociological imagination, concepts and principles to her/his own life	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Understand basic concepts and theoretical interrelations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Show how social issues can be understood by emphasizing the micro/macro connections	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Define theory and describe and illustrate its role in building sociological knowledge	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Understand the macro-micro emphasis and compare and contrast theories at one level with those at another	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Identify basic methodological approaches and describe the general role of methods in building sociological knowledge	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various choices were made	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Understand ethical codes that govern the conduct of sociologists	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Show how institutions interconnect in their effects on each other and on individuals	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Demonstrate how social change factors, such as population, urbanization, or technology affect social structure and individuals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Understand the internal diversity of U.S. society and the significance of variations by race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Understand the cultural diversity among societies	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Apply critical thinking skills to sociological data and theory	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Identify underlying assumptions in methodological approaches to an issue	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**IV. Assessment activities planned for the following academic year**

<b>a. Assessment Schedule - Student learning outcome(s) to assess in the following academic year.</b>	
2013-2014	Cultural Diversity (V)
2014-2015	Cultural Diversity (V) continued; Speech (I); Physical and Life Sciences (IX)
2015-2016	Speech (I) continued; Physical and Life Sciences (IX) continued; Quantitative Literacy (III); Social and Behavioral Science (VII)
2016-2017	Quantitative Literacy (III) continued; Social and Behavioral Science (VII) continued; Humanities and Arts (VIII); Information Literacy (II)
2017-2018	Humanities and Arts (VIII) continued; Information Literacy (II) continued; Critical Thinking (IV); Ethics(VI)
2018-2019	Critical Thinking (IV) continued; Ethics (VI)
2019-2020	Cultural Diversity (V revisited); Communication Skills/Speech (I revisited) continued; Physical and Life Sciences (IX revisited)

- b. For each outcome you plan to assess, identify approximately when, where (e.g., in which courses), and how (i.e., through what activity) students will demonstrate their achievement of the outcome.**

The Department of sociology employs a wide variety of assessment mechanisms for determining the extent to which outcomes for student learning are being met, using both direct and indirect measures that are reflective of the course level (for example, a lower level survey courses, versus an upper level course). For example, students are asked to complete various direct measures of their learning outcomes like quizzes, papers, projects, and/or presentations in all course levels, as well as indirect measures of their learning like teaching evaluations, student surveys, and/or their perceptions on their own outcomes in the class.

In the survey courses (SOC-S100; SOC-S101; SOC-S125), students are asked to complete quizzes, exams, short essays, short research presentations, and discussions throughout the semester. The short essays and research presentations are typically assigned in the second half of the semester with expected due dates the last weeks of the semester. Quizzes, exams, and discussions occur throughout the semester. Student surveys and teaching evaluations are done at the end of the semester.

In upper level courses, (SOC-S252; SOC-S340; SOC-S355; SOC-S470/471; SOC-S494/497; SOC-300s/400s) students are expected to reflect upon their learning, in addition to demonstrating their learning through direct measures, through quizzes, exams, and discussions that occur throughout the semester, as well as complete larger individual or group research projects and presentations, and/or participate in community-and service learning projects. The larger research projects and presentations, community projects, and research designs are assigned in the second half of the semester with expected due dates often occurring the last two weeks of the semester. Student surveys and teaching evaluations are done at the end of the semester.

**c. For each component of the outcome(s) you plan to assess, describe the performance characteristics or criteria necessary for successful achievement.**

- Quizzes - students must correctly identify sociological concepts, theories, and/or methodologies as it pertains to the topic and materials presented specific to the course
- Exams - students must correctly identify sociological concepts, theories, and/or methodologies as it pertains to the topic and materials presented specific to the course
- Short Essays – students must be able to demonstrate their knowledge or understanding of a sociological concept, theory, or methodology, or to summarize information correctly based on the topic and materials presented specific to the course
- Short Research Papers and/or Presentations - Students must compile evidence that responds to general questions, and will strive to present and defend a thesis statement about that question. Successful achievement will show that students mastered content knowledge for a particular topic, and (to varying degrees) that they are able to present this material in a paper and/or presentation format
- Discussions - Students will participate in oral exchanges about course content, illustrating their ability to employ evidence and to respond to claims and counter-claims about that material. These discussions at times may consider spontaneous statements and the effectiveness of a response to unanticipated viewpoints (or evidence). Where applicable, students must also display the ability to work with teammates to consider and deliver evidence effectively.
- Large Individual or Group Research Projects and/or Presentations - Students must compile evidence that responds to general questions, and will strive to present and defend a thesis statement about that question. Successful achievement will show that students mastered content knowledge for a particular topic, and (to varying degrees) that they are able to present this material in a paper and/or presentation format; extends beyond the short research paper with additional requirements for the research project
- Community and Service Learning Projects – The student integrates their academic work with community engagement, producing a tangible product (piece of legislation or policy, a business, building or civic infrastructure, water quality or scientific assessment, needs survey, research paper, service program, or organization) that has engaged community constituents and responded to community needs and assets through the process
- Senior Thesis - Students in their junior or senior year will conduct their own research, or use a secondary data source to complete a large, independent research project culminating in a final paper and research presentation, occurring in the last weeks of the spring semester of their junior or senior year

**d. Indicate a benchmark, that is, what level of performance will be considered acceptable (e.g., 85% of students will demonstrate satisfactory achievement of this outcome).**

Benchmarks for meeting a satisfactory level of achievement for the outcomes listed above will be observed when 75% or more of students can correctly identify basic sociological concepts, identify the differences in theoretical paradigms, understand the effects of status differences on daily life, compare and contrast critical or alternative views of society, and identify the relation between individuals and institutions. These benchmarks can be observed among each performance characteristic listed above.

## V. Ongoing Assessment

- a. **Describe the status of your larger program assessment plan (primarily sections II and III). Do you consider it complete? Is it still incomplete? If incomplete, which parts are missing?**

Recently, The Department of Sociology experienced transitions in leadership, which can be reflected in the assessment plan among other areas. For this reason, the assessment plan in Sociology is itself in transition. 2016 provided the first year where assessment plans, outcomes, and maps were fully developed with concrete plans to implement these measures among the classes. Parts of the assessment plan are incomplete only in regards to effective measures of collecting data and subsequently “closing the loop” on reevaluating the student learning goals and effective measures of those outcomes.

The Department of Sociology has presently identified an assessment coordinator with plans to complete and fully implement assessment measures effective 2017.

No additional funds or support are needed at this time to complete the assessment activities.