

## Year 0 Undergraduate Program Planning Report

College: Letters and Science

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Submitted by: Maggie Thorsen

Assessment reports are to be submitted annually by program/s. The report deadline is September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Which programs are requesting a planning year?

**Indicate all majors, minors, certificates and/or options that are included in this planning year**

Majors/Minors/Certificate	Options
Sociology Major (B.S. in Sociology)	Both General Sociology option and Criminology option

### Part 1: Review and approve program learning outcomes.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs): PLOs should be written as specific, measurable statements describing what students will be able to do upon completion of the program. The assessment of PLOs provide feedback on the expected knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students develop as they progress through their program.

**Are you keeping existing outcomes?** Unclear (maybe some, but will be redeveloping and making a new assessment plan)

### If you are developing new program outcomes, what is your timeline for completion and approval

We intend to develop new learning outcomes and an assessment plan in the 2019-2020 academic year. We will report on these changes/updates in the fall of 2020. The first learning outcomes will be assessed in the 2020-2021 academic year, and reported in the fall of 2021.

### Part 2: Development of Assessment Plan

**Each plan will require the following information:**

Threshold Values: Along with PLOs, plans should include threshold values; minimums against which to assess student achievement for learning outcomes. Threshold values are defined as an established criteria for which outcome achievement is defined as met or not met.

Methods of Assessment & Data Source: Assessment plans require evidence to demonstrate student learning at the program level. This evidence can be in the form of a direct or indirect measure of student learning. Both direct and indirect assessment data must be associated with the program's learning outcomes. An assessment rubric will also need to be included that demonstrates how evaluation of the data was used to assess student achievement.

Timeframe for Collecting and Analyzing Data: Develop a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed. As graduate assessment reports are

biennial, faculty review of assessment results may only occur every other year, however, annual faculty meeting to review these data and discuss student progress may be beneficial.

**Are any of your exiting thresholds, methods or data source rolling over to your new plan?**

Unclear (to be determined by the faculty)

**If are developing new planning documents, please indicate what you committee will be developing (mark all that apply):** likely all of these

**New threshold values**

**New Assessment Methods**

**New Data Source/s**

**Developing a multi-year rotation and data collection. In reviewing your existing planning schedule, will be keeping the same rotation?** No

**In the following fields, please indicate what will be completed, and by whom. It is recommended that during Year 0 Planning that assessment data is collected to determine whether it will be supportive of the learning outcomes.**

### **Part 3: Program Assessment**

The assessment report should identify how assessment was conducted, who received the analyzed assessment data, and how it was used by program faculty for program improvement(s).

Assessment reports should also reflect on previous assessment and program improvements by identifying previous program-level changes that have led to outcome improvements.

**What is your current method? What has, and has not been effective?**

The current method for assessment is to collect a random sample of student work from a specified course, evaluate that data based on specific rubrics for one of seven learning outcomes. Members of the assessment committee independently review and score students' work based on the assessment rubrics. After initial assessment, the committee meet to discuss overall impressions of students' work, alignment with the learning outcomes, and performance at meeting assessment criteria as outlined in the rubrics. The outcome of this evaluation process is to determine whether or not students' are meeting the learning outcomes, areas for improvement, and recommendations for faculty to improve student learning based on our analysis. Initial assessments of what was learned through the assessment process is communicated to faculty and feedback is solicited. Comments and suggestions by faculty in the department are incorporated into the report

There is a growing discussion of a significant revision of the departments learning outcomes. As of now, our department has seven learning outcomes. After attending workshops on program learning

outcomes hosted by the Assessment and Outcomes Committee, we would like to reduce this number to better reflect our curriculum and faculty's views on the important learning outcomes of our program. This will allow the assessment committee and faculty to better focus their attention on improvements in these core goals. The revision of learning outcomes needs to be a department-wide discussion so no outcomes are currently "targeted" for change.

The incoming committee chair (Colter Ellis), in collaboration with the outgoing committee chair (Maggie Thorsen), will initiate a department wide discussion to revise the department's stated learning outcomes. This process will be paired with an improved assessment process that more clearly measures student's mastery of key sociological principles. Further, there will be discussion of determining appropriate assessment targets (e.g. data collected), so that there is consistency in what is assessed with the same rubrics over time. Currently we have experienced a lot of changes in rubrics as well as where the assessment data is coming from. In order to "close the loop" it would be useful to have a more systematic evaluation of assessment materials.

#### **Part 4: Program Assessment Plan**

##### **A) Program Description (from catalog) – If updated please include a brief statement as to what determined the need for the update.**

###### **From the catalog:**

"The Bachelor of Science in Sociology program provides students the opportunity to combine a liberal arts education with a unique focus on the empirical study of human societies including social dynamics, institutions, and inequality. Students are permitted a large number of elective courses.

A Bachelor's degree in Sociology prepares students for employment in a number of arenas, including governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, agricultural organizations, and academic institutions. The fields of law enforcement, probation and corrections, labor relations, business management, personnel administration, market analysis, and various types of industrial research employ students who major in sociology. Many graduates enter social services. Sociology also provides excellent preparation for graduate school and other educational and career opportunities.

The Department offers a Bachelor of Science degree with two options: (a) General Sociology, or (b) Criminology. Both options require 42 credits in Sociology courses."

###### **From the departmental website:**

"Drawing on the expertise and commitment of our research-active faculty, we provide excellent educational experiences to undergraduate majors, minors and MSU as a whole. The unifying theme of the department is the study of societies – past and present – embedded in the tradition of the liberal arts.

We offer two degree programs: A B.S. in Sociology and a B.S. in Anthropology.

Sociology often draws students who are interested in human interaction, social inequality, social institutions and social change. Sociology students also have multiple opportunities to participate in

independent research. Students who are interested in studying justice systems (e.g., law enforcement, courts, corrections) can take sociology courses that focus on current knowledge in this area as a part of the sociology major.”

### “Program Goals and Assessment

Our programs are oriented around the following objectives:

- To provide a well-rounded liberal arts education heavily invested in the social sciences.
- To provide students an opportunity to study social worlds in-depth, including social arrangements, social interaction, social structure and culture.
- To foster critical reading and thinking, intellectual curiosity and ethical reasoning in all of our students
- To enable students to develop and pursue their own intellectual questions through independent research  
To nurture and train students to be progressively more independent learners
- To prepare students for the workforce – in government, business, education, nonprofits – by developing skills in research, synthesis, analysis, and written and oral communication
- To prepare interested students for graduate study in academic and applied fields”

### **What determined the need for an update:**

Members of the sociology curriculum assessment committee and the department head attended workshops put on by the University Assessment and Outcomes committee on developing program learning outcomes. Reflecting on the information we learned at these workshops, as well as current learning outcomes and assessment procedures, we have decided that the current model needs an update. The committee will initiate discussions with faculty, and hold a faculty meeting in which we can start to develop new learning outcomes, specify assessment targets, and create a new assessment plan. We intend to use information from two longitudinal studies conducted by the American Sociological Association (ASA) on sociology majors (“Bachelor’s and Beyond” studies). Additional resources and studies by ASA on learning outcomes and program outcomes at sociology programs across the country will be used to develop our own program learning outcomes (<https://www.asanet.org/research-publications/research-sociology/research-projects>).

**Please include the current plan and schedule. Make a note of what will be updated and or reconsidered**

ASSESSMENT PLANNING CHART. PROGRAM: Sociology/Criminology					
	<i>Assessment Year and Targeted Courses</i>				
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	<i>Data Source</i>
<i>Learning Outcome 1: Sociology as a Discipline.</i> Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of society and changes in society		SOCIxxx  (Upper Division Course)			Essay Question
<i>Learning Outcome 2: Sociological Concepts.</i> Our students will demonstrate a knowledge, comprehension, and relevance of core sociological concepts.		SOCI 311 (Criminology)			Final Project
<i>Learning Outcome 3: Sociological Theories.</i> Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the role of theory in sociology.			SOCI455/ SOCI 311		Essay Questions
<i>Learning Outcome 4: Sociological Application.</i> Our students will formulate research questions based on critical readings and understandings of sociological research.	SOCIxxx  (Upper Division Course)				Final Project
<i>Learning Outcome 5: Oral Communication.</i> Our students will demonstrate the ability to present material orally in an organized and effective manner.			SOCIxxx  (Upper Division Course)		Final Presentation
<i>Learning Outcome 6: Written Communication:</i> Our students will demonstrate appropriate writing practices and formats and effective written communication and editing skills.	SOCI 499 (Capstone)			SOCI499	Final Project

<i>Learning Outcome 7: Empiricism.</i> Our students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles and uses of evidence in qualitative and quantitative methods.				SOCIxxx (Upper Division Course)	Essay Question
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Threshold Values for all learning outcomes: 75% of assessed students to score a 3 or above on a 1 to 5 point scale.

**Notes on Changes:** Unclear what specific changes will be made to learning outcomes or assessment until the faculty can meet to discuss and spend time to make an informed plan.

**Part 5: Program Assessment Results**

This section will be completed and reported in next year’s report. If there is an existing rubric for assessment, please include.

**What is the goal for the end of Year 0, and who all will be involved in the process?**

Please include who received the analyzed assessment data, and how it was used by program faculty for program improvement

Submit report to [programassessment@montana.edu](mailto:programassessment@montana.edu)