# Annual Program Assessment Report

Academic Year Assessed: 2020-2021
College: Letters and Sciences
Department: Sociology and Anthropology
Submitted by: Colter Ellis

**Program(s) Assessed:**
**Indicate all majors, minors, certificates and/or options that are included in this assessment:**

| Majors/Minors/Certificate | Options |
|---|---|
| Sociology Major/Sociology Minor | Sociology and Criminology Options |

## Annual Assessment Process (CHECK OFF LIST)

1. Data are collected as defined by Assessment Plan
   YES__X___                NO_____
2. Population or unbiased samples of collected assignments are scored by at least two faculty members using  scoring rubrics to ensure inter-rater reliability.
    YES__X___                NO_____
3. Areas where the acceptable performance threshold has not been met are highlighted.
   YES__X___                NO_____            NA_____
4. Assessment scores were presented at a program/unit faculty meeting.
   YES__X___                NO_____
5. The faculty reviewed the assessment results, and responded accordingly (Check all appropriate lines)
   Gather additional data to verify or refute the result. _____
   Identify potential curriculum changes to try to address the problem _____
   Change the acceptable performance threshold, reassess _____
   Choose a different assignment to assess the outcome _____
   Faculty may reconsider thresholds_____
   Evaluate the rubric to assure outcomes meet student skill level _____
   Use Bloom's Taxonomy to consider stronger learning outcomes _____
   Choose a different assignment to assess the outcome_____
   OTHER:

6. Does your report demonstrate changes made because of previous assessment results (closing the loop)?      YES_____                NO__X___

**1. Assessment Plan, Schedule and Data Source.**
**a. Please provide a multi-year assessment schedule that will show when all program learning outcomes will be assessed, and by what criteria (data). (You may use the table provided, or you may delete and use a different format).**

| PLO# | Course | Assignment | Year to be Assessed | | | | |
|------|--------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
| 1 | SOCI 455 | Final Paper | X | - | X | - | X |
| 2 | SOCI 499/Other | Final Paper | - | X | - | X | - |
| 3 | SOCI 318 R | Research Project | X | - | X | - | X |
| 4 | SOCI 311 | Final Paper | - | X | - | X | - |

**\*Data sources can be items such as randomly selected student essays or projects, specifically designed exam questions, student presentations or performances, or a final paper. Do not use course evaluations or surveys as primary sources for data collection.**

**b. What are your threshold values for which you demonstrate student achievement? (Example provided in the table should be deleted before submission)**

| PLO# | PLO Description | Threshold Value | Data Source |
|------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| **1.** | **Sociological Principles**: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of sociology's core conceptual, theoretical, and empirical principles. | The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to score at or above 3 on a 1-4 scoring rubric. | Final paper or individual research project |
| **2.** | **Sociological Application**: Our students will demonstrate the ability to apply the "sociological imagination" to understand and analyze social institutions, groups, and processes. | The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to score at or above 3 on a 1-4 scoring rubric. | Final paper or individual research project |
| **3.** | **Sociological Communication**: Our students will demonstrate the ability to communicate sociological knowledge effectively | The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to score at or above 3 on | Final paper or individual research project |

| | | | a 1-4 scoring rubric. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | **Sociological Evaluation**: Students will develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the evidence, conclusions, and underlying assumptions of academic and non-academic sources of knowledge. | The threshold value for this outcome is for 80% of assessed students to score at or above 3 on a 1-4 scoring rubric. | Final paper or individual research project |

## 2. What Was Done

**a) Was the completed assessment consistent with the plan provided?** YES__X___        NO_____

Assessment committee members for this academic year were Colter Ellis (Chair) and Suzy McElrath. This committee assessed the performance of students in two classes (SOCI 318R and SOCI 455). These are two of the required sociology classes for the sociology option. Dr Ellis instructs SOCI 455.

To assess the sociology degree program, committee members met during October of 2021. Working with course instructors, the committee identified appropriate assessment artifacts and asked for a random sample of approximately half the class (n=15 for each class). Ellis and McElrath then independently assessed artifacts from each class using the PLO rubrics developed in the Year 1 assessment. Once completed, the committee shared their scores and met to discuss any significant discrepancies. The findings were shared with the sociology faculty who then discussed possible modifications to the curriculum and assessment process.

**If no, please explain why the plan was altered.**
n/a

**b) Please provide a rubric that demonstrates how your data was evaluated.**
As per the Year 0 assessment report, the committee requested a random samples of student papers from Sociology 455 (PLO #1) with a focus on "Theoretical Principles" and Sociology 318 (PLO#3) with a focus on "Overall Organization" and "Structure and Delivery".

| PLO#1: Sociological Principles: Our students will demonstrate an understanding of sociology's core conceptual, theoretical, and empirical principles. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indicators | Unacceptable (1) | Marginal (2) | Acceptable (3) | Advanced (4) |
| Conceptual Principles | Students may state a concept's basic principles but may not do so in a way that is entirely correct or complete, they cannot summarize or explain the concept in their own words. | Student can summarize a concept's principles with few mistakes but struggle to correctly apply it in a sociological analysis or compare it to other concepts. | Student demonstrates understanding by applying a concept's principles in a sociological analysis or comparing it to other concepts. | Student demonstrates understanding by synthesizing, critiquing, or applying the concept's principles in a new or unique analysis. |
| Theoretical Principles | Student may state the theory's basic principles but may not do so in a way that is correct or complete, they cannot summarize or accurately explain it in their own words. | Student can summarize a theoretical principle with few mistakes but struggle to apply it in a sociological analysis or compare it to other theoretical principles. | Student demonstrates understanding by applying a theoretical principle in a sociological analysis or comparing it to other theoretical principles. | Student demonstrates understanding by synthesizing, critiquing, or applying the theoretical principle to create a new or unique analysis. |
| Empirical Principles | Student may state the basics of empirical principle but may not do so in a way that is correct or complete, they cannot summarize or accurately explain it in their own words. | Student understands and can summarize an empirical principle but struggles to apply it in a sociological analysis, or compare it to other empirical principles or analyses. | Student demonstrates understanding by applying an empirical principle in a sociological analysis or comparing it to other empirical principles or analyses. | Student demonstrates understanding by synthesizing, critiquing, or applying the empirical principle to create a new or unique analysis. |

Threshold Values: 80% of students will meet or exceed level 3 competency

| PLO #3: Sociological Communication: Our students will demonstrate the ability to communicate sociological knowledge effectively. | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indicators | Unacceptable (1) | Marginal (2) | Acceptable (3) | Advanced (4) |
| Overall Organization | The main points and supporting evidence are unorganized, unclear, or otherwise confusing. | The main points and supporting evidence are presented, but the content does not follow a unified or logical organization. | The content follows a unified and logical organization but sometimes drifts from the thesis or makes points that lack adequate justification. | Organization is unified and logical, with excellent transitions and clear, substantiated conclusions. |
| Structure and Delivery | Major mistakes are evident, and the communication of the content is ineffective. | Main points are well articulated, but mistakes remain and communication of the content is inconsistent. | All points are well articulated, there are few mistakes, and the content is effectively communicated. | All points are well articulated, there are few mistakes, and the content is communicated clearly, concisely, and/or persuasively. |
| Sociological Principles | Major mistakes are evident regarding the definitions or applications of sociological principles (e.g., methods, theories, or concepts). | Use of sociological principles is appropriate, but errors in definitions or applications are pronounced. | Use of sociological principles is well defined and appropriately applied in the analysis. | Sociological principles are clearly defined, appropriately applied, and result in a novel or especially creative analysis. |
| Sociological Imagination | Student does not use the sociological imagination. | Student is generally able to use the sociological imagination but does not do so consistently. | Student consistently uses the sociological imagination. | Student consistently uses the sociological imagination, resulting in a novel comparison or assessment. |

Threshold Values: 80% of students will meet or exceed level 3 competency

# 3. How Data Were Collected

**a) How were data collected? (Please include method of collection and sample size).**

The committee chair contacted the appropriate course faculty member and asked for a random selection of 15 student papers (approximately half the total course size). Faculty members were asked to mask student names and email the sample to the committee chair who shared them with the other committee member via a Box.com folder. For both SOCI 318 and SOCI 455, the most appropriate assessment artifact was the final student paper. For SOCI 318, this paper was an independent research project and for SOCI 455 it was a discussion of a key sociological theorist.

**b) Explain the assessment process, and who participated in the analysis of the data.**
The two-person committee independently reviewed each sample, scoring entries on the 1-4 scale using the appropriate rubric presented above. The committee members compared their scores and discussed significant discrepancies.


# 4. What Was Learned
**Based on the analysis of the data, and compared to the threshold values provided, what was learned from the assessment?**

## a) Areas of strength
The committee found that a majority of students (60% of SOCI 318 and 53% of SOCI 455) met or exceeded the standards of Acceptable or Advanced as described in the PLO evaluation rubrics. While these scores are well below the ambitious goal of 80% Acceptable or Advanced, it is worth noting that the median and modal scores for both classes were in the Acceptable range.

SOCI 318, PLO #3
| | |
|---|---|
| Overall Average | 3.0 |
| Unacceptable | 6% |
| Marginal | 33% |
| Acceptable | 33% |
| Advanced | 26% |

SOCI 455, PLO #1
| | |
|---|---|
| Overall Average | 3.0 |
| Unacceptable | 6% |
| Marginal | 40% |
| Acceptable | 40% |
| Advanced | 13% |

## b) Areas that need improvement
There are areas of our curriculum, and likely our assessment process, that need to be improved. Written communication has long been a topic of frustration for our faculty as has students' understanding of the discipline's key theoretical perspectives. That said, it is also possible that our review criteria are unrealistically ambitious and may need to be recalibrated.

# 5. How We Responded

**a) Describe how "What Was Learned" was communicated to the department, or program faculty.  Was there a forum for faculty to provide feedback and recommendations?**

**b) Based on the faculty responses, will there any curricular or assessment changes (such as plans for measurable improvements, or realignment of learning outcomes)?**
**YES_____          NO_____**

**If yes, when will these changes be implemented?**

**Please include which outcome is targeted, and how changes will be measured for improvement.  If other criteria is used to recommend program changes (such as exit surveys, or employer satisfaction surveys) please explain how the responses are driving department, or program decisions.**

**c) When will the changes be next assessed?**

# 6. Closing the Loop
**a) Based on assessment from previous years, can you demonstrate program level changes that have led to outcome improvements?**

Submit report to programassessment@montana.edu