

Academic Program Assessment Plan

2010 -2011

Sociology (BA/BS)

(General emphasis)

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT PLAN: 2010-2011

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Program: Sociology BA/BS

College: Humanities and Social Sciences

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DEPARTMENT MISSION: The Department of Sociology and Anthropology is firmly committed to the principles of a liberal education. Our central objective is to teach and communicate the sociological and anthropological ways of viewing the world. The programs in sociology, sociology/criminology and anthropology are intended to increase the student's knowledge of social organization and social relationships and to assist students in developing skills in the processing, integration and utilization of knowledge, rather than its simple transfer. Our curriculum reflects the long-standing interest of our disciplines in examining the human condition and understanding stability and change in social life. The Department prepares students to work in a wide variety of occupations or to pursue professional or graduate studies. The Department's mission is to produce graduates who are motivated and equipped to make meaningful contributions to the enhancement of the human condition.

The Department's mission relates to the mission of Colorado State University at Pueblo in the following ways: (a) the Sociology and Anthropology Department offers programs of study designed to complement and strengthen a broad liberal arts education; (b) the Sociology and Anthropology Department provides programs with emphasis on preparing students for career success or further professional development through graduate education; and (c) the programs in the department wed theory to practice across the curriculum, stressing the application of knowledge in a variety of contexts.

The Department's mission relates to the mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in the following ways: (a) the Sociology and Anthropology Department programs provide classroom environments that stimulate critical thinking and assist students to further develop critical thinking skills; (b) social action and responsibility, personal morality and accountability, and professional ethics are focused on throughout the curriculum in classes that examine the interplay between individual agency and social influence; (c) the broad disciplines within the department stress the importance of an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity; and (d) the department is committed to producing motivated and socially aware graduates equipped to make meaningful contributions within a diverse community and increasingly interdependent world.

PROGRAM MISSION: Sociology is the study of human social behavior and is concerned with conditions such as crime and delinquency, family interaction and conflict, social inequality, social change, and organizations in contemporary industrial society. Sociologists are not only interested in understanding social issues and institutions, but also in resolving social problems and improving social conditions for human populations. Students may receive a general sociology degree, or they may specialize within the criminology emphasis area and receive a sociology/criminology degree.

The insights of a sociological perspective include the ability to perceive the structures and patterns upon which everyday life rests, to understand the interaction between individual agency and social forces, to interpret events from diverse perspectives, and to examine existing social arrangements critically – in other words, to apply a “sociological imagination.”

At Colorado State University at Pueblo a course of study leading to a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science in Sociology is intended to help students develop the insights of a sociological perspective, to provide a working knowledge of research and theoretical analysis of the social world, to ensure that students develop skills leading to successful careers, including graduate study, and to promote active involvement in the community in ways that improve the human condition, organizational process, or social relations and practices.

Since graduates enter in a wide range of professional, administrative, policy-oriented, research, educational, human service and other occupations, the program seeks to create a learning environment that engages students in their own learning and within which students may liberate themselves from ideological and social conditions that produce ignorance and apathy and limit human potential. Through the study of sociology, students gain skills that enhance their ability to assess new and unfamiliar situations, to select and apply a range of analytic techniques in solving problems in creative ways, and to communicate effectively. As multiple careers become the norm in American life, such a skill set becomes ever more crucial.

The program prepares its graduates to understand social relations, to think critically about social change, and to be active and involved citizens. It prepares them for further academic study and research as well as for professional careers in a variety of areas, in particular the criminal justice system and related community-based private organizations offering services to victims and offenders. The program maintains a continual focus on ensuring respect for diversity and a commitment to social responsibility.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Outcome 1

Students will be able to comprehend and criticize the major theoretical perspectives that inform modern sociological thought. Specifically, students will be able to: a.) show what these perspectives have in common (the sociological perspective) and how they differ (different theoretical approaches), and b.) criticize these different approaches in terms of their explanatory strengths and weaknesses for purposes of understanding what each reveals and what each obscures.

The basic theoretical approaches are explored in the Introduction to Sociology course which is required of all sociology majors. In addition, Social and Cultural Theory (Soc 310) is required of all majors. In these courses, the central theoretical approaches in sociology are investigated, applied to different social issues, and criticized from different perspectives. The various criticisms that have been generated from these applications to various substantive issues are also discussed. Sociology electives also include the application and critique of these basic explanatory approaches to specific social issues.

Assessment Measures

In addition to the evidence provided by exams and papers for the courses mentioned above, our students' ability to understand and criticize the basic theoretical perspectives in the field will be measured by students' self-evaluations concerning their understanding of theory in their responses to

the exit survey. Further assessment of this outcome will be achieved through the Major Field Achievement Test in Sociology. This test is given to a percentage of graduating seniors and includes a measure for Theory

Outcome 2

Students will learn to apply a range of research methods in conjunction with sociological theory in order to explain and analyze complex social relations and organizations. Specifically, students will be able to demonstrate that they can: a.) identify, define, and give examples of various methods used in sociological research on contemporary societies, and b.) recognize and interpret research methodologies used in sociological literature.

Research Methods is required of all sociology majors. Topics include research design and various data collection approaches as well as hypothesis testing, reliability, validity, and statistical inference. Research examples in sociological literature are examined and analyzed, and a literature review and research proposal are required. In addition, sociology electives incorporate, in varying degrees, discussions of sociological research, including various methodological strategies and issues.

Assessment Measures

In addition to the evidence provided by exams and papers for the courses mentioned above, our students' facility in research methods and analysis will be measured by their self-evaluation of their understanding of methods in their responses to the exit questionnaire. Further assessment of this outcome will be measured by the Major Field Achievement Test in Sociology which includes a measure for Research Methods.

Outcome 3

Students will learn to apply social analysis to substantive social issues and problems, including such areas as deviance, ethnicity, gender, inequality, power, and globalization. Specifically, they will be able to apply sociological theories and methods to these substantive areas in order to understand social problems and inform social policy.

Most elective courses in sociology address one or more of these substantive areas. Many of our courses focus on crime and deviance, including all aspects of the criminal justice system. Other courses focus on matters of gender and others on issues of stratification, globalization, and social institutions (politics, family, work, etc.). Most of these electives also incorporate analyses of race, ethnicity, and social difference. These are the defining issues of sociology as a discipline, and therefore all the dimensions of theory and methods are directed at understanding these social concerns.

Assessment Measures

In addition to the evidence provided by exams and papers in the electives mentioned above, students' substantive knowledge and analytic ability will be measured by students' self-evaluation on the exit questionnaire. Further assessment of this outcome will be provided by the Major Field Achievement Test in Sociology which includes measures for knowledge of the central substantive areas in sociology.

Outcome 4

Students will be able to engage in critical thinking about various aspects of social life and organization.

All sociology courses involve critical thinking. The primary focus of the discipline is to help people see the social and institutional aspects of problems and events that often seem private and personal. In other words, sociology is committed to stimulating students to question standard cultural assumptions and in so doing to think critically and analytically about social life and social relations. All of our

courses, then, address the strategies of critical thinking – consistency, logical argument, tacit assumptions, and hidden values.

Assessment Measures

Critical thinking will be assessed by self-evaluation through responses to the exit questionnaire. The MFAT also includes an indicator for critical thinking.

Program Goals (2010-2011)

- 1. Review and evaluate student learning outcomes to determine if any revisions or additions are needed.**
- 2. Review and evaluate assessment measures for student learning outcomes 1 and 2 to determine if current measures are satisfactory.**
- 3. Develop standards for competence for student learning outcomes 1 and 2 in accordance with current or revised assessment measures.**
- 4. Review and modify, if needed, the current senior (graduate) exit interview. Determine how the results from this instrument will be used in the program assessment process.**
- 5. Develop a 2-3 year assessment timeline for reviewing and modifying (if necessary) all other aspects of the program's current assessment process.**