

Sociology BA/BS

1. Achieve Sociological Competency: Entry Level

Goal Description:

Students who take introductory sociology classes will gain basic knowledge of social life, social change, and the causes and consequences of human behavior as they acquire the sociological perspective.

Providing Department: Sociology BA/BS

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Entry Level

Learning Objective Description:

Students who take introductory sociology classes that are included in the SHSU Core Curriculum will be able to demonstrate their understanding of the basic core concepts of the discipline and the sociological perspective.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts: Entry Level

Indicator Description:

A sample of students enrolled in all of the three introduction-level sociology courses in the SHSU Core Curriculum (SOCI2319 in Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts; and, SOCI1301 and SOCI1306 in Component Area V: Social and Behavioral Sciences) is chosen in the Spring semester for evaluation. Employing an extra credit opportunity format, students responded to a ten question evaluation instrument for the Component Area V courses (see Attachment #1) and five question evaluation for the Component Area IV course, respectively (see Attachment #2) to measure their understanding of basic core concepts in Sociology. The selection of these indicators conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological research. This assessment was developed by the Department Undergraduate Committee.

In this cycle, we included item-by-item analyses to assess students' understanding of the sub-concepts of basic core concepts of the discipline indicated by the SHSU Core Curriculum.

1. Two sub-concept areas corresponding to the Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts: (a) Concept 1- To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context. (questions 1, 2, and 4); and (b) Concept 2 - to demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature, philosophy, and/or the arts on intercultural experiences. (questions 3 and 5).
2. Five sub-concept areas corresponding to the Component Area V: Social and Behavioral Sciences: (a) Concept 1- to employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition. (Q2, Q7); (b) Concept 2 - to examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures. (Q4, Q9); (c) Concept 3 - to use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories. (Q1, Q6); (d) Concept 4 - to develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues. (Q3, Q8); and (e) Concept 5 - to identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures. (Q5, Q10).

Attached Files

 [Attach1.BA.BSEntryLevelCompAreaV.Questions.19.20.docx](#)

 [Attach2.BABSEntryLevelCompAreaIVQuestions19.20.docx](#)

Criterion Description:

1. Overall, at least 85% of participating students should have at least 6 correct answers out of the 10 questions for Component Area V and at least 3 correct answers out of 5 questions for Component Area IV.
2. For the Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts, at least 85% of participating students should have at least 2 correct answers out of the 3 questions for the Concept 1, and at least 1 correct answer out of the 2 questions for the Concept 2.

3. For the Component Area V: Social and Behavioral Sciences, at least 85% of participating students should have at least 1 correct answer out of the 2 questions for each of the five concepts.

Findings Description:

For Component Area IV (SOCI 1301), 162 out of 297 enrolled students participated in the assessment (54.5% participation rate). Overall, 92.9% of the students had at least three out of five correct answers. For concept 1, 95% of students had at least two out of three correct answers. For concept 2, 92.6% of the students had at least one out of two answers.

For Component Area V (SOCI 2319), 298 out of 546 enrolled students participated in the assessment (54.6% participation rate). Overall, 77.2% of the students had at least six out of 10 correct answers. For the Component Area V, the percent of participating students who got 1 out of 2 correct answers are as follows:

- Concept 1: 95.7%
- Concept 2: 83.3%
- Concept 3: 85.8%
- Concept 4: 96.3%
- Concept 5: 94.4%

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts: Entry Level

Action Description:

The data indicate the desired overall result is exceeded in Component Area IV. In Component Area V, the department missed its goal of 85% of participating students having at least 6 correct answers out of the 10 questions. The department met its goal for four out of the five concepts. However, for concept 2, which the department missed its goal, there was improvement in student comprehension from the previous academic year. Given this improvement, the department will continue its emphasis on social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures in its 2319 classes.

2. Sociological Competency: Mid-level

Goal Description:

Students who complete the mid-level assessment course, SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology, will gain knowledge and skills in thinking and writing sociologically.

Providing Department: Sociology BA/BS

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Mid-level

Learning Objective Description:

Sociology majors will be able to demonstrate the ability to think and write sociologically.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Sociological Mid-level Papers

Indicator Description:

The SOCI 2399: Writing in Sociology is required as a mid-level course to achieve the BA/BS in Sociology. A sociological essay is a requirement of the class. A random sample of approximately one fifth of student essays were selected from the SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology class in the Fall

2021 and Spring 2022 semesters for assessment of their ability to think and write sociologically.

Members of the Undergraduate Assessment Committee reviewed the selected papers at the end of the Spring semester based on two main areas: sociological content and sociological writing in the discipline of Sociology. Sociological Content includes three criteria: understanding social forces, applying a theoretical framework, and providing empirical evidence. Sociological Writing Style includes three criteria: adopting American Sociological Association format, demonstrating a formal academic writing style, and minimizing grammatical errors. The selection of these criteria conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological thinking and writing. The evaluation rubric was developed and reviewed by the Undergraduate Committee (see Attachment #1).

Each paper was evaluated by three Undergraduate Assessment Committee members using the evaluation rubric, where a score from 1 to 5 (1 is “no mastery” and 5 is “excellent mastery”) is assigned in each of the six criteria in the two main areas.

Criterion Description:

At least 75% of papers should be rated 3 or better on average for each of the two main areas: Sociological Content and Sociological Writing Style.

Findings Description:

Seven out of the eight (87.5%) students' essays meet the minimum requirement of 3.0 overall average for Sociological Content and Sociological Writing. Attachment #2 includes each of the individual committee members' ratings for each of the eight papers, and a summary of the results for the Sociological Content and Sociological Writing Style areas. The average combined score for the eight papers is 3.6/5.0. The results of inter-item analysis reveal that students performed better on the Writing Area (4.7/5.0) than the Content Area (3.2/5.0). The results also indicated that five of the six criteria (83.3%) are above the desired 3.0 minimum. The "Does the author use a theoretical framework to analyze the prompt?" criteria (C2) scores a 2.67.

Attached Files

 [Attach2.BABS.Mid.Level.Findings21.22.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Sociological Mid-Level Papers

Action Description:

The Sociology Program met its goal for the mid-level assessment. The one area in which student scores were lower was theoretical capacity. As the mid-level assessment uses papers from SOCI 2399, students tend to have limited exposure to sociological theories at this point in the program. Thus, the lower score on the use of sociological theories is not a significant concern. As the sociological curriculum has been updated, the assessment rubric will be reviewed and updated in the next assessment cycle.

3. Sociological Competency: Exit Level

Goal Description:

Students who complete the Sociology Program will have an advanced understanding of the core concepts of the discipline and the sociological perspective.

Providing Department: Sociology BA/BS

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Demonstrate Sociological Competency: Exit Level

Learning Objective Description:

Sociology majors will be able to demonstrate and apply advanced sociological knowledge and scientific skills to critically analyze social phenomenon through a capstone research paper.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Sociological Papers: Exit Level

Indicator Description:

The SOCI4399: Senior Seminar class is a required capstone course to achieve the BA/BS in Sociology. A sociological research paper is a requirement of the class. A random sample of twenty-five percent of student research papers was selected from the SOCI4399: Senior Seminar classes in the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters for assessment of their advanced sociological knowledge and scientific skills to critically analyze social phenomenon.

The Undergraduate Assessment Committee reviews the selected papers at the end of the Spring semester based on three core content criteria in the discipline of Sociology: Sociological Theory; Sociological Methods; and Sociological Perspective and four core writing criteria: Writing Quality: Academic Writing; Writing Quality: Spelling and Grammar; Documentation of Sources: Proper Citations; and Documentation of Sources: American Sociological Association (ASA) Format. The selection of these criteria conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological research. The evaluation rubric was developed by the Undergraduate Committee and approved by the entire faculty (see Attachment #1).

Each paper is evaluated by three Undergraduate Assessment Committee members using the evaluation rubric, where a score from 1 to 5 (1 is “no mastery” and 5 is “excellent mastery”) is assigned in each of the seven core areas. Note: The Undergraduate Committee is composed of four faculty members plus the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

To continue to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in meeting the core learning objectives in the undergraduate BA and BS programs, for the 2021-2022 cycle we conducted item by item analysis in the three core content areas and four core writing areas.

Attached Files

 [Attach1.ExitLevelRubric21.22.docx](#)

Criterion Description:

Overall, at least 80% of papers should be rated 3 or better on average for the three core content areas and the four core writing areas.

For item by item analysis, at least 80% of papers should be rated 3 or better on average for each of the seven core areas.

Findings Description:

Overall, 8 of the 8 students' papers (100%) meet the minimum requirement on average across the seven core areas. The average combined score for the eight papers is 3.5/5.0. Regarding the item by item analysis of the three core Content areas: 5 out of 8 (62.5%) for Theory, 8 out of 8 (100%) for Methods, and 7 out of 8 (87.5%) for Sociological Perspective, meet the minimum requirement. Regarding the item by item analysis for the four core Writing areas: 7 out of 8 (87.5%) for Academic Writing, 8 out of 8 (100%) for Spelling and Grammar, 7 out of 8 (87.5%) for Proper Citations, and 7 out of 8 (87.5%) for American Sociological Association (ASA) Format, meet the minimum requirement.

Attachment #2 includes each of the individual committee members' ratings for each of the ten papers, summary tables of overall results and item by item analysis.

Attached Files

 [Attach2BABS.ExitLevelFindings21.22.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Sociological Papers: Exit Level

Action Description:

The Sociology program met its goal for the exit level assessment. As SOCI 4399: Senior Seminar in Sociology is no longer part of the BA and BS curriculum with the 2022-2023 catalog, a new exit level assessment mechanism will need to be developed in the next assessment cycle.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

A primary focus of department initiatives during the 2020-2021 year will be on undergraduate programing for majors and minors.

The department will work to get the revised curriculum for the BA and BS programs approved and incorporated into the 2022-2023 catalogs. This includes the creation of four new courses, restructuring existing requirements, and revising several existing courses.

The department will develop recruitment and informational materials for the revised BA and BS programs. This will include an infographic, as well additional print, digital, and multimedia materials.

The department will explore the possibility of developing a mentoring program for sociology majors. Prior to the assignment of advising to the SAM Center, the department advised all majors in-house. While the SAM Center does an excellent job of advising students as to degree plans, the department would like to compliment such advising with a mentoring program that focuses on professional development. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the sociology department will research existing mentoring programs and develop a program to implement on a trial basis during the 2022-2023 academic year.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

A primary focus of department initiatives during the 2020-2021 year will be on undergraduate programing for majors and minors.

The department will work to get the revised curriculum for the BA and BS programs approved and incorporated into the 2022-2023 catalogs. This includes the creation of four new courses, restructuring existing requirements, and revising several existing courses.

- The department substantially revised its BA and BS programs. The revised curriculum includes increased emphasis on providing students with career-based skills and will allow

students more opportunities for community and civic engagement. The program also provides students increased flexibility in how they structure their sociology curriculum. For the BA and BS programs, students will now have to take five core courses, two applied core courses, and five electives. The applied core is a new component of the curriculum that emphasizes specific research, analytical, and communication skills that are applicable in a wide variety of careers. In doing so, the applied core addresses skills highlighted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers as important to occupational success. While the general curriculum has been restructured, some of new courses are delayed until the 2023-2024 catalog because of delays in receiving university approval.

The department will develop recruitment and informational materials for the revised BA and BS programs. This will include an infographic, as well additional print, digital, and multimedia materials.

- The Sociology homepage and BA and BS webpages have been redone. The webpages emphasize program learning outcomes and career possibilities and highlight the new curriculum. Additionally, a new webpage was developed entitled “alumni profiles” that highlights the career paths of program alumni and the ways that they are using sociology in their careers. The department is also working with enrollment marketing and communication to develop new print materials and SHSU online to develop a promotional video for the undergraduate programs. These are scheduled to be completed by the start of the Fall 2022 semester.

The department will explore the possibility of developing a mentoring program for sociology majors. Prior to the assignment of advising to the SAM Center, the department advised all majors in-house. While the SAM Center does an excellent job of advising students as to degree plans, the department would like to compliment such advising with a mentoring program that focuses on professional development. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the sociology department will research existing mentoring programs and develop a program to implement on a trial basis during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- The undergraduate committee was tasked with developing a mentoring program for sociology majors. The first part of the mentoring program will be a peer mentoring program, which will be implemented in Fall 2022. Mentors have been recruited from upper-level sociology students and a mentoring guidebook is being developed. Several activities for the peer mentoring program have also been planned, including a kickoff lunch and mid-semester meetings.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

For the BA and BS programs in the 2022-2023 academic year, the focus will be on implementing the revised curriculum. As part of the process, course rotations and schedules will need to be adjusted. The department chair and undergraduate coordinator will work on developing a new set of schedules and course rotations to fit with the new BA and BS curriculum. Additionally, the mid-level assessment mechanism will be reviewed, and a new exit level assessment mechanism will be developed.

The Sociology Department will implement a peer mentoring program. At the end of the spring semester, the program’s effectiveness will be reviewed, and adjustments made for the 2023-2024 academic year if necessary.

In the spirit of public sociology, the Sociology Department will launch a research initiative to study how issues of inequities impact student success at Sam Houston State University. The aim of this initiative is: (1) to better understand disparities and the ways they affect student experiences at SHSU, (2) to facilitate the development and implementation of programs and policies to assist student success, and (3) to foster academic excellence. The department will seek to use this initiative to increase student participation in research projects.

The department will increase its efforts to recruit more majors from both the current SHSU student body and new students. This will include the use of on-campus activities (e.g., alumni career panels) and off-campus outreach and recruitment efforts.