

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.

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 the two introduction-level sociology courses in the SHSU Core Curriculum (SOCI 2319 in Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts and SOC: I1301 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 (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.

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 Component Area IV: Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts: (a) Concept 1- To understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within a 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 various 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:

At least 85% of participating students should have 3 correct answers out of 5 questions for Component Area IV and 85% oat least 6 correct answers out of the 10 questions for Component Area V. For Component Area IV: At least 85% of participating students should have at least 2 correct answers out of the 3 questions for Concept 1, and at least 1 correct answer out of the 2 questions for Concept 2. For 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 2319), 306 students participated in the assessment. Overall, 96% of students had at least three out of five correct answers. For concept 1, 96% of students had at least two out of three correct answers. For concept 2, 90% of the students had at least one out of two answers.

For Component Area V (SOCI 1301), 57 students participated in the assessment. Overall, 82% of the students had at least six out of ten correct answers. For the five concepts, the percent of participating students who got 1 out of 2 correct answers are as follows:

- Concept 1: 98%
- Concept 2: 77%
- Concept 3: 81%
- Concept 4: 95%
- Concept 5: 88%

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Comprehension Of Basic Core Concepts: Entry Level

Action Description:

For Component Area IV, the department exceeded its goal.

For Component Area V, the department had uneven outcomes. The department did not meet its goal of 85% of students answering six or more of the assessment questions correctly. In terms of specific concepts, students comprehension met or exceeded the department goal on three out of the five concepts. The department did not meets its goal on concepts 2 and 3. The department will review these concepts and curriculum and seek to increase student comprehension in these areas.

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

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 a BA/BS in Sociology. A sociological essay is a requirement of the class. A random sample of approximately one-fifth of student essays was selected from the SOCI2399: Writing in Sociology class in the Fall

2022 and Spring 2023 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. Sociological content includes three criteria: understanding social forces, applying sociological concepts, 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 (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 of the eight (87.5%) student essays meet the minimum requirement of an overall average score of 3.0 for Sociological Content and Sociological Writing. The attached file includes 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 3.5/5.0. The results of the inter-item analysis reveal that students performed better on the Writing Area (3.7/5.0) than the Content Area (3.25/5.0). The results also indicate that, on average, papers meet or exceed the 3.0 desired minimum score for each of the six criteria.

Attached Files

 [Mid-Level Findings_22.23.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Sociological Mid-Level Papers

Action Description:

The department met and exceeded expectations. No actions are necessary.

3. Sociological Competency: Exit Level

Goal Description:

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

Providing Department: Sociology BA/BS

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 analyze social phenomenon through a capstone research paper.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Sociological Papers: Exit Level

Indicator Description:

The SOCI 4399: Senior Seminar class is a required capstone course to achieve a 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 SOCI 4399: Senior Seminar classes in the Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 semesters to assess students' advanced sociological knowledge and scientific skills to 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, Citations, and Documentation of Sources. The selection of these criteria conforms to disciplinary standards for sociological research (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.

To continue to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in meeting the core learning objectives in the undergraduate BA and BS programs, for the 2022-2023 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, 7 of the 8 students' papers (87.5%) meet the minimum requirement on average across the seven core areas. The average combined score for the eight papers is 3.6/5.0. Regarding the item-by-item analysis of the three core Content areas: 6 out of 8 (75%) for Theory, 6 out of 8 (75%) 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: 8 out of 8 (100%) 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.

The attachment includes each committee member's ratings for each of the eight papers, summary tables of overall results and item-by-item analysis.

Attached Files

 [Copy of Attach2BABS.ExitLevelFindings22.23_final.xlsx](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Sociological Papers: Exit Level

Action Description:

The department met expectations. As SOCI 4399: Senior Seminar is being phased out, the department will develop and implemt a new exit level assessment during the next academic year.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

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

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.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1. 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 approval of the revised curriculum was delayed in the curriculum review process. Hence, implementation of the revised curriculum is beginning in Fall 2023. Schedule adjustments have been made for Fall 2023. As the curriculum changes were not implemented, the revisions of the mid- and exit-level assessments were not undertaken. The modifications will now take place during the 2023-2024 academic year.

2. 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.

The peer mentoring program was implemented. The department recruited senior-level students and recruited first and second-year students to serve as mentors.

3. 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.

This research initiative was successfully launched. The research initiative has three ongoing projects: (1) Student-Parents: An examination of Role Conflict and Potential Unmet Need in Student Support Services (PI: Dr. Stykes); (2) Improving Food Security on Campus: An examination of Student Challenges, Needs, and

Assistance Programs (PIs: Dr. Hatanaka and Dr. Scherer); and (3) Diversity, Equity, and Online Education (PI: Dr. Scherer). Each of the projects has conducted fieldwork and collected data. I anticipate them producing outcomes for the university and peer-reviewed publications during the 2022-2023 academic year.

4. 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.

The department participated in several off-campus recruiting events at two Lone Star campuses. The department also hosted several on-campus events for students to familiarize them with the sociology program and faculty. Additionally, the student workspace was turned into a lounge for events and for students to use between classes and for activities. This space has increased the presence of students in the department and faculty-student interactions. However, participation at outreach and department events remains below historical norms

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

The department will further strengthen its BA and BS programs, increase the number of majors, and increase student success during the 2023-2024 academic year.

The department will convene its SOCI 1301 instructors to examine the introduction curriculum and develop ways to address those areas in which student comprehension is lower.

The peer mentor program was established during the 2022-2023 academic year. In the upcoming academic year, we will focus on increasing the program's effectiveness and the number of students participating. This will include developing a mentor-mentee network and database.

The mid-level and exit-level assessments will be reviewed and updated to correspond with the revised curriculum for the BA and BS programs.

The department will link its curriculum and class offerings with career skills. Using the National Association of Colleges and Employers database, the department will develop materials that demonstrate to students the specific skills the BA and BS program components provide them. Additionally, a guide will be generated for SAM Center advisors to assist them in advising sociology students. This mapping will also help the department identify curriculum gaps in its BA and BS programs.