

Sociology Certificate

Sociological Competency

Goal Description:

The Graduate Certificate in Sociology is designed for post-baccalaureate students interested in attaining the necessary expertise to teach sociology at the high school and community college levels. Graduate students who complete the Sociology Certificate Program will have core expertise in core sociological theories, concepts, and methods and expertise in key topical areas of sociological inquiry. The program will provide current teachers with the skills and knowledge to teach courses in the area of sociology.

Providing Department: Sociology Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Sociological Expertise

Learning Objective Description:

On completing the Sociology Certificate Program students must demonstrate expertise in core sociological theories, concepts, methods, and one topical area.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Certificate Indicator, Criterion, and Findings

Indicator Description:

The Sociology Department will assess its effectiveness in meeting the two primary learning outcomes associated with its Graduate Certificate in Sociology through an exit interview process. The exit interview will comprise a 30-minute zoom interview with the Director of Graduate Studies, or any member of the Graduate Committee, during the last semester of a student's enrollment in Sociology coursework.

The interview will, first, assess mastery of foundational sociological theories, concepts, methodologies. Second, it will examine the ability of the student to apply a sociological framework to a contemporary social issue. Third, the level of preparation to teach introductory sociology at the high school or community college level will be evaluated.

To assess the department's effectiveness, the interview will be scored using the attached rubric,. In addition, the scored rubric will be shared with the student to provide ungraded, constructive feedback on foundational sociological knowledge, readiness to teach introductory sociology, and level of professionalism.

Criterion Description:

Exit Level Script

1. Choose a micro and macro sociological theory. For each, provide a summary of the key tenets and describe a key concept associated with the theory.
2. Provide an example of a research topic in which quantitative research would be appropriate.
3. Provide an example of a research topic in which qualitative research would be appropriate.
4. Choose a contemporary social issue, and analyze it using a sociological lens.
5. Describe your approach to the classroom. What factors characterize your teaching persona, teaching interests, and the sorts of learning goals you would have for your students?
6. What are some examples of specific learning outcomes that would you emphasize in your own Introduction to Sociology course?
 1. How would you develop assignments to assess student mastery of these outcomes?

The expectation is that students will score sufficient or higher in each area. See attached the scoring rubric.

Attached Files

 [Certificate Scoring Rubric.docx](#)

Findings Description:

One student completed the 18-credit hour graduate certificate in sociology in Fall 2022. We were, unfortunately, unable to complete the exit interview for this student, as the student had professional and personal responsibilities that prevented her from participating. In hindsight, we realize the exit interview is not a sustainable means of conducting an assessment (see plan for continuous improvement).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Certificate Indicator, Criterion, and Findings

Action Description:

The Graduate Director will develop and implement a new assessment tool that does not require students to dedicate additional time beyond program requirements to complete.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Sociological Teaching

Learning Objective Description:

On completing the Sociology Certificate Program, students will be able to design a sociological course for high school or community college students.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Certificate Indicator, Criterion, and Findings

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Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

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

Closing Summary

Develop surveys for graduate certificate students in theory, research methods, social inequality, and pedagogy during Summer 2022. A 10-item survey will be included in the transition memo for the new graduate director as well as instructions for how to create and implement the survey in Qualtrics for all certificate students during their final semester.

Develop a recruitment plan to increase recruitment into our Sociology Graduate certificate.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1. Develop surveys for graduate certificate students in theory, research methods, social inequality, and pedagogy during Summer 2022. A 10-item survey will be included in the transition memo for the new graduate director as well as instructions for how to create and implement the survey in Qualtrics for all certificate students during their final semester.

This was not completed. The new Graduate Director prioritized other goals and priorities. A revised assessment tool will be developed and implemented during the 2023-2024 academic year.

2. Develop a recruitment plan to increase recruitment into our Sociology Graduate certificate.

The graduate website was redesigned and the content on the certificate program was updated. The program experienced increased applicants.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

Significantly revise strategy for exit assessment. Rather than a mandatory exit interview, faculty will implement mandatory (but ungraded) quizzes for all certificate students in the three core curriculum requirements (i.e., theory, methods, and inequality) and pedagogical competency in each area. During Fall 2023, the Graduate Director will partner with the theory, methods, and inequality instructor to develop these quizzes, which will evaluate student mastery on their successful quiz completion.

Update our department's webpage concerning the graduate program. These changes are designed to (1) simplify content, (2) provide information in a more engaging manner (including infographics and professionally recorded videos), (3) more effectively convey pertinent information to (a) prospective students, (b) current students, and (c) former students.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, the emphasis will be building enrollment in the graduate certificate program. This will entail the development of a recruiting plan and marketing materials targeting high-school and community college teachers.

The Graduate Director and Department Chair will also explore combining the Sociology Graduate Certificate with other SHSU graduate certificates to create degree pathways or provide students with additional credentialing options.