

# 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:**

No students completed the certificate program during the 2023-2024 academic year.

#### **RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

### **Certificate Indicator, Criterion, and Findings**

#### **Action Description:**

No students completed the certificate during the past academic year. No action is needed at this time, as more students need to complete the program to assess the effectiveness of the certificate program's learning outcomes.

#### **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**

#### **Indicator Description:**

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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.

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6. What are some examples of specific learning outcomes that would you emphasize in your own Introduction to Sociology course?
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The expectation is that students will score sufficient or higher in each area. See attached the scoring rubric.

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 [Certificate Scoring Rubric.docx](#)

### **Findings Description:**

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#### **RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

### **Certificate Indicator, Criterion, and Findings**

#### **Action Description:**

No students completed the certificate during the past academic year. No action is needed at this time, as more students need to complete the program to assess the effectiveness of the certificate program's learning outcomes.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

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

#### **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.

#### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

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.

- This was not completed during the 2023-2024 academic year. As no students were scheduled to complete the certificate program, other priorities were emphasized. The exit assessment will be revised during the 2023-2024 academic year.

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.

- This was completed. However, the changes were limited as SHSU is developing a new web page platform. In conjunction with the rollout of the new SHSU webpage, a more substantial revision of the program web design will be undertaken.

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

- Recruitment and outreach for the master's and certificate programs increased in 2023-2024. This included a digital marketing campaign. However, enrollment continues to be lower than desired in the certificate program.

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.

- Initial conversations were had about possible certificate combinations, including with the communications department. These discussions will continue during the 2024-2025 academic year as the department seeks to strengthen its graduate programs.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

The emphasis for the 2024-2025 academic year for the Graduate Certificate Program will be on increasing enrollment. The program has the potential to grow and funnel graduate students into the MA program. Recruitment efforts will be part of a larger effort by the Sociology Department to increase enrollment in its graduate programs.