

Sociology MA
Assessment Plan Summary

Sociology MA

Sociological Competency

Goal Description:

Graduate students who complete the MA program in Sociology will be competent in the area of sociological theory, research methods, and analysis.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

1. Sociological Competency In Research

Learning Objective Description:

M.A. Sociology students will demonstrate the appropriate array of sociological research skills and competence in advancing sociologically-informed arguments by producing a research paper that achieves the following: identification of patterns of social behavior; discernment of sociology's three major theoretical paradigms (structural functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism); utilization of one or both of the two major sociological methods (positivism and interpretive).

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

1-1. Thesis

Indicator Description:

M.A. Sociology students enrolling in the Spring 2014 and after have the option to choose the thesis-track.

A successful SOCI MA thesis will not be less than 50 and not more than 100 printed pages of referenced, original SOCI research or a meta-analysis of existing research including primary and/or secondary data analysis. The thesis track entails two semesters of work. First, students must take and pass SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum. In this the SOCI 6098 students must write a thesis proposal. Following the successful completion of SOCI 6098, students then enroll in SOCI 6099 Thesis.

Criterion Description:

All students enrolled in SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum will pass the course by demonstrating competence in writing a thesis proposal. All students enrolled in SOCI 6099 will successfully defend their thesis.

The committee members of each student will assess their thesis proposal and thesis using thesis proposal rubric and the thesis rubric. See attached.

Attached Files

 [Attachment 2 -Thesis rubric](#)

 [Attachment 1- Thesis Proposal rubric](#)

Findings Description:

One student enrolled in SOCI in 6098 in Summer 2016 and successfully passed it. Four students enrolled in SOCI 6098 in Fall 2016 and successfully passed. Two students enrolled in SOCI 6098 in the fall. They have yet to successfully complete it. All five students that successfully passed SOCI 6098 also received ratings of exemplary on thesis proposal rubric.

Three students successfully completed SOCI 6099 in the Spring 2017. All three students received exemplary ratings on their thesis rubrics.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

1-1. Thesis

Action Description:

The data indicate the desired result is satisfactory regarding the thesis track. The thesis proposal and thesis rubrics have been implemented and the Graduate Director and Graduate committee are satisfied with them. The thesis process and the thesis rubrics will be re-evaluated at the end of 2017-1018 academic year. At this time, more students will have completed their theses and thus, the department will have more data on the process and student outcomes.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

2. Comprehensive Exams

Learning Objective Description:

SOCI MA students will sit for comprehensive examination as a powerful tool for demonstrating overall student learning outcomes. MA SOCI students will demonstrate competence in applying sociological theories, sociological research methodologies and statistics, and research literature reviews of a selected, substantive sociological field.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

2-1. Comprehensive Exams

Indicator Description:

M.A. Sociology degree candidates will complete a written comprehensive exam. The specialty area will be assessed by an in-depth exploration of sociological literature on a topic of the students choosing, written answers to questions pertaining to sociological theoretical perspectives and appropriate research methodologies. In each case, an examination committee will be convened to discuss the performance of the students. A panel of at least two graduate faculty per each of the three examination areas will assess the quality of the written examination to determine student sociological mastery. Students failing to demonstrate the required level of content mastery will be allowed to retake that area of the exam in the subsequent semester. A second failure will result in termination from the program.

Possible examination grading outcomes are: High Pass, Pass, and Fail (see Attachment #3).

Attached Files

- [!\[\]\(815df092dd722ee9268ef8e6d0193e3a_img.jpg\) Attach_3.CompExamRubric14.15](#)
- [!\[\]\(c72edb9626cad660f3a9f5fb0f22a68c_img.jpg\) Comprehensive Writing Rubric](#)
- [!\[\]\(0c564128c6342bd2f601e97f4518828a_img.jpg\) Methodology Comprehensive Rubric](#)
- [!\[\]\(5cb79a1c9acdf5d94bce345803852578_img.jpg\) Sociological Essay Rubric](#)
- [!\[\]\(cc23775bf31a648cde5902baa397f9aa_img.jpg\) Statistics Rubric](#)

Criterion Description:

All M.A. candidates taking the comprehensive exam will complete all components of the examination with a score of High Pass or Pass.

Findings Description:

In Fall 2016, four students took the exam. Two students passed the exam. One student doing a partial retake from the Spring 2015 exam did not pass the methods section. The fourth student failed to complete the exam.

In Spring 2017, six students took the exam. three students passed the exam. Two students failed parts of the exam and will retake those sections of the exam in Fall 2017.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

2-1. Comprehensive Exams

Action Description:

The data indicates that the overwhelming majority of students are successfully completing the comprehensive exam within 2 cycles.

The Graduate Committee has recommended and the Sociology Graduate Faculty have approved several revisions to the comprehensive track that will be implemented beginning in Fall 2017. These revisions are based on ongoing assessment of the comprehensive exam results and process over the past two years.

1. Students will be required to receive a “B” or higher in the three core courses before they are able to take the comprehensive exam.
2. The theory part of the exam will be eliminated. The exam will consist of three parts: Part 1 will be methods, Part 2 statistics, and Part 3 sociological essay. The expectations for the sociological essay will be revised to into a theoretical component.
3. New rubrics were developed for the comprehensive exam. Each section of the exam will have its own rubric and there will be a writing rubric used on all three parts of the exam. The new rubrics will provide more precise feedback to students and increase the transparency of the results.

Attach new rubrics.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

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

The Graduate Director and Graduate Committee will implement the rubric for the thesis track for the first time. Following the 2016-2017 academic year, the rubric will be evaluated and modified as necessary.

The Graduate Director and Graduate Committee implemented an exit survey during the 2015-2016 academic year. At the completion of the 2016-2017 academic year, data from the exit survey will be analyzed. This data will be used to aid the design of the program.

As the Master Program is scheduled for its comprehensive program performance review to take place during the 2016-2017 academic year, the findings of this review will be used to improve the program beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The thesis rubrics were implemented during the 2016-2017 academic year. In summer 2017, the graduate committee reviewed the results and found no need for revisions to the rubrics.

The graduate committee is continuing to collect data from the exit survey. A preliminary analysis of the data has been undertaken, and finds that students rate the program positively. As the number of respondents is still low (n=14), the graduate committee has delayed a more comprehensive analysis of the data for another academic year.

The M.A. program in Sociology underwent an external review during the 2016-2017 academic year. The findings of the external review inform the plan for continuous development for the 2017-2018 academic year.

Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

1. Graduate Program Vision

The graduate director will facilitate a series of workshops over the next year and a half with graduate faculty in the department to develop a vision for the program. Based on these workshops, in spring 2018, the graduate committee will begin drafting a vision statement for the M.A. program. The vision statement will then be presented to the graduate faculty for discussion, amendments, and approval in Fall 2019. Beginning in Spring 2019, the graduate program vision will guide program and course development, and be incorporated into marketing and recruiting materials.

Timeline and Actions:

- Fall Semester 2017
 - Two graduate program vision workshops will be conducted.
- Spring Semester 2018
 - Graduate committee will develop initial draft of vision statement.
- Fall Semester 2018:
 - Graduate program vision will be presented to faculty for review.
 - Graduate committee will revise graduate program vision based on faculty input.
 - Revised graduate program vision will be presented to graduate faculty for approval.
- Spring Semester 2019
 - Graduate program vision will be incorporated into the Sociology Graduate Handbook and placed on relevant webpages.
 - Graduate program vision will be incorporated into marketing and recruiting materials for Fall 2019 applicants.

2. Graduate Course Guidelines

The graduate committee will undertake a curriculum review of the graduate classes in the MA program in Sociology. This will include a review of expectations, readings, assignments, and course structure. The outcome will be guidelines for graduate courses in the MA program in terms class organization, workload, and expectations.

Timeline and Actions:

Fall 2017:

- Data on sociology graduate courses will be collected.

Spring 2018:

- Analysis of sociology graduate courses will be conducted.

Fall 2018:

- Findings on sociology graduate courses will be presented to faculty.
- Following faculty discussion, guidelines for sociology graduate courses will be drafted.
- Sociology graduate course guidelines will be presented for faculty for approval.
- Sociology graduate course guidelines will be adopted.

3. Development of a Pro-Seminar

A one-credit hour required pro-seminar will be developed for new students in the MA program. In the pro-seminar students will be provided with the tools and resources to be successful graduate students. The course curriculum will include orientation materials, faculty introductions, resources and strategies on graduate student success, and professionalization. The course will also help form a cohort identity among incoming students. A form B has been submitted in Spring 2017 for the new course.

Timeline and Actions:

2017-2018:

- Pro-seminar content will be developed.
- The Sociology M.A. degree plan will be changed in the graduate 2018-2019 catalogue and Sociology Handbook to accommodate the pro-seminar as a required course.

Fall 2018:

- Sociology graduate pro-seminar will be implemented.

Spring 2019:

- Sociology graduate pro-seminar will be reviewed and modified as necessary

4. Development of Graduate Assistant Guidelines

A set of guidelines for graduate assistants (GAs) and undergraduate assistants will be developed. These guidelines will outline responsibilities and expectations of GAs and undergraduate assistants.

Timeline and Actions:

Fall Semester 2017:

- Graduate committee will draft student assistant guidelines.
- Student assistant guidelines will be presented to faculty for discussion.
- Student assistant guidelines will be revised based on faculty input.
- Faculty will approve student assistant guidelines.

Spring Semester 2018

- Student assistant guidelines will be implemented and incorporated in Sociology Graduate Handbook.

Spring Semester 2019:

- Student assistant guidelines will be assessed and modified as necessary by graduate committee.