

State University of New York at New Paltz

Assessment Plan

Department: Sociology

Years: 2005-2009

Developed by:

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State University of New York at New Paltz

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I. A. Mission Statement

The Department of Sociology offers undergraduate and graduate majors that strongly support the central liberal arts mission of the College. Our educational programs provide students with a broad view of the social world that enables them to evaluate the results of social scientific studies, compare and contrast different theories and research methods utilized to explain social dynamics and institutions, and identify the changing forms of social inequality and their consequences for social divisions that exist nationally and globally. The department offers a rich and diverse range of courses and utilizes various pedagogical techniques to help students develop critical thinking skills in a democratic society. The curriculum advances our students' ability to engage in discipline-relevant experiences outside of their normal coursework that allow them to apply their knowledge, engage with faculty and peers, and work towards social justice and change.

I. B. Scope of the Sociology Department

The Sociology Department offers students a range of course offerings and three specific undergraduate tracks at the undergraduate level. Students can pursue a traditional sociology major or opt to do a Concentration in Human Services or Criminology. All three tracks are designed to give students a strong fundamental background in the study of society and to prepare them for employment opportunities in business, the helping professions, and in a myriad of public sector positions. At the graduate studies level, the department offers course work leading to the M.A. degree in Sociology, which provides students with a broad-based curriculum of theory, methods, and research. In conjunction with SUNY at Albany, the Sociology Department also offers a dual degree M.A/M.S.W. program that provide students with a research-oriented, academic and sociological perspective on social work and the problems it addresses. The dual degree program meets the needs of our both graduates as well as social service employees in the Mid-Hudson region who seek to obtain further training in social work.

The department currently has 2 associate professors, 3 assistant professors, and 3 lecturers. Our faculty consists of creative teachers, experienced in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Utilizing a variety of pedagogical philosophies and tools, we provide students with opportunities to actively apply the theories and concepts they learn in classes. As well, we encourage students to engage in research and independent study, fieldwork and service learning, and participate as advocates for social justice in the community.

Our lack of sufficient full-time faculty lines does not allow us to provide a comprehensive undergraduate training in sub-disciplines that might be found in sociology departments at larger universities. The department does not have certificate programs and does not offer BS and BSW degrees.

I. C. *Activities/Processes of the Sociology Department*

The following activities promote the learning objectives of the Department:

- Advising – Department continuously develops materials that communicate programmatic requirements to students and faculty; students are advised to come to advising session on time, knowledgeable and prepared with programs of study; faculty advise students of the appropriate courses in major and GE requirements; students and faculty file appropriate paperwork; faculty mentor students toward a program of study that ensures timely graduation.
- Curriculum Design and Development – A process of regular review of our programmatic requirements relative to developments in the discipline, the learning outcomes expected, and resources available to our faculty; courses are developed as appropriate and based on the interests of faculty and submitted through the regular campus governance process.
- Teaching – Faculty conduct lectures, discussion, seminars, and presentation of the discipline utilizing diverse pedagogical approaches, guided by a syllabus that identifies student-learning expectations and assignments, timely return of assignments, and submission of final grades at semester's end. Increasingly we are using electronic media to facilitate our teaching.
- Research – Faculty hired to the department have an identified agenda of research that will move them to tenure-track, promotion and tenure; support needs are identified and needs are met through support for faculty development from the Dean; research activities are not only published but reported annually to the department.
- Professional development – The developmental needs of the faculty are regularly identified, supported through local or off campus resources and informal mentoring, assessed for progress for the purposes of merit, promotion and tenure, or for personal development.
- Service – Faculty in the department identifies potential opportunities for involvement in the campus community on an annual basis and participates in those opportunities.
- Out-of-Class Activities – Faculty identifies meaningful out-of-class experiences offered either by the department or at the campus levels and encourages students to participate.
- Community Involvement – Faculty provides students with information about potential community involvement activities that are consistent with the mission and values of the department and discipline and support their participation in such activities.

II. A. *Priority Goals for next five years*

1. Student Goals

Sociology Undergraduate students who:

- Are reflective and critical thinkers
- Sensitive to social inequities that exist nationally and globally
- Can apply sociological concepts and methods to the social world
- Willing to work towards social justice and change in a democratic society

2. Program Goals

- Maintain a coherent curriculum with diverse range of course offerings
- Maintain effective advising procedures
- Engage students in out of class experiences obtaining and presenting sociological ideas and research or involvement in social action
- Recruit and retain students into the Sociology department

II. B. 1. *Student Performance*

By completion of the Sociology Undergraduate Program, Sociology Undergraduates should be able to:

- a. Identify major theorists in the discipline
- b. Compare and contrast different theories utilized to explain social dynamics and institutions
- c. Evaluate and apply social research methods
- d. Identify the changing forms of social inequality and their consequences for social divisions that exist nationally and globally.

II. B. 2. *Program Performance*

- a. *Diverse Curriculum* to offer a rich and diverse range of courses to help students develop critical thinking skills.
- b. *Effective Teaching* by utilizing various pedagogical techniques (conduct lectures, discussion, seminars, and presentations) guided by syllabi that identifies course objectives and student-learning outcomes.
- c. *Out of Class Experiences* to advance our students' ability to engage in discipline-relevant experiences outside of their normal coursework that allows them to apply their knowledge, engage with faculty and peers, and work towards social justice and change.
- d. *Encourage Students' Retention and Completion of Course Plan* by providing academic advising and guidance to current, incoming, and transfer students within the department

III. Methodology

Method	5 Year Timeline
<p>From Students:</p> <p><i>Alumni survey:</i> Survey alumni who received their bachelors in Sociology within the past 6 years regarding retention and application of learning objectives.</p> <p><i>Senior Essay:</i> Any graduating senior interested in being considered for the Sociology Award will be asked to submit, in addition to their application, a 250 word essay describing how they have and will incorporate sociological ideas into their personal experiences.</p> <p><i>Biennial Focus Group:</i> Focus group will be conducted biennially with representatives from each major: Questions will include improvements to the department including satisfaction in advising, course scheduling, course offering, course content, career support, and general preparation for a BA in Sociology.</p> <p><i>Research Paper in Social Inequality course:</i> To measure students' ability to identify the changing forms of social inequality and its implications, students will be asked to do reflective analysis research papers on topics covered in the course.</p> <p><i>Final Exam in Research Methods course:</i> To measure students' ability to evaluate and apply social research methods, students will be asked to generate individual research proposals at the end of the research methods course.</p>	<p>1/04</p> <p>4/05, 4/06, 4/07, 4/08</p> <p>11/05, 11/07</p> <p>5/05, 12/05</p> <p>5/05, 12/05</p>
<p>From Faculty:</p> <p><i>Faculty Focus Group:</i> Faculty will review students' suggestions and discuss the feasibility of their suggestions. Faculty will also record their top 2-3 priorities in terms of ways to improve the department. These suggestions will be recorded and the faculty will rank the options in terms of priority.</p> <p><i>Syllabi Review:</i> Faculty will document their course offerings in terms of intensive writing, focusing on sociological thought, encouraging reading of research, encouraging engagement of social action. Syllabi will be assessed to collate the course materials used in the program.</p> <p><i>Internship Survey:</i> Faculty will generate for one full year, all of the internship opportunities completed by a Sociology undergraduate. A random sample of written experiences from these internships will be assessed to determine the level of integration of in-classroom education with out-of-classroom experiences.</p>	<p>3/06, 3/08</p> <p>3/07</p> <p>4/08</p>

II. B. Performance	III. A. Aspect of the performance to be measured	III. B. Means of Gathering and Evaluating Data	III. C. Start of Assessment	III. C. Assessment Coordinator(s)
Student Learning Goal 1: Identify major theorists in the discipline	a. Retention of Information	<i>Alumni survey:</i> Measuring how many undergraduates recalled primary sociology theorist.	Completed 5/04	Waltermaurer, Obach
Student Learning Goal 2: Compare and contrast different theories utilized to explain social dynamics and institutions	a. Assimilation of concepts	<i>Senior Essay:</i> Describing how they have and will incorporate sociological ideas into their personal experiences.	4/05	Christiansen
Student Learning Goal 3: Evaluate and apply social research	a. Application of concepts.	<i>Alumni survey:</i> Measuring the proportion of past undergraduates who utilize research and social statistics after graduation in the evaluation of or practice in social research. <i>Research Proposal:</i> Measuring the proportion of students capable of generating a concise research proposal.	Completed 5/04 5/05, 12/05	Waltermaurer, Obach Waltermaurer

II. B. Performance	III. A. Aspect of the performance to be measured	III. B. Means of Gathering and Evaluating Data	III. C. Start of Assessment	III. C. Assessment Coordinator(s)
<p>Student Learning Goal 4:</p> <p>Identify the changing forms of social inequality and their consequences for social divisions that exist nationally and globally</p>	<p>a. Application of concepts</p>	<p><i>Senior Essay:</i> Describing how they have and will incorporate sociological change into their personal experiences.</p>	<p>4/05</p>	<p>Christiansen</p>
		<p><i>Social Inequality:</i> Measuring the proportion of students who are capable of researching and reflectively analyzing a topic related to societal inequities.</p>	<p>5/05, 12/05</p>	<p>Benbow</p>
<p>Program Goal 1:</p> <p>Diverse Curriculum:</p> <p>Offer a rich and diverse range of courses to help students develop critical thinking skills</p>	<p>a. Availability of courses that suit student interest.</p>	<p><i>Biennial Student Focus Group:</i> Identification of additional courses of interest to students</p>	<p>11/05</p>	<p>Roschelle</p>
	<p>b. Variety in course offerings.</p>	<p><i>Biennial Faculty Focus Group:</i> Evaluation of the current course offerings and the potential for other courses.</p>	<p>3/06</p>	<p>Bose</p>
		<p><i>Syllabi Review:</i> Identification of the different course offered over a one-year period.</p>	<p>3/07</p>	<p>Kaufman</p>

II. B. Performance	III. A. Aspect of the performance to be measured	III. B. Means of Gathering and Evaluating Data	III. C. Start of Assessment	III. C. Assessment Coordinator(s)
<p>Program Goal 2:</p> <p>Out of Class Experiences:</p> <p>Provide educational opportunities beyond the classroom</p>	<p>a. Variety of Experiences</p> <p>b. Benefits of the experiences</p>	<p><i>Internship Survey:</i> Faculty will generate for one full year, all of the internship opportunities completed by a Sociology undergraduate. A random sample of written experiences from these internships will be assessed to determine the level of integration of in-classroom education with out-of -classroom experiences.</p>	4/08	Chaffee
<p>Program Goal 3: Encourage Students' Retention:</p> <p>Provide effective academic advising and guidance to current, incoming, and transfer students.</p>	<p>a. Perceived benefits by students.</p> <p>a. Perceived benefits by faculty.</p>	<p><i>Biennial Student Focus Group:</i> Evaluation of advising experience by students.</p>	11/05	Roschelle
		<p><i>Biennial Faculty Focus Group:</i> Evaluation of advising experience by faculty.</p>	3/06	Bose
<p>Program Goal 4:</p> <p>Effective Teaching:</p> <p>Utilizes various pedagogical techniques</p>	<p>a. Variety in pedagogical methods</p>	<p><i>Syllabi Review:</i> Identification of the different pedagogical approaches used over a one-year period.</p>	3/07	Kaufman