

Assessment Report for Student Learning
In the Sociology Major
2006-2007 Academic Year

October 1, 2008

Executive Summary

This Assessment Report for the Sociology major assesses student learning during the 2007-2008 Academic Year. Assessment results indicate that students performed at an excellent level for one of the three learning goals. Results are not available for the other two learning goals due to the small number of students enrolled in one relevant class and the loss of data due to the retirement of a faculty member for the other one. Improvement plans are discussed.

Student Learning Goals

The learning goals for the Sociology major are:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze personal and social experiences by applying the sociological imagination.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to use sociological analysis to explain the structural inequalities of race, class, and gender.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to design a sociological research project, and communicate its findings in accordance with the professional standards of the discipline.

The sociology faculty is committed to the Millikin mission and has designed a curriculum that intentionally prepares majors for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global community, and a personal life of meaning and value by producing graduates who are capable of thinking critically from a sociological perspective. The Sociology learning goals fit with the Millikin University Mission in the following ways.

Sociology graduates achieve the goal of *professional success* by demonstrating their ability to:

- a. analyze personal and social experiences by applying the sociological imagination,
- b. use sociological analysis to explain the structural inequalities of race, class, and gender, and their interrelationships, and
- c. design a sociological research project, and communicate its findings in

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Snapshot

Given the relatively small number of sociology majors and minors, most sociology classes are providing service to the Human Services major and other University curriculum requirements, including the CAS Social Sciences requirement, US Studies, Global Studies, and Gender Studies.

The following table shows the classes taught in Sociology during the 2007 Academic Year. Not included in this list are the Human Services classes taught by the Social Workers or the Statistics or Social Psychology classes taught by a Psychologist.

Fall 2007

Spring 2008

that by examining the diversity of human experience we are ultimately able to locate and define ourselves. Sociology course work helps majors develop strong analytical and quantitative reasoning skills from their required statistics and research methods courses. Students continue to learn the power of the scientific method of inquiry as they engage in research in the community and to use computer-based statistics packages for analyzing and interpreting social data. These experiences culminate with the development of a research project, often commissioned by organizations within the larger Decatur community in the senior year.

Beyond exposure to the discipline, students learn skills necessary to assess and critically evaluate the diversity of human experiences, especially the impact of diversity as characterized by race, class, and gender of groups. The integration of service learning and experiential education throughout the sociology curriculum creates a pervasive theme that pushes students to examine questions of ethics and values as they study issues of social inequality and interpret the social forces producing such inequality. Whether studying the family, race and ethnicity, criminology, urban sociology, or deviant behavior, students learn to synthesize existing theoretical knowledge using research findings to develop practical solutions. Their training enables and empowers sociology majors to critically analyze complex, real-world problems, evaluate the merits of various remedies, and appreciate the role diversity plays in the analysis of human behavior, and its ethical implications for their personal and professional lives. In sum, the sociology major integrates the general education and major curriculum with professional experiences and mentor relationships, to mirror the University goals of professionalism, citizenship, and a life of personal meaning and value by advancing and demonstrating the impact of life long learning and service.

Assessment Methods and Data

The Sociology faculty has decided to collect the following assessments of the sociology major:

1. Learning Goal 1 is assessed in Sociological Analysis SO450, capstone course, through an analysis of the final exam, which asks students to write a paper to this learning goal. Given the presently small number of graduating majors, all are evaluated.
2. Learning Goal 2 is assessed in SO224, Poverty and Welfare, which substitutes for one of the Sociology Fundamentals courses (SO 320 Social Stratification) by evaluating the term paper submitted in this class. Because of the small number of majors, all papers from Sociology majors are evaluated. Although this learning goal addresses inequalities of race and gender, as well as class, only papers concerning class inequality are reassessed because other classes are taught by adjuncts.
3. Learning Goal 3 is assessed by evaluating the proposal research project that students turn in while they are students in SO221, Methods of Sociological Research.

4. Advising Survey Each semester when course schedule advising is performed,

In response to results indicating that students were not performing up to standards 2006-2007 with respect to Learning Goal 6, we made changes in the assessment plan for 2007-2008. The plan was to assess this goal by scoring the final draft of a Research Proposal assigned in the required Methods of Sociological Research course, SO221. Greater weight was to be placed in the class for this research proposal, which would have increased the seriousness that students took in the assignment. Unfortunately, with Dr.

the immediate future, Dr. Troy will teach this class and will require students to complete the assignment in a meaningful way.

Appendix 1 Sociology Assessment Rubric

Learning Objectives	Nominal (1 point)	Adequate (3 points)	Excellent (5 points)
Goal 1: Ability to analyze personal & social experience by applying the sociological imagination. (Capstone Assignment)	Fails to understand or use the sociological imagination in problem solving or interpreting personal & social experiences. Fails to adhere to the ethical		