

Sociology BA/BS Program

Annual Program Report

Year:	2022-2023
Program:	Sociology
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Summary of Continuous Improvement Efforts since Last Report

Provide a brief description of how assessment results have been used for program improvement. Point to a specific example of how an assessment provided the program with data it could use for improvement and what that improvement was, if possible, also show evidence of the improvement. You may look at data from the two previous academic years to support this case.

Respond here:

1. We continued following and reviewing, when necessary, the course carousel successfully to meet the needs of our students.
2. We have focused on increasing rigor regarding analytic and critical thinking skills without sacrificing student enrollment.
3. We have been building distinct lines of concentrations within the SOCI program, such as our upcoming concentration in Environmental Sociology.
4. We continue to teach both cutting edge sociological research within the context of the intellectual history of our discipline so that students will understand how ideas and schools of thought evolve over time.

Program Highlights Since Last Report

Identify and briefly discuss any programmatic curriculum changes made since the last report (e.g. new courses, course changes, SLO changes, course deletions).

Respond here:

1. We are in the process of establishing an Environmental Sociology track of study.
2. We continue to update our course offerings to remain relevant and up-to-date on the latest research.
3. We have had some minor disruptions that come with changes: We have had a series of different administrative assistants, a change in the Sociology Division Director in January 2023, and a change in the SSCJ Department Chair. Despite the disruptions, the division is going strong and we plan to work toward establishing a Masters Program in Sociology over the next couple of years.

Table 1. Assessment Results and Analyses for Current Cycle.

STAGE 1: PLAN				STAGE 2: DO		STAGE 3: STUDY
Departmental Student Learning Goal	Program Student Learning Outcome	Assessment	Assessment Method/Location	Benchmark Expectations	Data Results	Actions/Goals Based on Data Results* What do the data tell you? How will you use this data? How were data from the last cycle used to make changes during this cycle, and What were the results of those changes?
To develop a Sociological Imagination to view the social world.	Students demonstrate that they understand the Sociological Imagination and how to apply it to various social issues.	Every Sociology course at LU applies the Sociological Imagination to a wide variety of social topics. This means that assessment occurs through an assortment of different exams, papers, projects, and other academic activities throughout students' sociological education at LU.	Students' performance in each course offering under the Sociology Program. Students must be able to successfully apply the sociological imagination on exams, papers, and other academic projects in order to graduate from the Sociology Program.	Sociology majors and minors must make a C or higher in Data Analysis, Research Methods, and Social Theory. Exit Exams used to be administered at the end of each Sociology major's senior year in order to assess the program's success in teaching this knowledge and skill. We will re-start assessment for next year. For this year, I will use a convenience sample from the capstone Social Theory course's required final	The average score for Sociology majors and minors on the final paper in Social Theory for academic year 2022-2023 was 67.95 out of 64 total students. Our target is to reach a 70 average meaning that according to our assessments, we are slightly below expectations.	The data tell us that there is room for improvement. The Sociological Imagination is so important to the discipline of Sociology that it is a part of every class in our program. Sociology majors should be making a 70 on average for measures of their knowledge of and ability to apply the Sociological Imagination. I plan to develop, with my colleagues in Sociology, a plan for more collaborative teaching where each faculty member will participate in evaluating course content and offering constructive criticism to help each other increase academic rigor without violating Academic Freedom.

				papers. Every Sociology major and minor is required to take the Social Theory course in order to graduate.		
To develop theoretical and critical thinking skills.	Students can write critical analyses of social environments.	While every sociology class at LU works as mini-assessments of students' theoretical and critical thinking skills. The ultimate assessment is the capstone Social Theory class where students must be able to demonstrate their theoretical and critical thinking skills through writing 2 research /analytic papers applying 2 different schools of theoretical thought to social issues of the students' choices.	In the Social Theory class, students must successfully apply sociological theories to social issues of their choice. Students must conduct 2 separate research /analytic papers, using a different school of theoretical thought in each paper, where they demonstrate their ability to critically analyze social issues from sociological perspectives.	Sociology majors and minors must make a C or higher in Data Analysis, Research Methods, and Social Theory. Exit Exams used to be administered at the end of each Sociology major's senior year in order to assess the program's success in teaching this knowledge and skill. We will re-start assessment for next year. For this year, I will use a convenience sample from the capstone Social Theory course's required final papers. Every Sociology major and minor is required to take	The average score for Sociology majors and minors on the final paper in Social Theory for academic year 2022-2023 was 67.95 out of 64 total students. Our target is to reach a 70 average meaning that according to our assessments, we are slightly below expectations.	The data tell us that there is room for improvement. Theoretical and critical thinking skills are so important to the discipline of Sociology that they are a part of every class in our program. Sociology majors should be making at least a 70 average for measures of their ability to apply abstract sociological theoretical constructs and critical thinking skills on any social issue with which they are presented. I plan to develop, with my colleagues in Sociology, a plan for more collaborative teaching where each faculty member will participate in evaluating course content and offering constructive criticism to help each other increase academic rigor without violating Academic Freedom.

				the Social Theory course in order to graduate.		
To apply scientific methods to analyze social problems.	Students are capable of constructing and conducting social scientific research projects on their own.	Like the other SLGs, each class in Sociology acts as a mini-assessment of students' abilities to apply scientific methods. The ultimate assessments are the Data Analysis and Research Methods courses. In these classes, students must construct social science research projects on their own. Students cannot graduate from our program without successfully constructing their own social scientific research projects.	The main assessment of students' skills in scientific methods are tested through constructing research projects of their own. Data Analysis and Research Methods are the 2 courses where students' skills with and knowledges of social scientific methodologies are assessed.	Sociology majors and minors must make a C or higher in Data Analysis, Research Methods, and Social Theory. Exit Exams used to be administered at the end of each Sociology major's senior year in order to assess the program's success in teaching this knowledge and skill. We will re-start assessment for next year. For this year, I will use a convenience sample from the capstone Social Theory course's required final papers. Every Sociology major and minor is required to take the Social Theory course in order to graduate.	The average score for Sociology majors and minors on the final paper in Social Theory for academic year 2022-2023 was 67.95 out of 64 total students. Our target is to reach a 70 average meaning that according to our assessments, we are slightly below expectations.	The data tell us that there is room for improvement. Scientific methodologies are so important to the discipline of Sociology that it is a part of every class in our program. Sociology majors should be making perfect scores on measures of their knowledge of and ability to apply scientific methodologies. I plan to develop, with my colleagues in Sociology, a plan for more collaborative teaching where each faculty member will participate in evaluating course content and offering constructive criticism to help each other increase academic rigor without violating Academic Freedom.

Table 2. Continuous Improvement Results Since Last Report

Stage 4: ACT		
Actions/Goals Based on Data Results <i>*Copy last cycle's actions/goals and report on progress toward continuous improvement on those here.</i>	Status <i>C=Complete</i> <i>P=Progressing</i> <i>N=No Action Taken</i>	Discussion of Status <i>If C, describe efforts that led to accomplishment of actions/goals.</i> <i>If P, provide update on progress made toward accomplishing actions/goals and what tasks remain</i> <i>If N, discuss why action toward accomplishing actions/goals has been delayed and what work will be initiated toward accomplishment.</i>
To develop a sociological imagination to view the social world.	P&C	<p>The sociological imagination is such a fundamental part of the discipline of sociology in general that it is taught throughout all sociology classes at LU. The status is both progressing and complete because it is an on-going process with new students regularly needing to be taught the Sociological Imagination. The Sociological Imagination, created by American Sociologist and Texan, C. Wright Mills in the mid-Twentieth Century, has become a core part of Sociology as a global discipline. The 3 parts of the imagination and how to apply them to understand the social world is something that is both knowledge and skill that all graduates of the Sociology Program at Lamar have.</p>
To develop theoretical and critical thinking abilities.	P&C	<p>For those who have graduated the Sociology Program, each class helps students to develop theoretical and critical thinking skills. For graduates, this goal is complete, but it is always in progress with our new students. The main test of majors' and minors' critical and theoretical thinking skills comes in the capstone course Social Theory. This course teaches the intellectual history of sociological theory from the big 3 umbrella schools of theoretical thought: Conflict Theory, Structural-Functionalism, and Symbolic Interactionism and then explores the major sub-theories that have developed over the last 2</p>

		centuries of sociological thought. The course is writing intense requiring 2 research/analytic papers on separate schools of thought. Students are graded on their factual accuracy, ability to not only explain abstract theoretical concepts, but to also apply them to the social environment, and their analytic skills in how they apply the theories in their research/analytic papers.
To apply scientific methods to analyze social problems.	P&C	Sociology, as a discipline, is both a part of the humanities and the sciences. While those academic “camps” tend to draw concrete divisions between the humanities and sciences, sociology embraces both and teaches both synergistically as one approach to epistemology, or knowledge in general. All classes in LU’s Sociology Program represent different ways of synergistically applying knowledges from the humanities and sciences. We dedicate 2 courses, Data Analysis and Research Methods, that all Sociology majors and minors must pass. In these classes, students learn both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gathering social scientific data and how to apply statistical models for quantitative data and how to code and identify empirical patterns in qualitative data. Sociology majors and minors at LU cannot graduate without demonstrating competency in scientific methods to analyzing social problems. This goal is, like the others, an on-going process with every new student who joins our program, but is complete once students complete their degree requirements.