

**Assessment Report
General Sociology 2013
Fall 2019, Spring 2020**

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In the spring of 2018 the Senate passed the new undergraduate “values added” curriculum for the University of Arkansas core curriculum. The social sciences are listed below. The broad criteria, listed below, while covered in our General Sociology courses (and Social Problems), are now explicit in all 2013/2033 syllabi as adapted to our specific discipline.

In addition to Assessment (**PART ONE**) this report includes both recruitment and retention efforts within the Department (**PART TWO**).

PART ONE: ASSESSMENT

A. General Sociology (Gateway Course): General Education Assessment

Learning Outcome 3.3:

Upon reaching this goal, students will be able to articulate and use the basic principles of human interactions—of individuals, groups, and institutions—in a variety of contexts.

Learning Indicators for Learning Outcome 3.3:

To be certified as meeting this outcome, a course must incorporate at least three of the five learning indicators. In an approved course, students will:

- a. articulate the key concepts, principles, and overarching themes to a social science discipline.
- b. apply social scientific reasoning and techniques.
- c. analyze theories, data, and methods of a social science discipline to explain individual, group, and institutional interactions.
- d. apply critical thinking and use scientific reasoning to evaluate claims about the social world.
- e. integrate and use evidence-based theories to explain various types of human interaction

4.1 To be certified as meeting this outcome, students will:

- a. Use your sociological perspective to examine and interpret an intercultural experience from your own and another’s worldview.

- b. Identify and analyze significant global challenges and opportunities in the human and natural world identifying aspects of global inequality.
- c. Identify and analyze the historical and/or contemporary interrelationships among multiple global cultures from a sociological perspective.

4.2 To be certified as meeting this outcome, students will:

- a. Identify and describe examples of historical and present day issues related to diversity and inclusion in the United States.
- b. Explain the historical and/or contemporary construction of difference through analysis of power structures, privilege, and explicit or implicit prejudice, and their roles in fostering discrimination and inequalities in the United States, whether cultural, legal, political, or social
- c. Analyze the historical and/or contemporary development of group agency and assess its role in addressing discrimination and inequalities in the United States from a sociological perspective.

Prior to the passing of the above learning outcomes, a Pre and Post-test instrument utilized in General Sociology was developed in order to match one or more of the University General Education Outcomes Goals for Students taking a Social Science course in Fulbright College. The assessment tool was revised in summer 2019, using Cengage testing, creating questions to address items from 3.3, 4.1 and 4.2 above. [See Appendix A] Because all those teaching General Sociology are using the same text (classes 150 and above), this should provide even better illustrations for the learning indicators listed above.

Results

The distribution of pre- and post-test instrument is targeted to cover core items of the discipline that should be known to students by course completion. As per the stated goal of the assessment: Review of the overall performance pre- and post- are intended to result in one of three outcomes: improvement of student post-test scores over the pre-test; no-improvement, and the decline in post-test scores compared with the pre-test. For those assessments that result in improvement in post-test outcomes, instructors may choose to take no action or examine ways to further improve positive outcomes. Note: All faculty teaching SOCI 2013 and SOCI 2033 will make their assessments available to the Value-Added Gen Ed Assessment Committee as well beginning Fall 2020. Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some assessments were not completed for the fall and spring semester. Additionally, due to change in reporting, classes do not differentiate first year students but rather an overall class change in means.

In all sections reporting, the overall mean significantly raised from pre- to post assessment.

Sections are provided below:

Fall 2019
SOCI 2013 002

Section N = 465

Pre-test mean = 12.85

Post-test mean = 14.05

N = 465

N = 435 (93% response rate)

SOCI 2013 – 005
Section N=150
Pre test mean = 13.80
Post-test mean = 15.37

SOCI 2013 – 008
Section N = 107
Pre test mean = 14.22
Post-test mean = 15.30

SOCI 2013 SECTION 04
Section N = 225
Pre-test mean = 14.14 N=219
Post-test mean = 16.10 N=225

Spring 2020 (section 02 is the only course reporting post test for spring 2020)

SOCI 2013 002
Section N = 435
Pre-test mean = 11.93 N = 435
Post-test mean = 14.55 N = 340 (78% response rate)

PART TWO: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS

For the 2020 Assessment report, I asked those teaching large sections to discuss any recruitment efforts. All report a variety of techniques. Some of those are listed below:

- Stating on the first day that I want them all to be Sociology majors and talking about why I love the department
- Demonstrating Enthusiasm for the Major
- Tying sociology to the Pre-Med program
- Identifying students who seem interested and connecting them with the Undergraduate Director
- Framing the course as the key to understanding our social world and how to change it
- Focusing on structure, and especially social movements designed to change institutions
- I seek out current events to use as illustrations in my classes to make the information relevant to their lives
- I ask students about what they are watching and who they listen to and incorporate that information into the lectures as examples
- Promoting the Sociology Club
- Promoting Sociology Department sponsored speakers and activities by giving extra credit for attending and writing a short reflection
- Speaking with students during office hours and before and after class about the class selections in the department that might interest them

- Encouraging my TAs to talk about their research and why they chose to pursue an advanced degree in Sociology
- Inviting guest speakers that tie what they learn in class to people pursuing social change professionally

Other Activities

1. In the Fall of 2019, the department had 114 new majors (73 first year and 4 transfer). Beginning Spring of 2019, the department received 13 new majors (12 CRIM and 1 SOCI). These numbers do not reflect those students who changed their major during the semester. We anticipate new majors throughout the summer during orientation.

2. Retention Efforts. In the Fall of 2019 17 students were below 2.0. By Spring 2020 eight students raised their GPAs and 6 remained below 2.0 in Spring 2020 and 3 are either suspended or no longer at the University. In the Spring 2020 we had 21 students at risk. Six were from the fall semester and 15 were newly at risk. Due to the COVID -19 circumstance, contact with these students was restricted to emails.

In addition to hosting our monthly “Pizza with a Prof” (Fall 2019) The Undergraduate Director ran degree audits throughout the year for at-risk students and contacted all through email, and met with approximately 8 students to discuss strategies for success. Regular emails to all majors include a variety of informational subjects, such as tutoring services, deadlines, and invitations for face to face meetings, guest speakers, honors colloquia, and special events. In the spring of 2020 virtual office hours via Blackboard Collaborate were offered for students to connect with the Undergraduate Director.

3. Suggestions for future efforts: Large sections of General Sociology are necessary but stronger recruitment can be done through student ambassadors, alumni, and face to face meetings or more concentrated referrals of students to the undergraduate director. Criminology majors in sociology courses should be encouraged to double major. Sociology students in Criminology classes should be encouraged to double major. Students in sociology major courses, such as honors sociology and upper level electives are an excellent site for recruitment in addition to the large sections.

Instructors can also provide a roster of potential majors along with both sociology and criminology majors to the undergraduate director from their classes to be targeted for special events. There is evidence that instructors who meet with small groups outside of class – “coffee with a prof” or “small group tutorials” can have a positive effect in both recruitment and retention of majors. While recruitment of criminology majors is not problematic, retention for criminology majors may require more on-campus sections for students to make connections. Contingency plans due to the COVID-19 Virus may hamper these efforts in the coming year.

4. In addition to “Pizza with a Prof” outreach is a result of a combination of factors aimed at improving student success and keeping students on track for graduation. These include the following:

A. Because of the high number of majors and the limited number of courses offered, I work to assist students with overrides into the courses that they must get into in order to graduate on time. We have been far more successful in the past few years at providing enough courses for graduation with a few exceptions. We have also standardized our override request with creating a Microsoft form that students fill out. While our majors should be meeting with their course advisors, many slip through the cracks and then are referred to me via the Fulbright advising center. Advocating for students to be included in classrooms that are already at capacity can be a daunting task but this trouble-shooting activity continues to be a necessity for so many majors.

B. I also am in regular contact with BJ. Northington and Marsh Huh, the Fulbright advisors for SOCI/CMJS majors and receive referrals from both on a regular basis. In addition, I contact BJ each semester to share course offerings and most important, we are in regular contact with students I have identified as at-risk. You might say that we “double team” these students. Those who come to advising are then referred to make an appointment with me. I send regular updates to BJ of those students I have identified as at-risk.

C. Especially significant is the tracking and targeting of students with GPAs at or below 2.0. These efforts continue to be successful.

An example email:

*“Dear _____
I've been thinking about you and wanted to check in. I see that you are still struggling. Is there anything I can do to help you get back on track and get your GPA up? I want to see you succeed. Let me know if there are any challenges that I can assist you with. I know these are challenging times but I am here if I can help. Dr. H”*

D. I have worked this year with the Undergraduate committee on the issue of our Senior Writing requirement. We now have a completed requirement along with the General Education Outcome 6 reflective essay requirement. These documents have been uploaded to the Sociology and Criminology On Line Community in Blackboard. In an effort to distribute the work load for faculty teaching upper level courses, each faculty member will accept up to 5 students per class for those classes at 3000 and above.

E. I work continually with all transfers, including course petitions and course descriptions to ensure that all students receive credit for courses that fit our curriculum and for those courses that do not but are sociology courses, my duties include reviewing the syllabus, institution of transfer and then making a decision as to what type of elective to allow.

F Finally, I also work closely with the Honors College to ensure that students who are successful are also tracked closely and provided information on scholarships, study-abroad, and thesis advising. I send out periodic emails to students with GPAs at 3.5 and above. As with the at-risk students, the correspondence is written such that it appears to have been sent directly to that students.

Appendix A

Indicate whether the answer to the question is yes or no.

1. Are you a first year student with less than 30 hours.

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. Have you taken a sociology course before?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Indicate the answer choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

3. Sociology is the _____.

- a. systematic study of human society and social interaction
- b. analysis of deviant groups and individuals
- c. scientific analysis of premodern people
- d. academic discipline that examines individual human behavior

4. _____ refers to the knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society.

- a. Technology
- b. Society
- c. Culture
- d. Social organization

5. Sociologists use the word _____ to refer to what is biologically determined and _____ to refer to what results from the social environment.

- a. natural; artificial
- b. nurturance; natural
- c. nature; nurture
- d. nurture; nature

6. Which of these statements about socialization is false?

- a. Socialization involves both formal and informal processes.
- b. Socialization enables us to adapt to new environments.
- c. Socialization is essential for an individual to live in society.
- d. Socialization is complete by the time we reach late middle age.

7. _____ are collective ideas about what is right or wrong, good or bad, and desirable or undesirable in a particular culture.

- a. Beliefs
- b. Norms
- c. Values
- d. Ideologies

8. A _____ is a socially defined position in a group or society characterized by certain expectations, rights, and duties, and it exists independently of the specific people occupying the position.

- a. role
- b. label
- c. status
- d. class

9. The income gaps between richer and poorer countries of the world are _____ than the income gaps between classes in the United States.

- a. more pronounced
- b. less pronounced
- c. more equal
- d. less stratified

10. The fastest growing minority group in the United States today is _____.

- a. Asian Americans
- b. Native Americans
- c. new Eastern European immigrants
- d. Latinos/as (Hispanic Americans)

11. Social deviance can be defined as any:

- a. aberrant behavior.
- b. serious violation of consistent moral codes.
- c. perverted act.
- d. behavior, belief, or condition that violates cultural norms.

12. _____ is the sociological term for the hierarchical arrangement of large social groups based on their control over basic resources.

- a. Bureaucracy
- b. Ethnocentrism
- c. Social stratification
- d. Social layering

13. Sociologists emphasize that race is _____.

- a. a socially constructed reality
- b. is important biologically
- c. is established genetically, not socially
- d. has no importance within society

14. The term ethnicity refers to _____.

- a. people who share a racial identity
- b. a group of people who were all born in the same location

- c. a person's cultural background or national origin
- d. feelings of ethnocentrism

15. Which of these is not likely to constitute a reference group for a person who strongly believes in the value of human rights and equal opportunity?

- a. Ku Klux Klan
- b. American Civil Liberties Union
- c. National Organization for Women
- d. Human Rights Campaign

16. Which of the following statements about social structure is false?

- a. Social structure gives us the ability to interpret the social situations we encounter.
- b. A predictable social structure makes it easier to develop one's self-concept.
- c. Social structure creates stability within society.
- d. Social structure creates relationships that are generally equal.

17. Gender refers to the socially constructed differences between males and females.

- a. True
- b. False

18. Which of the following is an example of discrimination?

- a. resenting people's success because of their ethnicity
- b. not hiring a person on the basis of race
- c. fearing people because of their race.
- d. assuming that people's intelligence level is based on their ethnic background.

19. Sociologists often describe racial and ethnic relations in terms of _____ and _____

groups. Despite their large numbers, _____ groups typically have less power, fewer resources, and less opportunity for upward mobility.

- a. dominant, minority, minority
- b. dominant, minority, dominant
- c. ethnic, racial, ethnic
- d. none of the above

20. A(n) _____ is a group to which a person belongs and with which the person feels a sense of identity.

- a. formal group
- b. outgroup
- c. ingroup
- d. reference group

21. Organized crime thrives primarily because _____.

- a. people are essentially dishonest, even on the job
- b. there is a high level of political corruption in the United States

- c. there is a great demand for illegal goods and services
- d. people without other job skills need to make a living

22. With regard to education around the world _____

- a. There has been no progress in educational attainment
- b. Educational attainment has increased only for women.
- c. Gender gaps in education are greatest when children are young.
- d. Children from more affluent families have greater access to educational resources.