

Undergraduate Program Report
Assessment, Recruitment, Retention and Graduation
Sociology and Criminology
(Fall 2024 - Spring 2025)

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Below is our program assessment for 2024 – 2025 (**PART ONE**). Next, are the recruitment and retention efforts within the department (**PART TWO: A**). The next section includes a summary of efforts by the Undergraduate Director on new career preparedness and internship activities, as well as retention and other activities of the undergraduate director, with information on majors, honors **Recruitment, Retention and Graduation**, and a summary of graduating seniors (**PART TWO:B**).

PART ONE: ASSESMENT

In the previous year Fulbright college implemented the General Education “values added” curriculum for the University of Arkansas core curriculum. The social sciences learning outcomes are listed below. The broad criteria, listed below, while covered in our General Sociology courses (and Social Problems), are now explicit in all 20103/20303 syllabi as adapted to our specific discipline. This year, we implemented measures and outcomes in our Methods course to comply with remaining GELO requirements. Those criteria are now included in all 33103/331H3 syllabi.

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.

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

- a. Complete a substantive piece of written work, which for this course will be a research proposal.
- b. Engage in approximately 1250 words of reflective writing about the research process
- c. In the reflective essay, students are required to answer the following questions
 - (1) how and why you chose your topic,
 - (2) ways your college curriculum or experiences lead you to your research topic and questions,
 - (3) skills and knowledge you used to complete your project,
 - (4) courses you completed that assisted you with this project, and how this project may help shape your future academic and/or career goals.

In accordance with the above learning outcomes, a revised Pre and Post-test instrument was developed by members of the Undergraduate Committee in order to match three or more of the University General Education Outcomes Goals for Students taking a Social Science course in Fulbright College. The assessment tool for General Education was revised in January 2023 and

was implemented across General Sociology and Social Problems curriculum beginning Spring 2024 to address items from 3.3, 4.1 and 4.2 above. [See Appendix A]. A forty-question exam was used and reported on a scale of 1 to 4 for Blackboard submission. All questions are identified along the learning outcomes assessed. In addition, SOCI 3193 (Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality) are included with a more advanced assessment (See Appendix B). Beginning in Fall 2025, SOCI 33103/331H3 was revised to meet GELO 6.1, written, oral and or multimodal communication skills, quantitative literacy, Diversity awareness and/or intercultural competency, and critical thinking/ethical reasoning. Sociology and Criminology is fully compliant.

PART TWO: A

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS – DEPARTMENT

Faculty members teaching large sections report a variety of techniques. Some of those are listed below:

- Top priority- help students see the relevance of the material to the times we are in. I want "buy in"!
- Encourage them to reach out to an advisor in the department regarding majoring, and to add as minor if they already have a major
- Encouraging students to take the new course in Careers in Social Sciences to help better prepare them for graduation and the future.
- 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
- Using games in the classroom such as getbadnews.com and Jeopardy
- 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, the Criminal Justice Club, and our honors clubs, AKD and APS.
- 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

- Inviting guest speakers that tie what they learn in class to people pursuing social change professionally
- I met with students who missed class or failed to turn in assignments early in the semester and discussed problems they were encountering academically, psychological, or socially, and made several referrals to UA Cares, CAPS, and directed them to other resources on campus.

PART TWO: B

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT – UNDERGRADUATE DIRECTOR

State of Recruitment, Retention and Graduation:

One of our chief focuses has been the recruitment of Majors. The department had a total of 886 Majors in Fall 2024 (including double majors N= 217), of which 668 students were unique.



To illustrate our ongoing efforts to recruit beyond summer and fall registration periods, Ryan Cochran provided data on new majors added after Summer recruitment and fall registration at the end of August. Our recruitment efforts resulted in the addition of 153 majors from September 2024 to May 2025 (48 in Spring 2025 alone). Our enrollment numbers (2024/2025) are as follows (the spring numbers reflect the graduation of students in the Fall):

	Fall 2024	Spring 2025*
Sociology BA:	257	254
Criminology BA:	628	602
Sociology Minor:	87	105
CMJS Minors	130	139
IDS Minors	<u>37</u>	<u>35</u>
Total	1139	1135

*67 Majors Graduated Fall 2024. Information on graduating minors not available.

Graduation

Our ongoing work toward preparing our students for graduation led to a record number of students graduating during the previous academic year. Between Fall and Spring, a total of 259 degrees were awarded to 193 unique students. This represents 115 double majors (both Sociology and Criminology), 60 stand-alone Criminology BA, and 18 stand-alone Sociology BA.

Efforts toward Career Preparedness:

Recognizing the importance of better preparing our students for life after college, the department approved the creation of a new course, Careers in Social Sciences (CRIM/SOCI 31403) in the Spring of 2024. The class was designed by the UDG (also the internship coordinator and department career champion). He offered 4 sections of the class between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. 108 students completed the course. Designed to be a holistic approach to career preparedness and professional development, the course integrated the Office of Career Connections, off-campus professional mentoring and networking, and preparation for internships. The instructor also worked with each student to help them understand the value of post-graduate study, by devoting time to discuss graduate study, professional school, and specialized training for select career paths. Time was devoted to GRE and LSAT familiarity with preparation recommendations and timelines. Each participant was required to create a CV in addition to resumes and cover letters, which were all reviewed by the OCC. Students participated in mock interviews, created and delivered an Elevator Pitch, created and edited a LinkedIn account (with a full critique and recommendations), and each participated in networking exercises tied to their desired career paths. The instructor created an exit survey that 103 of 108 students completed. The feedback was very positive. **See Appendices 1 and 2** for a Likert scale and qualitative responses. The class continues to evolve based on feedback from students, and the Undergraduate Committee will recommend converting this class to a permanent course offering this Fall.

In the Spring of 2025, an additional survey was administered in the CISS course to identify how effective the course had been at securing internships, being accepted to graduate

school, law school, or securing a job by the end of the semester. 17 seniors took the class in the spring and completed the survey on May 1st, *prior* to graduation. 7 (41%) reported they did not have confirmed future plans, but were actively searching for employment based on the skills they honed during the semester. The remaining 59% had confirmed plans before they graduated. 3 (18%) confirmed they had secured professional employment, 1 (6%) reported an internship that would begin after graduation, 3 (18%) reported being accepted to graduate school, and 2 (11%) had been accepted to attend law school.

The same survey among undergraduates (n= 27), revealed that 9 (33%) had secured an internship, 5 (19%) had secured a job directly as a result of the class, and 8 (30%) were working at a summer job they already had. One student was recruited and accepted a job directly from her LinkedIn account prepared during the semester. Of the remaining students, 4 were taking summer classes. Nonetheless, 51.8% of undergraduate students attributed their participation in the class directly with jobs or internships secured for the summer.

Undergraduate Internship Program:

A vital part of our attempt to ensure graduate success is the undergraduate Internship program. While not a required class, the Sociology and Criminology internship program is quite robust, and saw record success this year. The UGD worked diligently to expose as many undergraduate students to internship opportunities as possible, as did numerous faculty members in the department, resulting in nearly double the referrals from 2023/2024. An online application was created to streamline the application process. Over the past year, 118 students completed an internship for credit (not including Summer 2025). That is a record number of placements for our department. Those internships ranged from research placements (50 in the Terrorism Research Center in Fulbright College), to legal placements (law firms, prosecutors and judge's offices), non-profits and law enforcement (Federal, state and local). The UGD is aware of a dozen students who also interned but did not seek course credit, bringing the number of student interns to 140, surpassing the previous annual record by 44 students. Enrollment for Summer 2025 is ongoing, but 26 students had accepted placement at the time this report was prepared—A record number of summer internship placements.

Administrative Duties:

The Undergraduate Program Director regularly assisted students with overrides into the courses that they must get into in order to graduate on time. Normally, students would meet with their course advisors but some do slip through the cracks and were referred via the Fulbright advising center. This required the UGD to perform a degree audit, check graduation requirements and then reach out to individual faculty to advocate that the student be allowed for specific reasons. This trouble-shooting activity continues to be a

necessity within the department even though our online override form has become very helpful in streamlining this process.

Recommendations

For Fall 2025, I recommend the department return to the program, “Pizza with a Prof” - bringing faculty and students together in a social setting for out-of-class interactions. It is also helpful to work with Lauren Sabon to ensure announcements, events, changes in requirements, etc. are sent through our Blackboard learning community. I also recommend in person ceremonies at the department level for graduating “on line” seniors. I also recommend working with the administrative staff to create cards, events and celebratory aids. Finally, the Undergraduate Committee will focus on reviewing courses that are currently being taught as special topics classes that should be converted to regular classes.

At Risk

Especially significant is the tracking and targeting of students with GPAs at or below 2.0. Each semester the UDG uses the data provided by the dean’s office (Ryan Cochran) to examine who is at risk. My Goal was to identify at-risk students, and provide resources. From Fall 2024-Spring 2025, I identified 22 at risk students. I reached out to those students, and for those willing, I worked toward getting them the resources they needed to become successful. Of the 22, we did lose 12 students between the fall and spring semester due to academic suspension. 2 students improved their grades above the “risk” threshold. 6 students improved their GPAs but remain at risk and 4 did not improve their GPA. I will continue to work with our at-risk students to improve our retention rates.

Honors

The UGD serves as the honors advisor, working with sociology and criminology honors students to connect them with professors, stay ahead of deadlines, and find research topics. The incoming UGD will continue to 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 followed the previous UGD’s practice of periodic emails to students with GPAs at 3.4 and above (using data provided by Ryan Cochran). As with the at-risk students, the email is written such that it appears to have been sent directly to that student, providing them with “kudos” for their work. I continue to ask faculty to identify students who have or are doing their thesis for this purpose.

Transfers

I performed 205 course transfer evaluations this year. This work includes reading course descriptions, reviewing syllabi from other colleges, and evaluating equivalencies within our department.

Study Abroad

I also evaluated 55 Study Abroad requests during the past year, a slight increase from last year. This duty includes reviewing syllabi from international schools and determining equivalents, special topics and general electives.