

# Assessment Plan

## Western Michigan University

### Sociology

**Mission Statement:** The Mission of the Department of Sociology is to communicate the power of the sociological imagination in understanding the social world to students, colleagues, and the community via the interplay of teaching, research, and service. As a discipline, Sociology critically analyzes societal arrangements, attempts to expand the social awareness of its students, and seeks to improve the human condition. Our Department has a strong commitment to diversity in epistemological and methodological orientations toward studying the social world.

Our undergraduate program in Sociology seeks to help students to think critically and objectively about social issues from a variety of sociological viewpoints. Consistent with a philosophy of liberal arts education, our programs promote understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity, and reflect a commitment to equality and free expression. The Department strives to provide opportunities for students to learn to communicate clearly and effectively orally and in writing; to gather, evaluate, and analyze data relevant to sociological questions; and to apply their skills and knowledge through participation in structured internships.

At the Master's level, the Department seeks to provide students with a solid foundation in the theoretical traditions, research methods and analytical tools that comprise the core of the discipline of Sociology. Mastery of the core will prepare students to pursue work at the doctoral level, or to seek employment in an applied research setting.

At the doctoral level, the Department seeks to prepare students to become scholars in the field of Sociology within the Department's primary areas of focus: applied; comparative and historical; criminology and deviance; gender, race/ethnicity and class; medical; and social psychology. The Department has a strong commitment to an apprenticeship model of graduate education which places an emphasis on mentorship, graduate student-faculty collaboration on research projects, cultivating an interdisciplinary orientation, and teaching preparation. (Approved by the Department of Sociology, March 11, 1998)

#### Outcome: UG Goal 1 - Assessing Social Issues

Is able to critically assess social issues using recognized sociological perspectives and this is evidenced by the ability to demonstrate an understanding of (a) important concepts, theories and methods of sociological study, (b) the array of social issues studied throughout sociology, (c) the application of sociological knowledge to a critical assessment of aspects of social reality, (d) approaches to the study of human diversity and social inequality, (e) the various ways sociological knowledge and practice impacts social reality and the human condition, and (f) the social structure of U.S. society and its global environment.

**Track:** Sociology Undergraduate

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** A sample of student performance relative to the goals and objectives will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course.

Each faculty member will be given a sample list from the Department Assessment Committee of students to assess. This will be no more than 20 students in each of the five core courses (200, 282, 283, 300 and 480) and no more than 5 students from other courses. The faculty member is to assess the overall student performance and to do so for the relevant objectives of all four articulated goals.

Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided (e.g., X # of students were at level 2 for Goal 1).

Means of Assessment			
Assessment Method	Criterion	Schedule	Active
Faculty members will be given a sample list from the Department Assessment Committee of students to assess. This will be no more than 20 students in each of the five core courses (200, 282, 283, 320 and 480) and not more than 5 students for other courses. The faculty member is to assess the overall student performance and to do so for the relevant objectives of all four articulated goals. Each faculty members will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to organize the data for the course, and report the outcomes of that process on the Sociology Undergraduate Program Assessment Reporting Form.	Assessment of how many students fall at each of four levels: (3) ready for graduate school, (2) advanced undergraduate level, (1) partial competency, or (0) lacks basic knowledge.	Core courses (200, 282, 283, 320, and 480) will be assessed both Fall and Spring semesters. Various elective courses (some at the 200, 300 and 400-levels) will be assessed both Fall and Spring semesters.	Yes
<b>Assessment Method Category:</b> Survey-Faculty			

**Outcome: G Goal 1 - Professional Identity**

Is able to demonstrate an understanding of the state of the profession of sociology including important substantive areas of specialization, current disciplinary debates, and career options. This is evidenced by (a) an understanding of important areas of sociological investigation, (b) an understanding of debates in the profession of sociology including those over the the potential contributions of sociologists to societal concerns with policy, justice, and ethics, and (c) an understanding of the different career paths open to sociologists and the academic and other training that is associated with such paths, and (d) demonstration of professional development through professional activities of research, teaching, and service.

**Track:** Criminal Justice  
 Doctoral Program  
 Masters Program

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** Faculty members who teach the core courses in either graduate program will be asked to conduct course-based assessments at the conclusion of each course. Student performance relative to the goal will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be asked to assess the competencies of all sociology students in the core graduate courses (SOC 600, 602, 603, 604, 606, 607, 620 and 621) and to do so for the relevant parts of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided.

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**Outcome: G Goal 2 - Theory Competency**

Is able to demonstrate a critical understanding of important classical and contemporary sociological theories, major sociological approaches to conceptualizing the social world, and the role of theory in social research. This is evidenced by the ability to demonstrate a critical understanding of (a) classical sociological theory: its historical development; its major authors, ideas, assumptions; and the critical assessments of these theories, (b) of contemporary sociological theory: its historical roots; its major schools and branches; its important authors, ideas, assumptions; and the critical assessment of these theories, (c) of how diverse theories conceptualize and explain aspects of the social world, (d) of the role of theory in sociological research, and (e) of historical and contemporary issues of diversity and inequality in social theory.

**Track:** Doctoral Program  
 Masters Program

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** Faculty members who teach the core courses in either graduate program will be asked to conduct course-based assessments at the conclusion of each course. Student performance relative to the goal will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be asked to assess the competencies of all sociology students in the core graduate courses (SOC 600, 602, 603, 604, 606, 607, 620 and 621) and to do so for the relevant parts of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided.

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621) and to do so for the relevant parts of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided.	lacks sufficient preparation for graduate work.		

**Outcome: G Goal 3 -- Empirical Research Process Competency**

Is able to understand and critique the empirical research process, emphasizing the variety of modes of scientific observation, as evidenced by an ability to demonstrate an understanding of (a) the scientific method: its historical development, its major ideas and assumptions, and the critical assessments of this method, (b) of the research process: the steps, the problematic aspects, and appropriate procedures, (c) important modes of observation, (d) of how to conduct empirical research using the research process, and (e) of issues of diversity and inequality in the empirical research process.

**Track:** Graduate Outcomes - not course specific

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** Faculty members who teach the core courses in either graduate program will be asked to conduct course-based assessments at the conclusion of each course. Student performance relative to the goal will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be asked to assess the competencies of all sociology students in the core graduate courses (SOC 600, 602, 603, 604, 606, 607, 620 and 621) and to do so for the relevant parts of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided.

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**Outcome: UG Goal 2 - Understanding Sociological Theory**

Is able to demonstrate an understanding of important classical and contemporary sociological theories, major sociological approaches to conceptualizing the social world, and the role of theory in social research. This is evidenced by the ability to demonstrate an understanding of (a) classical sociological theory: its historical development; its major authors, ideas, assumptions; and the critical assessments of those theories, (b) of contemporary sociological theory: its historical roots; its major schools and branches; its important authors, ideas, assumptions; and the critical assessments of these theories, (c) of how diverse theories conceptualize and explain aspects of the social world, (d) of the role of theory in sociological research, and (e) of historical and contemporary issues of diversity and inequality in social theory.

**Track:** Sociology Undergraduate

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** A sample of student performance relative to the goals and objectives will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be given a sample list from the Department Assessment Committee of students to assess. This will be no more than 20 students in each of the five core courses (200, 282, 283, 300 and 480) and no more than 5 students from other courses. The faculty member is to assess the overall student performance and to do so for the relevant objectives of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided (e.g., X # of students were at level 2 for Goal 1).

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**Outcome: UG Goal 3 Empirical Research and Statistics**

Is able to understand and critique the empirical research process, including the scientific methods and the variety of modes of observation and analysis, as evidenced by an ability to demonstrate an understanding of (a) the scientific method: its historical development, its major ideas and assumptions, and the critical assessments of this method, (b) of the research process: the steps, the problematic aspects, and appropriate procedures, (c) important modes of observation and analysis, (d) of how to conduct empirical research, and (e) of issues of diversity and inequality in the empirical research process.

**Track:** Sociology Undergraduate

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** A sample of student performance relative to the goals and objectives will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be given a sample list from the Department Assessment Committee of students to assess. This will be no more than 20 students in each of the five core courses (200, 282, 283, 300 and 480) and no more than 5 students from other courses. The faculty member is to assess the overall student performance and to do so for the relevant objectives of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form provided (e.g., X # of students were at level 2 for Goal 1).

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**Outcome: G Goal 4 - Statistical Competency**

Is able to understand and critique the appropriate use and interpretation of descriptive and inferential statistics, including their relation to research designs and methods of scientific observation, as evidenced by an ability to demonstrate an understanding of (a) the appropriate use and interpretation of descriptive and inferential statistics, (b) the assumptions and limitations of different descriptive and inferential statistics, and (c) the relationship between research design and data collection methods and data analysis.

**Track:** Doctoral Program  
Masters Program

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Assessment Evaluation:** Faculty members who teach the core courses in either graduate program will be asked to conduct course-based assessments at the conclusion of each course. Student performance relative to the goal will be assessed by each faculty member after completion of a course. Each faculty member will be asked to assess the competencies of all sociology students in the core graduate courses (SOC 600, 602, 603, 604, 606, 607, 620 and 621) and to do so for the relevant parts of all four articulated goals. Each faculty member will use the appropriate Student Competency Assessment Rubrics to summarize their overall findings on the form

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**Outcome: UG Goal 4: Written and Oral Communication**

Is able to demonstrate and apply appropriate research and communication skills, as evidenced by an ability to (a) locate and retrieve relevant sociological literature, including journal articles, books and other materials, (b) critically read and assess appropriate sociological literature and other materials, (c) appropriately cite and reference sociological authors, ideas and literatures, and (d) conceptualize, organize, and use sociological ideas in written and oral research projects.

**Track:** Sociology Undergraduate

**Outcome Status:** Active

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