

## ***SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT CURRICULAR ORGANIZATION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES***

### **1. The Organization of the Major**

The Department of Sociology has organized its curriculum around the following five domains:

1. Methods of sociological research. [METHODS]
2. Major sociological theories and sociological reasoning. [THEORY]
3. Substantive sociological knowledge and current problems/issues in at least two major areas of the field. [AREA]
4. Effective written expression of the core ideas and issues of sociological methods, theory, and substantive expertise. [WRITING]
5. Integration of the skills developed in the aforementioned domains. [INTEGRATION]

The department has organized course offerings around area specializations to encourage students to develop in-depth knowledge of particular sub-areas in the discipline. All majors are required to successfully pass core courses (statistics, research methods, and theory) as well as courses within designated areas of specialization (Family/Life Course; Law/Crime/Deviance; Population Studies; and Social Organization/Social Inequality). The core courses (Sociology 210 Research Methods, 215 Social Statistics, 302 Classical Sociological Theory, and 310 Methodological Applications in Social Research) provide the necessary academic foundation for progression through the major to the capstone course. Instructors of Sociology 215 and Sociology 310 have collaborated to design common curricular objectives and strategies for these courses. As we note later in this document, capstone courses are intended to assess overall student competencies within the core areas of the discipline. In these courses, students complete an independent research project that integrates area-based knowledge with the core skills.

The Sociology Department offers students several degree options: Bachelor of Arts (major either in Sociology or Sociology/Social Studies); Bachelor of Arts in Education (major in Sociology – Elementary); and Bachelor of Science (major in Sociology). We also offer students options for accumulating sufficient credits (24) for a minor. Students may earn a minor in sociology, population studies, and criminology/sociology of law.

In addition to the information about the Department that is published in the University Catalog, we maintain a departmental website that is accessible to students and the community-at-large, <http://www.wvu.edu/depts/soc>. We post curricular changes, news and events in the department, internships, job opportunities, events sponsored by the Career Services Center, registration procedures, graduation policies and procedures, and other matters as appropriate. We also include links to resources available to students (e.g., library links, information about how to avoid plagiarism). The quarter-time student advisor maintains the website, the department's advising web pages, as well as a listserv for students. She compiles a quarterly newsletter that is posted on the website and is emailed to all sociology majors through the listserv. She also maintains Western's Advisors' listserv, and is a member of Western's Advisors' group which meets 2-3 times quarterly. She is a member of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), and attends national and regional conferences to keep up with the field.

The student academic advisor provides assistance to three groups of students: those interested in the possibility of Sociology as a major (170 as of Fall06); declared Sociology majors (211 as of Fall06); and Sociology minors (approx 50 as of Fall06). She has an individual office in the department and is available by appointment, by phone and by email on a daily basis as students' questions arise. All majors meet with the advisor at least twice: once to assist with the application process and develop a Plan of Study, and then to complete the Major Evaluation for graduation. Students also meet with individual faculty concerning academic matters concerning individual courses as well as the major, and for guidance concerning post-baccalaureate plans.

The Advisor, the Department Manager, and the Department Chair work closely together to estimate enrollment for particular courses as well as coordination of course offerings. The sequencing of core courses through the capstone has facilitated this process, and has been beneficial for student course planning.

**A. *Undergraduate Program Goals***

1. To deliver high quality undergraduate instruction in the discipline of sociology.
2. To contribute to the general educational requirements of the University.
3. To increase the sensitivity of students to issues of diversity in society.
4. To prepare students for careers in fields utilizing sociological knowledge and research methodology.
5. To develop creative, effective, and experiential teaching methods to enhance student learning, skill development, and involvement.
6. To provide opportunities for students to participate in sociological research and publication.
7. To provide effective advising to majors, minors, and interested students.
8. To provide information, training, and advice to students interested in pursuing advanced degrees or professional careers in sociology.
9. To foster students' ability to think critically about social dynamics and problems, assess these issues in the context of key sociological paradigms, and apply sociological reasoning to the investigation of these issues.

**B. *Research Program Goals***

1. To promote and facilitate faculty and student involvement in basic and applied research and scholarship appropriate to the discipline of sociology.
2. To promote and facilitate the dissemination of the results of faculty research and scholarship through professional outlets, including recognized publications and professional conferences.
3. To promote and facilitate faculty in their pursuit of internal and external sources of funding for the completion of scholarly endeavors, where appropriate.
4. To promote and facilitate the dissemination of the results of faculty research and scholarship to lay audiences through media interviews, public presentations and forums, and similar public outlets.

**C. *Professional, University, and Community Service Goals***

1. To contribute to the shared governance system of the University through representation on committees and in the Faculty Senate.
2. To conduct and sponsor presentations to the University on topics relevant to sociology.
3. To conduct and sponsor presentations to others outside the University on topics relevant to sociology.
4. To consult with organizations outside the University on matters of sociological significance or research.
5. To maintain and enhance inter-university and professional networks and associations.

Table 1 lists the sociology courses that address the individual learning objectives that we have identified within the department. See Appendix for a listing of course numbers, title, and course descriptions.

**Table 1.  
Departmental Domains and Course Assessment**

**1. Students will learn and apply the methods of sociological research. [METHODS]**

	<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>COURSES/ student-level assessment</b>
A)	Identify primary sociological research methods	210, 215, 251, 260, 310, 330
B)	Master basic statistical techniques	210, 215, 310, 320, 421, 450, 452, 460
C)	Understand logic of scientific reasoning	210, 215, 221, 260, 310, 320, 355, 363, 450, 460
D)	Manage, describe, analyze, and present data using statistical computing software	210, 215, 221, 310, 320, 355, 375, 426, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
E)	Choose appropriate methods and analytic strategies	210, 215, 310, 320, 376, 421, 452, 460
F)	Evaluate the methods and reasoning of published research	210, 310, 320, 326, 330, 332, 340, 360, 367, 368, 375, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
G)	Articulate issues in measurement	210, 310, 320, 355, 363, 368, 376, 421, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
H)	Understand the application of ethical principles in research	210, 310, 330, 352, 356, 376, 430, 452

**2. Students will learn about major sociological theories and sociological reasoning. [THEORY]**

	<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>COURSES</b>
A)	Identify major sociological theories	251, 255, 260, 268, 269, 302, 303, 330, 340, 352, 355, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 376, 450, 452, 460
B)	Distinguish between sociological argumentation and opinion	210, 221, 255, 260, 269, 302, 303, 310, 326, 330, 340, 355, 361, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 375, 430, 450
C)	Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of existing sociological theories	251, 255, 260, 268, 269, 302, 303, 310, 330, 340, 352, 355, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 375, 376, 452, 450, 460
D)	Identify key philosophical assumptions and paradigmatic traditions underlying theoretical arguments.	255, 260, 268, 269, 302, 303, 321, 352, 355, 363, 364, 369, 370, 375, 376, 430, 450, 452, 460

**3. Students will gain substantive sociological knowledge in at least two major areas of the field. [AREA]**

	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	COURSES
A)	Develop substantive specialization in one of the four departmental areas: Social organization and inequality; Crime, law, and deviance; Population studies; Family and the life course	221, 251, 255, 260, 268, 269, 321, 326, 330, 332, 340, 352, 354, 355, 356, 360, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 375, 376, 387, 421, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
B)	Identify major theoretical perspectives in relevant areas	251, 260, 268, 269, 303, 310, 326, 330, 332, 340, 352, 354, 355, 360, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 375, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
C)	Demonstrate knowledge of key social trends in relevant areas	221, 251, 255, 260, 268, 269, 303, 321, 326, 340, 354, 355, 356, 361, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 375, 387, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
D)	Read and evaluate original research in relevant areas	303, 310, 320, 326, 330, 332, 340, 352, 354, 355, 356, 360, 361, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 375, 376, 387, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
E)	Locate and evaluate published research in relevant areas	303, 310, 320, 326, 332, 354, 355, 360, 361, 363, 364, 369, 370, 375, 376, 387, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461

**4. Students will learn to communicate in writing in the areas of sociological methods, theory, and substantive expertise. [WRITING]**

	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	COURSES
A)	Identify and utilize the format of sociological research articles.	210, 310, 320, 326, 332, 355, 360, 363, 368, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
B)	Express theoretical concepts in sociological terminology.	210, 260, 310, 330, 332, 340, 352, 355, 356, 360, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
C)	Interpret statistical analysis accurately and translate into written format.	210, 215, 310, 320, 332, 340, 355, 360, 363, 367, 368, 376, 421, 426, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
D)	Appropriately identify sources and paraphrase researchers' arguments and findings.	210, 269, 310, 326, 332, 340, 354, 355, 360, 361, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461

**5. Students will link knowledge about sociological theories with training in sociological methods through applications to sociological problems. [INTEGRATION]**

	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	COURSES
A)	Conduct a group-oriented research project designed by the professor.	210, 269, 310, 354, 359, 360, 364, 369, 421, 460, 461
B)	Conduct an independent, supervised research project	210, 320, 376, 421, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461, Senior Thesis
C)	Integrate knowledge of theory and methods into research paper	303, 310, 361, 364, 369, 370, 376, 426, 430, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
D)	Link theory, data, and hypothesis testing	210, 221, 310, 320, 360, 375, 376, 426, 440, 450, 452, 460, 461
E)	Participate in Internships and Service Learning	364, 375, 397X, 430, 471

**2. The relationship between Department Curriculum and University General Education Requirements.**

The discipline of sociology is uniquely positioned at the intersection of science and humanities, allowing its curriculum to encompass a wide range of the University’s goals for students’ general education. Table 2 lists the individual courses that substantively address these General Education goals.

**Table 2.**

**OVERLAP BETWEEN GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS AND DEPARTMENTAL CURRICULUM**

<b>GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT (Assignments, Exams, Papers, Graded Projects or Presentations.)</b>
Written expression	210, 255, 269, 310, 321, 326, 330, 340, 352, 355, 356, 361, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 376, 430, 450, 452, 460, 461, 471,
Oral expression	269, 330, 364, 369, 376, 452, 460
Visual expression*	269, 460
Analysis and interpretation of information from various sources (including the internet and print and visual media)	210, 215, 251, 255, 268, 269, 310, 321, 326, 330, 340, 352, 354, 355, 356, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 376, 387, 397, 452, 461, 471, 430, 450, 460
Quantitative and scientific reasoning	210, 215, 251, 268, 310, 326, 330, 355, 363, 368, 370, 376, 430, 450, 452, 460
Identification and analysis of complex problems	210, 215, 251, 255, 268, 269, 303, 321, 330, 340, 352, 354, 355, 356, 363, 364, 367, 368, 369, 370, 376, 387, 430, 450, 452, 460, 461, 471
Application of technological tools**	210, 215, 310, 320, 376, 452, 460

Exploration, imagining and creativity	210, 251, 255, 268, 269, 330, 352, 356, 364, 369, 376, 430, 452, 460
Preparation for citizenship	210, 251, 255, 268, 269, 321, 326, 340, 352, 354, 356, 364, 367, 368, 369, 376, 387, 397, 452, 461, 471,
Understanding diversity across local, national and global communities	251, 255, 268, 269, 321, 326, 354, 355, 363, 364, 368, 369, 397. 460, 461, 471
Collaborative work	210, 269, 310, 330, 354, 355, 364, 369, 376, 452, 460
Ethical reflection	210, 251, 255, 268, 310, 321, 330, 340, 352, 356, 367, 368, 376, 430, 452, 461, 471
Understand and assess interdependencies across individuals, society and the environment	251, 255, 268, 269, 321, 330, 340, 352, 354, 356, 364, 367, 368, 376, 369, 452, 461, 471

\* We interpreted ‘visual expression’ to refer to student poster or PowerPoint presentations.

\*\* We did not include reference to computer usage for writing, electronic correspondence, or Blackboard. We refer here primarily to training in and usage of statistical packages such as SPSS.

Following are three examples of how courses taught in the Department overlap with General Education Program Objectives.

Students enrolled in Sociology 269 (Race and Ethnic Relations) have the opportunity to investigate and highlight the social, political, and economic realities of multicultural people across local, national and global communities, by designing showcase displays that are prominently located in the Wilson Library. Besides fostering collaborative work, exploration, and creativity, one of the main objectives of this activity is to stimulate dialogue among the larger student population concerning issues surrounding race and ethnicity. Showcase participants are also required to discuss the substance of their displays in both an oral presentation and a written paper.

Sociology 363 (Law and Social Stratification) selectively surveys recent sociological studies of the ways law shapes and is structured by inequalities in society. For example, the meaning of "equal protection of the laws" has varied radically from Reconstruction to the Jim Crow period to the Civil Rights era. Classical sociological theories, current empirical studies and case law texts are used to examine the ways in which American law has alternatively accelerated and undermined racial and gender caste systems.

A student completed a senior thesis project (Sociology 492, Senior Thesis) that surveyed adoptive parents of children from countries outside the United States. The questions were aimed to explore the extent to which socio-economic class and racial preference affected parents' decisions for international rather than domestic adoption. The student created an on-line survey and analyzed the data with SPSS. She completed the thesis project and presented her results in a poster session during Scholars Week.

In addition to the courses listed here, approximately ten sociology students per year are actively engaged in individual research projects with faculty as research assistants, and/or complete senior thesis projects. Approximately ten students per year participate in Scholars Week presentations of their research, and several students have presented their research at professional conferences.