



**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FORMS**

**Institutional Program Review
Report to the Board of Regents**

Use this form to submit a program review report to the system Chief Academic Officer. Complete this form for all units/programs undergoing an accreditation review, nationally recognized review process, or institutional program review. The report is due 30 days following receipt of the external and internal review reports.

UNIVERSITY:	NSU
DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL:	History and Social Sciences
PROGRAM REVIEWED:	Sociology
DATE OF REVIEW:	3/9/2023
TYPE OF REVIEW:	Institutional Program Review

University Approval

To the Board of Regents and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this report, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

President of the University

3/20/2023

Date

1. Identify the program reviewers and any external accrediting body:

Professor Tracy E. Ore, Professor of Sociology, St. Cloud State University (Minnesota)

2. Items A & B should address the following issues: mission centrality, program quality, cost, program productivity, plans for the future, and assessment of progress.

2(A). Describe the strengths and weaknesses identified by the reviewers

Strengths:

The reviewer noted that the Sociology Program has a productive & dedicated faculty, and its faculty, in fact the department faculty overall, are strikingly collegial, the department and college are led by strong, incisive, visionary leaders (Drs. Steven Usitalo and Alyssa Kiesow, respectively) who strongly support the Sociology Program. The Sociology Program's curricular content is consistent with standards adopted by the American Sociological Association and the Sociology Program's assessment plans are clearly stated and easy to follow and process. The reviewer met with several sociology students and noted that she found them very enthusiastic about the program and very complimentary about the program's instructional personnel. The reviewer stated in her the report that the program's two-full faculty do an excellent job guiding the program

given the demanding service (non-teaching, non-research) commitments required of them. To briefly quote from her conclusions: “the Sociology program at Northern State University is made up of dedicated educators and advisors supported by a dedicated Chair, and the level of commitment that they have to the students and the university is commendable.” She adds that the program maintains its vitality at a time of “dwindling resources.”

Weaknesses:

There are areas that challenge the long-term strength of the Sociology Program. The program must establish a clearer disciplinary identity. Students, and other faculty, must be made aware that the Sociology Program does not merely service the general education requirement, rather it also is an attractive major. The program’s learning outcomes should more closely adhere to standards established by the American Sociological Association. An over literal adherence to goals set by the South Dakota Board of Regents, at the expense of the disciplinary goals of sociology, will weaken the program’s sociological identity. The workload for the department’s two full-time faculty is very demanding. They will find it difficult to re-envision the program to meet the evolving requirements of students given onerous service and non-program tasks assigned to them. More importantly, their ability to engage in productive scholarship will steadily erode over time. Student enrollment in the program has to a degree stabilized in the past couple of years. Even so, it experienced a sharp decline in recent years. This needs to be addressed more systematically.

2(B). Briefly summarize the review recommendations

The Sociology Program should develop a visible program mission, this includes a program identity statement. At present, students, even in the program, exhibit little knowledge of what constitutes sociology. The reviewer stated that the Sociology Program should create a Strategic Plan, which might address the program’s relative lack of direction. Here she urges the Department Chair, Steven A. Usitalo and CAS Dean, Alyssa Kiesow, to seek outside expertise to formulate a Strategic Plan for the Sociology Program. The reviewer also recommended several curricular changes. Most importantly, she remarked that the program is lacking sufficient vigor in emphasizing “quantitative literacy” and empirical methodology generally.

2(C). Indicate the present and continuous actions to be taken by the college or department to address the issues raised by the review. What outcomes are anticipated as a result of these actions?

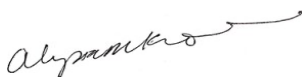
The department chair will meet with the sociology and criminal justice faculty (both full-time and adjunct) to review this report. The department chair will seek the dean’s support to enlist outside expertise in aiding the faculty to formulate a strategic plan. The chair will urge the faculty to consider the curricular issues – especially the lack of quantitative rigor in the sociology curriculum– noted by the reviewer. The most important issue facing the Sociology Program is long-term enrollment decline. While the department chair believes that this decline is a systematic issue facing sociology programs across the country, especially in universities which themselves are facing existential enrollment challenges, he will recommend to the sociology faculty that they make a more determined

effort, through mission statements, and the strategic plan, to establish a more visible identity for the Sociology Program at NSU.

- 3. Starting in Fall 2019 reporting year, campuses will identify the undergraduate cross-curricular skill requirements as part of programmatic student learning outcomes and identify assessment methods for cross-curricular skill requirements as outlined in Board Policy 2:11. Program review completed prior to Fall 2019 need not include cross curricular skills.**

See the accompanying document.

Note: This form was completed by Dr. Steven Usitalo, Chair of History and Social Sciences. It was reviewed by Dr. Alyssa Kiesow, Dean of College of Arts and Sciences.



3.13.23

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (signature), Date

Assessment Plan for BA – Sociology

Date created: 12/02/2019

Last revised: 03/16/2023

Goals: Minimum of 70% proficiency

Learning Objectives

1. Sociological discipline knowledge application: Students will be able to identify and apply sociological concepts and theories to everyday life, human behavior, and societies.
2. Access and opportunity: Students will be able to identify, analyze, and explain the factors contributing to and the consequences of social stratification and social inequality across dimensions/statuses and institutions. Students will engagement with diversity (i.e., individual differences and group/social differences) in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions leading to opportunities for equal access to and participation in educational and community programs for all members of society.
3. Critical and creative thinking: Students will be able to identify the characteristics of high-quality data and methods in sociological research and be able to effectively explain the results of sociological research to others.
4. Problem solving: Students will be able to assess the effectiveness of various social policies within the United States through the process of designing, evaluating, and implementing a strategy to evaluate policies.
5. Intercultural knowledge: Students will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of contexts and demonstrate skills that support understanding and effective communication and interaction in a variety of contexts.
6. Inquiry and analysis: A systematic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

Curriculum Map

	SOC 100/150	SOC 281	SOC/CJUS 380	SOC/CJUS 485	SOC 261, 350, 423, 458, 483	SOC 400, 401, 456, 471	SOC 270, 315, 320	SOC Elective – randomized by academic year
O1	X	X		X				X
O2	X			X	X		X	
O3			X	X				
O4	X			X		X	X	
O5	X			X				X
O6	X	X		X				X

Assessment Rubrics

Objective and type of student work assessed	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
<p><i>Learning Objective 1: SOC 100/150 – instructor-selected artifact</i></p> <p><i>SOC 281 – application paper</i></p> <p><i>SOC/CJUS 485 - portfolio</i></p>	<p>The artifact is unclear with no organization. The artifact has so many basic grammar errors and punctuation errors that the artifact cannot be readily understood. Major mistakes evident regarding theory or in definition of concepts</p> <p>Little to no sociological reasoning and/or evidence is found in the main body of the artifact. Student is unable to connect sociological theory/concepts to everyday life. The artifact makes no (or incorrect) reference to social, cultural, and/or historical context within the U.S.</p>	<p>Theory and key concepts are well defined and organized and linked together where appropriate</p> <p>Students evaluate social issues and structures with regard to sociological theories and concepts. Students are able to explain the relevance of sociological theories and concepts to variety of audiences. Sociological reasoning is accurate and precise, effectively supported with evidence from appropriate sources. The artifact explicitly ties social, cultural, and historical context sociological theory and concepts both within and outside of the U.S.</p>	<p>Concepts are clearly defined, linked where appropriate, and illustrated with examples</p> <p>Students evaluate social issues and proposed social remedies with regard to sociological theories and concepts. Students are able to explain the relevance of sociological theories and concepts and the potential implications of proposed solutions to a variety of audiences. Using appropriate sources, outstanding use of sociological reasoning and evidence to develop a concise argument. The artifact ties social, cultural, and historical context with theory and concepts</p>

			Student elaborates on this relationship with a global framework.
<p><i>Learning Objective 2: SOC 100/150 – instructor-selected artifact SOC 485 – portfolio SOC 260, 261, 330, 383, 350, 423, 483 – instructor-selected artifact</i></p>	<p>The main points of the artifact are ambiguous. The artifact has many basic grammar and punctuation errors but the meaning is somewhat clear. Gist of theory/concepts correct but some or major mistakes made. Students can minimally apply sociological concepts and theories relating to stratification to their own lives and demonstrate the connections of institutions/structure to their own circumstances. Reasons are in the form of assertions, anecdotes, lacking precision or relevant evidence. Stratification is identified in a single dimension with few contributing factors identified. Few remedies are proposed or remedies are aimed solely at an individual level. The artifact makes only minimal (correct) reference to social, cultural, and historical context to the development and continuation of stratification within the U.S.</p>	<p>Theory and key concepts are well defined and organized and linked together where appropriate. Sociological reasoning is accurate and precise, effectively supported with evidence from appropriate sources. Stratification is identified across multiple dimensions and the institutional impact of stratification is explored in depth. Students evaluate the ramifications to individuals and institutions when multiple axes of stratification intersect. Student compared multiple potential remedies at both the individual and institutional level and evaluated the potential efficacy of the proposals. Student demonstrates knowledge of global stratification. The artifact explicitly ties social, cultural, and historical context to the development and continuation of stratification both within and outside of the U.S.</p>	<p>Concepts are clearly defined, linked where appropriate, and illustrated with examples. Using appropriate sources, outstanding use of sociological reasoning and evidence to develop a concise argument. Stratification is identified across multiple dimensions and the institutional impact of stratification is explored in depth. Students explore the ramifications to individuals and institutions when multiple axes of stratification intersect. Student identified multiple potential remedies at both the individual and institutional level and evaluated the potential efficacy and ethical considerations of the proposals. Student shows an advanced understanding of global stratification and addresses potential global remedies. The artifact ties social, cultural, and historical context with stratification. Student elaborates on this relationship through a globally</p>

			comparative framework.
<p><i>Learning Objective 3: CJUS 380 – instructor-selected artifact SOC/CJUS 485 – research/policy paper</i></p>	<p>The main points of the artifact are ambiguous. The artifact has many basic grammar and punctuation errors but the meaning is somewhat clear. Gist of methods correct, but some mistakes made in application or ethical considerations. Students can minimally apply sociological methods to understanding their own lives and wider social institutions. Reasons are in the form of assertions, anecdotes, lacking precision or relevant evidence.</p>	<p>Methods and key concepts are well defined and organized/linked properly and follow proper ethical guidelines for the discipline. Students able to easily interpret research results for a wider audience. Students can conduct research on their own. Students evaluate social issues and structures with regard to sociological theories and concepts. Students are able to explain the relevance of sociological theories and concepts to variety of audiences. Sociological reasoning is accurate and precise, effectively supported with evidence from appropriate sources. Students are able to evaluate sociological research and explain the results of that research to a variety of audiences.</p>	<p>Methods and key concepts are clearly defined, linked where appropriate, and illustrated with examples. Students able to easily interpret research results for a wider audience. Students can create quality research on their own and present that research for a wider audience. Students evaluate social issues and proposed social remedies with regard to sociological theories and concepts. Students are able to explain the relevance of sociological research and the potential implications of proposed solutions to a variety of audiences. Using appropriate sources, outstanding use of sociological reasoning and evidence to develop a concise argument.</p>
<p><i>Learning Objective 4: SOC 270, 315, 320 – instructor-selected artifact SOC/CJUS 485 - portfolio</i></p>	<p>The main points of the artifact are ambiguous. The artifact has many basic grammar and punctuation errors but the meaning is somewhat clear. Gist of methods correct, but some mistakes made in application or ethical considerations.</p>	<p>Methods and key concepts are well defined and organized/linked properly and follow proper ethical guidelines for the discipline. Students able to easily interpret policy research results for a wider audience. Students can conduct</p>	<p>Methods and key concepts are clearly defined, linked where appropriate, and illustrated with examples. Students able to easily interpret policy research results for a wider audience. Students can create quality policy research on their own and present that</p>

	<p>Students can minimally apply sociological methods and concepts to understanding social policy and social institutions</p> <p>Reasons are in the form of assertions, anecdotes, lacking precision or relevant evidence</p>	<p>policy and program research on their own.</p> <p>Students evaluate social policy and structures with regard to sociological theories and concepts.</p> <p>Students are able to explain the relevance of social policy and the results of social policy analysis to variety of audiences.</p> <p>Sociological reasoning is accurate and precise, effectively supported with evidence from appropriate sources.</p> <p>Students are able to evaluate sociological research on policy and explain the results of that research to a variety of audiences.</p>	<p>research for a wider audience.</p> <p>Students evaluate social issues and proposed social remedies with regard to sociological theories and concepts.</p> <p>Students are able to explain the relevance of sociological policy research and the potential implications of proposed solutions to a variety of audiences. Using appropriate sources, outstanding use of sociological reasoning and evidence to develop a concise argument.</p>
<p><i>Learning Objective 5: SOC 100/150 – instructor-selected artifact</i></p> <p><i>SOC/CJUS 485 – portfolio</i></p> <p><i>SOC Elective – instructor-selected artifact</i></p>	<p>The content of the student’s work is accurate but lacks details and is supported by inappropriate or inadequate evidence, while its delivery or writing detract from the content.</p>	<p>The content is accurate, descriptive, supported by appropriate and credible evidence, and delivered with understandable writing or speech.</p>	<p>The content is accurate, descriptive, supported by appropriate and credible evidence, and delivered with understandable writing or speech.</p>
<p><i>Learning Objective 6: SOC 100/150 – instructor-selected artifact</i></p> <p><i>SOC/CJUS 485 - portfolio</i></p>	<p>Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable.</p> <p>Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/ approaches.</p> <p>Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/ or is unrelated to focus.</p> <p>States an ambiguous, illogical, or</p>	<p>Identifies a focused and manageable/doable topic that appropriately addresses relevant aspects of the topic.</p> <p>Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.</p> <p>Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences,</p>	<p>Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant yet previously less explored aspects of the topic.</p> <p>Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.</p>

	<p>unsupportable conclusion from inquiry findings. Presents limitations and implications, but they are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.</p>	<p>or similarities related to focus. States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. The conclusion arises specifically from and responds specifically to the inquiry findings. Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.</p>	<p>Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus. States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings. Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.</p>
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Assessment Cycle

June - May	Data is collected by instructors of courses indicated in the curriculum map during summer (if applicable), fall, and spring terms.
June 30	Results are sent to the program's assessment coordinator by this date.
August 15	Results are combined and the annual assessment report is drafted by the assessment coordinator in advance of the fall department meeting in mid-August.
September 30	After faculty discuss the assessment report draft, create any needed action plans, and tweak the program's assessment plan during the fall department meeting, the updated assessment report is submitted to the chair and/or dean by this date.
November 30	The dean reviews the annual assessment report, inputs comments, and sends the report back to the assessment coordinator by this date.
January 1	The assessment coordinator submits the final version of the annual assessment report to the nsuassessment@northern.edu email, accompanied by the updated assessment plan for the program.