

Sociology Assessment Plan
Department of Psychology and Sociology
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Park University

This year is a major transitional period for the Sociology program at Park University. We have grown from zero to two full-time Sociologists and joined with the Psychology faculty into one Department of Psychology and Sociology. As part of that growth, we have significantly revised the Sociology major and minor, as well as revised and added to our individual course offerings. The Sociology program at Park is both a small home campus major and half of the large Social Psychology university-wide major.

The discipline of Sociology is one of the traditional core fields in the social sciences. It is not only a useful major, in its own right, but has also had a longstanding role as a service discipline providing general education courses to all liberal arts majors and specific courses of interest to a variety of related majors. Accordingly, we have rethought our program to better meet four sets of student needs:

1. Sociology majors: The Sociology program graduated two majors in the 2005-06 Academic Year. We are currently on track to graduate four or five in the 2006-07 Academic Year and are actively recruiting new majors into the program in a number of ways: by participating in the Park Saturday Visits for potential incoming students, actively promoting the program in our lower division courses, and expanding our course offerings to attract new students. In the 2006-07 Academic Year, for example, we are offering new courses in Social Deviance; Statistics for Social Scientists; and the Sociology of Conflict, War, and Terror. We are also planning a new Sociology Club and an institutional chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta (the national Sociology Honorary Society) as well as attempting to build connections with high school teachers of Sociology in the area. We have also greatly revised the Sociology major for the 2007-08 Catalog.
2. Sociology minors: Sociology is an attractive complement to many of Park's majors. We are promoting our current Sociology minor program and have introduced a new minor to take effect in the 2007-08 Catalog.
3. Social Psychology majors: The Social Psychology major is the third largest single major at Park, but it has not been representative of Social Psychology as a field. Our revised and updated Social Psychology major strikes a better balance between the "social" and the "psychological," and brings Sociology program offerings to better parity with our already well-developed Psychology offerings.
4. Non-majors: The revised Sociology program includes several courses designed to educate sizeable student demographics in sociological

research and insights pertinent to their careers. For one example, our new Organizational Sociology and Sociology of Work and Professions courses complement the needs of our management students. For another, our new courses in Military Sociology and the Sociology of Conflict, War, and Terror apply Sociology to the real concerns of students in our military demographic. And for a third, our new methodological sequence (Ethical Issues in Social Science, Writing for the Social Sciences, Statistics for Social Sciences, and Principles of Social Research) enhances the marketable job skills we can provide for a number of social science majors.

In the midst of these changes, our assessment efforts this year concentrate in two areas. First, gathering additional information about what we are currently doing so as to better inform our program changes. And second, laying the groundwork for a more comprehensive assessment plan in our revised programs and courses.

Our existing assessment of Sociology majors happens at two points. Each Sociology course now has a new Core Assessment project, and each major is required to undertake a significant guided research project (as their SO405 Senior Project in Sociology) in order to demonstrate their mastery of Sociology content and methodology. Those research projects will be assessed by at least two Sociology instructors.

During the remainder of this academic year, we will undertake interviews with each Sociology major in order to determine their sense of what works and what doesn't within the program. And well will interview a sample of Sociology instructors to gain their perspectives on our offerings. We have also instituted a Sociology instructor e-mail list in order to engage in more wide-ranging discussions of curricular and instructional issues. All of this information will inform the implementation of our revised programs in the next Academic Year.

The Sociology program is also revising or developing a number of courses. With each new revision or development, we are setting the stage for an integrated assessment plan that will culminate in a comprehensive exit examination and a new senior project or seminar experience.

As a first step, we have adopted a new Sociology Program Mission in keeping with those already established at higher organizational levels:

“The Sociology Program at Park University will prepare students to think critically and communicate effectively about social realities, and to positively apply those insights in a their own lives and in a variety of careers.”

Second, we have adopted four Academic Goals that further elaborate on our Program Mission:

1. *“Students will have the necessary skills for employment in business, government, research, data analysis, or professions in the helping and service sectors.”*
2. *“Students will be able to apply social theory and research to solve real world problems.”*
3. *“Students will be able to collect, analyze, and interpret basic social scientific data.”*
4. *“Students will be able to communicate their sociological knowledge to a variety of audiences.”*

Third, we have devised a new set of detailed Program Competencies:

1. *Differentiate major concepts, theoretical approaches, and trends in sociology.*
2. *Create a plan for sociological research, and collect, analyze, interpret, and apply results using multiple methodologies (including statistical techniques).*
3. *Apply ethical standards of professional sociology to personal, social, and organizational issues.*
4. *Effectively utilize written, verbal, and information technologies to gather data and information, assess research, and communicate professionally about sociological issues to multiple audiences.*
5. *Use skeptical inquiry, critical thinking, and the scientific method to understand individuals, groups, societies, cultures, and their connections.*
6. *Evaluate the conduct and application of professional sociological research.*
7. *Explain the workings of micro, meso, and macro human processes.*
8. *Identify the operation of social structures, institutions, cultural forms, deviance, and various inequalities.*
9. *Identify and explain the operation of in-group and out-group dynamics, social interaction, and life course development.*
10. *Differentiate the various roles, professional settings, and career opportunities related to sociology.*

Fourth, each new and revised course has a new set of Course Learning Objectives, and each CLO is tied to a specific Program Competency.

Fifth, each core course is divided into units with Unit Learning Objectives. Those ULOs are matched with CLOs. And each ULO has a set of both objective and interpretive outcome assessment items. Those items will not only be used within their associated courses, but will also contribute to pools of items to be used in the new Sociology and Social Psychology Comprehensive Exit Examinations beginning with those students who enter the program under the 2007-08 Catalog.

Our efforts have included (and continue to include) consultation with students, Sociology instructors, colleagues in the other social science programs, a systematic study of the programs and degrees offered by highest ranked Sociology Departments and the Sociology Programs at the highest ranked liberal arts institutions, and the standards for the discipline encouraged by the American Sociological Association. It is still a work in progress, but we feel that we have made significant improvements this year and our efforts to design a new and comprehensive Sociology Assessment Plan are on schedule to be implemented with the revised programs in the next Catalog.

Revised Sociology minor accepted for 2007-08 Catalog.

Sociology
Program

MINOR
(Parkville Campus.)

Requirements for:

Minor — 18 hours, 2.0 GPA

Cr	Prg	###	Title
3	SO	141	Introduction to Sociology
3	SO	220	Ethical Issues in Social Science
3	SO	304	Social Problems

One of the following:

Cr	Prg	###	Title
3	SO	208	Social Inequality
3	SO	210	Social Institutions

And any two (2) additional PS/SO courses at the 300 or 400 levels.

Revised Sociology major accepted for 2007-08 Catalog.

Sociology
Program

BACHELOR OF ARTS
(Parkville Campus)

DESCRIPTION

Sociology is the study of people in groups, their interactions, identities, and the societies, institutions, and cultures they create. As a social science, it combines

the scientific and humanistic perspectives to study the full range of human experience and helps us understand pressing social issues and connect them to individual human concerns. It is a valuable liberal arts major that prepares students for a variety of careers in business, government, human and social services, and social research and data analysis. It teaches students to collect, analyze, interpret, and apply valid and reliable data and explanations to personal decisions and to public and organizational policies.

Requirements for:

B.A. Major — 42 hours *, 2.0 GPA
(42 hours in major, plus 3 hours of program specified GE substitutions.)

Sociology Core [18 hours]

Cr	Prg	###	Title
3	SO	141	Introduction to Sociology
3	SO	208	Social Inequality
3	SO	304	Social Problems
3	SO	325	Social Deviance
3	SO	403	Social Theory
3	PS	301	Social Psychology

Technical Skills [12 hours]

Cr	Prg	###	Title
3	SO	220	Ethical Issues in Social Sciences
3 *	SO	306	Writing for Social Sciences
3	SO	307	Statistics for Social Sciences
3	SO	308	Principles of Social Research

* *Program specified substitution for EN 306 writing requirement.*

Integrative Experience [3 hours]

Cr	Prg	###	Title
3	SO	498	Senior Capstone
OR			
3	SO	496	Senior Project

SENIOR EXAMINATION

Students must pass the comprehensive examination process as part of their Senior Capstone experience.

ELECTIVES

12 hours of SO electives at the 300 or 400 level.

Sociology courses for 2007-08 Catalog (*new courses in italics*).

SO141 Introduction to Sociology

An examination of the social processes and structures of society, with particular attention to American society. Reviews such topics as inter-personal attraction, culture, major social institutions, inequality, deviance, and social change. Also introduces methods used in sociological research.

SO208 Social Inequality

An analysis of patterns of social and economic inequality in American society as well as societies in other times and places. Examines theories of the causes of inequality, the consequences of inequality for individuals and society, and the patterns and causes of social mobility.

SO210 Social Institutions

An overview of major social institutions, such as education, family, religion, culture and media, science and health care, politics, and the economy. Discusses their historical development, modern forms, social functions, and the ways in which they relate to one another and shape individual lives. Pre-requisite: SO141.

SO220 Ethical Issues in Social Science

Considers the moral and ethical consequences of conducting social science research, disseminating the results, and implementing practices and policies based on those findings. Critically examines those questions and choices rising at each stage of the research process, and the results of those choices on relevant parties. Pre-requisite: an introductory social science course (i.e., SO 141, PS 101).

SO302 Study of the Family

A study of the family as a social institution and a social group in terms of cross-cultural, historical, and contemporary perspectives. Current controversies concerning male-female roles, sexual morality, reproduction and other issues are considered.

SO303 Urban Sociology

A study of the development of the city and of the social characteristics of urbanization, ecology, social processes, group relations, and selected urban problems.

SO304 Social Problems

Review of major controversial issues facing modern societies, such as poverty, crime, deviance, sexuality, addiction, mental illness, prejudice, changing values, demographic pressures, surveillance, technology, terrorism and war, the provision of social services, and the balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. Special attention is given to global and cross-cultural context, and the causes, consequences, and potential public policy solutions for each issue. Pre-requisites: SO 141

SO306 Writing for Social Sciences

Course emphasizes translating social science jargon and research findings into clear and appropriate language for a variety of common consumers of social science results, including professional, practitioner, and lay audiences. Topics also include APA style, conducting a literature review and evaluating sources, balanced and complete presentation, and professional authorial voice. Common forms of social science writing, such as research proposals, data summaries, and research reports and introduced. Pre-requisite: SO141, PS101, or other introductory social science course; SO220 recommended.

SO307 Statistics for Social Sciences

Statistical methods are a primary tool for all of the social and behavioral sciences. This course introduces a wide variety of common statistical techniques and their conceptual bases, including: basic descriptive and inferential statistics, analyses of association and variance, effect sizes, and others in their parametric and nonparametric forms. It provides a background in the relevant theories of probability, sampling, and measurement. And the student will learn how to become a more discerning consumer of statistical information as well as gaining practical experience

calculating these statistics by hand and computer. Pre-requisite: an introductory social science class (i.e., SO141, PS101, CJ100, or SW205) and MA131.

SO308 Principles of Social Research

Surveys the range of quantitative (experiments, surveys, etc.) and qualitative (observations, interviews, etc.) methodologies commonly used in social scientific research. Critically examines issues related to formulating research questions, evaluating social scientific literature, sampling, measurement, design, analysis, interpretation, and communication of results. Involves completion of data analysis projects and a research proposal. Pre-requisite: an introductory social science class (i.e., SO141, PS101, CJ100, or SW205) and SO307 or equivalent.

SO315 Minority Group Relations

An examination of the patterns and causes of prejudice and discrimination. Surveys the history and current status of groups in American society which have been subjected to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex or religion.

SO318 Military Sociology

The military as a social institution, focusing on both the internal structure and practices of the military and its relation to other institutions (such as the government or the family), military leadership, policy issues and the role of the military in diplomacy and international relations, and the social psychological effects on service members (including the differences between enlisted personnel and the officer corps), veterans, and their families and friends. And it analyzes the dynamic role of the military in a digital age with changing operational mandates. Pre-requisite: SO141.

SO325 Social Deviance

Survey of major theories of deviance and social control. Analyzes specific behaviors and identities commonly regarded as deviant: violence, property crimes, drug use, mental illness, unconventional sexual behaviors, suicide and self-destructive behaviors, among others. Explores both official and informal responses to deviantized behaviors, including criminalization and stigmatization, and their cross-cultural variation. Pre-requisite: SO141.

SO326 Sociology of Conflict, War and Terror

Surveys the conditions under which conflicts arise, escalate, and are resolved or erupt into open hostility. Examines the social functions and consequences of warfare, including its relation to political, cultural, and economic concerns, and its affects on combatants. Traces the reasons for terrorism and its rise from the 20th century onward, including its connections to globalization and the global community.

SO327 Sociology of Mental Health and Illness

Cross-cultural social history and analysis of mental health professions and psychiatric diagnoses, and an analysis of the politics and social control related to the labeling of mental illnesses. Topics include institutional and informal care-giving, effects of mental illness on family and friends, homelessness and substance abuse, effects of current mental health policies and trends, medicalization of deviance, and a social epidemiology of mental illness.

SO328 Sociology of Religion

Sociological analysis of religious organizations, movements, and experiences with an emphasis on historical and cross-cultural comparisons. The course surveys both large-scale religious trends and demographic patterns and the social and cultural dimensions of individual religious feelings and behaviors. Topics include formal religious organizations, religious socialization, religious conflict, relations with other institutions, the worldwide rise of fundamentalisms, and the future of religion. Pre-requisite: SO141.

SO329 Sociology of the Life Course

Examines the social aspects of aging from birth to death and the differences in our experiences due to age, historical period, and the cohort or generation to which we belong. Substantive topics include social psychological outcomes (such as self-esteem and stress), adolescence and identity formation, dating and family dynamics, occupational trajectories and retirement. Also examines the large scale effects of population aging trends and the effects of maturation of social relationships. Pre-requisite: SO141.

SO330 Sociology of Youth and Youth Cultures

Focus on the social and cultural aspects of development from the onset of adolescence through young adulthood. Examines historical and cultural differences in the concept of "youth." Topics include the effects of family, friends, and the media on identity and personal decisions; dating and mating; school and work; popular culture, values, and consumerism; violence, delinquency, sex, and risk taking.

SO332 Dying, Death and Bereavement

Examines the demographic, cultural, and social psychological aspects of dying, death, and the grieving process. Topics include cultural and individual attitudes toward death, the medicalization of death, associated institutions, end of life care, the social role of funerals, and various forms of death, such as old age and dying young, euthanasia, suicide, and genocide.

SO403 Social Theory

Surveys the historical development of sociological theory, examines the nature of social theory and theory construction, and reviews the principal contemporary perspectives and debates in the field of social theory. Pre-requisite: SO 141.

SO421 Organizational Sociology

Study of the origins and operations of formal bureaucratic organizations, such as businesses, governments, prisons, and voluntary and service associations; their place in modern society; and their relations to one another and to individuals. Topics include major organizational theories, leadership, authority, task performance, communication, decision-making, and effectiveness. Focuses on the structural and cultural aspects of these organizations. Pre-requisite: SO308 or equivalent, or instructor permission.

SO425 Sociology of Work and Professions

Analysis of work in the United States and a global economy. Examines the division of labor, central and peripheral labor markets, occupational prestige and professionalization, work and identity, occupational mobility, formal work hierarchies and informal collegueship, socialization and work processes, types of occupations and professions, and the influences of large corporations and globalization. Pre-requisite: SO308 or equivalent, or instructor permission.

SO451 Advanced Social Psychology

An in-depth survey of the major theoretical approaches in social psychology, including: social cognition, exchange theory, group dynamics, role theory, psychodynamics, symbolic interactionism, and social constructionism. The emphasis is on critical evaluation and practical application of each theory and major studies and findings are used as illustration. Pre-requisite: PS301.

SO455 Program and Policy Evaluation

Advanced survey of quantitative and qualitative methodologies used to evaluate organizational programs and policies. Covers all steps of the process, from value formation and goal setting, through research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and implementing data based program changes. Pre-requisite: SO308 or equivalent.

SO459 Survey Methodology

Advanced course in the design, implementation, and analysis of survey research. Topics include operationalizing concepts, scaling and measurement, multistage sampling, wording and ordering effects, and a number of statistical analysis techniques. It also introduces practical considerations regarding the time, cost, and method of survey implementation. Pre-requisite: SO308 or equivalent.