



Social Science Department

3rd Assessment Cycle 2012-2015

Assessment Plan

General Education Competency
Critical Thinking &
Written Communication

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Background

As part of the colleges Outcomes Assessment Council, each department is required to choose a high enrollment course to assess using two general education competencies. The Social Science Department chose to assess SO 101 (Introduction to Sociology) during the college's third assessment cycle. The department representative chose to assess critical thinking and written communication for this project.

The department representative invited all of the adjunct faculty to meet in order to get to know the course through dialogue with each other. Faculty worked via email and discussed the assignments they used in their sections. The communication was not evaluative but instead was meeting to be beneficial from sharing what we are doing, what seems to work, and a general discussion about our experiences with the course syllabus. After collecting all the assignments, the OAC representative went to a conference where she identified a beneficial project that also evaluated students' sociological knowledge.

From these experiences, the department representative created the project that is described below.

Methodology

For the rest of the semester try to keep a small notebook with you at all times. When you find yourself noticing something that relates to our course (and/or sociology in general) or find yourself thinking sociologically (which you should be trying to do as much as possible now!) jot it down in your notebook. Try to make at least **two** observations per day in your notebook. Write whatever you need to write to remember what it was that you observed/noticed/thought about, and how it relates to the course. For example you might jot down:

“Grocery store--gender roles--mostly moms shopping”

“Noticed socialization processes at church today.....”

“Today I was paying attention to the privileges I receive as a result of my (race/class/gender) and noticed

Write down everything that you observe that makes you think of something you read or that we discussed in class, or that you find to be patterns and trends in the social world.

Then, when you get home, (or at a minimum prior to our class) **type up** your best observations (shoot for about 4 per class) in a more complete form, **as follows**:

By the time your final log and paper are due, you should have a **minimum of 15 observations** recorded about your social world. You can use a concept or topic more than once, but don't become excessive. If you cite an example of status and its relationship to symbolic interaction theory for 5 of your observations this would be excessive and would not illustrate a broad understanding of numerous sociological concepts.

Finally, you will write a paper that analyzes and summarizes your data. Take a look over your observations, and think about how your perspective has shifted over the semester. *What has changed in the way you see the world? Is the world the way you thought it was before you took this course? How so and how not? In what ways did you and others construct this world? What was this experience like for you?*

You will address these questions in terms of your data in a 5-6 page summary of your experience. You will hand in this paper with your original field notes attached. This written report will constitute your “Sociological Imagination” paper in this course. This paper will be due in class on August 8.

The paper assignment will be handed out in class by the second week.

There is an opportunity for *boosting your grade* in this paper. If you write a detailed log with 25 or more sociological observations that are well explained and analyzed, you can receive up to one extra point on the “observation log” portion of your grade. Also, the more observations you have to draw from, the stronger your paper can be.

This assignment will be worth 0-5 points, based on the following two criteria:

Criteria 1: Intellectual Engagement with Key Concepts (4 points possible)

4 points: Student demonstrates that the activity was used to make deeper connections with the readings and class discussions. Additionally, the student's analysis demonstrates insight and relevance to the world and society. Let's call this the 4 point answer because here you are providing strong evidence that you are developing a strong sociological imagination.

3 points: Student uses the activity to make some connections with the textbook and class discussions.

2 points: Student comprehends the surface level meaning of the activity and draws some connections to the readings and class discussions.

1 point: Student demonstrates that the activity was completed by but does not make connections with the textbook, class discussions, or the bigger picture.

Zero points: Student does not take the challenge and submits no work.

Criteria 2: Professional Communication (possible to gain 1 or 0 points, or, even lose 1 point)

1 point: Student has a very good command of written English, writes with some flair and originality, and the paper could be used as a model for other students to emulate.

0 points: Student has a good command of English and recognizes that proofreading a paper prior to turning it in is essential for making a positive impact on the reader.

Minus one point – Student demonstrates some evidence of correct spelling, grammar, punctuation.

Analysis of Data

The assessment and research department will work to create a web submission form that will allow for the submission of data for the assessment. The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS statistical analysis software and a report will be provided to the department.

Assessment Timeline

<u>Semester</u>	<u>Assessment Objectives</u>
Fall 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and present a plan to OAC. 2. Deploy initial <u>Pilot Assessment</u>. 3. Design, Research and Implement an effective assessment tool. 4. <u>Collect data</u>.
Spring 2013 (PRR Status Report is due April 1, 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deploy <u>Pilot Assessment</u> if not completed in the fall. 2. <u>Analyze</u> initial Pilot Data. 3. Implement instructional and organizational strategies to improve the assessment project. 4. <u>Reassess</u> students and <u>collect data</u>.
Fall 2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Analyze</u> Pilot Data. 2. Develop strategies based on that data to help improve student learning. 3. <u>Begin 1st Assessment</u>. 4. <u>Collect data</u>.
Spring 2014	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Analyze</u> Assessment Data. 2. Develop strategies based on that data to help improve student learning. 3. <u>Reassess students</u>. 4. <u>Collect data</u>. 5. Present a <u>progress report</u> to the OAC.
Fall 2014 (Self-Study Begins)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Analyze</u> Assessment Data. 2. Develop final strategies based on lessons learned over the course of the assessment. 3. <u>Conduct Final Assessment</u>. 4. <u>Collect Data</u>.
Spring 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Analyze</u> Data Collected over the course of the entire assessment. 2. <u>Prepare Final Assessment Report</u>.