

**General Education Report from the Department of Sociology 2019-2020**

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## Executive Summary

The benchmark was not met for any of the general education SLO's measured using a direct assessment of students who completed Sociology 201 during the 2019-2020 academic year. However, there is an increase in the average scores from the previous academic year for two student learning outcomes (SLO 7-e and SLO 9-b). The scores for one SLO (7-f) decreased from the previous academic year. The benchmark for SLO 7-e was adjusted from 85% to 80% given the baseline (64.58%) and current score (68.61%) was much lower than the 2017-2018 score (81.81%). The target average score was also adjusted from 90% to 85%.

Sociology 201 is taught primarily as a traditional course; however, the department did offer a few hybrid sections and online sections in the previous years. Based on a separate analysis that revealed that overall scores are slightly higher for the traditional courses compared to the hybrid courses, the department was aiming to offer fewer hybrid and online 201 courses since 2018. Unfortunately, due to one faculty member having a sabbatical and another faculty member on maternity leave during the fall of 2019, online courses were offered. In the future, the department plans to offer fewer online/hybrid 201 courses (the Covid-19 pandemic may affect these future plans). Also, the department will focus on improving scores to meet the benchmarks in all SLO's. The department intends to further increase student understanding by continuing to incorporate written assignments and class discussions in all courses. These assignments and discussions emphasize the application of sociological concepts to real world and individual experiences.

### General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Competency	Courses	Assessment *See attached assessment instrument	Evidence	
			2018-19 20	2019-
7-e: Recognize how other influences affect individual behavior.	SOCI 201	Assessment items #1 & #3	64.58% 68.61%	
7-f: Recognize how other influences affect collective behavior.	SOCI 201	Assessment items #2 & #5	75.78% 72.66%	
9-b: Ability to think critically.	SOCI 201	Assessment items #2 & #4	67.49% 70.60%	

**Total number of students assessed: 260**

**SLO 7-e: Recognize how other influences affect individual behavior.** SLO 7-e was assessed using two items from a direct measure of student knowledge in seven Sociology 201 courses (see appendix for the assessment). Scores for these two items were combined to create an average score. The baseline is 64.58%. The benchmark is 80%. The average score of students for SLO 7-e is 68.61%. The benchmark for AY 2019-2020 was not met. The target average score the department would like to achieve is 85% in five years.

**SLO 7-f: Recognize how other influences affect collective behavior.** SLO 7-f was assessed using two items from a direct measure of student knowledge in seven Sociology 201 courses (see appendix for the assessment). Scores for these two items were combined to create an average score. The baseline is 75.78%. The benchmark is 80%. The average score of students for SLO 7-f is 72.66%. The benchmark for AY 2019-2020 was not met. The target average score the department would like to achieve is 85% in five years.

**SLO 9-b: Ability to think critically.** SLO 9-b was assessed using two items from a direct measure of student knowledge in seven Sociology 201 courses (see appendix for the assessment). Scores for these two items were combined to create an average score. The baseline is 67.49%. The benchmark is 80%. The average score of students for SLO 9-b is 70.6%. The benchmark for AY 2019-2020 was not met. The target average score the department would like to achieve is 85% in five years.

### **Action Items**

**1. SLO 7-e: Recognize how other influences affect individual behavior.** The department plans to continue to further increase student scores by including more written assignments and class discussions that highlight application and critical thinking in all Sociology 201 courses. The writing assignments presented in 201 courses are vast and include, but not limited to, applying concepts (e.g., health care) to media, observations of real world phenomenon, such as the division of household labor, and using Internet resources. Instructional films on certain topics, such as poverty, health care, immigration are regularly used to initiate class discussions that can continue to help improve student scores in this area to meet the benchmark. The use of these types of written assignments and classroom discussions will not only serve to further increase students' understanding of how social influences affect individual behavior, but will encourage student participation in all 201 courses.

**2. SLO 7-f: Recognize how other influences affect collective behavior.** The department plans to increase student scores by stepping up our efforts on emphasizing collective behavior in our lectures and assignments. This is an area that has shown a decline in the past two academic years. As a result, the department as a whole will further emphasize the importance of collective behavior during lectures including extensive discussions of norms, conformity, and social movements. In addition to more focused lectures, assignments, videos and discussions will be used to further enhance student learning in this area. For example, videos that emphasize obedience and conformity are routinely presented in 201 courses.

**3. SLO 9-b: Ability to think critically.** The department plans to further increase student scores by continuing to incorporate writing assignments that emphasize critical thinking skills, specifically applying sociological concepts to real world events and individual experiences. Faculty currently utilize assignments that require students to critically apply concepts; however, more specifically focused assignments that also include class discussion to further illustrate how sociological concepts are applicable to the social world will be implemented in the upcoming academic year. For instance, an assignment that involves students creating a budget based on poverty thresholds has been included in some courses and assignments that link sociological concepts and ideas to the real world using media and film are routinely presented in 201 courses.

## Appendix

### SOCI 201 General Education Assessment Questions

1. Why would sociologists who study academic performance be interested in the lives of college freshmen before they enter college?
  - a. Sociologists are particularly well equipped to study individuals' intelligence quotients and the impact of intelligence on academic performance.
  - b. Sociologists are particularly well equipped to study the influences of students' backgrounds—such as family influences—on academic performance.
  - c. Sociologists who took sociology courses in high school are particularly well equipped to study the academic performance of students entering college for the first time.
  - d. Students who excel academically are likely to attend schools closer to home.
2. If you possess a sociological imagination and someone asks you to study unemployment rates in a city of 50 million people where 15 million are unemployed, what would you conclude?
  - a. We should consider the economic and political structures of the society.
  - b. We should consider the work ethic of the average citizen.
  - c. We should worry about the intelligence level of the workers who have lost their jobs.
  - d. We should teach people how to take better advantage of their opportunities.
3. Which of the following statements is **TRUE** in society?
  - a. Peoples' lives are influenced primarily by the decisions they make.
  - b. Everyone who works hard will become successful.
  - c. People will most likely remain in the class they are born into.
  - d. Institutions cannot discriminate.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ would view crime as serving a purpose for society, while a \_\_\_\_\_ would view crime as a result of lacking resources (e.g., unavailability of jobs).
  - a. Functionalist; Conflict Theorist
  - b. Conflict Theorist; Functionalist
  - c. Symbolic Interactionist; Social Constructionist
  - d. Social Constructionist; Symbolic Interactionist
5. Which of the following is **NOT** an example of how norms influence collective behavior?
  - a. People clap at the end of a speech.
  - b. People look both ways before crossing a street.
  - c. People flee from bear attacks.
  - d. People face the doors of an elevator.