

Annual Assessment Report 2015

This form is intended to facilitate reporting program outcomes assessment to accrediting agencies, Board of Trustees, Strategic Planning Committee, and other internal or external audiences.

The department mission statement, PLO's, curricular map and multi-year action plan should to be posted on the departmental website.

Department: Sociology and Anthropology

Date: May 29, 2015

Department Chair: Felicia Song

I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

Program Learning Outcome	Research and Methods Competence
Who is in Charge	Entire Dept
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	SOC 195 Senior Seminar Research Paper were assessed using a scoring rubric on research methods developed this year which required each paper to be scored on a scale from Excellent (score=4) to Poor (score=1) in five areas: method choice, data collection instrument, sampling technique, ethical consideration and data collection process. Ten papers were purposively sampled from this year's SOC195 students. Ten papers were purposively sampled from the 18 paper submissions to reflect the work of 3 under-achieving, 4 mid-level achieving, and 3 high-achieving students. Each faculty member reviewed four papers so that each paper had two evaluators.
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	N/A
Major Findings	In general, it was observed that there was great variance between student papers that demonstrated excellent understanding and great thoughtfulness in conducting research, and other papers which contained significant holes and lacked basic research competence. Out of a possible 20 points, the average overall score was 13.08. Data collection and method choice were rated highest with scores of 3.05 and 2.93 respectively. The proper usage of a data instrument was rated 2.48. Student capacity to adequately account for ethical consideration and sampling technique were rated lowest at 2.325 and 2.2 respectively. (See appendix for details.)
Closing the	The evaluation of student papers raised many questions about the adequacy of the existing SOC106/107 research sequence,

Loop Activities	and the degree to which upper-division courses successfully strengthen students' research skills and lead up to the competence level expected of seniors in SOC/AN195. Because the department is undergoing significant change in personnel, this review has revealed the necessity of beginning discussions about these three key areas: SOC106/107, research expectations in upper-division courses, and SOC/AN195. Ideas for motivating students to raise the level of their research include requiring public presentations at the Westmont research symposium or encouraging participation in the Santa Clara Student conference.
Discussion	Several papers were noted for being excellent and thorough. These were gratifying examples of students being able to draw from their breadth of research methods and other course knowledge to execute a high-quality research project. However, in several cases, students' lack of ability to adequately and thoughtfully communicate their research rationale in method choice, sampling, data collection and ethics indicated a short-sightedness in the students' understanding of the larger research enterprise. Tito expressed great concern for the lack of qualitative methodology and appreciation for the place of culture in some student projects. While students generally seemed to be most able to articulate their method choice rationale, their execution of the respective methods varied greatly in skill. Meredith hoped that, regardless of how well students actually did in conducting their research, they should at least be able to be reflexive in articulating where limitations in their projects lay and appreciate the ethical dimensions of any kind of research that is conducted. Small sample sizes, convenience sampling methods, and weak explanations of coding schemes raised concerns about how much time and guidance students receive in developing independent research projects. Having taught SOC106/107 and SOC195, Felicia explained that while there is some review of methodology in SOC/AN195, there are many inherent problems in the fact that students are often either taking these methods courses more than a year before <u>or concurrently with</u> Senior Seminar. Thomas and Sarah both suggested that we re-consider the structure of SOC/AN195 and look at other models used within the college or by peer institutions.

II. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome	Faith-learning rubrics for key Sociology/Anthropology courses
Who is in Charge	Entire dept
Major Findings	While it was proposed that the faith-learning rubric be used to begin developing specific assignments and shaping class discussion for core courses such as SOC 001 Intro, SOC 106 Research, SOC 171 Theory, and SOC 195 Senior Seminar, a brief discussion revealed that this proposal needs to be re-visited so that there is agreement about what this actually entails.

Closing the Loop Activities	Discussion about what it means to integrate faith into these key courses will be re-visited in the upcoming academic year, especially as the existing curriculum map is re-evaluated.
Discussion	

III. Other assessment or key questions-related projects (optional)

Project	Mission Statement and Curriculum Map
Who is in Charge	Entire dept
Major Findings	
Action	Following up on prior assessment proposals, now that new faculty members are being integrated into the life of the department, the department can begin reviewing the mission statement and curricular map to evaluate how it should be updated and revised.
Discussion	

Project	SOC 192 Extra-curricular Activities
Who is in Charge	Felicia
Major Findings	<p>Following up on last year's report, SOC 192 involved newly revised prompts and was supervised by Sarah (Fall2014) and Felicia (Spring2015). In observing the extremely uneven quality of individual reflections and the final papers, Sarah and Felicia are concerned that the majority of students are still not adequately applying sociological/anthropological concepts and themes to their reflections of extra-curricular events and that SOC192, in its current form, is not adequately helping them do so. While students are attending events that they many not have attended without added incentive, their capacity to demonstrate thoughtful engagement continues to be inconsistent and mediocre, despite the newly designed prompts.</p> <p>A brief survey about SOC192 was conducted with the 17 graduating seniors. 14 of 17 students reported being motivated to attend some events they would not have normally attended. But 12 students said that, while interesting, most of these</p>

	events added little or nothing to their Westmont experience, and 16 students did not find the prompts useful in helping them to think sociologically/ anthropologically, or simply felt the written responses were a waste of time. Half of the students recommended removing the SOC192 requirements altogether, while the other half recommended less hours required or fewer/no written responses required. No one recommended that SOC192 be continued as it is.
Action	Felicia suggested removing SOC192 as a requirement and considering alternative ways for encouraging students' sociologically/anthropologically informed engagement of extra-curricular events. This proposal will be discussed in early Fall 2015.
Discussion	

IV. Appendices

- A. Prompts or instruments used to collect the data:
- B. Rubrics used to evaluate the data: **SOC 195 Scoring Rubric for Research and Methods Competence**
- C. Relevant assessment-related documents/samples (optional) **Ten SOC 195 research papers**