Mission Statement

The Department of Sociology is committed to offering students, the University, and the State of Montana the insights and techniques of sociological inquiry. Sociology is the systematic study of human societies, groups, and social relationships. Through teaching, scholarship, and service, the Department stimulates discussion on significant social issues and contributes to the development of an informed public and informed public policy. The goal of the Department of Sociology is to provide educational experiences to students to enable them to: (1) Understand the basic concepts, theories, and research methods used to study social phenomena; (2) Become acquainted with research in different fields within sociology, especially those at the core of the discipline; (3) Think sociologically about contemporary local, national, and global social issues; (4) Know how to evaluate evidence and think critically and analytically about the relationship between the individual and society; (5) Apply sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems; (6) Communicate effectively an understanding and analysis of social issues.

Department Educational Objectives

- Offer a basic grounding in sociology through courses in sociological theory, research methodology, and data analysis.
- Give students an opportunity to explore at least four different substantive areas of sociology through “major content” courses.
- Encourage students to explore their social environment through guided research, internships, service learning, and independent study opportunities.
- Provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their comprehensive ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge and skills learned throughout their experience in the Department of Sociology through a capstone course or senior seminar.
- Engage in research and community service that will enrich faculty’s ability to deliver a quality education in sociology.

Student Learning Goals

Student Learning Goal 1

Understand the basic concepts, theories, and research methods used to study social phenomena.

Measurement Tools

Sociological Proficiency Assessment will be administered each Spring Semester in Classical Social Theory (SOCl 455).

Department-designed writing rubric will be used to assess sociological content in randomly-selected writing assignments from upper-division writing courses.

Areas for Improvement

Student Learning Goal 2
Become acquainted with research in different fields within sociology, especially those at the core of the discipline.

Measurement Tools

Co-Chairs will review breadth of sociology coursework as evidenced by student graduation applications.

Department Curriculum Committee will periodically review requirements for the major.

Areas for Improvement

Student Learning Goal 3

Know how to evaluate evidence and think critically and analytically about the relationship between the individual and society.

Measurement Tools

- Sociological Proficiency Assessment administered each Spring Semester in Classical Social Theory (SOCl 455).
- Department-designed writing rubric will be used to assess critical-thinking and analysis skills displayed in randomly-selected writing assignments of upper-division writing courses.
- Department Curriculum Committee will periodically review availability and coverage of departmental seminars.
- Alumni survey will assess the extent to which graduates have been able to utilize critical-thinking and analysis skills gained in sociology courses.

Areas for Improvement

Student Learning Goal 4

Think sociologically about contemporary local, national, and global social issues.

Measurement Tools

- Co-Chair examination of graduation applications to assess whether students are taking courses that cover local, national, and global social issues.
- Department-designed writing rubric will be used to assess sociological analysis skills of contemporary issues in randomly-selected writing assignments of upper-division writing courses.
- Department Curriculum Committee will periodically review availability and coverage of departmental seminars.
- Exit survey of graduating seniors will assess how well equipped they feel to use the sociological perspective to analyze contemporary issues.
- Alumni survey will assess the usefulness of the sociological perspective for analyzing contemporary issues.

Areas for Improvement
Student Learning Goal 5

Apply sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems.

Measurement Tools

- Exit survey of graduating seniors will assess how well equipped they feel to apply sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems.
- Alumni survey will assess the extent to which graduates have been able to utilize sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems.

Areas for Improvement

Student Learning Goal 6

Communicate effectively an understanding and analysis of social issues.

Measurement Tools

- Departmental-designed writing rubric will be used to assess ability of students to convey understanding and analyze social issues in randomly-selected writing assignments of upper-division writing courses.
- Department Curriculum Committee will periodically review availability and coverage of departmental seminars.
- Alumni survey will assess the extent to which graduates have been able to communicate effectively an understanding and analysis of social issues.

Areas for Improvement

Future Plans

Student Learning Goal 1: The SPA and Writing Assessment Rubric measurement tools (see attached) have been designed and will be implemented during the 2012-2013 academic year. The Exit Survey of graduating seniors will be developed and implemented by the Co-Chairs during Spring Semester, 2013.

Student Learning Goal 2: For May graduation, graduation applications are due in mid-October. The Co-Chairs will record adequacy of coursework in sociology, especially in the "major content" area of requirements. Student Learning Goals 3-6: Develop Alumni Survey to assess relevancy of sociology curriculum for job-related skills.

Attachments

- Attachment 1: Sociological Proficiency Assessment
  - An assessment of core knowledge to the discipline of sociology.
- Attachment 2: Writing Assessment Rubric
  - A writing rubric including: ideas and evidence; organization; mechanics and writing; use of academic sources; and citations and reference list.
Sociological Proficiency Assessment

This is an assessment of the knowledge that you have gained through your sociology courses. Your performance will not affect your grades, and we ask that you complete the test anonymously. The Sociological Proficiency Assessment covers theory, methods, and statistics. The Department of Sociology will use the aggregate results of this assessment to modify its curriculum. Please answer the following questions using the provided scantron answer sheet. Thank you for your cooperation!

Theory

1. In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim used the term “organic solidarity” to refer to:
   A. solidarity based on workers’ control over the means of production
   B. solidarity based on interdependence
   C. solidarity based on likeness
   D. All of the above

2. Durkheim defines social facts as:
   A. social phenomenon that is true and universally valid
   B. rituals and symbols that provide for social solidarity within a community
   C. the scientific knowledge base on which social and economic planning are formulated
   D. conditions and circumstances external to the individual that, nevertheless, determine one’s course of action

3. According to Marx’s materialist conception of history, ideas or consciousness is determined by:
   A. the fetishism of commodities
   B. forms of legitimate authority
   C. the forces and relations of production; what individuals produce and how they produce it
   D. the conceptual categories through which we order experience

4. According to Marx, classes are groups of individuals who share a common position in relation to:
   A. their religious affiliation
   B. how they interpret the world
   C. the forces of production
   D. how they consume products

5. Weber defines rationalization as
   A. the tendency for an increasing number of individuals in modern societies to become more tolerant, educated, and well-rounded
   B. the attempt on the part of capitalists to create divisions within the working class
   C. an ongoing process in which social interaction and institutions become increasingly governed by methodical procedures, calculable rules, and impersonal practices
   D. none of the above
6. Weber used the term “iron cage” to describe:
A. the Church prior to the Protestant Reformation
B. the dominance of capitalistic and bureaucratic structures and disenchantment of modern western society
C. the religious motivation that encourages individuals to pursue worldly success
D. monastic or religious asceticism (self-denial)

Methods

7. A survey researcher assures her respondents that no one will be able to link them individually to any information that they report. Which ethical principle is she observing?
A. privacy
B. confidentiality
C. anonymity
D. none of the above

8. All of the following must be included on an informed consent form except:
A. the study’s purpose and procedures.
B. any risks or discomforts that subjects might experience.
C. the specific hypotheses being tested.
D. a guarantee of anonymity or confidentiality.

9. Which term refers to the dependability or consistency of a measuring instrument?
A. validity
B. authenticity
C. variability
D. reliability

10. An operational definition:
A. is a prediction deduced from a theory.
B. refers to the popular, as opposed to scientific, meaning of a term.
C. specifies the procedures used to measure a variable.
D. is the research design followed when collecting data.

11. Which of the following is not a type of probability sampling?
A. cluster
B. quota
C. stratified
D. systematic

12. You should use stratified random sampling when:
A. there is no list of elements in the population.
B. the population contains small subgroups that must be represented in the sample.
C. the population is homogenous.
D. it is impractical to contact every person in the population.
13. Which statement about survey research is correct?
A. It is a better method than field research for describing the characteristics of a large population.
B. In a survey it is appropriate to use emotionally charged language to get respondents to express their true opinions.
C. Interviews should be like casual conversations to help respondents relax and open up.
D. When asking questions about controversial issues, researchers should first inform their respondents about their own opinions on those matters.

14. What does it mean to say that a correlation between two variables is spurious?
A. The variables are not related to each other.
B. The correlation is meaningless because of measurement error.
C. The time order of the variables is unclear.
D. The variables are correlated only because both are related to a third variable.

15. What technique is the best way to find out if X is a cause of Y?
A. experiment
B. field observation
C. survey research
D. qualitative interviews

16. In an experiment, the manipulated variable is the ________ variable.
A. independent
B. dependent
C. confounding
D. control

17. The process of developing theory from specific observations is called:
A. qualitative research
B. deduction
C. inductive reasoning
D. secondary analysis

18. Which of the following best describes field research?
A. Saturation occurs when observers become so immersed in the lives of the people they are studying that they lose their objectivity.
B. Probability samples are rarely used.
C. Most contemporary field research uses standardized measurement.
D. The main reason for doing field research is to test hypotheses.

19. Which statement about qualitative interviews is correct?
A. Several subjects may be interviewed together, rather than one at a time.
B. Interview questions are standardized and follow a strict order.
C. Qualitative interviews cover a wide range of topics, but provide little depth on any particular issue.
D. Qualitative interviews are better for collecting factual data than for learning about subjective feelings and interpretations.
20. In which method are the researcher’s personal characteristics most likely to influence the data being collected?
   A. survey research
   B. laboratory experiment
   C. field experiment
   D. qualitative interview

**Statistics**

21. A defining characteristic of the normal curve is that it is:
   A. nonsymmetrical
   B. theoretical
   C. positively skewed
   D. negatively skewed

22. Which measure of central tendency is affected by every score in the distribution?
   A. the mean
   B. the median
   C. the mode
   D. all of the above

23. One key assumption of correlation analysis is that the variables have an essentially ____________ relationship.
   A. linear
   B. non-linear
   C. curvilinear
   D. circular

**For the following three questions:** In a class of 75 students, a survey was taken regarding the type of transportation students used to get to school finding that 24 students drove, 33 took public transportation, and 18 walked.

24. What proportion of students drove?
   A. .45
   B. .68
   C. .56
   D. .32

25. What percentage did not drive?
   A. 26%
   B. 48%
   C. 68%
   D. 32%

26. What percentage of the class walked?
   A. 42%
   B. 24%
   C. 37%
   D. 22%
27. Pie charts are particularly useful for what type of data?
   A. Nominal level data
   B. Ordinal level data
   C. Interval level data
   D. None of the above

28. In a symmetrical distribution, what percent of the scores fall above the mean?
   A. 34%
   B. 68%
   C. 95%
   D. 50%

29. In a normal distribution, approximately what percentage of the area under the curve is found between 1 standard deviation above and below the mean?
   A. 68%
   B. 95%
   C. 99%
   D. 100%
### Assessment Rubric for Writing Assignments in Upper-division Writing Courses

#### Paper #: _________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Ideas &amp; Evidence: 35</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Does the paper offer thoughtful insight into the issue?</td>
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<td>▪ Are the arguments logical and clear?</td>
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<td>▪ Is there a thesis statement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Is there sufficient, compelling evidence to support the thesis?</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Has the writer integrated evidence from a variety of academic sources?</td>
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<td><strong>2. Organization: 20</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Is the organization obvious?</td>
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<td>▪ Are the ideas linked to one another?</td>
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<td>▪ Is the paragraphing appropriate?</td>
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<td>▪ Does each paragraph have a topic sentence, with evidence to support that topic sentence?</td>
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<td><strong>3. Mechanics &amp; Writing: 20</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Has the paper been carefully edited?</td>
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<td>▪ Are there errors in grammar?</td>
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<td>▪ Is the punctuation &amp; spelling correct?</td>
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<td>▪ Is the writer’s word choice precise?</td>
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<td>▪ Has the writer avoided passive voice?</td>
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<td>▪ Are the sentences elegant and flowing?</td>
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<td><strong>4. Use of Academic Sources: 10</strong></td>
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<td>▪ Has the writer used evidence from at least 3 academic sources to make his points? (Academic sources include articles from academic journals &amp; academic books, &amp; possibly trustworthy websites like the UN or World Bank. Articles from newspapers, magazines, Wikipedia, general web sources are NOT academic)</td>
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<td><strong>5. Citations &amp; Reference List: 15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Has the writer provided citations for statistics, direct quotations, and unique ideas?</td>
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<td>▪ Is the format of the citations correct?</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Has the writer provided an alphabetized reference list in the correct format?</td>
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**TOTAL SCORE**