Department of Sociology
2020 Assessment Report

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.

DEPARTMENT OBJECTIVES and ACCREDITATION CORE THEMES

1. Offer a basic grounding in Sociology through courses in sociological theory, research methodology, and data analysis. (Aligns with Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation)

2. Give students an opportunity to explore and engage in a variety of substantive areas through exposure to content courses in general Sociology, inequality and social justice, and Criminology. (Aligns with Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum, Partner with Place)

3. Encourage students to explore their social environment (including an interconnected global world) and apply Sociology knowledge through guided research, internships, service learning, and independent study opportunities with a focus on our interconnected world. (Aligns with Engage Students Where They Are, Partner with Place)

4. Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their ability to analyze and synthesize knowledge and skills learned throughout their experience in the Department of Sociology through a capstone course or senior-level writing-intensive seminar. (Aligns with Support Excellence and Innovation in the Curriculum, Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation)

5. Facilitate faculty and student engagement in research and community service that enrich student learning and faculty member’s ability to deliver a quality education in Sociology. (Aligns with Foster Knowledge Creation and Innovation, Partner with Place)

6. Expand blended, low-residency, and online opportunities for students to gain sociological training at the undergraduate and graduate levels. (Aligns with Engage Students Where They Are, Partner with Place)
# STUDENT LEARNING GOALS and MEASUREMENT TOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Goals</th>
<th>Sociology Proficiency Assessment(^1)</th>
<th>Senior Exit Survey(^2)</th>
<th>Summative assessment of SOCI 220</th>
<th>Review of student application of learning in internships</th>
<th>Criminology student listening session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understand the basic concepts, theories, and research methods used to study social phenomena</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Become acquainted with research in different fields within Sociology, especially those at the core of the discipline</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Think sociologically about contemporary local, national, and global social issues</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Know how to evaluate evidence and think critically and analytically about the relationship between the individual and society</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Apply sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Communicate effectively an understanding and analysis of social issues</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
<td>Meets goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. For graduate students, identify social and sociological problems, collect evidence of those problems, analyze evidence, suggest solutions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) This assessment was not administered in 2019 or 2020. In the winter of 2019 we lost our chair, colleague and friend Dusten Hollist to cancer after a 10-day illness. The department was reeling that spring, and we did not distribute this assessment to seniors. The assessment was not administered in the spring of 2020 either. Early in spring 2020 our chair, Teresa Sobieszczyn, announced that she was leaving UM at the end of the semester. Faculty were scrambling to put together a succession plan and get her courses staffed for the next year, and did not have the bandwidth to administer the assessment.

\(^2\) This survey was not administered in 2019 or 2020. In the winter of 2019 we lost our chair, colleague and friend Dusten Hollist to cancer after a 10-day illness. The department was reeling that spring, and we did not distribute this survey to seniors. The survey was not administered in the spring of 2020 either. Early in spring 2020 our chair, Teresa Sobieszczyn, announced that she was leaving UM at the end of the semester. Faculty were scrambling to put together a succession plan and get her courses staffed for the next year, and did not have the bandwidth to administer the survey.
## RESULTS and MODIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goal results</th>
<th>Modifications made to enhance learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Even though our two assessment tools, the Sociological Proficiency Assessment and the Senior Exit Survey, were not administered during this period (see footnotes 1 and 2 for explanations), when they were administered between 2014 and 2018, response rates were low. The department made one change to the implementation of these tools in 2021, and plans to make an additional change in fall 2021.</td>
<td>To address low response rates for both tools, the department combined them into one instrument and loaded that combined tool into Qualtrics. We plan to invite seniors to complete one assessment rather than two in the future. Starting in fall 2021, the department will ask graduating students to fill out the instrument when they submit their graduation applications to our professional advisor. Students will complete it while waiting for the advisor to review their paperwork. We will not require students to complete the tool in order to get a signature on their graduation applications, but we will strongly encourage them to do so while they are waiting to hear back from the department’s professional advisor. The department is confident that this will improve the response rate overall, but especially for December graduates, who often miss the survey when it’s sent out to seniors in March or April.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The questions on the Sociological Proficiency Assessment were developed by the Sociology faculty in 2014. Since that time, nearly all of the instructors of our core classes have changed. As such, the current tool might not be the most effective way to measure student learning in those courses or in our curriculum broadly.</td>
<td>The department will make sure that the questions on the assessment tool are aligned with the current topics, pedagogy, and approach to instruction in our core courses. These are SOCI 202 (Social Statistics), 318 (Sociological Research Methods) and 455 (Classical Sociological Theory).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Criminology student listening session revealed a strong interest for practical, hands-on skills and experiences among our students. While some of participants’ requests are not tenable (for-credit martial arts classes that apply to the Sociology major, for example), others are already being satisfied by the department. We know this from the review of student application of learning in internships. That review demonstrated clearly and convincingly that Sociology and Criminology students at UM are connecting academic skills and knowledge to the real world often and effectively.³</td>
<td>To address students’ desire for practical, hands-on skills and experiences, the department should do more to emphasize the real-world implication of the skills and concepts that students are learning in their Sociology classes. One way to do that would be to provide students with more examples of practical applications of skills and knowledge, when presenting those skills and knowledge in class. Another way to address that student desire would be to invite current and past Sociology interns into classes to talk about how they applied Sociological knowledge in their internships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The review of student application of learning in internships suggests that the department is effectively meeting learning goal 5: apply sociological knowledge and methods to solve practical problems.</td>
<td>The department should conduct a review of other courses in our curriculum in order to determine whether and how much students are applying Sociological skills and knowledge in courses other than SOCI 498, the department’s internship course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The review of the summative assessment of SOCI 220 demonstrates that the class is meeting learning goals 1 (Think sociologically about contemporary local, national, and global social issues) and learning goal 2 (Know how to</td>
<td>The department will consider developing summative assessments of the other 100- and 200-level courses that it offers. Faculty that develop and administer these assessments will be encouraged to use the results of these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ The department is deeply concerned about how changes to our course offerings could undermine our students’ ability to apply learning in coming years, though. The H&S dean’s office has asked us to offer all of our core courses less frequently; in most cases once a year rather than every semester. They’ve also asked us not to offer SOCI 202 (Social Statistics) in AY 2021-2022. This will complicate students’ ability to complete these courses, which in turn could very well undermine their ability to apply the skills and knowledge that they learn in these classes. We currently require majors to have completed all four core courses before they can do an internship, but we might have to relax that rule if we’re unable to offer these courses every semester. This could result in a situation where students are interning, but don’t have the core skills that they need to be effective in their internships (such as data analysis and research design).
## Learning Goal results

Evaluate evidence and think critically and analytically about the relationship between the individual and society. The review also suggests the possibility, and utility, of creating summative assessments for some Sociology courses, especially large courses at the 100- and 200-levels.

## Modifications made to enhance learning

- Assessments to adjust/improve course topics, content, and pedagogy as needed to promote student learning.

- The department will brainstorm about how to measure learning in the graduate program. Options include creating and administering an exit survey for graduate students, review of portfolios from classes to determine whether and how graduate students are applying sociological skills and knowledge, and creating summative assessments for our required graduate-level methods classes.

## FUTURE PLANS FOR CONTINUED ASSESSMENT

1. The department administered its Sociology Proficiency Assessment and Senior Exit Survey in April 2021 and will return to administering it annually. See footnotes 1 and 2 for explanations about why the Department did not administer it in 2019 and 2020. The department will include data from both tools in the next assessment report.

2. The department will create a Freshman Entrance Survey based loosely on the Sociology Proficiency Assessment and Senior Exit Survey. Starting in fall 2021 the department will administer this tool starting to first-year Sociology majors annually in the Sociology H&S Freshman Seminar. Comparing students’ answers on the two surveys will help us measure the amount, type, and depth of student learning during their time in the Sociology program at UM.

3. The department will consider creating summative assessment tools for all of its 100- and 200-level classes. These tools could be similar to the summative assessment of SOCI 220 included in this report, or could be different.

4. The department will work with our professional advisor to develop a systematic procedure for auditing/reviewing graduation applications. This will help us identify: common course substitutions, reasons for the most common substitutions, and roadblocks to degree completion that our majors confront. The department will aim to conduct the first systematic audit in spring of 2021.

5. The department will construct curriculum maps for its undergraduate and graduate programs using the template from the Office of the Provost.

## APPENDICES

1. Sociology Proficiency Assessment
2. Senior Exit Survey
3. Summative assessment of SOCI 220 (Race, Gender & Class)
4. Review of student application of learning in internships
5. Criminology listening session – summary and selective transcript
Appendix One: Sociology Proficiency Assessment

Welcome to the Sociology Proficiency Assessment and Senior Exit Survey.

We are asking all graduating seniors to answer the questions provided. Please do NOT take this quiz unless you will graduate in Spring or Summer of [insert year here], or graduated in December [insert year here]. If you will graduate in a later semester, you will have an opportunity to participate at that time.

This survey explores two things: the knowledge that you have gained and retained through your Sociology courses at UM, and your experiences completing your Sociology major at UM.

Your performance on this survey will not affect your current grades in Sociology courses. Your participation is very important, though, because it will help the Sociology department assess our curriculum and major.

The first part of the survey covers theory, research methods, and statistics. The Sociology department will use the aggregate results of this part of the survey to modify and improve its curriculum. The second part of the survey covers your experience completing your Sociology degree at UM. The Sociology department will use the aggregate results of this part of the survey to plan our course offerings in coming years.

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous, so please do not put your name or any identifying information in any of the answers to open-ended questions.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Instructions:
• This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.
• Please read each item carefully and answer as carefully as possible. Your correct answers are important to us.
• This survey is voluntary and you may skip questions that you are unable to answer or you may stop taking the survey at any time.

1. In The Division of Labor in Society, Durkheim used the term “organic solidarity” to refer to
   • solidarity based on workers’ control over the means of production.
   • solidarity based on interdependence.
   • solidarity based on likeness.
   • all of the above.

2. Durkheim defines social facts as
   • social phenomenon that is true and universally valid.
   • rituals and symbols that provide for social solidarity within a community.
   • the scientific knowledge base on which social and economic planning are formulated.
   • 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
   • the fetishism of commodities.
   • forms of legitimate authority.
   • the forces and relations of production; what individuals produce and how they produce it.
• 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
• their religious affiliation.
• how they interpret the world.
• the forces of production.
• how they consume products.

5. Weber defines rationalization as
• the tendency for an increasing number of individuals in modern societies to become more tolerant, educated, and well-rounded.
• the attempt on the part of capitalists to create divisions within the working class.
• an ongoing process in which social interaction and institutions become increasingly governed by methodical procedures, calculable rules, and impersonal practices.
• none of the above.

6. Weber used the term “iron cage” to describe
• the Church prior to the Protestant Reformation.
• the dominance of capitalistic and bureaucratic structures and disenchantment of modern western society.
• the religious motivation that encourages individuals to pursue worldly success.
• monastic or religious asceticism (self-denial).

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?
• privacy
• confidentiality
• anonymity
• none of the above

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

9. Which term refers to the dependability or consistency of a measuring instrument?
• validity
• authenticity
• variability
• reliability

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

11. Which of the following is not a type of probability sampling?
• cluster
• quota
• stratified
• systematic

12. You should use stratified random sampling when:
• there is no list of elements in the population.
• the population contains small subgroups that must be represented in the sample.
• the population is homogenous.
• it is impractical to contact every person in the population.

13. Which statement about survey research is correct?
• It is a better method than field research for describing the characteristics of a large population.
• In a survey it is appropriate to use emotionally charged language to get respondents to express their true opinions.
• Interviews should be like casual conversations to help respondents relax and open up.
• 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?
• The variables are not related to each other.
• The correlation is meaningless because of measurement error.
• The time order of the variables is unclear.
• 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?
• experiment
• field observation
• survey research
• qualitative interviews

16. In an experiment, the manipulated variable is the _________ variable.
• independent
• dependent
• confounding
• control

17. The process of developing theory from specific observations is called
• qualitative research
• deduction
• inductive reasoning
• secondary analysis

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

19. Which statement about qualitative interviews is correct?
- Several subjects may be interviewed together, rather than one at a time.
- Interview questions are standardized and follow a strict order.
- Qualitative interviews cover a wide range of topics, but provide little depth on any particular issue.
- 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?
- survey research
- laboratory experiment
- field experiment
- qualitative interview

21. A defining characteristic of the normal curve is that it is
- nonsymmetrical
- theoretical
- positively skewed
- negatively skewed

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

23. One key assumption of correlation analysis is that the variables have an essentially ______________ relationship.
- linear
- non-linear
- curvilinear
- 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?
   - .45
   - .68
   - .56
   - .32

25. What percentage did not drive?
   - 26%
   - 48%
   - 68%
   - 32%

26. What percentage of the class walked?
   - 42%
   - 24%
   - 37%
   - 22%

27. Pie charts are particularly useful for what type of data?
   - Nominal level data
   - Ordinal level data
   - Interval level data
   - None of the above

28. In a symmetrical distribution, what percent of the scores fall above the mean?
   - 34%
   - 68%
   - 95%
   - 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?
   - 68%
   - 95%
   - 99%
   - 100%
Appendix Two: Senior Exit Survey

This survey covers your experience completing your Sociology degree at UM. The Sociology department will use the aggregate results of this part of the survey to plan our course offerings in coming years.

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous, so please do not put your name or any identifying information in any of the answers to open-ended questions.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

Instructions:
• Please read each item carefully and answer as carefully as possible. Your correct answers are important to us.
• This survey is voluntary and you may skip questions that you are unable to answer or you may stop taking the survey at any time.

1. How many semesters did it take you to complete your undergraduate degree, including classes at UM and other higher education institutions?

2. Did you transfer to UM from another college or university?
   • Yes (please explain below)
   • No

3. Did you ever have to delay taking a Sociology course you wanted to take because it wasn’t being offered?
   • Yes (please explain below)
   • No

4. Did you ever have to take an alternate course because a Sociology course you wanted to take wasn’t being offered?
   • Yes (please explain below)
   • No

5. What are your educational or career plans after graduation?

6. Do you feel that your Sociology degree prepared you for your post-graduation job or educational plans?
   • Yes, definitely (please explain below)
   • Yes, somewhat (please explain below)
   • No, not really (please explain below)

7. What is your gender?

8. What is your age?

9. What is your race? (check all that apply)
   • American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

10. What is your ethnicity?
- Hispanic or Latinx
- Non-Hispanic or Non-Latinx
Appendix Three: Summative assessment of SOCI 220 (*Race, Gender and Class*)

This tool was administered as a non-graded Moodle quiz in fall 2020. Correct answers are highlighted.

**Question 1:** In the U.S., a person’s class (socioeconomic status) is most strongly influenced by:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of the semester</th>
<th>End of the semester</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Their ambition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their parent’s class background</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their work ethic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their race</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 2:** To figure out a stranger’s race, you need to know their:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of the semester</th>
<th>End of the semester</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin tone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality/Country of origin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 3:** When expectant parents in the U.S. throw gender reveal parties, they’re actually trying to find out their child’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of the semester</th>
<th>End of the semester</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex assigned at birth</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and sex assigned at birth</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 4:** To figure out a stranger’s ethnicity, you need to know their:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beginning of the semester</th>
<th>End of the semester</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality/Country of origin</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Four: Review of student application of learning in internships

Students enrolled in SOCI 498, the department’s internship course, complete weekly writing assignments designed to help them reflect on what they’re learning in their internships. Each week of the semester they complete short writing assignments in response to a prompt, post their assignments to a Moodle forum, read each other’s assignments, and respond to two or three of their fellow students’ assignments. The topics of the weekly assignments are wide-ranging. Below are samples of the assignment prompts:

- **Identifying your motivations.** What motivated you to pursue an internship this semester? What do you hope to learn through your internship this semester? (Include professional, career and/or academic learning goals). How do you think that your internship placement will help you learn these things?

- **Understanding the professional expectations at your internship site.** First, briefly describe the professional expectations at the agency or organization where you’re interning. For example, are you expected to dress and/or act in a certain way? Are you expected to maintain confidentiality and/or boundaries with clients? Are you expected to use a certain mode, or style, of communication when sharing information with your supervisors and colleagues? How formal or informal can this communication be? Then, briefly describe how you became aware of the professional expectations at your internship site. Finally, try to predict which of these professional expectations you anticipate struggling with this semester, and explain why you might struggle with them.

- **How do you manage emotions in professional settings?** First, describe the example that you identified while brainstorming. For example, who was being emotional, and where? What triggered their emotional outburst? How did you respond to their emotions? How did they respond to your reaction? Then, evaluate how well, or poorly, you managed the emotional situation. For example, did your actions make the situation better or worse? Why? What do you wish that you’d done differently, if anything? How would a different response have been more effective at managing the situation? Finally, briefly discuss how you have, or could, manage emotional situations at your internship. When and where have, or could, emotional situations occur in your internship? How have, or could, you manage these situations? How have, or could, your responses at your internship differ from your responses in other professional settings?

- **How do you handle criticism in professional settings?** First, write about how you handle criticism in professional settings such as a job, an internship, in a volunteer situation, or at school. What kinds of criticism have you received in professional settings? How do you tend to respond, internally and externally, to that criticism? What factors determine your response to criticism in professional settings? How is your response to criticism in these settings different from your response to it in your personal life? Then, identify the hardest parts of receiving professional criticism, for you. Finally, briefly discuss productive professional criticism. What’s the most positive experience that you’ve had with criticism in professional settings? What made it constructive for you? What can your supervisor and/or co-workers do to make their criticism more productive? What can you do to make your criticism in professional settings more productive?

One of the assignments asks students to apply a Sociological concept or theory to their internship, or vice versa. Students’ responses to this prompt provide excellent insights into how often, and how deeply, students are applying the Sociological knowledge that they’ve gained in their UM classes to the real world. Below is the assignment prompt:

- **How are you integrating Sociological knowledge into your internship?** Before you start writing your post, spend a few minutes reflecting on the Sociology and/or Criminology courses that you’ve taken at UM (or at other colleges). Use the following questions to guide your reflection: Which of these courses have been most interesting to you intellectually?
Why? Which of these courses have been most interesting to you on a personal level? Why? Which of these courses exposed you to the newest perspectives and worldviews? How did that do that? Once you’ve completed this reflection exercise, write a post describing how you’re integrating Sociological knowledge in your internship, and vice versa. First, write about a specific concept or theory that you learned about in one of your Sociology or Criminology classes that is directly relevant to your internship. What makes the concept or theory relevant to your internship? Have you referenced it, or draw upon it, in your internship this semester? If so, when/how did you do this? If not, why not? Next, write about a specific internship experience that you’ve had that is directly relevant to one of your Sociology or Criminology classes. If you’ve drawn upon it in one of your class discussions or assignments, what motivated you to do so? If you haven’t done this, write about a specific internship experience that you could have drawn upon in one of your Sociology or Criminology class discussions or assignments. What made you hesitant to draw upon your internship experience in a class?

Below is a sampling of student response to this prompt, with identifying information removed to ensure students’ confidentiality.

Sample of Spring 2019 student responses to integration of Sociological knowledge assignment prompt

- In our Sociology and Criminology classes, we talk a lot about race, class, and gender and the inequalities these factors can create for people involved in the criminal justice system. In my internship, I have found myself always checking the offender’s race and gender when looking at their bond reports and I find myself looking into how the offender was raised, which is outlined in the pre-sentence report. I check these because it helps me to connect with the offender and try to understand why they may have committed whatever crime was committed. You can usually see that their childhood was difficult and they have looked to crime as a culture and a steady thing to rely on in their life. In Criminology classes we are also always taught that deterrence is an ineffective fear tactic and does not decrease recidivism. However, in my internship it is heavily relied on. I draw upon my internship in class when we talk about this concept because I agree, deterrence is not effective, however the courts reference this in every sentencing proceeding that I have attended. So I guess this concept that we learn in class contradicts what I see in my internship because most Judges say something along the lines of “I hope this sentence will deter you from committing any further criminal behavior” which always bothers me because I have been taught that it will not.

- Although I didn't anticipate it being so, my internship this semester has allowed me to utilize much of what I’ve learned over the years in the Sociology program. I did expect to be viewing my internship through a Sociological lens, but did not expect to be using such specific tools and skills. My freshman year, I took Social Statistics and acquired certain analytical tools for understanding data. Last semester, I completed Sociological Research Methods, where we spent time diving into both collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. Of course, when I was in both of these classes, I felt the information would be useful someday, but didn't put that much thought into the importance of retaining it. One of my projects in my internship this semester was to work with a survey that [internship site name redacted] worked with the Missoula Food Bank to facilitate. The survey respondents were individuals at the Food Bank, who would fill the survey out while filling out a required intake form. The results were analyzed quantitatively by myself and the data analyst at [internship site name redacted]. I went into the computer lab in the Sociology building and ran the data through programs that I hadn’t touched since freshman year, and combined my findings with the data analysts - who ran the data in a more nuanced and accurate way. Then, my task was to dive deeper into a more qualitative analysis of a particular question about patient perceptions of [internship site name redacted]. Using the data analyst’s results - which grouped responses into "sentiment" categories of positive, negative, or neutral - I went into the survey responses for that question; all 1,064 of them. I read each one, drawing out themes and creating a report-style write-up that can be shared with employees at [internship site name redacted] so they can better understand patient perceptions of [internship site name redacted] and brainstorm ways that we can improve negative
The project was challenging and time consuming, but I am grateful to have had the chance to work on this real-life example of useful data analysis.

- I have definitely used both my sociological and criminological backgrounds in my internship. Honestly, I have relied on a theory in one or both of these disciplines almost daily in my work, but I’ll focus on the current step in my project. I finished reading through cases to collect demographic and historical information, and now I’m in the analysis phase. In this step of the process I have been counting up the number of times I see an indicator appear, say gender, then I write up a paragraph on my thoughts of why certain indicators appeared more or less frequently. In these analyses, I have referenced prior research that I was taught about in Criminology courses. For example, I discussed that a typical offender or victim is a young male, and that a person who’s been a victim once is far more likely to be victimized again. When I noticed that we had less POC emerging as victims than suspects, I speculated that this may have something to do with an innate distrust for law enforcement from marginalized groups, that would lead them to not report crimes committed against them, the theory on this was one that really piqued my interest when I was completing Criminology Theory.

It has been fascinating to me to constantly make connections from my education to my real life work! So far I haven’t found contradictions between what I was taught and what I have seen in my data. In fact, I think it is really beneficial to the project I am on that I am fresh from school and I don’t (yet) have the perspective of someone who has worked in law enforcement for a long time. Though this isn’t true for everyone, I think it is easy to become jaded in police work and start to internalize biases based on some real life experiences. Fortunately for me I don’t feel that I’ve had the time to develop these biases, so I feel that my take on the data is with fresh eyes, and doesn’t skew to match the preconceptions of some law enforcement employees.

- As an intern for the [internship site name redacted], one of my main jobs has been to analyze initial correspondence from potential clients. Usually, a client writes a letter asking for our help proving their innocence and this is how our correspondence begins. After receiving this first letter, we will send the potential client a 16-page questionnaire and a case authorization form. The case authorization form is something that we need signed to allow us access to court documents and to grant us permission to reach out to attorneys, law enforcement, family, etc. The 16-page questionnaire is a questionnaire that [internship site name redacted] has developed which asks specific questions about the client's case. Many of the questions correspond with the criteria the client must meet in order for [internship site name redacted] to take their case. A client must present us with new evidence that was not used at trial, they cannot be currently represented by an attorney, and they must claim full and factual innocence to the crime in question. These are some of the main criteria our staff looks for when deciding to proceed to investigation. I have found that reading through these questionnaires with a sociological perspective shines light on much of the injustice faced within our criminal justice system.

The 16-page questionnaires ask the client whether they had hired an attorney or had one appointed to them. I can honestly say that I have not read one letter/questionnaire from a client who has hired an attorney and I believe that this shows just how much poverty plays a role in the U.S. criminal justice system. Prosecutors already have an unfair advantage within the court system, but when someone cannot afford to hire a private attorney, this adds another level of disadvantage. I think that most public defenders have chosen their career path because they want to do the right thing and help those who would otherwise receive nothing, but public defenders are extremely over worked and underpaid. They do not have the resources to prove innocence. Many times, this means that cases will end in a guilty plea deal because that is the best they can offer their client and when the cases do go to trial, they are at an extreme disadvantage. If working in the legal field has taught me anything, it is that going to trial is very expensive. Obtaining documents, hiring a court reporter, forensic testing, and getting expert testimonies all cost money and many of these things can be upwards of $1,000. Interning with [internship site name redacted] has truly shown me that our criminal justice system creates an unfair disadvantage for those in the lower socio-economic class. It is just another component of our society that continues to push people further behind. This observation has reinforced much of what I learned through the Sociology of Poverty course. Poverty has a cyclical nature and one of the many ways in which our society keeps it that way is through the criminal justice system. It creates disadvantages, loss of opportunity, and in-debts people to the government.
Race is another factor that I have observed to be a source of extreme inequality within the Montana criminal justice system. For each case we have at [internship site name redacted], we conduct an offender search on our client. This search provides us details about their charges and sentences, but it also provides the client’s race. Native Americans make up about 6% of the population here in Montana, yet they make up 22% of our prison population (I learned this in Social Stratification). I would say that about 50% of the cases I look over involve a Native American client. It is very disheartening to witness this extreme inequality first hand. My experience at [internship site name redacted] has confirmed that an overwhelming number of Native Americans are receiving unequal treatment and ending up within our criminal justice system. In Social Stratification, we read an article about how incarceration reinforces and continues the worsening inequality faced by the black underclass. I think that much of what was talked about in that article would be comparable to the Native American population in Montana.

I believe that working at the [internship site name redacted] has provided me with a deeper understanding of inequality faced within the Montana criminal justice system. My Sociology concentration is inequality and social justice, so this is what I am always looking for. Sadly, but not surprisingly, I have witnessed much inequality based on socio-economic status and race at the [internship site name redacted]. What I have learned at [internship site name redacted] has been consistent with what I have learned in all of my Sociology classes. If I were not graduating at the end of this semester, I would have loved to start a sociological research project with [internship site name redacted] focusing on these factors as well as possibly finding different factors that play a role in the inequality.

Sample of Fall 2019 student responses to integration of Sociological knowledge assignment prompt

- Routine activities and lifestyle theories relate to my internship at [internship site name redacted]. According to Leah Daigle in Victimology “a person’s routine activities and lifestyle place him or her at risk of being victimized. Risk is highest when motivated offenders, lack of capable guardianship, and suitable targets coalesce in time and space” (2018). This is relevant to my internship because people who are victimized come to [internship site name redacted]. They come in person or call to report what happened to them. The criminal activity that these people experienced usually happened when there was a lack of a capable guardian, a suitable target and a motivated offender. Many of the reports that come across projects that I work on describe aspects of this theory, if not all aspects of it. For example, if someone were to call in and say their bike was stolen from their yard after 10 P.M. on Friday night and there was no one home that weekend because we were out of town. This indicates that there was lack of a capable guardian, and a suitable target for the motivated offender. This is just an example of thing that can be reported to [internship site name redacted] and this is just simple case there are also the cases that involve more intense circumstances like homicide or aggravated assault. But I haven’t worked on cases that involve those circumstances.

  I have had a few experiences at my internship that relate to my Victimology class. Those experiences include returning property and making phone calls regarding possible recovered property. In these situations, I have direct contact with those who were victims of crime. After my first few weeks [name redacted], another intern, and I met with a young man about a possible recovered bike. This did turn out to be his bike and he filed the paperwork to claim his bike. Other times in the internship I get to see how [redacted] interact with victims of crime is through interviews. When they interview those who have lost someone or something, they are interviewing the victims of crime. I can watch those interviews from another room when they happen only when I am at [internship site name redacted] participating in my internship.

  Another class that has helped me with both the internship and my job at the TSA is the Prostitution and Human Trafficking class. There are sex offender cases that come through the [internship site name redacted] often. There are also cases that involve human or sex trafficking. These are the more intense cases that interns don’t get to work on as often. This is more relevant for me at the TSA because we are always watching for signs of human trafficking and sex trafficking. We are even trained every year on how to spot signs of trafficking. Most of this training for me was review because of what I learned in Prostitution and Human Trafficking. I personally haven’t seen any signs of any form of trafficking while I have been at the TSA, but I have had the opportunity to see reports for sex offences that are reported to [internship site name redacted].
A theory that I remember learning about in my past classes is the conflict theories by C. Wright Mills. Even though Karl Marx is more commonly known for creating conflict theories in classical Sociology, Mills is known as the founder of modern conflict theories. What Mills is basically saying is that social structures are created through conflict between people with different resources and ideas. This is relevant to my internship at [internship site name redacted] because there is a lot of conflict on a day to day basis, and a lot of it is because of resources. For example, a lot of times when the students are doing art projects I will make them share scissors or glue sticks, etc. To them, whoever gets to that resource first is at an unfair advantage and will often get upset and try to fight over it. I haven't actually made that connection until now because I haven't thought about sociological theories since I took the class last year. I always just thought of it as children usually don't have the social skills to avoid/resolve conflict on their own.

There is one experience I've had where it was a perfect set up for routine activity theory, but a "crime" didn't occur. [That theory] was created by Cohen, and it is basically made up of three parts. It is said that a crime will occur if there is a suitable target, motivated offender, and a lack of a capable guardian. This experience I had was with two boys who weren't in [internship site name redacted]. I was walking in a hallway at the elementary school, and I overheard these two boys arguing nearby. It was one boy throwing out the majority of the insults, and what they were fighting over I'm not sure. I walked around the corner to intervene, and I saw that the boy who was the aggressor was considerably smaller than the other boy. I told him that he wasn't being nice and needed to apologize, but the boys would have never known I was around the corner if I wouldn't have made myself known. That would be considered a lack of a capable guardian. Now, since the boy was smaller than the other boy, if things were to get violent, he would be a suitable target. The boy who was being bullied and would have been the motivated offender. I don't know either of these boys, so I would assume that the taller boy had a less aggressive personality and that was why things didn't escalate and he just took the insults. Nevertheless, based on routine activity theory, something more should have happened, probably with violence but it didn't.
Appendix Five: Criminology student listening session summary and selective transcript

Criminology Listening Session
February 3, 2021
3:30-4:30 PM via Zoom

Summary
What’s your name, what year are you at UM and how did you decide to study Criminology?
- Students ranged from freshmen to new transfer to junior
- Some very interested in law enforcement
- Some very interested in forensics
- Some general interest in Criminology broadly
- Desire to think big about social problems
- A strong desire to help people- serving the community

Tell us about your best Criminology class at UM and why it was so good.
- Criminal Justice System -- provides a solid foundation
- Juvenile Delinquency -- topics are interesting
- Significant concepts and terminology in other classes
- Several appreciated professors who were unbiased (RA: or so they appeared)
- Course structure and skilled facilitation also discussed

What are some of the skills and knowledge that you're getting from your Criminology classes?
- Terminology and a general orientation to Criminology or criminal justice
- Not too many explicitly identified skills
- They talked about gaining knowledge about aspects of Criminology
- They appreciate practical information particularly about career options
- They like hearing from practitioners in their classes

What are the skills and knowledge that you want, but you're not getting from those classes?
- Students seemed very interested in being part of the Criminology Club
- Some wanted experience with a crime lab or perhaps more direct exposure to corrections
- Many expressed a desire for more direct information about career options and instructions about how to prepare for some of those possibilities
- Students wanted courses that matched their interests, but did not identify a lot of topics or titles identified
- One student would like a course on the accounting of crime and seemed to mean the money and power connected to crime (Facilitator note: I thought he was talking about forensic accounting)
- One student was interested in taking Alternative Religions and Human Trafficking but concerned that they wouldn’t be able to

If you were in charge of redesigning the Criminology curriculum at UM, what’s one thing that you would change, and one thing that you would keep the same? It could be courses, topics, any requirements for the major, etc.
• Students agreed that mental health should be addressed
• Students were interested in specifically what sort of jobs they could secure with their Sociology major and Crim concentration
• Several wanted to know about addictions, especially in Montana
• Law enforcement ethics course, or something even broader
• Several students emphasized the importance of communication, especially for professionals; both written and oral communication. (Facilitator note: they can seek this out in courses outside the department)
• One student said that anyone going into law enforcement should learn martial arts (and probably deescalation techniques) (Facilitator note: they can learn that outside of the department)
• Several students proposed that we reduce the amount of overlap in different Crim courses. Students specifically described covering the same theories repeatedly.
• Students seemed receptive to the notion of having a small list of courses, probably from other departments, they could select from that would meet a Crim requirement related to mental health
  • Students urged us to keep the Crim program straight forward and easy to move through, like it is now
• One student mentioned wanting a course that contrasted media presentations and reality

Selective transcript
Tell us about your best Criminology class at UM and why it was so good.

• I really enjoyed Criminal Justice System. It was really interesting. The different precedents and the different motions and just kind of like the inner workings of the work group within the criminal justice system with the policing phase, the trial phase and the corrections phase.
• Criminal Justice System [with Tuttle this semester] is super great. We have discussion boards so we're able to like critically think and express our own ideas and then respond to other students, think about it...I've only known a lot about like forensics and science based stuff so this class is really good for like beginning Criminology students who want to learn more about the system.
• My favorite one so far has been Juvenile Delinquency [with Heirigs]. I really enjoyed that and it's got me more interested in juvenile delinquency and that whole topic, or just the way that he structured it and the way that he taught it he made it really interesting and he really presented the facts well. And I just really enjoyed that course overall.
• Yeah it was on zoom but because of his knowledge in the field and just how much he's already worked in it. I think it really enhanced the class and made it a lot more fun that way because you're able to ask him, questions and give you a really good answer when you ever you ask the questions, and so I just really enjoyed that course.
• It's like that, with him last Semester too and us like what --- said some kids have some like really good deep like detailed questions that they wanted to hear. And if he didn't know the answer he, like go and do extensive research on it for a week and then come back and give us like a super detailed answer so that was super awesome. But, but in the evaluation thing at the end of the Semester, I told him that it would have been nice if we did like more breakout rooms and like one on one discussion with our peers, I mean I guess it’s hard like was zoom but that’s awesome that you said he was doing that um so I mean right now online zoom breakout rooms would have been good for that class.

What are some of the skills and knowledge that you're getting from your Criminology classes?

• I feel like the instructors I've had so far have been pretty good about breaking stuff down, you know, obviously, if we've never had a course before that they can kind of break it down before they start using terminology that we’re not familiar with, so I do kind of enjoy that transition.
• One quick plug is I'm so disappointed Criminology Club isn't happening because I was doing that last year. Yeah but I learned a lot, you know, we had a lot of people coming in, like for me I'm interested in like the crime lab or department
of corrections, and so I would have loved us Criminology Club because that's where we got to meet some detectives and, especially, human trafficking as well.

[Facilitators encouraged them to kick-start it next year]

- I think that the professors do really good job with not being bias about I'm. Just about like both sides of the spectrum beliefs, as on like Criminology you know, like due process versus. Crime control, for example, I think I'm able to take in all the information I'm learning and create my own opinions um, so I think that's a really good thing and something that I can look forward to, as I keep learning through my degree, it just building and formulating my own opinions.
- I probably have to agree with her, I think you know, like especially right now in today's class we touched on a lot of topics that people have differing opinions on and people will ask questions and he does a really good job on. Staying very unbiased and even in just answering the question with the knowledge that he has. And then, you did you did ask about what we would like to see out of it right yeah? I think right now there's a lot of emphasis and i've talked to a couple of former FBI agents about but there's a lot of accounting in crime and you can like follow the money to get to the crime and so I've actually picked up a business minor in order to get some knowledge in that, but it'd be nice to see some kind of like. Accounting crime class or something around that to gain that knowledge and to have that part of it, because it's become such a large thing as I've been told a couple of times.
- I probably I haven't really asked well, cyber security, because I have a father, my father works kind of in my like it business kind of thing he told me not at all to get into that kind of stuff has all been shifted over to India. But I do know cyber security is a big thing right now I just don't know how much that would be like stepping on the toes of people taking like it professional type classes.

What are the skills and knowledge that you want, but you're not getting from those classes?

- One thing for me is that my dad works in online security and I was presented with a bunch of different options as far as careers. So I was hoping to learn more about various options for careers, you can get with a Criminology degree and learn more about opportunities that are out there, that a lot of people have no idea about. Because I know that for me personally I'm not exactly sure what I want to go into so learning more about opportunities that are out there for me some.
- Even like Homeland Security or ICE or the FBI. There's like so many different routes. When people think of like getting Criminology major they automatically think about being a cop or working for you know DOD or something but there's so much different options out there. I wish people are more educated on what they can do.
- My dad when he started out, he was a cop, and then he was selected to go fight in Central America, in the drug wars back 1980s 1970s. And he says that the job nowadays is much different than when he first started and so I'm not sure you can make a class out of this. But in the classes right now sort of like predicting what types of problems that will be in the future, as opposed to right now even. Because the jobs, like they develop in the change throughout time, especially in law enforcement like policing is going to get a complete overhaul I bet in the future so I'm just like predicting like what future what future problems and jobs in law enforcement might come of our political times.
- I'm going off of that too I'm taking Fundamentals of Forensic Science. A lot of the course is against like the media, how it portrays it so going off of with like constructing the 21st century and Sociology with mental health and stuff like. I think it would be important to teach people and let people know like what the reality of going in this job field is because. You know before I started in high school we'd all watch like Criminal Minds, you know and we're like Oh, this is what like criminal justice is and then you actually start going into Criminology and you're like this is not what criminal justice is so I think that would be an important thing to talk about the reality and like what to expect.
- Like how a case doesn't go through court and everything in one episode for that episode it's like five years, probably.
If you were in charge of redesigning the Criminology curriculum at UM, what's one thing that you would change, and one thing that you would keep the same? It could be courses, topics, any requirements for the major, etc.

- No matter pretty much in every branch of law enforcement you're gonna have to interact with people that are mentally unstable or unsure of where they're at necessarily I would say, especially if you get into like policing, so I do a class on like how to deescalate situations or how to. Work with people who are not necessarily all there mentally and then. In that same class I would start to teach kids about some certain things that they might see in the career that are like pretty graphic or like because a lot of people don't really expect to see some of the things they do when they go into law enforcement and my dad certainly didn't end up working a lot with. Like child pornography and legal aliens and stuff like that and human trafficking, so there's like starting to learn about how horrific some things actually are out in the world that seemed like so like, no one would ever do this but I'm starting to teach some kids like.

- This is actually real world, like their people to do this and, just like so they can know like if this is really for them, or if they're not so sure that they want to pursue this career, because one thing that I wish I would have gone from my past majors because I've switched my major billion times they didn't really like. Tell me exactly what to expect going into these majors and so I'm just like stuck doing research at night, trying to figure out Oh, is this really a job, I can see myself doing until you know recently when I fell on Criminology.

- [in response to question from facilitators about adding a mental health requirement to the major but having students take that class outside of SOCI] I like that, I think, maybe if we could like just narrow it down to like five or less classes necessarily for the mental health part of it. Because I think once you get like over five, then you just get people that are just overwhelmed with information. Some people graduate Criminology with like more knowledge on certain topics and others. Yeah trying to narrow like the scope of the courses.

- I fully, you have my support that.

- I was going to go off of a comment...Not knowing what you're getting yourself into. Luckily like when I was a senior in high school, I was able to have an internship with my local corners. And I went to go watch an autopsy and my mom was like oh my God like that's gross like, how can you sleep at night, but I was like I need to know if I'm like gonna go into this field like I want to know I can handle this stuff And a lot of people like don't get that experience until maybe they get an internship their junior year in college, so I think with like the gory aspect and stuff learning that part and mental health, especially early on, is like a freshman or sophomore in college, it can be, it can be important, so they can reflect like okay is this what like really, what I want to do.

- As far as like the Criminology concentration itself, the reason why I like this so much is because it's so straightforward like you were saying to some other majors there's like a million sections where you have to. Do this section and cross off this requirement, I love how straightforward the Criminology section is so I think it wouldn't hurt to add in another requirement such as mental health. I was just looking on my degree works earlier today, trying to plan out like what courses, I might be interested in taking next semester, so I was just looking through all of them, and I saw that there was an addiction studies class so like. For example, that could go into the mental health section to institute students could be required, just to take like maybe three or six credits of that one section, since we don't have much required to take anyways besides like criminal justice system into Crim stuff like that so I'm for that 100%.

- I'm in Criminal Adjudication and Law and Society right now and I think those are really two really good classes. The students in the class all really like [the instructor] and I've learned a lot already and it's only been a few weeks.

- This is my personal opinion and it's probably something really stupid, a lot of people think, but If I were in charge, and there are people coming out of my department going into law enforcement I would want them to know the basics of self-defense and martial arts, so they could go out into the law enforcement field and know how to deescalate a non-lethal weapon situation without having to use their weapon, because obviously last few months have not been great for law enforcement, as far as deadly shootings and other stuff like that. I think part of that is due to the fact that a lot
of people in law enforcement drivability to deescalate situations, without the use of deadly force because they have been trained properly.

- [in response to a comment from facilitators about developing a law enforcement ethics class] I was surprised that that wasn't one of them, because I need to take that for gen ed probably next semester, and the closest thing I feel like was maybe legal ethics yeah but yeah I wish there was more like a specific one. I think a lot of people would be interested.
- For the job exploration class, I don't know if you could make it a whole semester. I don't know if it'd be too hard, but if so we could make a bunch of listening sessions, or something that. Students could attend kind of like Criminology Club and away something like once a week.
- It's not that much information for a whole semester course.
- If there were different specific topics each week that falls under somebody specific situation they can attend that.

Any last thoughts?

- One thing I think I would be interested in is...I'm debating about as soon as I finished my bachelor's going into grad school and maybe something to parlay that any current sociological research studies that are happening, where they need people to apply for that's just kind of like me spit balling out loud about in grad school.
- [in response to a comment from facilitators about how SOCI might offer a Crim Theory class next year] Do you have a description of what like the crime theory class would be? I feel like [between] my Juvenile Delinquency class and the Criminal Justice System right now I've already learned a lot about different types of theories within crime. In my Introduction to Sociology class too I feel like we learned quite a bit [of theory].
- I've taken like three different classes and we've learned about like rational choice theory very in-depth every time. I already know what this means, but okay I'll go along with it.
- I agree with that. I think we covered theory and each of them. I think I learned a new theory in each of them, but I feel like sometimes there are overlapping theories on each of them and it's like okay well tonight just have review from a class that I already took. It's never bad to review, but at the same time, if I'm going to be spending time in this course I'd rather be learning new material and not doing review.
- Honestly instead of the crime theory class I would rather way rather see a criminal ethics Criminology ethics class.
- I feel like that would be more important and a lot of new information that people might not know.