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Acknowledgments

The Sociology Department would like to thank its Wittenberg colleagues, Pamela Schindler, Matthew Smith, Robert Baker, and Steven Dawson, for their excellent focus group reports conducted over past four years at the end of each annual Sociology Department Senior Thesis Presentation. We appreciate the time they took during their busy semester to meet with our majors so as to help assess the work of the Sociology Department at this revealing moment in the sociology students’ career.

Keith Doubt
Sociology Department Chair

Introduction

This assessment report addresses how the Sociology Department meets the educational goals of the Sociology Department and the institution of Wittenberg University. The report reviews the educational goals of Wittenberg University and the Sociology Department, describes in detail each instrument that is used in the assessment process, and reports the results of its investigation.

One instrument through the Sociology Department assesses itself is the senior thesis capstone experience for sociology majors. After senior thesis presentations, the Sociology Department as a group meets and discusses its senior thesis presentations. The faculty evaluates presentations in terms of the Sociology Department's learning goals (which are shared with senior thesis students at the beginning of year and throughout their major career) and the institution's foundational learning goals, namely, computing, diversity, research, and speaking. The Sociology Department also notes trends in students' research in relation to the field, the general strengths and weaknesses of students' work, and ways to improve the capstone course and curriculum in light of thesis presentations.

A second instrument with which the Sociology Department assesses itself is through focus group reports conducted by Wittenberg faculty outside the Sociology Department after Senior Thesis Presentations. Focus groups with seniors are conducted immediately after presentations. Reports are prepared and shared with the Sociology Department after grades for Senior Thesis are submitted.

A third instrument with which the Sociology Department assesses the degree to which it is meeting its education goals as a Sociology Department is with the results from a purposive sample of senior sociology majors who take the national ETS Sociology Major Field Test. The ETS Major Field test provides assessment indicators for various aspects of the field of sociology when there is a group score of more than five individuals.

With these multiple instruments for assessment, the degree to which the Sociology Department is successfully meeting its goals can be more clearly determined and critically measured. The Sociology Department thus takes advantage of a rich, context-based approach to assessing student learning as well as a national standardized testing
tool with which Wittenberg sociology majors are compared with a large data set. The Sociology Department believes that both the qualitative data and the quantitative data are equally important to helping determine how well the Sociology Department is providing a viable undergraduate sociology major at a quality liberal arts university.

In May 2003 Catherine White Berheide, a trained sociology department reviewer from the American Sociological Association and an expert on assessing sociology programs in small liberal arts colleges, conducted an extensive review of the Sociology Department. This external review was included in the Sociology Department’s previous four-year assessment report and is thus not included with this report. The purpose of the external review in 2003 was to weight the merits of the Sociology Department’s request for a second anthropology line in order to create a Cultural Anthropology Minor along with its Sociology Minor and Sociology Major and to invigorate anthropological course offerings in the area of globalization and multiculturalism. The Sociology Department’s request was tabled by EPC.

Spring of 2008, Professors McEvoy and Broh resigned their tenure-track positions. Currently, Professor Stephen Smith is on phased retirement teaching four courses an academic year having resigned his tenure track position. Professors Doubt, Nibert, and Pankhurst are the three regular faculty in the Sociology Department; historically, the Sociology Department has had six. In 2008-09 the Sociology Department will employ adjunct faculty to replace its three vacated tenure-track faculty lines.

Wittenberg Sociology Department Mission

Uniting sociological and anthropological perspectives, the students and faculty of the Sociology Department of Sociology join in exploring human society and culture. Course offerings and co-curricular activities address a full range of issues in both the applied and the more academic areas of the disciplines. The Sociology Department is unique in its international and inter-disciplinary emphases. (Found on the Sociology Department Web Page at http://www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/soci/)

The Sociology Department of sociology is comprised of professional sociologists and anthropologists dedicated to representing these two disciplines in the Wittenberg community. The facilities and resources of the Sociology Department are to be used in the pursuit of this task. Our primary tasks are those of instruction in our specialties, with the preservation, creation and dissemination of knowledge in our areas of expertise linked to instruction and consonant with it.

Anthropology and sociology are the most general social sciences, both devoted to the analysis of society and culture as complex human phenomena. While the first goal of scholarship is understanding, our pursuit of knowledge is also guided by the need to address human problems and assist in the formulation and implementation of intentional policy to meet socio-cultural goals. Each faculty member is involved in research activities with the aim of discovery and preservation of knowledge about society and
culture. In the most general sense, as teachers, we seek to induct students into this quest. At minimum, we seek to provide students with the basis upon which they will be able to evaluate publicly relevant social scientific scholarship, such as that which is used in policy development or planning. (Found on the Sociology Department Web Page at http://www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/soci/general/mission.html)

Assessment of Wittenberg Sociology Department’s Mission Statement

One way in which the Sociology Department demonstrates its commitment to its Mission Statement is through the wide range of sociology and anthropology courses it offers at Wittenberg University. These courses support not only the Sociology Department’s curriculum for its majors and minors but also, as importantly, the Wittenberg University institutional educational goals. These goals, as stated in the Wittenberg Strategic Plan, is to provide quality interdisciplinary courses, rich courses that support area studies programs, and up-to-date courses with an international perspective.

Sociology Department Courses that contributed to General Education Requirements in 2007-08

Objective 1 of Goal A in the Strategic Plan for Wittenberg University states: Renew the liberal arts core (as expressed in the general education requirements) to ensure it is current to the world in which we live, reflects the priorities of the strategic plan, and reinforces the connection between all majors and “the core.” Below is a listing and numbering of Sociology Department Courses in the academic year 2007-08 that contribute to Wittenberg University’s General Education Requirements. The listing is typical of the support that the Sociology Department provides the Wittenberg General Education Program with respect to meeting the institutional goals of Wittenberg University.

S Learning Goal (23 Courses)
1. SOCI 101 Introduction to Sociology, Seven Sections (7)
2. SOCI 110 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Three Sections (3)
3. SOCI 210 Sociology of Family, Two Sections (2)
4. SOCI 290 Global Change, Two Sections (2)
5. SOCI 376 Law and Society, One Section (1)
6. SOCI 201 Social Character in America, One Section (1)
7. SOCI 250 Deviance, Two Sections (2)
8. SOCI 270. Sociology of Minority Groups, One Section (1)
9. SOCI 280 Animals and Society, Two Sections (2)
10. SOCI 380 Identity, Self, and Society, One Section (1)
11. SOCI 301 Who are the Russians? (1)
C Learning Goal (6 Courses)
  1. SOCI 110 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Three Section (3)
  2. SOCI 301 East Asian Medical Systems, One Section (1)
  3. SOCI 277 Islam and Islamic Societies, One Section (1)
  4. HON 300 War, Identity and Justice: Lessons from Bosnia, One Section (1)

R Learning Goal (1 Course)
  1. SOCI 277 Islam and Islamic Societies, One Section (1)

M Learning Goal (1 Course)
  1. SOCI 307 Research Methods (1)

Writing Intensive Courses Offered within the Sociology Department

In 2007-08 the Sociology Department offered nine Writing Intensive courses, approximately twenty-five percent of its total course offerings. This high number of writing intensive course demonstrates another way in which the Sociology Department contributes dramatically and compellingly to Wittenberg University’s General Education Requirements and its Strategic Plan for providing a strong liberal arts education to its students.

Service Learning Courses Offered within the Sociology Department

Objective Three of Goal A of the Strategic Plan states: Supplement the liberal arts core with experiential learning opportunities for all students and . . . expand service-learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom.

In 2007-08, the Sociology Department offered five service learning courses and thus powerfully contributed to the primary interests articulated in Wittenberg University’s General Education Requirements and its Strategic Plan.

Service Learning Courses by Sociology Department in 2007-08 (5 Courses)
  1. SOCI 210 Sociology of Family, Two sections
  2. SOCI 301 Women and Poverty, One section
  3. SOCI 380 Identity, Self, and Society, One section
  4. WMST 100 Introduction to Women’s Studies, One section
Courses for Area Studies and Interdisciplinary Programs Offered within the Sociology Department

The Sociology Department provides a wide range of course offerings that directly support Objective 1 of Goal A of the Wittenberg Strategic Plan, which states:

- Encourage integrated learning experiences with interdisciplinary work teams.
- Review current Sociology Departmental structures and processes to encourage integrated and cross-disciplinary thinking and
- Facilitate the development of interdisciplinary majors.
- Provide curricular flexibility to encourage multi- and interdisciplinary exploration.

Women Studies Courses (4 Courses)
1. WMST 100, One Section
2. SOCI 301 Women and Poverty, One Section
3. SOCI 210 Sociology of Family, Two Sections

Africana Studies (2 Courses)
1. SOCI 430 Race Matters, One Section
2. SOCI 277 Islam and Islamic Societies, One Section

American Studies Program (1 Course)
1. SOCI 201 Social Character in American Television Series

Global Studies (2 Courses)
1. SOCI 290 Global Change, Two Sections (The course is required for the Global Studies Minor.)

East Asian Studies (1 Course)
1. SOCI 301 East Asian Medical Systems, One Section

Russian Area Studies (1 Course)
1. SOCI 301 Who are the Russians?

Honors Program (1 Course)
1. HON 300 War, Identity and Justice: Lessons from Bosnia

WittSems (2 Courses)
1. WITSEM, Violence and Society, McEvoy (Two sections)

Urban Studies (1/4 Course)
1. URBN 171 Introduction to the City (Broh, ¼ Course)
Major and Minor Enrollments

Besides substantially supporting Wittenberg’s general institutional goals as a quality liberal arts university, the Sociology Department is committed as well to providing a meaningful curriculum for an undergraduate sociology major or minor. The table below provides the number of sociology majors and minors that the Sociology Department has graduated the past five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MAJORS GRADUATED</th>
<th>MINORS GRADUATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
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</tbody>
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Sociology Department Learning Goals for the Major

I. Sociological Imagination
Students should acquire a sociological perspective on the interconnection between social structures and the life experiences of individuals; students should be able to understand how sociological and anthropological insights can be utilized to analyze and address major social issues.

II. Traditions of Social Thought
Level 1: Students should become acquainted with broad traditions of social thought so as to gain an understanding of the sociological/anthropological perspective as a way to examine and study human society and culture.
Level 2: Students should learn to apply these traditions in order to analyze sociocultural phenomena and to formulate theoretically significant research questions; students should develop the skills to critically evaluate these traditions of social thought, including their respective strengths, weaknesses and limitations.

III. Research Methodology
Level 1: Students should learn to use others' research in their own enquiries about sociocultural phenomena.
Level 2: Students should develop a methodologically critical attitude towards the research enterprise and towards assertions of relationships between sociocultural phenomena, so that they can critically evaluate others' research.
Level 3: Students should develop the research skills necessary to design and conduct their own research, with an awareness of how decisions of design may affect the outcome, as well as be able to summarize and analyze the results of their own research and to communicate their conclusions in a professionally acceptable way.
IV. Substantive Areas of the Discipline
Students should gain an understanding of the major findings in particular substantive areas of sociology/anthropology.

V. Social Diversity
Students should gain an appreciation for and an understanding of social diversity in contemporary culture, including both diversity between and within various cultural traditions and specifically in terms of socially defined categories such as class, race, and gender.

VI. Career Opportunities
Students should become familiar with the opportunities for graduate study in areas related to Sociology and Anthropology as well as with the various options available for careers for students with a background in sociology and anthropology.

(Found on the Sociology Department Web Page at http://www4.wittenberg.edu/academics/soci/general/learning_goals.html)

Assessment of Sociology Department Learning Goals

1. Senior Thesis/Capstone Experience
As part of the major in Sociology, students are required to complete a senior thesis under the supervision of the "Senior Thesis Professor" and a "Primary Reader" who has a related scholarly interest. The thesis is seen as a capstone experience for majors in that it allows them both to explore research and analytical skills that they have learned earlier and to develop these skills with direct application. In addition, in the process of research and writing, the student develops new skills for the analysis that grow out of the first-hand research tasks. Finally, the thesis process allows the Sociology Department to assess how well it is doing in preparing students for critical and creative thinking, and for professional or allied careers using their major.

The topic of thesis research is chosen in consultation between the student and the faculty. Hands-on empirical research is encouraged, sometimes using available data sets -- including those developed through the surveys carried out in the Research Methods course in the Sociology Department -- and sometimes requiring the full initiation and carrying out of data gathering in the form of a survey, participant observation project, content analysis, or other research method.

Senior theses are completed largely during the fall semester of the sociology student’s last year at Wittenberg. However, revision tasks normally run into the spring semester, and a presentation of the research paper in a student conference format is carried out in the middle of spring semester. The Senior Thesis Presentation is one of the programs in the Sociology Departmental colloquiums series, so an audience made up of students, faculty
and local guests has an opportunity to hear about the studies carried out by the senior majors.

After the senior thesis presentations spring semester, the Sociology Department meets and discusses the individual senior thesis presentations together. As a group the faculty evaluates each presentation in terms of the Sociology Department's learning goals (which are shared with senior thesis students at the beginning of year) and the institution's foundational learning goals, namely, computing, diversity, research, and speaking. The Sociology Department then discusses the event as a whole -- noting trends in students' research in relation to developments within the field and the Sociology Department course offerings, the general strengths and weaknesses of students' work, and ways to improve both the capstone course and the curriculum. In this way, senior thesis serves as both an effective capstone experience for the majors and a useful assessment tool for the Sociology Department. This assessment process has become a ritual within the Sociology Department; it has taken place on an annual basis for more than ten years.

**2. Senior Focus Group Reports**

To have the advantage of direct student input in the Sociology Department's self-assessment process, the Sociology Department arranges focus groups with senior sociology. Focus groups are conducted immediately after senior thesis presentations. No sociology faculty are present. Reports are prepared and shared with the Sociology Department after grades for Senior Thesis are submitted. During the past four years, Professors Matthew Smith from Communication (2008), Steven Dawson from Health and Exercise Science (2007), Robert Baker from Political Science (2006), and Pamela Schinder from Management (2005) have lead conducted group interviews and prepared reports for the Sociology Department. After sharing their reports, the focus group leader has discussions with the Sociology Department chair and Sociology Department members as a follow-up to the report.


**Administration of the Test**

Spring 2004, five honors students took the sociology major field test for sociology seniors. The reasoning was that through such testing the Sociology Department could see clearly the strengths and weaknesses of its curriculum because the Sociology Department's best students would be taking the two-hour exam. In Spring 2004 the students had a GPA above 3.5 in their major as well as in their overall curriculum.

Spring 2008 five sociology majors, who were not honors students, again took the sociology major field test for sociology seniors. This time only two students reported having a GPA above 3.5 in their major and only one within the university. Thus, these test scores from 2004 and 2008 are not truly comparable; nevertheless, they are revealing and informative in interesting ways. The 2008 sample is more representative of the
average but typical sociology major. The 2004 sample set a high but achievable benchmark for the Sociology Department.

Following ETS procedures, Professor Keith Doubt and the Administrative Assistant Peggy Hanna timed and monitored the tests. It is necessary for at least five students to take the test in order to attain group data for the assessment indicators provided in the data reporting. Only the Sociology Department's group mean scores rather than individual scores are reported.

**Purpose of Major Field Assessment Tests**


Assessing student outcomes in higher education has received increasing emphasis and attention in recent years. Outcomes assessment has been defined in variety of ways, from measuring student progress in general education programs to assessing learning at graduation to evaluating postgraduate activities and trying to relate success in career goals and objectives of a college or university. No matter how broad the definition of outcomes assessment, a key element for most institutions is that it is a way to evaluate student academic achievement and growth.

It was in response to these concerns--specifically, the need voiced by undergraduate institutions for valid, reliable measures of the outcomes of instruction in the disciplines--that Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) Board developed the Major Field Tests.

**Background and Development**

The Major Field Tests are objective, end-of-program tests in 14 disciplines. Based on the Graduate Record Examinations Subject Tests, they have been shortened to two hours each, made less difficult than the GRE tests, and revised to reflect undergraduate programs and to be appropriate for all seniors majoring in a field, not just those planning graduate study. (Since there is no GRE Subject Test in Business, the Major field Test in Business is based on a complete revision of the Undergraduate Assessment Program Business Test.)

Scores on these tests provide useful information for institutions seeking outcomes measures, for Sociology Departments in evaluating their curriculum, and for faculty in measuring the progress of their students and considering curriculum changes. The major Field Tests provide reliable data for individual and group measurement at the undergraduate level by assessing student learning in major fields of study.

Major Field Tests are available for the following disciplines: biology, business, chemistry, computer science, economics, education, history, literature in English, mathematics, music theory and history, physics, political science, psychology and sociology.
**Test Content**

The content specifications for the Major Field Tests reflect the basic knowledge and understanding gained in the undergraduate curriculum. They have been designed to assess the mastery of concepts, principles, and knowledge expected of students at the conclusion of a major in specific subject areas.

In addition to factual knowledge, the tests evaluate students' ability to analyze and solve problems, understand relationships, and interpret material. They contain questions that call for information as well as questions that require interpretation of graphs, diagrams, and charts based on material related to the field.

**Test Construction**

The Major Field Tests were constructed according to specifications similar to the specifications for the current GRE Subject Tests, which are developed and reviewed by committees of experts in each subject area. ETS test development specialists assembles the Major Field Tests using questions that had been used in GRE Subject Tests and other questions written by subject matter experts. The complete tests and the specifications were then reviewed by selected experts in appropriate subject matter areas both during the development process and before the pilot testing.

The test development process included an extensive review of each test to eliminate language, symbols, or content considered to be potentially offensive, inappropriate for any subgroups of the test-taking population or serving to perpetuate any negative attitudes that may be conveyed to these subgroups.

After the tests were administered during pilot administrations, each test underwent a rigorous statistical analysis to see whether each question yielded the expected result. Such an appraisal sometimes reveals that a question is not satisfactory. A question that proves to be ambiguous or otherwise unsuitable is not used in computing scores. The tests will be reviewed periodically for currency, and they will be revised and updated with the aid of expert consultants, as required.

Statistical properties of each question, such as difficulty level and degree of correlation with the total score, are on record or are computed when new or revised test forms are first administered to help ensure that each question contributed meaningfully to the test results. For each test, the aim is to provide an instrument that measures the subject matter and skills a student is expected to have mastered in the undergraduate program.

**Scores**

Three types of scores are provided for the Major Field Tests:

* **Individually Reliable Total Scores:**

Each test yields an individually reliable total score for each student. An individually reliable score is one with statistical properties such that decisions about individual
students can be made based on the scores. The length of the test and content coverage are factors in determining score reliability. Total scores are reported on a scale of 120-200.

* Individually Reliable Subscores:

Five of the tests, Biology, Economics, History, Music, and Psychology yield individually reliable subscores for each student (in addition to the total score). Subscores represent achievement in broad areas within the field reflecting students' strengths or weaknesses by area within their major. Subscores are reported on a scale of 20-100.

* Group-Reliable Scores:

Known as Assessment Indicators in the Major Field Tests, these scores relate to a subfield within a major field of study (e.g., Methodology and Statistics as a subfield of Sociology). Since only group data are involved, assessment indicators need not meet the more stringent statistical requirements for individually reliable scores. Assessment indicator scores are reported as mean percent correct for the Sociology Department.

By obtaining data on the performance of total groups of students (all Sociology majors at an institution, for example), it is possible to report group scores on the reduced number of test questions that constitute the assessment indicators. A minimum of five students is required for any test in order for assessment indicators to be reported. Assessment indicators are not reported for individual students.

The assessment indicator approach to academic outcomes measurement increase an institution's ability to examine the performance of groups of students on various elements of the curriculum and enables a Sociology Department to disregard results from an area covered by the test but not by the curriculum.

**Description of Sociology Major Field Test**

The Major Field Test in Sociology consists of 140 multiple-choice questions, some of which are grouped in sets and based on such materials as diagrams, graphs, and statistical data. Most of the questions require knowledge of specific sociological information, but the test also draws upon the student's ability to analyze sociological data, theories, and relationships, deductively and inductively.

**Content of the Sociology Major Field Test**

The broad field of sociology encompasses many sub-fields and specialties; the sociology test covers the majors fields included in most undergraduate programs. The distribution of the content areas with some examples of the topics covered is as follows:

1. General Theory (about 11 percent of the questions).  
   a. Classical and contemporary (including feminist perspectives)  
   b. History of social thought  
   c. Comparison of theories  
   d. Theory construction
2. Methodology and Statistics (about 15 percent of the questions)
   a. Quantitative and qualitative methods
   b. Research design
   c. Measurement
   d. Statistics with application to sociology
3. Deviance and Social Problems (about 9 percent of the questions)
   a. Criminology/criminal justice
   b. Juvenile delinquency
   c. Deviance and Social Control Theory
   d. Types of deviance (e.g., white collar crime, violence, drug use)
4. Demography (about 4 percent of the questions)
   a. Population structure and dynamics
   b. Population characteristics
   c. Basic demographic methods
   d. Demographic theory
5. Family (about 8 percent of the questions)
   a. Comparative family structure
   b. Family processes through the life cycle
   c. Human sexuality context and change
6. Organizations (about 6 percent of the questions)
   a. Organizational forms and change
   b. Organizations and their environments
   c. Organization theory
   d. Voluntary organizations
7. Multiculturalism (including race, ethnicity, and religion) (about 11 percent of the questions)
   a. Prejudice and discrimination
   b. Racial and ethnic stratification in the United States
   c. Historical and comparative trends in inter-group relations
   d. Religious groups and identities
8. Social Change (about 6 percent of the questions)
   a. Theory and models
   b. Comparative economic and social development
   c. Political change
   d. Social movements
   e. Technology and innovation
9. Social Institutions (about 9 percent of the questions)
   a. Economic structure
   b. Political systems and the law (including war and peace)
   c. Education
   d. Health and science
   e. Religion
10. Social Psychology (about 9 percent of the questions)
    a. Personality, culture, and social structure
    b. Socialization and learning
    c. Social interaction
d. Small groups

11. Social Stratification (about 7 percent of the questions)
   a. Class, status, and power
   b. Social inequality (including race, gender, and ethnicity)
   c. Stratification theory
   d. Social mobility (including intergenerational and intragenerational, and ascribed and achieved)

12. Urban/Rural/Community (about 5 percent of the questions)
   a. Urban systems/development
   b. Residential patterns and housing (including community identity/disorganization)
   c. Metropolitanization/suburbanization
   d. Human ecology

Critical thinking questions and gender questions are integrated into the entire Sociology Major Field Test. About twenty-five percent of the questions address critical thinking. About 11 percent of the questions are gender related.

13. Critical Thinking (require students to:)
   a. Draw inferences from theories and data
   b. Recognized unstated assumptions
   c. Deduce conclusions from information presented in statements or premises.
   d. Interpret and weigh evidence as to whether asserted conclusions are warranted.
   e. Evaluate the strengths of comparable arguments regarding a specific issue.
   f. Apply sociological knowledge to new problems.
   g. Read and interpret tables of data and graphs.
   h. Recognize the strengths and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative data

14. Gender
   a. Feminist/sociological theory, e.g., sex ratios and sex roles, nature vs. nurture controversy.
   b. Power
   c. Macro, e.g., social movements, participation in labor force, the glass ceiling, deviant behavior, organizational participation, social mobility, and influence on organized religion.
   d. Micro, e.g., interpersonal relations, small groups, leadership, role models, socializing agents.

Scoring
Scores on the Major Field Test in Sociology are reported as follows:

Total Score
Reported for each student and summarized for the group.
Sub-scores
   Reported for each student and summarized for the group.
   • Core Sociology (General Theory and methodology and statistics)
   • Critical Thinking

Assessment Indicators
   Reported for the group only. A minimum of five students is required for assessment indicators to be reported.
   • General Theory
   • Methodology and Statistics
   • Deviance and Social Problems
   • Demography and Urban/Rural/Community
   • Multiculturalism
   • Social Institutions
   • Social Psychology
   • Gender

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

1. Senior Thesis/Capstone Experience

After the senior thesis presentations spring semester 2008, the Sociology Department met and discussed the individual senior thesis presentations together. As a group the faculty evaluated each presentation in terms of the Sociology Department's learning goals (which are shared with senior thesis students at the beginning of year) and the institution's foundational learning goals, namely, computing, diversity, research, and speaking. Standardized evaluation sheets for both the students' written thesis and the students' oral presentation are filled out, coded, discussed collectively, and stored in the Sociology Department office.

The Sociology Department then discusses the event as a whole -- noting trends in students' research in relation to developments within the field and the Sociology Department course offerings, the general strengths and weaknesses of students' work, and ways to improve both the capstone course and the curriculum. In this way, senior thesis serves as both an effective capstone experience for the majors and a useful assessment tool for the Sociology Department. This assessment process has become a ritual within the Sociology Department; it has taken place on an annual basis for more than ten years. Senior thesis meets a number of the university’s learning goals such as writing, oral communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and in-depth research.
General Notes from Sociology Department Meeting after 2008 Senior Thesis Presentations

The following comments are a sample of points made during the Sociology Department meeting after Senior Thesis Presentations 2008:

1. Despite this year’s closure of the Oral Communication Lab, where students have traditionally gone for help with senior thesis oral presentations, on the whole student presentations were clear, articulate, and coherent. This year they practiced on their own or with Sociology faculty. Department faculty were especially impressed by the quality and creativity of the Power point presentations.

2. Once again, the discussion between students both during and after senior thesis presentations was excellent. The event is tantamount to a sociology conference, and students engage their peers with penetrating and revealing questions after presentations. A lot of peer teaching occurs. As a group, sociology majors take this event seriously and each individual rises to the occasion.

3. Several students still do not grasp how they cannot generalize from a data set when it is not a random sample or that a large convenience sample is a problematic sample. The Sociology Department discussed ways to develop the sense of empirical rigor in student research.

4. One student, for the first time in some time, worked with a large data set or secondary data for her thesis. While not a strong student, she did a credible job. The Sociology Department hoped that more students would follow this example.

Spring 2008 Senior Thesis Presentations

* Anderson, Ashley – Seedy CDs?: Sex and Gender Images in the Music Industry
* Baker, Kailyn – Perceptions of Racism and Misogyny in Hip/Hop: Caring or Indifference among Consumers?
* Bletzer, Ashley – How Has Technology Changed the Landscape of College Dating? Cell Phones, Facebook and the World of Cyberspace
* Braziel, Desmond – Where Is Everyone Like Me? An Analysis of Retention of African American Students on Wittenberg Campus.
* Cohen, Peri – Sex Selection and Decision-Making Processes: A Comparative Analysis of Two Female Populations
* Downing, Cate – Racial Dilemmas and Campus Climate: A Case Study at a Small Liberal Arts College
* Dunn, Cass – Academic Elitism in the Production and Dissemination of Knowledge: The Case of Scholarly Journal Publishing
* Edwards, Dallas – Standards of Stumbling Blocks? The Functions of the State Mandated Ohio Graduation Test
* Huffman, David – Perceived Outcomes of Playing Violent Video Games: A Comparison between Adolescents and Adults
  * Hyland, Sean – Players’ Perceptions of Violence in Football: A Critical Analysis
  * Lockhart, Kaleigh – Theatre behind Bars: Rehabilitation or Entertainment? A Case Study on Shakespeare Behind Bars
  * Lynch, Matt – Urban Redevelopment Projects: Variations in Perceived Costs and Benefits
  * Mahsetky, Mallory – Reverse Sexism? The Portrayal of Males in Men’s Contemporary Magazines
  * McEachran, Alyssa – Social and Religious Agendas within Religious Organizations: Dogmatism or Diversity?
  * Mohr, Samantha – The Social Landscape of Suburban Poverty: Patterns and Challenges
  * Nora, Nick – Parental Surveillance of Children’s Video Game Playing: What Do They Know and When Do They Know it?
  * Purnell, Lauren – Comparing the Social Climate at Predominantly White HBCU Colleges: Implications for Academic Social Development
  * Schnedl, Ashley – The Functions of Summer School Programming on Children from Diverse Economic Background
  * Williams, Amanda – Perceived Academic Outcomes of Bullying in School: An Exploratory Analysis
  * Wells, Krissie – Rape Crisis Services for Male Inmates: Challenges and Prospects
  * Wollenberg, Kristen – Patterns of Emotional Abuse in Nursing Homes: Myths and Reality
  * Yohman, Kaity – Green or Mean? Truth and Propaganda in the Media’s Portrayal of the Environmental Movement

Off-campus Sociology Student Presentations after Senior Thesis

Each year, many of the Sociology Department's thesis students present their work at professional meetings off-campus. Some have won undergraduate student research awards and have published their work. In spring 2008 Professors Pankhurst, McEvoy, and Broh hosted thirteen sociology majors at the North Central Sociological Association Meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. Twelve presented from their senior thesis work, and at the business meeting of NCSA the excellence of the Wittenberg students’ presentation was discussed and admiringly noted. This event this event reflects a general trend. In 2001, eight students presented their research at the annual North Central Sociological Association meetings in student sessions, and one of these students received an award for her scholarly work. In 2002, two sociology majors submitted parts of their senior thesis work and took first and second place in the Women’s Studies Writing Prize. Almost
every year, at least two sociology majors have abstracts accepted for presentation at the national undergraduate research conference and have traveled to these national conferences. Their presentations were well attended, and presenters received positive feedback from students and faculty at other universities. In 2004, four sociology majors presented their research in not student but regular sessions at the North Central Sociological Association in Cleveland, Ohio. Brianne Barclay presented parts of her senior thesis paper "Statistics in the Social Sciences: The Null Hypothesis as Rhetoric in Sociology," in the Quantitative Methodology session; Katie Martin presented parts of her senior thesis paper "A Content Analysis of 'A Dating Story:' Learning Gender on The Learning Channel" in the Mass Media/Popular Culture session. Jamie Shampine parts of her senior thesis paper "Potions, Portkeys, and Prejudice: A Content Analysis of Theory-based Notions of Race, Prejudice and Discrimination as Portrayed Within the J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter Novel Series" in the Sociology of Childhood session; and Brandon Stanfill presented parts of his senior thesis paper "Toward an Understanding of Friendship in Prison" in the Criminal Justice: The New Penology session. Their abstracts were first accepted in competition with other submissions. Co-presenters in their sessions were often graduate students or faculty at other universities. In each case, their oral presentations and analysis were professional and incisive, in some cases the best in the sessions. Students left the conference feeling positive about their work and proud of the education they had received in the Sociology Department at Wittenberg University. The university, the Sociology Department, and AKD, the national sociology honorary society, provide funds to help with students' registration and travel to these conferences.

2. Focus Group Reports

To have the advantage of direct student input into the Sociology Department's assessment process, the Sociology Department arranges focus groups by Wittenberg faculty outside the Sociology Department with senior majors. Focus groups are conducted immediately after senior thesis presentations. At this point, students are "high" from their presentations and want to give back to the Sociology Department. They are being evaluated and they now want to evaluate the Sociology Department and the process it went through. No sociology faculty are present. Reports are prepared and shared with the Sociology Department after grades for Senior Thesis are submitted. During the past four years, Professors Matthew Smith from Communication (2008), Steven Dawson from Heath and Exercise Science (2007), Robert Baker from Political Science (2006), and Pamela Schindler from Management (2005) have lead conducted group interviews and prepared reports for the Sociology.

Focus Group Report from Matthew Smith in Communication (2008)

TO: Keith Doubt
FROM: Matt Smith
RE: Sociology Assessment
DATE: March 3, 2008

A total of twenty-one seniors attended the focus group on Tuesday, February 26. The session lasted one hour and, given the size of the group, produced multiple perspectives
on each query. The following summary notes the recurrent themes that emerged following these prompts as well as some purposeful individual comments.

**Does your senior thesis represent your best work at Wittenberg?**
Students agreed that the senior thesis was very challenging and particularly rewarding, most especially for those planning to go on to graduate school. Additionally, many students reported that the time investment required of the project made them value the result all the more. However, those who appeared to be less personally disciplined seemed less pleased with their theses as a result of perceiving themselves as adrift at different stages in the process. They expressed a desire for greater personal guidance and requested more of a consistent push from the faculty.

**How did Sociology courses in the major prepare or not prepare you for senior thesis? What aspects of your methods course helped or did not help during the thesis project?**
Key to the students’ perceived success with the senior thesis was the Sociology Department’s methods course. A good deal of praise was accorded to Dr. Broh’s instructional techniques in that course, and the students expressed a desire to see her continue to staff it. They complemented the course for its clear structure (e.g., deadlines), concrete explanations, and the high expectations set by the instructor (i.e., a perception that expectations in this course were higher than other Sociology courses).

Students also praised the Sociology Department’s theory course for opening their minds to the discipline. While they expressed the value of this course, some students regretted not taking it earlier in their program of study, as theory seems to be discussed regularly throughout much of the Sociology curriculum. If a student had not already taken the theory course, they cited a sense of feeling lost at times in other courses. As a remedy, they wondered if the Sociology Department would consider requiring the course earlier in the curriculum. (I recognize that this recommendation works against the Sociology Department’s “ferris wheel” approach, but I wonder if the importance of taking theory earlier could be stressed through advising rather than made into a formal requirement.)

The students also discussed the senior thesis course in the fall as contributing to their success with the thesis itself. In particular they praised Dr. McEvoy for requiring them to discuss their ideas orally and develop a comfort with presenting publicly well in advance of the final presentations. Several students noted that they benefited from hearing other students talk through their ideas in class. Others regretted not having a clearer outline and deadlines in the fall. These seemed to be many of the same students who relished the structure of Dr. Broh’s course. (Again, I recognize that adapting to different expectations is part of the experience of adapting to new audiences for students. Perhaps these differences, as far as you all are aware of them, could be more explicitly identified to the students in advance.)

**What are your thoughts requiring statistics for the Sociology major?**
If the Sociology Department were to require statistics, the students would prefer to see a statistics course taught out of Sociology. Their perception is that the brand of statistics taught by other Sociology Departments seems less relevant to their projects. Some noted that the most useable statistics they learned, they gained in Sociology’s methods course. However, this course seems to be packed too tightly already, and a separate statistics course could alleviate the pressures in methods now and allow for in-depth exploration of tools like SPSS. Alternately, if statistics could be expanded in the methods course, students wondered if the course could be expanded to six credits.

**What recommendations would you give to Sociology majors? The faculty?**
In speaking to their fellow students, the seniors wished that successive students would take advantage of the variety of courses and faculty that the Sociology Department has to offer. Ample praise was offered for the passion, expertise, and accomplishments of this faculty. The way that the faculty integrates their expertise into the curriculum (e.g., Dr. Doubt on Bosnia) also excited them. Moreover,
the students perceived that the Sociology faculty genuinely cares about them and their success. However, to make this wish come true, the students noted that they needed to know about the faculty member’s interests and specialties sooner in the students’ careers. Even simple things like updating the Sociology Department’s web site would help with this kind of publicizing.

They also advised their successors to find a passion of their own and to follow it. Apparently the faculty serves as good models of this process.

For the faculty, they expressed some concern about the workloads that several individual faculty members have assumed. In the advice of one senior, “Don’t bite off more than you can chew.” The result of over-extending themselves was that such faculty members were perceived as inaccessible to the students or inconvenienced with minor inquiries.

More than one person wondered if key courses could benefit from a common list of objectives if not a common syllabus. There seems to be a perception of wide variation as a course is taught from instructor to instructor.

Also, a request was floated for a senior experience that emphasizes the transition from college to real life.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based solely on what the students reported to me and on my limited, and perhaps faulty, knowledge of the Sociology curriculum. Please consider them with those limitations in mind.

1) *Raise expectations across the major curriculum.* Many of the students seemed hungry for the kind of challenge that they cited experiencing in Dr. Broh’s methods course and noted that they did not feel the same level of rigor in other major courses.

2) *Standardize or better express shared learning goals across core courses.* Many more wanted to see greater consistency across sections of the same course taught by different instructors. Students did disagree about the value of some of these common courses, noting that the level in a given instructor’s expectations seemed to make the difference. Perhaps common syllabi or common objectives already exist across these sections, but these commonalities were not clear to the students.

3) *Justify or move the senior thesis presentations from midterm.* None of the students knew the reason for holding the thesis presentations during the stress-filled midterm week. Though pressed, I could not offer a pedagogical reason why the event was not held, say, two weeks earlier or two weeks later. If there is a justification for this time, the students could benefit from knowing it better. If not, it seems unnecessarily stressful to them and to the faculty to slate it within this period.

4) *Consider some form of check for students during the period between the thesis course and the presentations.* Many of those students who requested guidance wanted some oversight during this period. I’m not sure how this would function, per se, though some students wondered if making senior assessment a six-credit course, with two of the credits coming in to play in spring, could be possible.

5) *Consider advising students to take the theory course as soon as possible after declaring the major.*
Conclusion
To its credit, the Sociology Department’s senior thesis appears to provide students with a challenging capstone. It seems that the major experience could be enhanced with some clearer communication practices, and I hope the recommendations offered herein will help to direct your efforts to enhance the program further.

Focus Group Report from Steven Dawson in Heath and Exercise Science (2007)

Sociology Senior Thesis – Student Response 2007-02-27

1. Does the senior thesis requirement constitute an effective capstone for the major, and are there suggestions to improve the thesis process?

Yes, the thesis requirement is an effective capstone for the major. It is very specific and allows the student’s autonomy to research a particular area of interest. However, the thesis process could be improved by providing student’s more time to prepare – start the process earlier – and have more class/seminar time with professors.

2. Does the thesis constitute an effective way to integrate their knowledge of theory and research?

Yes, because it allows student’s a chance to apply theories/models to “real life” situations, occurrences. Sociology tends to be abstract and idealistic, and this research experience allows student’s to test theories/models “first hand.”

3. Do students see the thesis as an essential component of the major?

Yes, as it facilitates the transition to graduate school and even the work place where research is demanded. Also, it is somewhat unique to sociology majors

4. Does presenting the thesis (at Wittenberg and at professional meetings) serve as a positive learning experience?

Yes, as the experience can be very rewarding. It makes you complete something you normally would not try – addressing an audience on complex matters

5. Do the courses in theory, methods, and topical areas help prepare students for this capstone project?

Yes, but you have to draw from the methods classes – they build on each other. Students have a better understanding of sociological theory and why research methods are crucial after this exercise of measurement and testing. However, this thesis process and experience does not start early enough in the student’s career. For first and second year
students the courses are too descriptive – Sociology of the Family a 200 level course is too basic so as to meet the needs of younger students. Basically, sociology is two majors – one for first and second year students and one for juniors and seniors.

6. What recommendations do seniors have for future students who will have to write a thesis?

Start planning earlier, collect data ASAP, and treat the process as a class. We as undergraduates are not ready to work on our own with the discipline that is needed. Students need to arrive at the thesis stage more prepared.

7. What could be done to improve the senior thesis class?

Students should be aware of the grading allocation – how much percentage, weight, is given to presentation and discussion? There should be more than one professor involved in the seminar/class. One benefit of the class was it allowed student’s time to go and do research as they only met once a week. However, many felt they were sitting in a class involving material that was irrelevant to their topic.

8. Did you find the discussion section worthwhile?

Yes, because it allowed us time to express our knowledge in a more relaxed setting. It gave us the opportunity to bring out points that we omitted in the presentation, and therefore, we were able to demonstrate familiarity with the topic.

9. Did you find anything unique about the experience?

We experienced pride in being able to complete this task. It legitimates our major in relation to other disciplines

Conclusion

Overall, the students enjoyed the experience, but it was stressful, especially the presentation. They believe they were prepared, but this could have been more thorough and complete if this type of work was encouraged and demanded earlier in their college career. The process and experience is crucial to sociology majors and gives credibility to the Sociology Department.


MEMO

To: Keith Doubt
From: Rob Baker  
Date: March 7, 2006  
RE: Sociology Senior Thesis Assessment Report

Introduction
From 4:05 – 5:00 p.m. on March 1, 2006 I met with 10 senior Sociology majors after their thesis presentations. Two of them left immediately after they had responded to a written questionnaire, while the remaining eight participated in a discussion about the thesis process and the sociology major. This memo reports the results of that assessment meeting.

Procedures
I opened the session by giving each student a blank sheet of paper and asking them to write down any information they had about any issues of academic dishonesty they were aware of related to the senior thesis process. I then asked each student to fill out a brief questionnaire as a way to gather feedback from them about the senior thesis and the major. A copy of this questionnaire is attached to this report, as well as the copies of the raw survey instruments that were filled out anonymously by the students. After about 15 minutes, the students had finished this task, and I then led them in a discussion about the major and thesis. One of the students took notes for me.

Discussion of Assessment Results
First, I’m pleased to report that there were no concerns raised about academic dishonesty in conjunction with the senior thesis. Regarding the answers to the questionnaire, the overwhelming theme is that the students view the senior thesis to be a transformative experience, and a very positive contribution to their training in Sociology. Specifically, when asked to respond on a Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree about whether the Sociology Department should keep the Senior Thesis as its major assessment device, all 10 students agreed, and 7 strongly agreed.

Students were then asked to rank order (from 1=“Most Helpful” to 7=“Least Helpful”) the following components of the Thesis Process. The modal and mean responses for each item are provided in parentheses.
1. Senior Thesis Class: (Mode=4; Mean=4.4)
2. Textbook Used in Senior Thesis Class: (Mode=7; Mean=5.8)
3. Faculty Support on Projects: (Mode=1; Mean=1.7)
4. Theory Class: (Mode=2; Mean=3.1)
5. Role of Primary Reader: (Mode=2; Mean=3.3)
6. Background in Quantitative Methods: (Mode=5; Mean=4.4)
7. Other—One student mentioned Peer Support and another Mentioned the 2nd Reader

In sum then, the students’ responses indicate that Faculty Support, the Theory Class, and the Role of the Primary Reader were the most helpful to their efforts to complete the senior thesis.
The next question asked students to indicate what they thought they gained from the thesis by checking any of the following that applied to their particular situation and experience. The percentage of students checking each item is noted in parentheses.

1. Unique View of the World (50%)
2. More Open Mind (90%)
3. Empathy (40%)
4. Self-Confidence (90%)
5. Ability to Form/Express Opinions (90%)
6. Ability to Support Positions on Issues/Ideas (90%)
7. Closer Contact with Faculty (90%)
8. Closer Contact with Other Students (60%)
9. The Ability to Deconstruct Issues (60%)
10. The Confidence to Research Ideas (100%)
11. Improved Ability to Analyze Arguments (70%)
12. Improved Ability to Express Ideas in Writing (70%)
13. Improved Ability to Express Ideas Orally (80%)
14. Other (Sense of Accomplishment: N=1)

From these rankings, it can be seen that almost all (at least 90%) of the students believe they are gaining a more open mind, greater self confidence, improved abilities to form/express opinions and support positions, closer contact with faculty, and the confidence to research ideas. To further discriminate among these items, students were asked to list the one that they thought was the most important, and why. Four of them (40%) listed “self confidence,” two (20%) listed “ability to form/express opinion,” two (20%) listed “closer contact with faculty,” and the remaining 2 (20%) listed “the confidence to research ideas.”

The related comments provide some interesting insight to the students’ thoughts on this question.

*Self-Confidence*

“This process gave me more confidence which will help me as I pursue my Masters Degree. I feel I am prepared to research at the graduate level.”

“The most important would be self-confidence or express ideas orally because we are seniors and job interviews require such characteristics.”

“Self-Confidence because it helped me attain all the other checked abilities.”

“I believe that perhaps the idea of self-confidence was the most important because doing this showed me that I was able to accomplish such a large project and that if I can accomplish this then other things would be easier.”

*Ability to Form/Express Opinions*
“The ability to form/express opinions. By this I am referring to the ideas and theories that we have been introduced to. I was able to better express ideas and opinions from studies that have already been done and put it into my own words; explaining that same idea but at the same time adding my own opinion and understanding.”

“I think the ability to form/express opinions is very important because the way you formed your opinions and expressed them in this experience will allow you to be more comfortable doing these types of things in the future.”

Closer Contact with Faculty

“Closer contact with faculty because it made me feel as if I was wanted and appreciated by the Sociology Department and helped me to relax and more willing to open up to my professor on a personal level.”

“I feel that having closer contacts with faculty is the most important because I think this ultimately expresses the unique advantages of a small liberal arts institution.”

The Confidence to Research Ideas

“The confidence to research ideas because you feel overwhelmed at the beginning of the process, but when you are finished you realize that researching a project is not as daunting as it first seems to be.”

“I believe the most important thing I gained from senior thesis was the confidence to actually carry a research project out from start to finish—particularly in regard to contacting outside sources, and applying social theories to current issues.”

The next question asked if there was anything the student would like to change about the major. The results were:

1. Nothing (50%)
2. Requiring more a diverse set of courses in the major (40%)
3. More clarity and agreement among professors about the thesis (10%)

Following this question, the students were then asked what they’d definitely want to keep about the major? They suggested these items (They could suggest more than 1 item):

1. Social Theory (30%)
2. Faculty (10%)
3. Research Methods (20%)
4. Senior Thesis (50%)
5. The current number of credits (10%)
At the request of the Sociology Department, students were asked their opinions about the appropriate sequencing of statistics and research methods. Should one be taken prior to the other? If so, what order? The students responded as follows:

- Stats followed by Methods (60%)
- Methods followed by Statistics (10%)
- No Preference on Ordering (40%)

Finally, students were asked to make whatever suggestions they thought appropriate to improve the Sociology Major. They suggested the following:

1. Offer methods both semesters (10%)
2. Provide more diversity in course offerings (30%)
3. Institute a “junior thesis” requirement (10%)
4. Offer more service projects in the community (10%)
5. Achieve more agreement among professors about thesis requirements (10%)
6. Provide more help with career options (10%)
7. Provide more help to Honors’ Students (10%)
8. Definitely require statistics prior to methods (10%)

**Focus Group Discussion Summary**

After the questionnaires were turned in, I spent about 40 minutes having a discussion with the students about the thesis requirement and the major. The following narrative summarizes that discussion.

To begin, the students overwhelmingly praised the thesis project as helping provide a sense of empowerment, personal growth, and intellectual independence. Some mentioned the value in having more than one semester in which to complete it, while others noted the importance of setting deadlines and creating a research project that was interesting to them. On the other hand, some limitations of the thesis requirement were also noted such as the time that typically elapsed before they got feedback on their drafts, concerns about the primary thesis class professor not necessarily having expertise in all areas, contrasting feedback from different readers, and some feeling that the thesis class was not very helpful to the process. All in all, though, the thrust of the comments were very positive.

The discussion then moved to consideration of the Research Methods course. There were mixed opinions about the quality of the course that most of them took, but that in general it was a necessary part of the major contributing positively to the penultimate thesis project. A consensus emerged around the notion, however, that more time should have been spent on teaching students what a literature review is, and how to write one.
Discussion next moved to the issue of a statistics course. Most students felt, as indicated in their responses to the written survey, that stats should precede methods. However, the use of Minitab in Statistics versus the use of SPSS in Methods was frustrating to several students.

Finally, I asked the students to comment more generally on the strengths and weakness of the Sociology major. In terms of strengths, several comments coalesced around the fact that professors are approachable and personable, have an interest in the students, and even “hilarious.” Some concerns were voiced about needing more career advice, perhaps related to some sort of junior year requirement, and more organization of courses. One student summed up the tenor of the discussion at this point by noting that “Coming to the Soc Sociology Department probably was the best decision I every made.” This is high praise indeed from one of your seniors.

Conclusions

Overall, I come away from this exercise with a strong belief that your senior thesis is powerful capstone experience for your majors. They clearly see its benefits to their education and training in Sociology, and I applaud your continued use of it as a senior assessment mechanism. In addition, it seems that if there is a question about the proper sequencing of stats and methods, the students largely see the need for stats prior to methods. Finally, it’s quite clear that a strong Research Methods course is believed by the students to be essential to their ability to succeed in their senior thesis work. I think the Sociology Department should work to ensure that this course is strengthened, and that it is offered perhaps more than once a year.

Focus Group Report from Pamela Schinder from Management (2005)

To: Keith Doubt  
From: Pamela Schindler  
RE: Sociology Assessment Focus Group  
Date: February 28, 2005-03-02

Eight sociology majors attended the Assessment Focus Group on Thursday, February 24, from 4:00-5:10. One student joined about 10 minutes after we started, missing the warm-up exercise; that same student left 10 minutes before we stopped.

Primary Focus: Should Sociology keep its senior thesis as its assessment device?

Most students respected, and found considerable value in, the thesis, generally giving it between an 8 or 10 on a 10-point scale. While three had not experienced a smooth process, having negative early process problems with their primary readers, even these students thought the overall process was worthwhile (gave it a 7 or 8).
What value they identified came largely from self-discovery and an increase in self-confidence. They talked positively about 1) the discovery of increasing links between Sociology content and their topic, 2) increasing ability to think abstractly, 3) synthesis of sociological thought, and 4) improvements in the clarity of their writing.

Students universally cited “the best thing” about the thesis as the collaboration with other students and faculty (and not just sociology faculty). Even though most thought initially that commenting on other students’ work through WebCT would prove more busy work than helpful, they reassessed this position the moment they received the first useful suggestion that moved their own project forward. All had experienced this and therefore took the process of commenting on others’ work more seriously. They strongly encouraged you to keep this aspect of the process, even though they had complained about it.

One student summarized how she felt as “empowered to do sociology.” Another elaborated that she experienced “pride and satisfaction” in the end product and in herself. All other participants enthusiastically agreed with these assessments of the value of the process.

What helped most in the thesis process?

1. **Senior Thesis Class** and the structure the deadlines imposed on the process. Several felt they wouldn’t have known how to proceed without the class and the deadlines kept them focused and kept them from procastinating.
2. **Textbook used in the senior thesis class.** It helped them organize themselves for the process.
3. **Faculty support.** They especially commented on the passion and enthusiasm for research in general and their project in particular. Also, faculty were valued for their perspective. Nibert and Doubt were mentioned repeatedly and with glowing accolades.
4. **Theory class.** It gave them the foundation for their thesis. “Without it I wouldn’t have known where to start.” Several commented that Nibert’s class helped them to “think outside the box.”

What needs work in the thesis process?

1. **Clarification of the role of primary reader.** Most were getting mixed signals delivered by their adviser and primary reader. Students especially wanted the role of the primary reader clarified and thought that doing so would have solved most if not all of the problems they experienced. Feedback (and editing) was expected from the primary reader but many said it wasn’t forthcoming. And students concluded that faculty are not in agreement with each other in the role of primary reader. They commented that “students do talk with each other” and several felt there just wasn’t the consistency among faculty effort with regard to the thesis that there should have been, especially as faculty filled the primary reader role. Also, some students felt that they didn’t know the “steps” involved in the process and that their primary reader appeared not to know the steps.
within the process either. This was problematic for some as not following these elusive and unknown steps diminished the support from their primary reader.

2. **Enhanced understanding of quantitative research.** They universally indicated they lacked confidence in their quantitative research skills. This was cited by all for their choice of qualitative methodologies for their personal thesis. They described their methods class as “worthless,” and “a joke,” but attributed this to the specific professor they had not being knowledgeable, rather than to the subject matter.

3. **Earlier start.** Several thought it should be something they started exploring in their Junior year.

**What will sociology majors take with them from their full experience as a major?**

Participants’ ideas seemed to fall in two broad categories: Interpersonal knowledge and skills, and marketplace skills.

**Interpersonal knowledge and skills**

1. Unique view of the world
2. Open mind
3. Empathy
4. Self-confidence
5. The ability to form and express their opinions…and substantiate their positions to others.
6. Closer contacts with fellow students and faculty.

**Marketplace Skills**

7. The ability to deconstruct issues and scenarios
8. The confidence to research and analyze ideas.
9. Ability to express their ideas both in writing and orally.

**What if anything would they keep or change about the major?**

**Keep**

1. Great interaction with the professors
2. Diversity of ideology among their professors

**Change**

1. The Sociology Department should have more extra, defined as activities that exposed students to a greater diversity of opinions. (They realize this is problematic…that the ones you host now are not well attended; but they suggest that you consider making a certain percentage of them mandatory over two years and that students would attend if required. They also indicated that the topics need to be screened more closely, as many speakers seem to be talking about the same subject. They especially wanted to hear about how sociology is applied.)
2. The Sociology Department should have more support for career planning.
• While 3 of 8 will attend graduate school, even they needed help in selecting the right programs…they don’t understand the options. Students suggested a career workshop or possibly a mini-series of speakers.
• Several mentioned that social work seemed to be an expected career but they really know little about it. They wondered about the viability of a social work concentration within the major, like English has a writing concentration. Internships in this area also were of interest.
3. A social statistics class was seen as potentially valuable.

Recommendations:

RE: Thesis
1. Keep the thesis as the senior assessment for Sociology.
   • The positives far outnumbered the negatives. Even those students who had difficult experiences were positive about what they learned about themselves and sociology in the process.
   • Even knowing the extensive amount of faculty time that must be devoted to such a process, when students share that they are leaving with a much greater understanding of themselves and the world around them, it is hard to argue that the time was not well spent.

2. Clarify the role and responsibilities for the primary reader within the thesis process as opposed to the adviser.

RE: Sociology Major
3. Assign a different instructor to teach the methodology course.
   • You definitely need a different instructor for the quantitative methodology class. Students don’t feel comfortable with their understanding of this set of methodologies and some fear that they may be expected to do something in their first jobs that will require an understanding of these methodologies.

4. Consider alternative ways to explore different career options with students, especially a career in social work.

Conclusion
The Sociology Department is doing well on most of its critical responsibilities. The few disappointments cited can be rectified. Generally your majors are satisfied and you are meeting most of their expectations.

3. Sociology Major Field Test (ETS)

Spring 2004, five honors students took the sociology major field test for sociology seniors. The reasoning was that through such testing the Sociology Department could see clearly the strengths and weaknesses of its curriculum because the Sociology
Department's best students, a purposive rather than a convenience or random sample, would be taking the two-hour exam. The GPA for these five honors students in sociology was over 3.5 in their Sociology major and their university course work. As will be seen below, these five students set a high but informative benchmark with which to compare subsequent groups.

Spring 2008 five sociology majors, who were not honors students, again took the sociology major field test for sociology seniors. Only two of the five students reported having a GPA above 3.5 in their sociology major and only one had a GPA above 3.5 within the university. Thus, the group test scores from 2004 and 2008 are hardly comparable; nevertheless, the group test scores from 2004 and 2008 are revealing and informative as one of several parts of the Sociology Department’s assessment. They are revealing in terms of how the differences are predictable as well as in terms of how the differences are unpredictable. The 2008 sample is likely more representative of not the average but the typical sociology major at Wittenberg University.

Data from the Sociology Major Field Test in 2004 and 2008 show that the Wittenberg Sociology Department has some of the best undergraduate sociology majors in the nation and that its students are receiving a strong, excellent undergraduate sociology education within their major. The national measurement scales for each test year, 2004 and 2008, are different and so each year is reported with a different table of scales.

**Total Test Score**

Group Mean, 155, SD 9 (2008)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>65% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>75% at or below</th>
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<tr>
<td>155</td>
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<td>158</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 165; SD, 4.5 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>85% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The national comparative data represents seniors only. The measurement scales for 2008 are from Domestic Institutions from August 2006 to June 2007. The percentages provided are either at or below based on the lower limit of the score interval.
Assessment Indicator #1, General Theory
Group Mean, 66 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 62.6; (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
<td><strong>62.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Theory
- Classical and contemporary (including feminist perspectives)
- History of social thought
- Comparison of theories
- Theory construction

Assessment Indicator #2, Methodology and Statistics
Group Mean, 61 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>75% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 79 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methodology and Statistics
- Quantitative and qualitative methods
- Research design
- Measurement
- Statistics with application to sociology
Assessment Indicator #3, Deviance and Social Problems
Group Mean, 53 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>75% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 81.6 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>81.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deviance and Social Problems
- Criminology/criminal justice
- Juvenile delinquency
- Deviance and Social Control Theory
- Types of deviance (e.g., white collar crime, violence, drug use)

Assessment Indicator #4, Demography & Urban/Rural/Community
Group Score, 59 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>75% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 43 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>40% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>60% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demography
- Population structure and dynamics
- Population characteristics
- Basic demographic methods
- Demographic theory

Urban/Rural/Community
- Urban systems/development
- Residential patterns and housing (including community identity/disorganization)
- Metropolitanization/suburbanization
- Human ecology
Assessment Indicator #5, Multiculturalism

Group Mean, 60 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 65.2 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiculturalism (including race, ethnicity, and religion) (about 11 percent of the questions)
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Racial and ethnic stratification in the United States
- Historical and comparative trends in intergroup relations
- Religious groups and identities

Assessment Indicator #6, Social Institutions

Group mean, 53 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg University</th>
<th>35% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group mean, 60.2 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Institutions (about 9 percent of the questions)
- Economic structure
- Political systems and the law (including war and peace)
- Education
- Health and science
- Religion
Assessment Indicator #7, Social Psychology
Group Mean, 53 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean 63.4 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social Psychology
- Personality, culture, and social structure
- Socialization and learning
- Social interaction
- Small groups

Assessment Indicator #8, Gender

Group Mean 61, (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>50% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>60% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Score 72 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender
- Feminist/sociological theory, e.g., sex ratios and sex roles, nature vs. nurture controversy.
- Power
- Macro, e.g., social movements, participation in labor force, the glass ceiling, deviant behavior, organizational participation, social mobility, and influence on organized religion.
- Micro, e.g., interpersonal relations, small groups, leadership, role models, socializing agents.
Assessment Indicator #9, Globalization

Group mean, 60 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>65% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>75% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Score 73.8, (2004), Honors Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80%</th>
<th>85%</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>95%</th>
<th>Wittenberg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Globalization
(No description provided.)

Subscore 1 - Core Sociology
(General Theory, Methodology, Statistics)

Group mean, 58, SD 11 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>80% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 70; SD, 9.1, (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Subscore 2 - Critical Thinking**

Group mean, 57, SD 9 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>80% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Mean, 63; SD 9.6; (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>80% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2004</th>
<th>85% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Critical Thinking

- Draw inferences from theories and data
- Recognized unstated assumptions
- Deduce conclusions from information presented in statements or premises.
- Interpret and weigh evidence as to whether asserted conclusions are warranted.
- Evaluate the strengths of comparable arguments regarding a specific issue.
- Apply sociological knowledge to new problems.
- Read and interpret tables of data and graphs
- Recognize the strengths and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative data

**Institutional Mean Score Distributions**

Wittenberg Sociology Department Mean 155, SD 9 (2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>60% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
<th>75% at or below</th>
<th>80% at or below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>153</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wittenberg Sociology Department Mean, 165; SD 4.5 (2004), Honors students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>85% at or below</th>
<th>90% at or below</th>
<th>95% at or below</th>
<th>Wittenberg 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>158</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table compares Wittenberg Sociology Department's institutional total mean score with the total mean score of other institutions. The institutional population is 86. In a previous table, the Sociology Department's mean score were compared with individual students' total score. The Sociology Department's mean score is biased because it represents the mean score of five students from a purposive sample rather than the entire population or senior class. In the future, the Sociology Department may consider giving
the field test to a randomly selected as well as stratified group of senior majors, given the high cost of administering the test.

Discussion of Results

• The Sociology Department as a whole has not yet had the chance to discuss these results that were received in Summer 2008.
• Faculty personnel changes explain some of the differences. In 2004, Rebecca Plante had been teaching gender for several years. In 2008, Professor Broh had been teaching race for several years. The differences in the group scores in these areas could be attributed to the strength of their teaching in these areas. At the same time, all the areas of sociology are touched upon in part in every sociology course.
• It is not known which elective sociology courses the students taking the major field test took, although it is known that they all took theory, methods, and senior thesis, which are required courses for every major. For example, students may or may not have taken courses in deviance or institutions. Also, the last two years, Professor McEvoy has not been able to teach deviance and criminology as often as in the past because he has been teaching two Wittsems each year.
• In general, in the areas where we have regular faculty teaching--theory, methods, social psychology, deviance, gender, and globalization--the Sociology Department group mean in these particular assessment indicators is impressively high in 2004 and 2008. The scores indicate that the Sociology Department is teaching the principles and concepts of sociology well and also that the Sociology Department has some of the best sociology students in the nation.
• Some assessment indicators where the Sociology Department mean did not score high (demography/urban/rural/community) are understandable. The Sociology Department infrequently offers courses in these areas, although an elective course in population demography is offered in the geography Sociology Department every two years and urban sociology was taught several years ago. It is impossible for a small Sociology Department to cover all areas in the field of sociology.
• The scores show that the current curriculum and course offerings, which could be seen to be eclectic and too international in comparison to a traditional undergraduate sociology program, do not, in fact, detract majors from learning the core principles of the discipline; if anything, the Sociology Department's curriculum (perhaps because of the comparative and creative ways in which the subjects are taught) improves students' ability to master core areas. Further testing of this hypothesis needs to be carried out.
6. Selective List of Graduate Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Burley (2006)</td>
<td>Teach for America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake Troxel (2005)</td>
<td>Peace Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon Stanfill (2004)</td>
<td>Teach for America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barclay, Bri (2004)</td>
<td>Florida International University, Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisk, Gretchen (2004)</td>
<td>Cleveland State University, Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin, Katie (2004)</td>
<td>University of Louisville, Applied Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serratelli, Andrew (2003)</td>
<td>Michigan State University, Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanfill, Brandon (2004)</td>
<td>Teach for America, Masters in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephens, Jessica (2004)</td>
<td>OSU, School of Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagganer, Annie (2002)</td>
<td>University of South Florida in Tampa, Sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resource Needs

- The Sociology Department now has three vacated tenure faculty positions, each in a crucial area. Deviance (Alan McEvoy’s area of speciality) is the backbone of the field; this subject is to sociology what genetics is to biology. It is the field around which the entire discipline evolves. Methodology as well as race and gender (Beckett Broh’s area of speciality) are equally crucial. Given its senior thesis presentations and student research, the Sociology Department needs a strong methods faculty member. Race and gender are today the two most active and critical places to do sociology. Anthropology (Stephen Smith’s position) is crucial not only to the Sociology Department but also Wittenberg University in light of the Strategic Plan to globalize the curriculum and develop global citizens among our students. Anthropology is also crucial to area programs like East Asian studies, Africana studies, and Russian and Eurasian Area Studies. It is hard to imagine how these programs are viable with an anthropological presence on campus. The Sociology Department needs these positions replaced not with adjunct faculty (as it is doing academic year 2008-09) but with regular tenured faculty.

- With respect to human resources, the Sociology Department serves a disproportionate number of students relative to other departments at the university. The faculty feels that it is important for majors to have opportunities to study in seminars and small upper-level classes. As the external reviewer report says, this means hiring more Sociology Department faculty. At a liberal arts university there is no reason why students in some disciplines have notable
advantages over students in other disciplines, especially when both sets plan to
attend graduate school and both represent some of the best students in the nation. Moreover, both sets are paying the same tuition.

• The Sociology Department's students are among the best in the nation and their performance on Sociology Major Field Test could not be better in some core areas of the discipline. In the past, alumni reports indicate that their undergraduate preparation placed them ahead of their peers upon entrance into a graduate program. This is true for programs in sociology, social work, public administration, law, education, and other professional areas. The Senior Thesis, Research Methods, topical courses, and extensive amount of writing they are required to do are among the reasons why their preparation gives them an edge. Clearly, the Sociology Department does an excellent job teaching sociology.

• At the same time, the Sociology Department does an excellent job working compassionately and responsibly with a large number of students who are academically marginal or who are marginalized by academe. The willingness of the Sociology Department to work closely with this “last chance” group of students should set an example for other departments on campus.

• The Sociology Department teaches as well a large number of courses that meet the General Education requirements established by the university. The Sociology Department is a key player in interdepartmental programs such as East Asian Studies, Russian Area Studies, Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, Wittsems, Honors Program, and Global Studies.

• The Sociology Department, however, is not a service Sociology Department; it provides majors an excellent undergraduate education in sociology, an education that inspires several to pursue graduate school and excel in this context. The external reviewer points out, "I wish to note at the outset that Wittenberg University is very fortunate to have found seven [sic] faculty with such strong records as teacher/scholars. The University should avoid taking these high levels of achievement for granted and continue rewarding faculty in this Sociology Department (and other Sociology Departments) whose contributions reach these standards of excellence because they will be hard to replace."

• With respect to physical resources, one focus group report notes, "Some of the harshest criticisms of the major were reserved for the physical facilities in which the various activities of the major take place." The facilities in Carnegie are vastly inferior to the facilities in other educational buildings. When entering either Barbara Deer Kuss Science Center or Hollenbeck Hall, one feels as if one is entering a totally different world. These buildings feel like clubhouses in a country club. When entering Carnegie, one feels the opposite, as if one is entering a decrepit caddy shack. The focus group indicates that the differences in the facilities impact student attitudes and morale. There is no air conditioning in Carnegie, which makes classrooms and offices uncomfortable, if not unbearable, in early fall and late spring. The chairs in the classrooms are extremely dated and most uncomfortable, especially for larger people and people who are left handed. Carnegie is not assessable for people with physical disabilities, and this could raise legal issues. There are no classrooms for seminars with seminar tables and comfortable chairs as there are several in Kuss and Hollenbeck.
Plans for Future Assessment

• The Sociology Department plans to continue to maintain its senior thesis requirement, despite the workload it creates for the Sociology Department and the senior thesis supervisor. Senior thesis is an outstanding capstone experience as well as an excellent assessment tool. Senior thesis presentations, often lasting two days, are tantamount to a Wittenberg sociology conference. It is chance for majors to share their inquiries--conducted over the course of four or five months--in a public forum. The conference results in perhaps one of the best sociology meetings in the region.

• The Sociology Department now has excellent measurements of what it does well and incisive recommendations on how to enhance and revise its curriculum. At this point, the Sociology Department needs to review these results and these recommendations and formally revise its curriculum. Recent resignations delay this task. In view of the Sociology Department's impending tenure-track searches--three to replace the positions vacated with the resignations of Professors McEvoy, Broh, and Smith and another to add a bridge appointment to the anthropology program along with the creation of an anthropology minor--it is crucial for the Sociology Department to discuss these self-assessment findings collectively.

• The Sociology Department plans to continue conducting a focus group for sociology seniors. The practice was initiated this year and will be continued annually. The timing is ideal because seniors have just completed their research work and oral presentations. The significance of the capstone experience is clearest to seniors at this particular moment. Since sociology faculty are in the process of evaluating seniors after their thesis presentations, it is appropriate that seniors are asked to evaluate the Sociology Department and to reflect upon their career as a sociology major. The focus group, conducted by a Wittenberg faculty member outside the Sociology Department, is an ideal tool for continued Sociology Department self-assessment. Each year, the results were quite informative for the Sociology Department.

• As frequently as possible, the Sociology Department hopes to administer the major field test either to honors students, as it did in 2004, to a purposive sample of majors as it did in 2008, or, possibly, to a randomly selected group of majors. At this time, the Sociology Department, unlike departments in the natural sciences, does not have a budget line for self-assessment expenses; this disparity is disheartening but typical. At this time, the Sociology Department cannot afford to administer the major field test every year or even bi-annually given its small budget.
# Appendix

## Wittenberg Sociology Department ETS Scores (2008)

### DEPARTMENTAL DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
<th>MAJOR DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Loss less than 40%</td>
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<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40% to 90%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHNICITY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American or Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3.50 - 4.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.00 - 3.49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.50 - 2.99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American or Other Hispanic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.00 - 2.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1.00 - 1.99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Less than 1.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
<th>MAJOR FIELD GPA</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3.50 - 4.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3.00 - 3.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
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<td>2.50 - 2.99</td>
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<td>Senior</td>
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<td>2.00 - 2.49</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Graduate Level</td>
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<th>Percent of Students</th>
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<td>TOTAL TEST</td>
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<td>60-64</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>55-59</td>
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<td>50-54</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Subscores**

- **Subscore 1:** Core Sociology
- **Subscore 2:** Critical Thinking

Percent below is the percent of scores from your institution falling below each score range.

* Subscores for this test cannot be compared to previous test forms due changes in the data. Consult the MFT Comparative Data Guide at www.ets.org/hea/mft/compare.html for more information.
## DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT INDICATORS

**Institution:** Wittenberg University  
**Test:** SOCIOLOGY  
**Form Code:** 4CMF  
**Cohort:** MFT PPT SOCIOLOGY 76031  
**Processing Date:** May 08, 2008

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Assessment Indicator Title</th>
<th>Mean Percent Correct</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>General Theory</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodology and Statistics</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deviance and Social Problems</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Demography and Urban/Rural community</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Institutions</td>
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<td>Social Psychology</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Globalization</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students responding to less than 50% of the questions: 0  
Students in frequency distribution: 5  
Students tested: 5
## Comparative National Data Scales for the Sociology Major Field Test

### ETS Major Field Tests

**Major Field Test in Sociology (tom: 4CNF)**

**Individual Students Total Score Distribution**

Data includes Seniors from Domestic Institutions — August 2006 to June 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Score Range (123 - 200)</th>
<th>% at or below</th>
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</thead>
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<td>169</td>
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<td>152</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Number of Examinees:** 1377

- **Mean:** 147.9
- **Median:** 140
- **Standard Deviation:** 12.5

*Total Scores are reported as scaled scores. % at or below based on percent below the lower limit of the score interval.*
### Major Field Test in Sociology

Institutional Means: Subscore Distributions
Data includes Seniors from Domestic Institutions – August 2006 to June 2007

<table>
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Number of Institutions: 86
Mean: 49.5
Median: 49
Standard Deviation: 7.7

*Subscores for this test cannot be compared to testing years prior to 2008 due to changes in the Sociology Test that were introduced in 2006.

Subscore 1: Core Sociology
Subscore 2: Critical Thinking

Subscores are reported as scaled scores. % at or below based on percent below the lower limit of the score interval.
### Mean Percent Correct

<table>
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<th>Assessment Indicators</th>
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Number of Institutions: 86, 96, 86, 86, 86, 86, 86, 86, 86

Mean: 48.5, 53.1, 56.2, 56.8, 54.4, 57.1, 42.7, 59.5, 52.4

Median: 48, 53, 57.5, 57, 52, 59, 42.5, 58.5, 52.6

Standard Deviation: 11.8, 13.5, 11.0, 10.4, 8.7, 11.5, 9.2, 10.7, 12.0

Assessment Indicators for this test cannot be compared to testing years prior to 2006 due to changes in the Sociology test that were introduced in 2006.

Assessment Indicator 1: General Theory
Assessment Indicator 2: Methodology and Statistics
Assessment Indicator 3: Deviance and Social Problems
Assessment Indicator 4: Demographics and Urban/Rural/Community
Assessment Indicator 5: Multiculturalism
Assessment Indicator 6: Social Institutions
Assessment Indicator 7: Social Psychology
Assessment Indicator 8: Gender
Assessment Indicator 9: Disenfranchisement

Assessment Indicators are reported as percent correct.

% at or below based on percent below the lower limit of the score interval.
### Major Field Test in Sociology (form: 4CMF)

#### Institutional Means Total Score Distribution

Data includes seniors from Domestic Institutions -- August 2006 to June 2007

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<table>
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<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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</table>

Total Scores are reported as scaled scores.  
% at or below is based on percent below the lower limit of the score interval.
Senior Thesis Presentations 2007

International Challenges
* Melissa Niese – Inside the World Trade Organization: An Examination of the Effectiveness of the Anti-Dumping Agreement
* Beth Houser – Females under China’s One-Child Policy: Personal Perceptions and Changing Roles
* James Leonard – Face Work and Tourism: Dealing with Language Barriers and Social Interactions between American and European Cultures
* Kyle Noble – Crossing the Sector Gap: Assessing the Rhetoric and the Reality of Social Enterprise Organizations
* Jennifer Pfleiderer – Homeless Shelters: A Case Study of “The Other Place”
* Eric Rey – American Collegiate Fraternal Organizations: Perceptions of Influence on Student Behavior in a Small Liberal Arts College

Deviant Behaviors and Labeling Processes
* Derek Fugate – Spectators of Professional Football Games: An Analysis of Normative and Deviant Crowd Behavior
* Jessica Snyder – Student Perceptions of Drug Abuse Resistance Education in Schools: An Analysis of Manifest and Latent Functions
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