

## AY19 Program Learning Outcome (PLO) Assessment: Civic Engagement

### ANTHROPOLOGY/SOCIOLOGY

<b>Assessment Type:</b> Academic Program <b>Year/Term:</b> AY19  <b>Level:</b> SOC 403 ol  <b>Learning Outcome:</b> Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)  <b>Assessment Method/Tool:</b> Program Civic Engagement Rubric  <b>Measurement Scale:</b> 3-1  <b>Sample Size:</b> 4						
	<b>Proficient</b>		<b>Adequate</b>		<b>Developing</b>	
	<b>(# of students)</b>		<b>(# of students)</b>		<b>(# of students)</b>	
<b>Identifies Real World Problems through Research &amp; Civic Engagement</b>	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%
<b>Analyzes Real World Problems</b>	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
<b>Addresses Real World Problems</b>	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
<b>Evaluates critically research &amp; field experience to suggest sound solutions.</b>	1	25%	2	50%	1	25%
<b>Means</b>		56%		38%		6%
<b>% scoring 2 or 3</b>						<b>94%</b>

**Benchmark:** **100%** Institutional benchmark median percentage of students meeting “Proficient” or “Adequate” levels

**Median % Achieving Benchmark:** **94%** Percentage of students meeting “Proficient” or “Adequate” levels

### Overview

SOC403 is Capstone in Applied Sociology. Spring 2019 is the first term SOC403 has been offered online since we took the Sociology/Social Welfare concentration online in Fall 2018. This course only had 4

students enrolled. All of the students were able to identify real world problems and participate in some level of civic engagement. Most students were able to analyze and address real world problems through research. Most of the students were able to evaluate research critically and provide suggestions for solutions. One student struggled to approach their research topic from a sociological perspective. The results our students achieved were enabled through course design and instructor feedback. I designed this course and final assignments with a backwards course design, using several assignments to help students build necessary skills to complete the final project. My goal is for students to design their own research project, analyze data, and relate their findings to the real world. There are several ways these tasks can be completed so I work with students individually to help them identify key issues, find sociological literature, and develop their projects. On a weekly basis, students submit research articles related to their topic with a brief analysis on what they've gained from reading the articles and how it will inform their study. This enables me to provide feedback quickly and ensure that students are prioritizing peer reviewed research articles in their literature reviews. Discussion posts often ask students to share their progress, reflecting on strengths and limitations, and help build a community in the online classroom. At times I have students consider other approaches to their research questions, which sometimes they end up using to expand their focus. I have had students record their presentations to share with the classmates, giving them an opportunity for peer to peer feedback prior to their presentations at spring symposium. Further, I have smaller assignments due that help build towards the final paper, but have students focusing on writing and revising smaller sections of the paper at a time. For example, much of the background work for Soc 403 is developed in Soc 455. Students start in 403 by updating and incorporating feedback from their final paper in 455. First they submit a revised introduction and complete outline, then I have students focus on their literature review and proposed research methodology. They also submit two complete paper drafts prior to turning in their final paper. At each stage, I offer feedback and use rubrics to help students identify areas for improvement. A few students experienced challenges reflecting on feedback from their assignments. Initially I thought this was tied to an unwillingness to accept divergent ideologies; however, upon further investigation I discovered that students were not reading feedback on previous drafts. I was able to resolve the issue at different points in the term for all of the students by demonstrating how to view feedback and providing directions/links. In the future, I will provide links and discussions of how to view feedback at several points in the modules, such as with course pages and direct links in the weekly module. While most students were able critically evaluate sources and develop suggestions for solutions, one expressed difficulty. I believe this difficulty was primarily tied to the reality that she was not reading my comments on previous paper drafts and on assignments submitted on Canvas. I will take steps to make viewing feedback more transparent in the next term. Additionally, I may add a component to the course where students are required to respond directly to the feedback I've provided. I can do this by incorporating responses as an expectation of the evidence of research progress I already assign or by asking for a short conversation or email addressing some of the main issues as a way to confirm they have received my feedback.

Action Plan: I use a great deal of scaffolding and have several low-point assignments to help students achieve the skills they need to complete the assignments. While I assumed the low-point structure would benefit students by creating smaller assignments where I can quickly offer feedback, some students did not complete lower-point assignments. The intent was to not penalize students if their first attempts were lacking while creating an environment where students submitted drafts regularly for feedback. However, as some students failed to complete these assignments or failed to do so in a

timely manner, I may need to rethink this strategy. Assigning higher points to certain milestones and higher stakes for missed deadlines may ensure that students prioritize those tasks. Typically, as in SOC 403 I understand that the projects are individualized and often in conjunction with community partners, I am a bit more flexible on deadlines. Timing of access can depend on community partner needs and in some cases can be out of an individual student's control. Keeping students to a more set deadline schedule and significantly reducing points when they miss deadlines, may help me keep students on track for a timely course completion. Currently, I think the civic engagement rubric is effective. In our program, we assess civic engagement at both upper and lower division courses.

At our next ANTH/SOC program meeting, I plan to share the results from this assessment. Informally, I have talked with my colleagues about my concerns of students not reviewing feedback that we've provided. After our initial conversations, I started adding description links for how to view feedback in Microsoft word and on Canvas in emails and assignment comments for students to see. Initially, I provided this information on the rubrics I uploaded, but I discovered that some students were not downloading the documents.

## Closing the Loop Statement

### 1) Summary

For Academic Program assessments (upper division level) the Target is 100% scoring a 2 or 3. SOC403 is Capstone in Applied Sociology. Spring 2019 is the first term SOC403 has been offered online since we took the Sociology/Social Welfare concentration online in Fall 2018. This course only had 4 students enrolled. All of the students were able to identify real world problems and participate in some level of civic engagement. Most students were able to analyze and address real world problems through research. Most of the students were able to evaluate research critically and provide suggestions for solutions. One student struggled to approach their research topic from a sociological perspective.

### 2) Analysis of Results

I designed this course and final assignments with a backwards course design, using several assignments to help students build necessary skills to complete the final project. My goal is for students to design their own research project, analyze data, and relate their findings to the real world. There are several ways these tasks can be completed so I work with students individually to help them identify key issues, find sociological literature, and develop their projects. On a weekly basis, students submit research articles related to their topic with a brief analysis on what they've gained from reading the articles and how it will inform their study. This enables me to provide feedback quickly and ensure that students are prioritizing peer reviewed research articles in their literature reviews. Discussion posts often ask students to share their progress, reflecting on strengths and limitations, and help build a community in the online classroom. At times I have students consider other approaches to their research questions, which sometimes they end up using to expand their focus. I have had students record their presentations to share with the classmates, giving them an opportunity for peer to peer feedback prior to their presentations at

spring symposium. Further, I have smaller assignments due that help build towards the final paper, but have students focusing on writing and revising smaller sections of the paper at a time. For example, much of the background work for Soc 403 is developed in Soc 455. Students start in 403 by updating and incorporating feedback from their final paper in 455. First they submit a revised introduction and complete outline, then I have students focus on their literature review and proposed research methodology. They also submit two complete paper drafts prior to turning in their final paper. At each stage, I offer feedback and use rubrics to help students identify areas for improvement.

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### Academic Program Action Plan

While I assumed the low point structure would benefit students by creating smaller assignments where I can quickly offer feedback, some students did not complete lower point assignments. The intent was to not penalize students if their first attempts were lacking while creating an environment where students submitted drafts regularly for feedback. However, as some students failed to complete these assignments or failed to do so in a timely manner, I may need to rethink this strategy. Assigning higher points to certain milestones and higher stakes for missed deadlines may ensure that students prioritize those tasks. Typically, as in SOC 403 I understand that the projects are individualized and often in conjunction with community partners, I am a bit more flexible on deadlines. Timing of access can depend on community partner needs and in some cases can be out of an individual student's control. Keeping students to a more a set deadline schedule and significantly reducing points when they miss deadlines, may help me keep students on track for a timely course completion. Currently, I think the civic engagement rubric is effective. In our program, we assess civic engagement at both upper and lower division courses.

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### **AY20 Civic Engagement Improvement Plan Recommendation (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Quality)**

ANTH/SOC's programmatic approach to Civic Engagement should be used as a model for all programs in terms of effective assignment design and sequencing of steps, with a clear, exceptionally thorough, insightful, reflective analysis of results. It appears the program looks forward to refining efforts at community engagement so that all students and projects are fully served and improving student mastery of the program's civic engagement outcomes criteria. The assessment demonstrated Sociology's commitment to Civic Engagement, as it should since that commitment is central to its mission.

The AY20 ANTH/SOC's Civic Engagement Improvement Plan should focus on the suggestions offered in the analysis above. Reflecting on the students' civic engagement experiences could be a valuable addition to the program's outcome criteria, providing important data on how students view the meaningfulness of the outreach efforts—can they approach the faculty's level of reflection? It appears that key adjustments—such as making feedback more transparent, introducing higher grade percentages for formative work, requiring students to respond in writing to the instructors evaluative comments, etc.—have been shared programmatically already, which constitutes an improvement plan insofar as it is operationalized. The AY20 CE Improvement Plan should report on the results of these efforts and provide data on a course where the improvements have been operationalized.