

**ASSESSMENT REPORT
2018-2019**

Public Affairs: Applied Sociology
(Instructional Degree Program)

M.A.
(Degree Level)

Program Mission:

The Master of Arts in Public Affairs is an interdisciplinary program in the Social Sciences that provides academic training for careers in public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. The multidisciplinary core curriculum includes courses in political theory, social theory and historical thought, human culture and government policy and practice. These courses foster a comprehensive understanding of the social and cultural environment or public and private organizational policy design and implementation. The program prepares students for professional positions in managerial and leadership roles in government agencies, consulting firms, human services, public-interest organizations, non-governmental justice organizations, and businesses significantly affected by public policies, as well as trains for entry level doctoral studies.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

That students exhibit an understanding and appreciation of a multidisciplinary approach in relation to the work they eventually do and the social environments in which they live.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Assessed through the successful completion of the Interdisciplinary Core requirements earning a B or above:

- Anthropology 651—Seminar: Concepts of Human Culture (3)
- Political Science 563—Political Economy (3)

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion Anth 651	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	1
POLI 563 N/A			
Total Number of Students Assessed:	2	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion (minus N/A category):	Numbers are so small that % do not make sense to report

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

Regarding Outcome 1, Means 1, we did not meet our goal as one student out of two had extenuating family circumstances and has since left the program. The political science course was not taught because of a political science faculty's health issues. We did however offer substitutions and students were advised to fulfill their electives during this semester. Although the situation in political science posed problems for students in need of the core classes we recognize that this was a short-term issue and that a new search to fill the position in the political science department is underway and will result in an improvement regarding course completion.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

That students exhibit reading and writing skills that will benefit them as participants/authors working in public and private organizations, teachers in secondary schools and community colleges and also benefit them in Ph. D. programs.

MHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective communication skills
- Effective use of technology

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Assessment through the successful presentation of the thesis or professional papers. The data is qualitative and is provided by the members of the student's thesis/professional papers committee. Successful performance is based on presentation at a local or national conference where students demonstrate an understanding of sociological theoretical principles and concepts in her/his thesis/papers.

- SOCI 6990—Thesis (6 credits).

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion for Presentation:	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for presentation:	3
Number of Students Meeting Criterion for Thesis hours:	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for Thesis:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed for Presentations:	4	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	
Total Number of Students Assessed for			

Thesis:	2		
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Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Regarding Outcome 2, Means 1 The sociology program has been motivating students to present their research at various conferences. This is not a requirement but one that is highly valued and supported. A club formed out of a graduate course to foster presentation opportunities, The Association for Sociology. Although there was a short suspension of the club it is currently active and all graduate students are highly encouraged to join and present.

Regarding Outcome 2, Means 2, we did meet our goal with 100% of our students completing thesis hours for those on track to designing and completing a thesis. We have been providing assistance with designing and writing consistently and will continue to do so. We are also evaluating the possibility of formalizing a graduate writing course which had been offered previously as a special topics course. The course proved immensely beneficial. We anticipate that in the following year this course could be taught given our current search for a tenure track position in sociology.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

That students exhibit critical thinking and research skills and demonstrate an understanding of and ability to use qualitative and quantitative sociological research methods of data collection and analysis (learning the statistical package for social sciences program: SPSS). They should demonstrate the ability to interpret social scientific research as well as the ability to conduct sociological research through the appropriate application of data collection methods and data analysis techniques.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective use of technology

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Assessment based on the successful completion of course earning a B or above in the on midterm and final exams.

- SOCI 6300- Research Methods in Sociology
- SOCI 5300 or Psych 601 - Statistical Analysis

Number of Students Meeting Criterion for (formerly SOCI 6300): *course not taught this semester	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for presentation:	0
Number of Students Meeting Criterion for SOCI 530 or Psych 601	1	Number of Students Meeting Criterion for SOCI 530 or Psych 601	1
Total Number of Students Assessed for SOCI 6300:	0	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	
Total Number of Students Assessed for SOCI 5300 or Psych 601:	2		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

Regarding Outcome 3, Means 1, we did not meet our goal again as one student out of two had extenuating family circumstances and has since left the program. The sociology advanced research design course was not taught because we did not have students who were at a stage in the program to begin a thesis or publishable paper. We did however offer substitutions and students were advised to fulfill their electives during this semester. The methods course is scheduled to resume in the spring 2020 semester.

Student Learning Outcome 4:

That students demonstrate an understanding of sociology and its contribution to understanding society and human behavior through their familiarity with the theoretical and substantive literature. The students should demonstrate:

- the ability to compare and contrast theoretical perspectives within sociology and understand their application to society
- a theoretical understanding of the impact of race/ethnicity, social class, and gender on the life experiences, changes, and opportunities of people in society.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 4

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective communication skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Assessment based on the successful completion of course earning a B or above on midterm and final exams.

- SOCI 6380—Classical Sociological Theories (3)
- SOCI 5120—Social Stratification—Assessment based on midterm and final exams.
- SOCI 5930—Race and Ethnic Relations—Assessment based on midterm and final exams.

Number of Students Meeting Criterion for SOCI6380 *one student substituted Psy 621 due to schedule conflicts	2	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for SOCI 6380:	1
Number of Students Meeting Criterion for SOCI 5120	0	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for SOCI 5120:	0
Number of Students Meeting Criterion for SOCI 5930 *substituted with SOCI 5560	1	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion for SOCI 5930	0
Total Number of Students Assessed for SOCI 6380:	3	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion: not useful given small cohort	
Total Number of Students Assessed for SOCI 5120	0		
Total Number of Students Assessed for SOCI 5930	1		

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 4:

Regarding Outcome 4, we did meet our goal, 2 out of the three students assessed received a B or better in their courses. The discipline will continue to develop more courses for the Public Affairs Program designed to enhance overall comprehension and research skills.

Utilization of Results & Changes to Program Based on Results:

Outcomes Assessment has been recognized as a vital piece in the process to assess and improve the Public Affairs Program constituted by three distinct disciplines. The goal is to enhance our program by revamping courses to make them more current and relevant for students seeking careers in the government and non-governmental arena and those seeking post graduate degrees. The three programs will meet more regularly and continue to develop rigorous innovative classes. Sociology and Political Science are currently seeking to fill tenure track positions in our respective programs which will expand class offerings and increase mentoring for our graduate students.

Retention Strategies:

We plan to have a more collaborative design discussions including the 3 disciplines that constitute the Public Affairs program. Planned meetings include consideration of developing new courses across the three disciplines which will revitalize the program and engage students using more contemporary approaches and courses.

The faculty regularly invite nationally recognized scholars to present in their class to enhance engagement and opportunities to meet authors of books required for class. Faculty also take students to cultural lecture series featuring international scholars, journalists and activists. For example, Dr. Derkas (sociology), Dr. Ross (history), and Dr. Álvarez (criminal justice) have taken students to talks sponsored by the Lannan Foundation featuring well known Marxist theorist David Harvey, sociologist Michelle Alexander, and cultural critic Roxanne Gay, to name a few. Faculty in the department also host visiting scholars in their classes such as Dr. Hondagneu-Sotelo who presented in Race and Ethnic Relations course (SOC 593). Moreover, the Gender and Women's Studies program organizes a bi-monthly brown bag lecture series featuring our own faculty and alum and for which students are encouraged to attend for extra credit.

The department has successfully kept graduate level courses relatively small to ensure that students receive specialized attention from faculty members. We are currently exploring the creation of more 600 level courses geared specifically for our graduate students.