



Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice

ASSESSMENT REPORT AY 2020-2021

Contact Person: Dr. Gloria Gadsden, Department Chair

Criminal Justice Studies
(Instructional Degree Program)

B.A.
(Degree Level)

Program Mission:

The mission of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice is to: a) contribute to meeting the educational and research needs in criminal justice, sociology, anthropology, and related fields; b) contribute to meeting the career needs in social services and social sciences, as well as contribute to training for careers in criminal justice, social services, and other related fields; and c) provide socio-cultural service and expertise for the region, as well as the greater global community.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of criminal justice as applied to everyday life.

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:

Grades from

- final exams (with essay) assigned in SOCI 2120 Introduction to Criminal Justice,
- papers/chapter analyses in Sociology 3000-Sociocultural Theory,
- research papers assigned in Sociology 4270 – Criminology,
- final exams (with essay) assigned in Sociology 3290 – Institutional Corrections and
- research papers assigned in Sociology 4930 – Race and Ethnic Relations.

Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 70% of students in those classes receiving a grade of C or better on these papers.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	77	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	28
Total Number of Students Assessed:	105	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	73%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

Regarding Outcome 1, Means 1, we did meet our goal with 73% of our students receiving a C or better on the relevant assignments in the assessed criminal justice required courses. However, this is a decrease from AY 2018-2019. We believe our efforts to restructure and redesign core CJ courses, which started 4 years ago, have been successful. However, clearly the success of our students has been impacted by both the cyber-attack and COVID.

We have been evaluating the sequencing of courses. We have added a research-based writing requirement to a sophomore/junior level course (i.e., SOCI 3290). This change, which increases the difficulty level of the course, could also account for the slight decrease in the percentage of students meeting this outcome.

On Outcome 1, Means 2, we opted not to do exit surveys due to the cyber-attack and COVID. We will start the exit survey again in Spring 2022.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

Be able to read, understand and critique sociological and criminal justice literature.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Grades from papers in

- Sociology 3300 – Research Methods,
- Sociology 3000 – Sociocultural Theory, and
- Sociology 4270 – Criminology will be used for this assessment.

Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 70% of students in the class receiving a grade of C or better on their papers.

Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	32	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	13
Total Number of Students Assessed:	45	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	71%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Successful completion of Criminal Justice core classes (SOCJ 2120, SOCJ 3290, SOCJ 4270 and SOCJ 4930). Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 70% of students receiving 70% or better in the Criminal Justice core classes.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	65	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	21
Total Number of Students Assessed:	86	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	76%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Regarding Outcome 2, Means 1, we did meet our goal, with 71% of our students receiving a C or better on the papers in SOCJ 3300, SOCJ 3000 and SOCJ 4270. This consistent result, compared to 2 years ago, most likely reflects efforts on our part to better prepare students during the sophomore year. The discipline will continue to explore adding additional required research-based writing assignments in the courses designed for sophomores and juniors.

On Outcome 2, Means 2, 76% of the students earned a C or better in these courses. This is a decrease from two years ago. While we continue working closely with students on all assignments (e.g., quizzes, exams, class participation, writing assignments), and feel we are doing well in our upper-level courses, the cyber-attack and COVID clearly had an impact on student success rates.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

Ability to design, analyze and interpret the results of research and to report the results in written form using APA.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Grades from the final paper assigned in

- Sociology 3300 – Research Methods and
- Sociology 4270 – Criminology will be used.

Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 70% of students in the class receiving a grade of C or better on these assignments.

Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	20	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	6
Total Number of Students Assessed:	26	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	77%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

Regarding Outcome 3, Means 1, we did meet our goal with 77% of our students receiving a C or better on the final papers in SOCI 3300 and SOCI 4270. This is an increase from two years ago. This increase, we believe, reflects the recognition that our students needed more assistance writing papers and interpreting data. We have been providing this assistance consistently and will continue to do so. We have also required students to work with tutors in the Writing Center or use NetTutor. These requirements appear to be effective. We continue to evaluate the merits of instituting required, research-based papers in classes targeting second- and third-year students. Our expectation is that, as we continue to work with our students, we will further improve this percentage.

Utilization of Results & Changes to Program Based on Results:

The Outcomes Assessment process has encouraged us to look more closely at our overall program. We want to offer a program that prepares students to succeed at the later stages and is carefully aligned with our students' academic and post-graduation needs. We are discussing improved course sequencing and preparation for SOCI 4270, SOCI 4930 and SOCI 4300, courses where we expect a mastery of the content, advanced critical thinking and an ability to write advanced research papers. The department will continue to explore building these skills in lower-level courses (e.g., SOC 2120, SOCI 3270, SOCI 3290).

Retention Strategies:

We plan to continue working with the Writing Center and utilizing NetTutor to help improve students' writing skills. Each faculty member will continue to evaluate their individual course assessments and make relevant changes to assist students (e.g., some faculty members *require*

paper drafts and provide extensive feedback on said drafts, other faculty members divide the writing requirement into shorter papers for a cumulative, overall writing requirement).

The faculty has also been working with experts in the field and relevant community members to increase the number of guest speakers in classes. For example, Dr. Gadsden has invited police officers, probation officers, court officers (etc.), all former Highlands students, to speak in her criminal justice courses and will continue to do so. Dr. Alvarez has invited several experts from criminal justice fields, as well as prestigious community members, to visit her classes.

The department has successfully kept upper-level courses relatively small to ensure that students receive enough attention from faculty members.

Finally, the department continues to discuss mandating at least one advising session every semester before students can enroll in future courses.