

ASSESSMENT REPORT 2022-2023

Sociology/Anthropology: Sociology & Criminology Concentration **B.A.**
(Instructional Degree Program) (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 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 education, engineering, physical and biological sciences, medicine, and other science fields; c) contribute to meeting the need for secondary school teacher certification in sociology and/or anthropology; and d) provide socio-cultural service and expertise for the region, as well as the greater global community.

*Note changes made to the program for assessment period:

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice up until Fall 2022 offered two sociology concentrations for their Sociology/Anthropology Bachelor's degree: a concentration in sociology and a concentration in criminology. However, the concentration in criminology had been suffering from declining enrollments for a number of years, mostly due to the existence and popularity of the separate discipline criminal justice which is housed in the department. Students were unclear of the distinction between criminology and criminal justice and if they seek to pursue a career with the criminal justice system a degree with the sole title of *Criminal Justice* rather than *Sociology/Anthropology with a concentration in Criminology* is clearly more attractive. This resulted in difficulty with marketing criminology as a separate concentration. Students have also expressed an enthusiastic interest in Social Justice over the past few years. Additionally, the current socio-political landscape with prominent critiques, powerful social movements, and intense backlash to such offers a unique opportunity to create a program for the times. With that said, powerful resistance has and continues to be a solid part of our socio-political landscape, so although the concentration is ripe for inception it remains timeless as well. A concentration in social justice in place of the criminology concentration was approved and began in the fall 2022 semester. The concentration paves the road in the resolve to ensure that students are given a foundation from which to enhance their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families and communities. Thus, our faculty will reassess the outcomes assessment regarding the social justice concentration. However, until that occurs we assessed this period using previously established criteria.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of sociology and anthropology 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 the papers assigned in Sociology 3300-Research Methods, papers/chapter analyses in Sociology 3000-Sociocultural Theory, and papers in Sociology 4270 Criminology will be used for this assessment. 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:	26	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	15
Total Number of Students Assessed:	41	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	68%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research historically conducts an annual survey of alumni who received their degrees three years prior to the year the survey is administered. The survey includes a question regarding employment status. Successful completion of this outcome will be indicated by at least 70% of our alumni indicating employment in an area related to sociology or social justice.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	N/A	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	N/A
Total Number of Students Assessed:	N/A	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	N/A

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1: Regarding Outcome 1, Means 1, we did not exceed our target of 70%. On this measure, 68% of our students received a C or better on paper assignments in the assessed sociology core courses, slightly below our target. This has varied from 2018-2019 from 69% to 74% in 2020-2021. Given that our last outcome assessment cycle goals were exceeded, we wish to see more of our students with B's and A's on their papers and thus we will continue to develop our writing assignments while also providing more supervision for our students as they develop their critical thinking and writing skills. This was not yet achieved although

sociology faculty increased writing center utilization as either mandatory part of their coursework or by offering incentives like extra credit. As it stands the majority of our faculty have included some incentive to utilize the writing center in course work since 2023 and will continue to do so.

On Outcome 1 Means 2, data collected in 2021-22 included only one respondent from the sociology program rendering the information ineffectual. We are unable to compare results from prior years due to the exceptional events of the COVID-19 pandemic when no results were available. Therefore, we as a department plan to send out the survey through our department to our graduating cohorts to increase the response rate.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

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

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

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

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Grades from papers in Sociology 3300-Research Methods, Sociology 3000-Sociocultural Theory, 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:	26	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	15
Total Number of Students Assessed:	41	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	68%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Successful completion of Sociology/Criminology core classes (SOC 3000, SOC 3300 and SOC 4270). Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 70% of students receiving 75% or better in the Sociology/Criminology core classes.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	32	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	9
Total Number of Students	41	Percent of Students Meeting	78%

Assessed:		Criterion:	
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Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Regarding Outcome 2, Means 1, we did not meet our target of 70%. On this measure, 68% of our students received a C or better in papers assigned in selected sociology/criminology core classes, thus less than the target number demonstrated an adequate ability to read, understand and critique the sociological and criminology literature. This is an area that has decreased significantly since the outcomes assessment results of AY2018/2019 for this outcome (80%) and AY2020/2021 (79.9%). We are unsettled with this outcome that less of our students demonstrate a more than adequate understanding of the literature in our field. We are discussing ways to improve the outcomes for this area.

Regarding Outcome 2, Means 2, we did meet our target of 70%. On this measure, 78% of our students received a C or better in the selected sociology/criminology core classes, thus demonstrating an adequate ability to read, understand and critique the sociological and criminology literature. This is an area that has slightly decreased since the outcomes assessment results of AY2018/2019 for this outcome (80%) and AY2020/2021 (79.9%). We would like to improve results on this outcome. We are now petitioning for students to submit research projects to the NMHU Research Day and fostering a supportive environment for students to submit and present at local and national conferences as one way to increase their performance in this area.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

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

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective Communication Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Use of Technology

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Grades from the final research paper assigned in Sociology 3300-Research Methods 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 this assignment.

Summary of Data

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	11	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	2
Total Number of Students Assessed:	13	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	91%

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3: On Outcome 3, 91% of our students demonstrated an ability to design, analyze and interpret the results of sociological research in the proper format, and therefore we exceeded our goal in this outcome. The percentage has increased drastically from the outcomes assessment results of AY2018/2019 for this outcome (from 80.8%) to 56% in AY2020-2021. We noted that the decline in 20-21 was likely affected by the events of the COVID-19 pandemic; Sociology 3300 is one of the more difficult courses that our students take in terms of thinking rigorously about methodology, and it may be that the transition to online courses during this time period was just too onerous for students to manage. Several faculty adopted a check in survey conducted at the beginning of class during the continued disruption of COVID-19 to assess where students were and what needs they required to continue successfully with their studies. Adjustments were made and more sensitivity was extended to students regarding due dates and assistance to fulfill their course obligations. We feel that this approach helped students adjust to the extending demands placed upon them as the pandemic continued. Although we are pleased that the numbers have increased regarding completion, we wish to see those numbers improve. We have begun to incorporate more faculty visits to the research class to help better connect students to faculty and help them relate to their research agendas. On-campus visitations from outside academics discussing their research projects and findings have also been integrated into the research methods curriculum.

Utilization of Results & Changes to Program Based on Results:

The Outcomes Assessment process has encouraged us to look more closely at our overall program. The results continue to be discussed among faculty in discipline and department meetings to assess our curriculum and assignments in order to enhance student success. We have added sections of core courses to ensure that students receive more supervision on coursework, changed paper assignments to include multiple drafts, and are currently considering revising our curriculum based on these discussions.

Changes to Program Based on Results:

We now offer a concentration in social justice that provides both a theoretical and applied understanding of social justice theory and an exploration of the historical developments in the fields of justice, social movements, and human rights. Thus, faculty will begin to discuss a change in outcomes assessment criteria to focus on sociology and social justice. The concentration in social justice prepares students to critically address a variety of issues that stem from systemic, intersectional inequalities and to improve the conditions of life that are its outcomes. The focus of the concentration is to equip students in understanding and transforming forms of oppression, discrimination,

and environmental abuse during and after graduating and assists in preparation for advance graduate programs, and careers in leadership, community improvement/organizing, international non-governmental work to name a few. The concentration is unique in that no other program currently exists in the state of New Mexico. Students complete their general education courses and then focus on 42 units related specifically to (in)equity and social justice. Students are expected to complete a research project and related coursework offered in the department chosen with the assistance of an advisor.

With the creation of this very timely program, we included two newly created courses as core: Social and Transformative Justice and Visual Sociology. Moreover, new courses central to the principles of this concentration were created including Indigenous People's Law and Housing Security and Homelessness.

Two faculty central to the creation of this new major were featured in multiple news stories highlighting the new program. This included the front page of the Santa Fe New Mexican, the Santa Rosa Republic, The Las Vegas Optic and two radio spots.

Additionally, two sections of SOC 3000-Sociocultural Theory and SOC 3300-Research Methods (both on zoom and face to face) were included in our schedule to provide students with more individualized instruction and supervision on course assignments and papers. Previously there was one section of each course.

Recruitment Strategies:

Sociology faculty have begun meeting with Luna Community College faculty and directors in an effort to enhance the transition of LCC students to Highlands. Faculty are in process of arranging visits with students to enhance our recruitment and visibility. Faculty attended the Luna Transition Fair (Fall 2023) which targeted regional high school students potentially seeking college degrees. Pamphlets were handed out during the fair and students met faculty and discussed career and educational opportunities. This also provided faculty an opportunity to meet new NMHU recruiters, as we shared a booth, and thus will work towards enhancing the visibility of the program. One suggestion made by the recruiter was to create a brochure rather than the current information sheet, for the program that they could hand out during their visits to local schools.

Sociology faculty also plan to teach dual enrollment courses with the local high schools (Robertson has approved the inclusion of intro to sociology courses) and currently we are working with Mora and West Las Vegas to offer introductory courses as well.

Furthermore, the sociology program offers a Contemporary Social Problems course which is listed as a state general education course. However, currently NMHU has not obtained approval to have this course count at the state level. Thus, we are currently in the process of submitting this course for state approval. This will broaden the reach and visibility of the sociology and social justice degree as one more option in the official

state general education list thus another opportunity for students to become aware of the program and connect with our faculty.

Retention Strategies:

Our faculty have resurrected the Sociology Club which now includes graduate and undergraduate students. The main goal is to attend and present student research at academic conferences. The club also focusses on attending socially relevant regional talks as well as bringing speakers to the area. The consideration to combine this club with Luna Community College students is also underway and faculty are setting a date and time to meet with Luna students to introduce themselves and the club (recruitment strategy).

Faculty have made more accommodations for distance learning and now include many courses via zoom and face to face.

Faculty have also been more active in visiting one another's' classroom to introduce themselves and discuss their current research agendas. This helps our current students better connect with all faculty who are within the department.

Faculty have been actively involved in creating opportunities for students to learn about cutting edge sociological research of nationally and locally renowned scholars both as part of the DEI lecture series and the GWS Brownbag talks.

Ongoing activities include:

Our faculty regularly participate in Attendance Alert and Early Alert to identify students having difficulties early in the term in order to assist them. We also refer students with writing difficulties to the University's Writing Center for assistance. Our faculty strive to be personable and accessible to the students in our programs to enhance their chances of success. We announce advising opportunities in class and we are working to make advising mandatory for all students in our major (the University has no current mandatory advising policy). Additionally, we developed two-year and four-year "Degree Roadmaps" for our students to assist with advising and to help students stay on track toward degree completion. We have added a number of new courses, including Visual Sociology, Housing Security and Homelessness, Indigenous People's Law and several other courses such as Cybercrime that are cross listed with Sociology, criminal justice and some with Gender and Women's studies. These courses are central to understanding the shifting nature of socio-political landscape and help to retain existing majors and minors. Moreover, in order to attract more students, we have offered six sections of Intro to Sociology, two of which were offered during the winter intercession thus accommodating students in need of courses to maintain scholarships and athletic status.

We plan to continue working with the Writing Center and utilizing NetTutor to help

improve students' writing skills. Each faculty member has evaluated their individual course assessments and has made relevant changes to assist students (e.g., require paper drafts and provide extensive feedback on said drafts, offering extra credit for students who submit paper drafts in her courses and divides the writing requirement in several courses into shorter papers for an overall longer writing requirement, and providing students with ample guidance on improving their prose by hosting didactic writing workshops in all his classes).

Department faculty also regularly refer students to the library's one-credit library research courses, which enable students to prepare effectively for the research writing required in our program's courses. Our faculty also work closely with the librarians, inviting them to visit courses and work with our students individually.

The department plans to keep upper-level courses relatively small to ensure that students receive sufficient attention from faculty members. Some faculty are reverting back to face to face only classes which have been very successful. Housing Security and Homelessness was offered as a face-to-face course and 11 students enrolled.

Finally, the department will continue to discuss a way of mandating at least one advising session every semester before students can enroll in future courses. One possible suggestion is to make all required courses "instructor permission" courses in order to ensure that students visit with a faculty member before they can enroll in these courses.