EMORY UNIVERSITY
Assessment Report for Educational Programs
Assessment Period Covered: Fall Semester 2020 – Spring Semester 2022

Program: Sociology	**Date Submitted: October 24, 2022**
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I.   STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Goal 1: Written Communication
Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.

Goal 2: Social Research Methods
Students should be able to formulate empirical research questions, identify the major methods for collecting data to answer questions, recognize the major advantages and disadvantages of each method, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles to employ in analyzing data.

Goal 3: Sociological Theory
Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions.

II.   ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Three methods of assessment are used: A **course inventory** in which we examine the syllabi for our foundation courses; an **assessment of student papers** in our writing-intensive methods and theory courses; and our **exit survey** for graduating majors. Each method of assessment addresses all three learning goals in different ways. The course inventory focuses on the process through which the learning goals are achieved. The student papers provide a direct assessment, via actual student performance, of how extensively the learning goals are met. And finally, the exit survey gives us an opportunity to hear from the students themselves regarding their personal experiences with these learning outcomes.

FIRST METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING GOALS 1 -3:

Method of Assessment: Annual Course Inventory
In our annual course inventory, we review course syllabi to determine the degree to which our courses use pedagogical techniques related to each of the three learning outcomes. This year we focus on what we call our "foundation courses." We have seven such courses. Each one addresses a core area of the discipline:

SOC 201 Organizations and Society
SOC 214 Class/Status/Power
SOC 221 Culture and Society
SOC 225 Sociology of Sex and Gender
SOC 230 Sociological Aspects of Health and Illness
SOC 245 Individual and Society
SOC 247 Race and Ethnic Relations

Depending on staffing, we try to offer at least one section of each course every year. When the new general education requirements go into effect next year, these foundation courses will all be tagged as exploratory Social Science courses (a GER category indicating that the course is designed mainly for freshmen and sophomore students). Sociology majors are required to take at least two of these courses.

Achievement Target
One-hundred percent of our foundation courses should address Learning Goals 1 and 3 (Writing and Theory), and at least 85 percent should address Learning Goal 2 (Methods).

Summary of Assessment Results
During the two-year assessment period (2020-21 and 2021-22), we taught 25 foundation courses, 12 in the first year and 13 in the second. As in previous assessment reports, we utilize a three-category scale to classify the degree to which a given course incorporates pedagogical techniques related to our learning goals. The scale ranges from "minimal focus" on the goal, to "moderate focus," to "substantial focus" on the goal. Factors we considered when classifying courses into these three categories include the topics covered, the number and nature of assignments and readings, and the relative weight given to different types of graded assignments in the calculation of course grades. We consider our achievement target to be met if a course shows either a moderate or substantial focus on the learning goal.

Graphs summarizing the main course inventory findings are included as a supplement to this report (see Appendix A). These graphs show all three categories (minimal, moderate, and substantial) but we combine the moderate and substantial categories in the presentation of results below because these two categories define our achievement target.

Looking first at **Goal 1: Written Communication**, the following data show the percentage of foundation courses having a moderate to substantial focus on writing. Current assessment years are bolded, and previous years (based on analysis of all course syllabi) are shown for comparison.

2018-2019:   91 percent (all courses)
2019-2020:   91 percent (all courses)
2020-2021: 100 percent (foundation courses only)
2021-2022:   77 percent (foundation courses only)

Across all four academic years, a clear majority of courses emphasize writing. Our achievement target of 100 percent was met by foundation courses in 2020-21. Only 77 percent of foundation courses have a moderate to substantial focus on writing in 2021-22. This is the lowest percent in recent years but still a clear majority.

Turning now to **Goal 2: Social Research Methods**, the percentage of courses having a moderate to substantial focus on research methods is shown below:

2018-2019:   67 percent (all courses)
2019-2020:   79 percent (all courses)
2020-2021:   42 percent (foundation courses only)
2021-2022:   23 percent (foundation courses only)

Recall our goal is to have at least 85 percent of courses addressing methodological issues to a moderate or substantial degree. We did not reach that high percentage in any of the years shown above. Moreover, foundation courses are much less likely than courses in general to emphasize research methods, with 42 percent doing so in 2020-21 and only 23 percent in 2021-22.

Finally, regarding **Goal 3: Sociological Theory**, the percentage of courses having a moderate to substantial focus on theory is shown below:

2018-2019:   89 percent (all courses)
2019-2020:   98 percent (all courses)
2020-2021: 100 percent (foundation courses only)
2021-2022:   85 percent (foundation courses only)

Across all four years, we see a very high percent of courses focusing on theory to a moderate or substantial degree. The foundation courses do not deviate from this pattern and indeed the goal of 100 percent is met by foundation courses in 2020-21.

Honors and RISE

Beyond our regular courses, students have the opportunity to gain additional research experience through our **Honors Program** and the **Sociology Research Apprenticeship (SRA) Program** (formerly called RISE). By their very nature these two programs address all three learning goals to varying degrees. Because they lack a conventional course syllabus, we excluded the courses associated with these programs from the course inventory above. In the case of Honors, each student conducts an empirical research project under the supervision of a faculty adviser. Each student is evaluated by the Honors Committee's assessment of the student thesis. The Honors Committee assessment is objective and rigorous, with three faculty agreeing on the level of honors to be awarded. For the SRA Program, the student works as a research assistant helping faculty and graduate students in exchange for course credit. SRA students are evaluated by the supervising faculty member, who assigns the grade earned by the student. In short, both programs rely on faculty judgment of student performance – the same procedure used in regular courses.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program

We will continue to monitor our course offerings to check whether our learning goals are reflected in graded assignments. For the current assessment period, we find that foundation courses emphasize writing and theory to a similar extent as courses in general. However, foundation courses are much less likely than courses in general to cover research methods. These conclusions are based on course syllabi and may not reflect the content of classroom discussion.

Each year we remind our teachers (including graduate student instructors) to concentrate on the department's learning goals and to clearly indicate on their syllabi exactly how their courses relate to those goals. Each course we teach will also have its own unique set of learning goals. To encourage our faculty and graduate student instructors to think about their own learning goals and to clearly state them on their syllabi, the department's undergraduate committee created a document for our instructors that shows a variety of learning-goal examples. **We have attached this document as Appendix B to the current report.**

SECOND METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING GOALS 1-3

Method of Assessment: Review of Student Papers
Here we review student papers in our writing-intensive methods course (SOC 355W) and writing-intensive theory course (SOC 457W). Both courses are required for majors.

Achievement Target
Our review of student papers transitioned from one format to another halfway through the assessment period, and this affects our achievement target, as explained below.

Previously, our target was to have at least two-thirds of students meeting or exceeding expectations by earning final paper grades of B- or higher. We use this format below for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. However, the department's undergraduate committee voted last year to change the way we review student papers: Rather than base the review on letter grades, we decided to ask instructors to write a reflective assessment of the quality of student papers. We use this format below for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. The achievement target for these reflections does not lend itself to the "two-thirds" quantification used in previous years. Instead, our achievement target is to use the reflections to identify any problem areas that the instructor can improve upon (e.g., problems with literature reviews, constructing hypotheses, applying theories, etc.). We think these reflections will be more informative than the letter-grade review in terms of pinpointing problem areas that need improvement.

Summary of Assessment Results
Two of the Sociology Department's core courses (required of all majors) are "Soc 355 Research Methods in Sociology" and "Soc 457 Development of Sociological Theory." Both courses are approved as writing-intensive courses by Emory College. Instructors in both courses use grading rubrics to provide guidance and consistency in the grading of writing assignments. **These grading rubrics are attached as Appendix C.**

The grading rubric for papers in Soc 355 (the methods course) focuses the teacher's attention on 12 different issues: (1) the creativity and clarity of the introduction; (2) the quality and coherence of the literature review; (3) the use of theory to guide hypotheses; (4) the conceptualization and measurement of variables; (5) the description of methods such as the sampling strategy and research design; (6) the write-up of results; (7) the conclusion and discussion; (8) the overall organization, including paragraph structure and transitions; (9) the clarity of writing; (10) the writing style, including appropriate word choices and appropriate tone; (11) the grammar and mechanics of writing; and (12) proper citation style. See Appendix B for the grading criteria associated with each of these issues as well as details on how each issue relates to a specific learning goal. All three learning goals are reflected in the paper assignments in Soc 355.

The grading rubric for Soc 457 (the theory course) offers a five-point framework for evaluating papers, focusing the teacher's attention on the following: (1) the articulation of the paper's thesis and purpose; (2) the critical analysis of theoretical readings; (3) the use of

evidence to support theoretical arguments; (4) the writing style and essay organization; and (5) grammar and punctuation. See Appendix C for the grading criteria associated with these issues and for details on how each issue relates to our learning goals. Note that only two of our three learning goals, Goal 1 on writing and Goal 3 on theory, are reflected in these paper assignments in Soc 457. This is because Goal 2 on methods is not as relevant in the evaluation of these theory papers.

We consider papers as having met or exceeded expectations if they receive at least a B-. Papers receiving a C+ to C- may be considered in some contexts to be adequate and/or average and therefore "meeting expectations," but there are some factors that we think caution against this view. First, we fully expect paper grades to be high on average because students in our writing-intensive courses often benefit from feedback on earlier drafts. Relatedly, the cumulative nature of multiple writing assignments in writing-intensive courses allows the student to improve performance at later stages of the semester. Final paper grades therefore *should be* relatively high, given the process. Second, in our experience, undergraduates at Emory generally possess good writing skills, so holding them to a higher standard seems justified.

The following tables show the paper grade distributions by academic year (n=number of student papers). Earlier assessment years are shown for comparison.

Paper Grade Distributions in Research Methods (SOC 355)

	2018-19 (n=69)	2019-20 (n=74)	2020-21 (n=72)	2021-22
Percent Earning A to B-	93%	97%	90%	new format (see text)
Percent Earning C+ or Lower	7%	3%	10%	

Paper Grade Distributions in Sociological Theory (SOC 457)

	2018-19 (n=54)	2019-20 (n=56)	2020-21 (n=100)	2021-22
Percent Earning A to B-	100%	100%	94%	new format (see text)
Percent Earning C+ or Lower	0%	0%	6%	

Looking first at the Soc 355 research methods course, recall that these grades help us address all three learning goals. While we are unable in the present report to pinpoint which part of the grade reflects a given learning goal, we assume that papers in the A to B- range met or exceeded expectations across all three goals. In keeping with our two-thirds target, we hope

to find at least 67 percent of papers meeting or exceeding expectations. In the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 assessment year, 90 percent of papers did so, a number slightly lower but still consistent with the two earlier assessment periods (93 and 97 percent). Numbers are not shown for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 because, as noted above, the new format for reviewing papers was implemented. We defer discussion of this new format until after we address the Soc 457 course.

Turning now to the Soc 457 theory course, recall that these grades help us address Goal 1 on writing and Goal 3 on theory. Across the assessment periods, we find over 90 percent met or exceeded expectations. In Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, 94 percent did so, and again this is slightly lower but still consistent with the previous assessment periods (both 100 percent).

We find it relatively easy to meet the two-thirds achievement target because, as explained earlier, these class papers often benefit from feedback on earlier drafts, and students tend to improve performance at later stages of the semester. Final paper grades therefore *should be* in the A and B range, given the process. Relying on final paper grades, then, struck us as rather unchallenging and uninformative when virtually all students are meeting or exceeding expectations. We therefore decided to implement a new review format in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. The new format requires instructors to use the grading rubrics to reflect on how well their students performed on their papers. This format allows instructors to express in their own words any concerns they may have about student performance. We were able to obtain two such reflections for the 2021-22 academic year, and both were written by faculty teaching Soc 355 (in future assessment reports, we hope to include reflections for SOC 457 as well).

First SOC 355 reflection:

In my Spring 2022 section of SOC 355W, the major writing assignment that students were required to complete was in the form of a three-part cumulative research proposal. Students were instructed to "go big" and describe the methodological details of a nationwide study of their own choosing. The assignment required students to formulate a hypothesis based on previous research, describe the conceptualization and measurement of their key variables, describe the sampling strategy and overall research design, and explain how they would go about complying with various ethical guidelines involved in human subjects research.

My students did a fine job choosing their topics of interest and making sure they chose topics for which there was an identifiable literature that they could draw upon to inform their own proposed research. The students also did very well in their reviews and summaries of the literature on their topics, and in addressing most of the methodological issues. They write clearly, for the most part, even though there are some methodological issues that routinely challenge them, such as the different varieties of measurement validity and the proper way to collect a multistage cluster sample. But the writing itself is generally fine—well organized and grammatically correct. However, there are some recurring writing errors that I encounter each semester, and the most recent semester was no exception. For example, some students

routinely use "effect" and "affect" incorrectly, and they misplace quotation marks and commas as well. These are common errors in punctuation and grammar.

I grade their writing assignments very carefully, catching any mistakes and pointing them out, and giving them a chance to revise for the next go-around. I was very glad to see that students indeed took my comments into account and made the necessary revisions. This helps improve their scores on subsequent assignments, as does my feedback on rough drafts before they ever turn anything in for a grade. In fact, only about 15 percent of the 40+ papers I eventually graded (across 14 students and three paper assignments) were less than an A-letter grade.

In closing, the mechanics of their writing are, for the most part, unproblematic, even when English is not their first language. Overall, I am impressed with the writing skills of Emory students, and it is extremely rare for me to ever suggest to a student that they visit the Writing Center at Emory for help. I cannot even remember the last time I suggested this to a specific student (it's been at least 5 years). I always tell the class in general about the Writing Center at the start of the semester, so it's possible that some students are benefitting from this resource without my knowing it! If so, that is perfectly fine with me. The bottom line is that their writing skills seem well honed by the time they take this 300-level course required for majors. The challenges they face in the course usually pertain more to comprehension of the methodological issues rather than their ability to express themselves in writing.

Second SOC 355 reflection:

In SOC355W of spring 2022, my students completed two major writing assignments. The first was a multi-staged research paper, and the second was writing of findings and field notes from the qualitative interviews they conducted themselves. The first assignment required them to come up with a research question, formulate hypotheses, describe the conceptualization and measurement of their key variables, conduct secondary data analysis of survey data, present their results, and conclude with a discussion. At each stage, they were given feedback. In the second writing assignment, students had to write their findings according to themes that emerged in their qualitative data, as well as write their field notes and reflections.

My students did a wonderful job in coming up with interesting research topics and questions. Most of them chose topics that were sociologically relevant and enabled them to connect their learnings from other classes to this class. The students also did well in writing their literature reviews around their chosen topics and variables of interest. Writing about research conceptualization and methods isn't easy and comes with practice, but they showed great potential, especially after they received feedback on their staged assignments.
Overall, their writing is grammatically correct, organized, and promising. But since there's always a scope for improvement when it comes to writing, teaching students early on to avoid

long and dense sentence structures and paragraphs and paying attention to the flow of their arguments and writing will go a long way.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program

The reflections above suggest that students generally express themselves clearly in their written work, and that their main challenge is not the mechanics of writing but rather comprehension of course material. However, there are some common writing errors that are routinely encountered in student papers. To help prevent these errors, we have created a "Common Writing Errors" handout that will be distributed later this year to faculty and graduate student instructors. Instructors will be encouraged to share the document with their students. The handout describes 10 common errors. Many of the examples on the handout were culled from various internet sources that are designed to help students improve their writing skills. **This handout is attached as Appendix D to the current report.**

THIRD METHOD OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING GOALS 1 -3:

Method of Assessment: Annual Exit Survey
In previous assessment reports we relied on our department's exit survey which collected data on: (a) student assessments of their achievement level for our major learning outcomes; (b) their satisfaction with the undergraduate program, and (c) their suggestions for improving the overall program. Regrettably, due to changes in office staff during the last two years and the absence of an undergraduate program coordinator, the Sociology Department was unable to administer its exit survey to graduating seniors in Spring 2021 and Spring 2022. However, Emory College conducts a college-level exit survey that is a reasonable substitute for our own internal survey, and we rely on this alternative in the current assessment. The college-level exit survey allows each department to compare all graduating seniors to the department's graduating majors. The Sociology Department, for example, can use the college exit survey to compare all graduating seniors with specifically graduating sociology seniors. The college survey focuses on student satisfaction with various aspects of the undergraduate experience. However, the college-level survey does not measure students' views on the Sociology Department's learning outcomes, hindering our ability to strictly compare results with earlier assessment reports.

Achievement Target
To be consistent with earlier reports, our target is to have at least two-thirds of students report favorable views across a variety of satisfaction indicators on the college-wide senior survey. A "favorable" view is defined as the student choosing "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" in response to the question.

Summary of Assessment Results
The below table show the responses for all graduating seniors in the college and for sociology majors specifically.

2021 and 2022 Senior Survey Results

Indicator	2021		2022	
	College	Sociology	College	Sociology
	1322	51	1364	44
Percent Satisfactory or Very Satisfactory:				
Overall Academic Experience	85%	78%	84%	93%
Quality of Instruction in Your Major(s)	85%	96%	84%	95%
Course Content in Your Major(s)	85%	92%	84%	95%
Availability of Your Advisor	71%	78%	68%	68%
Value of Information Provided by Advisor	69%	73%	64%	73%
Availability of Courses You Want	66%	82%	65%	80%

One anomalous finding leaps out from the above table: In 2021, 85 percent of college seniors but only 78 percent of sociology majors report that their "overall academic experience" was satisfactory or very satisfactory. This is inconsistent with the other percentage comparisons in 2021 as well as 2022. Indeed, Sociology compares favorably to

the college with higher percentages for five of the six indictors in 2021, and again for five of the six indicators in 2022. At times, the percentage difference is substantial. For example, in 2021, 96 percent of sociology seniors rated the "quality of instruction" within the major favorably compared to 85 percent of college seniors in general. Regarding the "availability of courses" in 2021, 82 percent of sociology seniors had a favorable view versus 66 percent of college seniors overall. In 2022, the "quality of instruction" in the major as well as "course content" in the major were both rated favorably by 95 percent of sociology seniors versus 84 percent of seniors in general. While proportionally more of our department's graduating majors report favorable experiences compared to graduating seniors overall, the most important takeaway from these results is that we met or exceeded our target goal of two-thirds on every satisfaction indicator in the table above.

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program
Regarding the college-wide exit survey, we met and often exceeded our achievement target of two-thirds on every satisfaction indicator in the current assessment period. We will continue to ensure that our courses challenge students and that the quality of course content and instruction remains uniformly high. Toward these ends, we require that all graduate student instructors have their faculty advisor approve their course plans and syllabi. They must also submit their syllabi to the DUS and/or Chair of the department for review before the start of the semester. These quality-control practices have led to sometimes extensive feedback given to graduate students. For example, we have required some of our first-time graduate student instructors to revise their syllabi in order to more clearly describe assignments, tests, grading criteria, and other details such as learning goals.
The survey results shown above reveal that almost all sociology majors rate the department's quality of instruction and course content favorably. Even so, the undergraduate committee has recently discovered that some of our faculty and graduate student instructors were uncertain about the amount of work to assign in their courses. In response, the undergraduate committee created a document addressing appropriate workloads in undergraduate courses. The document was circulated within the department and will be re-circulated periodically, as needed. **This document is attached as Appendix E to the current assessment report.**

III.   FACULTY INVOLVEMENT

Describe how your faculty members were involved in this year's assessment procedures.
At almost every departmental faculty meeting we discuss the undergraduate program and how best to meet the needs of our students, but usually at least one departmental meeting each academic year is devoted to assessment-related concerns. At this meeting the DUS reports on findings from the SACS assessment, and faculty discuss ways to improve the program. In addition, the DUS informally discusses assessment plans and methods with faculty throughout the year as we continuously monitor syllabi and instruction for all faculty, but particularly first-time graduate instructors. See also the above three sections on **Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program** for additional details on faculty involvement.

IV.   What learning outcomes will your program assess next year?

Outcome: Written Communication. Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.	
Method: Annual Course Inventory	**Achievement Target:** Ideally, 100 percent of our foundation courses should address this outcome by using writing assignments that are consistent with conventional writing formats in social science college courses.
Method: Annual Review of Student Papers	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students meeting or exceeding expectations, as evidenced by rubric-based criteria used in our writing-intensive methods and theory courses (Soc 355 and Soc 457). Both courses are required for majors.
Method: Annual Exit Survey	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students say that the major contributed to their ability to (a) write clearly and effectively, and (b) think critically and analytically.
Outcome: Social Research. Students should be able to formulate empirical research questions, identify the major methods for collecting data to answer questions, recognize the major advantages and disadvantages of each method, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles to employ in analyzing data.	
Method: Annual Course Inventory	**Achievement Target:** At least 85 percent of our foundation courses should address this outcome using readings, lectures/discussions, or graded assignments that examine the process and practice of social research.

Method: Annual Review of Student Papers	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students meeting or exceeding expectations, as evidenced by rubric-based criteria for our writing-intensive methods course.
Method: Annual Exit Survey	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students say that the major contributed to their understanding of research methods and research ethics.
Outcome: Sociological Theory. Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions.	
Method: Annual Course Inventory	**Achievement Target:** Ideally, 100 percent of our foundation courses should address this goal through readings, lectures/discussions, and graded assignments that address theoretical issues in the discipline.
Method: Annual Review of Student Papers	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students meeting or exceeding expectations, as evidenced by rubric-based criteria for our writing-intensive theory course.
Method: Annual Exit Survey	**Achievement Target:** To have at least two-thirds of students say that the major contributed to their understanding of major theoretical traditions in sociology.

V.   SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

See the following attachments submitted with this report:

Appendix A – Course Inventory
Appendix B – Learning Goals for Sociology Syllabi
Appendix C – Grading Rubrics for Soc 355W and SOC 457W
Appendix D – Common Writing Errors
Appendix E – Student Workload Expectations for Undergraduate Courses

VI.   REVIEW PROCESS

Please forward the assessment report to the chair of your department for review and signature. This review will ensure that the information included in this report is accurate and that your program is engaged in a systematic process of continuous improvement.

_____   _____
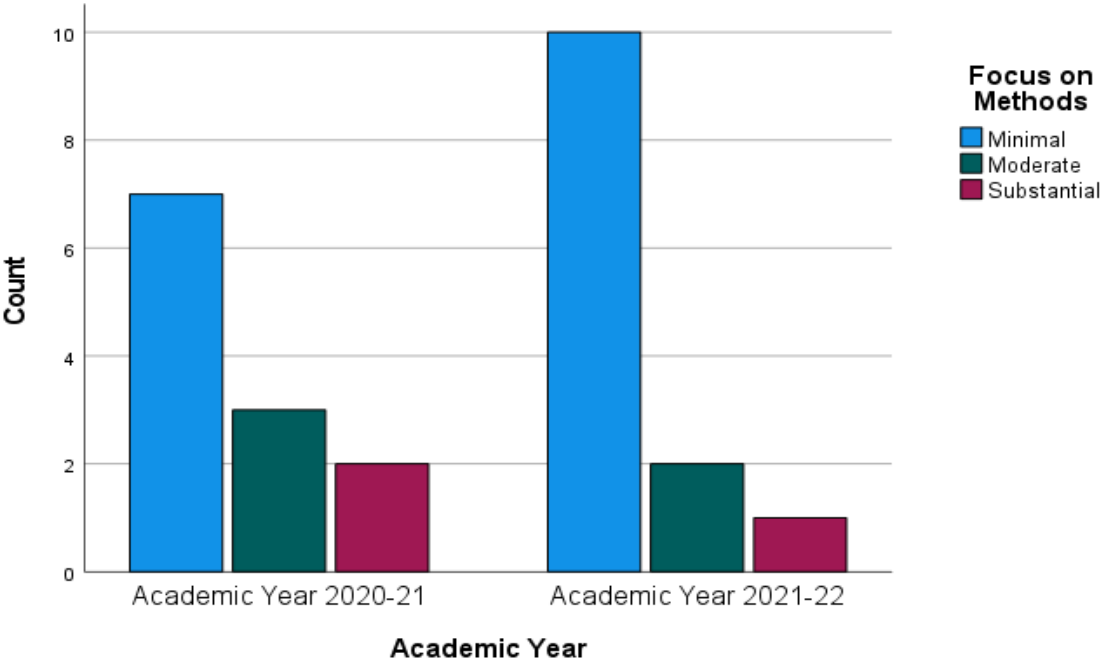Department Chair   Date

10-24-22

APPENDIX A

Course Inventory

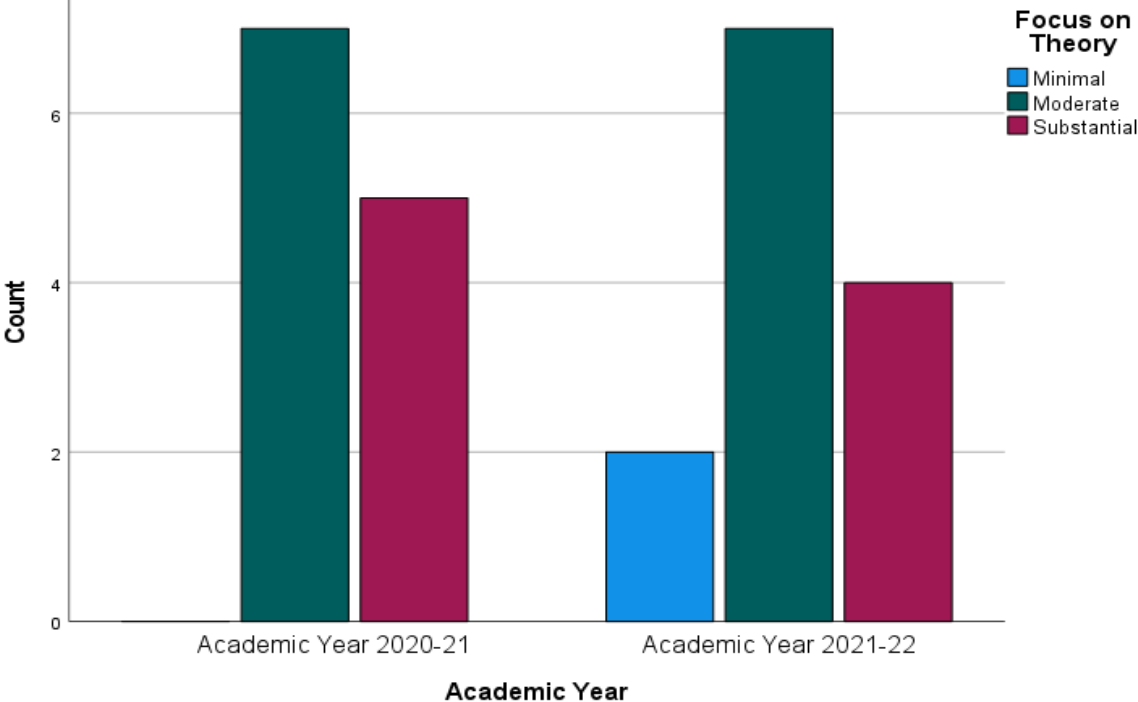## Graph 1. Number of Courses with a Minimal, Moderate, or Substantial Focus on Writing
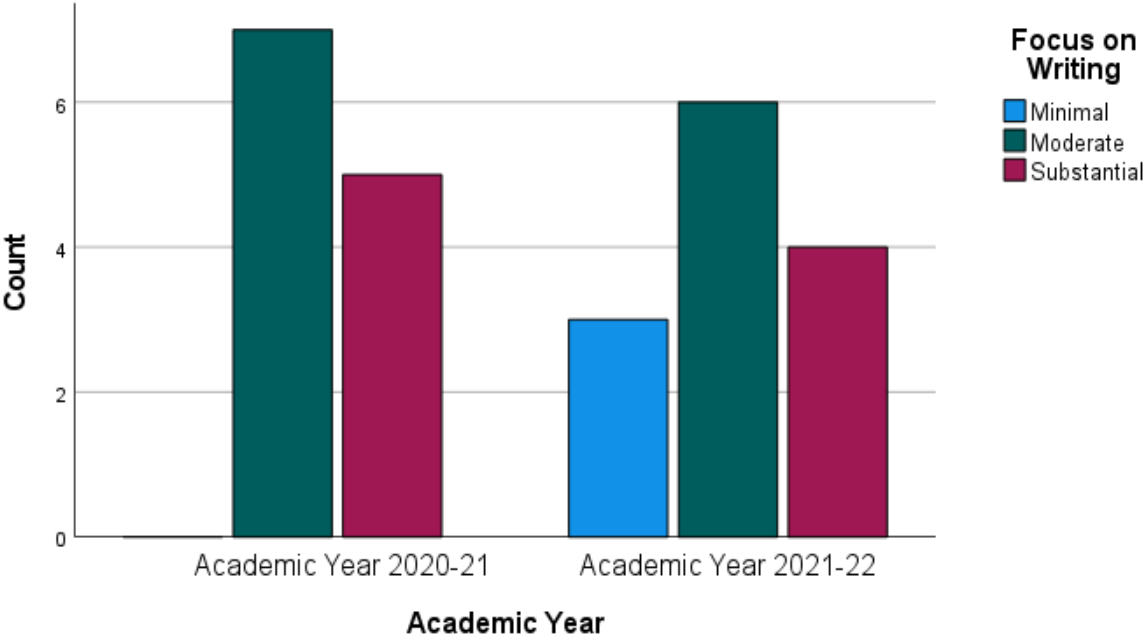
Graph 2. Number of Courses with a Minimal, Moderate, or Substantial Focus on Methods

Graph 3. Number of Courses with a Minimal, Moderate, or Substantial Focus on Theory

APPENDIX B

Learning Objectives for Sociology Syllabi

Learning Objectives for Sociology Syllabi

"Learning objectives" should be clearly listed on your course syllabus. These are sometimes called "learning goals" or "course objectives," or some similar term. The typical place to list learning goals is directly after the course description on Page 1 of your syllabus. A list of 4 or 5 general learning goals should be sufficient, but feel free to use a longer and precisely detailed list, as illustrated by many of the examples shown below.

What follows are examples of learning goals from selected course syllabi in sociology. If you currently are not listing any learning goals, then adapt these examples to create your own course-specific goals *and include them on your syllabus*.

From Tracy Scott's SOC 101 Intro to Sociology

Knowledge Objectives:

• Understand what sociology does: study systems, structures, and culture.

• Understand how social systems shape human behavior.

• Understand the sociological research process, including the major types of evidence sociologists use to examine social systems.

• Understand the two major aspects of social systems: Social Structure and Culture

• Understand how sociologists examine social structure and culture in particular realms of social life, even the seemingly personal (love and death)

• Understand how humans are socialized into social systems, as well as how deviation from that socialization is defined and enforced by the system.

• Understand major systems of inequality in society: social class, race/ethnicity, and gender.

• Understand and evaluate the use of evidence in sociology.

• Gather sociological evidence and build arguments from that evidence in two written assignments.

From Cassidy Puckett's SOC 221W Culture and Society

<u>Learning Objectives:</u>

1. Understand classical theories of culture and apply them to contemporary issues concerning race, class, and gender.

2. Distinguish the types of evidence used in sociology as compared to the types of evidence used in personal decisions or in journalistic writings.

      -- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources in sociology.

      -- Demonstrate an understanding of different types of empirical evidence, such as survey data, interview data, and document analysis data.

      -- Demonstrate an understanding of a broader definition of evidence and how non-empirical information is often used as evidence in other realms.

3. Locate, assess, and analyze different types of evidence.

      -- Locate and analyze evidence about the relationship between culture & society from diverse sources.

      -- Locate sociological research articles (secondary source of evidence) in Library databases.

      -- Gather and analyze primary evidence through a semester-long research project.

4. Evaluate evidence.

      -- Evaluate the quality, credibility, and validity of the different types of evidence.

      -- Determine the usefulness of evidence for different purposes.

5. Build strong written arguments based on primary and secondary evidence.

      -- Construct a clear thesis and develop a sociological research paper based on the different types of evidence you gather over the course of the semester.

6. Assess others' arguments and articulate how to make stronger arguments based on evidence.

      -- Evaluate peers' draft research papers and explain how they can construct stronger arguments using primary and secondary evidence gathered over the course semester.

From Irene Browne's SOC 225 Sociology of Sex and Gender

GOALS:

Content: To learn about theories, debates and issues that are central to scholarship in the sociology of sex and gender.

Skills: To build skills in critical analysis that will help you to effectively engage with the arguments presented in the readings and discussions, evaluate evidence, apply sociological theory and concepts to key issues, and articulate your own position.

Self-understanding: To discover how the social constructions of gender, race, class and sexuality are at work in your own life, and to understand how your individual biography is related to broader economic, political and cultural forces.

Community: To participate in creating a collaborative learning setting within our classroom, and understand how this approach enhances your own skill-building and learning.

From Alyasah Ali Sewell's SOC 247 Race and Ethnic Relations

Learning Objectives: Overall Course

This course aims to fulfill three functions:

1) To introduce you to the study of sociology

2) To introduce you to college-level instruction and the culture of the university

3) To engage you in a discussion of evidence and its role in analysis, argumentation, and interpretation.

By the end of the course, you will have developed some critical thinking skills and a basic background in social and political reasoning as it applies to the issues that we face regarding race, ethnicity, and racism.

Learning Objectives: Weekly Lessons

As an evidence-focused seminar designed to meet the initiatives of Emory's "The Nature of Evidence: How Do You Know?" Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) curriculum, all students will be able to:

1) Distinguish uses of evidence in and/or between disciplines

2) Identify, select, and/or gather evidence

3) Evaluate and analyze evidence

4) Build arguments based on evidence and assess the arguments of others

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From Rachel Clifford Hall's SOC 289 Foundations of Global Health

Student learning objectives:

1. Describe key actors, agencies, and structures engaged in global health
2. Apply basic principles of epidemiology to global health indicators and disease burden
3. Recognize the social determinants of health within community, national, and transnational contexts
4. Identify basic approaches to global health intervention design and evaluation
5. Articulate contemporary challenges in global health equity, including ethics, gender equity, and the differential impacts of climate change

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From Jeff Mullis' SOC 350 Sociology of Law

The main objectives of this course are:

(1) to introduce you to the sociology of law, including major theories and important empirical studies;

(2) to familiarize you with the "language of law" (basic legal concepts), the main bodies of law (criminal, civil, and regulatory), and the organization of the legal system in the United States;

(3) to develop your ability to analyze a variety of controversial legal issues from a sociological perspective, including victimless crimes, mass incarceration, the insanity defense, drug laws, gun control, and capital punishment;

(4) to encourage you to think critically about evidence and arguments put forward by sociolegal scholars.

From Roberto Franzosi's SOC 383 Advertising: Words and Images

Learning outcomes: By the end of term, students are expected to be able to:

1. Interpret the role of colours, structure, and position of objects in space in an advertisement

2. Identify the relation between text and pictures

3. Identify the difference between open and closed texts

4. Spot intertextual frames

5. Interpret an advertisement in terms of both text and con.text (i.e., with text, Latin *cum*)

6. Spot ouvert and covert meaning in advertising messages

7. Identify and recount the story told in an advertisement

8. Identify the type of story told (e.g., tragedy, comedy)

9. Identify the rhetorical figures used in an advertisement

10. Recognize the possible sexist, racist, nationalist nature of an advertisement

11. Be aware of the historical embedment of advertising (and of the importance of history)

12. Be aware of the cultural embedment of advertising

13. Be aware of the ideological embedment of advertising

14. Find answers to the question: How else could it be?

15. Find answers to the question: Who benefits (*cui prodest*?)?

From Heeju Sohn's SOC 389 Health and Inequality

Learning objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Apply sociological theories to articulate connections between social and health inequities

2. Critique empirical evidence that document social and health disparities

3. Analyze major events such as policy changes, natural disasters, and public health crises through a sociological lens

4. Disseminate your views to a broader audience

From Frank Lechner's SOC 457 Development of Sociological Theory

Learning Goals

• By the end of the course you will have a good sense of the main lines of sociological thought and the way they inform current work in sociology.

• You should also be able to address contemporary issues with the intellectual tools provided by the major theorists.

• This writing intensive course will also help you refine your academic skills.

Finally, all faculty and graduate student instructors should be familiar with the three basic "learning outcomes" of our undergraduate program (as spelled out in our biennial accreditation report). These outcomes apply generally to the undergraduate program. A given course in sociology is not required to address all three outcomes in full, but ideally at least one of the three will be meaningfully covered in every course we teach:

Goal 1: Written Communication
Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.

Goal 2: Social Research Methods
Students should be able to formulate empirical research questions, identify the major methods for collecting data to answer questions, recognize the major advantages and disadvantages of each method, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles to employ in analyzing data.

Goal 3: Sociological Theory
Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions.

APPENDIX C

Grading Rubrics

for SOC 355W (Methods)

and SOC 457W (Theory)

	A	B	C	D
Introduction/Opening	creative or engaging opening strategy that captures reader's interest and clearly conveys the author's research question and goals	basic opening strategy that clearly/ somewhat clearly conveys the author's research question and goals	stock (e.g., "Dictionary") opening strategy or one that does not communicate the author's research question and/or goals	weak, confusing or no opening strategy
Quality and Coherence of the Literature Review	Uses at least 5 empirical references that provide a very good or excellent resource for addressing the research question. Offers comprehensive summary of the literature. The main ideas from the literature are synthesized, and are fully developed. The review of the literature is linked to the hypotheses and to the methods, and is coherent.	Uses at least 5 empirical references that provide a good resource for addressing the research question. offers informed, general summary of the literature. Ideas are all presented, though some pieces more strongly than others. Research articles are presented separately (not synthesized). Most ideas are logically linked to the hypotheses and the methods, and are generally coherent.	Some references are tangentially related to the research question. offers uneven or cursory summary of the literature. Ideas are unevenly developed or one piece is missing; one/some parts not logically linked to the hypotheses and the methods. Ideas are not completely coherent.	Uses less than 5 references. fails to identify the main arguments in the literature or presents an incomplete, vague summary of the authors' main arguments. Ideas are not coherent.
Use of theory to guide hypotheses	Clear, specific, persuasive support for hypotheses based on theory	moderate or general support for hypotheses based on theory	minimal support hypotheses. Little discussion of theory.	no support for hypotheses. No theory.
Conceptualization and Operationalization	All key concepts are well-defined and flow directly from the literature review. Independent and dependent variables are clearly identified. Dimensions of each concept are explained. Clear, thorough explanation of how each variable is operationalized, and how the measure fits the concept.	All key concepts are well-defined and have some link to the literature review. Independent and dependent variables are identified. Dimensions of each concept are identified. Not all dimensions are clearly explained. Fairly clear explanation of how each variable is operationalized, and a reference to how the measure fits the concept.	Key concepts are vaguely defined and do not have a direct link to the literature review. Independent and dependent variables are not fully identified. Dimensions of concepts are missing. Unclear or vague explanation of how each variable is operationalized. No mention of how the measure fits the concept.	Key concepts are not defined. No link to the literature review. Independent and dependent variables are not correctly identified. No dimensions of concepts are identified. Sparse or no information of how each variable is operationalized.
Description of Method	provides a complete and accurate description of the research method and type of evidence used. The rationale for the method is explained. Each methodological step is clearly described in detail.	provides a solid description of the research method. Some aspects are discussed in depth, while other aspects are presented with little discussion. Most steps are clearly described in detail.	provides an incomplete description of the research method. Some aspects are discussed, while other aspects are not discussed. Some steps/decisions are covered, while others are not.	provides a vague and incomplete description of the research method. Most aspects are not discussed.
Results	Smoothly ties the results to the hypotheses. Discusses results in a manner that reflects a strong understanding of the analysis methods (e.g. univariate and bivariate). All of the results are interpreted correctly. Tables are easy to interpret, following format on handouts. Results section makes direct reference to table where appropriate.	Ties results to the hypotheses. General, obvious discussion of the results. An overall understanding of the analysis issues are suggested rather than fully treated. All of the results are interpreted correctly. Tables are generally easy to interpret, following format on handouts. Results section usually makes direct reference to table where appropriate.	Results are not directly tied to the hypotheses. Unfocused or confusing discussion of the results. Rarely addresses complexity of issues. Some of the results are interpreted correctly. Tables are not easy to interpret, or do not follow format on handouts. Results section does not make direct reference to table where appropriate.	no identifiable tie to the hypotheses. Incorrect no treatment of complexity. Results are not interpreted correctly. Tables are confusing.

Conclusion/Discussion	Conclusion links results back to previous literature; explains similarities and differences in an insightful way; and addresses the significance of the current study findings Good discussion of the limitations to the methods.	Conclusion that restates preceding ideas, but does not fully integrate current findings with past literature. Partial, obvious discussion of the limitations to the methods.	Weak conclusion that provides no closure. Uneven discussion of the limitation to the methods. Some important information omitted.	No clear conclusion. No discussion of the limitations to the methods.
Organization **Paragraph Structure** **Transitions**	Well organized argument that moves the reader smoothly through a complex presentation of ideas and issues. Well structured paragraphs. Smooth transitions that refer to the main idea(s).	Moderately well organized argument that moves the reader competently through a straightforward or general presentation of ideas and issues. Most paragraphs adequately structured. Competent transitions that sometimes refer to the main idea.	weak organization that is out of logical order and often requires the reader to search for connections between ideas and guess at the writer's intent; some weakly structured paragraphs; confusing or inadequate transitions that don't refer to the main idea	confusing organization with major sections of steps of the analysis missing, poorly structured paragraphs no transitions
Clarity	Always states ideas clearly and effectively	Usually states ideas clearly and effectively	difficulty in stating ideas clearly and effectively	severe difficulty in stating ideas clearly and effectively
Writing Style	Writing that is clear and logical; includes mature sentences of various types and lengths; appropriate word choices; an appropriate tone	writing that is comprehensible, includes sentences of a fairly uniform type and length; standard word choices; generally appropriate tone	writing that is difficult to understand, includes confusing sentences, confusing word choice; perhaps an inappropriate tone	writing that is extremely difficult to understand
Grammar, Mechanics, Proofreading	Uses active verbs, has no grammatical, spelling, or proofing errors	Uses active verbs most of the time, has some grammatical, spelling, or proofing errors	Uses passive voice, has many errors	Has many errors; difficult or impossible to follow
Citations and Bibliography	perfect	some incorrect cites/references	some missing cites/references	no citations/references

Grading will be determined in the following way:

If all/almost all of the paper sections fall in Column A, then grade will be an A (so could have 1-2 sections bordering on Column B and still get an A).

If a majority of sections fall in Column A, but a few fall in Column B, then grade: A-

If more sections fall in Column B, but still have some in A, then grade: B+

If all sections fall in Column B, then grade: B.

If a majority of sections fall in Column B, but a few fall in Column C, then grade: B-

ETC.

SOC 457: Development of Social Theory
Grading Rubric for Final Essay Assignment

	Soc457 Final Essay Categories	Grade: A	Grade: B	Grade: C	Grade: D
Sociology Major- Learning Goal 3. Sociological Theory: Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions	**Purpose: Articulation of purpose/thesis of the paper**	Purpose of the paper is clearly articulated. Addressed question specifically and with a clear thesis. Original ideas are easily identified and well-developed.	Purpose is clear and adheres to assignment description. The thesis is articulated clearly, but not carried throughout the whole paper. The essay does not include as much original content as a 4 point essay.	Does not address all aspects identified in the assignment. Thesis statement is confusing. Lack of original ideas.	Purpose is far from the guidelines identified in the assignment. No clear thesis. Essay only includes perspectives discussed in reading and class—no original reflection.
	Content: Critical Analysis of theoretical readings	Analysis is thorough and shows excellent understanding of the material. Key terms are clearly articulated in your own words.	Analysis explores many main ideas from reading/lecture. Key concepts are used, but explanations are brief.	Analysis mainly summarizes points already made in class or in the readings. Key concepts are used, but not explained in own words.	Essay only focuses on basic ideas. There is no additional support or analysis beyond ideas already discussed in class. Not enough key terms used; key terms used not explained well or correctly.
	Evidence: Using evidence to support theoretical argument	All points are well explained and supported by examples. Examples are cited appropriately. Argument is well-supported and convincing.	Most points are well explained and supported. Some examples need more concrete evidence. Argument is sufficiently convincing.	Essay does not fully support or explain all points made. The argument is not clear. Both more examples and more citations needed.	No examples are given or the examples that are given are not relevant to the points made. No argument made.
Sociology Major – Learning Goal 1. Written Communication: Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.	**Writing style/essay organization**	Style is engaging. The essay as a whole is cohesive and the individual paragraphs are well structured. Sentence structure is varied. References cited properly and thoroughly.	Writing style is clear and consistent. The tone is appropriate for the assignment.	Writing style is somewhat disjointed. Sections of the paper are not well-connected.	Both style and development of the essay are lacking. No smooth transitions. The thoughts are not clearly articulated. No citations.
	Proofread/Editing	No grammar or punctuation errors exist.	Few grammar errors are present.	Multiple errors per page of writing.	Grammar is sloppy with numerous mistakes.

APPENDIX D

Common Writing Errors

Ten Common Writing Errors

Error No. 1: Effect/affect
Explanation: In general, "affect" is a verb that means to have an influence upon, and "effect" is a noun.
Wrong: Gold prices have no affect on purchasing power.
Right: Gold prices have no effect on purchasing power.
Wrong: The earnings report is not expected to effect the stock price in the long-term.
Right: The earnings report is not expected to affect the stock price in the long-term.

Error No. 2: i.e./e.g.
Explanation: "i.e." means "that is," while "e.g." means "for example." Both are Latin abbreviations and are always followed by a comma.
Wrong: On their first day of work, new employees are given free company goodies (i.e., T-shirts and mugs).
Right: On their first day of work, new employees are given free company goodies (e.g., T-shirts and mugs).

Error No. 3: data/datum
Explanation: Strictly and traditionally speaking, "data" is the plural form of "datum" and therefore requires a plural verb. However, this rule is often violated in ordinary speech and even in some scientific reports. Moreover, some style guides accept the use of the noun "data" with either singular or plural verbs, indicating that the strict rule is in contention. In any case, you should be aware of the issue here. The following wrong-right usage reflects the traditional, strict rule:
Wrong: The data has been collected. The data is being analyzed as we speak.
Right: The data have been collected. The data are being analyzed as we speak.

Error No. 4: It's/its
Explanation: "It's" is a contraction for "it is." If you aren't sure whether to use "its" or "it's," read the sentence and substitute the words "it is." Does it make sense? Then "it's" is correct. If not, use "its."
Wrong: Your home and all it's contents are only protected if you lock it when you leave.
Right: Your home and all its contents are only protected if you lock it when you leave.

Error No. 5: They're/their/there
Explanation: "They're" means "they are." "Their" is a possessive pronoun just like "her," "his," or "our." All other uses are "there."
Wrong: There going on they're weekly lunch date to the restaurant over their.
Right: They're going on their weekly lunch date to the restaurant over there.

Error No. 6: One's/ones
Explanation: The possessive pronoun *one's* requires an apostrophe before the *S*, unlike *its*, *hers*, and other personal pronouns. A simple test: try inserting *anyone's* in place of *one's*. If it works grammatically, you need the apostrophe in *one's* too. When *one's* is a contraction of *one is*, it also requires an apostrophe: no one's listening, this one's for you.
Wrong: Due process rights include the right to a trial by a jury of ones peers.
Right: Due process rights include the right to a trial by a jury of one's peers.

Error No. 7: You're/your
Explanation: "You're" is the contraction for "you are," while "your" is used in all other instances.
Wrong: Your so smart to realize that you're flip flops aren't appropriate attire in the office.
Right: You're so smart to realize that your flip flops aren't appropriate attire in the office.

Error No. 8: Could of/would of/should of instead of could have/would have/should have
Explanation: It may sound like "of" when you speak and slur your words together, but it's not! The correct form is always "have."
Wrong: I could of gotten into that college if I only knew the rules of grammar.
Right: I could have gotten into that college if I only knew the rules of grammar.

Error No. 9: Different than/different from
Explanation: This one is easy. Use "different from" and don't use "different than." Period.
Wrong: My computer at work is different than the one I have at home.
Right: My computer at work is different from the one I have at home.

Error No. 10: Periods, commas, and quotation marks
Explanation: In the United States, periods and commas go inside quotation marks, even inside single quotes.
Wrong: She said, "Hurry up".
Right: She said, "Hurry up."
Right: She said, "He said, 'Hurry up.'"
An exception to this rule is when you are using an in-text citation, in which case the period goes after the closing parenthesis. For example: The film critic characterized the movie as "a loopy, lunkheaded load of drivel" (Reed 2017).

Appendix E

Student Workload Expectations

in Undergraduate Courses

**Student Workload Expectations in Undergraduate Courses:
Guidelines from the Undergraduate Committee in Sociology**

When planning a course, we all have been confronted with questions such as how much reading should I assign on a weekly basis, and how many graded assignments can I reasonably require of students? The Undergraduate Committee in Sociology has created this brief document to help teachers answer these and related questions concerning appropriate workloads. We address both the *amount of work* and the *type of work* and how these potentially vary by class size, course level, and credit hours.

Class Size

Our purpose here is not to recommend particular testing formats or types of graded assignments, e.g., multiple choice exams versus essay questions, or a series of short papers versus a long term paper. These decisions ultimately should be left to the preferences of the teacher. In making these decisions, however, teachers are likely be influenced, at least to some extent, by the size of the class. For example, larger classes might use more closed-ended questions on an exam while small seminars might use more essay questions–the amount of time it takes to grade and provide meaningful feedback being a deciding factor behind these formats. Class size might also affect the number of graded assignments as well as the grading scale utilized. For example, larger classes might rely on a smaller number of assignments overall. If frequent assignments are given in a large class (e.g., brief reaction papers or article summaries on a weekly basis), then "light grading" might be used, that is, grading with a simple scale of check / check minus.

Course Level

Beyond class size, the level of the course is important to consider when deciding upon workloads and requirements. Emory University uses the same 100-499 numbering system common to many schools. Although Emory does not have a detailed official description of the differences between course levels, descriptions from other schools are readily available online. The below passage is a combination of descriptions from Emory, Duke, and the University of Washington, with some modifications by Emory's Undergraduate Committee in Sociology:

Lower-division courses are 100- and 200-level and should have the following characteristics:

> *Lower-division courses generally do not have extensive college-level prerequisites (aside from preceding courses in the same sequence).*

> *Lower-division courses usually are not limited to students majoring in the field in which the courses are offered.*

> *Lower-division courses are often survey courses designed as general introductions to a field or subfield. Such survey courses often emphasize breadth over depth and should be appropriate for nonmajors.*

> *100-level courses are suitable for freshmen, and 200-level courses are directed toward sophomores. Although juniors and seniors may be allowed to enroll in 100- and 200-level courses, departments often reserve most of the seats for freshmen and sophomores.*

Upper-division courses are 300- and 400-level and should have the following characteristics:

> *Upper division courses may require substantial college-level preparation on the part of the student. Ordinarily this should be indicated in the course description by stating the expected background (e.g., formal prerequisites; informal recommendations such as "suggested for major or minors only" or "students should have taken at least one course in the field").*

> *300-level courses are directed primarily at juniors, and 400-level courses are directed toward seniors. Freshmen and sophomores are generally discouraged from taking upper-division courses, particularly at the 400 level. Capstone courses, senior seminars, and honors thesis courses are found at the 400 level.*

> *Both 300- and 400-level courses are well-suited for majors, providing them with opportunities to explore topics in depth and adopt the role of creator rather than mere consumer of scholarship in the field.*

The above description suggests that students in upper-division courses generally have more specialized knowledge and skills. Consequently, these students are better equipped to handle a heavier workload of more advanced readings and assignments. The weekly readings in upper-division courses potentially have a higher page count on average, but teachers need to balance the amount of reading with the degree of difficulty.[1] And written assignments need not be more frequent but perhaps just more challenging—for example, an original research paper that requires the student to draw upon knowledge/skills acquired in earlier courses. This sort of assignment might not be feasible in a lower-division course because it assumes capabilities that are cumulative.

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[1] A journal article written for a professional audience probably takes a student longer to digest than a selection from an undergraduate reader, even if the page count is the same. There is also the number of words per page to consider, which in turn is affected by font and page size. Figuring out how many pages of reading to assign each week thus quickly becomes mired down in caveats. While it is tempting to offer an ideal number of pages—for example, between 25-50 pages per week for a lower-division course and 50-75 pages per week for an upper-division course—there are so many variables in play that any such suggestion must be extremely tentative.

Credit Hours

In addition to class size and course level, the number of credit hours assigned to a course is yet another factor affecting the workload. Most of us teach three-credit hour courses. Writing-intensive courses are four credit hours, and directed study courses such as a Supervised Reading typically are two or three credit hours. What's the difference in terms of workload? And what exactly is a credit hour anyway? The following passage from Emory University's "Guidelines for Assigning Credit Hours to Courses" answers these questions:

> The primary standard for establishing course credit hours in Emory College is the Carnegie Credit Hour, the standard commonly used by the Federal Government. **An hour of credit is awarded for lecture/seminar course meeting 50-minutes each week during a 14-15 week semester and requiring two hours of outside preparation each week by the student.** An hour of contact time … is based on this 50-minute session. A standard lecture/seminar course meeting 150 minutes per week with 6 hours of outside preparation will carry three-credit hours. An equivalent amount of time in class meetings and preparation is required for shorter terms. Lecture/seminar courses involving more than 150 minutes per week of class may be awarded more than 3 credit hours based on additional contact time or additional activities incorporated into the course (emphasis in original).

In short, students enrolled in a standard three-credit hour course should expect to spend up to six hours each week in outside preparation for the course. This does not vary by course level: the expected amount of time in outside preparation remains the same regardless of whether the course is a three-credit hour 100-level course or a three-credit hour 400 level course. In planning syllabi, then, teachers should keep this in mind: the workload, measured by the number of hours spent in outside preparation per week, should be roughly twice that of the credit hours, or a 2:1 ratio.

Of course none of this tells us how long it actually takes the typical student to complete readings and assignments. Do we tend to underestimate or overestimate how long it takes them to do things? To help answer *that* question, professors at Rice University have created what they call a "Course Workload Estimator." This is an online tool that requires one to input information about a course such as the number of pages of reading assigned per week, the length of writing assignments, the number of exams, and more. The Undergraduate Committee in Sociology encourages everyone to visit this resource. It can be found in the Barre 2016 link in the references below (see also Houston 2016 for a brief overview). The workload estimator is

a valiant effort to provide guidance on this issue, and it is certainly worth a few minutes of your time to read about it if not actually use it. But it is not a substitute for your own good judgment, which begins with recognizing that most students are taking other courses in addition to yours. Give them space to do so.

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