

Institutional Effectiveness Report
Academic year 2007-2008
Department of Sociology

Dr. Joel Thayer, Chair
Dr. Lisa Eargle, Associate Professor
Dr. Russell Ward, Jr., Associate Professor

Mission of the Sociology Program

The Department of Sociology offers a major, minor, and collateral in sociology. The program operates in accord with the general purpose of Francis Marion University by providing an educational program within the liberal arts tradition by presenting a balance of theoretical views and varied analytical orientations. The bachelor's degree in sociology provides students with an understanding of sociology as the scientific study of human social life. The degree focuses on applying objective and systematic methods of investigation to identify patterns of social life and to understand the processes by which these patterns are established and changed. The program enables students to learn to think critically, to communicate effectively, to appreciate individual and cultural diversity, and to develop their skills in computer applications and library research. The program also provides student with opportunities for internships in applied settings. A major in sociology provides students with a broad-based education that will prepare them for entry-level positions in business, government, and a wide variety of human service organizations. The major also prepares students to pursue further education in areas such as law, medicine, business, religion, and social services, as well as sociology.

Summary of ongoing assessment activities:

- Analysis of senior survey responses regarding learning experiences, faculty performance, attributes of program
- Analysis of students' performance in research skills courses (Sociology 202, 303, 403, 407, 419)
- Summarize faculty productivity in research and service

Issues of Concern 2002-2008:

1. Develop and expand curriculum concentration in Criminal Justice

Actions taken:

- Created program in cooperation with Political Science faculty
- Created three new courses taught by then current faculty
- Hired new faculty member with specialization in criminology

Sociology I. E. Report, 2007-2008. p.2

2. Organization and variety of elective courses

Actions taken:

- Revised elective offerings with different categories and new numbering
- Created one or two additional electives in each of three categories

3. Enhance scope and quality of students' analytical skills

Actions Taken:

- Add research projects to several classes
 1. Content analysis in 202
 2. Use of qualitative analysis software in 202
 3. Analysis of existing data with case study and poster presentations in 407 and 419
- Using I.T. Committee grant, GIS software (ArcInfo) was purchased and installed on all faculty computers and all computers in student lab (ArcView). Dr. Eargle and Mr. Lillis have outlined specific plans for use in fall semester classes.

4. Purposes, content and students' perceptions of theory course (Soc. 425)

Actions taken:

- Assigned readings placed less emphasis upon early theorists and minor contemporary theories.
- More emphasis placed upon theoretical thinking skills and use of theories in contemporary research.

5. Upholding Academic Integrity:

Actions taken:

- Observed and reported incidents of plagiarism and cheating.
- Faculty discussed forms of academic dishonesty and responses with assistant provost; agreed on changes in syllabi and issues to be addressed in classes.

Goal 1. Students will have the ability to understand and apply the core concepts and principles of sociology.

No "objective" measure. When asked how well their sociology classes have prepared them: "to understand the sociological perspective and its relevance," and "to understand different cultures;"

seniors responded with a median rating of "very well prepared." (See Table 1.) These subjective measures indicate that the goal is met. There are, however, small decreases in mean scores, suggesting need for more explicit attention in courses.

When asked how well prepared to "read and understand research articles in sociological journals," the students ratings yielded a median of "very well prepared." This finding shows a small decline from the previous year, so bears watching.

Goal 2. Sociology students will understand the core concepts and principles of sociological theory.

As indicated above, this has been an area of concern. No “objective” measure. When seniors participating in the exit survey were asked how well their sociology courses have prepared them “to understand sociological theories,” the median response for the current year was “very well prepared,” a substantial improvement over recent years. This area will be monitored and discussed by faculty.

Goal 3. Students will understand and be able to apply the core methodologies of sociology.

When asked how well their sociology courses have prepared them to:

“analyze and interpret sociological data;” and to

“understand how sociologists collect information about the social world.”

seniors indicate that they view themselves as “very well prepared” in both areas. (See Table 2.) However, the mean scores on both measures and the median on the latter are somewhat lower than the previous three years. As these issues are addressed in all classes, faculty would do well to give them explicit attention.

In April, 4 students presented their research projects at the Carolina Undergraduate Social Sciences Symposium, hosted by the College of Charleston. Their work received recognition and praise from both students and faculty. A more general benefit is realized when our students tell their peers how well their work compares with that presented by students from other schools, indicated by collection of original data, larger samples, and accurate interpretations. We will continue our efforts to increase the number of symposium presenters and winning formal recognition of the quality of their research projects.

Goal 4. To provide students with information about careers in sociology-related occupations and to help students develop skills for professional careers in sociology-related occupations.

Seniors were asked in the exit survey, “How well have your sociology courses prepared you to have a career? The median response was “very well prepared.” Student comments on the exit surveys urge us to give this important matter more attention. We meet this goal, but with room for improvement.

Seniors also described themselves as “very well prepared...to communication effectively, both written and orally,” (See Table 2.)

This year, we placed 11 interns in 8 different agencies. The evaluations by both the students and on-site coordinators were uniformly positive. In written and telephone evaluations, on-site coordinators specifically noted the students’ reliability, willingness to assume responsibility, appropriate dress and demeanor, sensitivity to boundaries, and positive contributions to the host agencies.

Sociology I. E. Report, 2007-2008. p.4

Goal 5. Sociology faculty will emphasize an individualized approach to education through personalized attention to academic advising.

Senior exit data indicate that sociology faculty meet this goal. When asked to rate “the quality of advising you received,” seniors’ median rating was “excellent.”

Goal 6. Sociology faculty will deliver quality instruction.

A. Course availability and quality

Seniors’ ratings of the “availability of courses offerings” are positive, with median rating of “very good.” A somewhat lower mean rating reflects the numerous requests from students to increase the number and variety of elective courses. (See Table 3.)

When asked about “the extent to which class objectives were specified and met,” the median rating is “very good”; the mean slightly lower. The responses indicate general satisfaction, but the ratings of the past two years are somewhat lower than those of the previous three years. Sociology I. E. Report, 2007-2008, p.4

Seniors’ ratings of the “overall quality of instructional strategies” were “very good,” slightly higher than in the previous two years.

The median rating of “overall fairness of grading in sociology classes” was “excellent.” The mean ratings for the past two years (5.2 on a scale of 0-6) are the highest during this decade.

Seniors median rating of the “overall quality of courses you took in sociology” was “very good,” With the mean a bit higher.

Other than the suggestions of more elective courses and more faculty, graduating seniors express high satisfaction with their courses in sociology

B. Faculty Performance

As in the past, seniors evaluations of:

“faculty’s overall knowledge of the subject matter”

“faculty’s overall course conduct”

“faculty’s treatment of students in the classroom”

“each faculty member’s approachability and availability”

all yielded median ratings of “excellent, with means almost as high. Those high ratings have occurred only one other year since 2000.

Goal 7. Sociology faculty will be engaged in productive scholarly activity.

This has been an active and productive year for sociology faculty: Scholarly activities include:

- Research articles published –1
- Book chapters (co-authored) – 2
- Articles in edited collections (co-authored) – 2
- Conference presentations – 4 at national meetings, 6 at regional meetings
- Forthcoming publications:
 - Journal article – 2
 - Book chapters – 3
- Papers under review: 2 journal articles and one book chapter

Goal 8. Sociology faculty will engage in professional service at department, university, and discipline levels.

- The three senior members served on thirteen different university committees.
- Department faculty sponsored two information sessions to encourage student interest in graduate study—an informal question-and-answer session and a presentation by a representative of the U.S.C. School of Social Work.
- Two members served on the executive committee of the S.C. Sociological Association.
- Two members serve as readers and members of the editorial review board for a journal.

Table 1 - Seniors' Ratings of Learning Measures (0= Extremely Unprepared; 6 = Extremely Prepared)

Academic Year		To understand the sociological perspective and its relevance	To understand different cultures	To read and understand research articles in sociological journals	To understand sociological theories
1999-00	Mean	3.88	4.38	4.25	4.63
	Median	4.00	4.50	4.50	4.50
	Std. Deviation	1.642	1.302	1.282	1.061
	N	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	4.55	5.09	4.91	4.00
	Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	.688	.539	.701	1.000
	N	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	4.85	5.15	5.00	4.58
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50
	Std. Deviation	.899	.801	.816	.900
	N	13	13	13	12
2002-03	Mean	4.29	4.50	4.71	4.43
	Median	5.00	4.50	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.113	.548	1.113	.787
	N	7	6	7	7
2003-04	Mean	4.83	4.67	5.33	4.67
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.408	1.033	.816	.516
	N	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	4.70	5.00	4.80	3.90
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	.823	.816	1.135	1.287
	N	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	4.67	4.67	5.11	4.11
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	.707	1.118	1.054	1.269
	N	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	4.70	5.20	5.40	3.30
	Median	5.00	5.00	6.00	3.50
	Std. Deviation	1.059	.422	.843	1.567
	N	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.64	4.91	5.09	4.45
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.674	.831	1.044	.688
	N	11	11	11	11
Total	Mean	4.59	4.89	4.96	4.20
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00

Std. Deviation	.930	.850	.981	1.106
N	85	84	85	84

Table 2 - Seniors' Ratings of Skills Development and Advising (1 = Very Poor; 6 = Excellent)

Academic Year		Analyze and interpret sociological data	Understand how sociologists collect information about the social world	Communicate effectively, both written and orally	Have a career	Quality of advising you received
1999-00	Mean	3.88	4.13	4.25	3.50	4.86
	Median	4.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.458	1.356	.886	1.309	.690
	N	8	8	8	8	7
2000-01	Mean	4.73	4.91	5.00	4.82	4.55
	Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.905	.701	.775	1.168	1.214
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	4.54	4.85	4.77	4.54	5.31
	Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00
	Std. Deviation	1.050	.899	.927	1.391	1.032
	N	13	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	4.14	4.71	5.29	4.67	4.86
	Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.069	.951	.488	1.366	.900
	N	7	7	7	6	7
2003-04	Mean	4.67	5.17	5.67	4.33	5.50
	Median	4.50	5.00	6.00	4.50	6.00
	Std. Deviation	.816	.753	.516	1.366	.837
	N	6	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	5.40	5.30	4.50	4.50	5.30
	Median	5.00	5.50	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.516	.949	.707	.707	.675
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.11	5.33	5.22	4.78	5.50
	Median	5.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.50
	Std. Deviation	.601	.866	.972	1.481	.535
	N	9	9	9	9	8
2006-07	Mean	5.10	5.50	5.10	3.70	4.70
	Median	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.876	.707	.738	2.058	1.337
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.91	4.36	4.73	4.73	5.00
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00
	Std. Deviation	.701	1.567	1.272	1.009	1.789
	N	11	11	11	11	11
Total	Mean	4.75	4.92	4.91	4.42	5.05
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Std. Deviation	.975	1.060	.908	1.364	1.114
N	85	85	85	84	83

Table 3 - Sociology Seniors' Ratings of Sociology Courses (1 = Very Poor; 6 = Excellent)

Academic Year		The availability of course offerings	Extent class objectives were specified and met	The overall quality of the instructional strategies	Overall fairness of grading in sociology classes	Overall quality of sociology courses
1999-00	Mean	3.75	3.75	4.00	4.00	4.25
	Median	4.00	3.50	4.00	4.50	4.00
	Std. Deviation	1.488	1.165	.756	1.852	.886
	N	8	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	4.09	4.45	4.55	4.82	4.45
	Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.578	1.214	.934	1.537	1.128
	N	11	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	5.00	4.85	4.85	5.00	4.92
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.080	.987	.899	.913	1.038
	N	13	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	4.50	4.67	4.50	4.43	4.57
	Median	4.50	4.50	4.50	5.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	1.049	.816	1.049	.787	.787
	N	6	6	6	7	7
2003-04	Mean	4.83	5.50	5.17	4.83	5.00
	Median	5.00	5.50	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.753	.548	.753	1.169	.632
	N	6	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	4.90	5.20	5.20	5.00	5.20
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.994	.632	.632	1.054	.632
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.11	5.44	4.67	5.11	5.22
	Median	5.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.054	.726	.707	1.167	.833
	N	9	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	4.80	4.80	4.70	5.20	5.00
	Median	5.50	5.00	4.50	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.619	.919	.823	.919	.667
	N	10	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	4.36	4.82	5.00	5.18	5.36
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.362	.751	.894	1.779	.674
	N	11	11	11	11	11
Total	Mean	4.61	4.82	4.75	4.88	4.91
	Median	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	1.290	.984	.863	1.286	.881

Table 4 - Sociology Seniors' Ratings of Faculty Performance (1 = Very Poor; 6 = Excellent)

Academic Year		Faculty's overall knowledge of the subject matter	Faculty's overall course conduct	Faculty's treatment of students in the classroom	Each faculty member's approachability and availability
1999-00	Mean	5.50	3.50	4.63	4.50
	Median	6.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.756	1.690	.916	2.000
	N	8	8	8	8
2000-01	Mean	5.55	4.00	4.82	5.00
	Median	6.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.934	1.095	.982	1.483
	N	11	11	11	11
2001-02	Mean	5.69	4.62	5.38	5.08
	Median	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.630	.961	.768	.954
	N	13	13	13	13
2002-03	Mean	5.43	4.43	4.57	4.57
	Median	6.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
	Std. Deviation	.787	1.134	.976	.787
	N	7	7	7	7
2003-04	Mean	5.83	5.67	4.83	5.33
	Median	6.00	6.00	5.00	5.50
	Std. Deviation	.408	.516	.753	.816
	N	6	6	6	6
2004-05	Mean	5.70	5.40	5.40	5.50
	Median	6.00	5.00	5.50	5.50
	Std. Deviation	.483	.516	.699	.527
	N	10	10	10	10
2005-06	Mean	5.78	5.67	5.33	5.22
	Median	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
	Std. Deviation	.441	.500	.866	1.093
	N	9	9	9	9
2006-07	Mean	5.60	5.20	4.90	5.40
	Median	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.50
	Std. Deviation	.516	.789	1.101	.699
	N	10	10	10	10
2007-08	Mean	5.82	5.45	5.55	5.82
	Median	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
	Std. Deviation	.405	.688	.522	.405
	N	11	11	11	11
Total	Mean	5.66	4.87	5.09	5.19
	Median	6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
	Std. Deviation	.609	1.142	.881	1.086

APPENDIX A - Analysis of Student Performance
Dr. Russell E. Ward, Jr., Associate Professor

Principles of Sociology 201 (Fall 2007)

More students failed Principles of Sociology 201 than any other course I taught in 2007-2008. Grades were based on four multiple-choice tests, a 2-3 page take-home written assignment, and five in-class writing assignments. Among the 34 students, five of them earned grades of F, and three earned grades of A. The mean course grade was 2.10, the median was 2.50, and the standard deviation was 1.24. Sociology majors underperformed compared to non-sociology majors. The mean course grade for sociology majors (N = 4) was 1.25 with a standard deviation of 0.29, and the mean course grade for non-sociology majors (N = 30) was 2.22 with a standard deviation of 1.28.

The take-home written assignment consisted of me presenting the students with different perspectives on educating children in poverty, and having them describe similarities and differences between the perspectives. The mean score on the assignment was 80.29%, the median was 83.00%, and the standard deviation was 16.26%. While the students summarized each perspective fairly well, they experienced more difficulty with the critique. For instance, only two or three students could describe how the film, "Corridor of Shame," might be criticized rather than praised. Sociology majors performed slightly better (Mean = 81.50%) than non-sociology majors (Mean = 80.13%) on the take-home written assignment.

Five in-class writing assignments, each worth five points, were randomly administered throughout the semester to determine if students were thinking "sociologically." The mean score for the assignments was 3.91, the median was 4.00, and the standard deviation was 0.74. Sociology majors performed worse (Mean = 3.15) than non-sociology majors (Mean = 4.01) on the in-class writing assignments.

Sociology of Sport 381 (Fall 2007)

Sociology of Sport 381 was the only course I taught in 2007-2008 where no student earned an A. Grades were based on four multiple-choice tests, a research paper, a classroom presentation of the research paper, and 16 type-written discussion papers. Among the 24 students, no student earned an A, and one earned an F. The mean course grade was 2.33, the median was 2.50, and the standard deviation was 0.76. Sociology majors underperformed compared to non-sociology majors. The mean course grade for sociology majors (N = 13) was 2.15 with a standard deviation of 0.55, and the mean course grade for non-sociology majors (N = 11) was 2.55 with a standard deviation of 0.28.

The research paper consisted of either analyzing the content of a sports video game or participating in the Center of Excellence essay contest with the purpose of explaining how sports may add to or subtract from secondary education. Only two students pursued the essay contest. Neither student won the contest. The mean score on the research paper was 76.92%, the median was 85.00%, and the standard deviation was 21.73%. The students struggled with the task of

applying an analytical strategy (i.e., method) to analyze the content of the sports video game. Sociology majors performed worse (Mean = 75.92%) than non-sociology majors (Mean = 78.09%) on the research paper.

Students presented their research papers in class. The vast majority of students (i.e., except one or two) used power point technology to present their papers. The mean score for the presentations was 84.58%, the median was 85%, and the standard deviation was 20.53%. Sociology majors performed slightly better (Mean = 85.77%) on the presentations than non-sociology majors (Mean = 83.18%), raising the possibility that sociology majors get more experience with classroom presentations.

Sixteen type-written discussion papers (i.e., one paper per chapter), each worth five points, were assigned to determine if students were thinking “sociologically” about sports. The mean score for the assignments was 3.50, the median was 3.90, and the standard deviation was 1.11. Sociology majors performed worse (Mean = 3.12) than non-sociology majors (Mean = 3.96) on the discussion papers.

Methods of Sociology 202 (Fall 2007 and Spring 2008)

Overall, student performance in Methods of Sociology 202 resembled Principles of Sociology 201. Grades were based on four multiple-choice tests, a computer lab exercise (Fall 2007 only), and a take-home written assignment.

Among the 38 students in Fall 2007, four of them earned F’s, and four earned A’s. The mean course grade was 2.13, the median was 2.0, and the standard deviation was 1.08. Sociology majors underperformed compared to non-sociology majors. The mean course grade for sociology majors (N = 18) was 1.51 with a standard deviation of 0.57, and the mean course grade for non-sociology majors (N = 20) was 2.62 with a standard deviation of 0.63.

In Fall 2007, students completed a computer lab exercise designed to introduce them to qualitative data analysis software. The students appeared to enjoy the computer-based assignment, and earned an average grade of 82.29%. Because of the extraordinary amount of time it took to teach students how to use the software package, the assignment was dropped in Spring 2008. Sociology majors performed a little worse than non-sociology majors on the computer-based assignment. Sociology majors averaged 80.94%, and non-sociology majors averaged 83.50%.

In Fall 2007, students also completed a take-home written assignment where they were asked to deconstruct a peer-reviewed journal article. In particular, they answered 23 questions (e.g., identify independent and dependent variables, discuss reliability and validity issues, etc.) about the article. The mean score on the assignment was 67.34%, the median was 70%, and the standard deviation was 24.84%. While some of the students supplied lengthy, thoughtful, and elaborate answers, the majority of the students offered cursory responses. Sociology majors performed considerably worse (Mean = 59.95%) than non-sociology majors (73.95%) on the take-home written assignment.

Among the 39 students in Spring 2008, one of them earned an F, and five earned A’s. The mean course grade was 2.15, the median was 2.0, and the standard deviation was 0.95. Sociology

majors underperformed compared to non-sociology majors. The mean course grade for sociology majors (N = 22) was 1.78 with a standard deviation of 0.83, and the mean course grade for non-sociology majors (N = 17) was 2.65 with a standard deviation of 0.89.

In Spring 2008, students completed a take-home written assignment where they were asked to deconstruct a peer-reviewed journal article. In particular, they answered 23 questions (e.g., identify independent and dependent variables, discuss reliability and validity issues, etc.) about the article. The mean score on the assignment was 72.20%, the median was 76.00%, and the standard deviation was 21.37%. Nearly 25% (N = 10) of the students earned A's on this assignment, but 13 of the students earned grades of zero on the assignment because they copied from each other. Sociology majors performed considerably worse (Mean = 64.32%) than non-sociology majors (82.23%) on the take-home written assignment.

Beginning in Fall 2007 and continuing into Spring 2008, lecture notes were converted to power point presentations for the first time since I began teaching Methods of Sociology 202 in Fall 2000. This course revision did not appear to alter student performance. Despite some of the test questions (e.g., definitions) coming directly from power point slides, some students missed these questions on the test.

Social Deviance 342

Overall, students performed better in Social Deviance 342 than in any other course I taught in 2007-2008, and it was the only course I taught where sociology majors consistently outperformed non-sociology majors. Grades were based on four multiple-choice tests, a research paper, and a classroom presentation of the research paper. Among the 27 students, two students earned A's, and one earned an F. The mean course grade was 2.41, the median was 2.50, and the standard deviation was 0.86. Sociology majors outperformed non-sociology majors. The mean course grade for sociology majors (N = 14) was 2.54 with a standard deviation of 0.82, and the mean course grade for non-sociology majors (N = 13) was 2.27 with a standard deviation of 0.90.

The research paper consisted of reading a confessional novel or memoir written in the first person that focused on a deviant or stigmatized person. The students had the option of either linking the novel or memoir to a sociological theory of deviance or connecting the novel or memoir to various neutralization strategies or justifications for deviance. The mean score on the research paper was 74.93%, the median was 78.00%, and the standard deviation was 18.26%. Most of the students appeared to read the novel or memoir more carefully than the textbook. Sociology majors performed much better (Mean = 80.71%) than non-sociology majors (Mean = 68.70%) on the research paper.

Students presented their research papers in class. The vast majority of students (i.e., except one or two) used power point technology to present their papers. The mean score for the presentations was 86.11%, the median was 90.00%, and the standard deviation was 18.72%. Sociology majors performed better (Mean = 89.64%) on the presentations than non-sociology majors (Mean = 82.31%), supporting the earlier statement that sociology majors get more experience with ssroom presentations.

APPENDIX B

REFLECTIONS ON SOCI 303, 407, and 419 by Lisa Eargle

Issues to Maintain

1. Research projects in SOCI 407 and 419
2. Data analysis paper in SOCI 303
3. Performance on examinations
4. Open door policy

Issues to Address

1. Quality of student oral presentations
2. Decreasing opportunities for plagiarism
3. Decreasing opportunities for cheating on other assignments

Discussion

1. Students continue to produce quality research projects in these courses, with an average grade of 88 (B+) on the projects. Students continue to demonstrate knowledge of how to conduct a literature review, develop research questions based upon the literature review, locate relevant data, perform appropriate analyses, and interpret statistical results.
2. When first instituted as a requirement in Fall 2007, students complained and haphazardly completed the assignment (Average grade of 70, a low C). In Spring 2008, however, students seemed to take the assignment in stride and performed well on the assignment (Average grade of 86, B+).
3. In spite of increasing the number of examinations and essay questions on each exam, students continue to excel in my courses (exams average 76 to 82, C+ to low B range). I continue to receive positive remarks on teaching evaluations about the method, quality, and content of my lectures, and on the expectations that I have for student performance.
4. Students continue to positively evaluate my approachability and availability to them, to answer questions about class material, grades, etc.

Actions Taken/To Be Taken

- 1a. created detailed grading rubric and included it in syllabus in all courses
- 1b. explained rubric to students before presentations and explained grades after presentations to show students their weaknesses in all courses
- 2a. Instructor assign topics for projects and papers in all courses
- 2b. require students to submit Xeroxed copies of all references cited in work, with passages used for papers highlighted in all courses
- 3a. Changed format of exams to all short answer and essay questions (already use multiple version of exams, with versions used differing between different sections of same course) in all courses
- 3b. homework/lab assignments no longer assigned points in final course grade calculations in SOCI 303

4. Increasing student exposure to spatial component in research
 5. Exposing students to wider varieties of data, Including infrastructure data
 6. Table/chart/figure reading literacy
 7. Recognizing the different formats that data sources can take and how to work with them
 8. Reducing number of weak or lazy students in courses
- 4a. Received IT Grant to purchase ArcView software
 - 4b. adding ArcView map requirement to student research projects
 - 4c. incorporate maps in course lectures
 5. using infrastructure dataset from my personal research for course assignments and lectures in SOCI 303, 407, and 419
 6. Incorporate their interpretations in lectures and assignments
 7. Use different types of data in lectures and assignments, to teach students data coding
 8. Increased number of assignments, difficulty of assignments, strict attendance regulations/enforcement, etc.

APPENDIX C

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIOLOGY 403 RESEARCH PROJECTS, 2002-03 TO 2007-08

Dr. Joel Thayer

	A or B	C	D or F
Number and quality of references			
2002-2003 (n = 16)	38%	38%	25%
2003-2004 (n = 19)	47%	42%	11%
2004-2005 (n = 20)	40%	30%	30%
2005-2006 (n = 20)	35%	25%	40%
2006-2007 (n = 30)	33%	57%	10%
2007-2008 (n = 26)	38%	23%	38%
Thoroughness of literature review			
2002-2003	56%	25%	19%
2003-2004	63%	32%	5%
2004-2005	50%	20%	30%
2005-2006	45%	30%	25%
2006-2007	63%	23%	13%
2007-2008	46%	27%	27%
Sample size and design¹			
2002-2003	6%	94%	0%
2003-2004	100%	0%	5%
2004-2005	95%	0%	5%
2005-2006	40%	45%	15%
2006-2007	37%	60%	3%
2007-2008	31%	65%	4%
Questionnaire¹			
2002-2003	63%	25%	13%
2003-2004	79%	21%	0%
2004-2005	85%	5%	10%
2005-2006	90%	0%	10%
2006-2007	87%	13%	0%
2007-2008	58%	38%	4%
Accuracy and thoroughness of methods section			
2002-2003	38%	31%	31%
2003-2004	58%	26%	16%
2004-2005	45%	40%	15%
2005-2006	45%	25%	30%
2006-2007	30%	33%	37%
2007-2008	35%	50%	15%

	A or B	C	D or F
Accuracy and thoroughness of data analysis/interpretation ²			
2002-2003	31%	38%	31%
2003-2004	47%	32%	21%
2004-2005	40%	45%	15%
2005-2006	45%	30%	25%
2006-2007	43%	23%	33%
2007-2008	62%	19%	19%

Index/scale construction and analysis ²			
2002-2003	0%		
2003-2004	26%		
2004-2005	5%	10%	
2005-2006	10%		
2006-2007	17%		
2007-2008	12%		

Multivariate analysis ²			
2002-2003	0%		
2003-2004	16%		
2004-2005	10%		
2005-2006	10%	20%	
2006-2007	13%		
2007-2008	15%	4%	

1. Smaller proportions of high grades for sampling reflect adoption of higher standards rather than a worsening of student work.
2. Index/scale construction and analysis as well as multivariate analysis are encouraged, but not required for a final grade of “B” or lower.
3. Average performance in discussion of hypotheses supported by literature review worsened this past year. Instructor will provide more practice and modeling. Tighter emphasis on early deadlines may be necessary.
4. More detailed emphasis upon components of the methods section of the research report appears needed. More class time will be devoted.
5. Last year’s report addressed the need for increased class time, use of examples, handouts to improve interpretation of results of statistical analysis. That may be responsible for the notable improvement in this area. More emphasis upon selection of statistical measures will be added while continuing the increased attention to these of the past year.