

Department of Sociology  
Assessment Plan  
January 23, 2017

In 2017, Sociology will assess Learning Outcome #3: “Students will be proficient in basic research methods including interviews, direct observation, content analysis, and surveys. They will know how to collect and analyze data, and how to identify appropriate methods for answering different sociological questions.”

The assessment plan includes two different strategies. First, the curriculum committee will evaluate all department syllabi to assess which of our courses contribute to this learning outcome. Second, we plan to conduct several focus groups with a sample of graduating seniors during spring term. At the beginning of the focus group, students will be asked to work independently on a problem that will test their understanding of basic research methods. During the subsequent group discussion, participants will discuss their responses to this problem. They will then be asked to discuss a series of questions about what they have learned in terms of research methods during the course of the major, as well as question about their experiences in the overall program.

These focus groups will be audio recorded and analyzed by the curriculum committee for major themes. The faculty will then meet to discuss the findings and make a plan for how to adjust our curriculum, if necessary.