ASSESSMENT REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019

LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair,

Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

Evelyn Rodriguez, Chair of the Sociology Department

2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? Kindly

state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report,

please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program.

No **Mission**

Statement:

In the Department of Sociology, students learn to apply sociological frameworks to their everyday lives and to "real world" social problems. They will critically examine social patterns and inequalities and will develop sociological perspectives to become engaged participants in this globalized world. Our program equips students with the tools to challenge interlocking

systems of oppression and privilege and build just societies as advocates, policymakers, activists, and scholars.

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2018?

Kindly state "Yes" or "No." Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please

provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.

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Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Sociology majors should be able to analyze critically social practices, structures, and inequalities, such that the student will be able to:

   a. Define, give examples of, and use meaningfully at least six of the following: culture; status; role; norms; deviance; social structure; social class; social mobility; social change; socialization; stratification; institutions; race; social class; ethnic group; gender. b. Identify both macrosociological and microsociological aspects of social life, and discuss examples of these from at least one substantive area of sociology; and describe at least two "intersections" of structural inequalities. c. Describe inequalities at the regional, international, and/or global levels of analysis.

2. Sociology majors should be able to discuss, differentiate, and apply major sociological theories, frameworks and traditions, such that the student will be able to:

   a. Describe, compare, and contrast basic theoretical orientations, such as functionalism, conflict theories, and interactionism. b. Describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one

area of social reality.

3. Sociology majors should be able to formulate, conduct, and communicate independent social research, such that the student will be able to:

   a. Describe, compare, and contrast basic methodological approaches for gathering sociological data, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. b. Design, implement, and convey data findings in writing for a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made, including sampling, variables, measures, methods of data collection, and data analysis. c. Use computerized and online databases to find published sociological research and critically assess a published research report in an area of choice.

4. Sociology majors should be able to connect sociological analysis to practical social action, such that the student will be able to:

   a. Explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in an area of choice. b. Develop a sociologically informed action plan in an area of choice. c. Conduct at least twenty-five hours of service or activist work in an area of choice, and explain what they have experienced from a sociological framework.

4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2018-2019?

PLO 4a Given that we have assessed our students' methodology for several years now, and how critical written communication is for the future endeavors of our students, following the last

assessment cycle, the faculty elected to evaluate more closely our department's effectiveness in training our majors to clearly and effectively communicate sociological concepts in writing. Consequently, for 2018-19, the Assessment Committee examined to what extent our students are meeting PLO 4a, "Sociology majors should be able to connect sociological analysis to practical social action, such that the student will be able to explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in an area of choice."

This year's assessment clarified for us that the department does not have a stated Program Learning Outcome that is specific to writing. Nevertheless, since the Assessment Committee had been tasked to evaluate our graduating students' writing abilities, we deemed that PLO 4a was the most well-suited PLO for such an exercise.

METHODOLOGY

5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).

This year our Assessment Committee is composed of three full-time departmental faculty (i.e., 30% of our faculty), including one Writing for Sociology instructor and both Sociology Capstone Seminar instructors: Jennifer Turpin, Nicole Raeburn, and Evelyn I. Rodriguez, respectively.

Our committee analyzed work produced in the department's Spring 2018 senior year exit courses--Senior Thesis (SOC 410) and Sociology Capstone Seminar (SOC 450)--to assess whether students have achieved PLO 4a by the time they have completed our program. In Spring 2018, six (6) students completed SOC 410, 12 students completed SOC 450-01, and eight (8) students completed SOC 450-02. All students were declared Sociology majors.

For this assessment, we utilized students' FInal Theses in SOC 410, Portfolio Assignment 2 submissions in SOC 450-01, and students' Capstone Portfolios in SOC 450-02 to assess the extent to which students are meeting PLO 4a during the semester before their graduation (see Appendices A-C).

To evaluate students' writing, our committee created the following rubric for assessment:

SOC PLO4a Assessment Rubric

Criteria

Performance Standards

Exceeds Expectations (4)

Meets Expectations (3)

Needs Improvement (2)

Below Expectations (1)

Below Expectations (1)

ory

Explains the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing

Explains the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing **with acceptable specificity and accuracy**

Explains the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing **with acceptable specificity and accuracy**

Attempts to explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing **with**

insufficient specificity and accuracy

Attempts to explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing **with insufficient specificity and accuracy**

Attempts to explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing **with insufficient specificity and accuracy**

Does not explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing and/or articulates content with **excessive errors**

Does not explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing and/or articulates content with **excessive errors**

Does not explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing and/or articulates content with **excessive errors**

Does not explain the implications for the practical action of sociological theory and research in writing

To assure that the Assessment Committee could consistently apply the PLO 4a rubric, we underwent the following **calibration procedure**:

● Each member individually evaluated the same, randomly-selected (using a random number generator) three (3) assignments from the student work produced in SOC 410, SOC 450-01, and SOC 450-02.

● Afterwards, the Assessment Committee held a norming session to compare and discuss our individual scores and establish clear methods for evaluating writing performance, so that we could be sure to apply the PLO 4a Rubric uniformly.

To complete our assessment, the Assessment Committee:

● Randomly selected (using a random number generator) a total of 12 assignments from the student work produced by our Spring 2018 graduating seniors: two (2) from SOC 410, six (6) from SOC 450-01, and four (4) from SOC 450-02.

● Evaluated each student's writing product using the criteria specified in the PLO 4a Assessment Rubric above.

● Input each of the reviewer's scores for each student's assignment.

● Tabulated the total number of students whose work fit the criteria at each of the following scoring levels for PLO 4a for the entire sample: 1 ("Below Expectations"), 2 ("Needs Improvement"), 3 ("Meets Expectations"), and 4 ("Exceeds Expectations") (see Table 1 in Results and Raw Data in Appendix D).

RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

The following tables summarize our 2018-2019 Assessment of SOC PLO 4a:

Table 1: Papers Scored at Each Level (for all courses)

PLO 4a (#) PLO 4a (%) Level 1 0 0 Level 2 1 8% Level 3 6 50% Level 4 5 42%

Table 2: Papers Scored at Each Level (by course)

SOC 410: Senior Thesis

SOC 450: Capstone Level 1 0 0 Level 2 0 10% Level 3 0 60% Level 4 100% 30%

Our direct data results highlight that:

● The vast majority of our students (92%) are meeting or exceeding PLO 4a by the time they are ready to graduate from Sociology.

● All (100%) of our Senior Thesis students are *exceeding* PLO 4a expectations by

graduation.

● The vast majority (90%) of our Capstone students are meeting or exceeding PLO 4a by graduation: 60% are meeting PLO 4a expectations, and 30% are exceeding PLO 4a expectations.

The Assessment Committee **interprets our results** as follows:

We are pleased that a high percentage of our students meet or exceed expectations for PLO 4a, given the emphasis our department places on preparing students for critically informed action. We determined that in both Sociology 410 (Senior Thesis) and in Sociology 450 (Capstone), our students are connecting sociological analysis to practical social action. Our data show that while the majority of our students are successfully doing so, there is room for improvement.

CLOSING THE LOOP

7. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery

in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your

department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next

academic year itself.

Based on our results and our reflections while conducting the assessment, the department will consider updating our PLOs to include a writing-based outcome. We are adding this proposal to our department's spring retreat agenda (related to our planned discussion of the Writing in Sociology course that is one of our core required classes). At the retreat, we will weigh the costs and benefits of a programmatic expansion of learning outcomes and collectively decide on concrete forms of support that we would consider essential before proceeding with the addition of a writing-specific PLO.

As a second course of action based on our assessment of PLO 4a, we will recommend that all faculty direct students to specifically and accurately reference sociological theory and research. In addition, we will recommend that all faculty reinforce the expectation that students must properly and consistently cite those scholarly sources both within the body of their

assignments and in the References or Works Cited section.

Finally, in our departmental discussions about pedagogy, we will brainstorm and discuss various teaching methods that would further enhance our students' ability to specifically and accurately address the intersections between theory and practice when considering various forms of social action. These additional pedagogical strategies could then be appropriately

adapted for each course across our curriculum in an endeavor to help all students "exceed expectations" for PLO 4a.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic

year 2017-2018, submitted in October 2018)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

Based on feedback from our last assessment reports, the Sociology Department determined that we had more than adequately tracked and addressed students' learning and growth in key areas of PLO 3 (concerning Research Methods) that had been of concern to us. As we continue to implement our own and the university's recommendations regarding what was assessed in 2018, the department has decided to shift our assessment focus to our department's effectiveness in training our students to clearly and effectively communicate sociological concepts in writing.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

For ease of reading, rather than placing them at the end of our report, we have integrated our

assessment rubric and various tables in the sections where they are most relevant.

Below please see various Appendices (i.e., the assignment prompts for SOC 410 and both sections of

SOC 450, as well as raw data of the randomly selected student work that was assessed by all members of the Assessment Committee).

Appendix A: SOC 410 Senior Thesis Course and Assignment Description

The purpose of this course, which fulfills the final Sociology major requirement in lieu of Capstone in Sociology, is to allow students to *synthesize* (or bring together)—and bring to bear—the theoretical knowledge, research skills, substantive concerns, and understanding of social justice that they have learned as Sociology Department members at USF. This allows students to experience firsthand what it means to do original sociological research....

The course's main purpose is to help you design, research and write your senior thesis—an original scholarly study on a topic selected by you, built from evidence collected by you, and written up by you into a paper of roughly 30-40 double spaced pages (including notes and bibliography) for the Honors Track, and roughly 14-20 pages for the Senior Thesis Track, that contributes to our sociological knowledge and understanding of the social problem, issue, or phenomenon you choose to investigate. With help from me, your thesis advisor, and your peers in the class, you will define a research question, choose an appropriate methodology, craft a research proposal, generate a critical review of relevant sociological literature, conduct first-hand research involving original data collected by you, analyze the data you've collected, and draft and revise a final thesis.

Appendix B: SOC 450-01 Assignment 2 Prompt

Assignment 2 of Scholar-Activist Portfolio SOC 450-01: Sociology Capstone
Seminar Prof. Nikki Raeburn Spring 2019 **(worth 20% of total course grade &**
tentatively due on **Fri., 4/26, by 11:59 p.m.)**

Scholar-Activist Portfolio: Focusing on a social movement issue that you are passionate about, students will create a *digital* **portfolio** that will provide useful materials/analyses/suggestions meant to inform various audiences (other activists, students, educators, policymakers, concerned public, etc.). The project will be "scaffolded" such that each piece will be related to the others but will be due at different times in the semester so as to make the process more manageable. Now that you're finished with the first portion of the portfolio, it's time to focus on the second component.

As you move forward with the writing process, please be **sure** to see the **Writing-related Resources folder** under **Files** in Canvas for useful information on avoiding common writing errors (with examples and corrections), citing online sources (with specific examples), and adhering to ASA format (see the Quick Tips sheet, but I've also included the full ASA Style Guide in case you're interested). The **syllabus** also includes links to several useful writing-related resources. Below are the specific requirements for this portion of your scholar-activist portfolio:

Portfolio Assignment 2: **Online Guide to** *Activism* **Targeting X Inequality:**

Part (a): a **bullet point list** of key **social movement organizations/activist efforts** aimed at challenging X inequality (i.e., various forms of organized resistance to whatever oppression you focused on for Portfolio Assignment 1), with brief descriptions of organizations and contact information (in linked format if available). [Note that, due to the decisions you all made as part of the consensus-building activity we did, Assignment 2 does not have to be linked to Assignment 1, meaning the activist organization you select for your participant observation and case study does not have to be focused on challenging X inequality from Assignment 1. I nevertheless recommend that you do link the two, since I think it will be more meaningful for you.]

Part (b): a **1-paragraph abstract** providing a succinct overview of the **social movement organization/activist network** that you selected for **participant observation.**

Part (c): your application of **social movement theory** via a **case study** (10-12 pages) of the movement organization/activist network that you chose [more detailed requirements for this part of the assignment are included **below**]. (Scholarly and other trusted sources to be listed at end of document. Complete citation information in ASA format required.) Part (d): a list of **recommended resources** on X-focused **activism** that would be useful for other activists, students and educators, community members, policymakers, etc. (with brief descriptions of each and links embedded where available). [More details re the difference between part (a) and part (d) of this assignment are included **below**.]

More details re part (c) above [your case study]:

Remember that your case study focuses on the **social movement organization (SMO)/activist network** that you have selected for **participant observation.** This SMO must provide **organized resistance to whatever form of inequality/oppression/privilege you chose for Assignment 1** [or, if you choose **not** to link Assignments 1 and 2, then you can select an SMO focused on challenging a **different** form of inequality/oppression/privilege]. As a reminder, your SMO can be a larger regional, state, national, or international organization, but it must have a local chapter here in the Bay area so that you can attend meetings and talk with members and leaders. Alternatively, it can instead be a small local

activist network without a wider membership, as long as contact information is publicly available and as long as they are open to your attending meetings and talking with members and leaders.

Your **case study** must draw on interviews with leaders and/or other members (those interviews can come from various published sources, but you must also conduct **at least two interviews yourself**) AND your own **field notes from your participant observation** in the SMO/activist network meetings and/or actions. You must also supplement that **primary data** that you will gather with a **wide variety of secondary sources**, including but not limited to the following: website materials maintained by the activist organization (if applicable), other movement literature written by the activist network (whether print or online), published work about the social movement organization (whether scholarly or not), relevant media coverage, documentaries, and other print or digital sources about the organization.

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Required sections for your case study [part (c) above]:

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This part of Assignment 2 allows you the opportunity to bring to life **resource mobilization theory, political process theory, and new social movement theory** by applying course content—i.e., assigned readings, lectures on social movement theory, documentaries that we've watched in class and on your own as video homework, and class discussions—to the SMO or activist network you have selected for participant observation. As such, your case study **must include the following components**, although you may certainly include additional information if you wish:

(1) a brief **history** of the organization: when it formed, by whom, number of members (if available), and some of its key actions over the course of its existence (2) **goals & target(s)** (3) **strategies & tactics** (4) organizational **structure & leadership** (5) **recruitment:** how they attempt to gain new members, supporters, and allies (6) **framing:** how they discursively frame movement messages/values/beliefs, what they diagnose as the problem(s), what solutions they propose, and how they motivate others to get involved (via the 3 core tasks of framing) (7) **collective identity:** how participants construct a new shared subjectivity in order to strengthen their sense of agency and efficacy and challenge marginalization (via the 3 key components presented in lecture) (8) **media:** the organization's relationship with the media (how they attempt to gain visibility & what they think about how they are portrayed in the media, if at all) (9) various types of **resources** (material, human, etc.) (10) **indigenous resources** (provided from within a marginalized community) vs. **external resources** (including any elite patronage or institutional funding) (11) **political opportunity structure:** how the external environment shapes the opportunities and constraints faced by the organization (via the 4 key components presented in lecture) (12) **social movement successes:** briefly discuss any victories of the group and specify which types of success they have achieved (as per the 6 types of success presented in lecture); and briefly explain each of the 6 levels of success even if your SMO has only achieved some of those

Your case study [part (c)] should total to approximately **10-12 pages** in length. The page limits are guidelines; you may go over 12 pages if you feel it is necessary, but anything less than 10 pages is likely to lack the depth and thoroughness

required. For the write-up of your case study, break it into 12 separate **labeled subsections** representing the 12 numbered requirements above, but please also be sure to use *paragraphs* **within** those subsections wherever logical breaks occur.

More on the difference between part (a) and part (d) above:

Part (a) is a list of what you see as the main SMO's/activist networks in the movement you're writing about, but think of part (d) as much broader than that. Part (d) should include information that would be useful to know regarding how to take action around X inequality even if one does not belong to an activist organization (since people can work toward social justice even if they're not a member of a formal SMO, though of course it most likely makes it easier if they are). In other words, part (d) will include resources that you would recommend for not just activists who belong to SMO's but anyone who cares about addressing X inequality [or whatever form of oppression/privilege that your SMO is trying to challenge] and learning more about **how to get involved/engaged in the struggle for social justice on that issue.**

Assume for part (d) that you're gathering this list of recommended resources for an audience that cares about **addressing/resisting/challenging/ending/solving** X inequality (whether as **activists, students, concerned global citizens, policymakers, etc.**), so these should be things that you think would be particularly helpful for them. This could include but is not limited to the following recommended resources: **websites, conferences, books, articles, pamphlets on how to get involved, policymakers' contact information, other organizations that aren't SMO's/activist networks but nevertheless are doing things related to X inequality, etc.** Overall, then, the list in part (d) should be things that you think interested audiences would find helpful in terms of **taking action to solve/challenge/end X inequality** even if they don't join an SMO. For **each** of your recommended resources, be sure to give a **1-2 sentence description** along with the full name of the resource (and complete citation if a publication) as well as a link (if available).

Other requirements for Assignment 2:

Format: Be sure to **label each lettered section,** *and* for part (c), include labeled **subheadings for each of the 12 numbered requirements of the case study.**

Bibliography and citing properly: Be sure that your **bibliography** includes a listing of all the sources you drew on in gathering information for your case study, including details regarding your **primary sources** (interview dates and names/pseudonyms if requested; dates and locations of meetings/actions attended as part of your participation observation for your case study, etc.). You must also cite the **scholarly sources** we've read in class on social movement theory and the various social movements we've discussed from Staggenborg's book and other relevant assigned readings (supplemented with my lectures on specific social movement theories). Be sure to follow **ASA format** within the body of Assignment 2 **and** in your bibliography itself. (For a **Quick Style Guide to ASA format** and information on **how to cite online sources,** see the folder on **writing-related resources** in the **Files** section of Canvas.)

Informed consent form: Be sure to see the informed consent template (see **Files** and select the Assignment 2 folder), which you will need to **adapt to your purposes.** You **must** have **anyone you interview** complete and sign your informed consent form, and then when you submit your Assignment 2, be sure that it includes a **scanned copy of those signed**

forms after your bibliography. (At a minimum you will need to include **two signed consent forms** since you must complete at least two interviews.)

Please be sure to put your *name* on every page (with the first page also containing the course name and date), *number your pages*, and *double-space* your work, using *11- or 12-point font* and *1-inch margins*. (These are all **requirements**, not suggestions.) Be certain to *carefully proofread* your work well in advance in order to avoid any errors in spelling,

grammar, and punctuation. **Points may be deducted for any such errors.** (Again, please be sure to consult the folder on **writing-related resources** in the Files section of Canvas, which includes a worksheet on **common writing errors with corrections.** Consult the **syllabus** for additional writing resources, including details about the Writing and Learning Center on campus.)

Turnitin: You must submit Assignment 2 to **Turnitin** via **Canvas**. See related announcements on Canvas for submission instructions and how to interpret your Turnitin score and Originality Report. (NOTE: If you run into technological problems with Turnitin, you **must** e-mail the assignment to me by the deadline as proof that you had it done on time, and then after you get help with any technical difficulties, you must submit it to Turnitin since I will be grading it online.) Absolutely **no late submissions** will be accepted without verifiable proof of a serious family or medical emergency.

Appendix C: SOC 450-02 Final Portfolio Assignment Prompt

Final Portfolio (200 pts) DUE: T May 14, 5pm

Students will bring together and rigorously evaluate their in-class and CEL from throughout the semester in a Final Portfolio.

The first section of your Portfolio (500-750 words) may borrow from previous assignments to: ➢ Provide an overview of the scholarly and popular discourse regarding the social problem your

Social Change Project (SCP) was designed to address, and
➢ Describe your Service Learning organization and your SCP.

The rest of your paper will appraise the overall experience and effectiveness of your SCP (1250-1500 words) by evaluating: ➢ How did you execute your SCP? How closely did this follow your original proposal (i.e., did your SCP

change over time; and, if so, why or why not)? ➢ What has been the impact of your SCP, using the measures you developed in your midterm proposal?

Why or why not? Overall, would you say your SCP contributed to improvement within the community you have been working with? Why or why not? ➢ What notable *difficulties* (organizational/political) did your project face? How did you respond to such

oppositional forces? What notable *strengths*/decisions contributed to your project's efficacy? From where did these problems and advantages arise? How does this support/challenge existing sociological knowledge of social problems, movements, *and* organizing? ➢ How does this overall experience support/challenge existing sociological knowledge of social

problems, movements, *and* organizing? What did this experience teach you about social problems, movements, and/or organizing? ➢ What recommendations would you make for others who want to work with the same community,

and/or help meet similar community needs?
Why?

Appendix D: Assessment Raw Data

Paper PLO 4a Score Course

1 4 410-01

2 4 410-01

3 3 450-01

4 3 450-02

5 3 450-02

6 4 450-01

7 3 450-02

8 2 450-01

9 4 450-01

10 4 450-02

11 3 450-01

12 3 450-01