

Department of Sociology Assessment Report: 2014-2015

Fall 2014 and Spring 2015:

The Department of Sociology, which includes the Criminal Justice Studies major, reviewed the learning objectives and outcomes for the college catalog. We streamlined it and made some changes. After we had finished it, we see the need for a further revision to make it easier to perform assessments. The catalog description is in Appendix A.

The department has been archiving student papers in order to have material for assessment. We are developing a Capstone Course in Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies for our fourth year students. As it is still in development, the Sociology 342: Sociological Theory course is the closest we have to a capstone course (although this class is directed to third and fourth year students and not just fourth year students). We have assessed Sociology 342 and have action items pertaining to our assessment later in this document.

We assessed samples of student work in these courses that were offered in the 2014-2015 academic year:

Rubric Scoring of random samples of student work in the following courses:

CJS 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice Studies
Sociology 121: Microsociology
Sociology 141: Macrosociology
Sociology 191: Social Problems
Sociology 211: Anthropology
Sociology 342: Sociological Theory
Sociology 425: Urban Sociology
Sociology 431: Sociology of Working Class Literature
Sociology 431: Sociology of Sports

From our assessments we were able to make recommendations for further action. C.f. Appendix B for the Critical Thinking (AAU&P) Rubric that we used for assessment purposes. C.f. Appendix C for all the assessments that we performed.

2014-2015 Action Items:

1. We were to develop a capstone course for the two majors in our department: sociology and criminal justice studies. This is still under development and will be presented to the curriculum study committee in Fall 2015.
2. We have developed and are continue to amass an electronic archive of student work for assessment.
3. We have assessed 9 courses over the 2014-2015 academic year.
4. We are still developing rubrics for all our courses to be published in course syllabi.
5. We revised the college catalogue description for sociology and criminal justice studies and revisited and revised the learning objectives and goals.

2015-2016 Action Items:

1. The sociology/criminal justice studies capstone course is being developed. It will be presented to curriculum study in Fall 2015. In lieu of its completion, the Sociology 342: Sociological Theory course is a type of capstone as it allows the students a chance to discover their own inner sociological theory/perspective in much more depth than in other courses. We envision the capstone course as one to pull together what students have learned in sociology and criminal justice studies. Students would do a major research project. The better projects would be presented in the research symposium that Thiel has every spring semester.
2. We will continue to archive student papers/tests for assessment purposes.
3. We will continue assessing courses that we offer and will reassess some of the courses that we assessed in the 2014-2015 academic year.
4. We will find a way to assess adequately objective questions, such as multiple choice questions, for assessment purposes. For assessment purposes, we will be assigning for short answer/essay questions in exams at the introductory level.
5. We will continue to develop rubrics across the department and individual rubrics for courses that we offer. We expect each course syllabus to have a grading rubric included in it and it will be explained to the students.
6. Even though we revised the learning objective and goals for the college catalog for sociology and criminal justice studies, we see the need for further revision and will undertake this in fall 2015.

Appendix A

Revised Thiel College catalog copy for the 2015-2016 academic year:

Departmental Objectives

Sociology is the branch of science which specializes in the study of human societies and human social interaction. As part of a liberal arts education, the program in sociology has three main goals:

1. to convey basic knowledge of human societies and social relations leading to the development of a perspective for understanding and appreciating the diversity and potentiality of human cultures;
2. to develop skills in collecting and analyzing social data, in speaking and writing clearly and effectively, and in thinking logically and critically; and
3. to prepare students for employment in the social services or for graduate study in sociology, social work, or a related field.

A C average is required for the sociology major and/or minor and the criminal justice studies major to graduate.

Sociology

(Bachelor of Arts Degree)

Major Requirements

The major requires a minimum of 35 credit hours and must include the introductory courses:

SOC 121 Microsociology

SOC 141 Macrosociology

SOC 251 Minorities

SOC 341 Social Research Methods SOC 342 Sociological Theory SOC/CJS 371 Professional

Seminar MATH 211 Elementary Statistics

plus four sociology courses numbered 261 through 491, with the exception of SOC 455, and one other sociology course.

Note: Students electing to double major in sociology and criminal justice studies may not use the same elective courses to satisfy the elective requirement for both majors.

In addition to the required courses, sociology majors are encouraged to choose electives from a variety of disciplines in the humanities, natural sciences and other social sciences, and to include off-campus experiences, such as the social science internship. A declaration of a major in sociology must be filed no later than the first semester of the junior year.

A student who graduates from Thiel College with a major in sociology will:

- understand the sociological perspective.
- understand the principles of good social science research methodology.
- understand the major theoretical paradigms of sociology.
- understand the complexity and interaction of social groups in United States culture in terms of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, social class, sexual orientation, age and disability.
- understand the diversity of collective human behavior and belief.

Minor Requirements

The minor requires a minimum of 18 credit hours and must include the introductory courses: SOC

121 Microsociology

SOC 141 Macrosociology

SOC 211 Anthropology

SOC 342 Sociological Theory

Two additional sociology courses numbered 261 or higher, excluding 455.

A declaration of a minor in sociology must be filed no later than the first semester of the senior year.

Criminal Justice Studies

(Bachelor of Arts Degree)

The program is framed by Thiel's commitment to the liberal arts, signifying the importance of supporting the development of humane and altruistic perspectives of students in all fields of thought and work.

The major is interdisciplinary and requires study in a variety of related and supportive fields including sociology, political science, psychology, religion and philosophy.

Graduates from the program may work in courts, law enforcement, probation and parole, specialized treatment programs, public and private agencies such as juvenile probation, child and protective services and other occupations dedicated to principles of behavior reform.

The major in criminal justice studies requires a minimum of 44 semester credit hours, distributed according to the rules presented below. (Note: All courses listed are three credit hours unless otherwise indicated; CJS = criminal justice studies).

Major Requirements

The major requires a minimum of 44 credit hours and must include the following courses:

SOC 121 Microsociology

or

SOC 141 Macrosociology

CJS 101 Criminal Justice Studies CJS 301 Juvenile Justice System or

CJS 303 Family Justice Issues
 SOC 341 Social Research Methods
 SOC 342 Sociological Theory
 SOC/CJS 371 Professional Seminar (1 CH)
 MATH 211 Statistics (4 CH)
 PHIL 267 Ethics
 POSC 116 American Government and Politics
 POSC 436 Constitutional Law

The major also requires 15 additional course hours selected from the unselected classes listed above (Micro/Macrosociology and Juvenile Justice Systems/Family Justice Issues) and the following: SOC

191 Social Problems
 SOC 251 Minorities
 SOC 321 Deviance
 SOC 331 Criminology
 SOC 401 Sociology for the Family
 SOC 411 Organizations
 SOC/CJS 431 Selected Topics
 ACCT 453 Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examination
 BADM 355 Business Law I
 BADM 356 Business Law II
 BADM 364 Business Ethics
 COMM 455 Media Law and Regulation
 ENSC 200 Introduction to Environmental Law
 POSC 226 State and Local Politics and Policy
 POSC 236 Public Policy
 POSC 300 Introduction to Legal Studies
 POSC 316 Topics: Civil Rights and Liberties
 POSC 336 Public Administration
 POSC 385 The Law of Families
 POSC 388 The Death Penalty
 POSC 437 First Amendment Law
 POSC 438 Criminal Due Process Rights
 POSC 439 Criminal Law
 POSC 445 The Great American Trial
 PSY 240 Child Development
 PSY 242 Adolescent Development
 PSY 300 Abnormal Behavior
 PSY 360 Social Psychology
 PSY 370 Counseling Methods

PHIL 277	Business Ethics]
PHIL 297	Environmental Ethics
PHIL 347	Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 377	Legal Philosophy
REL 200	Contemporary Ethical Issues

Students electing to double major in sociology and criminal justice studies may not use the same elective courses to satisfy the elective requirement in both majors.

An elective, experiential educational opportunity in criminal justice studies areas is strongly encouraged. Internships may be in the local area, Washington, D.C., via Thiel's Washington Semester programs or in another region accessible to the student and approved by the program's administrators (e.g. Harrisburg, Pa., a nearby city or near the student's home.) Credit hours awarded are variable (1 to 16), depending on the program selected.

A student who graduates from Thiel College with a major in criminal justice studies will:

- understand the major theoretical paradigms of criminal justice.
- understand the principles of social science research methodology.
- understand the complexity and interaction of social marginality in United States culture in terms of deviance, criminality, corrections, race/ethnicity, sex/gender and social class.
- understand the criminal justice system and role of law in the United States as related to critical issues in US society: restorative justice, terrorism, domestic and transnational crime, corrections, deviance, race/ethnicity, sex/gender, juvenile law, and domestic violence.
- understand the diversity of criminal acts and the variety of criminal justice systems in a global context.

Appendix B
Critical Thinking (ACC&U VALUE) Rubric

	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
		3	2	
Explanation of issues	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown.	Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description.
Influence of context and assumptions	Thoroughly (systematically and methodically) analyzes own and others' assumptions and carefully evaluates the relevance of contexts when presenting a position.	Identifies own and others' assumptions and several relevant contexts when presenting a position.	Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa).	Shows an emerging awareness of present assumptions (sometimes labels assertions as assumptions). Begins to identify some contexts when presenting a position.
Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)	Conclusions and related outcomes (consequences and implications) are logical and reflect student's informed evaluation and ability to place evidence and perspectives discussed in priority order.	Conclusion is logically tied to a range of information, including opposing viewpoints; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is logically tied to information (because information is chosen to fit the desired conclusion); some related outcomes (consequences and implications) are identified clearly.	Conclusion is inconsistently tied to some of the information discussed; related outcomes (consequences and implications) are oversimplified.

Appendix C

Assessment of Criminal Justice Studies 101

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of concepts and issues in criminal justice studies.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies
Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

CJS 101: Introduction to Criminal Justice Studies is taught every fall semester. There is no prerequisite and two sections of the course are offered. We choose to assess a two short answer questions from two final examinations.

The first question is:

1. Compare and contrast the crime control model with the due process model of criminal justice.

The second question is:

8. The individual from Question 8 is before the judge requesting bail. What are some of the factors that a judge may take into account in determining if bail is appropriate and, if so, the amount?

Using the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric, we chose *Explanation of Issues*.

Sample 1: Explanation. Question 1: 4 and 4; Question 8: 4 and 4.

Sample 2: Explanation. Question 1: 3 and 3; Question 8: 4 and 4.

This is an introductory course and the majority of the students are first year students with a large contingent of second year students. We were pleased with the results. Dividing students into class year may be advantageous for assessment as these are fairly large courses and are in high demand. This would give us a basis for comparison if we sampled by class year. One of the difficulties that we face is that many final examinations questions are multiple choice which doesn't afford us much more than a right or wrong answer. We need to find a good way to access such questions.

Action Items:

We need to find a good way to access multiple choice questions and we might consider looking at stratifying the samples based on class year.

Assessment of Sociology 121: Microsociology

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. To be able to apply sociological concepts to explain social reality.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We chose one category for our evaluation. It is: *Explanation*.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies
Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 121: Microsociology is one of the two main introductory courses in sociology (the other is Soc 141: Macrosociology). It is offered every fall and has two sections. Most students taking it are either first or second year. We chose three samples from the class and used the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric with the one area for evaluation being *Explanation*.

Sample 1: Explanation. 1;1

Sample 2: Explanation. 3;3

Sample 3: Explanation. 1;1

The results were not unexpected for an introductory sociology course. Again, the differences in scores might be due to student ability or class year. Stratifying the samples might be helpful. A longer question that asks the students to go into more depth may be better for assessment purposes. As most of the tests in this course are objective, we need to find a way to assess adequately multiple choice questions.

Action Items:

Work with stratified samples by class year, develop a longer writing assignment for the final examination, and find a way to handle multiple choice questions for assessment purposes.

Assessment of Sociology 141

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Know and be able to apply the three major theories in sociology to analyze the workings of the social world.

Assessment Activities:

- Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
- Discussion of results
- Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:

Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 141: Macrosociology is taught in every spring semester. It has two sections. There are no prerequisites to this course. The textbook is shared with Sociology 121: Microsociology. All sociology majors have to take both course; criminal justice studies majors only have to take one or the other. This is the first time this course is being assessed. A short essay question on the final examination was chosen for assessment:

101: How would sociologists Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim look at religion in society? For Durkheim, what are the functions, dysfunctions, and latent functions of religion? Offer examples. For Marx what is the role of religion in society? In other words, what is Marx' critique of religion? Offer examples. Both Marx and Durkheim had not thought about the idea of a liberation theology. What is liberation theology? What are its premises and what is its potential? Discuss. Your response is to be double-spaced, ideally written in ink, in your bluebook. Respond to each part of the question. Outline your answer first and then begin to write. Be sure to check it over before you turn it in. This is worth 20 points

We sampled five tests. Using the Critical Thinking (ACC&U VALUE) Rubric, we chose *Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.*

There are two scores for each sample.

Sample 1: Explanation. 2;2

Context. 3,3

Conclusion. 2;2

Sample 2: Explanation. 2;2

Context. 1;1

	Conclusion.	1;1
Sample 3:	Explanation.	2;2
	Context.	2;2
	Conclusion.	2;2
Sample 4:	Explanation.	4;4
	Context.	4;4
	Conclusion.	4;4
Sample 5:	Explanation.	4;4
	Context.	3;4
	Conclusion.	4;3

This course has mostly first year students in it, but it does attract those who just need a course to graduate; hence, there are a few fourth year students in the class. Dividing students into class year and then drawing samples from each class year, may give us more accurate results. As students don't do a lot of writing in this course, incorporating more writing assignments with a published rubric may help students learn better and be better prepared for short essay questions on exams.

Action Items:

Develop a rubric on essay questions for this course and have more essay questions as part of examinations.

Assessment of Sociology 191

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

4. To identify significant social problems and analyse them from the three major paradigms in sociology.

Assessment Activities:

- Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
- Discussion of results
- Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

- Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:
Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies
Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 191: Social Problems is taught every fall semester. There is no prerequisite and two sections of the course are offered. This is the first time that this course has been assessed. We chose to assess a short essay question from the final examination:

Bonus Question for Sociology 191, Fall 2014

Take any social problem that we have covered in this course—abortion, aging, prostitution, pornography, violent crime (murder and rape), crime, the economy, racism/ethnic/minority group discrimination, sexism, politics, homosexuality, healthcare, family—and analyze it from the standpoint of functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and conflict theory. Double space your response in the provided blue book and make sure to include that date and the course name and section. Do not forget to write down your name. While there is no set length for the response, I would expect at least 250 to 300 words. Do try to write in pen and to write legibly. This is worth 10 points.

We sampled four tests from the two sections of the course. Using the Critical Thinking (ACC&U VALUE) Rubric, we chose *Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.*

Sample 1: Explanation. 1; 1
Context. 1; 1
Conclusions. 1;1

Sample 2: Explanation. 1;1
Context. 1;1
Conclusions. 1;1

Sample 3: Explanation 1;1

Context. 1;1
Conclusions. 1;1

Sample 4: Explanation. 2;2
Context. 2;2
Conclusions. 2;2

This is an introductory course and the majority of the students are in their first semester in college. As it has no prerequisites, we often find that there is a good number of second, third, and fourth year students in attendance as well. We may want to stratify the samples by class year; however, most students are first semester first year. Students do not do a lot of writing in this course which means that the short essay question on the final has not been a practiced activity in this course. This needs to be addressed by more short answer questions and short essay questions in future examinations throughout the course. Most examination questions are multiple choice and we need to find a way to assess adequately this type of question.

Action Items:

We need a good way to assess multiple choice questions, we might consider stratifying samples by class year, and we may incorporate more short answer and short essay questions in subsequent examinations throughout the semester.

Assessment of Sociology 211

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Applying anthropological knowledge to contemporary life.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We chose the Explanation from this rubric for this assessment.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 211: Introduction to Anthropology is taught every spring semester. There is no prerequisite and two sections of the course are offered. This is the first time that the course has been assessed. We choose to assess a short answer question from the final exam:

1. There are four types of mobility that are possible in the U.S., define/describe each type of mobility AND give an example of each type of mobility. (5 points).

We sampled two tests. Using the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric, we choose *Explanation of Issues*.

There will be two scores for each sample.

Sample 1: Explanation. 4 and 4

Sample 2: Explanation. 2 and 2

As this is a course usually aimed at second-year students (although students can take it whenever they like during their degree program), we are not surprised by the results as we would expect a lot of variation given its availability to all college students no matter what their majors. Dividing students into class year and then sampling from each level would give us stronger results and give us a better handle on how to use assessment data.

One difficulty that we faced in assessing Sociology 211 is that most of the tests use objective (multiple choice) questions which are difficult to fit into a rubric as the answers are right or wrong. It is much easier to assess an essay or short answer question.

Action Items:

We need to find a good way to assess multiple choice questions and we might consider looking at stratifying the sample based on class year.

Assessment of Sociology 342

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Every student will write a paper on a social theorist and, in so doing, will demonstrate advanced knowledge of that theorist's perspective.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:

Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies
Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 342: Sociological Theory is a core class for both the sociology and criminal justice studies majors. This course is taught every fall. It is for third and fourth year students. Given the content of the course and the centrality of theory in sociology, it is the closest thing that we have to a capstone course. We expect to introduce a capstone course in sociology and criminal justice studies in fall of 2016.

All students in Sociology 342 had to write a term paper on a sociological theorist. We chose three sample papers from the course for assessment. From the AAC&U VALUE Rubric, we choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:

Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Sample 1: Explanation. 1;1
Context. 1;1
Conclusions 1;1

Sample 2: Explanation. 3;3
Context. 2;2
Conclusions 3;3

Sample 3: Explanation 4;4
Context. 4;3
Conclusions. 3;2

There was a lot of variation between scores. As most of the students are third and fourth year, we would expect to see more 4s and 3s. The assignment has to be rethought as to create more consistent results.

Action Items:

Publish and explain the grading rubric for the assignment. Break the assignment down into five steps. Require a topic statement. Require an outline. Require an annotated bibliography. Require a draft of the paper to be turned in. Require a final draft of the paper to be turned in. This may produce better results and aid the students in crafting a stronger research paper. A specialized rubric for this assignment needs to be worked on and included in the fall 2015 syllabus for this course.

Assessment of Sociology 425: Urban Studies

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Students will explore US and/or global trends in urbanization.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:

Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 425: Urban Studies is a course for third and fourth year students. It is an elective course for both sociology and criminal justice studies. This is the first time that it has been assessed. The assignment that is assessed is the term paper which can be on any topic in urban studies with a specific focus on a city (in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world). We sampled two essays.

We used the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric and we chose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are: *Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.*

Sample 1: Evaluation. 1;1
Context. 1;1
Conclusions. 1;1

Sample 2: Evaluation. 1;1
Context. 1;1
Conclusions.1;1

The course had objective examinations and a term paper which was to be presented to the class. Most of the papers came out as “Chamber of Commerce” style advertisements of the city under study. Very descriptive, very laudatory, and with only a surface mention of social issues that negatively affect city life. This assignment has to be rethought as it is too uncritical and shows little depth of analysis.

Action Items:

An assessment of multiple choice questions might be helpful, but from our current assessment, the paper topic has to be rethought, more explicitly spelled out on paper. The paper writing component might be split up into several steps so that students get a lot of feedback and, through revision after revision, create a strong paper.

Assessment of Sociology 431: Sociology of Sport

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. Demonstrate how sports impact individuals and groups in society.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:

Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies
Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Sociology 431: Sociology of Sport is a special topics course that was introduced in Spring 2015 for the first time. Only one section of the course was offered. We choose to assess one essay question from the final examination:

2. In American football, what are the arguments that supporters of a change to flag football (and making tackling illegal) would make? What would opponents to this change argue? Which arguments are stronger? [NB: that is not the same as asking which position should be adopted, but what is the better argument...there are lots of examples in society where a better-supported option isn't used]

We sampled two tests. Using the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric we chose *Explanation, Context, & Conclusions*.

There are two scores for each sample.

Sample 1: Explanation. 3; 3
Context. 3; 3
Conclusions: 2; 2

Sample 2: Explanation. 2;2
Context. 2;2
Conclusions. 2;2

This course was designed for third and fourth year students. Students performed well with Context, but were not as strong on Explanation and Conclusions. Presenting students with a rubric for such questions might help them do better.

Action Items:

Develop and give the students a rubric to handle essay exam questions could help them prepare and improve their responses.

Assessment of Sociology 431: Sociology of Working Class Literature

Student Learning Outcomes Assessed:

1. To make the connection between literature and society.

Assessment Activities:

Rubric Scoring, random sample of student term papers
Discussion of results
Development of Action Plans

Rubrics: (AAC&U VALUE)

Critical Thinking

We choose 3 categories for our evaluation. They are:
Explanation, Context, & Conclusions.

Assessors:

Jared Hanneman, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Allan Hunchuk, Sociology & Criminal Justice Studies

Assessment Results

Significant Factors:

SOC 431: The Sociology of Working Class Literature is a special topics course that was taught for the first time in Spring 2015. It is designed for third and fourth year students and is a three credit hour course. This is the first time that the course has been assessed. The assignment assessed was a critical book review which was to run no more than twelve pages in length.

3. One will review a novel with significant working class themes or critically read a novel from a working class perspective. I have included a list of possible novels in the syllabus. You will summarize your book review in class. This is worth 30% of the final grade.

We chose two samples from the class and used the Critical Thinking (AAC&U VALUE) Rubric with the three areas for evaluation being *Explanation, Context, & Conclusions*.

Sample 1: Explanation. 1;1
Context. 1;1
Conclusions. 1;1

Sample 2: Explanation. 2;2
Context. 2;2
Conclusions. 2;2

Given that this is a class designed for third and fourth year students, we found the scores lower than we could have anticipated (we expected 3's and 4's). The assignment question needs to be rewritten and breaking up the critical book review into discernable steps might improve performance.

Action Items:

The paper prompt has to be recast. It needs to describe what is a critical book review and then in class the professor must take time to present what it is in depth. Examples should be made available for students. A clear rubric of the assignment would be particularly useful. Breaking up the assignment into graded steps with a chance for multiple revisions would be helpful.