

1st Draft Feedback Submitted to the Sociology PAC

Blyden Potts, Adjunct Faculty, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, 11/3/2011

Sociology

A couple typographic errors on p.3 ought to be corrected:

Under 1. General Survey of Sociology the course is sometimes known as "Principles of Sociology" rather than "Principals", and one of the course objectives could be "to identify and explain the three key theoretical perspectives" rather than "to indentify" them.

I know that much sociology is taught in terms of there being just three key theoretical perspectives, but I question the utility of that, given that model seems to be outdated by a couple decades. Where, for example, is the relational or network perspective? Where is the rational choice perspective? Maybe you should say they should be able to identify and explain key theoretical perspectives, specifically including the three you list, rather than falsely implying that there are only three.

On p.4 under 4. Statistics one of the course objectives is "Understanding the 5-step hypothesis testing process". I guess that's fair enough. They should certainly understand that process, but although I have a Ph.D. in Sociology from a quantitatively-oriented research university and have taught Statistics for Sociology many times, including co-teaching it with other faculty, I don't believe I've ever seen that process formally identified (with the definitive article, no less) as "the 5-step hypothesis testing process". You could probably just say that an objective is to understand the process of statistically testing hypotheses.

On p. 5 under 2. Social Stratification there is no mention of class or other models of inequality as a concept distinct from social class or strata, which seems quite strange given the history of the sociology of structured inequality. Similarly expecting that courses on structured social inequalities be labeled "Social Stratification" without considering that they might alternately be named "Social Inequalities" or "Structured Social Inequalities" strikes me as biased toward a particular theoretical perspective. One of the course objectives listed therein says "Social class - how is it determined [?]" Given the state of the discipline, in which there is anything but consensus about social class it seems presumptive to imply that any course could provide students with a definitive account of how it is determined, all the more so since ultimately it is an analytic concept that we apply to real world phenomena rather than a quality that has a real world existence independent of social analysis. I think some rewording of this section might be desirable, but I don't have specific language to suggest.

Kimberly Mahaffy, Faculty, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, 11/9/2011

Sociology

While I appreciate the need to provide a seamless transition from the two year to four year institution, social research methods and the senior capstone courses are courses I am opposed to making transferable from a two year institution. These are upper level courses that require students to complete the substantive work represented in the introductory and elective courses. All of which can be offered and transferred from a two year institution. According to the report published by the ASA, Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major, appendices 4-6 illustrate that these courses are upper-level (junior and senior). I am not convinced that two year institutions have the expertise or the course sequencing in place as prerequisites to offer these courses. Moreover, each institution differs in terms of their research project expectations for their research methods course. At Millersville, we have a high standard-- students complete the research project in its entirety in one semester using either qualitative or quantitative methods. Many of our students have presented their work at regional conferences, published their work, and won awards as undergraduates. I respectfully request that research methods and the capstone course be removed from the articulation model.

Lisa Ruchti, Faculty, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 11/10/2011

Sociology

In Introduction to Sociology it should be explicit that major sub-areas of the discipline, e.g gender and sexuality, be surveyed. Theory requirements should explicitly state which theories should be covered, e.g. functionalism, symbolic interactionism, structuralism, post-colonial, feminist, etc. Women's and Gender Studies should be added to recommended coursework outside of the discipline.

Blyden Potts, Faculty, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, 11/10/2011

Sociology Draft Articulation

Further thoughts on the course objectives that you set forth for the following courses:

1. General Survey of Sociology – 3 credits

This course is generally called Introduction to Sociology or Principals [sic; Principles] of Sociology.

Course Objectives:

- To understand the meaning and essential elements of the sociological perspective, including the relationship between structure and agency
- To identify and explain the significance of key sociological concepts
 - o Culture – material and non-material culture, symbols, language
 - o Society – roles, statuses, norms, values, etc.
 - o Socialization – the process of integrating new members

[More could be added]

- To survey the major early theoretical and methodological contributions to Sociology [Is that really a requisite course objective for Intro Sociology?]

- To identify and explain [DELETE the three] key theoretical perspectives [in sociology including] Functionalism, Conflict Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism (Social Constructionism)

- To identify and understand the primary research methods

- To enhance understanding of majority-minority relations through an historical application of the sociological perspective

- To increase understanding of the process of social change [DELETE through the application of the Cultural Materialism/Ecological-Evolutionary perspective]

- To survey major areas of sociological inquiry

 - o Social Deviance

 - o Social Stratification

 - o Social Institutions – Family, Religion, Education, Economy, etc.

[Should each of these specific institutions, family, religion, etc be expected, or is it sufficient to include social institutions even if not these specific ones? If the latter then there should probably be e.g. in front of the list to make clear they are examples rather than specific expectations.]

[More could be added including micro-social processes of symbolic interaction, e.g. presentation of self, social exchange, etc.]

2. Classical/Contemporary Social Theory – 3 credits

Course Objectives:

- Define and explain key concepts and theories from classical sociological theory
- Apply and evaluate these concepts and theories to contemporary social issues and, in doing so, demonstrate a solid ability to think critically in one's applications and evaluations

- Explain the historical development of classical sociological theory.

[DELETE Examine how theory is influenced by personal biography; that should not be a requirement]

- Trace linkages from classical to contemporary social theory

- Survey the major paradigms [theoretical perspectives] and the theories/theorists associated with them

3. Basic Methods of Social Research

Course Objectives:

- Understanding of the Scientific Method as a way of knowing, and why it is used in social research

- Relationship between Theory and Research

- Knowledge of the purposes of research (exploration, description, prediction)

- Knowledge of the steps in the design of research

- Understanding of the concept[s] of Dependent and Independent variables

- Understanding the concepts of validity and reliability in research

- Experience conducting a literature review

- Experience generating ideas and hypotheses for research

- Knowledge of the construction and use of indexes and scales [I'm debating with myself if this should be required]

- Exposure to Qualitative and Quantitative styles of research

- Types of research (Survey, Experiment, Field Study, Unobtrusive)

- Understanding of research ethics and the Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Understanding the difference between random and systematic error and the implications of each
- Knowledge of various methods for measuring the dependent variable
- Knowledge of and experience with writing a research proposal

4. Statistics

Course Objectives:

- Understanding the relationship between samples and populations (Statistics & Parameters)
- Identification of levels of measurement
- Using frequency distributions to summarize data
- Using frequency data to create graphs and charts
- Identification and computation of appropriate measures of central tendency
- Identification and computation of appropriate measures of dispersion
- Computation and interpretation of z-scores
- Understanding and uses of the standard normal curve (Central Limit Theorem)
- Construction and interpretation of confidence intervals
- Computation and interpretation of one and two sample hypothesis testing
- Understanding [DELETE the 5-step] [process of] hypothesis testing [DELETE process]
- Identification, computation, and interpretation of appropriate correlation coefficients
- Computation and interpretation of the least-squares regression line
[In my experience teaching undergraduate statistics OLS regression is about as far as classes typically can expect to get, and I'm not sure it is reasonable to expect all undergraduate statistics courses for sociology majors to get that far.]
- Interpretation of the proportion of variance accounted for
- Basic understanding of elementary probability and sampling theories
- Understanding of The Null and Alternative Hypotheses
- Using Statistical Software Packages (e.g. SPSS, SAS, Excel) to analyze data
- Computation and interpretation of the chi-square tests for nominal data
- Computation and interpretation of measures of association for nominal, ordinal, and interval data

5. Seminar/Capstone Course

Course Objectives:

- Students will apply skills acquired from the major to the successful completion of a capstone project/research paper.
 - Students will develop skills in writing cover letters and preparing resumes.
 - Students will gain knowledge and skills in networking, interviewing, and other matters related to career development.
 - Students will be exposed to elements of the graduate school application process, as well as the expectations of graduate schools, the application process, etc.
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Adriana Bohm, Faculty, Delaware County Community College, 11/14/2011

Sociology Articulation Draft Comments

1. Replace the Capstone Course with the 'Recommended Major Specific Content' Course on Stratification. We suggest replacing the Capstone Course because it focuses on applying to Graduate School, writing CVs & cover letters, and interviewing skills, which we deem more appropriate for a four year institute than a Junior College.
2. Replace the Sociological Theory course with the 'Recommended Major Specific Content' course entitled The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, as outlined in the Sociology Articulation Draft. We suggest replacing the Theory course because such content is usually covered later in one's education, not during the first and second years of undergraduate study.

Mary Glazier, Professor, Millersville University of Pennsylvania, 11/15/2011

Sociology Articulation

The proposal to allow students to transfer Statistics, Sociological Theory, Research Methods and Senior Seminar from the community colleges is misguided. Those are upper level courses designed to be taken in the third and fourth years after students have a background in the content areas of sociology. The course descriptions - especially for Research Methods, Theory and the Senior Seminar- indicate that these courses will not be as rigorous as those offered in four year institutions.

It would be preferable to allow students transferring from community colleges to take 100 and 200 level content courses which they can transfer as electives to the four year program. The required courses on statistical analysis, research methods and theory should be taken at the four year institution. The Senior Seminar/Capstone course, by definition, should come at the end of the student's undergraduate career, that is, in the fourth year of studies.

Community colleges can do a good job teaching students the fundamental concepts and theoretical approaches through 100 and 200 level content courses. They can also insure that students take necessary pre-requisites, for example a basic math statistics class, and that they explore related fields like psychology, history, anthropology and geography. It is not their mission to teach the upper level theory and methods courses.

**Andrea Connor, Associate Professor Sociology/Social Work, PA TAOC Standards,
11/16/2011**

Capstone Senior Seminar

Appendix A list the Capstone Senior Seminar as major specific content required for transfer from the 2 year institution. If this is a senior seminar, it would not be appropriate to offer this course on the community college level.

**Ying Yang, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Shippensburg University of
Pennsylvania, 11/18/2011**

Sociology

Comments and Feedbacks from Shippensburg University:

1. Inclusion of Social Stratification in Sociology B.A. Core: Social Stratification has been at the core of the discipline of Sociology since its establishment as an academic discipline at the University of Chicago in the early 20th Century. This course was incorporated into the Sociology Major curriculum as a requirement in part based on a recommendation made by Dr. Theodore Wagner, who served as an external reviewer for the Department's Five-Year Review in 1993. This course also serves as a foundation for several other Sociology electives that majors take, including Minority Groups, Race Relations, Women's Roles and Status, and Elites in Society. Finally, the national attention being paid to the subject of growing inequality underscores the significance of this course to Sociology students.
2. Classical/contemporary theory class: it is important to require coverage of Marx, Weber and Durkheim since it is not just classical social theory.
3. It is not clearly defined in the draft; however, 200 level classes from junior college should not be counted as senior courses.
4. About course objectives, it would be good idea to provide a list of more general expectations, so each participating institution can have room to add their own expectations. Below is one example:
Classical/Contemporary Social Theory – 3 credits

Course Objectives:

- Define and explain key concepts and theories from classical sociological theory
 - Apply and evaluate these concepts and theories to contemporary social issues and, in doing so, demonstrate a solid ability to think critically in one's applications and evaluations
 - Explain the historical development of classical sociological theory.
 - ~~NEED TO BE REMOVED~~ (Examine how theory is influenced by personal biography)
 - Trace linkages from classical to contemporary social theory
 - Survey the major paradigms [theoretical perspectives] and the theories/theorists associated with them
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Janis Wilson Seeley, Chair/Professor, Social Sciences/History Department, Luzerne County Community College, 11/18/2011

Sociology

Below are my comments regarding this proposal:

1. I am perplexed as to the selection of Social Theory as a freshman/sophomore course. I do not believe that students in the first two years possess the depth of understanding of the core concepts the necessary to benefit from a theory course especially given that Principles of Sociology could potentially be the only other SOC course they have taken. I think it would be far more appropriate to link Social Theory with an advanced research course. Social theory should be replaced by an elective in the sociology program.
2. I am even more perplexed by the inclusion of a Capstone/Senior Seminar course, which based on the course objectives listed, is appropriate for a fourth year student but not a second year student. At the two year level, I believe it is appropriate to have the research course serve as a capstone. This would allow students to take an additional Soc. elective.
3. Since my department houses Psychology and Sociology, I had expected the the psych. stat requirement and the soc. requirement to be the same. Not so. A math stats course meets the psy. requirement not the soc. requirement. Given the few soc majors in our program, a social science stats course does not make sense. I do not believe it is necessary at the two year point to have a social sciences stats. course. A math stats course should suffice.
4. Lastly, as with the other programs I have reviewed, I have major reservations about the lack of direction for gen.ed requirements. I believe that a true program to program articulation should include consistency regarding gen.eds. If we are to ensure that a two year student regardless of institution will possess a comparable knowledge base, then gen. ed. competencies should be the same.
5. Based on discussion with the Director of Curriculum at LCCC, I have been informed that students who transfer are to be treated the same as native students. In the proposal to transfer major coursework credits, a minimum grade of C or better is required. Is this the same criteria for native students to enter their junior year? I approve and actually applaud the standard if it is to be applied equitably to all students.

Ying Yang, Sociology, PA TAOC Standards, 11/18/2011

Sociology

In addition, though Anthropology is not included in this discussion, it is important to recognize the interdisciplinary nature of the two subjects. Mansfield University, for example, offers a combined degree in Sociology and Anthropology. Sociology students can benefit from Anthropological view about culture and human society. Therefore, it would be a good idea to incorporate the elements of Anthropology in this draft.

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Sociology PAC
November 29, 2011

Barbara Ford, 11/23/2011

Subject: Sociology

In the Appendix A chart, is the term "Senior Seminar" appropriate for Associate degree courses? (Under Major-Specific and Related Competencies #5, the term "Seminar/Capstone Course" is used without reference to "Senior.")

Thomas Soltis, 11/25/2011

Subject: Sociology

The Draft Articulation Agreement looks good. It will help those of us at the CC level better advise our students regarding courses and transfer credits. Each year we do a Discipline Report and every 5 years a Discipline Review and this agreement will assist with those processes. The Senior Institutions can now be assured that their transfer students have received a uniform and consistent foundation in their Sociology degree.