## Mission

The primary mission of the USC Upstate sociology program is to provide students with the ability to understand human behavior in the context of social, historical, and cultural influences—that is, to use the sociological perspective. Consistent with the metropolitan mission of the university, this includes promoting a global perspective, and an understanding of diversity. Specifically, the program seeks to develop majors who can think critically and analytically, and who are familiar with the historical developments and current institutional patterns, as well as other forms of human relations which constitute the structure of society.

### Goal 1

**Knowledge base of sociology:** The student will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings of sociology.

### Objectives SLO's

**Student learning outcome 1.1:** The student should be able to identify major theoretical perspectives used in sociology.

**Student learning outcome 1.2:** The student will demonstrate understanding of the basic research methods in sociology.

**Student learning outcome 1.3:** The student will demonstrate familiarity with concepts and empirical findings from the following areas: inequality and diversity (i.e. class, race, and gender); and globalization.
### Assessment Methods

From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the measure(s) by which the department will know the students are meeting the departmental learning objectives. Includes both direct and indirect assessment. Each SLO should have at least one assessment method.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Student learning Outcome 1.1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Major Field Test: ETS – General Theory subscale</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Student learning Outcome 1.2</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Major Field Test: ETS – Methodology and Statistics subscale</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Student learning Outcome 1.3</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major Field Test: ETS - Social Institutions, Gender, Multiculturalism, and Globalization subscales</td>
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### Assessment Criteria

Level of achievement you are targeting (Indicate benchmarks, scores on assessment instruments, etc… that would indicate acceptable achievement under your plan)

Scoring at or above the national average in the selected Major Field Test subscales.
1.1: In the General Theory subscale, our 15 senior students received an average score of 42%, compared to the national average of 47%. A difference of means test (t=1.91, p>0.05) indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between our students’ score from that of the national average. This was the same case in the 2008-2009 group where our student's average of 48% was not statistically different from the national average of 49%.

1.2: In the Methodology and Statistics subscale, our 2009-2010 students scored 48%, compared to the national average of 52%. In comparison, our 2008-2009 seniors scored 48% compared to the national average of 53%. Since no measure of standard deviation exists for our sample on this particular subscale, we cannot compute a one sample t-test. However, our score is well within one standard deviation (10.9 for this particular indicator), suggesting that, just like it was true in the previous year’s scores, our student’s score is not significantly different from the national average.

1.3: In this SLO, our 2009-2010 senior students scored at or above the national average on two of the indicators for this measure (56% and 54% vs. the national average of 56% and 51%, respectively, in the Gender and Globalization subscales). However, our students scored below the national average in the other two indicators for this measure (52% and 45% vs. the national average of 56% and 51%, respectively, in the Social Institutions and Multiculturalism subscales). In spite of this mixed performance, our 2009-2010 students performed much better in this SLO compared to the 2008-2009 group which scored lower than the national average in ALL of the selected indicators for this measure.

(See attachment)
### Action Plan

#### What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?

1. **In order to strengthen our student’s knowledge base of sociology (Goal 1), our faculty has decided to take the following actions.**
   - **a.** Become more intentional in advising our major students to take the Sociological Theory course (SSOC 301) before they take the Senior Seminar course (SSOC 499) as a way of ensuring that they are adequately exposed to necessary general theory skill which could then be reviewed and reinforced in the Senior Seminar class. We are thus modifying our Senior Seminar prerequisites to require that our major students take at least 15 credit hours of their major courses before they can take the Senior Seminar (SSOC 499).
   
   - **b.** We are expanding the content of our Senior Seminar course to include a week or more of review of the major sociological perspectives. This will ensure that our senior students are exposed to the necessary theoretical skills required to meet this Goal.
   
   - **c.** To more strictly enforce our requirement that our major students take the Sociological Research Methods course (SSOC 302) before they take the Senior Seminar course to enable students to be more grounded in the sociological methodology which they would apply in their senior seminar class.
   
   - **d.** Requiring sociology majors to take the Social Statistics course (SSOC 201) as one of the core sociology courses instead of the current practice where our major students can choose between SSOC 201 and SMTH 102. (In the 2009-2010 academic year, only 55% of our majors took SSOC 201). Requiring our majors to take SSOC 201 could ensure that our sociology majors are more adequately exposed to the necessary sociological statistical skills necessary for SLO1.2. We are submitting a Change in Program request so that this change can be made in the catalogue.

2. **As far as SLO 1.3 is concerned, we are renewing our request to hire additional faculty with expertise in some of the content areas measured under this SLO but which we are currently not covering because our current faculty do not have the necessary expertise. Specifically, the social institutions subscale includes measures of 7 indicators, four of which (Religion, Education, Economic Structure, Work and Occupation, and Mass Media) we are currently not covering. While awaiting positive action on our request for a new hire, each of our faculty who is teaching a particular social institution will review their syllabus to ensure that the content area being covered is adequate to equip students with the necessary skills in those social institutions. Our faculty has also been encouraged to be more deliberative in covering issues relevant to multiculturalism. (See attachment)**
### Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Year’s “Action Plan”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>How was the action plan identified in the previous year’s report implemented this year, and what was the impact?</th>
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<td>In our 2008-2009 report, we identified lack of faculty with expertise in the specific content areas assessed in SLO 1.3 and submitted a request to hire additional faculty to cover some of the areas. However, this request is yet to be honored. The impact of this limitation is that our students continue have low scores in this SLO because the Major Field Test measures skills in some of the content areas that we are not covering due to lack of necessary expertise.</td>
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## Component Description

### Goal 2

**From your Program Assessment Plan** (Describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (what you want students to learn) expressed in general terms (clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc). Goals should focus on discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the program.)

**Goal 2:** The student will demonstrate the ability to engage in critical thinking.

### Objectives

**SLO’s (student learning outcomes)**

**From your Program Assessment Plan** (Describes the specific skills, values and attitudes students should be able to exhibit that reflect the broader goals. Objectives (student learning outcomes) transform the general program goals into specific student performance/behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development along these goals.

**Student learning outcome 2.1** The student should be able to demonstrate the following skills: draw inferences from theories and data; interpret and weigh evidence as to whether asserted conclusions are warranted; deduce conclusions from information presented in statements or premises; evaluate the strengths of comparable arguments regarding a specific issue; and apply sociological knowledge to new problems.

### Assessment Methods

**From your Program Assessment Plan** (Describes the measure(s) by which the department will know the students are meeting the departmental learning objectives. Includes both direct and indirect assessment. Each SLO should have at least one assessment method.)

**Student learning outcome 2.1** Major Field Test – Critical Thinking subscale

### Assessment Criteria

**Level of achievement you are targeting** (Indicate benchmarks, scores on assessment instruments, etc... that would indicate acceptable achievement under your plan)

Scoring at or above the national average in the Major Field Test.

### Assessment Results

**Actual results and data collected** (Make sure to break down data by subgroups (e.g. other campuses or emphases). As appropriate, also include item or category analysis.)

2.1: In 2009-2010, our students’ performance was at par with the national average (48%) on the critical thinking subscore. In comparison, our 2008-2009 majors averaged 45% compared to the national average of 48%.

(See attachment)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Year’s “Action Plan”</th>
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<tr>
<td>What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?</td>
<td>Even though our students are meeting our departmental benchmark on this SLO, the sociology faculty has decided to make our Social Statistics course (SSOC 201) a required course in the major. Our faculty feels that our major students who are meeting their math requirements by taking math or statistics courses are at a disadvantage in demonstrating the sociological skills necessary for this SLO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How was the action plan identified in the previous year’s report implemented this year, and what was the impact?</td>
<td>Since our students met the departmental benchmarks on this SLO in the 2008-2009 academic year, we did not recommend any specific action plan. Our faculty was encouraged to “consider whether and how their upper level courses could be modified to improve students’ critical thinking skills”. In response, our faculty changed the requirement in statistics to require a minimum grade of ‘C’ as a way of strengthening the analytical and quantitative abilities we expect from our majors. As the results discussed above show, our major students in the 2009-2010 academic year performed slightly better than students in the previous academic year, suggesting a positive outcome of this change.</td>
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## Academic Program: Assessment Report 2009-2010

**Unit/Department:** Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Women's Studies  
**Division:** CAS

<table>
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<th>Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| **Goal 3** | From your Program Assessment Plan (Describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (what you want students to learn) expressed in general terms (clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc). Goals should focus on discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the program.)  
Goal 3: Communication Skills in Sociology: The student will demonstrate the ability to communicate sociological material effectively in writing. |
| **Objectives SLO's (student learning outcomes)** | From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the specific skills, values and attitudes students should be able to exhibit that reflect the broader goals. Objectives (student learning outcomes) transform the general program goals into specific student performance/behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development along these goals.)  
3.1 The student should be able to synthesize appropriate information from a variety of sociological sources and develop a well-organized, logical presentation of that material.  
3.2 The student should be able to demonstrate effective writing skills by using professional writing conventions to present sociological material. |
| **Assessment Methods** | From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the measure(s) by which the department will know the students are meeting the departmental learning objectives. Includes both direct and indirect assessment. Each SLO should have at least one assessment method.)  
Student learning outcome 3.1  
SSOC 499 Senior seminar paper evaluated by rubric.  
Student learning outcome 3.2  
SSOC 499 Senior seminar paper evaluated by rubric.  
(See attachment) |
| **Assessment Criteria** | Level of achievement you are targeting (Indicate benchmarks, scores on assessment instruments, etc... that would indicate acceptable achievement under your plan)  
At least seventy percent (70%) of overall writing skills on the Senior Seminar Research Paper rated as average or higher. |
### Assessment Results

**Actual results and data collected** (Make sure to break down data by subgroups (e.g. other campuses or emphases). As appropriate, also include item or category analysis.)

For the 2009-2010 academic year, 91% of the senior seminar papers (compared to 86% for the 2009-2009 academic year) were rated as average or higher with regards to overall writing skills. (Even though the papers were evaluated by different faculty members, in addition to the Senior Seminar faculty, the results were generally consistent).

- **Excellent (25-35)**: 5 (45.5%) papers
- **Average (17.5-24.5)**: 5 (45.5%) papers
- **Weak (0-17)**: 1 (9%) papers

*(See attachment for grading rubric)*

### Action Plan

**What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?**

Even though our students in the 2009-2010 academic year performed much better in this SLO when compared to students in the 2009-2009 academic year, our senior seminar instructors will encourage more students to make use of the Writing Center and the Library Research workshops available through our Library. This will address some of the weaknesses in ‘Organization of Content’, ‘Quality of Sources’, and ‘Writing Mechanics’ that were identified in some of the weaker Senior Seminar papers.

### Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Years’ “Action Plan”

**How was the action plan identified in the previous year’s report implemented this year, and what was the impact?**

Since our students met the departmental benchmarks on this SLO in the 2008-2009 academic year, we did not come up with any specific action plan, other than encouraging the senior seminar faculty to continue to “maintain and improve current performance”. Changes made on the Senior Seminar course based on previous years’ assessment reports seem to have produced the positive results we saw in our 2009-2010 students whose performance in this SLO was higher than the previous year’s group (see “Assessment Results” section above).