

Social Science General Education Annual Assessment Report 2015-2016

I. Introduction

The Social Science General Education Program serves all OIT degree students, who are each required to take twelve credits in this general education area. The program offers courses in anthropology, history, psychology, and sociology. The program also offers a number of online courses to serve degree completion students as well as on-campus students.

II. Program Purpose, Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

The Social Science faculty reviewed the program purpose, objectives, and learning outcomes during the fall faculty meeting in September 2011. Faculty revised and updated the schedule in Fall of 2015.

Social Science General Education Program Purpose

The Social Science general education program assists students in the acquiring empirical knowledge of those aspects of human experience that are social, political, economic, and psychological.

Program Educational Objectives

1. Foster intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and logical reasoning.
2. Develop knowledge of quantitative and qualitative methods for understanding human behavior.
3. Provide an introductory understanding of the structures and processes of social institutions and individual behavior within cultures.

Expected Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates from this program will be able to:

1. Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.
2. Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues in the social sciences.

III. Two-Year Cycle for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty also confirmed the assessment cycle updated in 2015 to match course availability with the outcomes necessary to assess in those years. The current assessment schedule is listed below in Table 1.

Learning Outcomes	'15-16	'16-17	'17-18	'19-20
1. Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.	X		X	
2. Interpret, compare, and contrast ideas in the social sciences.		X		X
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.	X		X	
4. Demonstrate knowledge of historical and contemporary issues.		X		X

Table 1. Social Science General Education Assessment Cycle

IV. Summary of 2015-2016 Assessment Activities

Social sciences faculty conducted a formal assessment of two student learning outcomes during Spring term 2016. The courses used for these assessments included both intro level and upper division applied sociology courses.

Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.

The Social Science faculty conducted an analysis of where this outcome is reflected in the curriculum. The mapping of this outcome to social science courses can be found in Appendix A, Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrix, table A1.

Seventeen students ranging from Junior to Senior level status enrolled in SOC 307: Community Program Planning were assessed. A key assignment from this course, the executive summary for the final project, included all of the necessary components to deem this assignment appropriate for outcome #1. Students researched and organized arguments, backed up arguments with appropriate evidence, and tied arguments together in a coherent way. The assignment included the task of examining the validity of evidence in the form of research, as well as applying such research to the design of a realistic program. The results of this assessment are below- the faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 2.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Uses appropriate organizational structure to present arguments	Student executive summary, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	17/17, 100%
Separates arguments into appropriate parts and shows their interrelations	Student executive summary, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	17/17, 100%
Evaluates the validity of evidence	Student executive summary, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	17/17, 100%
Selects appropriate evidence to support arguments	Student executive summary, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	80% at 3 or 4	17/17, 100%

Table 2 Assessment Results for SLO #1 in SOC 307 for Spring 2016

Students met the assessment criteria for all four areas.

Information regarding the rubric or other assignment components may be available as per request to the instructor.

Student Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.

The Social Science faculty conducted an analysis of where this outcome is reflected in the curriculum. The mapping of this outcome to social science courses can be found in Appendix A, Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices, table A2.

The faculty assessed student work from the residential version of SOC 225 Medical Sociology using the third and final report assignment for the course. In the report, students must use the vocabulary of medical sociology and social science generally, demonstrate understanding of concepts by “teaching” the concept in the report, and show knowledge of social science methods by integrating and explaining sociological studies referenced in the report. The faculty rated the proficiency of students using the performance criteria described in Table 3.

For this assignment, 28 undergraduate students of varying statuses (mostly sophomores) had the opportunity to complete the assignment, and of those 25 completed the assignment. Of those 25, 23 students scored at 80% or higher, and met all of the criterion.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Knowledge of concepts in social science	Report #3, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	75% at 4	82% at 4
Knowledge of techniques and methods of social science (research method; ability to read academic studies)	Report #3, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	75% at 4	82% at 4
Appropriately utilizes the vocabularies of social sciences	Report #3, rubric	1 - 4 scale, % at 3 or 4	75% at 4	82% at 4

Table 3 Assessment Results for SLO #3 in SOC 225 Medical Sociology for Spring 2016.

The majority of students in SOC 225 met all criteria for this learning outcome. The results of this outcome included students who did not complete the assignment, who were counted as not meeting the outcome.

Information regarding the rubric or other assignment components may be available as per request to the instructor. Blackboard was used to calculate column statistics and store the rubric.

V. Summary of Student Learning

Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences.

Strengths: Students met the performance criteria for two of the three criteria measured.

Weaknesses: Since all students met the criterion, it is possible that the criterion could be made more stringent, or that the assessment should be taken in an intro level class.

Actions: This course and assignment can also be used for assessment for the Population Health Management program in coming years.

Student Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences.

Strengths: The majority of students, and nearly all of the students who attempted this assignment, met all criteria. The level and quality of work for this intro class exceeds expectations for an introductory course.

Weaknesses: Components for this learning outcome are overlapping. This makes the components difficult to parse out- most students, if they met one criterion, met all outcome components.

Actions: Learning outcomes should be reworked to reflect wholly independent aspects of the outcome.

VI. Changes Resulting From Assessment

Overall, the results for this assessment round were positive. In reviewing the course content and assignments used for these outcomes, it is concluded that the level of expectation for the introductory course exceeds an intro level course. For the upper division course used in this assessment, it would be more appropriate to use for the future assessment of the Population Health Management Program.

The HSS department and other departments are going through significant changes at this time, both external and internally. Within HSS, there are two new programs that will be assessed next year (2016-2017): these include the Population Health Management B.S. program, and the Marriage and Family Therapy M.S. program. Program directors for these programs will seek advice from other program directors and make use of trainings and best practices to design an assessment plan that best supports a continuous equality improvement feedback loop.

Additionally, the general education structure at Oregon Tech is being updated to more accurately reflect the institutional mission and learning outcomes. The HSS department is engaged in these changes, and will likely play a large part in subsequently updating the assessment process for general education. The assessment plan and report for next year will change significantly; results from this assessment were helpful in identifying potential future changes to courses and assessment procedures.

Appendix A

Student Learning Outcome-Course Matrices

Student Learning Outcome #1: Structure, analyze, evaluate, and support an argument both orally and in writing in the social sciences. Table A1 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to social science courses.

Social Science Course	Fall	Winter	Spring
ANTH 335		X	
ANTH 452			X
GEOG 106	X		
GEOG 107		X	
HIST 224	X		
HIST 225		X	
HIST 226			X
HIST 335	X		
HIST 356	X	X	X
PSCI 201			
PSY 311	X	X	X
PSY 312		X	X
PSY 347	X	X	X
PSY 410	X	X	X
SOC 307		X	X

Table A1. Student Learning Outcome #1-Course Matrix

Student Learning Outcome #3: Demonstrate knowledge of the methods, techniques, concepts, and vocabularies of the social sciences. **Table A2 demonstrates the mapping of this outcome to social science courses.**

Social Science Course	Fall	Winter	Spring
ANTH 335		X	
ANTH 452			X
ECO 201N	X	X	X
ECO 202N	X	X	X
GEOG 106	X		
GEOG 107		X	
GEOG 108			X
HIST 335	X		
HIST 356	X	X	X
PSCI 201			
PSY 311	X	X	X
PSY 312		X	X
PSY 347	X	X	X
PSY 410	X	X	X
SOC 204	X	X	X
SOC 225	X	X	X

Table A2. Student Learning Outcome #2-Course Matrix