

Learning Objectives for the Sociology Major

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The learning objectives for the sociology major reflect the Sociological Literacy Framework (SLF) developed by the American Sociological Association (Pike et al 2017). This framework for undergraduate majors in sociology include five “Essential Concepts” (The Sociological Eye, Social Structure, Socialization, Stratification, and Social Reproduction & Social Change) and six “Essential Competencies” (Identify and apply sociological theories to understand social phenomena; Critically evaluate explanations of human behavior and social phenomena; Apply scientific principles to understand the social world; Evaluate the quality of social scientific data; Rigorously analyze social scientific data; and Use sociological knowledge to inform policy debates and promote public understanding).

Critical Thinking: Students will be able to abstract general propositions from textual, observational, and quantitative evidence; identify logical relations among general propositions, and test the applicability of these propositions against new evidence. This object addresses the SLF essential competency of “Critically evaluate explanations of human behavior and social phenomena.”

Assessed in SOC 302, 499

Concepts and Paradigms: Students will be able to explain sociological understanding of culture, social structure, and social processes using the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives in the context of the United States and other societies. This objective addresses the SLF essential concepts of The Sociological Eye, Social Structure, Socialization, Stratification, and Social Reproduction & Social Change. It also addresses the SLF essential competency of “Identify and apply sociological theories to understand social phenomena.”

Assessed in SOC 101, 301, 499

Application: Students will be able to connect sociology to their public and private lives-as members of families and organizations and as citizens of local, national, and global communities. This objective addresses the SLF essential competencies of “Apply scientific principles to understand the social world,” “Identify and apply sociological theories to understand social phenomena.” and “Use sociological knowledge to inform policy debates and promote public understanding.”

Assessed in SOC 101, 301, 499

Social Research Methods: Students will be able to explain causality and to posit interesting and important sociological research questions, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, interpret their findings and effectively communicate their results to appropriate audiences. This objective addresses the SLF essential competencies of: “Apply scientific principles to understand the social world,” “Evaluate the quality of social scientific data,” and “Rigorously analyze social scientific data.”

Assessed in SOC 302, 499

Communication: Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to write and speak logically and cogently, to convey ideas and research findings to large audiences and small groups, to listen to

others and respond constructively, and to demonstrate leadership skills and collaboration skills. This objective addresses the SLF essential competencies of “Apply scientific principles to understand the social world,” and “Use sociological knowledge to inform policy debates and promote public understanding.”

Assessed in SOC 301, 302, 499

Information Literacy: Students will be able to distinguish between scientifically-grounded observation, logical proposition, anecdote, and opinion. This objective addresses the SLF essential competencies of: “Evaluate the quality of social scientific data,” and “Rigorously analyze social scientific data.”

Assessed in SOC 101, 302, 499

Source:

Pike, Diane L., Teresa Ciabattari, Melinda Messineo, Renee A. Monson, Rifat A. Salam, Theodore C. Wagenaar, Jeffrey Chin, Susan J. Ferguson, Margaret Weigers Vitullo, Patrick Archer, Maxine P. Atkinson, Jeanne H. Ballantine, Thomas C. Calhoun, Paula England, Rebecca J. Erickson, Andrea N. Hunt, Kathleen S. Lowney, Suzanne B. Maurer, Mary S. Senter, and Stephen Sweet. 2017. *The Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. <https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/asa-booklet-2017.pdf>

Annual Assessment Plans:

This plan reduces assessment of learning goals in introductory settings because 1) most students taking SOC 101 at TCNJ do not major nor minor in sociology and 2) a substantial number of our majors do not complete SOC 101 during their first year at TCNJ (as internal or external transfer students). Thus we limit assessment in SOC 101 to focus on key issues of concepts/paradigms and application, as these are appropriate for liberal learning students as well as sociology majors.

Year	Course Focus	Learning Goals Assessed
22-23	SOC 101	Introductory Level: Concepts and Paradigms Application
23-24	SOC 301	Intermediate Levels: Concepts and Paradigms Application Communication
24-25	SOC 499	Advanced Level: All
26-27	SOC 302	Intermediate Levels: Critical Thinking

		Social Research Methods Communication Information Literacy
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Sociology Major Assessment Strategy

Learning Objectives	Assessed in	Assessment Strategy	Cycle
<u>Critical Thinking</u> : Students will be able to abstract general propositions from textual, observational, and quantitative evidence; identify logical relations among general propositions, and test the applicability of these propositions against new evidence.	302 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of research papers in 302, & 499 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 302: 2026-27 SOC 499: 2024-25
<u>Concepts and Paradigms</u> : Students will be able to explain sociological understanding of culture, social structure, and social processes using the functionalist, conflict and interactionist perspectives in the context of the United States and other societies.	101 (Introductory level) 301 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Syllabus review in SOC 101 Portfolio analysis of conceptual assignments in SOC 101 (majors only), 301, & 499; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: 2022-23 SOC 301: 2023-24 SOC 499: 2024-25
<u>Application</u> : Students will be able to connect sociology to their public and private lives-as members of families and organizations and as citizens of local, national, and global communities.	101 (Introductory level) 301 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Syllabus review in SOC 101 Portfolio analysis of application assignments in SOC 101 (majors only), 301, & 499; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision; Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 101: 2022-23 SOC 301: 2023-24 SOC 499: 2024-25
<u>Social Research Methods</u> : Students will be able to explain causality and to posit interesting and important sociological research questions, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, interpret their findings and effectively communicate their results to appropriate audiences	302 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Portfolio analysis of research papers in 302 & 499; syllabus review in 101 Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.	SOC 302: 2026-27 SOC 499: 2024-25
<u>Communication</u> : Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to write and speak logically and cogently, to convey ideas and research findings to large audiences and small groups, to listen to others and respond constructively, and to demonstrate leadership skills and collaboration skills.	301/2 (Intermediate level) 499 (Advanced level)	Oral communication skill will be assessed by (1) collecting baseline data in SOC 101; (2) observation of SOC 302 research presentations; and (3) observation of student presentations in SOC 499 capstone. Writing skill will be assessed by (1) collecting baseline data by analyzing	SOC 301: 2023-24 SOC 302: 2026-27 SOC 499: 2024-25

		<p>written assignment from a random sample of SOC 101 students; (2) analysis of the papers in SOC 301 & 302; (3) analysis of final paper in SOC 499</p> <p>Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.</p>	
<p><u>Information Literacy</u>: Students will be able to distinguish between scientifically-grounded observation, logical proposition, anecdote, and opinion.</p>	<p>302 (Intermediate Level) 499 (Advanced level)</p>	<p>Common assignment to be developed across SOC 101, portfolio analysis in 499</p> <p>Ongoing discussion with regard to rubric development and revision for each level during planned year of assessment.</p>	<p>SOC 302: 2026-27 SOC 499: 2024-25</p>