

**Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum
May 2020**

Department/Program: Sociology

1) Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed?

We list below the formal learning outcomes for the Core courses:

- a. Demonstrate the critical, mathematical, informational, analytic, expressive, and creative skills that are essential tools of the educated person well-prepared for a meaningful life and vocation.
- b. Understand the major ideas and methods of inquiry of the scholarly disciplines that comprise the university and be able to use those methods of inquiry as beginning practitioners to address complex contemporary problems.
- c. Be able to identify and articulate the strengths and limitations of the disciplines and the relationship of the disciplines to one another, and demonstrate an understanding of the breadth and diversity of human knowledge as well as its openness to integration in more comprehensive wholes.
- d. Be conversant with and able to discuss intelligently enduring questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.
- e. Demonstrate the ability to apply more than one disciplinary perspective to the same enduring question or complex contemporary problem.
- f. Be familiar with the scholarly exploration of religious faith and understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.
- g. Demonstrate the ability to examine their values and experiences and integrate what they learn with the principles that guide their lives.
- h. Be prepared and disposed to use their talents and education as engaged global citizens and responsible leaders in service of the common good.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.

The learning outcomes appear on the University Core website: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/core-renewal/renewed-core-course-goals.html>.

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

During the fall term, the Assessment Committee distributed to all instructors of core Sociology courses (a) a list of the names of a randomly-selected 25% sample of students enrolled in their course(s), and (b) a rubric. The rubric is used to assess two of the eight general core formal

learning outcomes. Instructors applied the rubric to a 5-page paper or essay exam question from each student in the sample.

- 4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Assessment Committee consists of two full-time faculty members, who also work with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. The Assessment Committee is responsible for (a) creation of the rubric for student work, (b) data collection, compilation, and analysis, (c) provision of summary data and recommended actions to the full faculty, and (d) communication with administration, including annual reports to the Dean of Arts & Sciences.

Annually at the department's spring retreat, the full faculty discusses the Assessment Committee's internal report and decides upon programmatic changes.

- 5) What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

Overall, faculty members' assessment of their students' work produced in core courses was largely very positive; most students appeared to demonstrate solid skills in the areas we evaluated (see full data in the Appendix A). One aspect of students' work that appeared to be somewhat weaker than some of the others, however, is the ability to situate the problems studied within their historical or cultural contexts. This might be due to the emphasis on current topics/connections with current facts in the department core classes, which serves the purpose of boosting student engagement with the topics discussed, but may reduce students' understanding of the effects of historical and cultural contexts. Based on this finding, we recommended that the Undergraduate Study Committee should explore ideas and suggestions for core instructors about how to strengthen the historical and cultural context of their core classes.

- 6) Date of the most recent program review.**

2016.

Appendix A. 2019/20 Assessment of Core, Department of Sociology, Boston College

2020 Assessment of Core, Data from 16 Instructors and 19 Courses Included

