

**Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum
May 2022**

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 spring 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). Last year (2021), we saw some improvements compared to the assessments we conducted in 2020; some of these gains have been preserved this year as well (also see the data in Appendix A), and we saw some additional improvements.

Specifically, compared to 2021, more students demonstrate an ability to consistently see the familiar as strange. Students' ability to describe social problems as public issues and to address differences by race, class, gender, age, or sexual orientation remain largely unchanged.

While we saw improvements last year in students' ability to situate the problems studied within their historical or cultural contexts, we saw a partial decline in how consistently students were able to do this in their work in 2022. We will renew our efforts to strengthen the historical and cultural content of core classes.

We also saw a significant decline from the prior year in students' ability to strongly grasp the bigger picture (and not just the issue immediately at hand). The Undergraduate Studies Committee will work on developing ideas and suggestions for core instructors to strengthen students' understanding of how specific topics of discussion relate to broader issues.

The faculty also plans to look into renewing our Introductory Sociology course over the next couple of years. This would be a long-term project requiring the kind of support that faculty receive for teaching Complex Problem and Enduring Question courses. Some of the ideas include creating a series of modules, recording some lectures that can be used for inverted

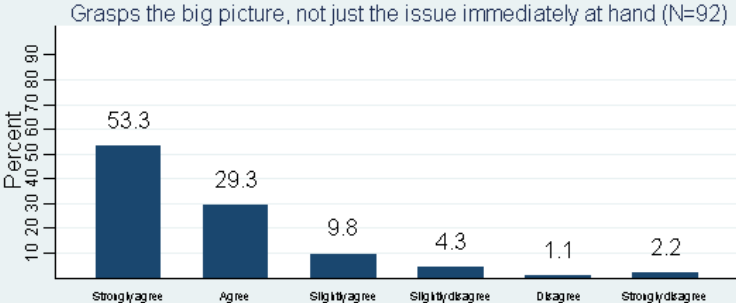
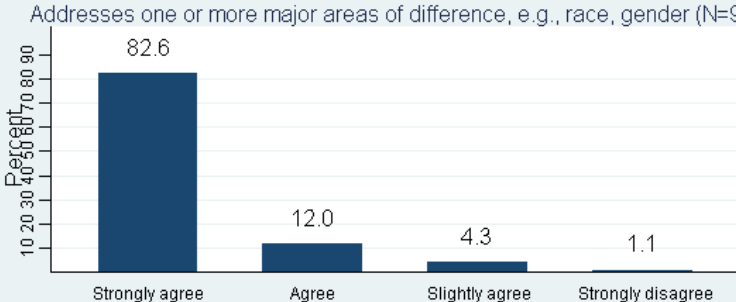
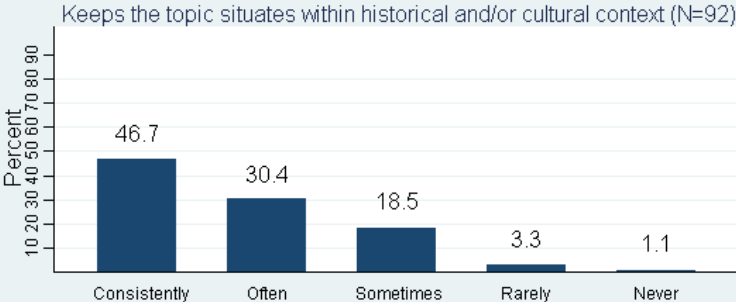
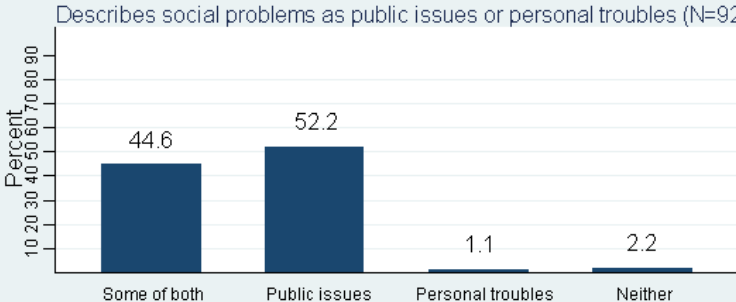
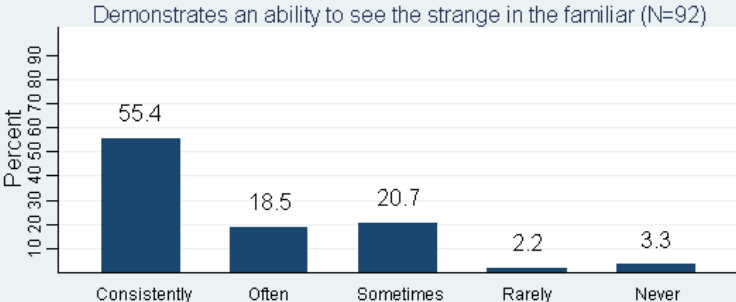
classroom-style teaching, creating a syllabus template for graduate students to utilize, and gathering useful external sources. Next year, the Undergraduate Studies Committee plans to come up with a proposal, hold a wider departmental discussion, and submit the proposal to the Dean's office the following year.

6) Date of the most recent program review.

2016.

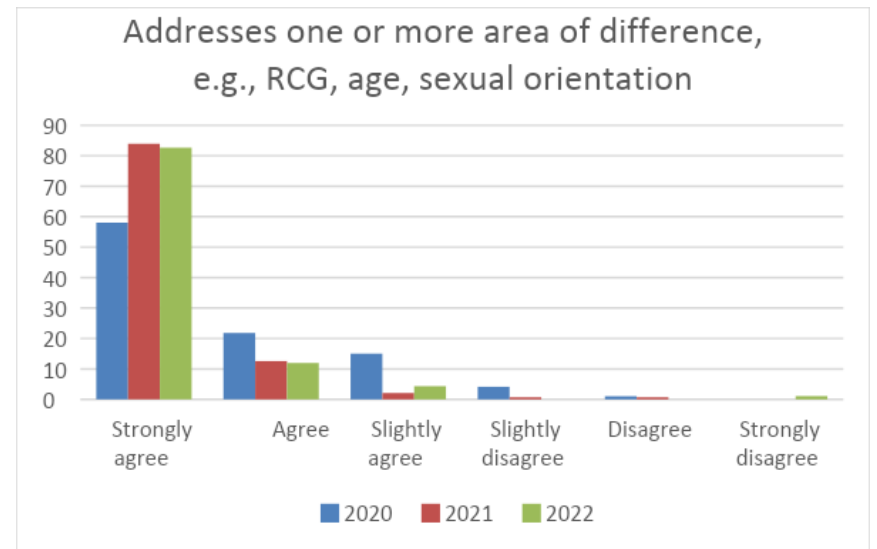
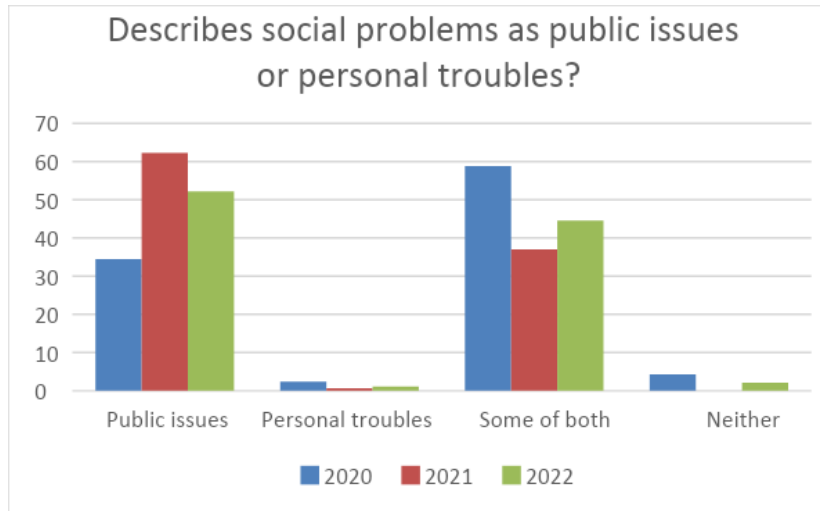
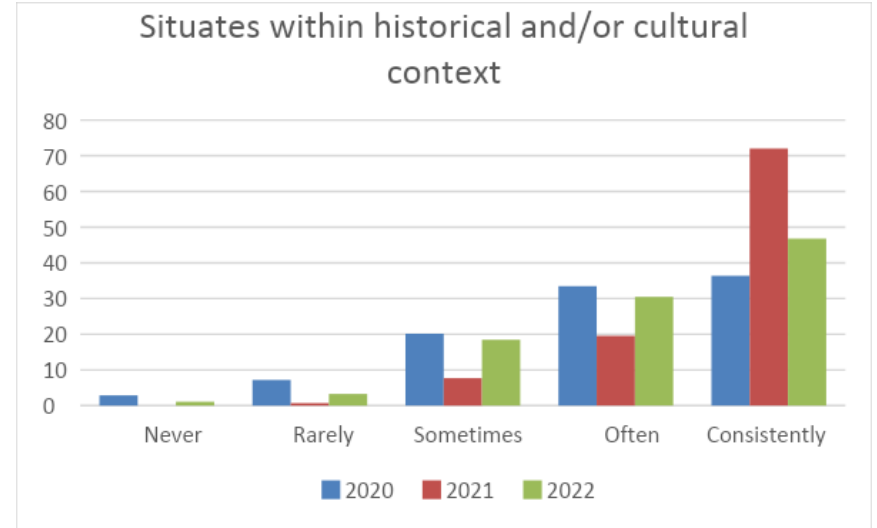
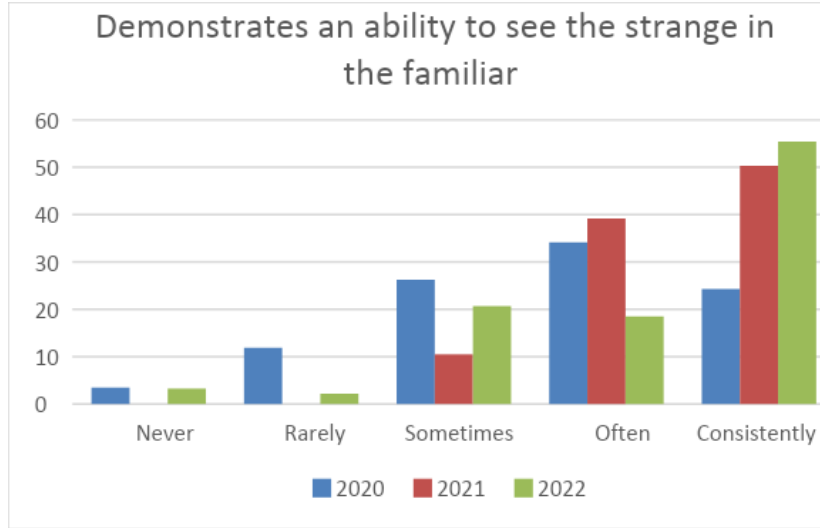
Appendix A. 2020-2022 Assessment of Core, Department of Sociology, Boston College

2022 Assessment of Core, Data from 9 Instructors and 6 Courses Included



Core Assessment Data: Significant Differences over the 2020-2022 Time Period (N for 2020 = 209, N for 2021 = 143, N for 2022 = 92)

Note: We used chi square tests to evaluate if there were significant changes over time in our core assessment data. All items indicated statistically significant differences for core assessment ($p < .05$); they are presented in the graphs below.



Grasps the big picture, not just the issue immediately at hand

