

Teagle Foundation Grant on Sustainable Department-level Assessment of Student Learning
Learning Goals from the report for Bryn Mawr College's Sociology Department
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Introduction:

Central to the discipline and our department's educational mission is the *sociological imagination*—the linking of individual experience and biography to broader historical and social processes and institutions. Developing a sociological imagination involves a range of educational objectives that create very different assessment challenges. For example, assessing students' understanding of certain types of statistical analysis is relatively straightforward and can often be accomplished in a single course. By contrast, assessing their ability to interpret sociological data or to formulate a sociological question is a considerably more complicated and subjective endeavor—a multi-stage process that unfolds as students make their way through the major. By the completion of the major, however, all graduating sociology majors should be competent in the skills listed below.

A graduating major should be well-versed in the sociological canon and be able to:

1. identify the historical circumstances and social changes that contributed to the development of sociology, many of which remain central to the discipline.
2. identify current and past social theorists that have shaped the discipline theoretically and methodologically, and be able to describe, compare, and apply their ideas.
3. identify and discuss the ideas of other social theorists who made significant contributions, but whose ideas have not conventionally been included as part of the sociological core.
4. analyze and discuss the experiences of diverse cultures, populations and perspectives from the US and abroad.

A graduating major should think sociologically. Specifically, s/he should be able to:

5. distinguish between and think across different levels of analysis: micro (individual), meso (institutional) and macro (national/global/cultural).
6. distinguish between responsible and irresponsible generalization, and engage in the former.
7. think reflexively and sociologically about their own cultural biases and social location, and how these factors may shape their own sociological analysis.
8. Pursue a research question through systematic sociological analysis, including theorizing, conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, and data-gathering.
9. Apply sociological theory and analysis to contemporary social issues, problems, and policy.

A graduating sociology major should be able to follow and contribute to the ongoing sociological conversation. Specifically s/he should be able to:

10. read and comprehend the various methods used by sociologists to conduct research (statistical, content analysis, ethnography, textual analysis, socio-historical analysis) and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of each.
11. organize ideas and research into presentations (both written and oral) that are well-argued, clear, and insightful.