

College of Arts & Sciences

Sociology, MA

Broad Learning Goals

- A. Students will understand, critique, and be able to note research applications of insights from the classical sociological theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim..
- B. Students will be able to explain the meaning of terms used to capture elements of sociological theory.
- C. Students will understand the nature of sociological research methods and how they may be used to in examining sociological issues.
- D. Students will understand how statistical procedures may be used to examine research issues in contemporary sociology.

Student Learning Outcomes

- A1. Students will be able to explain the major themes of Marxian, Weberian, and Durkheimian perspectives on the social world.
- A2. Students will be able to discuss the differences, merits, limitations, overlapping characteristics, and possible ways to integrate two or more of the three classic perspectives.
- A3. Students will be able to derive at least two research hypotheses from two or more of the perspectives that may be applicable to an area of their own interest. They will also be able to provide a brief description of a possible research project that investigates the hypotheses.
- B1. Students will be able to explain how concepts, relationships, middle-range theory and general theory relate to one another in comprising what sociologists mean by theory (note: there are several alternative terms referring to middle-range and general theory that are not noted here). They will be able to note some major concepts, relationships, an perhaps middle-range theory found in a major perspective in contemporary sociological theory.

- B2. Students will be able to explain and critique at least two theoretical perspectives that are part of contemporary sociological theory.
- B3. Students will be able to explain two research hypotheses that are associated with two perspectives described above. They will be able to provide a brief description of a possible research project that investigates the hypotheses.
- C1. Students will be able to explain the major characteristics of the scientific method, and how it differs from other ways of knowing the world.
- C2. Students will be able to explain the major approaches to research design, data collection, and data analysis in contemporary sociological research.
- C3. Students will be able to explain how a research topic important to them may be investigated using a particular research design, mode of data collection, and mode of data analysis.
- D1. Students will be able to describe the idea of fitting a line into a scatterplot of data points and the least squared concept. They will be able to explain the “ordinary least squares” (OLS) regression assumptions and their implications, and illustrate the use of OLS regression. They will be able to interpret OLS results, including summary measures of model fit, estimated coefficients, and statistical significance of effects.
- D2. Students will be able to describe, for at least two of the methods listed below research problems or types of data for which the methods are useful. They will also be able to explain the methods in a non-technical way, and be able to interpret their main results. Possible methods include generalized least squares, logistic regression, Poisson and negative binomial regression, principal component and factor analysis, correspondence analysis, event history analysis, time series analysis, social network analysis, and analysis of hierarchical or clustered data.