

## Sociology Program Assessment 2004-05

### Introduction

The program used three assessment instruments to evaluate the achievement of its goals:

*Senior Seminar Paper* – All sociology majors are required to take our capstone course, the Senior Seminar. The course was developed with the objective of assessing students' sociological skills. Students are required to complete a major research project (involving data gathering, data analysis, and reporting skills) for the seminar. Senior Seminar papers are read by an evaluation committee and the student work is used to assess the effectiveness of our program objectives.

*Senior Exit Interviews* – Annually we conduct senior exit interviews and evaluate students' responses as to the adequacy of courses offered (intellectual rigor, breadth and depth in the discipline), pedagogical quality of instruction, advising, course availability, and suggestions for change or program improvement.

*Library Skills Test* – All sociology majors are also required to take a library skills test that measures their level of competence in research work, including selecting sources, searching databases, retrieving full text, evaluating information, using the internet, and citing sources. The library skills test is a good way to gauge their level of methodological sophistication.

### Objective Accomplishments/Results

Results of the three assessment instruments are shared with the program faculty and are subject to program approval. Since the results for the most part supported the structure and nature of the curriculum, they have been used to support its continuance. The assessment action taken this year was the introduction of requirements to become sociology major. The introduction of the requirements was a function of our program's desire to maintain a high level of excellence in student performance and intellectual rigor.

### Senior Seminar Assessment

Senior Seminar students are expected to produce an original research paper. As a whole, these papers are expected to demonstrate sociological competence which can be assessed by the accomplishment of program goals. The Sociology Program Goals are listed in Appendix A.

A Senior Seminar Committee (Joe Spear, Chair, Damian White and James Steele) was charged with the evaluation of a random sample of senior seminar papers from the past three semesters, Spring 2004, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005. The sample was comprised of 20 percent, 28 papers, of the semesters total of 140 papers. The Committee's written report was approved by the sociology faculty and appears in this document as Appendix B.

Presented here is a brief review of the Committee's findings as they pertain to the general program goals.

**Goal 1.** Cultivation of the sociological imagination by developing students' appreciation of the social component of all dimensions of human experience.

*The Committee concluded that overall these papers demonstrate that our students have gained a "...significant insight into the understanding and analysis of social life."*

**Goal 2.** Faculty instruct with regard to school of thought and methodological skills within the sociological tradition.

*The Committee found there to be "...widespread understanding, at least in principle, of how to proceed from formulating a question, to situating of the question in theoretical and methodological terms, to using appropriate means for addressing these questions." However, the Committee also reported that "...the papers frequently demonstrate relatively superficial engagement with theoretical and methodological issues..." Further, at the level of execution too often theory is detached from the content of the paper, and "...there are frequent difficulties with carrying through completely on methodology."*

**Goal 3.** The program nourishes disciplines, creative and spontaneous participation in the sociological endeavor.

*The Committee concluded that our students demonstrate "...the basic logic and procedure for producing professionally-styled research paper," and "...in most cases the general principles for carrying out original sociological research are understood."*

In conclusion, the senior seminar papers demonstrate basic competence with respect to program goals, but the level of competency among individual papers varies from "dismal" to "significant work." A significant proportion of the variance in senior seminar papers may reflect what is seen by the sociology faculty as a growing number of students who major in sociology as "a path of least resistance" to graduation more than program curriculum and instruction. This having been said, there is need for improvement. We need to improve student's execution of theoretical and methodological uses and the mechanics of method. Specific means to accomplish this are beyond the charge of the Senior Seminar Committee. Therefore, at this junction, it is recommended that such means should be addressed in ongoing dialogs regarding our program.

## Exit Interviews/Questionnaires

Since the 2001-02 academic year exit interviews have been the preferred program evaluation instrument. The content of the exit interview primarily focuses on the student's satisfaction with the Sociology Program. Hence, these data can best be seen as "evaluation" rather than assessment. Two comments are appropriate with regard to this distinction. First, sociology faculty consider as important how students feel about the program, its strengths and weaknesses, and how we might improve. Second, students' "evaluation" yield important information about their understanding of the major theoretical debates in sociology, the sociological skills they have acquired and the application of sociology to their work and everyday lives. It is, then, evident that the exit interview can be a source of assessment as well. In fact, the responses from exit interviews conducted in 1998 and 2001 indicated that students did not understand the philosophies and epistemologies of the paradigms. As a result we added SOCI 200 as a requirement and as a prerequisite to the three analysis courses: SOCI 380, 382 and 384.

Historically, exit interviews have been conducted by a faculty member in her/his office. The standardized questions were read by the faculty member and student responses were simultaneously recorded and the entire document was saved as a number. The interview format, however, has raised concerns among sociology faculty about student anonymity. As a result, the exit interview form was administered as an anonymous questionnaire for the 2004-05 academic year. The questionnaire was administered to all spring 05 senior seminar students by a work study student who gathered the completed questionnaires, placed them in an envelop and returned them to the Department's secretary. These data were analyzed after spring 05 graduation by Professors Imani and Carter. A copy of the exit questionnaire is included in this document as Appendix C and a summary of the findings is included as Appendix D.

The exit interview questionnaire contains both quantitative and qualitative items and allows students to evaluate the program in seven areas: overall quality, quality of instruction, number and type of courses, facilities assessment, preparation for future work, preparation for life, and the quality of advising. Students rank these seven areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 indicating "poor" and 5 indicating excellent.). The relevant statistics appear in Table 1 where they are compared to the results from the 3 previous academic years. Comparative data are needed to examine the potential effect of the change in the method of data collection from interviews to questionnaires. Table 1 below contains the mean scores for the seven areas listed above for the academic years 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, and 2004-05.

Sociology Program Senior Exit  
Interviews/Questionnaires

Ranking of	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Overall Quality	3.85	4.25	4.02	3.76
Quality of Instruction	4.42	4.5	4.5	3.92
Course Availability	3.83	3.5	3.4	3.69
Facilities	3.17	3.5	3.3	3.08
Advising	3.52	4.16	4.17	3.34
Work Preparation	4.04	4.1	4.4	3.45
Preparation for Life	4.38	4.25	4.6	3.68

Most apparent in Table 1 is the decline in mean scores for the 2004-05 academic year in 6 or the 7 items ranked. The largest declines, especially when compared with 2002-03 and 2003-04, are in Overall quality, Quality of Instruction, Advising, Preparation for Work and Preparation for Life.

Two alternative explanations for these declines are plausible. First, students may have been reluctant to give low or even medium rankings in face-to-face interviews with a faulty member resulting in biased and inflated rankings for the previous years. Second, these declines may indicate real changes in student perceptions of the program. Of course, some combination of the change in method and change in perceptions is also plausible.

While any interpretation of changes in one year's rankings warrants caution there have been unanticipated changes in the quality of instruction and among sociology majors themselves that are worthy of notation. As to the former, our program has become increasingly dependent upon part-time and one-year faculty appointments to teach our introductory courses, especially SOCI 101-Introduction to Sociology, and GSOCI 210—Global Social Issues. Among these adjunct appointments there has been a “luck of the draw” concerning the quality of their instruction. On this year's Exit Questionnaires nine (17 percent) students commented negatively about part-time and one-year faculty.

Representative among these comments are:

*Have less professors that are here for just one year that are not invested as much in the school or the sociology department.*

*I found classes with professors who had only been hired on for that semester to be of the poorest quality....*

*I understand the monetary issues with hiring part-time assistants, but I'd rather see a lack of classes than take a class that was a waste of time.*

*Be careful who you hire as an adjunct; I had a bad experience.*

Concerning changes among sociology majors themselves, there has likely been an increase in the number of “default” majors. Included in this category are students who did not meet the academic challenges or standards of their desired major or who chose sociology to facilitate graduating in 4 years. On the Exit Questionnaire 14 (26.4 percent) students admitted to choosing sociology as a fallback major or to complete a major in time for graduation.

Representative among these admissions are:

*I didn't have the GPA to get into the other major I wanted.*

*I started out as a Biology major my first year and was a member of the Bio learning community my 1<sup>st</sup> year. After struggling with math/chem. I decided to change my major.*

*Started out as a minor, didn't get into SCOM with 2.7 so I just decided to major in SOCI.*

*I didn't get into JMU's nursing program.*

*I planned to major in education but wanted to graduate on time, so SOCI seemed like the best option.*

*Transferred here and could graduate on time if I switched it [sociology] to my major.*

No doubt, “default” majors are not new to Sociology. However, exit interviews from previous years did not reveal anywhere near the slightly more than one out of four found in the 2004-05 exit questionnaires. The extent to which this reflects an actual increase in “default” majors or results from a change in the method of data collection is not certain. What is certain, however, is that in recent years the majority of academic departments in our college and other colleges as well have established a minimum GPA of 2.5 or better as a requirement for declaration of a major, while also increasing the number of prerequisite course requirements within their majors. Also certain is the consensus among sociology faculty that Sociology has increasingly become a “default” major resulting in an increase in majors who do not meet our academic expectations and who do not demonstrate a commitment to sociology. As a result, the Sociology Program has implemented GPA requirements for admission to the Sociology major beginning Fall 05. The requirements for admission to the Sociology major appear in the final section of this document, entitled “Use of Evaluation/Assessment Results and Action Taken.”

## Library Skills Exam

A library skills evaluation was developed by Elaine Day (former sociology library liaison) and first administered to a pilot group of 25 senior seminar students in 1999. Since the library skills test does not assess any specific goals/objects of the program, it has not been administered systematically. In fact, it was not given between 1999 and 2005.

In spring 2005 the library skills test was taken by all seniors in three sections of SOCI 480 - Senior Seminar. A total of 55 student took the exam which was administered electronically through a website. A copy of the exam can be found at <http://sass.jmu.edu/socfrm.htm> (password "soctest").

Six areas of competence in library research were assessed by the exam: selecting sources, searching databases, retrieving full text articles, evaluating information, internet use and citing sources. Student competency was rated in terms of exceptional, competent, minimal, and incompetent. Student ratings in the six area, and on the exams as a whole, are compared for the years 1999 and 2005 in Table I below.

Table 1.

Sociology Information Literary Assessment Results  
Performance by Competency Level, 1999 and 2005

	<u>Level of Competence</u>							
	<i>Exceptional</i>		<i>Competent</i>		<i>Minimal</i>		<i>Incompetent</i>	
	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005	1999	2005
Selecting Sources	8%	24%	28%	62%	32%	0%	32%	14%
Searching Databases	12%	45%	40%	40%	0%	11%	20%	4%
Retrieving Full Text	8%	51%	52%	38%	0%	7%	40%	4%
Evaluating Information	8%	60%	44%	38%	0%	2%	48%	0%
Internet	64%	98%	20%	2%	0%	0%	8%	0%
Citing Sources	NA	58%	NA	20%	NA	0%	NA	22%
Overall Competence	4%	33%	20%	49%	52%	11%	24%	7%

\*Competency levels were higher for 2005 than 1999. In 1999 competency levels were: Exception 37-45, competent 32-36, minimal 26-31, and incompetent 0-25. Respectively, the 2005 competency levels were: 41-44, 35-39, 31-34, 0-30. The 2005 levels were set by Lynn Cameron, Instruction Coordinator, and Candace Miller, Reference Librarian.

Clearly, in 2005 our students demonstrated at least minimal competence in library skills with only 7 percent incompetent. This is a significant improvement when

compared to 1999 where 24 percent were incompetent. Also important in 2005, 33 percent of our students received an exceptional rating. In 1999 only 4 percent scored an exceptional rating. Significant percentage increases in the exceptional level of competency were evident in the 5 areas for which data were available for 1999 and 2005. And, in these 5 areas there were significant decreases in the percentage of students who received an incompetent rating in 2005 compared to 1999.

While there remains some room for improvement in all areas, with the exception of “internet” where 98 percent of our students were rated exceptional, “citing sources” is an area where improvement is most needed. There were no data for this area in 1999; however, 22 percent of our students in 2005 were rated incompetent in citing sources. Hence, it is recommended that “citing sources” be more systematically addressed in each of the three analysis classes and in Senior Seminar.

Mastery in all of these skill areas would undoubtedly enhance our students’ ability to write original research and to evaluate the work of others. The Library Skills test is a valuable tool in tracking the progress of our students in these areas, and to make changes in our curriculum/courses to address these skills accordingly. Hence, it is recommended that the Library Skills test be administered in all Senior Seminar classes biannually.

#### Use of Evaluation/Assessment results and Action Taken

The results of the three assessment instruments were shared with and approved by the Sociology faculty. The Sociology faculty agreed that student proficiency in meeting program goals varied greatly (see Senior Seminar Report, Appendix B). The majority of our students were meeting or exceeding our expectations, but too many students were not. Furthermore, the sociology faculty was of the opinion that the proportion of students who were not performing at a satisfactory level had been increasing in recent years.

In addition, all faculty expressed concern and disappointment over the number of our majors who chose to major in Sociology because they had not met the academic requirements of their preferred major, or in order to graduate on time (see exit interviews/questionnaires, appendix D). A review of the 2004-05 JMU catalog revealed that a number of departments in the College of Arts and Letters and other colleges had established GPA requirements for pre-majors and minimum courses grades of “C” within their majors. Sociology has not had GPA requirements for prospective majors and a course grade of “D” has been counted for major credit. Our only academic requirement has been an overall GPA of 2.0 for the 39 credits required for a major in Sociology. And, in the Fall 2004, 18 percent, about one in five sociology majors, had a GPA of 2.0 or below.

Among those who major in sociology as a “path of least resistance” to graduation basic matters of student interest, effort and ability go beyond our program and cannot be reasonably addressed by changes in our curriculum and/or instruction. With that said, the

course of action taken this year was the introduction of requirements for admission to the sociology major. Students must meet the following requirements to be admitted to the Sociology Program as a major.

- Students are automatically admitted to the sociology major program if : A) they have an overall GPA of 2.5, or B) they receive at least a B- in SOCI 200 and at least a B- in one of the following introductory sociology classes: GSOCI210, GSOCI 240 or SOCI 101.
- Transfer students will be admitted to the sociology major after earning at least a B- in SOCI 200 and at least a B- in one of the following courses taken at JMU: GSOCI 210, GSOCI 240 or SOCI 101. If transfer credits have been awarded for the equivalent of GSOCI 210, GSOCI 240 and SOCI 101, transfer students will be admitted after earning at least a B- in SOCI 200.
- Students admitted to the major must earn at least a C- in all sociology classes or any course that is substituted for a sociology core course credit. If a student earns below a C- in a course, he or she can re-take the course once in order to meet the C- standard.
- Students with an overall GPA of at least 2.0 may apply for admission to the sociology major for a limited number of spaces through an application process. To download an application, visit the Sociology Department Website at <http://www.jmu.edu/sociology/>.

## **APPENDIX A**

### Sociology Program Goals

Cultivation of the sociological imagination by developing students' appreciation of the social component of all dimensions of human experience, including:

- Diversity and alternatives in social orientations and practices within and across societies
- The importance of social science to social policy decisions; political, social and cultural activity; and personal growth

Faculty instruct with regard to school of thought and methodological skills within the sociological tradition by enhancing students':

- Understanding of the major strands of sociological thought
- Ability to place the development and practice of sociology within a social and historical context
- Understanding of the logic of sociology's various methodological skills
- Skills in the application of sociological methods

The program nourishes disciplined, creative and spontaneous participation in the sociological endeavor by cultivating:

- Norms of a scholarly community and a democratic society (openness to testing, reinterpretation and refutation, openness to public scrutiny)
- Scholarly traits necessary to practice sociology (objectivity, value clarity, skill development, perceptiveness, creativity, logical consistency, hard work and discipline)
- Receptivity to the emergent qualities produced by creative and spontaneous sociological reflection.

## APPENDIX B

Committee for Evaluation of Senior Seminar Papers, 2005

Members: Joe Spear, Jim Steele, Damien White

Base: Random selection of 28 Senior Seminar papers from Spring 2004, Fall 2004 and Spring 2005

### **I. General Comments:**

First, it should be noted that senior seminar papers cannot provide any thorough or complete evaluation of the extent to which our program goals are being met. There is a great deal that we do with students in this program, and the senior seminar paper represents only a snapshot of some aspects of the total educational experience of our students. On a point by point basis, it is unreasonable to expect that a research paper would clearly address or necessarily reflect all of our program goals as formally listed. If these papers were to do so, then they would not be research papers. That said, the senior seminar papers should reflect the acquisition of a basic set of skills, particularly with respect to defining sociological questions and developing appropriate theoretical and methodological tools for addressing said questions. The comments produced here are primarily intended to address issues at that level.

Second, it is important to note at the outset that the quality of papers varies a great deal. Some of these papers are pieces of work that could easily be taken to graduate school and turned into the bases for Masters thesis or other significant work. On the other hand, some of them are clearly dismal, and demonstrate little work, “sociological imagination,” or sociological expertise. We have all encountered the difficulty of banging our heads against the wall with students who either will not (or perhaps cannot) perform well. As such, it should be clear that a significant proportion of the variation seen in these papers is more reflective of the students’ efforts than of our program.

### **II. General Form and Style of Papers**

In general, the papers clearly represent a very wide range of interests in terms of both substance and sociological approach. As such, it seems clear that we do aid in producing a student culture that is sensitive to many different kinds of sociological questions and approaches to those questions. Interests range from the local and immediate world of the students’ everyday reality to the broader world encompassing cross cultural and historical interests.

In addition, our students do seem to have a grasp, at least in general form, of the basic logic and procedure for producing professionally-styled research papers. There is widespread understanding, at least in principle, of how to proceed from formulating a question, to situating of the question in theoretical and methodological terms, to using appropriate means for addressing those questions. As might be expected, the execution of these steps is not always stellar. In fact, it is sometimes not good at all. However, in most cases the general principles for carrying out original sociological research are understood. Without a basis for comparison to other undergraduate programs it is difficult to say, but in comparison to other programs that I (J. Spear) have participated in

(as faculty or student), we demand a higher level of work from students, and by and large, our students produce a higher level of work.

### **III. Most Apparent Problems: Execution**

The most apparent difficulties do seem to exist at the level of execution. Again, keeping in mind a great deal of variation in quality, the papers frequently demonstrate relatively superficial engagement with theoretical and methodological issues, including the integration of what is being done theoretically with the methodological work. To the extent that theoretical perspectives are present (because they aren't always), they often seem to be included in an obligatory manner rather than in a manner that is suitable to the problem at hand. In other words, the use of some form of theory is expected and it often seems that the theory present is geared toward meeting this expectation rather than toward the substantive problem at hand. Thus, to the extent that the theory may be suitable to the problem, it is rarely actively engaged in dealing with the problem. The theoretical points remain at arm's length from the rest of the content of the paper.

Methodological problems are of a different kind. At a general level, there is normally good fit between question, approach, and methodology. However, there are frequent difficulties with carrying through completely on methodology. This ranges all the way from a lack of attention to any clear methodological strategy (most likely to occur in association with critical analysis), to obvious errors or violations of well known methodological principles (most likely to occur in association with interpretive or positivist analysis). For example, papers of a critical orientation sometimes lapse into opinion pieces without clearly engaging the problem that was laid out. One student's presumably interpretive paper was based on a grand total of four interviews with persons who, based on the information presented, were likely members of her own family. Students who do quantitative analysis routinely exhibit errors in its basic logic, from connecting analysis to questions through to technical execution and interpretation. There frequently appears to be an emphasis on "doing" rather than thinking. Thus something that, on its surface, looks like "sociology" gets done, but the sociology itself isn't always obviously present. The superficial engagement with both theoretical and methodological issues frequently results in papers that do not adequately address their questions in a satisfactory way.

In general, many of the former difficulties are quite understandable. First, these are the most difficult issues that we deal with as professionals. If it were all so easy, our program would not likely be structured this way. Historically, theory and methodology have been separate specialties (to a large extent) in sociology because they represent very difficult areas in and of themselves. We attempt to give students proficiency in both and, as such, attempt to pass along the core of what we ourselves find most difficult. Second, these students have a very short period of time within which to accomplish this piece of work. A certain degree of corner cutting and lack of polish should be expected. Often the speed with which these papers are assembled sometime results in a loose concatenation of different components that *might* serve as the basis for a paper if someone sorted it all out. This latter point, of course, is significantly affected by the students' own efforts since time difficulties are frequently the result of the tendency to procrastinate.

With that said, many of the basic difficulties also lie beyond what we can reasonably be expected to address. Some of these are, as noted, basic matters of student interest and/or level of effort and engagement with their own projects. Many of the difficulties that students have are ones that we explicitly attempt to avoid or overcome (including the time that they spend on completing these projects). Yet others, go beyond our program to the basic abilities of students and/or the quality of their general educational experience (both and JMU and prior). These include such things as basic errors in logical thought (beyond carelessness or any logic specific to sociology), and the ever-present difficulty that many students have with writing coherently.

#### IV. Summary

In general terms, we do produce undergraduate sociology students who are relatively sophisticated in terms of their experience with and exposure to a broad range of substantive issues and theoretical and methodological approaches in sociology. Our best students seem exceptionally well prepared to enter either graduate school and/or entry level positions within knowledge producing organizations if they so choose. At the very least they do gain significant insight into the understanding and analysis of social life. In this overall sense, our program should be considered very successful.

In terms of improvement, it seems apparent that some “tightening up” of students’ understanding of fundamental theoretical and methodological issues, uses, and mechanics would go a long way to improving student experience. The means by which that might be accomplished are beyond what this committee is able to establish on the basis of a reading of these papers, and should be addressed in our ongoing dialogs regarding our program.

## APPENDIX C

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Exit Interview Questions for Sociology Majors

*[first questions open ended, could rate as know/don't know?]*

[1] Could you explain what you think are important theoretical debates within sociology?

[2] What sociological tools/skills do you feel you are taking with you when you graduate?

[3] How have you applied sociology in your experience here at JMU?

*[scale of 1 to 5 as we did in the past? (1= poor, 5= excellent) plus comments]*

[4] What do you think of the overall quality of the program? (1-5)

[5] How could we make it better? (open ended)

[6] What do you think of the quality of instruction here? (1-5)

[7] How could we do better? (open ended)

[8] What do you think of the availability of courses? (1-5)

[9] Are there certain classes that we should add in the department? (open ended)

[10] What do you think of the facilities? (1-5)

[11] What do you think of the quality of advising in the department? (1-5)

[12] Has this degree helped prepare you for your future work? (1-5) How?

[13] Has this degree helped prepare you for life? (1-5) How?

[14] How did you end up majoring in sociology?

[15] Any other suggestions or comments??

[END]

## APPENDIX D

### Summary of 2005 Senior Exit Questionnaire Data Professors Carter and Imani

#### **1. Could you explain what you think are important theoretical debates in sociology?**

30% (16 students) said the major theoretical debates were between the three paradigms, and often gave deeper explanations of an individual point within the paradigms.  
28% (15 students) claimed that they did not know what the important theoretical debates of sociology were.  
5 claimed that they knew what the theoretical debates were, but did not describe any.  
5 claimed that social issues were important as well.  
A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

#### **2. What sociological tools or skills are you taking with you?**

66% (35 students) answered that they would be taking analyses skills/the ability to see things from different perspectives with them.  
40% (21 students) said that they would be taking research/SPSS skills with them.  
21% (11 students) said they were taking writing skills with them.  
5 claimed that they were taking knowledge of the three paradigms with them, and another 2 reported that they did not know what skills they were taking.  
A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

#### **3. How have you applied sociology to your experiences at JMU?**

38% (20 students) claimed that they used sociology in their everyday lives.  
36% (19 students) claimed that they used sociology to help raise their awareness of social issues.  
17% (9 students) claimed that they used sociology to help them in other classes.  
3 claimed that sociology helped them with their research skills, and another 3 claimed that they did not know how they applied sociology to their experiences at JMU.

#### **4. What do you think of the overall quality of the program?**

Overall ranking = 3.76 (2004, rank = 4.02)

#### **5. How could we make it better?**

There were a number of single answers for this question, but the most recurring answers were to increase the organization between the paradigms (8); to offer more electives (6); to increase availability of classes (5); and to slow down the teaching of the paradigms (4).

## **6. What do you think of the quality of instruction here?**

Overall ranking = 3.92 (2004, rank = 4.5)

1 student did not rate the quality of instruction.

## **7. How could we make it better?**

26% (14 students) claimed that hiring more good teachers (that were not adjunct or temporary) would help improve the program.

5 claimed that combining the paradigms or offering classes that explained them more in depth would also help.

4 claimed that teachers needed to give more structured guidelines of what they wanted throughout the course as well as requiring fewer papers would be beneficial.

3 claimed that having smaller classes would also be of assistance.

A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

## **8. What do you think of the availability of courses?**

Overall ranking = 3.69 (2004, rank = 3.4)

1 student did not rank this question.

The biggest complaint in this section was that classes were not offered frequently enough.

Students claimed that they had difficulty getting into classes when they were offered because of the high demand for them. Some students also pointed out that the analysis classes were very hard to get into as well.

## **9. Are there classes we should add?**

There were a number of different suggestions for elective classes. 6 students simply asked for more electives, while another 7 stated that the current classes were sufficient, but that more sections should be offered and more frequently. Some examples of classes that were suggested were child related electives, a senior open forum, more criminology/deviance courses, a research methods class, intro courses to the three paradigms, etc.

## **10. How would you rank the facilities?**

Overall ranking = 3.08 (2004, rank = 3.3)

3 students did not rank this question.

The biggest complaint in this section was the fact that there was not a building for sociology. Students complained that their classes were spread out all over campus, and felt that it was important for sociology to have a building to be contained in. Some students also mentioned the fact that they would like to see more technology incorporated into the classrooms as well.

### **11. How would you rank the quality of advising in the department?**

Overall ranking = 3.34 (2004, rank = 4.17)

6 students did not rank this item.

There was almost a polarization of answers for this question. Students claimed that if they had used their advisor, they felt that they were very helpful and informative.

However the other half of the students had either never met their advisor or talked to them only one or two times, and felt that they were either unnecessary or unhelpful.

### **12. Has this degree helped prepare you for future work?**

Overall ranking = 3.45 (2004, rank = 4.4)

15 students did not numerically rank this question.

8 students claimed that the degree helped them interact with people better.

5 claimed that it would be helpful in the law field.

4 claimed that it helped them with their writing skills.

6 claimed that they would not use it in the future.

A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

### **13. Has this degree helped prepare you for life?**

Overall ranking = 3.68 (2004, rank = 4.6)

14 students did not numerically rank this question.

28% (15 students) claimed that it helped them look at things from many perspectives instead of just their own.

7 claimed that it taught them to think for themselves.

7 claimed that the degree helped them to see society as a whole.

5 felt that they were more well-rounded/open-minded thanks to the degree.

### **14. How did you end up majoring in sociology?**

49% (26 students) claimed that they had taken a sociology course of some kind and had enjoyed it thoroughly enough to pursue sociology as their major.

19% (10 students) claimed that sociology was their fallback major or second choice.

4 students claimed that they chose sociology as a major because it related to criminal justice.

4 claimed that they chose it because they were able to complete the major in time for graduation.

4 claimed that an advisor/friend suggested the major to them.

A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

### **15. Any other suggestions or comments?**

4 students said that the department had great faculty and to keep up the good work.

2 said that there was more organization overall necessary with the analysis courses.

A number of other answers were given as well, but not to statistical importance.

## 2005 Exit Interview Data Coding Sheet

1. Paradigms – 16
  - Don't Know – 15
  - Yes – 5
  - Social Issues – 5
  - Role of Sociology – 2
  - Global Issues – 2
  - Social Behavior Theories – 1
  - Giving voice to the oppressed – 1
  - Social Ecology/Environment – 1
  - Nature v. Nurture - 1
  - Objective v. Subjective - 1
  - Sociological Thinkers Theories – 1
  - Sexuality Issues – 1
  
2. Analyze/See things from multiple perspectives – 35
  - Research/SPSS Skills – 21
  - Writing Skills – 11
  - Knowledge of 3 Paradigms – 5
  - Don't Know – 2
  - Connect More w/future job – 1
  - Interact w/people – 1
  - Interviewing Skills – 1
  - Knowledge about Social Issues – 1
  
3. Daily Life – 20
  - Awareness of Social Issues – 19
  - Other Classes – 9
  - Research Skills – 3
  - Don't Know – 3
  - Critical Thinking – 2
  - Sociology Classes – 1
  
4. 5 – 3
  - 4.5 - 1
  - 4 – 32
  - 3.5 – 2
  - 3 – 15
  
5. Organization between paradigms – 8
  - Don't know/nothing – 7
  - More electives – 6
  - Scheduling availability – 5
  - Paradigms taught to quickly – 4
  - Better advising – 3

- More fun activities/department activities – 2
  - No analysis courses allowed during Senior Seminar – 2
  - Friendlier professors – 2
  - More theory based electives – 2
  - More prep for analysis courses/senior seminar – 2
  - Offer analysis courses earlier – 2
  - Have a building – 1
  - Require same prereqs for all students – 1
  - More TA opportunities – 1
  - Keep theory from being a chore – 1
  - Get rid of the stigma – 1
  - Soci 200 as year long course – 1
  - Harder classes – 1
  - Add research methods class – 1
  - Brief overview of theories in Senior Seminar – 1
  - Help find internships/apply for Grad school – 1
  - Senior Seminar offered in fall – 1
  - Narrow down gen-eds – 1
  - No hiring temporary professors – 1
  - Stricter entrance requirements – 1
  - Elimination of Senior Seminar – 1
  - More student/faculty engagement – 1
  - Shorter night classes – 1
6. 5 – 8  
 4.5 – 3  
 4 – 31  
 3.5 – 1  
 3 – 9  
 1 student did not rate this item
7. No adjuncts/temps/hire more good professors – 14  
 Don't know/nothing – 12  
 Combine paradigms/have better classes on them – 5  
 More guidelines within classes/fewer papers – 4  
 Smaller classes – 3  
 Vary teaching styles – 2  
 Hold Imani accountable for his treatment of students – 1  
 Shorten night classes – 1  
 Better/more advising – 1  
 Have professors teach classes that interest them – 1  
 More discussion v. lecture in classes – 1  
 Require a teaching class for professors – 1  
 Look at a professor's final grades to determine if he's teaching well or not – 1  
 More cohesion between professor's when teaching same theories – 1

8. 5 – 10  
4 – 19  
3 – 17  
2.5 – 1  
2 – 4  
1 – 1  
1 student did not rate this item.
9. More electives – 7  
Keep current classes but add more sections – 7  
Deviance/Criminology courses - 2  
Youth and youth policies – 1  
Intro course to the three paradigms – 1  
Applied sociology within the community – 1  
Senior Open Forum – 1  
Well structured critical class – 1  
Research methods – 1  
Transparadigmatic frameworks – 1  
More classes like 395 – 1  
Culture based electives – 1  
Sports related electives – 1  
Job market class – 1  
Child related electives – 1
10. 5 – 3  
4 – 10  
3 – 28  
2 – 7  
1 – 1  
0 – 1  
3 students did not rate this item.
11. 5 – 6  
4 – 17  
3 – 12  
2 – 11  
1 – 1  
6 students did not rate this item.
12. 5 – 6  
4 – 11  
3 – 18  
2 – 0  
1 – 3  
15 students did not rate this item.  
Interact with people better – 8

- Not using in the future – 6
  - Helpful in law – 5
  - Writing skills – 4
  - Indirect ways – 3
  - Skills learned are coveted by employers – 3
  - Going into social work – 3
  - Critical thinking skills – 3
  - Teaching in Sociology field – 1
  - Improved world view – 1
  - Having a concentration would have helped more – 1
13. 5 – 8
- 4 – 16
  - 3.5 – 1
  - 3 – 10
  - 2 – 2
  - 1 – 2
- 14 students did not rate this item.
14. Took sociology class and enjoyed it – 26
- Fallback major/2<sup>nd</sup> choice – 10
  - Related to criminal justice – 4
  - Transfer student/could complete major on time – 4
  - Advisor/friend suggested it – 4
  - Don't know – 3
  - Started as social work but changed to sociology – 1
  - Wanted a helping major – 1
15. Great faculty/keep up the good work – 4
- More organization necessary towards analysis courses – 2
  - Don't make all 3 paradigms necessary – 1
  - Wonderful experience – 1
  - Rein in Imani (he's very belittling) – 1
  - Professors are very helpful – 1
  - Get rid of the stigma – 1
  - Enjoyed the size of the department – 1
  - Would like to see concentrations within the major – 1
  - Focus Senior Seminar as more of a review class – 1