

Sociology

Undergraduate and Graduate Review

Year 3 (2019) - FAR Implementation Report

(reviewed 2015/16)

Recommendation #1

Strike two sub-committees: one for core Theory and another for core Methodologies to report to the department as whole. The theory committee should review its current offerings with a total of one full credit required. Is that sufficient? The methodologies committee is to consider adding an offering SOCI 3PXX Qualitative Sociological Methods II and changing the requirements for Honours and Pass students to at least three from SOCI 3P11, 3P12, 3P02 and 3PXX for Honours and at least two from that list for Pass.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to strike 2 sub-committees to examine core Theory and core Methodologies to be not accepted. However, the Department agrees that the issue raised by the reviewers regarding theory and method curriculum should be considered by the Department Committee with a view to providing clear directions to students such that a balance between theory and methods content is present in the program.

The Committee encourages the Department to undertake an ongoing process of curriculum review and revision, utilizing the curriculum map which was prepared for the cyclical review.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of the academic year 2016/17

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)				
Action #1 Initiate discussion of recommendation and solicit provisional input from faculty at department meeting.	Chair	C		
Action #2 Discuss recommendation in greater depth in the curriculum committee; develop a plan for addressing it.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		

Action #3 Convene special session of the Curriculum Committee with regular Theory Instructors; develop proposal.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		
Action #4 Convene special session of the Curriculum Committee with regular Methods Instructors; develop proposal.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		
Action #5 Present proposals to department and achieve consensus on its formal response to recommendation #1.	Chair	C		
Action #6 Brainstorm and develop various ways of responding substantively to the spirit of this recommendation without changing our basic curricular structure.	Chair, Dept. Committee	T	T	C

Comments 2017:

This recommendation generated considerable discussion in both the curriculum committee and undergraduate program committee this year. After engaging in consultations with various stakeholders, comparing our theory and methods offerings to those of Sociology departments elsewhere, and considering a variety of alternative models, we ultimately decided to forego changing our basic theory and method requirements, which have been arrived at over many years of careful reflection and recalibration. Moving forward, the department is committed to engaging in an ongoing process of curriculum review and revision with a view to enhancing course and program outcomes, making appropriate use of the curriculum map prepared for its cyclical review.

Comments 2018:

The department's curriculum committee has remained engaged in this critical reflection on the soundness and balance of our theory and methods offerings as part of its ongoing process of curricular review. While grounded in the curriculum map prepared for our last cyclical review, the aforesaid discussion is currently unfolding in conjunction with planning for our department's proposed BA in Critical Criminology and our new faculty hire in the area of Indigenous Sociology. Out of this process, the curriculum committee will bring forward some specific curricular proposals and/or generative discussion topics to our spring departmental retreat.

Comments 2019:

The department's curriculum committee discussed this important reflection regarding balancing theory and methods offerings as part of its ongoing process of curricular review. The Department has recently received approval from the Quality Council (pending provincial approval) to launch a new degree in Critical Criminology. This new degree is nested within the structure of the BA in Sociology, and includes additional theoretical formation in criminological theory. In addition, the discussion related to theory and methods led the Department to develop a proposal to introduce a new concentration in Data Analysis and Research Methods that will likely include courses in advanced research methods, special topics courses in social media and data analysis, and the application of big data to Sociology. This new curriculum will be reviewed by the Department at its April 2019 meeting, and we

expect to include it in our calendar for 2019-20. This development, in addition to responding to the insights raised in the external review, additionally responds to student concerns to develop expertise and translation to the labour market post-degree. The Department continues to dynamically revisit its balance of theory and methods offerings.

Recommendation #2

For the Graduate Methods requirement, have the Graduate Committee consider recasting SOCI 5P02 to reflect more of the logic of the research process approach toward developing proposals for Master’s theses and Research Papers, especially in light of the suggested methodologies requirements above.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2016/17

Actions On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Initiate discussion of recommendation at the MACS Program Committee; solicit provisional input.	GPD, Chair	C		
Action #2 In-depth consultation between Chair, GPD and recent MACS methods instructors.	GPD, Chair	C		
Action #3 Present results of consultation at MACS 2017 spring retreat; begin to formalize the program committee’s response to recommendation #2.	GPD, Chair	T	D	C

Comments 2017:

While this recommendation has been discussed quite thoroughly, no formal decision on it has been made yet. Discussions to date have revolved around defining and clarifying the relative roles and functions of SOCI 5P02 and 5N00. The process of formalizing the MACS program committee’s response to this recommendation won’t begin until the program’s upcoming spring retreat.

Comments 2018:

A good start was made on this process last year, and informal discussion has continued within the MACS Program Committee, but no definitive decision on this proposal had been made. The process has been delayed somewhat by significant changes in the composition of the Program Committee and by succession planning for the next MACS GPD. The MACS Program Committee will refocus its energies and deliver a formal report on its deliberations on this issue at our department's spring retreat.

Comments 2019:

The MACS committee reflected considerably on this recommendation and sought input from MACS student representatives. For 2019-20, MACS will offer its required theory course in the fall term and the required methods course in the winter term. The 5N00 course runs the full year. The logic of this shift in timing, from both theory and methods offered in the fall term, is to more fully develop student confidence and mastery with both areas by fostering greater attention to each individually by term. Additionally, the fall term in 5N00 can be devoted to assisting students to acclimatize to graduate school and academic culture, prepare scholarship applications, build their skills as researchers and in oral presentations, and craft approaches to their research questions. The winter term of methods will permit students to simulateneously explore course content and build their research proposals, culminating at the end of term with the annual symposium on student research. This more active mentoring model may facilitate student confidence and success over the fall and winter terms.

Recommendation #3

Faculty replacement. As the current complement of 17.75 reduces, consider the following priorities in hiring: the broad areas of gender, sexuality, work and labour within a political economy perspective; the capacity to teach theory; the capacity to teach qualitative methodologies. In all appointments the hiring of Indigenous scholars should be prioritized where possible.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. ARC expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for faculty replacement.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #4

The department as a whole should reconsider its identity as Critical Sociology by expanding to Critical and Engaged or some similar broadening to reflect the activist and engaged way in which the program undertakes critical sociology. This includes recasting the Community Engagement Course which should be opened to Sociology majors for program credit and consideration of offering a similar course at the third year specifically for Sociology majors.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be in two parts.

a. The Committee considers the recommendation that the Department “reconsider its identity by expanding its focus to Critical and Engaged” to be accepted.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

b. The Committee considers the recommendation on “recasting the Community Engagement Course” (SOCI 2F60) to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2016/17

Actions for Recommendation 4(a) On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Initiate discussion at the departmental level.	Chair	C		
Action #2 Discuss part (a) of the recommendation in greater depth in the curriculum committee.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		
Action #3 Curriculum Committee reports back to department regarding the above discussion.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		
Action #4 Brainstorm ways to highlight the “engaged” quality of our department without changing its name per se.	Chair, Dept. Committee	T	T	C

Comments 2017:

With regard to recommendation (a), we agree that the activist-oriented and “engaged” aspect of our departmental identity needs to be foregrounded more, although we do not believe that this necessarily entails changing the department’s name. The term “critical”

itself is not currently attached to our undergraduate program name, so at that level it cannot be argued that we are unduly downplaying our “engaged” qualities as a department. At our upcoming departmental spring retreat, we will also be brainstorming other possibilities for more clearly communicating our engaged and activist oriented qualities as a department on our website, social media, promotional materials, and course outlines. As we explore such avenues, the curriculum map prepared for our most recent cyclical review will provide us with a touchstone for reviewing, updating and formalizing any curricular changes pertaining to experiential learning and community engagement.

Comments 2018:

The spirit of this recommendation has engendered some productive discussion across a range of departmental committees, including the Curriculum Committee and the Recruitment and Student Outreach Committee. It has fostered a new commitment in the department to a creative and proactive use of social media and multi-media promotional materials to highlight the “engaged” nature of our department. At the spring retreat, the department will take stock of its achievements in this area over the past year, and discuss possibilities for develop them further over the coming year.

Comments 2019:

This recommendation animated productive discussion at the Departmental Curriculum Committee and the Recruitment and Student Outreach Committee. The latter committee has been exceedingly active over the last year, hosting a range of recruitment events on campus for a cross section of potential students, and focusing on translating the engaged element of the discipline to those in attendance. The addition of a potential new degree in the Department in Critical Criminology has also amplified Departmental attention to engagement and degree application, and this new degree has a community engagement pedagogical component as well as a new Walls-To-Bridges course housed in a correctional facility. The spirit of this recommendation has also borne fruit in departmental social media undertakings, and has amplified our approach to student-focused events, such as our annual careers night. While the Department rejected the idea of changing our formal name from Sociology, the tenor of the recommendation has been broadly incorporated into Departmental approach and practices.

Actions for Recommendation 4(b) On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 Make SOCI 2F60 open to Sociology majors for program credit.	Chair, Dept. Committee	C		
Action #2 In the Curriculum Committee, discuss ways of integrating community engagement and experiential	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		

education into Sociology's curriculum without simply adding a 3 rd year version of SOCI 2F60.				
Action #3 Curriculum Committee reports back to department regarding the above discussion, and commits to ongoing discussion about ways to deepen Sociology's involvement in community engagement and experiential learning initiatives.	Chair, Curriculum Committee	C		

Comments 2017:

With regard to recommendation (b), the department has approved recasting the existing Community Engagement course (2F60) so that it is open to Sociology majors for program credit. In turn, it decided that adding a new 3rd year course of this kind would not be advisable, given that it would not build significantly upon SOCI 2F60 from a curricular point of view and that it would require an undue share of our departmental resources to mount properly. As the curriculum map for our most recent cyclical review suggests, our commitment to community engagement and experiential learning is substantiated in a variety of other ways. This map will be consulted to ensure that future initiatives to deepen this aspect of our curriculum link to and build upon learning outcomes that enhance and consolidate broader program outcomes.

Recommendation #5

Support the development of the Critical (and Engaged) Criminology initiative on the model of a double-major with Sociology. Consider some modifications to the course offerings which would enrich the Criminology content to include a half course at the first year, two credits at the second year, two credits at the third year and 1.5 credits at the fourth year for a total of 5.0 criminology credits. Consider including some psychology electives within the offerings.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be advice to the Department as it prepares the proposal for the new Critical Criminology degree program. ARC believes the Department is best-positioned to determine how to incorporate this advice in developing the new program.

Implementation Plan

No further action required.

Recommendation #6

We recommend the University increase the teaching opportunities for Post-doctoral fellows. Brock is fortunate to have attracted five current post-docs in Sociology. It is a mutual benefit. Key to their career prospects is to teach in their areas of expertise and enhance their experience for the job market. It is also a significant opportunity for Brock to inject fresh perspectives into its teaching, especially in Sociology where there have been few new appointments. This may involve making this possibility a priority in collective bargaining.

PDFs is a sign of scholarly maturity for the university and their presence should be encouraged and supported.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted. The Committee acknowledges the intent of the recommendation; however this issue lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction and is a matter of labour relations between the University and its various labour groups.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #7

We recommend that Brock University consider reducing the number of committee members on MA theses from 3 to 2; and consider allowing a course-work only option MA, as a default for a select number of students identified by the Graduate program Director as being able to benefit from that limited option.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be in two parts.

a. The Committee considers the recommendation to reduce "the number of Committee members on MA theses from 3 to 2" to be not accepted at this time as it is not in line with existing University regulations. However, the Department may wish to review the results of the survey which was suggested by the Dean of Graduate Studies, "to ascertain the approach(es) being used for MA thesis committees" across the province.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

b. The Committee considers the recommendation to "consider a course-work only option MA" to be accepted in principle and understands that the idea is under review by the Department. The Committee believes the Department is best-positioned to determine strategies to move forward with this issue.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of the academic year 2017/18

Actions for Recommendation 7(b) On Target (T), On Hold (H), Delayed (D), Complete (C)	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Action #1 GPD consults with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and gathers information about the process involved in the development of a course-work only pathway for MACS.	GPD	T	C	
Action #2 GPD reports above information at the MACS 2017 Spring Retreat; the program committee develops a course of action in light of this information.	GPD, MACS Program Committee	T	T	C

Comments 2017:

Our response to this recommendation is still very much a work in progress. Considering the feasibility of mounting a course-work only degree pathway in MACS requires a substantial amount of preparatory research on the institutional steps involved, the structure of course-work only models that exist in other programs at Brock and beyond, and the potential changes to our own curriculum and course offerings. The GPD is in the process of consulting with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and other relevant parties in order to provide the MACS program committee with enough information to start developing a suitable course of action in coming months. This topic will be discussed at length at the upcoming MACS spring retreat.

Comments 2018:

The prospect of developing a course-work only MA pathway involves a complex process of research, consultation and inquiry into the requisite institutional procedures. The MACS committee will report on its deliberations and planning to date at the department's annual spring retreat.

Comments 2019:

The Department concluded that it would reject this option, after considerable reflection. In part, this decision stems from financial considerations that students in this stream would not be eligible for university funding during their studies. In conversation with graduate student representatives on the Departmental graduate committee, there was also little appetite for such a degree undertaking, in part owing to its terminal nature. The Department remains open to revisiting this decision moving forward should there be demand, but the small nature of our cohort and their academic orientation at this time led the Department to conclude that it is not a clear fit for our current needs.