Date: 28 March 2011 (revised from 11 February 2011)

To: Committee on Educational Programs

From: Laura M. Carpenter (DUS) and Katharine Donato (Chair), Sociology

Re: Changes to the Sociology Major (revised)

The Sociology faculty have voted to make two sets of changes to the sociology major requirements. First, we intend to require all majors to take an ungraded comprehensive exit exam as a graduation requirement. Second, we intend to make several interrelated changes involving statistics training: (1) to make SOC 127 (Statistics for Social Scientists) a formal requirement for the major (instead of a pre-requisite), (2) to increase the major’s hours requirement from 30 to 33, and (3) to require SOC 127 of ALL sociology majors except those double-majoring in another subject with a statistics requirement/option (Psych, Econ, Math, HOD and other Peabody majors). No changes will be made to the sociology minor.

Neither of these changes are expected to entail new costs or to affect other departments or programs.
The changes would be as follows:

*Program of Concentration in Sociology*

Students majoring in sociology are required to complete 33 hours of work in sociology. The major consists of five types of courses: introduction to sociology; a course in theory; courses that emphasize research skills; courses that familiarize students with core areas of the field; and electives. In addition to these sociology courses, students must take a statistics course as part of their training in research skills. The statistics course must be taken prior to the required Research Practicum. The statistics course does not count toward the 30 hours in sociology.

Course work for the major is distributed as follows:

*Introduction:* Sociology 101, 101W, or 102, 102W 3

*Theory:* Sociology 201 3

*Research Skills:* (3 courses)
- Sociology 127 (statistics) or Economics 150, or Math 127b, 180, or 218, or Psychology 209 or Peabody Psychology and Human Development Statistics 2101 for those students who double major in sociology and one of those programs)*, followed by or concurrent with (3)
- Sociology 211, followed by 3
- Sociology 212 (or Independent Research 295a, or 295b, or 299) 3

*Core Areas:*

*Crime, Law, and Deviance:* Sociology 222, 224, 231, 232, 233, 234, 240, 263

*Organizations, Politics, and Inequality:* Sociology 223, 225, 226, 235, 239, 244, 247, 249, 250, 251, 254, 255, 268, 272, 279, Jewish Studies 252

*Family, Medicine, and Mental Health:* Sociology 220, 230, 237, 262, 264, Anthropology 265

Students must take at least one course in three of the four core areas

Electives: Any 3 sociology courses not used to satisfy the above requirements

Total hours: 30

* Not included in the 30 hours.

Comprehensive exam

In order to graduate with a sociology major, students must take a comprehensive exam during their senior year. The exam is not graded, and no grade will appear on the student's transcript. The purpose of the exam is to test the extent to which sociology majors are retaining core aspects of the sociology curriculum.

Honors Program

The Honors Program offers superior students the opportunity to pursue intensive work within sociology. Students who meet the College of Arts and Science requirements and are recommended for the program by the director of undergraduate studies will typically begin the program in the fall of their junior year. To be considered for the Honors Program in Sociology a student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a minimum sociology GPA of 3.0. Interested majors should contact the director of undergraduate studies for information.

Minor in Sociology

The minor in sociology is intended for those students who want to gain an overview of the discipline and to sample some of the special lines of study in it. Students are required to complete 18 hours of course work inside the department, distributed as follows:

1. Sociology 101, 101W, or 102, 102W 3
2. Sociology 201 3
3. Four courses, including at least one from three of the four core areas listed above in the major 12

Total hours: 18
The proposed new catalog copy would read as follows:

*Program of Concentration in Sociology*

Students majoring in sociology are required to complete 33 hours of work in sociology. The major consists of five types of courses: introduction to sociology; a course in theory; courses that emphasize research skills; courses that familiarize students with core areas of the field; and electives. The statistics course must be taken prior to the required Research Practicum.

Course work for the major is distributed as follows:

*Introduction*: Sociology 101, 101W, or 102, 102W 3

*Theory*: Sociology 201 3

*Research Skills*: (3 courses)

Sociology 127 (or Economics 150, or Math 127b, 180, or 218, or Psychology 209 or Peabody Psychology and Human Development Statistics 2101 for those students who double major in sociology and one of those programs), followed by or concurrent with 3

Sociology 211, followed by 3

Sociology 212 (or Independent Research 295a, or 295b, or 299) 3

*Core Areas:*

*Crime, Law, and Deviance:*
Sociology 222, 224, 231, 232, 233, 234, 240, 263

*Organizations, Politics, and Inequality:*
Sociology 223, 225, 226, 235, 239, 244, 247, 249, 250, 251, 254, 255, 268, 272, 279, Jewish Studies 252

*Family, Medicine, and Mental Health:*
Sociology 220, 230, 237, 262, 264, Anthropology 265

*Culture and Social Change:*
Sociology 203, 204, 214, 215, 216, 218, 219, 225, 227, 228, 229, 238, 241, 242, 246, 248, 257, 270, 276, 277, Jewish Studies 155, Women’s and Gender Studies 243

Students must take at least one course in three of the four core areas 9
Electives: Any 3 sociology courses not used to satisfy the above requirements 9

Total hours: 33

Comprehensive exam

In order to graduate with a sociology major, students must take a comprehensive exam during their senior year. The exam is not graded, and no grade will appear on the student’s transcript. The purpose of the exam is to test the extent to which sociology majors are retaining core aspects of the sociology curriculum.

Honors Program

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1. Sociology 101, 101W, or 102, 102W 3
2. Sociology 201 3
3. Four courses, including at least one from three of the four core areas listed above in the major 12

Total hours: 18
COMPREHENSIVE EXIT EXAM: DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

The Sociology Department faculty voted to require all majors to take an ungraded comprehensive exit exam before graduating. The exam is intended to assess whether sociology majors are gaining and retaining knowledge across sociological sub-disciplines, as stipulated in the department’s Learning Outcome #3: Breadth of Knowledge in Sociology. The exam will not be graded and no score will appear on the students’ transcripts. Results of the exam will be used internally to enhance teaching and the curriculum. Details of the proposed exam structure and administration procedure are available on request. (Note: We have followed the example of the Psychology Department’s exit exam.)

STATISTICS REQUIREMENT: DESCRIPTION & RATIONALE

The Sociology Department faculty voted:
(1) to make SOC 127 (Statistics for Social Scientists) a formal requirement for the major (instead of a pre-requisite),
(2) to increase the major’s hours requirement from 30 to 33, and
(3) to require SOC 127 of ALL sociology majors except those double-majoring in another subject with a statistics requirement/option (Psych, Econ, Math, HOD and other Peabody majors).

In addition, we are requesting to add the sentence, “Preference given to SOC, PPS, and NURS majors” to the catalog description of SOC 127. We will use the “seat reservation” function in YES to save at least 10 seats for SOC majors/minors. This is to ensure that our majors will be able to take the course in a timely manner.

We are requesting these changes for several interrelated reasons. First, we believe that a course specifically designed to instruct students in statistics for sociology will best prepare our majors for the required sequence of research methods courses (SOC 211 and 212). Moreover, some faculty expressed concern that certain sociology majors were opting out of SOC 127 in favor of what they perceive as “easier” courses in other departments. Therefore, the faculty voted to require students to take SOC 127 to fulfill their statistics requirement unless they are double-majoring in a program/department that also requires a statistics course.

Although we believe that a statistics course specifically designed for sociology students – SOC 127 – will provide the optimal preparation, we also acknowledge that many sociology majors double-major in programs/departments that also require statistics courses (e.g., 12% of our majors double-major in Psychology, 9% in Economics; in 2009, 37% of graduating sociology majors [10 of 37] were double majors). We do not believe that our double-majors should be denied the opportunity to use the other major’s course to fulfill the requirement, even though these courses may cover (slightly) different material. Hence, the faculty voted to approve alternate courses for double-majors only.
Currently, we require sociology majors to take SOC 127 (or equivalent) as a pre-requisite to SOC 212. SOC 127 is not an official requirement, however – that is, students must take it in addition to the 30 credits required for the major. This practice stems from an earlier time in which no majors required more than 30 hours of course work. We presume that our predecessors believed that students needed to learn statistics prior to research methods, but not in the place of the courses comprising the 30 required hours. Today, many majors require more than 30 hours, including African American & Diaspora Studies, Communication, Economics, Medicine, Health & Society, Women’s & Gender Studies, and the research track of Psychology (just to name those with some relevance to SOC). Bearing these factors in mind, the faculty voted to increase the number of hours for the major from 30 to 33.
Michael Muise  
College of Arts and Science Registrar’s Office Vanderbilt University  
Phone: 615-343-3156  
Email: michael.r.muise@Vanderbilt.Edu

-----Original Message-----
From: Donato, Katharine  
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 3:47 PM  
To: Muise, Michael R; Carpenter, Laura M  
Cc: Campbell, Karen E  
Subject: RE: 

Michael: As Laura sent you a copy, I had a copy walked over to you. You should get it shortly. The faculty vote was unanimously in favor, 14-0.

RE: your last point, we have had several faculty meetings to discuss the assessment plan. I will let Laura send you those details.

Best, Katharine

-----Original Message-----
From: Muise, Michael R  
Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2011 3:44 PM  
To: Carpenter, Laura M  
Cc: Campbell, Karen E; Donato, Katharine  
Subject: RE:

Dear Laura,  
Oh my, I'm glad this came up then. It looks in good order which should help it to make it in just one pass. There are only two things missing, very small.  
What was the actual faculty vote tally? (this is a new requirement) Has your department discussed updating the Assessment plan with Jonathan Bremer?  
Thank you  
Michael

Michael Muise  
College of Arts and Science Registrar’s Office Vanderbilt University  
Phone: 615-343-3156  
Email: michael.r.muise@Vanderbilt.Edu

-----Original Message-----
Date: 3/28/2011
From: David Zald, Ph.D. Chair, Committee on Educational Programs
To: Faculty Council
Re: Change in Sociology Major
The Sociology Department has proposed a modification of the Sociology Major (attached). On 3-22-2011, the Committee on Educational Programs voted to approve the modification, with a vote of 5-0 (with 1 member absent).

Sincerely,

David H. Zald, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychology, Psychiatry & Integrative Neuroscience Program