Memo to the CEP
From: David Hess, DUS, Sociology, and Katharine Donato, Chair, Sociology
Date: March 21, 2014

On December 8, 2013, the Sociology Department proposed changes to its major. The CEP responded with twelve queries. A revised memo was submitted on January 28, 2014. The CEP responded with additional queries, and a revised proposal was sent on February 28, 2014. The CEP then approved the proposal subject to ten additional corrections. These corrections were made on March 19. Additional corrections were requested on March 21. This proposal makes all additional corrections (described as follows):

(1). Under Program II, Pages 10-11:

The requirements #3 and #4 in the honors track need to be flipped/switched.


REPLY: Done

(2). Under Program II, Page 11:

Indent “#5” properly as for #1 - #4 on page 10.

REPLY: Done.

(3). Under Program I: Point #5, Page 9:

“SOC 127 or its equivalent (see below) may be counted toward the electives.”

“See below” appears to point to the honors program requirements. In that case, it would be better to specify here, for program I, what the equivalent courses are.

REPLY: Done.

(4). Under Program II: point #4 (which is to become #3), Page 10:

“SOC 127 or its equivalent (described above) is counted toward the electives”

Does this mean any of the other courses used for meeting the statistics requirement (ECON 150 or 155, or MATH 127b or 218, PSY 209 or PSY-PC 2101) in the Honors track can be counted as an elective?
If that is true, then would it be appropriate to replace the sentence, “SOC 127 or its equivalent (described above) is counted toward the electives”, with the sentence, “The course used to satisfy the statistics requirement (see #2 above) can be counted as an elective”?

REPLY: We have altered the wording for clarification.

(5). Page 10:

Replace “fall of their junior or senior year” with “first semester of their junior or senior year”

REPLY: Done.

(6). Page 10

“Program 2” should be ” Program II” to be consistent with program I.

REPLY: Done.

I also note that the URL given for the elective clusters has been updated. DH
Proposal for Modifications in the Sociology Major Requirements

Rationale: The Sociology Department is requesting changes in its curriculum, after a review of the curriculum by the full faculty at a departmental retreat and after a vote by the faculty at a subsequent meeting. In addition, the proposed changes also reflect comments and advice from undergraduate students. The vote for this proposal was 18 faculty in favor and none against, taken on Oct. 15, 2013, at the departmental retreat. There was a follow-up vote taken on Nov. 15, 2013, on the detailed proposal and the change in 211 (12 in favor and none against).

The review identified the following issues:

1. There is a need to increase the flexibility of the sociology curriculum in a way that responds to the extensive review by undergraduates and faculty that was conducted in 2013. We need to make the curriculum more flexible in order to accommodate the needs of students in an era when they are demanding increasing flexibility. One indicator of the demand for flexibility is the rise of independent majors.

2. By giving students the option to take more upper-level courses in their area of specialty, they will be better able to develop an expertise in their planned career area. For example, medical sociology students will be able to take more courses in the sociology of health and medicine; students interested in working in the government or nonprofit sector will be able to take more courses in the political sociology and institutions area; students in environmental sociology and demography will be able to focus more on this area; and so on. Thus, by having greater flexibility, students will have more expertise in their area of special interest. This added flexibility will enhance their prospects on the job market and their applications to professional programs.

3. Another dimension of the demand for flexibility involves the increasing rate of students who study abroad. The existing three-course research methods sequence (Sociology 127, 211, and 212) is difficult for students to complete, especially if they are spending a semester studying abroad. Students are leaving the sociology major because they are not able to accommodate the sequence with their study abroad plans. This issue has become increasingly important because the number of students who hope to study abroad has grown.

4. There was too much duplication between 127 (Statistics for Social Scientists) and 211 (Introduction to Social Research). Our proposed revision of 211 will eliminate the duplication and also make 211 a general methods course that provides students with the capacity to evaluate and synthesize social science research, including quantitative research, and to write a literature review essay, but with less focus on the capacity to conduct quantitative sociological research. Soc 127 will be a course in statistics that teaches students how to use sociological statistics and software packages.

5. For non-honors students the research sequences will have one methods course and one theory course. Thus, the research sequence will continue to include Soc 201 (a social theory course) and the revised version of Soc 211. Students will then have the flexibility to pursue either additional research methods courses or additional upper-level content courses in
sociology. For honors students, there will be two methods courses (Soc 127 and Soc 211), one theory course (Soc 201), and two thesis courses. We believe that this plan strikes a great balance between flexibility and rigor, and it allows students who wish to develop research skills in detail a great opportunity to do so.

6. Our curriculum is now in line with other social science majors at Vanderbilt, all of which provide more flexibility to their students than does sociology. Political science and anthropology have no methods requirement and only one theory course requirement. HOD has one general methods requirement (1700) and no general theory requirement. Economics has one methods requirement, a statistics course (150 or 155). Psychology has two methods classes, including for its honors sequence, but no general theory course.

7. Our current four-course research methods and theory sequence is really an honors sequence, and it is too close to our five-course honors program. For non-honors students who do not intend to pursue a career in research, the sequence lacks flexibility. The existing four-course sequence is too research-focused for students who do not plan to go on to careers in research and education. For them, we believe it is best to develop literacy in social science methods instead of the capacity to conduct original research. The goal of conducting original research is best suited for the honors program. For non-honors students, it is better to have the flexibility to have more access to specialized courses in their sub-specialty of sociology, but of course they have the option to take more research courses.

8. Students who prefer a strong research experience generally take the honors sequence instead of Sociology 212.

Therefore, we propose to change the major so that students may choose between two tracks. The first is designed to achieve literacy in sociological methods and theory, and the second is for students seeking to graduate with intensive research readiness about sociological issues. The changes we propose are as follows:

1) Require one research methods course (Sociology 211) for all sociology majors. This course will be revised somewhat to emphasize research methods literacy, research design, and literature reviews (see below).
2) Redefine the honors option to include the statistics course Sociology 127.
3) Remove Sociology 212 from the required curriculum.

This revision will retain the same number of overall credit hours for the sociology major (36 for students in the research-intensive honors sequence and 33 for the standard major). Students who do not meet the GPA requirements for the honors thesis but who still wish to develop research skills may take Sociology 127 and an independent study as an elective. The independent study would have an original research paper as its final product. Thus, no student is precluded from taking additional methods and research courses.
PROPOSED CATALOG COPY REVISIONS WITH UNDERLINES AND STRIKE-THROUGHS

Program of Concentration in Sociology

Students majoring in sociology are required to complete 33 credit hours of work in sociology. The major consists of five types of courses as listed below: introduction, theory, research skills, core areas, and electives. The statistics course must be taken prior to Sociology 212.

Course work for the major is distributed as follows:

Program I (Standard Track).
A total of 33 credit hours as follows:

(1) Introduction: Sociology 101, 101W, 102, or 102W

(2) Theory: Sociology 201

(3) Research Skills: (3 courses)

Sociology 127 or Economics 150 or 155 or Math 127b or 218 (or PSY 209 or PSY 2101 (Peabody) for those students who double major in sociology and psychology or in sociology and the Peabody majors in human and organizational development, child development, cognitive studies, or child studies)

followed by or concurrent with

Sociology 211 (or HOD 1700 for students who double major in sociology and HOD)

followed by

Sociology 212 (or two semesters of Sociology 296 (Honors Research); or at least three credit hours of Independent Research 299 and the approval of the chair or director of undergraduate studies)

(4) Core Areas: (3 courses)

Students must take at least one course in three of the four core areas listed below. A course cannot be used to satisfy more than one requirement in the major:

Culture, Institutions, and Socialization

Sociology 214, 218, 219, 227, 228, 229, 230, 246, 248, 254, 277, 279
Health, Environment, Population, and Migration
Sociology 205, 206, 220, 221, 237, 264, 268, 270, 274; Environmental Studies 278; Medicine, Health, and Society 231, 240

Politics, Law, and Conflict
Sociology 204, 216, 224, 225, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 240, 244, 247, 249, 251; Jewish Studies 252

Race, Ethnicity, and Gender
Sociology 204, 239, 247, 250, 251, 253, 255, 256, 257, 272; Jewish Studies 155, 158

(5) Electives: (5 courses)
Any 3 5 sociology courses not used to satisfy the above requirements. SOC 127 or its equivalent may be counted toward the electives. (Equivalent courses are ECON 150 or 155 or MATH 127b or 218. Students who double major in sociology and psychology or in sociology and the Peabody majors of human and organizational development, child development, cognitive studies, or child studies may also choose from PSY 209 or PSY-PC 2101.) They Electives may also include only one of the following 100-level sociology courses: Sociology 104, 104W, or 115F. No other 100-level sociology course may be counted toward the electives requirement of the major except by permission of the director of undergraduate studies. The Department of Sociology advises students to group their three elective sociology courses in a cluster of advanced concentration electives to be selected with the student’s adviser. See the director of undergraduate studies or the departmental website for suggested clusters: http://as.vanderbilt.edu/sociology/undergraduate/major/

Program II (Honors Research Program Track).
A total of 36 credit hours as follows:
The Honors Research Program Track offers superior majors in sociology the opportunity to pursue intensive work through an independent research project. Students interested in pursuing the Honors Research Program Track in Sociology should contact the director of undergraduate studies for more information. To be considered for the Honors Research Program Track in Sociology, a student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 and a minimum GPA of 3.3 for courses that count toward the sociology major. 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 first semester of their junior or senior year.

Students who complete the Honors Research Program take 36 credit hours to complete the requirements for the major in sociology. The Honors Research Program Track in Sociology requires:

1. Successful completion of requirements 1-4 in Program I,
3. Completion of 12 credit hours of elective courses. The statistics requirement is counted toward the electives. Electives may include only one of the following 100-level sociology courses: Sociology 104, 104W, or 115F. No other 100-level sociology course may be counted toward the electives requirement of the major except by permission of the director of undergraduate studies. If students take more than 6 credit hours of Soc 296, the additional hours (7-12) are counted toward the elective courses.

4. Successful completion of at least two semesters of SOC 296 (Honors Research). The first semester of 296 (Honors Research) is a 3 credit hour seminar in which students develop the literature review and research plan for the honors thesis. In the second semester of 296 (Honors Research), also for 3 credit hours, students must complete the research and data collection, data analysis, and initial write-up of results of the thesis. Students may elect to take a third or fourth semester of 296 during their senior year, when they may, for example, work on revisions of the project and/or on publication. Students who begin the Honors Program in their senior year may also take more than 6 credit hours of 296, up to a maximum of 12 credit hours.

5. Successful defense of the completed thesis through an oral defense attended by the chair and reader of the thesis; this oral defense typically takes place during the second semester of the student’s senior year. In order to earn honors in sociology, students must successfully complete and defend an honors thesis before graduation.

Total credit hours: 33-36

Honors Research Program [MATERIAL DELETED AND MOVED TO LOCATION ABOVE]
The Honors Program offers superior majors in sociology the opportunity to pursue intensive work through an independent research project. Students interested in pursuing the Honors Program in Sociology should contact the director of undergraduate studies for more information. To be considered for the Honors Program in Sociology, a student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 and a minimum GPA of 3.3 for courses that count toward the sociology major. 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 or senior year. Students who complete the honors
sequence take a minimum of 36 credit hours to complete the requirements for the major in sociology. The first semester of 296 (Honors Research) is a 3 credit hour seminar in which students develop the literature review and research plan for the honors thesis. In the second semester of 296 (Honors Research), also for 3 credit hours, students must complete the research and data collection, data analysis, and initial write-up of results of the thesis. Students may elect to take a third or fourth semester of 296 during their senior year, when they may, for example, work on revisions of the project and/or on publication. Students who begin the Honors Program in their senior year may also take more than 6 credit hours of 296, up to a maximum of 12 credit hours.

The Honors Program in Sociology requires:

1. Successful completion of at least two semesters of 296 (Honors Research);
2. Successful defense of the completed thesis through an oral defense attended by the chair and reader of the thesis; this oral defense typically takes place during the second semester of the student’s senior year. In order to earn honors in sociology, students must successfully complete and defend an honors thesis before graduation.

Comprehensive Exam  [NO CHANGES]
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.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON REVISED COURSE DESCRIPTION FOR 211 (SUBMITTED TO ORCA):

SOC 211. Introduction to Social Research.
Theory, hypothesis formation, and measurement. Overview and evaluation of research strategies in sociology. Capacity to interpret qualitative and quantitative sociological analysis, evaluation of research methods and design, and basic understanding of research ethics, research hypotheses, and a literature review. Prerequisite: Sociology 101, 101W, 102, 102W, and standing as sociology major. The ethics of social research, univariate statistics and cross tabulation, logic and interpretation of multivariate analysis. Prerequisite or corequisite: major or minor in Sociology and either 127, MATH 127b or 218, or ECON 150 or 155. Open also to students who have earned credit for PSY 209 or PSY PC 2101 and are majors in Child Development, Child Studies, Cognitive Studies, Human and Organizational Development, or A&S Psychology. [3] (SBS)
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Program of Concentration in Sociology

Students majoring in sociology are required to complete 33 credit hours of work in sociology (36 credit hours for students in the Honors Research Program Track). The major consists of five types of courses as listed below: introduction, theory, research skills, core areas, and electives.

Course work for the major is distributed as follows:

Program I (Standard Track).
A total of 33 credit hours as follows:

(1) Introduction: Sociology 101, 101W, 102, or 102W ........ 3 credit hours
(2) Theory: Sociology 201 ........................................... 3 credit hours
(3) Research Skills: Sociology 211 (or HOD 1700 for students who double major in sociology and HOD) .. 3 credit hours
(4) Core Areas: 
Students must take at least one course in three of the four core areas listed below. A course cannot be used to satisfy more than one requirement in the major:

Culture, Institutions, and Socialization
Sociology 214, 218, 219, 227, 228, 229, 230, 246, 248, 254, 277, 279
Health, Environment, Population, and Migration
Sociology 205, 206, 220, 221, 237, 264, 268, 270, 274;
Environmental Studies 278; Medicine, Health, and Society 231, 240
Politics, Law, and Conflict
Sociology 204, 216, 224, 225, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 240, 244, 247, 249, 251; Jewish Studies 252
Race, Ethnicity, and Gender
Sociology 204, 239, 247, 250, 251, 253, 255, 256, 257, 272; Jewish Studies 155, 158

(5) Electives: .............................................................. 15 credit hours
Any 5 sociology courses not used to satisfy the above requirements. SOC 127 or its equivalent may be counted toward the electives. (Equivalent courses are ECON 150 or 155 or MATH 127b or 218. Students who double major in sociology and psychology or in sociology and the Peabody majors of human and organizational development, child development,
cognitive studies, or child studies may also choose from PSY 209 or PSY-PC 2101. Electives may also include only one of the following 100-level sociology courses: Sociology 104, 104W, or 115F. No other 100-level sociology course may be counted toward the electives requirement of the major except by permission of the director of undergraduate studies. The Department of Sociology advises students to group their elective sociology courses in a cluster of advanced concentration electives to be selected with the student’s adviser. See the director of undergraduate studies or the departmental website for suggested clusters: http://as.vanderbilt.edu/sociology/undergraduate/major/.

Program II (Honors Research Program Track).
A total of 36 credit hours as follows:
The Honors Research Program Track offers superior majors in sociology the opportunity to pursue intensive work through an independent research project. Students interested in pursuing the Honors Research Program Track in Sociology should contact the director of undergraduate studies for more information. To be considered for the Honors Research Program Track in Sociology, a student must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.3 and a minimum GPA of 3.3 for courses that count toward the sociology major. Students who are recommended for the program by the director of undergraduate studies will typically begin the program in the first semester of their junior or senior year.

The Honors Research Program Track in Sociology requires:
1. Successful completion of requirements 1-4 in Program I, for a total of 18 credit hours.
2. Successful completion of the statistics requirement: SOC 127 or its equivalent (defined in requirement 5 of Program I).
3. Completion of 12 credit hours of elective courses. The statistics requirement is counted toward the electives. Electives may include only one of the following 100-level sociology courses: Sociology 104, 104W, or 115F. No other 100-level sociology course may be counted toward the electives requirement of the major except by permission of the director of undergraduate studies. If students take more than 6 credit hours of Soc 296, the additional hours (7-12) are counted toward the elective courses.
4. Successful completion of at least two semesters of SOC 296 (Honors Research). The first semester of 296 (Honors Research) is a 3 credit hour seminar in which students develop the literature review and research plan for the honors thesis. In the second semester of 296 (Honors Research), also for 3 credit hours, students must complete the research and data collection, data analysis, and initial write-up of results of the thesis. Students may elect to take a third or fourth semester of 296 during their senior year, when they may, for example, work on revisions of the project
and/or on publication. Students who begin the Honors Program in their senior year may also take more than 6 credit hours of 296, up to a maximum of 12 credit hours.

5. Successful defense of the completed thesis through an oral defense attended by the chair and reader of the thesis; this oral defense typically takes place during the second semester of the student’s senior year. In order to earn honors in sociology, students must successfully complete and defend an honors thesis before graduation.

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.

FURTHER COMMENTS ON REVISED COURSE DESCRIPTION FOR 211 [CLEAN CATALOG COPY]

SOC 211. Introduction to Social Research.
Overview and evaluation of research strategies in sociology. Capacity to interpret qualitative and quantitative sociological analysis, evaluation of research methods and design, and basic understanding of research ethics, research hypotheses, and a literature review. Prerequisite: Sociology 101, 101W, 102, 102W, and sociology major. [3] (SBS)
To: A&S Faculty Council  
From: Prasad Polavarapu, Chair, Committee on Educational Programs (CEP)  
Ref: Changes to the Major in Sociology

Dear Jonathan,

The Committee on Educational Programs (CEP) discussed the proposal submitted by Professor David J. Hess, for changes to the Major in Sociology, at its meeting on March 18, 2014. The committee approved the proposal with minor revisions, with a vote of 4-0 and two members absent. Professor Hess has now incorporated the revisions into the proposal.

The revised proposal is attached to this email.

Best,
Prasad

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