

SAMPLE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The following pages contain examples of learning outcomes from other educational institutions in the area of the **social sciences**. These examples may be used as a point of departure for developing learning outcomes for the majors in your department or program.

Other educational institutions have posted links to learning outcomes assessment, including Marquette University (<http://www.marquette.edu/assessment/>, with specific learning outcomes at <http://www.marquette.edu/assessment/outcomes/index.shtml>); the University of South Florida, with specific learning outcomes at <http://www.ie.usf.edu/OA/>; and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/>, with specific learning outcomes at <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/update/view.php>).

A compilation of other examples of learning outcomes is expected to be posted on a web page on UCR's Institutional Research for Undergraduate Education website (<http://irue.ucr.edu/>) by the time of the Summit on Learning Outcomes and Assessment. A link to this website will also be posted on the UCR WASC website (<http://wasc.ucr.edu>).

The primary resource document regarding learning outcomes assessment is the Assessment Guide from the University of Virginia (<http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/assessment/Assessment%20guide.pdf>).

Last year some workshops on learning assessment were held on campus through the Scholarship of Teaching Seminar series. Video tapes of the following sessions are available for review on the Scholarship of Teaching website (<http://www.teaching.ucr.edu/SoT.html>):

- (a) Strategies for establishing educational goals and evaluation procedures for all undergraduate programs: The UC Berkeley Experience [Winter 2008]
- (b) Using ePortfolios for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment [Winter 2008]
- (c) Establishing Measures of Student Outcomes: A Debate on Methods [Fall 2007]

Learning Outcomes for the Social Sciences, adapted from those developed at the University of Virginia

Basic Outcomes (knowledge and comprehension)

- By the end of their second year in the program, African American Studies majors will, on a final exam, be able to summarize the history of the African Diaspora and the foundations for the Atlantic trade in African captives.
- During an exit exam, graduating Anthropology majors will be able to outline the general theoretical and epistemological issues of relevance to anthropologists in the areas of society, culture, and history.
- By the end of their third year, Political Science majors can, during a course examination, identify and summarize the major historical events in the development of American government.
- Graduating Psychology majors can, in a final project, describe and summarize the development of psychological theories, including their origins and alterations based on evidence.
- On a course examination, Ethnic Studies majors are able to comprehensively describe the history, function, and ongoing effects of racism in America.

Higher-Order Outcomes (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation)

- All graduating Anthropology majors will, on an exit exam, be able to analyze a contemporary social problem, using major theoretical perspectives of anthropology to develop solutions.
- Anthropology majors will apply a body of anthropological theory to the analysis of a linguistic, cultural, or archeological phenomenon.
- Sociology majors will, on a course exam, be able to create compelling, original arguments that integrate theoretical perspectives and research findings, and that advance reasonable conclusions.
- On a final exam, graduating Women's Studies majors will be able to apply feminist theory to contemporary social problems, using the work of major figures in the field.
- All graduating Economics majors will, on a final exam, apply economic theory effectively to a simulation exercise.
- Economics majors can use an appropriate analytic frame to predict the impact of policy proposals on social welfare.
- Graduating Psychology majors, in completing final project, can integrate ideas from two or more areas of psychology into their own research.
- Fourth-year Sociology majors can, on a final exam, evaluate the contributions of the main theoretical traditions, and can provide examples of their application to contemporary sociological literature.

- On a final exam, third-year Economics majors will be able to adequately describe and evaluate economic relationships.
- All graduating Political Science majors can, on an exit exam, comprehensively evaluate U.S. foreign policy from at least two perspectives.
- All undergraduate Psychology majors can, on a research project, conduct literature reviews that critically evaluate the research on a particular topic.

Sample Learning Outcomes for Specific UCR Social Sciences Majors

ADMINISTRATIVE STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Administrative Studies have not been located, but the following are learning outcomes for Business at Ball State University:

Students will:

1. demonstrate knowledge and ability in entrepreneurship gained throughout the program, and;
2. demonstrate their preparation for the business world.

For assessment methods/measures for the Ball State University program and the corresponding results/action plan, see the Appendix to the University of Virginia Assessment Guide:

<http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/assessment/Assessment%20guide.pdf>.

Also, see <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/BUSUG08.pdf> for a detailed discussion of learning outcomes assessment for Business Administration at the University of Illinois; <http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/business.pdf>, pages 1-2, for discussion of learning outcomes assessment for the Bachelor of Business Administration at the University of Michigan, and http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=5&dpt=83&yr=2007&dg=70&prg=233#test for discussion of learning outcomes assessment in the Bachelor's program in Management at the University of Alabama.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

The following are the learning outcomes for Africana Studies at the University of South Florida:

1. Graduating seniors will demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the history and culture of people of African descent in the Diaspora, and the major schools of thought in Africana Studies.
2. Graduating seniors will be required to demonstrate ability to present an argument verbally that displays their knowledge and understanding of the diverse history,

- cultural linkages, and social geography of people of African heritage in Africa and the Diaspora.
3. For the final year of preparation for the BA degree, students will be required to maintain a portfolio of class projects that demonstrate an understanding of the link between African cultural institutions and those of the people of African descent in the Diaspora.

See also, on page 2 of this document, the example of a learning outcome in African American Studies at the University of Virginia.

ANTHROPOLOGY

The following are learning outcomes for Anthropology at the University of Michigan:

1. Train concentrators [majors] in theory, method, and practice of anthropology; provide them with scholarly skills needed to engage in graduate study.
2. Prepare concentrators [majors] for a lifelong path of liberal learning, and understanding and appreciation of cultural and biological diversity.
3. Provide non-concentrators [non-majors] with a basic understanding of cultural and biological diversity in time and space, and anthropology's general approach to knowledge.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Anthropology at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lisa_full_version.pdf, pp. 21-22.

See http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=9&yr=2007&dg=4&prg=156#test for discussion of learning outcomes assessment at the University of Alabama.

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Asian American Studies have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

ASIAN STUDIES

Learning outcomes for majors in East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois are as follows:

Outcome 1: A firm competence in an East Asian language—ability to communicate effectively in the language of the target country in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

Outcome 2: A solid familiarity with East Asian cultures through multiple disciplines.
Outcome 3: A more advanced knowledge of the region including research and writing in a seminar format.

For more information on learning outcomes assessment in East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Illinois, including discussion of assessment measures, see <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/EALC08.pdf>

For discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lca_full_version.pdf, pp. 22-23.

BUSINESS ECONOMICS

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Business Economics have not been located, but see discussion under Administrative Studies, above, of learning outcomes in Business and discussion under Economics, below, of learning outcomes in Economics.

CHICANO STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Chicano Studies have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

ECONOMICS

Learning outcomes for Economics at the University of Illinois are:

- 1: Demonstrate a good working knowledge of the basic principles and terminology of microeconomics and macroeconomics
- 2: Demonstrate the ability to read, evaluate and interpret general economic information.
- 3: Demonstrate the ability to understand and use basic statistics.

The department anticipates that our students will gain additional competencies throughout their course of study in order to function effectively in the workplace. However, training in necessary skills and knowledge is shared with the entire campus and occurs across a broad spectrum of courses. This includes:

- 4: Math proficiency through basic calculus.
- 5: Basic computer literacy for students with business concentrations.
- 6: Leadership and interpersonal skills.
- 7: Ability to communicate effectively both in written and oral form.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Economics at the University of Illinois, see <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/economics08.pdf> .

For a discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Economics at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lisa_full_version.pdf, p. 35.

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.

ETHNIC STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Ethnic Studies have not been located, other than the one learning outcome identified from the University of Virginia in the general section above. Please see examples from related majors for additional general guidance.

GLOBAL STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Global Studies have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

HASS INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The following are learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama:

1. To have formed, completed and defended an integrated depth study of inter- or multi-disciplinary scope.
2. To be able to do high level problem solving utilizing a diversity of critical thinking skills and research methodologies.
3. To be skilled in ethical reflection towards life-long learning and civic engagement.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama, including discussion of learning outcomes assessment in the college in which Interdisciplinary Studies is located (New College), see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=93&yr=2007&dg=42&prg=39#test.

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

The following are learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama:

1. To have formed, completed and defended an integrated depth study of inter- or multi-disciplinary scope.
2. To be able to do high level problem solving utilizing a diversity of critical thinking skills and research methodologies.

3. To be skilled in ethical reflection towards life-long learning and civic engagement.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama, including discussion of learning outcomes assessment in the college in which Interdisciplinary Studies is located (New College), see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=93&yr=2007&dg=42&prg=39#test.

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Latin American Studies have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

LAW AND SOCIETY

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Law and Society have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

LIBERAL STUDIES

The following are learning outcomes for Elementary Education at the University of Alabama:

1. Have in-depth knowledge of core subject matter and pedagogical strategies appropriate for teaching elementary children as described in professional standards.
2. Demonstrate skills and understanding of pedagogical and content knowledge that meet the standards of the profession at the local, state and national levels.
3. Display a thorough understanding of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of a professional teaching in school environments as described in state and national standards.
4. Collaboratively interact with faculty and supervisors within partnership schools to improve and refine the knowledge and abilities required to meet and exceed institutional, state, and national performance standards and competencies.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Elementary Education at the University of Alabama, see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=2&dpt=52&yr=2007&dg=95&prg=91#test.

The following are learning outcomes for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama:

1. To have formed, completed and defended an integrated depth study of inter- or multi-disciplinary scope.

2. To be able to do high level problem solving utilizing a diversity of critical thinking skills and research methodologies.
3. To be skilled in ethical reflection towards life-long learning and civic engagement.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Alabama, including discussion of learning outcomes assessment in the college in which Interdisciplinary Studies is located (New College), see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=93&yr=2007&dg=42&prg=39#test.

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Native American Studies have not been located; please see examples from related majors for general guidance.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

The following are the learning outcomes for Political Science majors at the University of Illinois:

1. Understanding of structures and processes of American government commensurate with citizenship duties and an effective civil society.
2. Acquiring a high degree of familiarity with a broad range of political systems (including the global political order) and cultural perspectives.
3. Developing effective written and communication skills.
4. Enhancing the ability of students to conceptualize problems and apply analytical tools to solve them.
5. Exposing majors to at least three of the subfields of political science, including at least one non-U.S.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Political Science at the University of Illinois, see http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/political_science08.pdf

For discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Political Science at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lisa_full_version.pdf, pp. 60-61; for discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Political Science at the University of Alabama, see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=102&yr=2007&dg=46&prg=45#test

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.

PSYCHOLOGY

The following are the learning outcomes for Psychology majors at the University of Michigan:

Students completing the psychology concentrations [major] should have attained the following:

- The ability to give clear written and oral analyses of the basic psychological processes that give rise to complex human and animal behaviors.
- An understanding of the breadth and diversity of research in psychology which includes work in biopsychology, cognition and perception, developmental psychology, organizational psychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, and personality psychology.
- The ability to read and understand original research as published in scholarly journals.
- The ability to think critically about psychological theories and to evaluate scientific data.
- The ability to synthesize interconnected ideas and to apply psychological concepts to everyday life.

For more detailed discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Psychology at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lsa_full_version.pdf, pp. 18, 62.

For discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Psychology at the University of Illinois, see <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/psychology08.pdf>; for discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Psychology at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, see the University of Virginia Assessment Guide (<http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/assessment/Assessment%20guide.pdf>), Appendix section; for discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Psychology at the University of Alabama, see http://uaops.ua.edu/right_arm_x.cfm?col=3&dpt=105&yr=2007&dg=157&prg=206#test.

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.

PUBLIC POLICY

Specific examples of learning outcomes from other universities in the area of Public Policy have not been located, but see discussion under Political Science, above, of learning outcomes in Political Science.

SOCIOLOGY

The following are learning outcomes for Sociology majors at the University of Illinois:

OUTCOME 1 – *Develop a thorough knowledge of sociological theories, concepts, and research methods.* Specifically, students who have completed the Sociology major should:

- Demonstrate a knowledge of the general history and recent trends in the discipline and its major sub-fields;
- Be familiar with important sociological concepts and theoretical traditions;
- Master a range of basic empirical and statistical social research methods; and
- Apply their theoretical and empirical knowledge to complex social problems.

OUTCOME 2 – *Develop the intellectual skill of critical thinking.* Specifically, Sociology majors should be able to:

- Frame social issues as empirical questions resolvable by observation;
- Assess the validity and reliability of evidence for competing claims regarding social issues;
- Demonstrate cognitive complexity in understanding complex social phenomena; and
- Write and speak clearly about social issues.

OUTCOME 3 – *Foster attitudes that sustain community engagement and a sociological imagination.* Specifically, Sociology majors should:

- Link personal problems and troubles of everyday life to broader social processes and social problems;
- Adhere to the ethical standards of confidentiality and maintain the integrity of the discipline; and
- Seek out opportunities for community engagement in pursuit of social justice.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Sociology at the University of Illinois, see <http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/sociology08.pdf>.

For discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Sociology at the University of Michigan, see http://www.provost.umich.edu/reports/slfstudy/ir/pdfs/assess/lsa_full_version.pdf, pp. 67-68.

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.

WOMEN’S STUDIES

The following are learning outcomes for Gender and Women’s Studies majors at the University of Illinois:

Students will:

- **Outcome 1.** Understand how racial, ethnic, religious, class, and other social categories intersect with gender and shape understandings of what it means to be female, male, transgender, and/or intersexed.

- **Outcome 2.** Be familiar with women's and men's roles in families, cultures, social institutions, politics, economics, history, and global contexts.
- **Outcome 3.** Recognize the impact of culture, politics, and social structure on women's and men's psychology, behavior, and styles of communication.
- **Outcome 4.** Understand how political, economic, and ethical policy issues arise from gendered expectations and beliefs.
- **Outcome 5.** Know and be able to compare new methods of research and theories of knowledge that have informed the study of gender and sexuality.
- **Outcome 6.** Develop the critical thinking skills needed to assess, critique, and construct arguments based on theoretical justification and empirical data.
- **Outcome 7.** Develop communication skills (written and verbal) in order to persuasively construct arguments, summaries, and analyses of material with which they interact; and to articulate their ideas and understanding of material to one another in class presentations and discussion.
- **Outcome 8.** Develop reading skills to enhance their ability to analyze a variety of texts, including written, visual, cultural, and political forms of representation.
- **Outcome 9.** Develop their intellectual commitment to improve their skills and talents in the course of their studies.
- **Outcome 10.** Develop their ethical commitment to apply what they have learned and understand the importance of civic engagement.
- **Outcome 11.** Develop advocacy skills in order to understand the ways in which gender, race, class, sexuality, and disability structure individual, community, representational, and institutional practices; and the willingness to intervene in bias in each of those venues.
- **Outcome 12.** Achieve an understanding of the practices of academic disciplines and the innovations of interdisciplinarity.

For further discussion of learning outcomes assessment in Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois, see

http://www.cte.uiuc.edu/assessment/plans/gender_and_womens_studies08.pdf.

See, also, the additional examples of learning outcomes at the top of this document.