

Implementation Report for the 2020-2021 Cyclical Review of the Department of Sociology Programs

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first implementation report for the cyclical review of the Department of Sociology undergraduate and graduate programs that took place in 2020-2021. The full language for each recommendation from the External Reviewers' Report has been included, along with the corresponding information about implementation from the Final Assessment Report. For each recommendation, the unit has provided an update on the progress or action made toward the implementation of that recommendation, followed by comments from the relevant dean(s) and the Program Review Sub-Committee. Taking into account the updates provided by the unit and the comments from the dean(s), the Program Review Sub-Committee will review the report and determine if all recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily or if a subsequent report will be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<p>1) Reduce the number of undergraduate courses required for majors to a number more consistent with comparable departments, and restrict the array of non-required undergraduate courses to areas where existing faculty have expertise and in subject areas more central to department specializations in Social Inequality, Social Justice, Theory and Applied Research. With course reductions, scarce faculty resources can be redeployed to the graduate level, existing or emerging specializations, or even resources to enhance student</p>	<p>Department</p>		<p>April 2022 Completed June 2024</p>

writing, should that be prioritized by the department.			
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Unit Update: This recommendation was completed in 2024. Since 2022, the unit has undergone significant curriculum changes. In part, these changes are responses to the recommendations from the external reviewers, but these changes also reflect some of the Faculty of Arts big picture curriculum strategies. The changes listed below include the following: removal of courses, deletion of courses, addition of electives from other units, development of new courses to strengthen the Applied Social Research Specialization, and changes to ensure greater ease for progression through the Honours Program. An accredited Coop program in Sociology was also added.

Removal of courses for the Honours and Combined Honours Degree:

- Removed EN190 as a required course.
- Removed the requirement of SY208 for Combined Majors
- Eliminated the Applied Research Option
- Replaced the Honours Program requirement of SY210 with “one of SY210 or SY213.”

Deleted courses in the Academic Calendar that have not be offered in more than five years:

- SY333 Human Rights
- SY390 Resistance and Revolt
- SY410 Human Rights
- SY422 Subjectivity, Power and Government

Added courses from other departments to serve as Sociology electives:

- SE/GS364 Social Entrepreneurship
- RE339 Dynamics of Islamophobia

Courses developed for the Applied Social Research Specialization:

- SY327 Interviews and Focus Groups
- SY309J Research Ethics

Changing program requirements for both the Honours and Combined Honours Program:

- 100-level: In line with other departments in the Faculty of Arts, Sociology reduced the number of senior credits required from 14.0 to 13.0 (i.e., increased the maximum number of first year courses allowed from 6.0 to 7.0 credits). This will allow more flexibility for students changing programs at Laurier and for transfer students from other institutions.
- To increase flexibility for majors and attract other students at the first-year level, Sociology approved that SY101 and SY103 no longer needed to be taken in a specified order. Either course can now be used as a prerequisite for the following required courses: SY207, SY208, SY210, SY213, SY280, SY281.
- To make Sociology electives available to non-Sociology majors, the Department approved that the pre-requisite requirement of SY101 or SY103 be removed from all 200-level elective courses (201, 206, 211, 215, 216, 218, 224, 231, 232, 241, 242, both in-class and online formats).

- 400-Level: Reduction of fourth year credits in the Honours and Combined Honours Program:
- Sociology was not in line with other FoA programs in our 4th year course program requirements. Sociology reduced fourth year requirements from 1.5 credits to 1.0 for the Honours Program and from 1.0 to 0.5 in the Combined Honours Program. This change helped with finances without hurting pedagogical integrity.
- Accredited Sociology Co-Op in the Sociology Honours Program: This direct entry program will begin accepting applicants for the 2025-26 academic year.

Arts Decanal Comments: The Department has worked hard to revise the curriculum to support student progression and success. The Dean of Arts Office will continue to work with all departments to ensure that curriculum is as flexible as possible in order to facilitate this goal.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee appreciates the level of detail provided by the Department about the curriculum changes that have been made since the 2020-2021 cyclical program review. It is clear from the examples provided that the Department has made several changes to its undergraduate program curriculum to streamline and it make it more consistent with other programs in the Faculty of Arts. This recommendation is considered completed and the committee applauds the Departments for its critical approach to curriculum review.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
2) Outdated online courses must be updated. Learning outcomes in sociology depend on instructors using references and examples from students' everyday lives; subject matter becomes more difficult to grasp when cited sources are out of date and examples used to illustrate concepts are long passed. We understand that this is somewhat outside the purview of the department, but it must be undertaken through whatever means or offices are involved.	Department, in consultation with Dean of Arts and e-Learning		Ongoing Completed April 2023

Unit Update: This recommendation was fully completed by April 2023.

Online course development was completed 2020-2021 with funding from the Dean's office as reported in Final Assessment report for the 2020-2021 Cyclical Program Review of Sociology. The FOA funded a 10-hour (\$500) revision for SY321OC (Sociology of Medicine). Sociology used \$3500 to fund 10-hour refreshes for seven additional courses:

Fall 2020:

- SY210OC (Sociology of Health and Illness), SY332OC (Sociology of Race and Ethnicity)

Winter 2021:

- SY215OC (Sociology of Health and Illness)
- SY224OC (Sociology of Work)
- SY241OC (Sociology of Crime: Structural Perspectives)
- SY242OC (Sociology of Crime: Interpretive Perspectives)
- SY307OC (Political Sociology)

Two additional and significant OC course developments were also completed by June 2023.

- An SY382OC “Social Statistics” course was created in 2021. This is a mandatory third year course. Students learn a variety of statistical techniques for analyzing survey research and cross-tabular analysis, correlation, regression, an introduction to inferential statistics. CTF member Lisa Fiksenbaum developed SY382 OC under the supervision of Glenda Wall. SY382OC was offered three times: Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Winter 2023.
- The SY201OC “Sociology of Families” course had not been updated since 2011. It was re-created in 2022/23 with 12 new weekly lessons. Lesson 1, “Indigenous Families,” was written by an Indigenous scholar (Jessica Bomberry), which was unprecedented in the department. Linda Quirke, working in conjunction with Teaching and Learning, created the remaining new course material and incorporated interactive course materials and assessments that align well with asynchronous course delivery. Aside from the material in the first lesson by Jessica Bomberry, Linda Quirke incorporated meaningful course material on Indigenous families throughout the remainder of the course. This content explores historical and current issues such as child separation, Indian status and family creation, birth alerts, and marital dissolution on reserves. These and numerous other course content elements to demonstrate how Indigenous families are affected by the Indian Act and other modern-day policies.

Arts Decanal Comments: The Department has done well to respond to the need to update online courses. The Dean of Arts continues to work with each department to identify which courses should be given highest priority in terms of revision and redesign, prioritizing these in light of the resources available for this work.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is great to hear that the issue of outdated online course content raised by the cyclical program review has been addressed in recent years, and that this issue is being addressed at the faculty-level as well. This recommendation is considered to be completed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
3) The department should (re-)invest in establishing a graduate program in accordance with university priorities	Department, in consultation with the Dean of Arts		June 2022 On-going June 2024

<p>and directions. While department resources for graduate instruction and supervision may be limited (especially with many faculty members involved in other programs), an interdisciplinary program, or an applied program which could generate revenue, should overcome these limitations. The department should consider several different options for this program including (1) an interdisciplinary program with one or more cognate departments; (2) a graduate diploma or certificate program; (3) an applied research program or child/family specialization for professionals; (4) a modified, less resource intensive version of their current program.</p>	<p>and the Dean of FGPS</p>		
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Unit Update: This recommendation is ongoing, but underway. The MA program in Sociology went on hiatus in 2018-2019. Due to a significant decline in our faculty complement with three faculty retirements and one resignation, we decided to temporarily pause the program. In response to the recommendation of the external reviewers, there has been some important work done to revitalize the Sociology graduate program. In 2022, Chair David Monod proposed a reboot to the MA program by pivoting and offering the program as a virtual MA program. Interest was expressed by faculty both within and outside of the department as well as the Dean’s office. If successful, Sociology Laurier would be the first in Canada to offer a fully virtual MA program. In 2023, Jasmin Zine was elected to serve in the position of the Sociology MA Coordinator. With the support of the Dean’s office, Dr. Zine submitted a proposal for a major modification to the Sociology MA program’s mode of delivery from intramural to fully virtual. The proposal was passed by Graduate Faculty Council in April 2024. However, it was tabled at Senate Academic Planning Council due to issues related to resourcing. Given this situation, and other staffing issues, we have decided to take a pause. This past year, one of our members passed away (James Overboe) and we lost another member to retirement (Garry Potter retires at end of August 2024). Both members would have been involved in the MA program. Jasmin Zine will be going on sabbatical in winter of 2025 and given our limited faculty complement, no member involved in the MA Sociology program was available to replace her for one year. Given this staffing situation and our proposal being tabled at SAPC, the MA coordinator in consultation with Dean Sofie Lachapelle has decided to take a temporary pause. We are currently looking for feedback and we are considering how the MA program will be envisioned in the future. The plan is to submit a proposal to Senate Academic Planning Council and Senate in the fall of 2025.

Arts Decanal Comments: The Dean of Arts strongly supports the development of an online MA in Sociology and has worked hard to facilitate this. We will continue to work with the Department in the hopes that the program proposal is approved by Senate in Fall 2025.

Dean of FGPS: I appreciate the effort that went into developing the major modification to re-launch the Sociology MA as a fully virtually program. Additional questions raised at the SAPC meeting included to provide

further background, beyond what was contained in the document, on the decision to move to a fully virtual mode of delivery. Multiple modes of delivery are indeed being embraced by graduate programs across Laurier to continue to attract applicants in a highly competitive market, and I support this direction taken by the unit. A re-launch of the MA Sociology, once the faculty complement is able to support it, will align with sub-objectives in the Strategic Academic Plan including (1.2) “Laurier will offer academic programming that meets the needs of a diverse student body through a variety of pedagogically-informed modes of teaching and program delivery”, and (2.2) “Laurier will strategically grow the diversity and capacity of our professional and research-based graduate programs”.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is clear from the comments provided that this recommendation has been approached cautiously and thoughtfully, and that there is a plan in place to re-offer the MA in Sociology program in a way that would distinguish it from its comparators. The committee wishes the Department good luck with its plans to re-launch the MA degree program when the time and resources are appropriate to do so. No further reporting on this recommendation is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<p>4) The department should revisit its committee structure. We believe there are ways to reconstruct the administrative workload to lighten the load. Prioritizing committees as essential or ad hoc depending on expectations for the coming months, reducing the size of some committees and/or having reps vet work in advance to reduce the work of the entire committee or committees of the whole, and rotating faculty members in and out of committees and positions that demand the most work are some suggestions.</p>	<p>Department</p>		<p>June 2022 Completed June 2024</p>

Unit Update: This recommendation was completed in 2024. Since the review took place in 2020, there have been two retirements (Glenda Wall and Garry Potter) and one death (Jim Overboe). One member (Morgan Holmes) now has a joint appointment with Anthropology. She is designated as 51% in Anthropology and sits on their DAPC; she teaches two Sociology courses but has no service obligation in Sociology. Another member (Jasmin Zine) is designated as 49% in Religion and Culture and teaches two courses in Sociology. There was a replacement hire for Glenda Wall: Qian Wei started on July 1st, 2023. As a result of these changes, Sociology’s full-time faculty complement is now at 8.5 faculty members:

- Jeffrey Aguinaldo
- Greg Bird, CAST Coordinator
- Richard Christy
- Nikolaos Liodakis
- Lucy Luccisano, Chair
- Linda Quirke
- Dana Sawchuk, Undergraduate Advisor
- Qian Wei
- Jasmin Zine (0.5)
- Morgan Holmes (0.5)

This signifies a significant reduction of faculty members who can provide service for the program and given the number of members on sabbatical and other leaves at any given time, we face continued challenges to distribute committee work evenly.

Since David Monod’s time as Chair, we put in place a succession plan with Lucy Luccisano as Chair for 18 months ending December 31, 2024, and Dana Sawchuk undertaking a three-year term as Chair from January 1st 2025 to December 31, 2027. With respect to Undergraduate Advising, Dana Sawchuk assumed the role as UG advisor from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024. Lucy Luccisano will be UG advisor from January 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

Arts Decanal Comments: The Dean of Arts appreciates the hard work that the small number of faculty members go to in order to ensure all aspects of the program operate smoothly. The leadership plan for the next three years should go a long way to providing stability.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It sounds like this recommendation is still a relevant one, given the changes in the Sociology faculty complement since the cyclical program review took place. The Department is encouraged to continue monitoring its committee structure to ensure that the collective faculty are not overtaxed with committee assignments. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
5) The department should investigate, in conjunction with contract faculty how they may be better included in department decision-making. The department has elected to minimize the administrative burden on contract faculty, since they are not paid for administration work, and this is	Department, in consultation with Contract Teaching Faculty		Completed June 2024

<p>reasonable and commendable. However, there should be mechanisms for consulting with contract faculty when decisions are made that impact the courses they teach, for example.</p>			
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Unit Update: This recommendation was completed in 2024. As explained in the Final Assessment Report, the Sociology Department does value the expertise, experience, and dedication of CTF members in delivering Sociology courses. CTF members are integral members of our department, and we simply could not offer the robust and diverse academic courses without them. As Chair, I witness first-hand how our CTF colleagues, through their pedagogy and compassion, have impacted the department culture and the lives of so many of our students.

The Zoom Department-in-Council meetings provide CTF members with a mechanism of inclusion and participation in the department decisions. We voted to continue the practice of having virtual Department in Council meetings as it was the model that allowed for the greatest participation for all members of our department, including CTF members, students, and faculty. This has been a success and has resulted in higher participation and attendance rates among all members. With the move to virtual, CTF members, including those with and without voting rights, have no travel barriers to participate. Agenda items and department meeting minutes are sent to all department members, which further allows for participation either in the meetings themselves or through email correspondence directly with the Chair.

While CTF members do not sit on the curriculum committee as this would constitute a conflict of interest, we do consult with CTF members on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. As reported earlier, CTF who have expertise in teaching specific courses may be consulted or included in relevant discussions. It is important to note here that the curriculum committee only makes recommendations to the department in council. All curriculum decisions are discussed and voted on during our regularly scheduled meetings to which all CTF members are invited and notice of all curriculum items to be discussed is circulated in advance. All CTF members will also be invited to attend the Sociology Retreat at the end of August 2024, where the challenges and opportunities of the upcoming academic year will be discussed in more detail than a monthly department in council meeting typically allows.

Arts Decanal Comments: Maintaining DIC meetings in virtual format is an excellent way to ensure that CTF are able to be included in important departmental business. The Dean of Arts supports the inclusion of CTF in departmental decision-making as much as possible, recognizing their importance to the success of the program.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The initiatives and efforts described in the Department’s response indicate that it is being attentive to the need for inclusion of Contract Teaching Faculty members in the unit’s decision-making processes, while also adhering to Collective Agreement regulations. For reporting purposes, this recommendation is considered to be completed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Vice Dean of the Faculty of Arts: The Department has taken seriously the recommendations from the previous review and the Dean of Arts appreciates the significant effort that has been made to address some challenging matters related to both curriculum and departmental governance. We will continue to provide as much support as possible to ensure the long-term well-being of the Department, and that of its full-time and part-time faculty.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I look forward to advocating for the re-launch of the MA Sociology program once the unit has sufficient faculty complement in place.

Program Review Sub-Committee: The committee appreciates the updates provided by the Department of Sociology in its 2024 Implementation Report; it is clear that the Department has actively engaged with the recommendations made by the external review committee in the 2020-2021 cyclical program review. All of the recommendations are either considered to be completed, or sufficiently in progress to not necessitate any further reporting. The committee wishes the Department good luck in restarting its MA program in the coming years. No further Implementation Reports will be required in advance of the Department's next cyclical program review.

Subsequent Report Required: No

Next Cyclical Program Review: 2027-2028