CUNY Pathways Sociology Major Committee

Proposal for Common Core Courses across Campuses

November, 2012

Basic Plan

To insure that students can begin the sociology major at any CUNY campus and be assured that their courses will transfer to other CUNY campuses we have identified three baskets of courses. We have identified our baskets as “Introduction to Sociology,” “Social Institutions,” and “Social Inequality.” Each campus will offer three of these courses in at least two baskets in sufficient numbers to meet the anticipated needs of transferring students based on historical data. Therefore, at least three sociology courses at each campus will be offered and accepted for credit toward the sociology major at every other CUNY Campus. The list of these courses on each campus will be made available to students and advisors.

Implementation

Each college will either offer one course in each of the three baskets or offer two in one basket and one in another. However, no more than one class from any campus may be placed in the Introduction to Sociology basket. In either case students will be able to transfer designated basket courses to any other school at CUNY. Each of the three courses will directly count towards the credits required for the major, and the introductory level courses will count towards any general prerequisite towards the major or the major itself depending upon the requirements at a specific institutions (e.g., a 100 or 200 level introductory sociology course.)

If a college decides not to offer a course in one of the baskets, then it must offer at least two courses in one of the other two baskets, so that student still have the ability to transfer at least three courses to another CUNY Campus. If a student then transfers to another CUNY campus, those three courses will directly count towards the credits required for the major. The only limitation to this is that no department will be required to give credit toward the major for more than one designated Introduction to Sociology class.

Generalizing Sociology

Sociology provides a variety of approaches to the study of the myriad of issues, ideas, events, relationships, policies, identities, conflicts, etc., that comprise the social, political, economic, cultural, and interpersonal factors that define or create a society. With such a broad canvas to cover, each sociology department tends to divide its program between defining core courses (such as theory and methods) and sub-disciplinary offerings that reflect the department’s particular strengths. Thus, while every sociology department at CUNY offers classes that address social inequality, they do not all offer
the same classes. Colleges will be able to modify their list of basket courses as departmental needs and specializations change.

Course Buckets

I. Introduction to Sociology
The committee recommends that a general introduction to the field of sociology define the first basket. In many cases, this class will be called Introduction to Sociology or something similar. Individual departments, however, may choose to identify a different class as fitting the learning objects of an introduction course.

All courses so identified will be recognized across campuses as equivalent. No department will be required to accept more than one course in this basket for fulfillment of requirements for the sociology major. That is, students in general (unless a specific campus has a policy otherwise) will only receive credit toward the major for one Introduction to Sociology course on this list.

Upon completion of an introductory class, students will be expected to be able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with classical and/or contemporary social theory;
- demonstrate an understanding about how social structure affects individual life chances;
- identify and apply major paradigms of sociological analysis;
- describe the principles of social research methodologies;
- identify significant sub-discipline areas of study including, but not limited to the topics covered by social institutions and social inequality;
- apply “the sociological imagination” to contemporary social phenomena and social problems;
- explain the processes of socialization and adult re-socialization; and
- discuss the concepts of normative and deviant behaviors.

Students are also expected to develop writing skills and critical thinking skills appropriate for study at the college level.

II. Social Institutions
The study of sociology includes sub-discipline specializations in numerous familiar social institutions. Typical course titles in this area would be (but are not limited to): Sociology of the Family; Sociology of Education; Sociology of Religion; Economic Sociology; Urban Sociology; Criminology; Criminal Justice; and Sociology of the Media.

Departments receiving transfer students with successful completion of up to two of these designated classes on their transcripts will approve the transfer of credits for them with the
limitation that departments will not be required to approve transfer of credits for more than three basket courses for any single student.

Upon completion of a social institutions class, students should be able to:

- describe the role(s) of the pertinent institution in socialization;
- demonstrate an ability to examine and critique ideological assumptions underlying social institutions and systems of representation, including but not limited to assumptions regarding gender, race, class, nationality, disability, age, religion, and sexual orientation;
- explain the relationships between the focal institution and other social institutions; and
- discuss the process of institutionalization.

III. Social Inequality

The study of sociology includes sub-discipline specializations in stratification and inequality, frequently measured in terms of race/ethnicity, class, or gender. Typical courses in this basket might be (but are not limited to): Stratification; Sociology of Race and Ethnicity; Ethnic Relations; Class, Status & Power, Global Stratification, Poverty, Aging; and Sociology of Sex & Gender, Sexuality.

Departments receiving transfer students with successful completion of up to two of these classes on their transcripts will approve the transfer of credits for them with the limitation that departments will not be required to approve transfer of credits for more than three basket courses for any single student.

Upon completion of Social Inequality courses, students should be prepared to:

- relate enduring patterns of inequality to historical, normative, and political dimensions of social life;
- discuss patterns of inequality in terms of social justice and democracy;
- provide theoretically sound, empirically based explanations for patterns of inequality;
- identify individual and social costs of enduring inequality; and
- explain the social construction of inequality.

The recommendations contained in this report reflect the desire to ease the management of transfer credits, and do not serve as a statement of priority concerning which classes students should or should not take. Class schedules and planning a path to graduation remain a matter for each student to work out for themselves in consultation with their department advisers.