

How Sociological Leaders Rank Learning Goals for Introductory Sociology

Caroline Hodges Persell

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Claim: Undergraduates taking introductory sociology should understand each topic.

Rankings based on mean scores of Likert scale data ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

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#	Learning Goals Ranked in Importance by 49 Leading American Sociologists in 2010	MEAN	SD	MIN	MAX	N
1	Show the relevance and reality of structural factors in social life	4.90	0.31	4	5	49
2	Place an issue in a larger context (identify systemic elements; identify stakeholders; list unintended consequences)	4.65	0.56	3	5	49
3	Identify and offer explanations for social inequality	4.57	0.58	3	5	49
4	Recognize the difference between empirical and normative statements	4.51	0.65	3	5	49
5	Compare and contrast one's own context with those in other parts of the U.S. and the world	4.48	0.58	3	5	48
6	Recognize that counterfactual anecdotes do not invalidate sociology	4.29	0.68	3	5	48
6	Debunk individualistic explanations of behavior and identify social patterns	4.29	1.14	1	5	49
8	Describe the elements of the scientific method in the social sciences	4.22	1.01	2	5	49
9	Transform a topic of interest into a researchable, sociological question	4.14	1.04	1	5	49
10	Interpret descriptive statistics	4.08	0.93	2	5	49
11	Appreciate the role of human agency in social change	4.06	0.97	1	5	49
12	Evaluate the methodological processes and limits of research (e.g., bias, generalizability)	4.00	0.99	2	5	48
13	Understand the intersection of biography and history	3.94	1.03	2	5	49
14	Describe, explain, and predict aspects of social problems	3.92	0.89	1	5	49
15	Position personal life choices and chances in a demographic context	3.82	0.97	2	5	49
16	Recognize the difference between dispositional and sociological explanations	3.80	0.93	1	5	49
16	Unpack the "causal nexus," e.g., correlation, time order, elimination of alternative explanations	3.80	0.96	2	5	49
16	Take the role of the other	3.80	1.04	2	5	49
19	Describe the tension between generalization and stereotyping	3.73	0.96	2	5	48
20	Posit intervening factors and spurious relationships in social life	3.71	0.98	2	5	49
21	Describe the tension between social forces and determinism	3.69	1.06	2	5	49
22	Understand basic elements of an ethical code of conduct for social scientists	3.67	0.94	2	5	49
22	Set up a data table properly and read and interpret a table correctly	3.67	0.99	2	5	49
24	Distinguish levels of analysis	3.65	1.13	2	5	49
25	Show awareness of probabilities and contingencies	3.58	0.94	2	5	48
26	Analyze labor force issues	3.24	0.92	2	5	49
27	Critique the media	3.02	1.15	1	5	49
27	Describe various career trajectories for sociologists at different degree levels...	3.02	1.09	1	5	49
29	Critically assess Web sites and electronic resources	2.98	1.13	1	5	49
30	Perform a content analysis of texts or news to identify possible sources of bias	2.73	1.06	1	5	49