MAJOR IN SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is the study of social life, focusing on the mutual interaction between human groups and institutions. Human beings, through patterned social interactions, construct and reconstruct the social webs within which they live. The nature and type of social relationships are central to their lives. Sociologists study relationships within family units from the most primitive cultures to interactions of large, bureaucratic institutions in major industrialized nations. Social issues are studied in a variety of ways: direct observation of groups; surveying or interviewing individuals; analyzing historical research; and a variety of other methods.

Sociology majors have many opportunities to pursue broad and diverse ranges of interest. Students gain a sense of social perspective, an understanding of human affairs, an ability to think critically and perform research, and a capacity to write well. The curriculum includes general courses in the arts and humanities and the social sciences along with sociology course work. A generous selection of electives allows students to major or minor in a complementary discipline. A Sociology major also may enroll in one of the interdisciplinary minors, such as Latin American and Caribbean Studies, Religious Studies, or Women's and Gender Studies.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Analyze critically the major classical and contemporary theories from the 19th and 20th centuries. Students are expected to demonstrate how well these theories help us understand or explain current social phenomena both in the U.S. and abroad. Students will learn to apply a wide variety of theories, including European critical theory, functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and post-modern theory, in required empirical research.
- Analyze critically sociological phenomena by applying objective social research methodologies. Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of sociological theories and the application of these theories to real world social phenomena. Specifically, students will understand conceptual frameworks associated with:
  a. social structure (social stratification, ethnic structures, social institutions, small group dynamics, social demography, and social organizations);
  b. culture (socialization and the development of personalities, social norms, framing normative assumptions of societies and organizations); and
  c. social agency (the behavior of the individual, collective behavior such as with social movements, and the principles of social-psychology).
- Analyze critically sociological phenomena by applying social statistical techniques and qualitative research methods. Students will demonstrate a strong working knowledge of statistical techniques, including:
  a. parametric statistics;
  b. non-parametric statistics;
  c. ordinary least squares statistical analysis;
  d. application of the SPSS statistical package;
  e. interview techniques;
  f. focus group interviews;
  g. qualitative data analysis techniques; and
  h. qualitative data management and presentation.

Potential Occupations

Careers are exceptionally varied. Participating in internships and cooperative education opportunities is highly recommended to enhance practical training and development. Sociology graduates apply their education to a large variety of occupations in the non-profit, private, and public sectors. Because Sociology graduates possess a number of transferable communication, analytical, and people skills, they find positions in government, industry, and academia. Many employers appreciate liberal arts majors for their multiple skills and their ability to adapt to a variety of tasks and work environments. Graduates who go on to advanced studies can pursue careers in sociology or attain advanced positions with the possibility of rising to top professional levels.

Depending on student interests, the electives taken, or the concentration selected, available career choices include, but are not limited to: business manager, personnel director, city manager, clinical social worker, college/university instructor, human relations director, demographer, government aide, labor relations specialist, market analyst, researcher, medical administrator, police officer, politician, probation/parole officer, program director/manager, public administrator, publishers, sociologist-specialist, consultant, criminologist, lawyer, librarian.

Concentrations

- Criminology and Criminal Justice Concentration
- Environmental Sociology Concentration
- General Sociology Concentration