

# What is Sociology?

Imagine having the ability to analyze the dynamics of a hostile mob, track patterns in corporate downsizing, explore how people express emotions, or study the effects of cultural difference on problems of peace and war.

Sociology is the scientific study of social life. Sociologists study the structure of societies as well as how they change and interact with one another and impact the individuals within them.

The sociological journey often begins with posing a question or hypothesis which is then answered or tested using theoretical frameworks and scientific research methods. These methods include approaches such as statistical analysis, survey research, ethnography, conversational analysis, and content analysis.

Sociologists study a broad array of topics including the family, crime, politics, race, gender, and social class.

The results of sociological investigations help develop new theories and inform social policy, programs, and laws. Sociologists who become experts in their field are a first point of reference for inquiries as to what is going on in the world, and more importantly, why and how.



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# Sociology

A 21st Century Major



$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

*What is the difference between race and ethnicity?*

Expected 174.640 95.387 22.973 74.640

*O = the frequencies observed E = the expected frequencies*

*Do social networking sites affect how college students interact?*

# Why do students major in sociology?

"I chose sociology because I felt that sociology would give me the most freedom to explore multiple career paths. As a rising city planner, I am able to see how my understandings of socio-economic disparities operate in an urban context. I know that in the future I will be able to effectively create solutions in local distressed communities."

"I had a genuine interest in understanding my own social location in the world."

"In my first sociology class I felt at home. This was a major where I was encouraged to go wherever my mind would take me. I was given the tools to test my ideas and discover actual data to support my theories."

"Studying sociology is like seeing the world through a new pair of glasses, and I don't think I could be an effective health care provider without having studied it, especially considering my interest in global health."

## A 21st century major

The 21st century labor market is fast-changing, increasingly global, and technology-driven. The jobs that you will apply for as a graduate may not even exist yet. Sociology can help you prepare for those new opportunities. The concepts and skills you will learn as a sociology major will equip you to critically analyze the evolving world and your place within it and help you compete effectively in today and tomorrow's job market.

**Conduct Research and Analyze Data.** In sociology you use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Learn to recognize trends and patterns and produce social statistics such as those used in market research, opinion polling, program evaluation, sales, and many other applications.

**Communicate Skillfully.** Learn how to convey your ideas effectively in writing and in presentations. Strong communications skills are essential for success in the 21st century.

**Practice Critical Thinking.** Learn to look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why." Build your analytical skills. Solve problems and identify opportunities.

**Gain a Global Perspective.** Learn about different cultures and how to analyze the interaction of groups and societies through a global and historical perspective.

**Prepare for Graduate School.** An undergraduate major in sociology provides an excellent foundation for graduate study in a wide range of fields including law, business, social work, medicine, public health, public administration and, of course, sociology.

## How are recent sociology graduates using their degree?

As a broad social science, an undergraduate degree in sociology provides you with the technical and analytic skills and the global perspective you need to navigate the 21st century successfully and succeed in many careers.

### Social Services/Counselors

"I work as an advocate for victims of domestic violence in a public assistance office."

### Sales/Marketing

"I assess the performance of social media strategies as they relate to traffic growth, reader engagement, SEO (search engine optimization), and sales and marketing."

### Administrative Support

"I provide support within different parts of the human resources department in my organization, including recruiting, benefits, and payroll."

### Teachers

"I am a high school social studies teacher in the subjects of sociology, psychology, U.S. government, and advanced placement U.S. history."

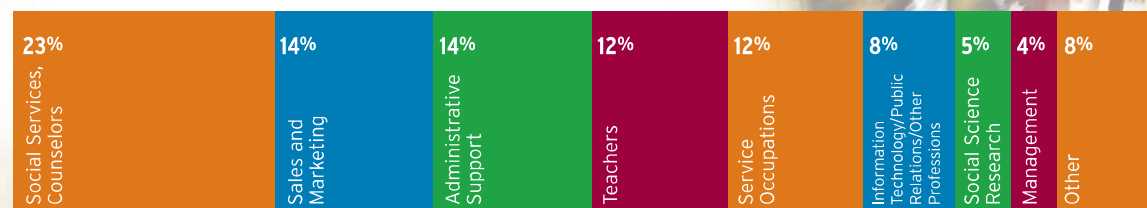
### Service Occupations

"I am a probation officer for a DUI/Drug Court program at an adult probation facility."

### Social Science Research

"I am a statistician in the Fertility and Family Statistics Branch of the U.S. Census Bureau."

How are recent sociology graduates using their degree?



Source: ASA, Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey, 2012.