

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. It is the exploration of social change and a lens into the complexity of the causes and consequences of human behavior.

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 intimate family, organized 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 inquires as to what is going on in the world and more importantly why, and how?



American Sociological Association

1430 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington DC 20005

202 383 9005 phone
202 638 0882 fax
202 638 0981 tdd

apap@asanet.org

www.asanet.org

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Sociology

A 21st Century Major

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."

"After my first Sociology course, I was hooked. I was into studying society and how social changes affect us. Sociology offers so many different ways to understand how society works, and it helps us have a greater understanding of why certain things happen in society."

A 21st century major

The 21st century labor market is fast-changing, increasingly global, and technology-driven. The jobs that you may apply for as a graduate may not even exist yet. To navigate the 21st century means being able to keep up with the changing world.

As society evolves, you as sociology major will have the tools to critically analyze the world and your place within it. You will also learn the practical skills you need to succeed there.

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 countless 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/Public Services

"I am a caseworker for incarcerated mothers and their infants."

Program Support

"I am an immigration specialist for a large company. I write petitions for people to receive their Green Cards."

Management

"I provide management and financial analysis. The work involves forecasting and tracking revenue for large multimillion dollar efforts as well as labor relations."

Education

"I teach Conversational English and American Studies classes at a secondary school in Southeastern Ukraine."

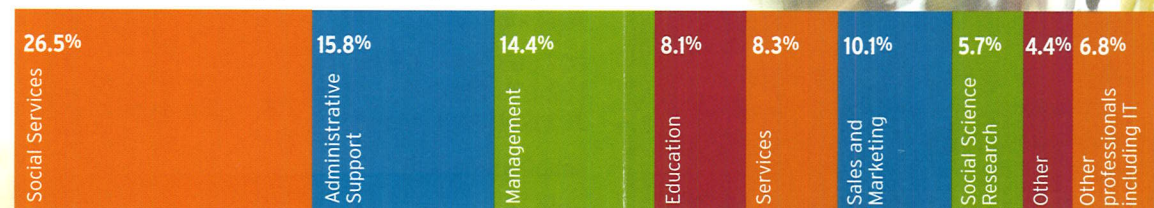
Sales Marketing

"I am a marketing consultant. I assist with the planning and development of marketing strategies for my organization."

Social Science Researcher

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

How are recent sociology graduates using their degree?



Source: "What Can I Do With a Bachelors Degree in Sociology? National Survey of Seniors, Wave II, 2007"