

SOCIOLOGY, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The major provides graduates with a sociological perspective on human behavior informed by exposure to different substantive areas of the field; an understanding of the structure of American society, its internal diversity, and its international context; an understanding of basic principles of the scientific method, statistics, research design, computer use, logic and critical thinking, and how these apply to the study of human behavior; and experience in posing sociological questions and collecting and analyzing data to bear on those questions. Graduates have the background to seek employment in a variety of public and private sector jobs, to pursue graduate study in sociology or related areas, or to enter professional schools in social work, law, business, or health fields.

Students may choose either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree program. The B.A. degree in Sociology is a classic liberal arts degree. The B.S. degree is intended for students with a strong interest in quantitative skills. Students completing the B.S. degree have additional training in mathematics and other social science disciplines.

Opportunities to work as departmental teaching and research assistants are available. Students are encouraged to participate in study abroad and/or internship experiences while enrolled in either the B.A. or B.S. sociology majors.

Graduates of this program have found positions in social research, social service agencies, government and business research and planning offices, other business positions (especially sales and marketing), or have entered graduate school in sociology, social work, policy analysis or law school.

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the scientific study of social behavior and human social groups. The topics covered in sociology are as diverse as society itself, from families to gangs, from non-profit organizations to nations. Sociology focuses on the ways that groups and individuals interact, examining how social environments, like neighborhoods, schools, religious organizations, workplaces, and social networks shape individuals' behaviors and create cooperation or conflict. Sociology uses different methods (surveys, interviews, network analysis, observation, social media, censuses, case studies) to make the invisible patterns of the social world visible.

Sociology especially helps us understand the roots of racial, gender, and class inequality by investigating the ways that social groups control resources, enforce social boundaries, and accept unequal social outcomes. But sociology also helps us to understand how societies change, whether due to the impact of large-scale events like pandemics and economic recessions, or through social movements and labor unions.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to understand how society influence our lives, both in the United States and throughout the global community.
- You would like to learn skills for social research, group facilitation, or organizational leadership.

- You want to pursue a career in research, law, social work, business, community organizing, social entrepreneurship, education, non-profit organizations, public policy, counseling, or the health professions.
- You want to understand social inequality as well as social change.