SOCIOLOGY, B.S. (LIBERAL ARTS)

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Sociology BS major provides students with a sociological perspective on human behavior through coursework and learning experiences that are especially focused on connecting sociological concepts and knowledge with advanced research skills. Students choose an option to pursue an area of specialized interest. Students can tailor advanced coursework around areas such as social inequality, social data, social networks, social change, social diversity, conflict, and cooperation. Courses on these topics examine sociological aspects of race, ethnicity, immigration, gender, health, politics, economics, culture, deviance, religion, social movement organizations, and more. Coursework also includes learning basic principles of the scientific method, research design, logic, data collection, coding, and statistics. Students learn how to pose sociological questions and analyze data to answer those questions.

Opportunities to work as departmental teaching and research assistants on faculty-guided research projects are available. Students are encouraged to participate in dialogue facilitation, study abroad and/or internship experiences as part of their learning.

Graduates of this program have found positions in social media, social entrepreneurship, social research, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations. Graduates are very well prepared to enter professional schools in law, business, social work, or health fields, as well as graduate school in the social sciences.

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 advanced learn skills for social research, including statistics and data analysis.

- 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.

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	22-25
Requirements for the Major	59

6-9 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes 6 credits of GQ courses; 0-3 credits of GS courses.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
SOC 1	Introductory Sociology	3
SOC 207	Research Methods in Sociology [1]	3
SOC 400W	Senior Research Seminar [1]	3
SOC 405	Sociological Theory [1]	3
SOC 470	Intermediate Social Statistics	4
STAT 184	Introduction to R	2
STAT 200	Elementary Statistics [1]	4
Additional Courses		
Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better		
MATH 110	Techniques of Calculus I	4
or MATH 140	Calculus With Analytic Geometry I	
Select 3 credits from the following:		3

CMPSC 101	Introduction to Programming (Students should take 101 version based in Python, not C++)	
CMPSC 121	Introduction to Programming Techniques	
CMPSC 131	Programming and Computation I: Fundamentals	
Select 15 credits in sociology, 9 credits must be at the 400 level		15
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better		
Select one of the following five possible pathways:		15
1. Data Analysis		
Select 15 credits from the following:		
CMPSC 203	Introduction to Spreadsheets and Databases	
DS 220	Data Management for Data Sciences	
DS 310	Machine Learning for Data Analytics	
DS 330	Visual Analytics for Data Sciences	
DS 402	Emerging Trends in the Data Sciences	
DS 410	Programming Models for Big Data	
DS 420	Network Analytics	
MATH 220	Matrices	
MATH 441	Matrix Algebra	
STAT 380	Data Science Through Statistical Reasoning and Computation	
STAT 460	Intermediate Applied Statistics	
STAT 461	Analysis of Variance	
STAT 462	Applied Regression Analysis	
STAT 463	Applied Time Series Analysis	
STAT 464	Applied Nonparametric Statistics	
STAT 466	Survey Sampling	
2. Geographic Information Systems		
GEOG 260	Geographic Information in a Changing World: Introduction to GIScience	
Select 12 credits from the following:		
GEOG 363	Geographic Information Systems	
GEOG 364	Spatial Analysis	
GEOG 365	Intermediate GIS Programming	
GEOG 463	Geospatial Information Management	
GEOG 464	Advanced Spatial Analysis	
GEOG 465	Advanced Geographic Information Systems Modeling	
GEOG 483	Problem-Solving with GIS	
GEOG 484	GIS Database Development	
GEOG 485	GIS Programming and Software Development	
GEOG 489	Advanced Python Programming for GIS	
3. Social Demography		
SOC 23	Population and Policy Issues	
Select 12 credits from the following:		
GEOG 126	Economic Geography	
GEOG 220	Perspectives on Human Geography	
GEOG 421	Population Geography	
GEOG 422W		
GEOG 425	Geography of Race, Class, and Poverty in America	
SOC 408	Urban Ecology	
SOC 411	Racial and Ethnic Diversity and the American Family	
SOC 422	World Population Diversity	
SOC 423	Social Demography	
SOC 452		
SOC 459	Communities and Crime	
4. Political Analysis		
PLSC 1	American Politics: Principles, Processes and Powers	
PLSC 309	Quantitative Political Analysis	
Select 9 credits from the following:		
PLSC 404	Analyzing Public Policy in the American States	
PLSC 410	Strategy and Politics	
PLSC 429	Analysis of Electoral Politics	
PLSC 447	Analysis of Public Opinion and Political Attitudes	
PLSC 476	Empirical Legal Studies	
SOC 180N	State, Society, and Public Policy	
SOC 419	Race and Public Policy	
SOC 432	Social Movements	
SOC 446	Political Sociology	
5. Health and Society		
SOC 451	Health, Disease & Society	
Select 12 credits from the following:		
SOC 35	Sociology of Aging	
SOC 150N	Healthy People, Healthy Society	
SOC 162N	Communicating Care	
SOC 309	Sociology of Health	
SOC 428	Homelessness in America	
SOC 435	Perspectives on Aging	
SOC 450	Justice and the Environment	
SOC 466	Solving Community Problems	

[1] Sequencing: SOC 207 and STAT 200 prior to SOC 470; SOC 470 and SOC 405 prior to SOC 400W.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)
- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies
- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration
- **GN,** may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement
All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement
6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum
3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits
A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work
Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition
The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Integrated B.S. in Sociology and M.I.A. in International Affairs

Undergraduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park

Graduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park

Requirements for the Integrated B.S. in Sociology and M.I.A. in International Affairs can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/international-affairs/#integratedundergradgradprogramstext).

Integrated B.S. in Sociology and Masters of Public Policy

Undergraduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park

Graduate degree available at the following campuses: University Park

Requirements for the Integrated Undergraduate/Graduate Degree Program B.S. in Sociology and Masters of Public Policy can be found in the Graduate Bulletin (https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/public-policy/#integratedundergradgradprogramstext).

Program Learning Objectives

- **Career-Related Skills:**
  - Demonstrate an understanding of the career options available to someone with a background in sociology
- **Communication Skills:**
  - Write a paper following the format of published sociological research, including each of the major sections of a research paper.
  - Communicate the results of sociological research in oral form.
  - Content Knowledge: Describe the focus of sociology as a discipline.
  - State what is distinctive about the sociological perspective.
  - Apply the sociological perspective to a problem or scenario.
- **Knowledgeable Consumers of Research:**
  - Comprehend and effectively extract central points from sociological research as this research is presented in professional articles, including substantive content, theory, methods and conclusions.
- **Research Skills:**
  - Demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret quantitative sociological data using statistics, graphs, and data tables.
  - Do research that develops and tests hypotheses using data, including use of appropriate previous research, theory, data collection, statistical analysis techniques, interpretation of research results and development of conclusions.
  - Present research results in correct tabular and written form.
- **Understanding of Theory:**
  - Identify theories and concepts from classical sociological theories.
  - Apply theories and concepts from classical sociological theories.
  - Identify theories and concepts from contemporary sociological theories.
  - Apply theories and concepts from contemporary sociological theories.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (https://senate.psu.edu/ students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545
Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (https:// la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (https:// bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Sociology, B.S. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
LA 83	1.5	STAT 200 (GQ)*‡†	4
MATH 110 or 140 (GQ)*‡†	4	SOC Lower-Level Course*	3
SOC 1*	3	General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
General Education Course (GWS)‡	3	General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3	Elective	3
Elective	3		
	17.5		16

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
CMPSC 101, 121, or 131*	3	LA 283	1.5
SOC 207*	3	SOC 470*	4
SOC Lower-Level Course*	3	SOC Lower-Level Course*	3
Pathway Course*	3	General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course	3
		Elective	3
	15		17.5

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
STAT 184*	2	SOC 405*	3
SOC 400-Level Course*	3	Pathway Course*	3
Pathway Course*	3	General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5
General Education Course	3	Elective	3
General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5		
	15.5		13.5

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
SOC 400W*	3	SOC 400-Level Course*	3
SOC 400-Level Course*	3	Pathway Course*	3
Pathway Course*	3	General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
General Education Course	3	Elective	3
Elective	3	Elective	2-3
	15		14-15

Total Credits 124-125

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.
- All incoming freshmen must take a First-Year Seminar (FYS) during Fall or Spring of their first year. Academic advisers can provide a list of FYS being offered and help the student enroll. Most FYS in the College of the Liberal Arts are worth 3 cr. and count as a General Humanities (GH) or General Social Sciences (GS) course. For this reason, the FYS is not listed separately on this eight-semester plan; most students will be able to fulfill the FYS requirement while also fulfilling a GH or GS requirement.
- When planning general education and elective courses, students should factor in the following requirements:
  - 3 credits of United States Culture (US)
  - 3 credits of International Culture (IL)
  - 6 credits of Inter-Domain (N) coursework

Sociology, B.S. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
MATH 110 or 140 (GQ)*‡†	4	STAT 200 (GQ)*‡†	4
SOC 1*	3	SOC Lower-Level Course*	3
General Education Course (GWS)‡	3	General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
	16		**16**

Second Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
CMPSC 101, 121, or 131*	3	SOC Lower-Level Course*	3
SOC Lower-Level Course*	3	Pathway Course*	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course	3
Elective	3	Elective	3
	15		**15**

Third Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
LA 283	1.5	SOC 405*	3
SOC 207*	3	SOC 470*	4
STAT 184*	2	Pathway Course*	3
SOC 400-Level Course*	3	General Education Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5
General Education Course	3	Elective	3
General Education Course	3		
General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5		
	17		**14.5**

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
SOC 400W*	3	SOC 400-Level Course*	3
SOC 400-Level Course*	3	Pathway Course*	3
Pathway Course*	3	Pathway Course*	3
General Education Course	3	General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
Elective	3	Elective	2-3
	15		**14-15**

Total Credits 122.5-123.5

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.
- When planning general education and elective courses, students should factor in the following requirements:
  - 3 credits of United States Culture (US)
  - 3 credits of International Culture (IL)
  - 6 credits of Inter-Domain (N) coursework

Career Paths

The Sociology BS major trains students in how to design social research, how to collect data, how to analyze data, and how to interpret data. This includes advanced training in data management and statistical analysis, with chances to focus on social media data, surveys, and network analysis. Sociology provides insight about how and why society works, giving students tools to critically examine social and propose creative solutions to social problems. Sociology also gives in-depth knowledge on key aspects of social life: race, family, immigration, gender, religion, work, sexuality, violence, social movements, and more.

Careers

People with sociological training can be found in a range of careers, since sociology provides skills that translate to numerous contexts and specialized knowledge on specific topics. BS graduates are especially skilled in data management and data analysis. Our recent graduates have pursued careers in law, social work, social media, research, business, community organizing, social entrepreneurship, education, non-profit organizations, public policy, counseling, health professions, government, and criminal justice. Since our department offers a wide range of courses, students can tailor to their interests. Students also have numerous opportunities for research, career, or teaching internships.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM (https://sociology.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/sociology/careers-in-sociology/)

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

Sociology provides a strong foundation for graduate study. Many students choose sociology as a step towards graduate school because it provides intensive training in data analysis and critical thinking skills. Sociology students have multiple chances to develop their communication skills, through writing, speaking, and data presentation. Research, teaching, and community internships all provide opportunities for advanced skill development and mentorship. Over half of recent

sociology students have considered graduate school, especially in the fields of law, business, data analytics, human services, education, and public health.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (https://sociology.la.psu.edu/graduate/sociology/)

Professional Resources

- American Sociological Association (https://www.asanet.org)
- The International Sociology Honor Society (https://alphakappadelta.org)

Contact

University Park

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINOLOGY
211 Oswald Tower
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-2527
sociology@psu.edu

https://sociology.la.psu.edu/undergraduate/sociology/majors/