

SOCIOLOGY, B.A.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. (Conduct Research and Analyze Data) Sociology encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative methods are used in market research, opinion polling, sales, government, and countless other applications and allow researchers to recognize trends and patterns and produce social statistics. Qualitative research skills provide an in depth understanding of interactions, communications, worksite practices, and social worlds. Advanced sociological research methods require graduate#level training beyond the scope of our undergraduate major, but we expect that all undergraduate majors will be able to conduct small-scale research using surveys, interviews, experiments, textual analysis or observations in which they formulate a research question, collect data, analyze results, and draw conclusions.
2. (Critically Evaluate Published Research) Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications. They will be able to identify the research methods used, assess the quality of the sample, assess the quality of measurements and procedures, evaluate the links between the data and the interpretations, identify possible threats to the validity of the results, and provide an overall assessment of the trustworthiness of the research results. They will be able to read and evaluate a set of research articles on the same broad issue and be able to draw summarize the research findings across multiple issue.
3. (Communicate Skillfully) Because the sociology major involves a large amount of reading, writing, and discussion, majors learn how to convey ideas effectively in writing, presentations, and everyday conferences and meetings. Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
4. (Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes) Sociological inquiry involves learning to look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure. Sociology majors develop strong analytical skills and learn to solve problems and identify opportunities. They are able to consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
5. (See Things from a Global Perspective) Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies. They examine both variation and universality across places and through history. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among residents of the United States. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.
6. (Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market) An undergraduate major in sociology provides an excellent foundation for work and graduate study in a wide range of fields including law, business, social work, medicine, policy research, public health, public administration and, of course, sociology. With the aid of faculty and staff, students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for employment or further study , assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their qualifications.

Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications.