

SOCIOLOGY

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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DEGREE OFFERED: BA

Sociology is a branch of the social sciences that evolved in response to the revolutionary social changes of the 19th century, such as industrialization and urbanization, that ushered in the modern era. Sociology's founding fathers include Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and George Herbert Mead. They explored how social relationships and interactions affect individuals and large-scale social institutions, including religion, government, and education. Today, sociologists use qualitative techniques, including ethnography; participant observation; and case studies of a variety of social phenomena, processes, and problems as methods for exploring the meaning of social life and culture to those who live it, and in building inductive theory. Quantitative techniques engage in hypothesis testing of established theories and concepts, using techniques that include experimental designs, survey questionnaires, and network analysis. Sociology as a discipline includes "ways of knowing" that link it closely to methods of the natural sciences, and more interpretive and critical perspectives that are closer to scholarship in the humanities.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BA IN SOCIOLOGY

For general university requirements, see Graduation Requirements (Undergraduate Student section, pages 2-5). Students majoring in sociology must complete at least 33 semester hours (11 courses) in sociology. Requirements for the major include the following:

SOCI 101 *Introduction to Sociology*

SOCI 298 *Social Statistics*

One of the following:

SOCI 381 *Research Methods*

SOCI 384 *The Craft of Sociology*

One of the following theory courses:

SOCI 380 *Social Theory*

SOCI 383 *Feminist Social Thought*

Any other sociology courses to reach a total of 11

HONORS PROGRAM

The Honors Program is designed to provide sociology majors with the opportunity to sharpen their research skills and deepen their understanding of the discipline through a two- to three-semester program of directed independent research and writing. The program also offers the opportunity for formal recognition, through Departmental Honors, of those undergraduates who have demonstrated unusual competence in sociology by successfully completing a sustained independent research project.

Eligibility—To be eligible for the program, students must have taken at least four sociology courses beyond SOCI 101 *Introduction to Sociology*, including SOCI 381 *Research Methods*. If their project requires statistical analysis, students also should complete SOCI 382 *Social Statistics* before beginning their research. An A- average in all sociology courses taken also is required.

Application Process—During the fall and early spring semester of their junior year, students are invited to consult with members of the faculty about a potential thesis topic. All students must have at least one faculty member in the sociology department approve their topic and agree to serve as their thesis committee chair.

Once a thesis supervisor has been identified, the student must submit a written description of their proposed research project to the departmental undergraduate advisor, Dr. Bridget Gorman. The proposal should be two to three pages in length (double-spaced) and is **due by April 1st of their junior year**.

The sociology faculty will vote on the merits of the proposed thesis project at their monthly faculty meeting in mid-April. If approved, the student may begin work on the thesis immediately, or at a start time agreed on with their thesis supervisor (including summer semester, if desired).

Program—Students in the Honors Program register for two successive semesters in *Directed Honors Research* (SOCI 492 and 493). An honors thesis typically involves much discussion over both semesters between the student and their primary advisor. Students should meet early in the process to agree on ground rules for the project, to choose the other members of the thesis committee (made up of two additional faculty members, sometimes from other departments, who serve as readers and ad-hoc advisors), and to set up a schedule for discussions and submission of written work. It is the department's experience that students who work alone without much consultation with faculty are less likely to succeed in their project than students who maintain close contact with their advisor and the department. Students also are encouraged to include other members of the committee in discussion of the thesis, especially as the project nears completion, so that their feedback can be incorporated before the final draft of the project is submitted.

Students normally begin by conducting a thorough review of the relevant literature, formulating hypotheses that grow out of the literature review, and proposing a research design that clearly describes how the data for the project are to be collected and analyzed. The research itself is usually carried out in the fall semester of the senior year (and sometimes in the summer following the junior year), and is analyzed, written up, and defended as a completed Honor's Thesis during the spring semester of the senior year. (Students are encouraged to examine several previously written theses, which are available from the sociology department administrator.)

In addition to being read by the student's primary advisor, the thesis also is read and evaluated by the other faculty members, sometimes from other departments, who make up the student's thesis committee.

Program Timeline—A first draft of thesis must be turned in to the committee members no later than February 1 of the student's senior year.

After receiving feedback on the project, the student has until the last Monday in March to submit a final draft of the senior thesis to their committee.

A short presentation (10–15 minutes) of the thesis project must be given to the full sociology faculty by mid-April. Faculty will vote on whether to grant Departmental Honors to the student at the conclusion of their presentation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR IN SOCIOLOGY

Six classes total (18 credits)

Required Classes:

- SOCI 101 *Introduction to Sociology*
- One methods or theory course

Elective Classes :

- Four electives (12 credits), including at least one 400-level class.

See SOCI in the Courses of Instruction section.