

SOCIOLOGY

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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DEGREE OFFERED: BA

This undergraduate major fosters an analytic approach to the study of human societies, whether as a preparation for graduate work in sociology and related fields or as the foundation for a variety of occupations. It also is an important component of a liberal arts education and, as such, can serve as effective preparation for professions like law or medicine. The program provides students with considerable latitude in pursuing personal interests while ensuring familiarity with basic theoretical approaches and research methods.

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*

At least one theory course, such as:

SOCI 380 *Social Theory*

SOCI 383 *Feminist Social Thought*

Any other sociology courses to reach a total of 11

Sociology majors are not required to take a foreign language, but those planning graduate study should be competent in at least one such language. Some sociology courses listed in the Courses of Instruction section may not be offered every year, and courses among the regular offerings are occasionally added or dropped. Students are responsible for making sure they satisfy all the requirements for their degree. One of the sociology faculty, preferably the department advisor, should sign each major's registration.

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 Patsy Garcia, 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:

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.