

School of Arts and Sciences

SOCIOLOGY

www.pitt.edu/~socdept/

This is an exciting time of dramatic social change, both nationally and internationally. Global processes are integrating the world and creating a "global village." At the same time, old hostilities based on ethnic solidarity are re-emerging and tearing the social fabric of various parts of the world. The U.S. economy is undergoing structural change that is altering the occupational structure. The United States is becoming multicultural, leading to shifts in the meanings of community. These changes bring huge benefits for some and heavy costs for others. Social problems are not marginal to societies but are integral to them.

Sociologists try to understand these phenomena. For some, this means informing public policy; for others the social world is simply one of the most interesting things to study. Sociologists study social organization. For some, this means examining societies: how they are structured, how they work, and how they change. Sociologists also study how people behave in families, groups, and organizations; how people develop identities; and how their social organizations become real. In addition, sociologists analyze vital issues such as race, class, gender, cultural identity, education, welfare, health care, demography, and the environment.

Sociology is also a useful preparation for people looking forward to careers in the helping professions (such as law, social work, education, nursing, and the health-related professions), for any of the administrations (such as business, public, social service, and hospital), and for many other professions (including criminology and the administration of justice, regional and urban planning, child development, and civil service). The Department of Sociology at the University of Pittsburgh is strongly committed to the career development of its students, and sponsors a wide variety of strategic internships.

Required Courses for Majors

Twenty-seven credits are required in sociology and four credits in statistics for the major, distributed as follows:

I. One of the following three courses:

SOC 0002 Sociology of Everyday Life

What do action movies and sitcoms tell us about American society? What makes Pittsburgh a great city? Why is it so important to say "how ya doing?" to people you pass on the street? Why is Superman a cultural icon and B'rer Rabbit a political subversive? These are the sorts of questions this course will explore. You will look at the common stuff of everyday life, the stuff most people take for granted and ignore as unimportant. But, as you will discover, it is in these trivial things that you can most clearly see the effects of culture, power, and other social forces that shape lives.

SOC 0005 Societies

From a historical-sociological perspective, this course spans the chronology of human existence. You will begin by examining the emergence of the earliest societies, and the corresponding development of social groups and institutions within them. Moving forward through time, and across societies, you will explore the increasing complexity of social and economic organizations. You will consider topics such as the development of religious and political institutions, the rise (and fall) of empires, the Crusades, medieval societies, the rise of capitalism, and the implications of modern "global society."

SOC 0010 Introduction to Sociology

This course is designed to offer you an overview of the discipline of sociology as a social science. The course content will include an introduction to the key concepts, main theoretical perspectives, important substantive issues, basic research methods, and findings of sociology. You will learn to apply your understanding of sociology to contemporary social issues such as changes in the institutions of family, education, and technology, as well as domestic violence and race relations.



II. A course in statistics, chosen from the following:

STAT 0200 Basic Applied Statistics

This course teaches descriptive and inferential statistics, making use of a user-friendly computer package. Students who complete this course will be able to conduct their own analysis of standard one-sample or two-sample data sets, follow statistical reasoning, and read statistical reports with understanding. Introductory topics in linear regression, analysis of variance, and contingency table analysis will also be covered.

STAT 1000 Applied Statistical Methods

This course is an intensive introduction to statistical methods. It is designed for students who want to do data analysis and to study further ideas in applied statistics beyond this course. The topics covered include descriptive statistics, elementary probability, random sampling, controlled experiments, hypothesis testing, regression, and the analysis of variance. Emphasis will be placed on the statistical reasoning underlying the methods. Students will also become proficient in the use of a statistical software package.

III. SOC 0230 Social Research Methods

This overview of principles of social investigation aims at providing skills to decipher reports of social study and to engage in social inquiry. Focus is on how questions can be formulated; how initial questions lead to selection of people or other subjects for investigation; how data concerning the subjects are collected by observation, experiment, archives, or otherwise; how the data are analyzed; how the analyses are interpreted; and how the interpretations are presented in written reports.

IV. SOC 0150 Social Theory

Contemporary sociology presents an expanding array of theories, schools, and approaches to social inquiry. You will survey some of the more influential sociological theories of the 20th century, with particular attention to how core sociological concepts are analyzed and applied to sociological problems such as gender, power, and social change.

V. A research practicum, designed as a focused empirical research experience that provides an appreciation of conducting research and an example of the excitement of doing sociology. The practicum will change every semester, allowing you to select topics of interest to you. Some examples of practicums include:

SOC 1277 The Pittsburgh Area Study

SOC 1231 Applied Network Analysis: Interorganizational Networks

SOC 1435 Social Change in the United States

SOC 1438 Demography

SOC 1447 Science and Technology in the U.S., Japan, and Europe

Note: Practicum courses are defined by substantive content, theoretical questions, methodological approaches, specific data analytic methods, or any combination of these. One course from this category will be taught every semester. The methods, theory, and statistics courses are prerequisites for the research practicum.

VI. At least six credits from advanced-level courses (1000 level). Internships, independent study, and courses taken for the research practicum do not count towards these six credits.

VII. Nine additional elective credits must be taken to complete the major.

VIII. One of the above courses must be an approved writing course.

Related Area

Sociology majors must also complete 12 credits in a related field such as anthropology, Africana studies, computer science, economics, history, mathematics, philosophy, political science, psychology, or religious studies. In special cases, your sociology advisor may approve some other field to satisfy this requirement, such as the study of a foreign area or language.

Requirements for the Minor

Fifteen credits distributed as follows:

I. SOC 0002 Sociology of Everyday Life or SOC 0005 Societies or SOC 0010 Introduction to Sociology

II. SOC 0230 Social Research Methods

III. A sociological theory course from a list of approved courses, currently including SOC 0150 Social Theory and SOC 1105 Feminist Theory.

IV. An elective in sociology

V. One elective upper-level sociology course (1000-2000).

For more information about the sociology program, contact:

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For more information about other majors, contact:

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Special Programs and Opportunities

Certificate Programs

Certificate programs allow students to complete a concentrated area of study in addition to their major. They consist of 18–24 credits of course work and in many cases can be used to fulfill the “related area” requirement of the A&S degree. Certificate programs in Asian studies, Latin American studies, Russian and East European studies, and West European studies are offered through the **University Center for International Studies (UCIS)** and are designated by the U.S. Department of Education as among the best of their kind for research, teaching, and public service. Other UCIS certificate programs include Africana, European Union, and global studies. Certificate programs are also available in American Sign Language, children’s literature, conceptual foundations of medicine, film studies, geographic information systems, German language, historic preservation, history and philosophy of science, international engineering studies, Jewish studies, medieval and Renaissance studies, professional and public writing, structural engineering for architectural studies majors, photonics, professional translation, and women’s studies.

Internships

The Department of Sociology strongly supports and encourages participation in internships. Having a sociological internship can be one of the most enlightening and productive aspects of your undergraduate education. It not only gives you a closer look at working in a particular field, but can help you gain a competitive edge, make contacts in the job market, and earn credits toward your degree. The Department of Sociology’s internship coordinator maintains an ever-growing list of internship sites. For example, sociological internships are available at the offices of U.S. Senator Arlen Specter and U.S. Senator Rick Santorum; the American Civil Liberties Union; the Pennsylvania Bureau of Consumer Protection; the Allegheny County Coroner’s Office; the Make-A-Wish Foundation; the Homeless Children’s Initiative; and the Protection from Abuse Office in the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County, Family Division. There are also numerous local internship opportunities involving childhood counseling and education, hospitals and health care, psychological and substance abuse counseling, business, law, criminal justice, and many others.

University Honors College (UHC)

The UHC offers many resources for talented, active students—unique courses, special degrees, opportunities to perform independent research or teach, supplemental advising, and a social and academic community of similarly motivated students. UHC courses offer a more in-depth treatment of the material covered in a nonhonors course. Students work more problems, write more, read more, and discuss topics in greater depth. Although UHC does not have a formal membership and does invite all students to participate in honors courses, there are certain qualifications that must be met to be eligible to take UHC courses. Entering freshmen are automatically considered for UHC participation on the basis of their admissions applications. A minimum quality point average (QPA) of 3.25 is required for current Pitt students.

Study Abroad

Studying abroad is an exciting way to add an international perspective to your undergraduate education and strengthen your credentials as a graduate. Since only about 8 percent of American students have studied abroad, this experience distinguishes you when you enter the job market or pursue graduate study. The experience allows you to broaden your personal experience and gain an appreciation of other cultures while earning credits toward your degree. Scholarships are available and financial aid is applicable.

Students may study sociology in St. Petersburg, Russia. St. Petersburg is the most European of Russian cities. Founded by Peter the Great in 1703 as Russia’s “Window to the West,” it still retains many of the Baroque splendors of the former empire; more bridges than Venice; and a fairy-tale atmosphere of golden domed churches, elaborate palaces, and riverside parks. In St. Petersburg, emperors and empresses entertained in the lavish Winter Palace. Within its crowded tenements, Dostoevsky wrote his greatest works and, in 1837, Pushkin fought the duel that ended his life. In St. Petersburg, Shostakovich composed his first great symphony and Lenin began his political career when his brother was hanged by the czar. In St. Petersburg, you can see one of the greatest ballet companies perform

classic and contemporary works, or explore the thriving music scene that includes rock, jazz, classical, and everything in between. There is no previous Russian language study required. There is a three-day London stopover before the program begins and a three-day visit to Moscow along with other cultural activities.