

SOCIOLOGY, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The major provides graduates with a sociological perspective on human behavior informed by exposure to different substantive areas of the field; an understanding of the structure of American society, its internal diversity, and its international context; an understanding of basic principles of the scientific method, statistics, research design, computer use, logic and critical thinking, and how these apply to the study of human behavior; and experience in posing sociological questions and collecting and analyzing data to bear on those questions. Graduates have the background to seek employment in a variety of public and private sector jobs, to pursue graduate study in sociology or related areas, or to enter professional schools in social work, law, business, or health fields.

Students may choose either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree program. The B.A. degree in Sociology is a classic liberal arts degree. The B.S. degree is intended for students with a strong interest in quantitative skills. Students completing the B.S. degree have additional training in mathematics and other social science disciplines.

Opportunities to work as departmental teaching and research assistants are available. Students are encouraged to participate in study abroad and/or internship experiences while enrolled in either the B.A. or B.S. sociology majors.

Graduates of this program have found positions in social research, social service agencies, government and business research and planning offices, other business positions (especially sales and marketing), or have entered graduate school in sociology, social work, policy analysis or law school.

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 learn skills for social research, group facilitation, or organizational leadership.

- 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/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, a minimum of 123 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	20
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	38

4 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes 4 credits of General Education GQ courses.

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if foreign language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

This degree may be combined with a minor such as Business/Liberal Arts, Human Development and Family Studies, or Information Systems and Statistical Analysis, among others.

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/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#82-44>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
CAS 283	Communication and Information Technology I	3
SOC 1	Introductory Sociology	3
SOC 207	Research Methods in Sociology	3

SOC 400W	Senior Research Seminar	3
SOC 405	Sociological Theory	3
SOC 470	Intermediate Social Statistics	4
STAT 200	Elementary Statistics	4
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 15 credits in sociology, at least 9 credits at the 400 level		15

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/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/#83-80>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

Foreign Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one foreign language. See the Placement Policy for Penn State Foreign Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; foreign language credits in this category must be in a second foreign language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language)

Other Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the General Education US/IL requirement.

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

Requirements for the Integrated B.A. 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>).

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/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/](https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-)) 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 2023-24 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 (*Note: the archive only contains suggested academic plans beginning with the 2018-19 edition of the Undergraduate Bulletin*).

Sociology, B.A. 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
General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3 General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3
SOC 1 [*]	3 SOC (Lower Level Course) [*]	3
World Language Level 1	4 World Language Level 2	4
General Education Course or First-Year Seminar	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
16		16
Second Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC (Lower Level Course) [*]	3 SOC 207 [*]	3
STAT 200 (GQ) ^{*††}	4 BA Fields	3
CAS 283 [*]	3 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 3	4 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
17		15
Third Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC (400-Level Course) [*]	3 General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3
General Education Course	3 SOC 405 [*]	3
General Education Course	3 SOC 470 [*]	4
BA Fields	3 BA Fields	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
15		16
Fourth Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC 400W [*]	3 SOC (400-Level Course) [*]	3
SOC (400-Level Course) [*]	3 General Health and Wellness Course (GHW)	1.5
General Health and Wellness Course (GHW)	1.5 General Education Course	3

BA Other Cultures Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	Elective	1
	13.5	14.5

Total Credits 123

- * 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.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures/>).

Advising Note:

- 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) or 6 credits of Linked (Z) coursework

Sociology, B.A. 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
General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3 SOC (Lower-Level Course) [*]	3
SOC 1 [*]	3 World Language Level 2	4
World Language Level 1	4 General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3
General Education Quantification (GQ) [‡]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
16		16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC (Lower-Level Course) [*]	3 BA Fields	3
STAT 200 ^{*††}	4 General Education Course	3
World Language Level 3	4 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
17		15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC 207 [*]	3 SOC 405 [*]	3
SOC (400-Level Course) [*]	3 SOC 470 [*]	4
CAS 283 [*]	3 General Education Course (GWS) [‡]	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
BA Fields	3 BA Fields	3
15		16

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
SOC 400W [*]	3 SOC 4xx level [*]	3
SOC (400-Level Course) [*]	3 General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5
General Health and Wellness (GHW)	1.5 Elective	3
BA Other Cultures Course	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	1
	Elective	3
13.5		14.5

Total Credits 123

- * 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.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in Other Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as Other Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-other-cultures/>).

Advising Note:

- 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) or 6 credits of Linked (Z) coursework

Career Paths

Sociology helps you to prepare for your future career in multiple ways. Sociology trains students how to design social research, how to collect data, how to analyze data, and how to interpret data. For example, students can observe and facilitate small groups, analyze a nationally representative survey, or collect social media data. 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. 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

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