

SOCIOLOGY, B.S. (LIBERAL ARTS)

Seven Penn State campuses are scheduled for closure after Spring 2027: DuBois, Fayette, New Kensington, Mont Alto, Shenango, Wilkes-Barre, and York. New students are not being admitted at these campuses.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Sociology BS major provides students with a sociological perspective on human behavior through coursework and learning experiences that are especially focused on connecting sociological concepts and knowledge with advanced research skills. Students choose an option to pursue an area of specialized interest. Students can tailor advanced coursework around areas such as social inequality, social data, social networks, social change, social diversity, conflict, and cooperation. Courses on these topics examine sociological aspects of race, ethnicity, immigration, gender, health, politics, economics, culture, deviance, religion, social movement organizations, and more. Coursework also includes learning basic principles of the scientific method, research design, logic, data collection, coding, and statistics. Students learn how to pose sociological questions and analyze data to answer those questions.

Opportunities to work as departmental teaching and research assistants on faculty-guided research projects are available. Students are encouraged to participate in dialogue facilitation, study abroad and/or internship experiences as part of their learning.

Graduates of this program have found positions in social media, social entrepreneurship, social research, social service agencies, and non-profit organizations. Graduates are very well prepared to enter professional schools in law, business, social work, or health fields, as well as graduate school in the social sciences.

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 advanced learn skills for social research, including statistics and data analysis.
- 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.