



GUIDE TO MAJORS AT STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN: SOCIOLOGY

Choosing a major can be stressful, but it is important to understand that you can pursue almost any career regardless of which major you choose. While there are some exceptions, most entry-level positions simply require general transferable skills—those that can be learned in one setting and applied in another. Relevant experience through internships and activities is generally more important to employers than a major. It is best to choose an area that you find interesting and where you have the ability to do well.

What is the Sociology Major?

Sociology is the study of social relationships and social structures. It focuses on relations among people, groups, organizations, classes, cultures, and societies. Through study in sociology, students gain an understanding of the social character of human life and of the impact of varying forms of social organization on human affairs. Students are introduced to the methods by which such knowledge is obtained and to the applications of sociological knowledge.

What can I do with a Major in Sociology?

A sociology degree is excellent preparation for careers in law, criminal justice, social work, research, public administration, business, medicine, counseling, health care management, or other service professions. The faculty at YU offers expertise in criminal justice, public health, religion, medical sociology, research methods, the visual arts, and social psychology. Some potential occupations include:

Economy/Business

- Customer relations manager
- Human resources manager
- Labor relations consultant
- Marketing manager
- Systems analyst
- Training coordinator

Social Organizations and Social Services

- Consumer advocate
- Day care worker
- Policy analyst
- Teacher

Social Change/Social Inequality

- Academic researcher
- Affirmative action representative

- Caseworker
- Vocational evaluator

Law, Criminology, and Deviance

- Law enforcement officer
- Legislative aid
- Paralegal
- Mediator
- Probation/parole officer

Graduate Study Required

- Arbitrator
- Epidemiologist
- Forensic investigator
- Gerontologist
- Industrial Sociologist

- Juvenile court judge
- Lawyer
- Physician
- Professor
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Social researcher/analyst
- Social worker
- Urban/regional planner

Skills and Abilities

Whether in academic, business, or social change careers, majors in sociology learn and apply communication, research, planning, social analysis, and critical thinking skills. Like all those studying the social sciences, sociology majors tend to be analytical and problem solvers, though there is typically a greater emphasis on group behavior. They also learn fundamentals of issue analysis and policy formulation. The following list provides a sample of the potential skills acquired through study in sociology.

Analysis

- Interpreting data
- Evaluating ideas and theory
- Analyzing information qualitatively and quantitatively
- Reasoning logically
- Understanding components of complex problems

Communication

- Articulating and defending positions
- Writing effectively
- Reading critically
- Presenting alternative explanations
- Understanding and motivating groups
- Preparing reports

- Conveying information

Research and Project Development

- Defining hypotheses
- Planning/designing projects
- Gathering data
- Interviewing
- Working with research
- Translating theory into action
- Working as a team member

Human Relations

- Identifying cultural/social norms
- Assessing needs
- Understanding human relationships
- Recognizing social processes
- Understanding prejudice and discrimination