

Career Options

- Academic Researcher
- Affirmative Action Representative
- Arbitrator
- Caseworker
- Community Organizer
- Consumer Advocate
- Customer Relations Manager
- Day Care Workers
- Emergency Management Professional
- Epidemiologist
- Forensic Investigator
- Gerontologist
- Human Resources Manager
- Industrial Sociologist
- Interviewer
- Juvenile Court Judge
- Labor Relations Consultant
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Lawyer
- Legislative Aid
- Marketing Manager
- Mediator
- Paralegal
- Policy Analyst
- Probation/Parole Officer
- Professor
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Public Opinion Researcher
- Social Researcher/Analyst
- Social Worker
- Survey Research Scientist
- Systems Analyst
- Teacher
- Training Coordinator
- Urban/Regional Planner
- Vocational Evaluator

What is Sociology?

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.

Occupational Opportunities

Sociology fosters individual's sensitivity and curiosity about the world and provides majors with a well-rounded liberal arts education that can be utilized in the service of an enormous range of careers. It is an excellent major for those interested in careers in non-profit or government related organizations, the legal professions, education, even market research, management, and advertising. For some of the occupations, such as paralegal or social worker, related skills or training may be necessary.

Skills & Abilities

Whether in academic careers, 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. While oriented to both people and humanitarian concerns, they tend to be more involved with indirect contact. They tend to be responsible for issue analysis and policy formulation rather than direct human services such as counseling.

The following list provides a sample of the potential skills acquired through study in sociology:

Analysis

- Interprets data
- Reasons logically
- Evaluates ideas and theory
- Analyzes information qualitatively and quantitatively
- Understands components of complex problems

Research and Project Development

- Defines hypotheses
- Plans/designs projects
- Gathers data
- Interviews
- Works with research
- Translates theory into action
- Works as a team member

Communication

- Articulates and defends positions
- Writes effectively
- Reads critically
- Presents alternative explanations
- Understands and motivates groups
- Prepares reports

Human Relations

- Identifies cultural/social norms
- Assesses needs
- Understands human relationships
- Recognizes social processes
- Understands prejudice and discrimination



Career Snapshot: Social Worker

Social workers spend their days helping people with complicated psychological, health, social, or financial problems. They assist families in need and people who are the victims of abuse. They provide counseling, advice, and direction for people who would otherwise have no way of bettering their situations. New social workers either love what they do or are too drained by its emotional intensity. Many individuals leave after one or two years, frustrated at their inability to help their clients and exhausted by their anxiety over their clients' prospects. Specialization begins after about two years for people at public agencies. The hours are long, but salaries are reasonable. Satisfaction varies widely. As one continues in the profession, the hours increase along with caseloads. Once a social worker has been in the profession for around ten years, he or she typically will have earned managerial or senior case officer status. Individuals who accept these positions become caseload managers and assign people to cases, exercising large discretionary powers of assessment and approval for clients' unusual needs. Satisfaction is high, and the hours remain stable.

Career Snapshot: Emergency Management Professional

Emergency management professionals work at nonprofits such as The American Red Cross or various government agencies. They work to find opportunities that empower individuals who face disasters. Emergency management professionals educate through teaching, organizing, and positively communicating methods for the community to deal with disasters.

Additional Resources

U.S. Government's Occupational Outlook Handbook
<http://bls.gov/oco>

American Sociological Association (ASA)
www.asanet.org

Careers in Sociology
www.abacon.com/socsite/careers

National Association of Social Workers
www.naswdc.org

The Educational Alliance
www.edalliance.org

Make the Difference
www.makingthedifference.org/federalcareers

Action Without Borders – non-profit organizations and opportunities
www.idealists.org

Social Work Job Bank
www.socialworkjobbank.com

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<http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/socio/undergrad.html>

Department of Defense
www.defense.gov

International Association of Emergency Managers
www.iaem.com