

# **SOCIOLOGY**

## **Student Handbook**

Department of Cultural and Social Studies  
Creighton University

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# Welcome to Sociology!

The Sociology Program is part of the Department of Cultural and Social Studies, which houses the disciplines of Sociology and Anthropology as well as the independent interdisciplinary programs of Social Work, Health Administration and Policy, and Justice and Peace Studies. We strive to achieve the unique goals and objectives for each of our areas of study while also reflecting the goals of Creighton's Jesuit Catholic mission. We as faculty are dedicated to research, teaching and service. Our special contribution to student centered learning is increasing our students' awareness of society and culture as contexts that shape the quality of human life. All of our programs aim to develop students as agents of social change through close collaboration in student research, service and learning. We are a richly diverse department and prepare students for a variety of careers.

We invite you to make good use of our department student lounge and conference room on the fourth floor of Creighton Hall—consider it your cognitive home away from home. We also have a study space at the end of the hallway. In addition, we will put you on our department mailing list so you will be informed about the many different lectures and other events we hold during the year. Please take time to explore the resources on our department web page (<http://www.creighton.edu/ccas/culturalandsocialstudies/>). Please also be sure to check the faculty and staff page to familiarize yourself with the department members.

**Department Chair:** Dr. Laura Heinemann, Associate Professor. As Department Chair. Dr. Heinemann is responsible for approving transient study courses, study abroad courses, major applications, and related concerns of the students and faculty of Cultural and Social Studies.

**Office Coordinator:** Ms. Angela Batson. Angela's desk is located near the top of the 4th floor main stairs in Creighton Hall and is extremely helpful. She serves all of the programs in the department.

**Sociology Faculty:** Any of the sociology faculty would be happy to talk with you, answer questions about navigating the Sociology program, and considering opportunities for research, internships, and careers.

- Dr. Ryan Wishart, Sociology Program Director (Environment, Political Economy, Power and Society)
- Dr. Dawn Irlbeck, Criminal Justice Program Director (Criminal Justice, Race, Community Internships)
- Dr. Sabrina Danielsen (Religion, Cultural Conflict, Health, Inequality)
- Dr. Pierce Greenberg (Environmental Sociology, Inequality, Spatial Analysis)
- Eric Meyer (Criminal Justice, Public Health, Youth Violence)
- Dr. Rebecca Murray (Criminal Justice, Statistics. Dr. Murray is an Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and is not currently teaching classes, but is available to meet about your interests.)

**Other Department Faculty:** There are other faculty in the department in Anthropology, Social Work, Health Administration and Policy, and Justice and Peace Studies who also would be happy to talk to you. As an interdisciplinary department, we encourage collaborations across disciplinary lines and you will find that other faculty in our department will be helpful to you as you increase your awareness of society and culture and engage in research and service.

- Dr. Daniel DiLeo (Justice & Society)
- Dr. Barbara Dilly (Cultural Anthropology, Sustainability, Food Studies)
- Dr. Kevin Estep (Sociologist in the Health Administration & Policy Program)
- Dr. Laura Heinemann (Medical Anthropology, Kinship)
- Dr. Alex Roedlach (Medical Anthropology, Public Health)
- Dr. Renzo Rosales (Cultural Anthropology, Latin America)
- Ms. Susan Walsh (Health Administration & Policy)
- Ms. Monica White (Social Work)

# SOCIOLOGY

**Sociology prepares you to live in a changing world and change the world you live in.**

## WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology is the study of social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies and how people interact within these contexts. While the humanities and the arts also frequently examine and reflect on the social world, sociology is distinct because it is a social *science*. Sociological methods include survey research and statistical analysis, focus groups, in-depth interviews and observation, and content analysis of both written and visual documents. The results of sociological analysis are used in the development of social policies, programs, and laws as well as product development, marketing, and customer service appraisals.

**We have 2 majors and 2 minors in Sociology at Creighton.**

## WHAT WILL I LEARN?

**Conduct research and analyze data.** In Sociology you use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Learn to recognize trends and patterns and produce social statistics such as those used in market research, opinion polling, program evaluation, sales and countless other applications.

**Communicate skillfully.** Learn how to convey your ideas effectively in writing and in presentations. Strong communication skills are essential for success in the 21st century.

**Practice critical thinking.** Learn to look beyond the surface of issues to discover the “why.” Build your analytical skills. Solve problems and identify opportunities.

**Gain a global perspective.** Learn about different cultures and how to analyze the interaction of groups and societies through a global and historical perspective.

**Prepare for graduate school.** An undergraduate major in sociology provides an excellent foundation for graduate study in a wide range of fields including law, business, social work, medicine, public health, public administration and, of course, sociology.

## Sociology

In the Sociology major (37 credits) and minor (18 credits), students develop an understanding of the complex nature of human interaction on the societal level as well as face-to-face. Sociology students are able to think critically about the causes and implications of social inequality and other social issues by employing scientific methodology. The diversity and breadth of courses allow students to explore areas relevant to their individual interests.

## Criminal Justice Policy

The Criminal Justice Policy major (37 credits) and minor (18 credits) introduces students to the history and current structure and processes of the American criminal justice system. Students also explore the ethical issues surrounding the components of that system, as well as the research that evaluates the impact of the criminal justice system. It also provides an introduction to other social systems and cultures as students explore what a criminal justice system ought to be.

## Electives

315: Healthcare, Society, and Culture

424: Sustainability and Rural America

499: Senior Capstone: Applying the Social Sciences  
How can we connect, integrate, and elaborate prior learning and skills from the program?

411: Social Inequality and Stratification  
What is the nature, causes, and consequences of social inequality and stratification?

415: Social Stratification in the Dominican Republic

318: Gender in American Society

317: Global Health: A Biosocial and Justice-Oriented Approach

455: Food, Society, and Environment

313: Power and Society: Political Sociology in Action

360: Gender, Society, and Culture

570: Introduction to Geographic Information Systems

355: Environment and Society: Sociological Perspectives

314: Statistics for the Social Sciences  
How can we analyze data to describe and make inferences about populations?

341: American Cultural Minorities

385: Community Internship I, II

497: Directed Independent Research

345: Sport in American Culture

312: Research Design for the Social Sciences  
How do we ask and answer research questions about social life?

309: The Urban Social System

322: Victim Advocacy Policy and Practice

495: Directed Independent Study

316: Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences

323: Crime, Victimization, and Urban Environments

321: Sociology of the Criminal Justice System

493: Directed Independent Readings

170: Social Science and Social Problems

301: Social and Cultural Theory  
How have people over time described how and explained why social life is as it is?

423: Law and Society

320: Sociology of Deviant Behavior

### Required Courses for Criminal Justice Policy Track

## 5 Foundational Courses

## 1 Introductory Course

101: Introduction to Sociology: Self and Society  
How is social life organized?

# Courses in Sociology

## **1 Introductory Course**

For both of our Sociology majors (Sociology and Criminal Justice Policy), *you should take the Introductory Course as early as possible.* "Introduction to Sociology" is a foundation for all other courses in the program. To be admitted into the major, you need to take SOC 101 and three more credits in sociology with a grade "C" or higher.

### **SOC 101: Introduction to Sociology: Self & Society (3 credit hours)**

Human beings live out their lives in a multitude of social relationships. This course explores the meaning of these relationships by considering four questions: (1) How is social life organized? (2) What consequences does this social organization produce? (3) How does social organization change? (4) How does this organization affect individuals?. *(Multiple sections offered every semester. Understanding Social Science course for Magis Core Curriculum.)*

## **5 Foundational Courses**

For both of our Sociology majors (Sociology and Criminal Justice Policy), there are five foundational courses in sociology that all students are required to take. These foundational courses build upon one another and it is recommended for them to be taken generally in the order below. At the very least:

- It is very strongly recommended to take our Introductory Course (SOC 101) before these foundational courses.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 312 before SOC 314.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 301 and SOC 312 before your last semester. The SOC 499 Capstone is taken in your senior spring semester and you will be at a disadvantage if you have not already taken at least these two courses.

### **SOC 301: Social and Cultural Theory (3 credit hours)**

An exploration of the ideas central to sociology and anthropology from the perspective of their historical and contemporary theories. Special attention is given to the implications of these ideas for understanding human social values. *(Offered every semester. Dr. Wishart (Sociology) teaches it in the fall semester and Dr. Dilly (Cultural Anthropology) teaches it in the spring semester. It counts towards the program no matter which faculty you take it with, although Dr. Wishart will have a more sociological perspective.)*

### **SOC 312: Research Design for the Social Sciences (3 credit hours)**

Introduction to quantitative and qualitative research methods within the social sciences. Attention is directed to the basic logic and research techniques involved in studying the social world scientifically. Specific topics considered include research design, measurement, alternative data collection procedures, and ethical concerns involved in studying social life. *(Offered most semesters. A Designated Ethics and Designated Written Communication course for Magis Core Curriculum.)*

### **SOC 314: Statistics for the Social Sciences (4 credit hours)**

Broad introduction to the statistical techniques used by social scientists to analyze their data, including computer usage. Attention is directed to the basic procedures for organizing and describing data, for assessing relationships among social variables, and for using that information to make inferences about the population. *(Offered every semester. A Designated Statistical Reasoning and Designated Technology course for Magis Core Curriculum.)*

### **SOC 411: Social Inequality and Stratification (3 credit hours)**

Nature, causes, and consequences of social inequality and stratification, with particular attention directed to the interaction among class, race and ethnicity, and gender. *(Offered only in the spring semester. Only available to Juniors and Seniors.)*

### **SOC 499: Senior Capstone: Applying the Social Sciences (3 credit hours)**

Students will connect, integrate and elaborate prior learning and skills by studying and interpreting a selected aspect of the shared modern experience of globalization. Reading, research, discussion, writing, exercises and presentations will engage us in the topic and allow us to use our knowledge and skills developed by pursuing a sociology or anthropology major. The course provides both a completion of the undergraduate experience and engages student in program assessment. *(Offered only in the spring semester. Only available to graduating seniors. If you plan to graduate in the fall semester, you need to be sure to take this course in the spring semester because it is not available in the fall.)*

## **4 Required Criminal Justice Courses (Required for CJ Major)**

For the Criminal Justice Policy major, there are four additional required courses. You need to take these four Criminal Justice courses in addition to the five foundational courses required of all sociology programs. These required Criminal Justice courses are optional electives for the Sociology major.

### **SOC 320: Sociology of Deviant Behavior (3 credit hours)**

A sociological examination of the conditions under which societal definitions of deviance emerge, develop, and change over time. Special attention will be paid to the process of societal reaction to deviant behavior. *(Offered only in the fall semester.)*

### **SOC 321: Sociology of the Criminal Justice System (3 credit hours)**

A survey of the development, modification, and enforcement of criminal law. Special attention will be given to the courts, corrections, and enforcement agencies, and the role of competing values in the decision-making process. In addition to the western legal heritage that has been the principle influence in U.S. criminal law, the perspective of nonwestern traditions of criminal justice will be addressed. *(Offered only in the fall semester.)*

### **SOC 323: Crime, Victimization, and Urban Environments (3 credit hours)**

This course will take a look at how crime and victimization are perceived within society, how they are measured through quantitative and qualitative lenses, and the particularities of urban environments that intersect with high concentrations of crime and victimization. *(Preq: Understanding Social Science course, such as SOC101)*

### **SOC 423: Law and Society (3 credit hours)**

A sociological examination of the development and evolution of models of legal systems from several contemporary cultures, with particular emphasis on the way each of the different models functions, either as a mechanism of social stability or as a mechanism of social change. This will include a survey of civil, criminal, administrative, and commercial issues, and their relationship to other social institutions, as well as a review of efforts to develop legal systems that transcend competing cultures, either by treaty, or by international organizations. *(Offered only in the spring semester. Only available to Juniors and Seniors.)*

# Sociology Major Requirement Checklist

Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree

Requirements: 37 Credits

## 1 Introductory Course (3 credit hours)

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology: Self and Society	3	

Note: Completion of SOC101 and three credits of another Sociology or Anthropology course with a grade of “C” or better is required for admission to the major.)

## 5 Foundational Courses (16 credit hours)

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 301	Social and Cultural Theory	3	
SOC 312	Research Design for the Social Sciences	3	
SOC 314	Statistics for the Social Sciences	4	
SOC 411	Social Inequality and Stratification ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	
SOC 499	Senior Capstone: Applying the Social Sciences ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	

Note: These foundational courses build upon one another and it is recommended for them to be taken in order. At the very least:

- It is recommended to take SOC 101 before these foundational courses.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 312 before SOC 314.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 301 and SOC 312 before your last semester. The SOC 499 Capstone is taken in your senior spring semester and you will be at a disadvantage if you have not already taken the main theory course and methods course for the department.

## Electives (Need at least 18 credit hours)

Note: Some of these electives are cross-listed and may be taught by non-sociology faculty.

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 170	Social Science and Social Problems ( <i>freshmen only</i> )	3	
SOC 309	The Urban Social System ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	
SOC 310	Religion and Contemporary American Society	3	
SOC 313	Power and Society: Political Sociology in Action	3	
ANT 316	Qualitative Methods in The Social Sciences ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	
ANT 317	Global Health: A Biosocial and Justice-Oriented Approach	3	

SOC 318	Gender in American Society	3
SOC 320	Sociology of Deviant Behavior ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3
SOC 321	Sociology of the Criminal Justice System ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3
SOC 322	Victim Advocacy Policy and Practice ( <i>offered in summer</i> )	3
SOC 323	Crime, Victimization and Urban Environments	3
SOC 341	American Cultural Minorities ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3
SOC 355	Environment and Society: Sociological Perspectives ( <i>offered spring</i> )	3
ANT 360	Gender, Society and Culture	3
SOC 385	Community Internship I, II	3
SOC 415	Social Stratification in the Dominican Republic	3
ANT 418	Healthcare, Society, and Culture	3
SOC 423	Law and Society ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3
ANT 424	Sustainability and Rural America ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3
ANT 455	Food, Society, and Environment ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3
SOC 493	Directed Independent Readings	
SOC 495	Directed Independent Study	
SOC 497	Directed Independent Research	
JPS 499	Justice and Peace Studies Senior Seminar	3
SOC 570	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	4
SOC 540	2040 Initiative Seminar	3

Note: In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the sociology program, you need to continue to make sure you fulfill the requirements for the Magis core. It is helpful to double-dip with courses that count towards both:

- SOC 101 = Understanding Social Science
- SOC 170 = Critical Issues in Human Inquiry
- SOC 312 = Designated Ethics, Designated Written Communication
- SOC 313, 318, 323 = Doing Social Science
- SOC 314 = Designated Statistical Reasoning, Designated Technology
- SOC 418 = Intersections

# Criminal Justice Policy Major Requirement Checklist

Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree

Requirements: 37 Credits

## 1 Introductory Course (3 credit hours)

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 101	Introduction to Sociology: Self and Society	3	

Note: Completion of SOC101 and three credits of another Sociology or Anthropology course with a grade of “C” or better is required for admission to the major.)

## 5 Foundational Courses (16 credit hours)

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 301	Social and Cultural Theory	3	
SOC 312	Research Design for the Social Sciences	3	
SOC 314	Statistics for the Social Sciences	4	
SOC 411	Social Inequality and Stratification ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	
SOC 499	Senior Capstone: Applying the Social Sciences ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	

Note: These foundational courses build upon one another and it is recommended for them to be taken in order. At the very least:

- It is recommended to take SOC 101 before these foundational courses.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 312 before SOC 314.
- It is very strongly recommended to take SOC 301 and SOC 312 before your last semester. The SOC 499 Capstone is taken in your senior spring semester and you will be at a disadvantage if you have not already taken the main theory course and methods course for the department.

## Criminal Justice Required Courses (12 credit hours)

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 320	Sociology of Deviant Behavior ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	
SOC 321	Sociology of the Criminal Justice System ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	
SOC 323	Crime, Victimization and Urban Environments	3	
SOC 423	Law and Society ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	

## Electives (Need at least 6 credit hours)

Note: Some of these electives are cross-listed and may be taught by non-sociology faculty.

Course #	Course Title	Credit Hours	Semester Completed
SOC 170	Social Science and Social Problems ( <i>freshmen only</i> )	3	
SOC 309	The Urban Social System ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	
SOC 313	Power and Society: Political Sociology in Action	3	
ANT 316	Qualitative Methods in The Social Sciences ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	
ANT 317	Global Health: A Biosocial and Justice-Oriented Approach	3	
SOC 318	Gender in American Society	3	
SOC 322	Victim Advocacy Policy and Practice ( <i>offered in summer</i> )	3	
SOC 341	American Cultural Minorities ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	
SOC 355	Environment and Society: Sociological Perspectives ( <i>offered spring</i> )	3	
ANT 360	Gender, Society and Culture	3	
SOC 385	Community Internship I, II	3	
ANT 418	Healthcare, Society, and Culture	3	
SOC 493	Directed Independent Readings		
SOC 495	Directed Independent Study		
SOC 497	Directed Independent Research		
JPS 499	Justice and Peace Studies Senior Seminar	3	
SOC 570	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	4	
PLS 320	Judicial Process ( <i>offered in spring</i> )	3	
PLS 337	Constitutional Law ( <i>offered in fall</i> )	3	

Note: In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the sociology program, you need to continue to make sure you fulfill the requirements for the Magis core. It is helpful to double-dip with courses that count towards both:

- SOC 101 = Understanding Social Science
- SOC 170 = Critical Issues in Human Inquiry
- SOC 312 = Designated Ethics, Designated Written Communication
- SOC 313, 318, 323 = Doing Social Science
- SOC 314 = Designated Statistical Reasoning, Designated Technology
- SOC 418 = Intersections

# Thinking Ahead to the Senior Capstone

SOC 499, Senior Capstone: Applying the Social Sciences, is our “capstone course” during which students demonstrate the mastery of skills, theories, and concepts of one or more of the disciplines within the department by designing and completing a project, on a topic chosen by the student, subject to the concurrence and approval of their project mentor and the course instructor. The department will use these projects to assess the extent to which our graduating majors have met the published goals and objectives of the university, the college, and the department. The project will culminate in:

1. A paper of a no less than 5000 words (including the bibliography but excluding the title page, images, charts, graphs, and other non-text-based materials), and
2. A public poster presentation of the results of the project through a format and quality comparable to a conference poster presentation.

Before your final semester in the project, it is helpful for you to think ahead to the senior capstone. You can think ahead in two major ways:

1. Consider the research topic you might be interested in for the capstone project. Is there a topic that you explored in a research paper in another class that you would like to develop further in your last semester? Is there an independent research project that you have been developing, such as in an Directed Independent Research credit? What would you like to do after you graduate and what topic for a paper might help you develop a writing sample or an area of expertise that would help you in those ventures?
2. Consider which faculty mentors you might be interested in working with for your capstone project. In selecting your desired mentor you should consider both the research topic you wish to pursue and the faculty member’s disciplinary background (e.g. Sociology vs. Anthropology). There are limits on how many students each faculty member can mentor for the senior capstone course, so you should consider multiple possible faculty you might be interested in working with. You should reach out to your desired faculty mentor before the senior capstone class begins.

If you think you might want to do *original research* for your capstone project, then you might want to get started before the spring semester of your senior year. One possibility is to do a Directed Independent Research or Directed Independent Study credit in your fall semester of your senior year, which you could continue in the spring semester in the Senior Capstone course. Another possibility is to apply for a CURAS Summer Undergraduate Research Award in January of your junior year to provide funding to conduct the research in the summer between your junior and senior years. You certainly do not need to start on your Senior Capstone project early in this way, but doing so may maximize your opportunities for independent research or for more deeply investigating a topic you are passionate about.

# Recent Senior Capstone Project Titles

“Policy Planning Network Power in the Affordable Care Act”

“Fostering Mental Health Care in the African American Community”

“Youth Disadvantage in Minority Communities and Gang Prevention”

“Not Your Grandparent’s Farming: A Look at the Transformation of Farming”

“Sowing an Identity: Saving Seeds & Sovereignty in the Karen Community of Omaha”

“Let’s Talk about Sex: Boundary Work in Christian Versus Secular Sexual Education Literature”

“Compliance of Healthcare in African Female Prisons to Standards of Human Rights”

“Rural Migration, Diversity, and Parish Unity: A Participatory Action Approach to Needs Assessment of St. Ann’s Parish in Lexington, NE”

“Upward Mobility and Enduring Inequality in American Higher Education”

“Marketing Organs: A View into the Complex System of Organ Donation and Transplantation and the Diverse Aspects Based in Different Culture”

“Development Domain Risk Factors and Latino Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System: How the risk factors Latinos face and common experiences influence the perceptions about law enforcement”

“They Too Deserve Adequate Health Services: Highlighting Medical Negligence, More Specifically with Vulnerable Populations within U.S. Correctional Facilities”

“Sexual Assault Prevalence Among High School Students”

“The Reproduction of Gender Role Expectations and the Greek Recruitment Process at Creighton University: A Case Study in Gender Inequality”

“Understanding Disparities in Protection Order Outcomes: The Power Control Wheel and Domestic Violence”

“Teenage Minority Males and the Juvenile Criminal Justice System in the United States”

“The Effect of Social Class on Christian Religious Motivation and Practice”

“Sex Work in the United States: The Prostitution Problem”

“Stratification in Higher Education: Methods, Theories, and Social Justice”

“Perceptions of ‘Mattering’ in Higher Education”

“Socioeconomic Status and the Impact on Access to Healthcare: A Spatial and Aspatial Analysis of the Demand for Healthcare Facilities in Douglas County, Nebraska”

“Physical Disability and Limb Loss: Body, Self, and Society.”

# Recent Sociology Grads

**Sharon.** BS in Sociology in 2017, Masters of Geography at University of Nebraska Omaha (in progress). Sharon is pursuing her Masters degree focusing on global information science and technology. While at Creighton she did Geographic Information Systems (GIS) research with Mr. Ault looking at theories of "Cultural Nations" from Collin Woodard's book investigating the use of Gini Coefficients. As a graduate student, Sharon's thesis work is on Wage Discrimination within Major League Soccer based on country of origin.

**Marika.** BS in Sociology in 2017. Marika works as a volunteer at Jerusalem Farm, a Catholic community in Kansas City, MO dedicated to prayer, community, service, and simplicity. As a sociology student, Marika studied with Dr. Wishart investigating sustainability, sexuality, and feminism. Her capstone research project examined the ways in which institutions of higher education reproduce economic inequality.

**Tess.** BS in Sociology in 2016. Tess is working on her Masters of Divinity, "using the skills of [her] undergrad everyday." All last summer she was working on research, conducting interviews, a survey, and being an almost constant participant observer. She also has a full time job at TeamMates, where she uses her descriptive statistics knowledge and soon will be conducting more in-depth research with the direction of inferential statistics to look at outcome measurements.

**Peter.** BS in Sociology in 2015, MA in Higher Education Advising from University of Buffalo 2016. Peter completed his Masters degree in 2016. In 2017, he began working at the University of North Carolina Wilmington as an Academic Success and Student-Athlete Development intern. His capstone research project during his senior year at Creighton investigated perceptions of "Mattering" in higher education.

**Angie.** BS in Sociology in 2014, PhD candidate at University of Maryland College Park. Angie is pursuing her PhD in Sociology. She is concentrating on stratification and demography and her research interests center on gender and family. Her masters research was about how race influences school administrator's perceptions of school choice in Washington DC.

# Recent Criminal Justice Policy Grads

**Molly.** BS in Sociology - Criminal Justice in 2016, JD Candidate at Villanova University School of Law. As an undergraduate, Molly did research with Dr. Rebecca Murray on sexual violence. They jointly presented their research entitled "Understanding Disparities in Protection Order Outcomes: The Power Control Wheel and Domestic Violence" at the American Criminal Justice conference. At Villanova, she has interned with the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women, Villanova Law Institute to Address Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and will clerk with Cook County State's Attorney's Office in Illinois during summer 2018.

**Danielle.** BS in Sociology - Criminal Justice in 2012, Masters in Sociology from DePaul University 2014. After graduation, Danielle moved to Chicago to work as a Geographic Information Systems Mapping Analyst for the Cook County Sheriff's Office. She also began work on her masters degree, and was a Graduate Assistant in Statistics. In 2016, Danielle was promoted to Senior Criminal Analyst at the Cook County Sheriff's Office. In 2017, she transitioned to the private sector and currently serves as Assistant Vice President Intelligence Analyst for Corporate Security for Bank of America.

# Sociology Major Goals and Objectives

- 1. Sociology majors will acquire “sociological literacy” such that a student will be able to:**
  - 1.a. describe the similarities and differences between sociology and other social sciences,
  - 1.b. define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of key sociological concepts and their fundamental interrelationships,
  - 1.c. identify society and culture as socially constructed realities,
  - 1.d. identify the structures and patterns upon which everyday life rests,
  - 1.e. describe the interplay between individual choice and social influence,
  - 1.f. identify global and domestic diversity in cultures and social systems.
  
- 2. Sociology majors will understand the role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to:**
  - 2.a. define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge,
  - 2.b. compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations,
  - 2.c. show how theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed,
  - 2.d. describe & apply some basic theories in at least one area of social reality.
  
- 3. Sociology majors will understand the role of evidence and both quantitative and qualitative sociological research methods, such that the student will be able to:**
  - 3.a. identify basic methodological approaches and describe the role of methods in building sociological knowledge,
  - 3.b. compare and contrast basic methodological approaches for gathering data, link theoretical constructs to research questions,
  - 3.c. write a clear and concise report of the findings from empirical sociological analysis, to present sociological research findings in a clear manner,
  - 3.d. use standard software packages, such as Stata and Excel, to analyze data,
  - 3.e. critically assess a published research report and suggest how the study could have been improved.
  
- 4. Sociology majors will appreciate the role and significance of social diversity and social justice concerns to the discipline of sociology, such that the student will be able to:**
  - 4.a. explain how personal and cultural values result from and affect social processes,
  - 4.b. explain why social differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, and social class, and their subsequent effects, have been enduring themes in sociological inquiry,
  - 4.c. explain the importance of ethical practice for sociologists, including addressing the research needs of marginalized populations and considering social-structural influences when articulating policy implications/suggestions,
  - 4.d. explain why ethnocentrism is contrary to social scientific principles as well as social justice concerns.

# Sociology Faculty Research

**Dr. Sabrina Danielsen** studies how debates about controversial issues transform over time and how these debates are informed by differences such as by race and political identity. Her recent work has studied how Protestant groups have debated abortion politics since the 1960s. Additionally, a recent co-authored article published in *Social Science Research* demonstrated that the loss of social relationships associated with religious disaffiliation negatively influences the health of individuals. A new project focuses on how different communities have discussed the North Freeway and the predominantly African-American North Omaha neighborhood that it goes through differently from 1960-today.



**Dr. Pierce Greenberg** studies how disadvantaged populations are disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards. His recent work—published in *Rural Sociology*, *Society and Natural Resources*, and *Social Science Research*—focuses on neighborhoods near coal impoundments, large facilities that hold billions of gallons of waste. He recently conducted a mail survey in West Virginia that examines whether socioeconomic, geographic, and coal-related attitudes influence residents' risk perceptions of environmental harm. Upcoming projects range from a co-authored study of absentee landowner attitudes in Japan to a case study of rural community perceptions of cryptocurrency mining in Washington state.

**Dr. Dawn M. Irlbeck** continues to work on data she has collected regarding racial profiling and vehicle searches. She also continues to lead the research team, along with Rebecca K. Murray, on evaluating Omaha's Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) grant, and co-presented on a national webinar and co-wrote a white paper on national research partnerships. She is also doing evaluation work for the Omaha Police Department and the African American Empowerment Network.





**Eric Meyer** researches community violence as a public health issue and the use of art to affect social change. His dissertation is an ethnography within the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility where he examines the outcomes of policies and rehabilitation on violent youth offenders. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Public Health, Department of Health Promotion and Social Behavioral Health. Eric is a former police officer with nearly 20 years of experience with two metropolitan law enforcement agencies.

**Dr. Rebecca Murray's** most recent publication, "Concept Measurement in Alcohol Serving Establishments" in *Advances in Applied Sociology* and examines the context of different types of alcohol-serving establishments in Omaha and their potential effects on crime. She has also worked extensively with Dr. Irlbeck on researching the process of community-academic partnerships in Omaha through the article "Evolution of the Researcher-Practitioner Partner Model and the Role of Academic Research Partners in Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation (BCJI) Grants." Her most recent project includes a book, *Data Driven Policing*. She continues to work with data on Domestic Violence Protection Orders in Douglas County, NE, and an evaluation of the *Career Readiness to Eliminate Disparities (CRED)* program offered through Heartland Workforce Solutions in Omaha. She also continues her work on a grant for the Nebraska Victim Assistance Academy, which she, along with Academy Coordinator Lacey Craven, hopes to expand to offer additional training to professionals who work with victims of crime.



**Dr. Ryan Wishart** continues several projects on the historical interplay of social inequality, economic exploitation, natural resource extraction, and ecological issues. These include a book project combining historical and statistical analysis, *Underdeveloping Appalachia*, and a related article "The Coal Coalition and Energy Policy Planning Network in 2009: Class Capacities and Climate Politics" that examines the role of interlocking boards of directors in shaping elite political stances. He recently coauthored a paper analyzing coal sludge waste impoundment locations with Dr. Greenberg, "In the Shadow of Production: Coal waste accumulation and environmental inequality formation in Eastern Kentucky."

# Careers in Sociology

Adapted from *21st Century Careers with an Undergraduate Degree in Sociology*, a publication of the [American Sociological Association](#)

## What is a 21st Century Career?

The 21st century labor market is fast-changing, increasingly global, and technology-driven. Many of the jobs you will be applying for after graduating from college did not exist when your parents began their careers. The skills you need to succeed in the 21st century include: creativity, innovation, critical thinking, analytic problem-solving, communication, collaboration, multi-cultural and global understandings, strong math and science skills, and excellent written expression. 21st century careers are also marked by constant change, increasing diversity, and heightened educational requirements.

**Change.** 21st century careers include many different places of employment, often in completely different market sectors. While in the past, employees often stayed with a company for their entire career, the average student today will probably have more than 10 different jobs before they turn 40.<sup>1</sup>

**Increasing diversity.** 21st century careers take place in an increasingly diverse global society. Being able to work effectively with people from different cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities has become a basic work-place requirement.

**Educational levels.** As the labor market in the United States moves from an industrial model to a service model, the educational requirements for employment are increasing. For advancement in many jobs you will need a Masters Degree or even a PhD. That said, one year after graduation, the vast majority of sociology majors are not in graduate school, they are in the work force<sup>2</sup>. Whether you decide to go to graduate school or not, thinking carefully about how you will use your *undergraduate* degree as the starting point for your career is essential. Remember, most people have many different jobs during their careers—your challenge right now is to prepare yourself to get your first job after graduation.

**Ethics and social responsibility.** Situations of rapid social change bring both opportunities and danger. The news is full of stories of workplace failures to abide by social norms and ethical standards, such as hiring new populations of immigrants at below minimum wage to work in unsafe conditions; failing to follow safety standards and, as a result, producing contaminated food and medicines; using technology to invade people's privacy; and polluting poor communities to make profits. Because the 21st century is characterized by rapid change and an increasingly global community, successful 21st century careers will depend on having a firm ethical base for decision making, and a strong sense of the interconnectedness of all communities.

## Sociology and the 21st Century Career

The good news for sociology majors is that your studies are uniquely suited to help you develop the skills you need for a successful 21st century career. Sociologists study social change, diverse communities and their interactions, and they use scientific methods to find empirical answers to complex social questions. Studying sociology can help you foster your creativity, innovation, critical thinking, analytic problem solving and communication skills. Sociology will challenge you to see the world through the lens of different cultures and communities and give you opportunities to collaborate with others in

**Sociology  
prepares you to  
live in a changing  
world and  
change the world  
you live in.**

developing multi-cultural and global understandings. Sociological methods can help you build strong math and science skills. Preparing papers about social problems, and the theories and evidence that can help us solve them, will foster the strong writing and presentation skills you need to succeed.

Daniel Little, Chancellor of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, says sociology “provides a foundation for better understanding and engaging with the globalizing world our young people will need to navigate and lead. It provides students with the intellectual tools needed to make sense of the shifting and conflictual social world we live in, and this in turn permits them to contribute to solutions for the most difficult social problems that we face.”<sup>3</sup>

**Your life as a composition.** Finding the meaningful thread that connects the 10 different jobs you probably will hold before you are 40 cannot be a passive process. To build your own 21st century career you will need to use all your creativity and innovation. Now is the perfect time to start thinking about your talents, interests and career goals and how, combined with your degree, they can help you be competitive in today’s job market.

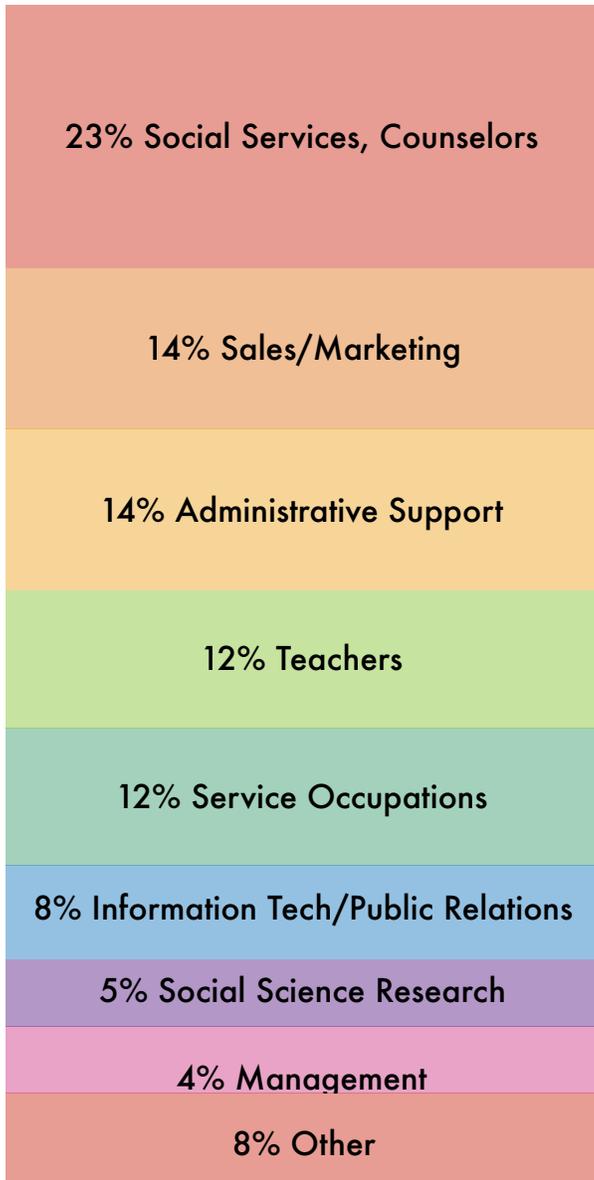
**Sociology teaches the skills employers want.** In 2013 the American Association of Colleges and Universities commissioned Hart Research Associates to conduct a survey to identify the essential aptitudes and skills that employers—including private sector and non-profit organizations—wanted college graduates to gain during their studies.<sup>4</sup> 21st century employers want students who have innovated ideas and can work to develop new solutions to complex problems. They want new employees to have strong critical thinking and communication skills. They also valued ethical judgment, the ability to work in diverse teams, and openness to continuous learning. Importantly, they also thought students should have more opportunities to apply their learning in real-world settings, and to conduct research and do evidence-based analysis. Studying sociology will help you develop the skills and aptitudes 21st century employers want.

### Where do recent Sociology graduates work?

Given the breadth, adaptability, and utility of studying Sociology, employment opportunities are numerous with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology.

<p><b>Social Services</b>            Rehabilitation; Case management; Youth/ Elderly services; Recreation; Administration; Social work; Local, state, federal agencies</p>	<p><b>Community Work</b>            Non-profit agencies; Urban planning; Childcare; Community development; Environmental groups; Advocacy</p>	<p><b>Law</b>            Law enforcement; Investigations; Probation/parole; Criminal Justice; Judicial affairs; Paralegal</p>	<p><b>College Settings</b>            Admissions; Advising; Alumni relations; Development; Administrative support</p>
<p><b>Health Services</b>            Substance abuse education; Family planning; Rehabilitation counseling; Hospital admissions; Insurance providers</p>	<p><b>Business</b>            Public relations; Marketing/sales; Consumer research; Human resources; Real estate; Training; Entrepreneurship; Media</p>	<p><b>Publishing</b>            Professional writing; Research; Editing; Journalism</p>	<p><b>Teaching</b>            Elementary; Secondary; Special education; Teaching English as a second language</p>

## Survey of Recent Sociology graduates about their FIRST job after college



In the 2012 *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, recent graduates with a sociology bachelors degree around the country were asked about the kinds of jobs they held just seven months after graduation.

The figure to the left examine the occupational categories of these students' *first jobs* after graduation. Keep in mind that after a few years of job experience and in some cases, the addition of a Masters Degree, these same students are likely to move up on the organizational charts.

**Social services, counselors.** 23% of the 2012 graduates were working in social services and counseling positions. Graduates working in social services may have a wide range of job titles, including: case worker for abused and neglected children; director for the Meals on Wheels program; forensic interviewer for a child advocacy center; Medicaid eligibility coordinator. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "employment of social and human service assistants is expected to grow by nearly 34% through 2016. Job prospects are expected to be excellent, particularly for applicants with the appropriate post-secondary education."<sup>5</sup> To be successful in social service jobs, employees need to have a deep understanding of the social factors that contribute to poverty, illness, and unemployment. They must understand how social institutions impact individuals and how to work respectfully and effectively with people from diverse racial, ethnic, and class groups.

**Sales, marketing.** Customers are a social group that is influenced by

all the factors that sociologists study, such as gender, race, class, culture, and age. Sales and marketing jobs can provide ample opportunities to apply the insights of sociology to the world of business. Sales and marketing jobs also exist in the non-profit sector. Sociology graduates working in this category may be designing and executing marketing plans, conducting marketing research, running capital campaigns, or writing commercial copy for radio.<sup>6</sup>

**Administrative support.** Administrative support positions are the classic entry-level job. In non-profit organization these jobs often have the title "Program Assistant." By taking advantage of the opportunities and contacts that an entry-level administrative

### SOCIAL SERVICE JOB LISTING

## Case Manager

**DESCRIPTION** Leading mental health services provider seeks full-time Intensive Case Manager to monitor clients and coordinate planning and access to community services for housing, education, vocation, socialization, benefits and finances...

**JOB REQUIREMENTS** A bachelor's degree in sociology...excellent interpersonal and organizational skills.

## SALES/MARKETING JOB LISTING

### Marketing Assistant

**DESCRIPTION** Organization creates free fundraising platforms for sports and music fans to raise critically needed funds for respected charities and foundations. Marketing assistant creates creative content, tracks marketing efforts, and conducts market research.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS** Bachelor's Degree, strong analytic, interpersonal, verbal and written skills, passion for social change...

support job can provide, sociology graduates can get the experience, contacts and specific work-place knowledge they need to become competitive for more advanced positions. Remember, 21st century careers have many steps. 14% of the recent graduates who responded to the 2012 survey were working in some form of administrative support. These jobs may be located in a wide range of office settings, including: a paralegal in a courthouse, an immigration specialist for a large company, an office manager, and a scheduler in the office of a State Representative. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook points out that all organizations need skilled administrative support staff in order to be successful, and that they are employed in every sector of the economy. It also states that “when evaluating candidates for these jobs, supervisors look for strong teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, and communication skills, as well as determination, loyalty, poise, and confidence.”<sup>7</sup>

**Teachers.** 12% of respondents to the survey of sociology graduates were working as teachers. Some had combined their studies in sociology with teaching certificate programs and were working in public schools. Others were working in private schools, were members of AmeriCorps, or were teaching English in schools abroad.

**Service occupations.** 12% of the recent graduates were employed in jobs that were categorized within “Services.” These jobs may fall within the subcategory of protective services—such as crime scene technician, police officer, and probation officer. For example, Alexis Mesko, a recent graduate, works as a probation officer and draws on her understanding of the impact of race, ethnicity, class, and gender on individuals’ lives as she works to find the best treatment plans for the offenders she supervises. Jessica Lightfoot considers the cultural context in which crimes take place in order to better investigate financial fraud as an intelligence Research Specialist.

**Information technology/public relations/other professionals.** 21st century organizations need to effectively communicate their mission and the ways they are working to advance that mission. The stakeholders who need to receive that information may include customers, clients, investigators, members, volunteers, the media, government officials and regulators. People working in Information Technology and Public Relations help create and maintain a positive public image for their organizations. Web sites and social media play a central role in public relations. Eight percent of the 2012 graduates were working in this area. One survey respondent wrote, “I work as a Public Affairs Program Assistant in an office that focuses on human trafficking. I provide research, public diplomacy, and program support for the public engagement team of my office.” Another described his work as “coordinator for a small state agency (work includes administrative support, public policy, public/government relations, and event planning).” According to the Bureau of

## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT JOB LISTING

### Program Assistant

**DESCRIPTION** National social science nonprofit provides grants to support African American, Latino, and Native American schools and those committed to this goal. Program Assistant works with staff to administer grants, organize seminars, workshops and conferences.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS** Social science bachelor’s degree...superior organizational skills, attention to detail, strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to meet competing deadlines.

## SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH JOB LISTING

# Research Assistant

**DESCRIPTION** International Consulting Corporation working with government and industry to develop solutions to energy, climate change, and public policy problems. Research assistant helps collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data, reviews literatures, and interacts with government and commercial clients.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS** A bachelor's degree in related field, minimum GPA of 3.0, excellent written and oral communication, computer skills, detail orientation, ability to work under strict deadlines.

Labor statistics, work in this area is expected to grow through 2020 because organizations need to “maintain their public image in a high-information age and with the growth of social media.”<sup>8</sup>

**Social science researchers.** Only 5% of the 2012 respondents were working as social science researchers. Yet in a comparison of internet job searches at three popular on-line job banks, the term ‘research’ and ‘data’ produced the largest number of entry-level job postings.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the disparity between the number of postings for entry-level jobs in social science research and the number of sociology graduates who say they are working in this area has to do with a mistaken impression that only people with a PhD can do research. In reality, there are a wide range of research-related employment opportunities for students at the Bachelor's level. An additional advantage of this kind of work is that it provides excellent preparation for individuals who plan to go on to graduate school.

**Management.** Sociology graduates in management positions may have many different responsibilities, such as: coordinating programs; running government contracts; providing oversight for quality assurance operations and customer satisfaction; working in human resources related to hiring, training and conflict

negotiation; and ensuring equal opportunity for employees. Opportunities in administrative management are expected to grow by about 15 percent between 2010 and 2020.<sup>10</sup> Being an effective administrative services manager requires “good leadership and communication skills and to be able to establish effective working relationships with many different people, ranging from managers, supervisors, and professionals, to clerks and blue-collar workers. They should be analytical, detail-oriented, flexible, and decisive. They must be able to coordinate several activities at once, quickly analyze and resolve specific programs, and cope with deadlines.”<sup>11</sup>

## What Can I Do to Start My Career Now?

The first thing you can do on your path to a successful 21st century career is simply recognize that you have to start preparing *now*.

Imagine it is May, and two students who majored in sociology are about to graduate. Although they both think they would like to go to graduate school in a year or two, for now they are looking for jobs. One of them just wrote his first resume, and struggled to find anything to put under “work and volunteer experience.” He also put off taking the statistics and research methods classes required for his major until the very end of his studies, and does not feel confident of his ability to use STATA or any other statistical software—so he did not say anything about data analysis or statistics on his resume. In a recent job interview he said that studying sociology taught him a lot about people.

The other student wrote her first resume during her freshman year, did volunteer work in a homeless shelter for two years, and completed an internship at a local food bank where she collected and analyzed data about the clients who came to a local food bank and the donations the food bank received. As part of her internship she used STATA to analyze data and was able to demonstrate that there was a mismatch between the months when the food bank had the most clients and the months when the food bank received the most donations. Her data helped the food bank get additional grant money from their state. Her current resume, which prominently lists

her social science research skills, also lists a link to her electronic portfolio, which includes the PowerPoint presentation she did for the staff at the food bank at the end of her internship as well as examples of her written work. In her recent job interview she was able to explain how she collected and analyzed data during her internship. She also could effectively define sociology as a science that makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide insights on effective responses to social problems.

It is not hard to figure out which student is going to have an easier time finding a job. Although the story of these two students is fictional, the lesson behind their story is supported by data. The results of the second wave of the “*What Can I Do with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology*” study indicate that graduating seniors who included their research skills on their resume, and talked about those skills in job interviews, were far more likely to get jobs that related to their studies in sociology and more likely to be satisfied with the jobs they got.<sup>12</sup>

## Action Box

Take two (or three) of the self-assessments found at [CareerOneStop.org](http://CareerOneStop.org) and compare and contrast what they tell you. How are the results similar? How are they different? What new insights about yourself do they offer?

**Get to know yourself. What are your goals?** Success is not a one-size-fits-all concept, nor is the definition of a good job universal. Working in a large city in a fast-paced, high-paying, government job may be one student’s dream-come true. Another student’s perfect job may be coordinating social services in a rural health clinic that serves a small farming community. If these two students participated in a reality TV program that made them switch places, those ‘good jobs’ instantly would be transformed into terrible jobs—without changing anything about the jobs themselves.

So spend some time thinking carefully about who you are, where you want to go, and what you want to do. [CareerOneStop.org](http://CareerOneStop.org) has links to five

different assessment tools that you can explore:

- The [Skills Profiler](#) identifies skills and matches them to jobs.
- O\*NET’s [Ability Profiler](#) matches strengths with occupations.
- O\*NET’s [Interest Profiler](#) identifies broad interest areas.
- O\*NET’s [Work Importance Locator](#) identifies job features that are important to you.
- [Employability Checkup](#) provides a snapshot of your employability.

**Start looking for your first job—now.** Even if you are in your first or second year of college, you can start looking for your first job. If you are further along in your studies, it’s not too late to get started. Browsing job listings can help you clarify your goals for your first job after graduation, and help you define what you need to do to achieve those goals. Research has shown that people who set clear and specific goals are far more likely to achieve them than people who have only good intentions. This is also true for grades—students who are self-motivated and set high goals for themselves are more likely to achieve good grades.<sup>13</sup> The same is also true for career success. Setting clearly defined and challenging goals leads to greater success in the workplace than vaguely conceptualized efforts to “do my best.”<sup>14</sup> Don’t worry if your goals change over time—most people’s do. However, creating a goal now and starting to work toward it will be far more useful and productive than waiting until you have perfect clarity.

## Action Box

Find three entry-level job postings that interest you. Then answer the following questions:

1. What employment sectors are they in? What populations do they serve?
2. What are the requirements for the job?
3. What could you do in the next few years to build a resume that would make you an outstanding candidate for that job?

Here are some on-line job banks you can use to start your job hunt:

- **Idealist.org.** This site lists jobs in non-profit organizations all over the world. The site also lists internship and volunteer opportunities.
- **CareerOneStop.org.** This site has links to all 50 states' job banks.
- **USAJobs.gov.** This is the Federal government's job bank and includes jobs in all federal agencies and offices across the United States. Begin by searching for "Form EI-23" in any internet browser. This document lists federal job titles by college major. Then go to USAjobs.gov and click on "advanced search." Scroll down to the pay grade fields and enter "5-7." This will ensure that you are looking for entry-level postings. From there you can search using the job titles listed under 'sociology' on Form EI-23, or try a broader key word search.
- **CollegeGrad.com.** This site specializes in entry-level jobs, although it includes listings for many advanced positions as well.

In your searches, especially in large national-level job banks, layering search terms can be helpful. Start with search terms that reflect your current level of experience:

- BA or BS
- Entry level

Then add your sociological skills:

- Sociology
- Social science
- Data
- Research
- Diversity
- Statistics

If you get too many listings, add an occupational category or market sector.

- Program assistant
- Human resources
- Research assistant
- Non profit
- Government
- Marketing

## **Action Box**

Make an appointment with a Career Counselor at the Creighton Career Center. The Career Center can help provide career assessments to explore options, connect you with alumni and other professionals to learn more about career paths, find relevant jobs or internships, and provide support for writing resumes and job interviews as you apply to opportunities. These resources are available free to you—take advantage of them!!

**Develop your professional network.** While internet searches can be helpful for clarifying your career goals and identifying additional knowledge or experience you need in order to achieve those goals, they are not a particularly effective way of finding a professional job. In examining the data from the 2012 study of sociology graduates, the factors that were most highly associated with obtaining a career-level job after graduation were consulting with faculty members, participating in capstone seminars and career workshops in the department, and talking with internship advisors and former employers. Through activities like these, students meet potential employers, learn about job openings, and can submit applications that are far more likely to result in career-level employment. Graduates who only looked for jobs on the internet or the newspaper were far less likely to obtain career-level employment after graduation.<sup>15</sup> In keeping with this, Marcus Pruitt says, "Immerse yourself in internships and as much research as possible." Jessica Lightfoot agrees and adds, "Develop a good working relationship with your academic advisor."

**Go on informational interviews.** In order to build your professional network, you need to meet people who are working in the employment sector that interests you (such as business, non-profit associations, social services, social science research, or government). Informational interviews can be very helpful in this regard. An informational interview is just a conversation with someone who is working in an occupation that you would like to explore. One of the major differences between a job interview and an informational interview is that in an informational interview you will be asking most of the questions.

So how do you get an informational interview? The first step is to locate someone working in your area of interest and ask them for a brief (20-30 minute) informational interview. Your college or university's career center and alumni center may be able to direct you to individuals you can contact. In addition, ask the people in your social network if they know someone you can contact. Your social network includes your professors, family members, friends, neighbors, and the people where you are a volunteer or intern. The internet also can be a wonderful way to search for businesses or non-profit organizations in the occupational area you want to explore. Once you have located an organization, look for the unit within that organization that fits your interests best. Then find the name of the person who supervises that unit or department. Write that person a letter introducing yourself and explaining that you are requesting a brief informational interview because you would like to learn more about the opportunities and requirements for working in their field or organization. Follow up with a phone call about a week later.

Once you have an informational interview scheduled, follow some simple guidelines to make the interview successful:

- Limit the interview to 30 minutes.
- Dress professionally.
- Bring your resume.
- Ask the person you are meeting with about their career path. How did they get their job? What do they like about it? What does it take to succeed in their field?
- Ask what qualities they look for when hiring entry level employees.
- Write a note to thank the person for sharing their knowledge and expertise with you.

**Create a coherent course plan.** There is more than one way to complete the requirements for graduation at Creighton University. By thinking carefully about your goals in advance, you can choose topics for class projects, elective courses, and additional minors or second majors that will help you reach your career goals.

Once you have identified a market sector or population that you hope to work with after graduation, you can amplify the power of your sociology major by taking a multidisciplinary approach. Consider a double major, minor, or certificate in Cultural Anthropology, Medical Anthropology, Health Administration and Policy, Social Work, Justice and Society, Communication Studies, Business, Economics, Education, Environmental Science, Sustainability, Graphic Design and Media, International Relations, Law, Leadership, Political Science,

## **Action Box**

Develop your research skills in classes by building on a project in multiple courses. For example, you could:

1. Get interested in a particular research topic in one of your sociology classes.
2. Develop a feasible proposal for independent research on that topic for your final project in SOC 312.
3. Find a faculty member who can mentor you on this project. You could submit a proposal for CURAS Summer Undergraduate Research Award to provide funding to conduct the research over a summer. You could also or alternatively do an Directed Independent Research course with your faculty mentor to conduct your research during a semester.
4. There are opportunities to present your research at a conference, such as at the Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Symposium around November or the Midwest Sociological Society around March. There are many sources of funding for you to present research.
5. Write and present about your research project in the SOC 499 Senior Capstone course in your final semester.

Theology, a second language, Spanish and Hispanic Studies, African Studies, Asian Studies, Black Studies, or Women's and Gender Studies. There are endless possibilities—the key is to think about how your choice will advance your career goals. Employment analysts predict that the most successful people in the 21st century will be those who have been exposed to a wide variety of disciplines and have taken the time to study in some depth outside their field.

Work with your advisor to develop an integrated set of courses. You can bolster your employability by using your elective hours to take extra methods and statistics courses, or upper-level courses and independent studies in sociology (or another discipline) that focus on the market sector, population, or issues where you hope to build your career.

Writing research papers that apply to the market sector or population you hope to work with is useful as well.<sup>16</sup> By doing the research which you can use in interviews for internships and employment, and the paper itself will become a tailor-made writing sample to include with your job applications.

**Do an internship and volunteer.** Internships offer invaluable experience that can bring to life the sociological concepts and theories you study in books and the classroom. You can sample potential careers, build your resume, and learn new skills during a well-chosen internship experience. Many agencies and institutions offer internships and most colleges will provide college credits for internships. Data from the “*What Can I Do with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology*” study indicate that participating in activities such as internships, community volunteer projects, and service learning programs significantly increases the likelihood of being employed in jobs that reflect the skills and concepts learned as a sociology major.

A wide range of internships are available to sociology students in the for-profit, non-profit, and government sectors both in the United States and abroad. Start looking for your summer internship at least six months in advance. Winter break is often a great time to start looking for an internship.

Use the same networks you used to get informational interviews to help locate informal internship opportunities. Internship opportunities also can be located through the internet. When you contact organizations about internship opportunities, be prepared to explain why you want to do an internship there and what personal qualities and sociological skills you would bring to the organization. Ask if you can send your resume and cover letter. Cast a wide net—the more organizations you contact, the better your chances of getting an internship. Although volunteer work is less formal than an internship, it can help you build a winning resume. In addition, long-term volunteer experience can help counter-balance limited work experience, especially if the volunteer work was in the same market sector where you eventually hope to work.

Regardless of whether you are considering doing a formal internship, taking a service learning class, or independently volunteering, with careful planning your activities can work together to build a coherent set of experiences that will apply to your career goals and help your resume stand out in a crowd.

## **Action Box**

There are many resources in the department and at Creighton to help connect you with internships, volunteer, and other service opportunities.

- Take courses that have a service learning component. Dr. Irlbeck and Dr. Dilly often have community engagement components in their courses, particularly in SOC385: Community Internships I, II (taught by Dr. Irlbeck) and SOC/ANT 316: Qualitative Research Methods (taught by Dr. Dilly). Other courses taught by other faculty have community engagement components as well.
- Go to the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice and learn about many local service opportunities and service and justice trips.

**Create your core resume.** Think of your resume as a core document that you will build over time. As you gain new experiences and skills, add them to your resume. Each time you apply for a job, you will edit your core resume and write a unique cover letter tailored to that position. Start building your core resume now, even if you just declared your major. As you start, you will probably notice that some areas of your resume are “thin.” Those will become the areas that you can spend time bolstering before you graduate.

## What about Graduate School?

An undergraduate major in sociology provides an excellent foundation for graduate study in a wide range of fields. 18 months after graduation, 35% of the individuals who responded to the second wave of the “*What Can I Do with a Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology*” study were enrolled in graduate school. Among those, the largest single group (22%) was composed of students studying sociology at the graduate level. The remaining individuals primarily were using the skills and concepts they learned in sociology to pursue professional or applied degrees.<sup>17</sup> The researchers were able to identify factors that predicted respondents’ successful entry into graduate school. If your goal is graduate school, their findings provide a number of pointers.

- Focus on doing well in your sociology course work. A high GPA is particularly important for students who hope to pursue a PhD in sociology.
- Attend, and consider doing a poster presentation, at the annual meetings of state, regional, or national sociology associations. Some of these include:
  - American Sociological Association (ASA) around August.
  - Midwestern Sociological Society (MSS) around March.
  - Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Symposium (NUSS) around November.
- List your sociological skills on your graduate school application.
- For students interested in entering a master’s program, seek out on-the-job training activities, including internships and volunteer opportunities.
- For students interested in entering a PhD program in sociology, seek out professors who are willing to become mentors and allow you to assist on research projects.

<b>BA &amp; Beyond Respondents’ Graduate Fields of Study</b>	
<i>Field of Study</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Sociology	<b>22%</b>
Social Work	<b>17%</b>
Education	<b>11%</b>
Law	<b>11%</b>
Other Social Sciences	<b>9%</b>
Psychology/Counseling	<b>9%</b>
Engineering	<b>7%</b>
Business/Management	<b>5%</b>
Public Policy/Affairs	<b>4%</b>
Other	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Sociology Resources

## Sociology Professional Association Resources

**American Sociological Association (ASA)** is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to advancing sociology as a scientific discipline and profession serving the common good. There are numerous ways the ASA can help you as you compose your sociological career. Listed below are just a few of the many resources that can be found on the Student Resources page of the ASA website ([www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)).

- “The Student Sociologist”. This is a newsletter for students and their departments. It is produced by the ASA Student Forum and is available as a free PDF download.
- “Navigating the Major”. Also available as a free PDF download, this is a guide for undergraduates that covers course selection, research and internships, careers, graduate school, and much more.
- “The Guide to Graduate Departments”. Available in our department, this is published every year and provides information on graduate programs in sociology and is indexed in a variety of ways, including program emphasis.
- The ASA Honors Program. This program is a wonderful opportunity for sociology majors to come to the Annual Meeting, meet other students, and learn more about the profession. The ASA Annual Meeting occurs in August each year. The deadline for applying for the Honors Program is on or around February 1st.
- ASA Student Forum. This provides resources for graduate and undergraduate sociology students, helps develop networks among student members, and facilitates student participation in the ASA by congaing professional development and service.

**Midwest Sociological Society** is the regional Sociological Association. Undergraduates students can present their original research either as a poster presentation or a roundtable session at the annual meeting in late March/early April. To present, you need to submit a proposal at the beginning of January. Contact Sabrina Danielsen, who is a member of MSS, to learn more and for help submitting a proposal.

**Nebraska Undergraduate Sociological Symposium** is a forum for undergraduate students to present research. Creighton students present often and have a history of collecting awards at the dinner. Contact a faculty member for more details about presenting.

## Writing Resources

**Creighton’s Writing Center** is a wonderful resource for improving your writing. Tutors work with writers on matters of clarity, assignment responsiveness, grammar, and all things literate. Make an appointment ahead of time: the Center fills up fast!

**Writing in Sociology, 2nd edition, by Mark Edwards (2015)** is a very helpful and straightforward book for learning how to write various types of sociology papers, including: quantitative and qualitative research papers, peer reviews, theory papers, and book reviews.

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- <sup>4</sup> Association of American Colleges and Universities and Hart Research Associates. 2013. *It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success*. Washington, DC. Retrieved October 14, 2013 (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/presidentstrust/compact/2013SurveySummary.cfm>)
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- <sup>7</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*. Retrieved April 24, 2009 (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos059.htm>)
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- <sup>11</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition*.
- <sup>12</sup> Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Nicole Van Vooren. 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> Zimmerman, Bandura, Martinez-Ponz. 1992. "Self-Motivation for Academic Attainment: The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Personal Goal Setting." *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 29, No 3 (Autumn): 663-676.
- <sup>14</sup> Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham. 2005. "Goal Setting Theory: Theory Building by Induction." Chapter 7 in *Great Minds in Management*, edited by K.G. Smith and M.A. Hitt. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- <sup>15</sup> Spalter-Roth, Roberta, Nicole Van Vooren, Michael Kisielewski, and Mary Senter. 2012. "Strong Ties, Weak Ties, or No Ties: What Helped Sociology Majors Find Career-Level Jobs?" American Sociological Associates: Washington DC.
- <sup>16</sup> Ferrante, Joan. 2009. *Wadsworth Sociology Module: Careers in Sociology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- <sup>17</sup> Spalter-Roth, Roberta and Nicole Van Vooren. 2009. *Idealists vs. Careerists: Graduate School Choices of Sociology Majors*. American Sociological Association, Washington DC.