Sociology

[College of Letters and Science]
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Stephanie L. Mudge, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Caitlin Palfer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Kimberlee A. Shauman, Ph.D., Professor
Xiaoling Shu, Ph.D., Professor
Chris Smith, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
Vicki Smith, Ph.D., Professor
Eddy U. Ph.D., Associate Professor
Diane L. Wolf, Ph.D., Professor
Emeriti Faculty
Fred Block, Ph.D., Research Professor and Professor Emeritus
Lawrence E. Cohen, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
James C. Cramer, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Diane H. Felimlee, Ph.D., Professor Emerita
John R. Hall, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Carole E. Joffe, Ph.D., Professor Emerita
Carl C. Jorgensen, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
John F. Lolland, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Lyn H. Lolland, Ph.D., Research Professor and Professor Emerita
John T. Walton, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus
Affiliated Faculty
Lalita Kiburi, Ph.D., Lecturer

The Major Programs
Sociology is the study of human society in all its manifestations. Its aim is to discover the process and structure of human interaction, to identify the main forces that sustain or weaken social groups, and to determine the conditions that transform social life. Sociology, like any science, is a disciplined, intellectual quest for knowledge about the fundamental nature of things.

The Program. The Department of Sociology offers two major programs, Sociology and Social–Organizational Studies. Students selecting the Sociology major choose concentrations in four options in the major. The General Sociology emphasis allows students to obtain a broad understanding of the concepts, methods, and theories of sociology. Students with a special interest in law and Society or Social Services may choose a more specialized program of courses and practical experience within the sociology major. The Comparative Studies and World Development emphasis provides a sociological perspective on social and economic changes throughout the world, with a stress on relationships between “developed” and “developing” societies. In their junior year, students are encouraged to consider the Education Abroad Program—especially one in a developing country.

The Sociology–Organizational Studies major develops a broad understanding of the political, social, and economic organizations that comprise modern society. This major emphasizes a sociological perspective, but incorporates a multidisciplinary field of study. The major introduces students to a range of theories and methods of social scientists use in the analysis of organizations.

Career Opportunities. In the Sociology major, the General option is for students desiring a solid liberal arts education as well as those interested in graduate work in the social sciences. Options in Law and Society or Social Services prepare students for careers in such areas as law, corrections, social work or counseling. The Comparative Studies and World Development emphasis prepares students for graduate training leading to careers in international fields. The Organizational Studies (OS) major is designed to provide a broad understanding of the political, social, and economic organizations that make up modern society. Whether thinking about the structure of government bureaucracies, legal systems, economic markets, educational systems, or workplaces, OS offers the interdisciplinary perspective and materials needed to understand the contemporary world in which complex and formal organizations are ubiquitous. Formal organizations influence how we feel, what we think, and what we can accomplish. As such, OS major provides both a basic understanding of the field as well as enhancing your ability to pursue their more specialized career interests.

At the upper-division level, you can choose one of four specialized tracks, any one of which will help to better identify and inform your career goals—whether that be in postgraduate education or a specific type of job—and pursue them after graduation. Whether you select the “Business and Society,” “Public Policy and Social Welfare,” “Nonprofit and Social Change Organizations” or the “Student-Initiated Theme” track, once completed you will have a unique and valuable area of expertise.

Students who plan to enroll in graduate programs in business, public policy, public administration, and education are advised to develop proficiencies in statistics and calculus (such as the Math 16 series).

Track 1: The Business and Society track is for students who hold an interest in or wish to pursue careers in management or corporate professions and who are interested in economic institutions and commerce, management and administration, work and workplaces, and labor markets. Courses in this cluster analyze businesses, firms, corporations, and markets—nationally and globally—and their place in society, historically and in the present, from a critical perspective. The BAS exposes students to the origins of business corporations and economic markets (and relations); the power relations, inequalities, and stratification associated with contemporary business organizations (firms and corporations); why business organizations rely on particular organizational structures to increase their efficiencies and effectiveness; and overviews of the role business and regulatory organizations play in the economy.

Postgraduate training and careers that follow from this cluster:

- Professional training: MBA programs; mediation programs; law, public policy.
- Graduate training: sociology; economics; Ph.D. business school programs (with concentrations in organizational behavior, entrepreneurship, industrial relations, economic analysis, policy analysis, labor relations).
- Career paths: managers, human resources professionals, project managers, diversity personnel, corporate social responsibility directors, human resource managers, business entrepreneurs, labor relations specialists, creative professionals, research staff at policy institutes such as Economic Policy Institute, Urban Institute.

Track 2: Public Policy and Social Welfare (PPSW) The PPSW track is for students who hold an interest in or plan to pursue careers in government and/or social welfare organizations. Courses in this track emphasize how formal organizations and institutions emerge to address key social problems and the policies they generate and utilize to solve them; the unique challenges that government and other policy-oriented organizations confront in addressing and managing public problems and promoting the common good; and the dynamics and special circumstances that specific organizational/institutional policy fields such as education, health care, and social welfare confront in seeking to fulfill their charge.

Postgraduate training and careers that follow from this track:

- Professional training: programs in public policy, public administration, government, social welfare, counseling, public affairs, law, leadership studies, community psychology.

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