

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Mission

Sociology is a discipline concerned with equality, justice, and social responsibility within society's cultural, political, and economic systems. The mission of the Sociology Department at Sam Houston State University is to cultivate sociological mindfulness, which involves understanding how social forces and cultural contexts shape people's experiences, how personal troubles are connected to broader social issues, and how social arrangements create both constraints and opportunities for individuals and groups. Sociological mindfulness promotes critical and analytical thinking and equips students with the theoretical, methodological, and communication skills to work with others to solve problems and improve social conditions in local communities and the broader society.

Programs

The Sociology Department offers a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Science, and a Minor in Sociology. The BA and BS programs provide students with strong conceptual and methodological foundations, training in applied methods, and a wide range of elective course options. All our programs are offered both in-person and online. The department is also home to two interdisciplinary minors. The Minor in Community Leadership gives students the knowledge, skills, and experience to be agents of change in their communities. The Minor in Cultural Competency offers students an understanding of pluralistic workplaces and communities and uniquely equips students to participate in civic life, advance in their careers, and contribute to a just society.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students who major and minor in sociology gain proficiency and expertise in a wide range of skills:

- Knowledge and experience in problem-solving, data analysis, and critical thinking.
- Appreciation for cultural differences and experience working on diverse teams.
- Written and verbal communication skills.
- Interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills.
- Experience using conceptual frameworks and diverse research methods to think systematically about and assess equality, justice, and social responsibility within society's institutions.
- The ability to identify practical solutions to an array of social problems and help improve social conditions in their local communities and the broader society.

Highlights

- The Sociology Department focuses on excellent teaching.
- The sociology faculty collaborate with undergraduates on research and the Sociology Department sponsors undergraduate research, including presentations at regional and national conferences.
- The Sociology Department offers an internship program that provides students with hands-on experience and work experience.
- Members of the Sociology Department have published books, textbooks, and journal articles, as well as, maintain active research programs in diverse areas.

Suggested Minors

- Communication Studies
- Community Leadership
- Criminal Justice
- Health Education
- History
- Human Services
- Latin American and Latinx Studies
- Middle Eastern Studies
- Political Science
- Psychology

Career Opportunities

Sociology graduates find successful employment in the private sector (management, human resources, public relations, research); public sectors (Federal, State and Local Government agencies), and in non-profit organizations (NGOs) in the areas of social services, civic engagement, and advocacy.

Career paths include:

- Non-profit advocacy
- Market research and data analysis
- Government, law, and court professions
- Case management and child protective service
- Private and public sector work in sales and supervision
- Human resource management and public relations
- Education and teaching

Curriculum

The sociology curriculum is focused on developing sociological perspectives and providing students with the skills and tools to be successful both in their future careers and as engaged members of society. All of the sociology degree programs emphasize critical and analytical thinking, and theoretical, methodological, and communication skills that equip students to solve problems and improve social conditions in local communities and the broader society. The sociology Bachelor of Arts and Science programs include core, applied core, and elective courses. The applied core consists of skill-based courses that provide students with research and analytical skills that are applicable across a range of fields and careers. Students can choose any five electives and thus, can customize their sociology major to fit with their interests. Sociology minors have three required core classes and then can choose any three electives. All sociology programs, except the Minor in Community Leadership, are offered both in-person and online. Students can complete their sociology program requirements in-person, online, or through a combination of the two formats. As part of their sociology program, students are encouraged to participate in research projects and extra-curricular activities designed to foster sociological thinking and application.

Students must successfully complete SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319 (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/course-descriptions/soci/>) before taking additional sociology courses with the exception of SOCI 3324 (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/course-descriptions/soci/>), SOCI 3381, SOCI 3341, SOCI 4337, and SOCI 4339. The only substitution permitted is Psychology Statistics (PSYC 3402) for Social Statistics (SOCI 3345).

Code	Title	Hours
SOCI Core Courses		
SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319	Introduction to Sociology Introduction To Ethnic Studies	3
SOCI 2399	Writing in Sociology	3
SOCI 3324	Social Inequality	3
SOCI 3370	Research Methods in Sociology	3
SOCI 4344	Sociological Theory	3

Total Hours **15**

Code	Title	Hours
Applied Core		
SOCI 3345	Social Statistics	3
SOCI 3371	Qualitative Methods	3
SOCI 3372	Demographic Techniques	3
SOCI 3373	Social Program Evaluation	3
SOCI 3377	Community Planning and Development	3
SOCI 4379	Internship In Applied Sociology	3

Code	Title	Hours
Elective Courses		
SOCI 3305	Introduction to Community Leadership	3
SOCI 3325	Gender And Inequality	3
SOCI 3327	Sociology of Popular Culture	3
SOCI 3335	Food and Society	3

SOCI 3341	Marriage And The Family	3
SOCI 3344	Sociology of Education	3
SOCI 3354	Sociology of the Life Course	3
SOCI 3355	Racial and Ethnic Inequality	3
SOCI 3365	Sociology Of Health & Illness	3
SOCI 3376	Rural And Urban Sociology	3
SOCI 3381	Cultural Anthropology	3
SOCI 3383	Sociology of Latin America	3
SOCI 3384	Economy And Society	3
SOCI 3392	Social Movements	3
SOCI 4330	Sociology of Immigration	3
SOCI 4334	Sociology Of Disaster	3
SOCI 4337	Environment And Society	3
SOCI 4339	Development & Sustainability	3

Arranged Courses

Code	Title	Hours
Arranged Courses		
SOCI 4075	Readings in Sociology	1-3
SOCI 4379	Internship In Applied Sociology	3

- Bachelor of Arts, Major in Sociology (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/ba-sociology/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Integrated Studies: Bioethics and Policy in Healthcare Concentration (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/integrated-studies/bs-integrated-studies-concentration-bioethics-and-policy-healthcare/>)
- Bachelor of Science, Major in Sociology (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/bs-sociology/>)
- Minor in Community Leadership (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/minor-community-leadership/>)
- Minor in Cultural Competency (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/minor-cultural-competency/>)
- Minor in Sociology (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/undergraduate/colleges-academic-departments/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/minor-sociology/>)

Research

The department strongly encourages and supports undergraduate student research and research collaborations with faculty members. SHSU sociology majors and minors regularly present their papers at regional and national conferences and publish their work in academic student journals.

Participating in research provides numerous benefits to students. It offers students opportunities to get hands-on experience, participate in professional activities, apply their knowledge, test out potential careers, and build up their resume. Student participation in research enhances intellectual, communication, and teamwork skills.

The Sociology Faculty looks forward to working with students on research projects. You can learn more about faculty research interests and projects of the sociology faculty by contacting the Department Chair at jstykes@shsu.edu.

Student Organizations and Activities

Students in the Sociology Club and Alpha Kappa Delta, the Sociology professional honor society, are introduced to the profession of Sociology through activities including: research opportunities, volunteer work, organization of special events, participation in professional meetings, and programs highlighting speakers of note in the many interest areas of Sociology.

Internships

Internship opportunities are available for senior Sociology majors. Interns are placed with employers, including social service organizations, government agencies, healthcare facilities, and private companies. Please contact the department for more information.

Scholarships

The department offers several scholarships. For information contact the department or visit the Sociology Department (<https://www.shsu.edu/academics/colleges/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/>).

SOCI 1301. Introduction to Sociology. 3 Hours. [TCCN: SOCI 1301]

Students are introduced to the discipline with a focus on the concepts and principles used in the study of group life, social institutions and social processes. This course is a prerequisite to many other courses taught in the department.

SOCI 2319. Introduction To Ethnic Studies. 3 Hours. [TCCN: SOCI 2319]

Students investigate the field and problems of ethnic studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. Major considerations of the entire Ethnic Studies field will be defined and analyzed, including the topics of prejudice and discrimination. Students are strongly urged to take this course before attempting other ethnic studies courses. Course Equivalents: SOCI 2320 .

SOCI 2320. Introduction to Ethnic Studies-Honors. 3 Hours.

HONORS COURSE Students investigate the field and problems of Ethnic Studies from an interdisciplinary perspective. Major considerations of the entire Ethnic Studies field will be defined and analyzed, including the topics of prejudice and discrimination. Students are strongly urged to take this course before attempting other Ethnic Studies courses. Course Equivalents: SOCI 3219 .

SOCI 2366. Sociology Of Sport. 3 Hours.

Students apply the social science mode of inquiry to study the sociocultural characteristics of sport. Topics may include the examination of the cultural, economic, political and structural factors (i.e., gender, race, etc.), which form salient aspects of today's sport activities at various levels. Focus is placed on the characteristics of sports and how these characteristics both reflect and have impact upon the social climate of a given society.

SOCI 2399. Writing in Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students learn the writing skills needed for advanced courses in Sociology. Topics may include: the structure and style in writing; citations and American Sociological Association stylebook; how to conduct library and internet research as a basis for research writing; and specialized techniques for quantitative research papers, qualitative research papers, book reviews, compare and contrast papers and essay exams.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301.

SOCI 3305. Introduction to Community Leadership. 3 Hours.

Students learn the definitions, types, and theories of community. Topics may include how to conduct basic community needs assessment, strengthen communication skills, and explore resource mobilization strategies through applied community experiences. Community leaders facilitate conversations about leadership techniques and challenges. Course Equivalents: SOCI 2350 .

SOCI 3324. Social Inequality. 3 Hours.

Students learn the three primary resources of social inequality: class, status and power. Topics may include the way birth-ascribed statuses such as age, sex and race interact with class, status and power stratification systems. Special attention is also given to the popular and scientific explanations of inequality, especially with respect to the high and low ends of the distribution of income and wealth.

SOCI 3325. Gender And Inequality. 3 Hours.

Students learn about the influence of gender on socialization and placement in class, status and power stratification systems. Topics may include the analysis of institutional discrimination against women in major social institutions such as religion, education, family, health care and work, and an examination of the feminization of poverty.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319 .

SOCI 3327. Sociology of Popular Culture. 3 Hours.

Students engage in a critical analysis of popular culture in its cross-cultural and historical perspectives with the main focus on the role and character of popular culture in American society. Topic may include the different forms and aspects of popular culture in their dynamic relation to the cultural "mainstream", to everyday life of Americans, and to the core values of American society.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3335. Food and Society. 3 Hours.

Students examine food from a sociological perspective. Topics may include the production, distribution, and consumption of food in today's globalized society.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3341. Marriage And The Family. 3 Hours. [TCCN: SOCI 2301]

Students engage in a sociological examination of marriage and family life. Topics may include the problems of courtship, mate selection, and marriage adjustment in modern American society.

SOCI 3344. Sociology of Education. 3 Hours.

Students examine the relationship between the educational system and society. Topics may include education and inequality, the relationship between education and different social institutions, educational experiences and the life course, and schooling experiences.

SOCI 3345. Social Statistics. 3 Hours.

Students examine the basic concepts, techniques and data necessary for an adequate understanding of social structure and change. Topics may include observational, experimental, sample survey, and demographic analysis. Course Equivalents: SOCI 3443

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301.

SOCI 3354. Sociology of the Life Course. 3 Hours.

Students examine the sociological dimensions of aging. Topics may include the various sociological theories and methods used in the study of aging, discrimination against the young and the old, the relationship between life-cycle changes and changes in placement in class and status, and the impact of population aging on retirement patterns, income security, health care, and long-term care.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3355. Racial and Ethnic Inequality. 3 Hours.

Students examine racial and ethnic stratification in its various dimensions. Topics may include the placement in the class, status and power stratification systems on the basis of birth ascribed and socially defined race/ethnicity, and the ideologies which serve to rationalize these inequalities. Other topics may address the study of institutional discrimination and racial/ethnic stratification in major social institutions such as education, health care, religion and work.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3365. Sociology Of Health & Illness. 3 Hours.

Students investigate the processes by which persons assume, act, and relinquish the sick role. Topics may include the interrelationships between patient and family, doctors, and hospital; the quality and quantity of health services distributed by class and race; and the problems posed by mental illness, such as diagnosis, treatment, and involuntary commitment.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3370. Research Methods in Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students learn the logic and character of scientific and alternative means of social inquiry. Topics may include the function of observation, concept formation, proposition arrangement and testing of theory as components of the scientific process in sociology. Course Equivalents: SOCI 4340

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301.

SOCI 3371. Qualitative Methods. 3 Hours.

Students examine the principles and practices of qualitative research. Topics include qualitative techniques of design, data collection and organization, analyses, and interpretation. Students gain experience conducting and assessing qualitative research on social issues.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319; and SOCI 2399.

SOCI 3372. Demographic Techniques. 3 Hours.

Students examine demography concepts like population composition and change, mortality, fertility, migration, population distribution, population policy, and the relationship between population and environment. Students develop and apply the techniques of demographic analysis including data management, analysis, and visualization including the development of population pyramids, population projections and life tables.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319; and SOCI 2399.

SOCI 3373. Social Program Evaluation. 3 Hours.

Students will evaluate social programs in a variety of agencies, institutions, and settings. Students gain an overview of the field of program evaluation and will be exposed to hands-on experience through practical case study. Specific topics may include core knowledge, theories, and approaches to program evaluation. Students will also learn technical skills related to conducting program evaluation.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3376. Rural And Urban Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students examines the human community in its ecological, cultural, and associational aspects. Topics may include the folk, rural, and urban community considered from the standpoint of various sociological perspectives. Special attention is given to social change, including decision-making as it affects local life.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3377. Community Planning and Development. 3 Hours.

Students examine the practice of community planning and development from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Topics may include sociological theories used to examine communities, approaches used by federal and state agency personnel, municipal leaders, community, and economic practitioners to facilitate community planning and development, and the social, political and economic forces shaping communities. Students gain experience using community development frameworks and tools.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319; and SOCI 2399.

SOCI 3381. Cultural Anthropology. 3 Hours.

Students investigate the cultural and social organization of preliterate societies. Topics may include marriage, property, religion, magic, and tribal control.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3383. Sociology of Latin America. 3 Hours.

Students apply sociological concepts in order to analyze contemporary social issues in the context of Latin America. Topics may include social inequality, political repression, borderlands, socio-environmental struggles, indigenous politics, and social movements in Latin America.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3384. Economy And Society. 3 Hours.

Students investigate the relationship between economy and society. Topics may include employment opportunities for college graduates; blue collar, white collar, and professional lifestyles; origins of industrial society and effects on social stratification, minorities, and the family. Students may learn about workers' control of industry, relationships between industry and government, the sociology of labor relations and personnel management.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3392. Social Movements. 3 Hours.

Students examines the characteristics of social movements useful to the sociological study and interpretations of major social trends involving both social and cultural change in community and society. The theoretical frameworks for understanding the causes, types, and theories of social change in contemporary society are given special attention.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 3399. Gulf Field Studies. 3 Hours.

Students visit sites across the area to discuss energy development, historically underserved neighborhoods, street art and architecture, urban and rural development, and communities impacted by natural disasters and environmental challenges. As part of site visits, students will build relationships with community leaders, government officials, private sector companies, and non-profits to explore the complex issues facing the Houston metro area, Southeast Texas, and the larger Gulf region.

Prerequisite: GEOG 3398 or POLS 3398: Junior standing and approval of the instructor.

SOCI 4075. Readings in Sociology. 1-3 Hours.

Advanced students engage in independent study on a special topic approved by the chair of the department and the instructor directing the course. Variable Credit (1-3). Course Equivalents: SOCI 4375 .

SOCI 4330. Sociology of Immigration. 3 Hours.

Students develop an in-depth understanding of the theoretical tools that sociologists use for studying international migration. Topics may include the sociohistorical context of modern-day migration and the institutional forces that drive it; the social and political processes by which legality and illegality are constructed; and the consequences for immigrants and communities. Consideration is also given as to how inequalities based on race, class, and gender shape immigrants' experiences and ability to integrate into their receiving communities and the implications of these processes for social change.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 4334. Sociology Of Disaster. 3 Hours.

Students investigate how culture, inequality, and social structure and processes shape how people face disasters, how they respond and the ways in which they recover or fail to do so. Topics may include how disasters may lead to rapid social change and the foundations of sociology of disaster theory.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 4337. Environment And Society. 3 Hours.

Students examine the environment as a social and cultural issue. Topics may include an overview of the field of environmental sociology, traditional sociological perspectives on environmental issues, paradigmatic implications of environmental sociology, the development of environmental movement, the rise of environmental deterioration, public attitudes toward environmental issues, national environmental policies, and social impact assessment.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 4338. Social Gerontology. 3 Hours.

Students examine the current controversies in the field of Social Gerontology. Topics may include the various sociological theories and methods employed in the study of social gerontology, along with the biological and physiological changes related to aging. This course also explores the trends in the discipline of social gerontology, the impact of population aging on retirement patterns, income security, health care, long term care, and the politics of aging.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319.

SOCI 4339. Development & Sustainability. 3 Hours.

Students examine development, globalization, and sustainability. Topics may include the form, objectives and ramifications of development and globalization, socio-economic relations between countries, and the effects of development and globalization on people, communities, and the environment. Course Equivalents: SOCI 3336

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301 or SOCI 2319 and Junior Standing.

SOCI 4344. Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.

Students engage in a historical survey of the development of sociological thought. Emphasis is placed upon the growth of Sociology as a discipline, major areas of interest and major contributors.

Prerequisite: SOCI 1301.

SOCI 4379. Internship In Applied Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students engage in an in-depth exploration of sociological issues in an applied setting. Students are required to complete a minimum of 120 hours in an approved host organization, plus complete appropriate academic requirements. Internships are unpaid. Internships are unpaid. Fall and Spring only.

Prerequisite: Junior or senior Sociology majors, minimum GPA 3.0 or through special petition.

SOCI 4399. Senior Seminar In Sociology. 3 Hours.

Students engage in a capstone project which addresses special areas or issues in Sociology. Topics may include the career needs of Sociology majors and/or prospective teachers of Sociology.

Prerequisite: Advanced standing in Sociology and SOCI 1301 and SOCI 2399.

Director/Chair: **James Bartlett Stykes**

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