

Sociology

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Majors

The Major in Sociology

The major in sociology provides students with a rigorous understanding of the ways in which social relations and settings shape individual and group experiences and outcomes, with an emphasis on how various forms of inequality are created and propagated through time. Reflecting the diversity of social settings that motivate sociological inquiry, students will enroll in multiple introductory-level courses. We intend that these foundational courses will help students develop a sociological lens through which they can better understand the baseline determinants of inequality, social order, and change. Because the discipline draws on diverse theoretical and methodological tools to engage with these core issues, required course work ensures that students develop expertise in classical and contemporary theoretical concepts as well as both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Upper-level seminars provide majors and minors with opportunities to apply these substantive, theoretical, and methodological perspectives to focused and more intensive study of specific sociological topics. The major additionally features a capstone experience, which enables students to deploy sociological tools to undertake original work connected with a course-related research project, an internship, or an honors thesis.

The sections that follow provide a detailed overview of the sociology major, with an emphasis on providing answers to many of the questions likely to arise at each stage as well as serving as a guide to related opportunities available to our majors and minors.

Requirements:

The major requires the successful completion of 10 courses, distributed as specified below. Courses that satisfy major requirements must be completed with a letter grade of C- or better. Courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis do not satisfy program requirements.

- a. **Introductory requirement** (6 credits total): Any two 100- or 200-level sociology courses (Students may substitute an upper-level sociology course for one of their two introductory courses with the written approval of their major advisor.)
- b. **Theory requirement** (3 credits): SOC 3001 Social Theory or SOC 3002 Black Feminist Theory
- c. **Methods requirement** (6 credits): SOC 3030 Introduction to Research Methods and SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology. Because SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology draws on specific sociological applications of statistical analyses, we strongly encourage students to enroll in our department's Statistics for Sociology course. However, with the written approval of their

major advisor, students may substitute Math 2200, Math 3200, or a disciplinary statistics course from another social science for SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology. Majors who receive approval to fulfill this requirement with a course from another department or university are required to take an additional upper-level sociology elective in lieu of SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology.

- d. **Upper-level sociology electives** (15 credits): Any five 300- or 400-level seminar courses. An independent learning course (i.e., independent research, a teaching assistantship, or an internship) can fulfill one of these five elective course requirements. Courses taken to fulfill Theory and Methods requirements cannot count toward upper-level elective program credit.
- e. **Capstone:** Majors will choose to complete one of the following options:
 - i. *Capstone paper tied to an upper-level course* (at least 1 credit): Students electing this option may align the research paper with any upper-level sociology elective course taken during or prior to the semester in which they undertake this accompanying capstone paper. Capstone research papers typically are 10 to 15 pages in length and represent a researched extension of the course content addressed in an elective course taken by the student. The capstone paper topic should be developed by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students interested in this option should register for the section of SOC 4900 Capstone Paper for Sociology Majors assigned to the relevant instructor, who will then do the following: (1) approve the capstone paper topic no later than the beginning of the semester in which the capstone is to be completed; (2) be available for consultation throughout the duration of the project; (3) assign a final grade for this course; and (4) upon completion of the paper, certify the final product as fulfilling the capstone requirement. Students should schedule a meeting with the relevant instructor well prior to or at the start of the semester (i.e., well before the add/drop period) to obtain the required approval for enrollment in SOC 4900 Capstone Paper for Sociology Majors and discuss the paper.
 - ii. *Internship* (at least 2 credits): Students electing to complete a field internship are able, in consultation with their faculty advisor, to identify and select a position with an organization of their choosing. For help identifying options in St. Louis, we recommend that students reference the Gephardt Institute's internship opportunities listings (<https://gephardtinstitute.wustl.edu/for-students/>) as well as the Career Center's resource pages (<https://students.wustl.edu/career-center/>). Capstone internships are intended to integrate and apply the knowledge gained in the classroom to community and organizational settings. As such, students are required to identify a faculty advisor of their choosing to approve and oversee the experience in consultation with the on-site internship manager. (**Note:** The internship advisor need not be the same as the student's major advisor.) To receive credit for the internship, students should first obtain approval for the proposed experience from their selected faculty advisor in advance of the internship start date. The selected faculty advisor will then provide the

required permission for the student to enroll in the advisor's assigned section of SOC 4910 Internship in Sociology. Students must complete and file an Internship Learning Agreement (PDF) (http://bulletin.wustl.edu/undergrad/artsci/sociology/Learning_Agreement_Form_SOC.pdf) with the department no later than two weeks after the first day of the internship. The university stipulates 45 hours of work for each academic credit earned, so students will need to complete at least 90 internship hours — along with a series of reflective assignments arranged in consultation with their advisor — to fulfill the capstone requirement. Although only 2 credit units are required, students can register for up to 3 credit units, which would require a minimum of 135 internship hours to be completed.

- iii. *Honors thesis* (6 credits): The sociology honors thesis program is a two-semester sequence that students complete during their final year of study. Students interested in the program should submit an application in the late spring of their junior year. In the fall of their senior year, students who have been admitted to the program will enroll in the Honors Thesis Seminar, which will aid them in developing their research questions and their thesis proposals. In the spring, students will undertake independent research under faculty mentor supervision through an independent study-style course. Honors students must successfully defend their thesis in front of a faculty committee. The students are also expected to share their work by participating in department- and university-level research forums. Students who choose the thesis capstone option can apply 3 of their thesis credits toward their major elective requirement (part d in the list above). Thus, in addition to their thesis project, they would need to complete four (rather than five) additional 300- or 400-level seminar courses. Students must complete both fall and spring offerings of the honors sequence to receive this dual credit. *To be eligible for Latin honors in sociology, students must complete an honors thesis.* For more information about honors work in the department, please visit our Honors Thesis Program page (<https://sociology.wustl.edu/sociology-honors-thesis-program/>).
- iv. *In|Visible St. Louis* (3 credits): This course collaboration between the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts and the Department of Sociology provides a unique, hands-on opportunity to fulfill the capstone requirement in a formal classroom experience. As the class collectively works with St. Louis community partners to further their missions through student projects, students who enroll will learn about inequalities of power and place within the city and region. *Although first-year and sophomore students may enroll in this course, only juniors and seniors will earn capstone credit for their work. This capstone option is offered episodically; please contact the Department's Academic Coordinator to inquire about the course's upcoming availability.*