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# Major in Sociology

Wright State University

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# Wright State University

# College of Liberal Arts

# Major in Sociology

## What Is Sociology?

Since the dawn of intelligence, inhabitants of this planet have formed groups to protect themselves from the forces of their environment, to dominate or keep from being dominated by other groups, to allow their members to divide and share their labors, and to achieve harmony among a group's members.

The first and most basic social group is the family. Today's world of complex systems, highly specialized activities, and rapid communications has fostered a fast-growing array of other diverse social structures, each with a particular purpose and constituency. These groups may be ethnic, religious, political, industrial, occupational, or purely social—but any and all of society's structures, like the family, share a common characteristic: they reflect universal principles of human interrelationships and processes.

The first person to advance the notion that social organizations and processes could be studied scientifically was the French philosopher-scientist Auguste Comte. To the new discipline that he envisioned he gave the name sociology. His successors, including Herbert Spencer, Frederic Le Play, Lester Ward, and Emile Durkheim, made many contributions to the development of the newest and broadest of the social sciences.

Today sociology is a field so broad that its practitioners must specialize in one or more of its component studies. These specialty areas include marriage and the family, race and minority relations, crime and delinquency, population and migration, social psychology, urbanization, bureaucracy and complex organizations, group dynamics, methods of research and data collection, and many others.

The sociologist in pursuing a scientific study of human groups seeks to learn how social structures evolve; how groups relate

to one another; how they change; what enables some groups to survive and prosper while others decline and disappear; how a group affects its various members; and how members affect the group.

## Career Opportunities

The number of sociologists in the United States is growing at a phenomenal rate. From an estimated 4,000 persons employed in the sociology professions in 1965, the number increased to more than 12,000 in 1970. About three-fourths of all professional sociologists may be found in colleges and universities. The remainder work in federal, state, local, or international government agencies, in private industry and business, in welfare or other nonprofit organizations, in secondary education, or are self-employed.

The great majority of sociologists are engaged in some type of research. Many are employed by urban or regional planning agencies, by agricultural extension services, by departments of correction, by commerce agencies, by public relations agencies, and by mass communication facilities, such as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and other publishing enterprises.

A master's degree in sociology is usually the minimum requirement for employment as a sociologist. The Ph.D. is essential for attaining a professorship in most colleges and universities, and is usually expected of candidates for directorships of major research projects, for important administrative positions, and for consultants to industry or sales organizations.

The bachelor's in sociology can also be an excellent foundation for graduate work in the allied fields of public health, marketing, advertising, communications, public administration, and social work. Sociologists with the master's degree can

expect to earn an average annual salary above the national mean for those with degrees in the liberal arts.

## High School Preparation

There are no specific course requirements for admission to the university or to the sociology major program. However, a broad college preparatory course is recommended, including English, mathematics, the natural and social sciences, and one or more foreign languages.

## The Degree Program

Since a well-rounded, liberal education is of primary concern at Wright State, all students are required to complete a program of basic studies referred to as the General Education requirement. This includes two courses in English, three courses in a laboratory science, and nine courses in the humanities and social sciences. Students have considerable flexibility in fulfilling this requirement.

The specific program for each sociology major is worked out by the student and his or her adviser. Ordinarily, the undergraduate program is structured to prepare the student for graduate study in sociology, for advanced study in such professional programs as law, social work, hospital administration, and corrections, or for careers in community services, government, extension services, public relations, and teaching.

The departmental unit consists of a required six-course sequence and a wide range of electives in sociology. Related courses may be selected from offerings in anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, history, and social work. Students are also required to select either a foreign language or a research methods core to complete their requirements for the B.A. degree.

**Further Information**

For further information about the sociology major program, write to:

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