

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Social science is the study of human community: how communities develop, how they are organized, how they shape and are shaped by individuals, how they transform, how they endure, even how they disappear. Our work plays a role in nearly every major issue facing humanity, from poverty to climate change to healthcare to racial divides. The Division is united in its conviction that a rigorous understanding of human social life is both valuable in its own right and essential to promoting social justice in the 21st century.



Highlights

- In 2015 the UW Social Sciences were ranked the fourth best in the world by the National Taiwan University Ranking, a ranking system based on academic performance.
- The UW Social Sciences were #7 in the U.S. in their receipt of federal research dollars in the most recent ranking.
- Three divisional faculty have been inducted into the National Academy of Sciences. A number of our faculty have served as presidents of national disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarly associations. Many have also served as editors for the most highly regarded journals in our fields.
- Social science faculty have received recent awards and fellowships from, among others, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Carnegie Corporation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education.
- The Center for the Study of Demography and Ecology is one of only 11 centers in the country with both research and training center grants from the NIH and has the only biodemography laboratory in the U.S. affiliated with an NIH-funded population center.
- The Northwest Federal Statistical Research Data Center, one of 24 RDCs nationwide, was established through a collaborative funding arrangement from the National Science Foundation, the State of Washington Office of Financial Management, and the UW.

Teaching

The 13 Social Science departments and programs annually offer an average of more than 2000 courses. About 4500 students major in social science departments each year, with more than 2000 undergraduate degrees awarded annually. Our largest majors serve up to 900 majors, with smaller interdisciplinary units steadily growing in enrollments. Our newest interdisciplinary major is a fully online degree completion program in Integrated Social Sciences, organized by thematic areas rather than by disciplines.

Social science faculty are deeply committed to excellent pedagogy. More than 50 of our faculty have won the UW Distinguished Teaching Award and many of our graduate students have won the Excellence in Teaching Award. Social sciences faculty have also been prominent among recipients of other UW awards that recognize excellence in public service teaching, the advancement of learning communities, innovation with technology, and the training of our graduate students. Five Social Science faculty have won the Marsha Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award—almost one-third of all recipients.

George Lovell, Divisional Dean

DEPARTMENTS

- American Ethnic Studies
- American Indian Studies
- Anthropology
- Communication
- Economics
- Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies
- Geography
- History
- Jackson School of International Studies
- Law, Societies, and Justice
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Sociology

STUDENTS (2015-16)

- 4,421 Undergraduate majors
- 806 Graduate Students

DEGREES GRANTED (2015-16)

- 2183 Bachelor's degrees
- 189 Master's degrees
- 56 Doctoral degrees

K-12 and Community Outreach

Many social science departments have active collaborations with public and private schools in the region, offering classes taught by our faculty to K-12 teachers and offering programs such as the Sociology of Education practicum through which undergraduate students work in local schools, the Philosophy for Children program through which UW students conduct philosophy sessions in public schools, and Geography classes in which UW students and community partners collaborate on GIS mapping projects. Many social science faculty are also active with local heritage communities, serving on advisory boards for local museums, historical societies, and community groups.

Preparation for Careers

Through both formal course work and special programs, social science departments prepare students for their future careers. Social science graduates know how to search effectively for information, how to critically evaluate the plethora of data on social issues, how to collaborate effectively in groups, and how to present and communicate key ideas, both orally and visually. They also develop ethical frameworks that guide application of these skills. Advanced statistical training offered by the Center for Social Sciences and Statistics prepares students for the “Big Data” world of data-driven inquiry. Economics pairs alumni and undergraduates in mentoring relationships. Communication and Political Science each run internships in the State Capitol. Philosophy’s applied ethics courses encourage a values-based orientation. History Fellows offers career workshops on writing strong resumes, enhancing interview skills, and building networks. A division-wide Career Night brings together alumni and local professionals who share their expertise with undergraduate students preparing to enter the workforce.

Diversity and Societal Inequalities

Social sciences are the intellectual foundation of the study of human diversity and the societal inequalities associated with these differences. These are the core foci of scholarship and instruction in the Departments of American Ethnic Studies, American Indian Studies, and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies. The Division plays a central role in two related curricular programs, a Diversity Studies minor administered through American Ethnic Studies, and a Disability Studies minor administered through Law, Societies, and Justice. The Department of Political Science is home to the Washington Institute for the Study of Inequality and Race. A Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity was recently established in the Department of Communication.

Health and Well-Being

President Cauce’s Population Health Initiative conceives of health as a state of holistic physical, mental, and social well-being. Motivated by the recognition that health cannot be understood apart from social and cultural contexts, social science faculty conduct research critical to promoting well-being, ranging from studies of the inequitable distributions of the impacts of climate change; to health disparities associated with racial and socioeconomic factors; to population dynamics of infectious diseases; to how social network structures shape the transmission of diseases. Anthropology’s popular Medical Anthropology and Global Health track prepares students for a wide variety of careers in global health. History, Sociology, and Geography offer courses that help prepare students for the MCAT exams and a possible career in health sciences.

International and Global Focus

Many of our departments emphasize international and global research and instruction. The Jackson School of International Studies is home to eight National Resource Centers—area studies centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The Jackson School also sponsors the Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship program, which provides over 60 foreign language learning fellowships to students across the UW. Many social science departments offer coursework to support study abroad experiences.

FACULTY (2015-2016)

255 ACADEMIC FACULTY INCLUDING:

102	Professors
76	Associate Professors
40	Assistant Professors
1	Research Associate Professor
6	Principal Lecturers
6	Senior Lecturers
1	Artist in Residence
23	Lecturers

DIVISIONAL CENTERS

Center for Social Science Computation and Research

Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences

Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology

OTHER CENTERS

American Politics and Public Policy

Center for Communication and Civic Engagement

Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity

Center for Comparative Law and Society Studies

Center for Environmental Politics

Center for Human Rights

Center for Philosophy for Children

Center for Research on Families

Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest

Economic Policy Research Center

Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies

Program in History and Philosophy of Science

Program on Values in Society

Research Center for International Economics

Washington Institute for the Study of Inequality and Race

Women’s Center

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