DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is the scientific study of people in groups—from friendship networks to communities to entire nations. Sociologists describe the characteristics of social groups and consider explanations for social stability and social change. They promote critical thinking on issues such as social inequality, racial and ethnic conflict, law and justice, and the role of gender and sexuality.

Highlights

- The UW Department of Sociology is consistently ranked among the top 20 graduate programs in the country. In the most recent ranking from U.S. News and World Report, our specialization in the Sociology of Population was ranked 14th.
- Five members of our faculty have been honored with UW Distinguished Teaching Awards, two have received UW Distinguished Graduate Mentor Awards, and two have received Distinguished Public Service Awards.
- The undergraduate major in sociology features practicum courses in which students bring their sociological knowledge, skills, and passions to real-world settings.

Undergraduate Education

The study of sociology provides students with knowledge of and a perspective on social life that transcends their personal experience and helps them understand the world they live in. Through courses and other opportunities, students learn about the implications of technology on society, how social factors shape deviance, social control, and criminal justice contact, changes in gender and family structures, the experiences of different immigrant groups, the extent of health disparities across social groups, how political and religious institutions shape society, and the many factors that produce and reproduce social inequality.

UW Sociology courses attract more than 4,500 students each year, many of them non-majors fulfilling general education requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences and other units. We graduate over 200 majors annually.

The Sociology Honors Program offers an academically rigorous, cohort-based alternative to the general major that includes an independent research project and a thesis. Our honors program is designed for students interested in graduate work in sociology or in related professional fields.

The undergraduate major features a diverse set of practicum courses where students develop real-world experience in conjunction with classroom learning. Sociology students have worked with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Contracts Compliance Program on workplace discrimination issues; in Seattle Public Schools as tutors; at grassroots organizations like the inter-generational Vietnamese nonprofit Helping Link; and with national organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union. Our research practicum offers an opportunity for students to conduct a research project that brings their sociological knowledge and skills to the community. Recent projects have investigated the impact of Seattle's workplace scheduling ordinance on diverse populations.
Graduate Education

The department's graduate program consistently ranks among the top twenty in the country. The aim of the PhD program is to train students to be independent sociological researchers. In addition to coursework, graduate students participate in working groups, seminar series, and professionalization activities, all of which contribute to a highly collaborative intellectual environment. UW Sociology has particular strength in quantitative methods, demography, criminology and socio-legal studies, and studies of states, markets and societies; across all areas, graduate students benefit from the department's deep connections to affiliated research centers on campus. (See reverse.)

Alumni

Alumni from the Department of Sociology have translated their degrees into successful careers in business, education, law, law enforcement, social work, and government. Most of our graduate students pursue faculty careers in higher education or conduct research in private, non-profit, or government organizations.

Faculty and Research

Department faculty are engaged in research on a wide variety of important issues, including:

- how different economic and social institutions shape inequality (racial, ethnic, health, income, educational);
- the complex role of neighborhoods on violence, crime and health outcomes;
- incorporating social change into population projections;
- the role of housing finance in shaping the urban landscape;
- the creation and implications of racial disparities in the juvenile and the adult justice systems;
- the role of law in reproducing inequality;
- demographic processes in Asia;
- the role of social networks in organizational processes, migration and health outcomes;
- the role of gender and sexuality in family organization and life course experience.

Research conducted by UW Sociology faculty has directly impacted policies and programs in Seattle, Washington state, the US, and the United Nations.

Department of Sociology faculty awards and honors include:
2 Members of the National Academy of Sciences
6 Members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
6 Members of the Washington Academy of Sciences
4 Fellows at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
1 Past President of the Population Association of America
1 Past President of the American Sociological Association
5 UW Distinguished Teaching Awards
3 UW Distinguished Graduate Mentor Awards
1 UW Distinguished Public Service Award
1 UW Honors Program Excellence in Teaching Award

FACULTY (Autumn 2020)

10 Professors
4 Associate Professors
3 Assistant Professors
3 Lecturers

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Demography & Health
Inequality
Research Methods, Social Statistics, and Data-Intensive Social Science
Crime, Law & Deviance
Migration Studies
States, Markets & Society

RESEARCH PARTNERS

Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences
Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology
Comparative Law and Society Studies Center
Center for Social Science Computation and Research
eScience Institute
Population Health Initiative
Qualitative Multi-Method Research Initiative (QUAL)
Urban@UW
West Coast Poverty Center

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