What Can I Do With A Major In…

Sociology?

Compiled by the staff at the SUNY Oneonta Career Development Center

Introduction

Sociology is the study of human behavior in a social atmosphere. As a sociologist you would focus on the structure and actions of social systems within particular cultures and societies. While studying, you will touch upon subjects including: gender, religion, ethnicity, race and social class. There are a number of opportunities that would use a background in sociology. This includes careers related to health services, law and government, media arts, business and criminal justice.

Functional Skill Set for Sociology Majors:

Research
Critical thinking
Communication
Human relations
Managing
Promoting
Selling
Analyzing
Organizing
Problem solving
Conflict resolution
Detail orientation
Computer skills
Work well under pressure
Insight into group dynamics
Knowledge of social structures and change
## Career Titles for Sociology Majors:

- Addiction Specialist
- Administrative Assistant
- Admissions Counselor
- Adoption Agent
- Advanced Certified Fundraising Exec.
- Advertising Manager
- Advocate
- Aging Director
- Aging Specialist
- Alcohol and Drug Case Worker
- Bank Teller
- Bereavement Counselor
- Board Certified Diplomat
- Border Guard
- Budget Analyst
- Camp Counselor
- Career Services Counselor
- Case Aid Worker
- Case Manager
- Chaplain
- Child Abuse Investigator
- Child Welfare Officer
- City Planner
- Civic Reform Worker
- Civil Engineer
- Claims Adjuster
- Clergy
- Clinical Therapist
- Community Relations Director
- Community Service Agency Worker
- Compensation/Benefits Worker
- Congressional Aid
- Consultant
- Consumer Advocate
- Consumer Survey Advisor
- Convention Organizer
- Cooperative Extension Agent
- Coordinator
- Correctional Case Worker
- Corrections Officer
- Cottage Parent
- Criminologist
- Crisis Intervention Counselor
- Customs Inspector
- Data Analyst
- Day Care Worker
- Delinquency Counselor
- Demographic Analyst
- Detention Care Worker
- Dietitian
- Domestic Violence Counselor
- Editor
- Environment Coordinator
- Family Development
- Family Guidance Clinic Worker
- Family Preservation Case Worker
- Family Services Specialist
- Federal Program Administrator
- Financial Aid Director
- Foreign Service Officer
- Foster Care Worker
- Foster Home Developer
- Fund-Raiser/Development Officer
- Gerontologist
- Government Worker
- Group Therapist
- Guidance/School Counselor
- Health Care Worker
- HIV Counselor
- Hospice Social Worker
- Hospital Administrator
- Human Resources Administrator
- Human Rights Spokesman
- Human Services Worker
- Independent Living Trainer
- In-home Support Counselor
- Insurance Agent/Broker
- Intelligence Specialist
- Job Analyst
- Labor Relations Representative
- Lawyer
- Long Term Care Administrator
- Marketing Research Analyst
- Marriage and Family Therapist
- Mediation Counselor
- Medical Social Worker
- Mental Health Agent
- Motivational Speaker
- News Correspondent
- Nonprofit Agency Manager
- Opinion Poll Statistician
- Parole/Probation Officer
- Peace Corps/VISTA Worker
- Penologist
- Personnel Interviewer
- Personnel Specialist
- Policy Analyst
- Political Systems Researcher
- Population Specialist
- Professor
- Program Consultant
- Program Director
- Protective Service Worker
- Public Administrator
- Public Assistance Worker
- Public Health Educator
- Public Health Statistician
- Public Opinion Surveyor
- Public Relations Specialist
- Public Service Worker
- Quality Assurance Coordinator
- Recreation Director
- Recreation Therapist
- Rehabilitation Counselor
- Reporter
- Research Analyst
- Research Assistant
- Resident Assistant
- Retail Salesperson
- Sales Representative
- Secret Service Agent
- Shipping Operations Manager
- Social Movements Organizer
- Social Psychologist
- Social Science Manager
- Social Scientist
- Social Service Director
- Social Welfare Examiner
- Social Worker
- Sociologist
- Statistician
- Student Personal Worker
- Supported Living Coordinator
- Systems and Programming Specialist
- Teacher
- Technical Writer
- Therapy Aid
- Trainer
- Unit Secretary
- Urban Planner
- Veterans Affairs Specialist
- Waste Management
- Welfare Counselor
- Writer/Author
- Youth Worker
**Some Organizations that Typically Employ Sociology Majors:**

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<th>Advocacy Programs</th>
<th>Industry/Business</th>
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<td>Area Agencies on Aging</td>
<td>Insurance Companies</td>
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<td>Banks</td>
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<td>Child Welfare &amp; Youth Protection Services</td>
<td>Juvenile Justice Programs</td>
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<td>Childcare Facilities</td>
<td>Law Firms</td>
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<td>Children’s Defense Fund</td>
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<td>Churches</td>
<td>Marketing Research Firms</td>
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<td>Community Agencies/Crisis Centers</td>
<td>Mental Health Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Development &amp; Service Organizations</td>
<td>Museums</td>
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<td>Congress</td>
<td>Non-profit Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulting Firms</td>
<td>Occupational Training Centers</td>
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<td>Consumer Rights Organizations</td>
<td>Peace Corps/VISTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Correctional Facilities</td>
<td>Personnel/HRD Offices</td>
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<td>Court System</td>
<td>Private Foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Centers</td>
<td>Psychiatric Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol/Rehab Centers</td>
<td>Public Health Programs</td>
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<td>Educational Institutions</td>
<td>Public Service Agencies</td>
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<td>Employee Assistance Programs</td>
<td>Publishing Firms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal, State, Local Government Agencies</td>
<td>Recreation Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foster Care Agencies</td>
<td>Research Institutes/Firms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geriatric Centers/Nursing Homes</td>
<td>Residential Treatment Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group/Private Practice</td>
<td>Retail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-Way Houses</td>
<td>Social Service Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start Programs</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeless Projects/Shelters</td>
<td>United Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospices</td>
<td>Victim Advocate Programs</td>
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<td>Hospital, Clinics</td>
<td>Volunteer Service Department/Center</td>
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<td>Welfare Organizations</td>
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<td>Youth Agencies</td>
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</table>

**Start a Strategic Plan:**

Gain experience and develop helping skills through volunteer positions.  
Spend summers working at camps, YMCA’s or other social service agencies.  
Gain experience working with diverse populations.  
Develop excellent written and oral communication skills.  
Concentrate course work in area of interest such as youth, gerontology or poverty.
Learn a second language to interact with non-native speakers of English – particularly helpful in certain parts of the country. Take advantage of opportunities to serve as peer mentors, resident assistants, or other student leader positions. Gain essential practical experience via part-time or summer jobs, internships, or volunteer work related to your career goal. Obtain certification/licensure to teach grades K-12. Earn dual certification to increase job opportunities. Take extra courses in research and statistics. Secure strong personal recommendations, particularly from professors. Consider joining the military to jump-start a career with the government. Develop exceptional quantitative, statistical, and computer skills. Learn to use statistics software packages as well as database, spreadsheet, and desktop publishing programs. Volunteer to help a professor with a research project. Enhance curriculum with courses in ecology, environmental science, and statistics. Join environment-related student organizations. Volunteer to work on environmental clean-up projects. Earn a minor in business or take basic business classes such as accounting and finance. Join related professional associations. Earn a master’s degree in social work, counseling or other related fields to increase employment opportunities. Earn a graduate degree to teach in post-secondary institutions; master’s degree required for two-year colleges and a doctoral degree for four-year institutions.

Professional Organizations and Associations for Sociology Majors:

American Sociological Association
1722 N. Street NW
Washington DC  20036
www.asanet.org

Association of Black Sociologists
Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, MI  48859

National Council on Aging
600 Maryland Ave. SW
West Wing 100
Washington DC  20024
http://www.ncoa.org

National Association of Social Workers
750 1st St., NE Ste 700
Washington DC 20002
http://www.naswdc.org

National Urban League
500 East 62nd Street
New York, NY 10002
http://www.nul.org/

Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248

The National Network for Soc. Work Managers
PO Box 11391
Columbia, SC 29211-1391

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## SOCIOLOGY

### What can I do with this major?

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<tr>
<th>AREAS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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</table>
| **HUMAN SERVICES** | Community service agencies  
Counseling  
Case Management  
Advocacy  
Mental Health Services  
Programming  
Administration | Gain experience and develop helping skills through volunteer positions.  
Spend summers working at camps, YMCA’s, or other social service agencies.  
Gain experience working with diverse populations.  
Develop excellent communication skills.  
Concentrate course work in an area of interest such as youth, gerontology, or poverty.  
Learn a second language in order to interact with non-English speakers and increase marketability.  
Serve as a peer mentor, resident assistant, or other student leader.  
Earn a master’s degree in social work, counseling, or other related field to increase employment opportunities.  
Most states require licensure or certification for positions involving the direct provision of therapeutic services to clients. | | | |
| **CRIMINAL JUSTICE** | Correctional institutions  
Court systems  
Federal, state, and local government (especially law enforcement agencies) | Gain practical experience via part-time or summer jobs, internships, or volunteer work.  
Volunteer to work with troubled youth.  
Obtain a graduate or law degree for advancement.  
Consider obtaining experience in a branch of the military. | | | |
| **EDUCATION** | Public and private schools  
Colleges and universities  
Adult education providers | Obtain certification/licensure to teach grades K-12.  
Become certified to teach multiple subjects and age groups for increased job opportunities.  
Earn a graduate degree for post-secondary teaching opportunities.  
Assist a professor with research.  
Take extra courses in research and statistics.  
Develop exceptional written and oral communication skills.  
Volunteer as a tutor.  
Secure strong personal recommendations, particularly from professors. | | | |
### AREAS

#### GOVERNMENT
- Social Statistics
- Demography
- Public Administration
- Policy Analysis
- Research
- Program Development
- Human Services
- City Planning
- Law Enforcement

#### SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
- Research
- Data Analysis
- Demography
- Market Research
- Information Sourcing

#### ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY
- Waste management firms
- Health agencies
- Local planning agencies
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Environmental periodicals
- Federal government
- Regional, state, and local agencies
- Consulting firms
- Private industry

### EMPLOYERS

- Federal departments and agencies such as:
  - Departments of Agriculture, Education, Interior, Commerce, Defense
  - Health and Human Services
  - Drug Enforcement Administration
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  - Housing and Urban Development
  - Veteran’s Administration
  - National Institutes of Health
  - National Institute of Aging
  - State and local government
  - Peace Corps

### STRATEGIES

- Supplement curriculum with coursework in statistics and social research.
- Develop exceptional computer, communication, and research skills.
- Gain work experience via government internships, part-time jobs, or summer work.
- Develop a specialty such as aging, family, criminal justice, or healthcare.
- Learn the federal job application process.
- Obtain a graduate degree for advanced positions.
- Consider beginning a career with the government by joining the military.

- Develop exceptional quantitative, statistical, and writing skills.
- Learn to use statistics software packages as well as database, spreadsheet, and desktop publishing programs.
- Volunteer to help a professor with a research project.
- Obtain an advanced degree in sociology for research administration positions.
- Earn certification in applied social research by The American Sociological Association.
- Network with professionals working in areas of interest.
- Gain experience working on teams.

- Enhance curriculum with courses in ecology, environmental science, and statistics.
- Join environment-related student organizations.
- Volunteer to work on environmental clean-up projects.
- Find a related internship, part-time, or summer job.
- Obtain a graduate degree for advancement.
### Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th>EMPLOYERS</th>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Insurance firms</td>
<td>Earn a minor in business or supplement curriculum with courses in general business, accounting, and finance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>Retail stores</td>
<td>Gain business experience through part-time jobs, summer work, and internships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting</td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>Develop excellent computer skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Staffing agencies</td>
<td>Learn to use software applications such as spreadsheets, databases, and word processing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>Manufacturing companies</td>
<td>Hone written and oral communication skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Service industries</td>
<td>Join related professional associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Non-profit organizations</td>
<td>Seek leadership roles in student organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Administration</td>
<td>Healthcare organizations</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### General Information

- Many transferable skills such as analytical, organizational, research, interpersonal, computer, leadership, teamwork, and oral/written communication are associated with the sociology degree.
- Internships, part-time jobs, summer jobs, and/or volunteer experiences are critical.
- An undergraduate degree is sufficient for many entry-level positions in business, industry, and government; however, a graduate degree is likely to be more desirable in a competitive market.
- An undergraduate degree in sociology is great preparation for graduate or professional education in sociology, law, counseling, psychology, social work, medicine, education, college student personnel, higher education administration, and other related fields. Research pre-requisites for graduate or professional programs of interest.
- To enhance graduate or professional school opportunities, maintain a high grade point average, secure strong faculty recommendations, join student or professional organizations, and gain relevant experience outside of the classroom through work, internship, volunteer, and research opportunities.
- A Ph.D. is required for teaching at the four-year university level.
- For human or social service positions, gain experience with a population of interest (i.e., children, college students, elderly adults) and develop multicultural sensitivity and understanding.
- Talk with professionals working in areas of interest.