



Social Life, Social Change, Social Justice: Your Guide to Pursuing a Bachelor's in Sociology



MARYMOUNT
UNIVERSITY

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Sociology — Defined

Choosing Sociology



Defined by the [American Sociological Association](#), sociology is “the study of society — a social science involving the study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies. It’s the study of our behavior as social beings, covering everything from the analysis of short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to the study of global social processes.”

Sociology’s subject matter is diverse and varied. It observes subjects ranging from race to religion, from the family to the state, and from social stability to social change. The purpose of sociology is to comprehend how human behaviors shape and change our social structures.

Individuals who are inspired to pursue social justice, who are concerned about ensuring human rights, and who see themselves making a difference in the world are well-suited for pursuing a bachelor’s degree in sociology.

Choosing sociology as the focus of your college education can come with some questions and concerns. If you’re unsure if you’re well-suited to pursue a B.A. in Sociology, consider the following questions:

Are you interested in the topics that sociologists explore?

Sociologists are concerned with global and local challenges like inclusive urban development, intercultural dynamics, and immigration policy. A sociology program would allow you to further study and prepare yourself to address challenges such as these.

Do you value using evidence-based approaches to address challenges?

Sociologists rely on research to better understand everyday life and to make our communities better places to live, work, and play. If you’re passionate about understanding how to make the world a better place, a sociology major could be the perfect fit for you.

Do you want to learn how to use the tools of inquiry and research to make a difference in the world?

Sociology majors develop a range of transferable skills that allow you to be an engaged member of your community. A sociology degree prepares you to address topics, to name a few, related to gender, race and ethnicity, religion, social class, cultural diversity, globalization, and migration — all important for impacting the world in a positive way.

Sociology challenges you to examine the factors that shape everyday life and question what is often taken for granted. If you’re interested in making a tangible difference in the world, sociology could be the perfect field of study for you.

Notable Professionals Who Studied Sociology

Careers in Sociology



There are so many accomplished people with degrees (of varying levels of advancement) in sociology. The American Sociological Association highlights these professionals and pioneers, who earned their degree in sociology.

Jane Addams: Community Organizer, Political Activist, Second Woman to Win the [Nobel Peace Prize](#)

Martin Luther King: Civil Rights Leader, Winner of the [Nobel Peace Prize](#)

Ronald Reagan: Governor of California, [Two-Term President of the United States of America](#)

Michelle Obama: Attorney, [Health and Fitness Advocate](#), Former First Lady of the United States of America

Diane Vaughan: Public Sociologist, [Research contributed to improving NASA](#) after several space shuttle disasters

Although the majority of “sociologists” work in research and development (31 percent), the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that greater growth will occur in related jobs that call on the skills developed in sociology programs. Very few of these jobs are advertised as “Help wanted: Looking for a sociologist.” The advantage of the sociology major is that students learn transferable skills needed to work in a variety of jobs.

According to [research conducted by the American Sociological Association](#), “sociology graduates who use the concepts and skills that they learned as undergraduates on the job are better positioned for long-term careers, are happy that they majored in sociology, and are well positioned to assist their communities in creating a better world.”

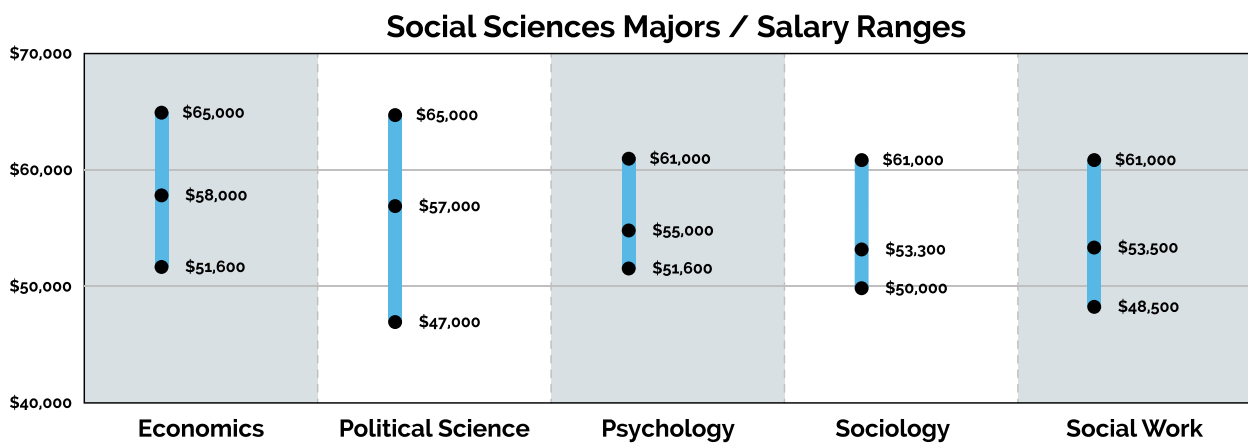
In short, a sociology degree is versatile and prepares you for a variety of occupational environments. Here are several career options for those who hold an undergraduate degree in sociology:

- Activist
- Admissions Counselor
- Advocate
- Analyst
- Business Owner
- Career Counselor
- Case Worker
- Community Organizer
- Community Relations Specialist
- Consultant
- Delinquency Counselor
- Education Specialist
- Labor Relations Representative
- Marketing Assistant
- Nonprofit Director
- Parks and Recreation Program Director
- Peace Corps Volunteer
- Policy Analyst
- Rehabilitation Counselor
- Researcher
- Social and Community Service Managers
- Teacher
- Volunteer coordinator
- Writer

Salary Ranges

Salaries upon graduation vary dramatically, depending on where you work (company size and region of the country) and your language proficiency in multiple languages. National level data is often provided for social science majors. In the graphic below, we see a comparison by discipline for economics, political science, psychology, and social work.

In this [chart developed by NACE](#), the salary ranges represent starting salaries for graduates with a bachelor's degree.



Without knowing the number of years on the job, level of education, and type of organizational setting, it is difficult to compare salary data by discipline or assess whether the data is an accurate measure for your chosen career path. For instance, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the salary range for those in the role of social and community service manager is \$67,580 (for those in [non-profits/NGOs](#)) to \$82,100 (for those working in [local government positions](#)).

Some sources report higher salaries for sociologists. For example, the [2017 LinkedIn Salary Report](#) reports \$87,900 as an average salary for sociologists, however, caution should be used when interpreting any salary information.

Choosing a Program

Marymount University's B.A. in Sociology



If you've decided to pursue a major in sociology, you should start considering the best program for your goals.

Before choosing a sociology program, consider the questions below to ensure that you pick a program that will prepare you well to make a difference in your community and find a satisfying career.

- What areas of research are the faculty engaged in?
- Will you be able to assist faculty with research?
- What kinds of courses will you be required to take?
- What electives are offered?
- What is the student to faculty ratio?
- Will you have the opportunity to participate in an internship or field-placement experiences?
- What kind of study abroad opportunities are available?

At the Department of Sociology at Marymount University, we focus on empowering students to value diversity as strength, recognize internationality as a gift and understand the dynamics of inclusion. The Sociology major embodies Marymount's tradition of cultivating an appreciation of the value of difference and challenging structural foundations of social injustice.

In our applied curriculum, students develop transferable skills that are valued by employers such as critical reasoning, data collection and analysis, the foundational knowledge needed to work with different community groups, and communication skills.

We help students to further refine their critical reasoning and analytical skills, allowing them to synthesize and translate social scientific research into layman's terms; for example, students learn to:

- Apply recent scholarship to inform civic engagement, policy debates, and to promote public understanding of issues related to social justice.
- Differentiate between issues that are limited to the local level versus those that extend beyond the local to regional, national or global.

Across our curriculum, students acquire data collection and analysis skills; as a result, students leave our program with the ability to evaluate the strengths and limitations of data from a variety of sources and collected by a variety of methods. In our courses, students gain the foundational knowledge needed to work with different community groups, including those who are often under-represented, in a way that:

- Yields a more encompassing understanding of the topic at hand
- Values developing and maintaining a variety of relationships on multiple levels
- Appreciates the role of active and reflective listening

Through their sociology coursework, students develop effective communication skills, including strong oral, written and visual presentations in a variety of formats. When they graduate our students are confident in their abilities to communicate sociological ideas to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Our students also focus their studies on addressing inequality and achieving justice in a world of diversity and difference. All required courses in our major contribute to this departmental focus. You'll take courses such as Working for Justice, Working for Change, Social Justice, and Addressing Injustice. The electives in our program explore aspects of diversity or inequality such as Gender Inequality in Global Perspective, Cultural Diversity, Topics in Human Rights or Global Inequality & Community Development.

We value diversity and foster inclusive classrooms in which all students – independent of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, disability, or immigration status – become engaged members of our university community. By promoting mutual recognition and respect across our differences in the classroom makes it possible for us to address the divisive social challenges we face today.

The Sociological Journey

Our students come from all over the globe and from all walks of life: An appreciation of this diversity is central to building the common ground that distinguishes Marymount University's heritage. It also serves as the basis for meaningful conversations in the classroom and provides opportunities for students to develop collaboration skills.

Our students gain first-hand research experience. Students can explore topics of personal interest by working on independent study projects or assisting faculty members whose research and areas of expertise cover a range of fields within sociology. Students also have the opportunity to present at Marymount's Student Research Conference.

Our students are encouraged to expand their horizons and find new ways of exploring the world. Marymount offers several study abroad programs, and students are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities. Whether it is learning in a global classroom over Spring Break, a short-term summer course, or a semester abroad, this range of global experiences provides you the opportunity to develop intercultural competence. Visit our Center for Global Education to learn more about the career benefits of study abroad.

Our students make a difference. Grounded in a liberal arts curriculum, a degree in Sociology from Marymount prepares students for a range of careers – including working to make a difference locally through community development initiatives, and working for global change with non-governmental organizations or international institutions. Your training in sociology will provide you with a unique ability to understand the world we live in and the rapid changes being brought about by globalization.

Global Perspective

Marymount University's Sociology program adopts an applied approach to learning that integrates a global perspective throughout the program. Our department is committed to building a community of students and faculty who share the common interest in understanding the importance of global connections and the benefits of cultural diversity. We accomplish these goals in terms of what we do and how we understand our place in the world – how we work collaboratively with the many communities that we serve.

Our program's applied focus on global issues will help you to:

- Explore social justice issues in local, national, and global communities
- Focus on diversity in a global context
- Identify cross-border connections in our rapidly changing world
- Address social challenges at home and around the world

Similarly, the [Sociology Department](#) offers globally networked classes that connect faculty and students who are located in another country. Currently the department offers globally networked classes with partner universities in Mexico and the Netherlands.

In collaboration with partners at the Hanze University of Applied Science, Dr. Janine DeWitt and her colleague, Loes Damhof, have pioneered this form of global learning by offering [The Global Village](#). This course is taken simultaneously by students at both universities. The professors and students meet together for presentations and guided discussions, sharing their observations of globalization in the communities where they live, work, and play. Through these exchanges students on both sides of the Atlantic gain a deeper understanding of globalization, identify its different impacts on people within their communities, and build valuable career skills by working on intercultural teams.

Dr. Matt Bakker and his colleague, Terry Graham at ITESO University in Guadalajara, Mexico connect their two human rights-focused courses. Using video conferencing software and other communications technologies, they bring their students together for discussions and group projects. By building relationships across the border, studying together, and sharing their perspectives, students develop a better understanding of human rights across the US-Mexico divide and beyond.

Internship Opportunities

The nearby resources of Washington D.C. offer abundant and exciting career opportunities for sociology majors. Sociology majors gain practical work experience by completing one of two course offerings during their senior year: an internship (SOC 400) or a community engagement project (SOC 497).

SOC 400 requires students to complete a semester-long placement entailing 120 hours of supervised work and the related academic requirements. SOC 497 requires students to complete a ten-week placement for a minimum of 80 supervised hours and the related academic requirements. Working with their advisor, students select the placement that best meets their career goals.

[Marymount's Sociology students have participated in a variety of internships](#) including placements with:

- Bonder & Amanda Johnson Community Development Corporation
- Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter
- Tenants and Workers United
- Community Gardens, D.C. Department of Parks & Recreation
- Offender Restoration of Arlington
- Northern Virginia Family Services
- The Shepherd Program Internship Program
- Earth Day Network
- 3greenmoms
- Youth Service America
- Separated Children Seeking Asylum

Study Abroad

Sociology majors often take advantage of the [study abroad opportunities available at Marymount](#). The Sociology department works closely with Marymount's Center for Global Education (CGE) to offer a variety of study abroad experiences, including the [Global Classroom Series](#), and the Short-Term Summer Programs - like this [short-term study abroad opportunity in Cuba](#).

Some recent sociology study abroad courses include:

- Netherlands: Through the Sociological Lens (Spring 2014)
- Kenya: Addressing Injustice (Summer 2014)
- Belize: Through the Sociological Lens (Summer 2015)
- France: Diversity, Community, and The Church (Summer 2015)
- El Salvador: The Global Village (Spring 2016)
- Netherlands: Through the Sociological Lens (Spring 2017)
- Cuba: Global Inequality and Community Development (Spring 2018)
- Portugal: Topics in Human Rights (upcoming in Spring 2019)

Program Options & Partnership Agreement

Students interested in studying Sociology at Marymount University may choose to complete a [major](#), [minor](#), or [double major](#) in Sociology.

With careful planning, you can easily complete two majors within the 120 credits required for graduation. For example, you can combine your interest in the major social challenges of our time such as immigration, human rights, cultural diversity, and gender or racial inequality with other majors at the university. The following planning guides give you an idea of how this might work with other social science fields:

- [Sociology and Criminal Justice](#)
- [Sociology and Economics](#)
- [Sociology and Politics](#)
- [Sociology and Psychology](#)

A partnership agreement between Marymount University and [The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law \(CUA Law\)](#) makes it possible for eligible students pursuing a degree in sociology to receive direct admission to CUA Law after successful completion of three years of undergraduate study. Interested students should meet with their advisors as soon as possible to review program requirements and fit.

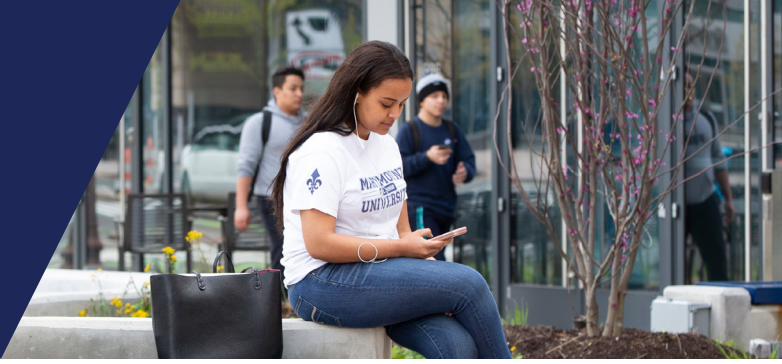
Sociology to Pre-Med

Increasing numbers of sociology graduates are applying to Pre-Med programs and pursuing their doctoral degrees in what was previously considered to be a path exclusively for biology majors. Despite its basis in social sciences, an undergraduate degree in sociology is highly versatile and can lend itself to a wide variety of career paths and graduate programs.

Sociology teaches students to study human behavior and patterns, fostering their ability to [make connections and see the bigger picture](#), which are both necessary skills when working in the medical field. Sociology also offers students a strong foundation in understanding the factors that contribute to [social and behavioral determinants of health](#).

To translate a sociology degree into a Pre-Med pathway, students will need to take [additional science courses](#), and pass the MCATs. Biology is only one of the many integrated subjects tested on the MCAT. In recent [revisions of the MCAT](#), sociology accounts for a greater portion of the test, with an in-depth look at the social, psychological, and behavioral sciences. In addition to their in-depth and integrated understanding of the human person, this gives sociology majors an advantage in pursuing medical degrees.

Additional Reading



Versatility Matters: 8 Majors for Students Unsure of Their Future Career



7 Majors for Students Who Enjoy Reading, Writing, & Researching



Why Diversity is so Important to the Marymount Experience



Perks You Should Know About Going to a Small College



Admissions & Financial Aid

Connect With Us



Marymount University (MU) has varying admissions requirements depending on your current academic standing. [Visit Marymount's website for more information on applying to Marymount](#) as a high school student, transfer student, or returning/non-degree student.

Last year, Marymount undergraduates received nearly \$16 million in grant and scholarship aid. MU's generous [financial aid programs](#) give freshmen a leg up in financing a great education. Get started with these easy options:

- See if you qualify for a [Marymount Academic Scholarship](#)
- Explore our various [Scholars and Honors programs](#)
- Learn about our referral program, the [Refer-a-Saint Scholarship](#).

In the meantime, check out two of our most popular resources. Whether you're preparing to tackle the college admissions process or considering financing a college education, our Team at Marymount University is here to help. Click below to explore our resources!

THE ONE-STOP COLLEGE APPLICATION STOP

YOUR GUIDE TO FINANCING YOUR EDUCATION

The Admissions Professionals at Marymount University are available and willing to answer your questions, address your concerns, and help you make an informed decision about your next academic venture. We hope you'll take advantage of our accessible Admissions Team and request more information today!

We can't wait to hear from you!

REQUEST MORE INFORMATION

APPLY NOW

