

What Can I Do With A Degree In Sociology?



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A Look At Some Options For Sociology Majors

A lot of people take their first sociology course simply to fill a college requirement, not knowing much about the field before stepping into that first course. Soon after, however, many of these people fall in love with the subject matter and decide to major in it. If this is you, you may be asking yourself, "What can I do with a degree in sociology?"

Most people who think of themselves as "sociologists" or have the word "sociologist" in their job title, have graduate training, but B.A.s in sociology apply the sociological perspective to a wide variety of jobs in such sectors as business, the health professions, the criminal justice system, social services, and government.

As a strong liberal arts major, a B.A. in sociology provides several things:

- The undergraduate degree provides a strong liberal arts preparation for entry level positions throughout the business, social service, and government worlds. Employers look for people with the skills that an undergraduate education in sociology provides.
- Since its subject matter is intrinsically fascinating, sociology offers valuable preparation for careers in journalism, politics, public relations, business, or public administration--fields that involve investigative skills and working with diverse groups.
- Many students choose sociology because they see it as a broad liberal arts base for professions such as law, education, medicine, social work, and counseling. Sociology provides a rich fund of knowledge that directly pertains to each of these fields.

With advanced degrees (M.A. or Ph.D.), the more likely it is that a job will have the title sociologist, but many opportunities exist--the diversity of sociological careers ranges much further than what you might find under "S" in the Sunday newspaper employment ads. Many jobs outside of academia do not necessarily carry the specific title of sociologist:

- become high school teachers or faculty in colleges and universities, advising students, conducting research, and publishing their work. Over 3,000 colleges currently offer sociology courses.
- Sociologists enter the corporate, non-profit, and government worlds as directors of research, policy analysts, consultants, human resource managers, and program managers.
- Practicing sociologists with advanced degrees may be called research analysts, survey researchers, gerontologists, statisticians, urban planners, community developers, criminologists, or demographers.
- Some M.A. and Ph.D. sociologists obtain specialized training to become counselors, therapists, or program directors in social service agencies.

Today, sociologists embark upon literally hundreds of career paths. Although teaching and conducting research remains the dominant activity among the thousands of professional sociologists today, other forms of employment are growing both in number and significance. In some sectors, sociologists work closely with economists, political scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, social workers, and others, reflecting a growing appreciation of sociology's contributions to interdisciplinary analysis and action.

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