Sociology & Criminology

Sociologists study human life as the product of social relationships and interdependencies. Individuals rarely live or develop in isolation. Our connections with others shape almost everything about how we live in, understand, and cope with the world around us. This perspective, known as the “sociological imagination,” encourages students to recognize how other individuals, groups, institutions, and international circumstances influence how people think, act, and behave. By understanding the power of social contexts, sociologists develop ever deeper understandings of social problems and inequities that hamper human flourishing.

THE PROGRAM
The Department offers a Sociology major (33 credits) and a minor (18 credits). The major develops skills in social theorizing and research through courses in general sociology, statistics, research methods, classical social theory, contemporary social theory, and sociological analysis. Students complete their program with electives in subjects such as crime, deviance, sociology of education, social psychology, social and economic inequity, race relations, education, and religion. Sociology minors are free to complete their program with electives after completing an introductory sociology course.

Criminology is offered as a major (33 credits) and minor (18 credits) which introduce students to sociological perspectives on the causes, consequences, and control of criminal behavior. Course work focuses on the development and organization of criminal justice institutions, especially the police, courts, and corrections. Students examine pressing social issues such as racial profiling, mass incarceration, and prisoner re-entry.

RESEARCH & PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE
The Sociology & Criminology Department urges students to design and implement research projects under faculty supervision. These projects deepen knowledge on specific subjects and develop research skills. The American Sociological Association encourages undergraduates to submit their research papers, which are then evaluated for creativity and potential contributions to the discipline. Students interested in applying classroom lessons to real-life situations may take advantage of the Department’s internships and practicums. As the Inland Northwest’s largest city, Spokane offers numerous opportunities for students to serve in social service agencies and criminal justice institutions.

OUTCOMES
Gonzaga Sociology and Criminology graduates pursue a wide variety of careers in fields such as public health, social policy, data analysis, urban planning, law, law enforcement, education, counseling, and social work.

Prior to entering the workforce or attending graduate school, students often volunteer in humanitarian and nonprofit organizations such as AmeriCorps, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and the Peace Corps.

Gonzaga Sociology and Criminology graduates have participated in graduate study programs at the following institutions:
- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- Eastern Washington University
- Georgetown University School of Law
- Gonzaga University School of Law
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Loyola University Chicago
- McGill University
- Northwestern University
- Portland State University
- Santa Clara University School of Law
- St. John’s University School of Law
- Syracuse University
- University of Southern California
- University of Washington
- University of Washington Law School
- Washington State University
THE PEOPLE
In addition to teaching, Sociology Department faculty serve as advisors and mentors that assist students with academic and professional planning. Many faculty members also belong to the American Sociological Association and the Pacific Sociological Association.
As the major in Criminology is interdisciplinary, professors from the Departments of Psychology, Political Science, and adjunct faculty working in criminal justice fields join Sociology and Criminology Department professors in student instruction and advising.

FACULTY CONTACTS & SPECIALTIES
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