Sociology

Sociology is the study of human societies. We ask basic questions like “why do humans do what we do” and “how does society work.” Along the way we pick up essential human questions like: What does it mean when we say that we live in a socially constructed reality? What is the place of the individual in society? Do we have “free will,” or are our personal actions determined by social forces? Is social life really what Thomas Hobbes called the “war of all against all”? Why do we have social order?

If you have ever thought about questions like these, you might want to consider a degree in sociology. Humans are social beings and we interact in a social environment. Sociology is the scientific discipline that studies human behavior and social interactions of individuals, groups, organizations and whole societies. Sociology is a science, and was identified in the 1830s as one of the five “mother sciences” along with astronomy, chemistry, physics, and biology, and as such overlaps with other social sciences (political science, economics, psychology, and anthropology) though we maintain our unique perspective. Sociology focuses primarily on contemporary societies, though we incorporate a historical and developmental perspective.

The sociology program at Marshall University offers students the opportunity to study the intricacies of social life: how to negotiate the collaboratively constructed institutions through which our social world works, how social stratification affects opportunities for individuals and groups, how to critically analyze the problems inherent in the way we construct society, how to empirically determine the facts we construct into truths. The social and analytical skills developed through the program are essential for any job dealing with people and organizations – especially those dealing in multiethnic and global environments and that require breadth and adaptability.

You don’t often see jobs with “sociologist” in the title, but a sociology BA is recognized as an excellent preparation for a wide variety of occupations, especially for careers in social policy, education, union organizing or other social movements, health care, criminology, aging network, industrial or public relations, marketing, human resource management, organizational research, or community and social services. Of course, Marshall’s sociology program also offers an excellent preparation for professional degrees and/or advanced degrees in sociology. A recent study by CareerCast.com ranked sociology as the eighth most appealing job in its analysis of 200 occupations based on job characteristics such as perceived work environment, income, employment outlook, physical demands, security, and stress.

The sociology program at Marshall seeks to ensure that each student develops a solid foundation in the principles, theories and techniques of analysis in the discipline. While allowing for flexibility to accommodate students' diverse interests, the curriculum ensures that students are introduced to social theory, learn to employ the basic methods of the discipline, and take courses that provide a good orientation in the discipline both in breadth and depth.

Major in Sociology
To graduate with a major in sociology, a student must take 36 credits of required core classes and electives as described below.

The required core of the sociology major consists of 18 credits (6 classes):
SOC 200 Introductory Sociology
SOC 344 Social Research I
SOC 345 Social Statistics I
SOC 360 Sociological Perspectives
SOC 391 Junior Seminar
SOC 475 Senior Seminar (Capstone)

An additional 18 credits (6 classes) of electives must be chosen from classes with the SOC prefix. These electives must include:
a) a minimum of three classes from courses in one of the focus areas listed below to develop program depth; this selection must include the italicized course as the foundation course for that focus area.
b) classes that contribute to two other focus areas to develop program breadth.
c) free electives: the remaining 3-9 credits can be fulfilled by any class with the SOC prefix, including Independent Study and Internship. The number of remaining credits will vary dependent on the selection of courses to satisfy requirement a) and b) above. Some classes are listed in more than one focus area and a student can count such classes in more than one focus area for this requirement; however, the requirement for the total number of credit hours must of course still be met.

The focus areas are as follows:

<u>Organizations & Institutions</u>
SOC 300 Social Organization
SOC 362 Health, Culture, and Society
SOC 408 The Family
SOC 433 Sociology of Work
SOC 450 Sociology of Religion
SOC 464 Complex Organizations

<u>Stratification/Diversity</u>
SOC 375 Social Stratification
SOC 423 Social Class, Power and Conflict
SOC 425 Race and Ethnicity
SOC 432 Sociology of Appalachia
SOC 440 Introduction to the Sociology of Aging
SOC 455 Sociology of Sex and Gender

<u>Social Problems & Collective Behavior</u>
SOC 310 Individual and Society

SOC 311 Deviance and Social Control
SOC 313 Contemporary Social Issues and Problems
SOC 413 Social Movements and Social Change
SOC 420 Criminology
SOC 435 Juvenile Delinquency
SOC 460 Holocaust & Genocide

<u>Demography, Health, and Human Environments</u>
SOC 362 Health, Culture, and Society
SOC 401 Population and Human Ecology
SOC 432 Sociology of Appalachia
SOC 440 Introduction to the Sociology of Aging
SOC 442 Urban Sociology
SOC 452 Sociology of Death and Dying

Marshall Plan Computer Competency Requirement
By successfully completing SOC 344, sociology majors fulfill the Computer Competency requirement.

Marshall Plan Capstone Requirement
By successfully completing SOC 475, sociology majors fulfill the Capstone requirement.

Minor in Sociology
A minor in sociology requires at least 15 credits. As listed below, 9 of these credits constitute the core of the minor. The remainder of the required credits can be taken from any class with the prefix SOC. A maximum of 6 credits below 300-level can be counted towards the minor.

The required core of the sociology minor consists of 9 credits (3 classes):
SOC 200 Introductory Sociology
SOC 344 Social Research I
SOC 360 Sociological Perspectives

Students majoring or minoring in sociology are strongly encouraged to discuss with an advisor (in the department and/or in the office of the dean of the College of Liberal Arts) ways in which the requirements in the major/minor simultaneously cover parts of the general education requirements in the College of Liberal Arts and/or the Marshall Plan.