

# Sociology Department

## STUDENT HANDBOOK



CLARK  
UNIVERSITY



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# DIRECTORY OF DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Parminder Bhachu  
Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 410

phone: 508-793-7599  
[pbhachu@clarku.edu](mailto:pbhachu@clarku.edu)

Jack Delehanty  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 409

phone: 508-793-7230  
[jdelehanty@clarku.edu](mailto:jdelehanty@clarku.edu)

Matthew Gregory  
Visiting Assistant Professor  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 413

phone: 508-793-7529  
[mgregory@clarku.edu](mailto:mgregory@clarku.edu)

Joseph Guzman  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 411

phone: 508-793-7267  
[joguzman@clarku.edu](mailto:joguzman@clarku.edu)

Deborah Merrill  
Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 405

phone: 508-793-7284  
[dmerrill@clarku.edu](mailto:dmerrill@clarku.edu)

Rosalie Torres Stone, Department Chair  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 415

phone: 508-793-7376  
[rtorresstone@clarku.edu](mailto:rtorresstone@clarku.edu)

Shelly Tenenbaum  
Professor of Sociology  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 407

phone: 508-793-7241  
[stenenbaum@clarku.edu](mailto:stenenbaum@clarku.edu)

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## **Staff**

Sarah M. Barry  
Managerial Assistant  
Jefferson Academic Center, Room 401

phone: 508-793-7243  
fax: 508-793-8854  
[sbarry@clarku.edu](mailto:sbarry@clarku.edu)

# STUDYING SOCIOLOGY AT CLARK

As an undergraduate major, the Sociology Department has two principal missions. The first is disciplinary and involves introducing students to the theoretical and methodological content of sociology. The second addresses the general education goals of a liberal arts program of study. Sociology is a broad field unified by its theoretical attention to history, culture, and social structure and their effects on human behavior. Sociology encompasses substantial variation in method and perspective. At Clark we offer an approach to the discipline that is largely grounded in empirical social science and classical theoretical traditions.

The American sociologist C. Wright Mills described the perspective of sociology as the "sociological imagination." This point of view enables us to see the ways in which individual lives are shaped by larger social forces. Mills argues that we cannot fully understand ourselves without understanding the society in which we live:

*[People] do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change ... The well being they enjoy, they do not impute to the big ups and downs of the society in which they live. Seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary people do not usually know what this connection means for the kind of people they are becoming and for the kinds of history-making in which they might take part. They do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of individuals and society, of biography and history, of self and the world.*

At Clark, the sociology faculty is committed to developing such an analytical capacity in students. We are committed to developing your capacity to understand the relations between local situations and larger structures.

The skills and competencies we seek to develop in our majors include critical thinking, writing, quantitative literacy, comparative analysis, and logical reasoning.

## THE SOCIOLOGY MAJOR

One of the questions most frequently asked by students is "What can I do with a degree in sociology?" Because of the emphasis placed on critical thinking, analytical and communicative skills, and methodological training, students majoring in sociology are well equipped to enter a variety of occupations as well as professional and graduate schools. Sociology majors have gone to law school, medical school, social work programs, and business school. Others have become marketing analysts, city planners, government policy analysts, university administrators, and political consultants.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

The sociology major develops a number of related skills, so that students are able to

- Develop the ability to make connections between individual lives and broader social forces.
- Identify, compare, contrast, and synthesize basic theoretical orientations in the discipline.

- Apply theory to data to build sociological knowledge.
- Identify, compare, and contrast basic methodological approaches.
- Identify appropriate methods for empirical research.
- Conceptualize and interrogate patterns of inequality in local and global contexts.
- Understand diversity and its structural and cultural implications.

## MAJOR REQUIREMENTS: OVERVIEW

The sociology major consists of eleven courses within the department, which must include the following:

SOC 010 or SOC 012: Introduction to Sociology  
 SOC 201: Classical Sociological Theory  
 SOC 202: The Social Research Process  
 SOC 208: Class, Status, and Power  
 A capstone seminar

Students are encouraged to begin with Introduction to Sociology. Majors should plan to complete Classical Sociological Theory and The Social Research Process prior to the senior year. Introduction to Sociology (SOC 010 or 012) is a prerequisite for Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 201), and Classical Sociological Theory is a prerequisite for Class, Status and Power (SOC 208). Students should take their capstone seminar their senior year.

Students may **substitute** the following for SOC 202 - Social Research Process:  
 PSCI 107 - Research Methods, GEOG 141 - Research Design and Methods in Geography, or  
 BOTH PSYC 105 - Statistics AND PSYC 109 – Qualitative Methods in Psychology.

All majors must also complete six additional sociology credits. At least three of these six courses must be at the 200 level. These credits may be fulfilled through the completion of six regular courses or through a combination of coursework, internships (maximum of two credits), or directed study.

Of the five required courses for the major, three *must* be taken on campus. Of the eleven total courses for the major, six must be taken on campus. COPACE courses *are not counted* for sociology credit. To receive credit toward the sociology major, students *must* earn a course grade of C- or better. If students take courses with a Pass/Fail option, then a maximum of two courses that receive Pass grades will count towards the major.

It is the policy of the Sociology Department that students may miss no more than one-third of the classes for any one course in order to pass the course. This is in addition to the attendance policy of the individual faculty member.

# CAPSTONE REQUIREMENT

Sociology majors *must* take a capstone seminar. To enroll in a capstone seminar, students must have completed Introduction to Sociology (SOC 10 or SOC 12), Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 201), and The Social Research Process (SOC 202). Each capstone seminar also lists an additional prerequisite.

The capstone seminar builds on knowledge gained in previous courses and includes a significant research component. All courses numbered between 270 and 296 are capstone seminars. A senior honors thesis (Honors, SOC 297) also fulfills the capstone requirement.

## THE SOCIOLOGY MINOR

The sociology minor consists of six courses, which must include three of the following:

SOC 10 or SOC 12: Introduction to Sociology  
SOC 201: Classical Sociological Theory  
SOC 208: Class, Status and Power  
SOC 202: The Social Research Process

Students are encouraged to begin with Introduction to Sociology. Introduction to Sociology (SOC 010 or SOC 012) is a prerequisite for Classical Sociological Theory (SOC 201), and Classical Sociological Theory is a prerequisite for Class, Status, and Power (SOC 208).

Students may **substitute** PSCI 107 - Research Methods, GEOG 141 - Research Design and Methods in Geography, or BOTH PSYC 105- Statistics and PSYC 109- Qualitative Methods in Psychology for SOC 202 - Social Research Process

The following provisions also apply to the sociology minor:

- Students must complete three additional sociology courses, *at least two of which must be at the 200 level.*
- One internship credit may count toward the minor.
- *Four* of the six courses required for the minor must be taken on campus.
- Students must earn a course grade of C- or better to receive credit toward the sociology minor.
- If students take courses with a Pass/Fail option, then a maximum of one course that receives a Pass grade will count towards the minor.

# DECLARATION OF THE MAJOR OR MINOR

Students must complete a major and minor declaration form that can be obtained in the Sociology Department or the Academic Advising Center. The form must be signed by a department faculty member. Forms are also available on the Registrar's website: <https://www.clarku.edu/offices/registrar/student-forms/>

## TRANSFER OF MAJOR OR MINOR CREDITS FROM OFF CAMPUS

Sociology majors may take courses that count toward the major or minor at other colleges and universities (for example, summer school or study abroad). All courses taken elsewhere must be approved for major or minor credit by your advisor. Note, however, that the number of sociology major credits that may be transferred from off campus is limited. For the major, three of the five required courses must be taken at Clark. For the minor, at least one of the three core requirements must be taken at Clark. Overall, six of the eleven credits for the major and four the six credits for the minor must be taken at Clark.

## CHOOSING A DEPARTMENT ADVISOR

Students choose their advisors when declaring a major. All faculty members within the department serve as advisors, and students are welcome to choose whom they would like to serve in that capacity.

Students who are not familiar with the sociology faculty may wish to have an advisor assigned. In general, it is best to select a faculty person with expertise in your areas of interest.

The forms are available in the Sociology Department, the Academic Advising Center, and on the Registrar's website.

You may change your faculty advisor at any time. A form for this purpose is available in the Academic Advising Center and is also posted on line:

## SOCIOLOGY INTERNSHIP GUIDELINES

The heritage of sociology has involved bringing academic knowledge into the community, to understand and respond to social concerns. Through systematic field work sociologists show – following C. Wright Mills – the ways in which people's "private problems" are "public issues." In the process we critically evaluate our knowledge in light of observation and participation. The department encourages such a course of study through a directed internship.

An internship is the academically informed study of social issues through structured field work in the community. Its goals are (1) to deepen the understanding of a social issue provided by the formal learning, (2) to provide the student with an in-depth field experience, and (3) to make a contribution to the community in the process of learning. An internship requires a significant semester-long commitment to a supervised placement and related academic study.

Internship placements for sociology students can be found in a variety of areas, some of which include criminal justice, elderly services, health-related services, media, and women's services and programs. Some programs and agencies that sponsor student internships are the Public Defender's Office, Worcester Juvenile Probation Office, The Age Center of Worcester, St. Francis Adult Day Health Center, American Civil Liberties Union, Abby's House (shelter for homeless women), Daybreak (battered women's services), Planned Parenthood, the City Planning Department, and legislators' offices. For more information and an extensive list of agencies that offer student internships, please consult the Internship Office in Career Services, in the LEEP Center.

Students are encouraged to select placements in the term preceding the internship. They are also expected to complete an internship application, available from the Internship Office in Career Services, by the due date.

## TIME COMMITMENT

The internship should comprise of one or two full courses of work. While majors are not required to pursue internship credit, all majors may choose to fulfill one or two major credits through internships. In no case should an internship be less than one full course. It is expected that a course unit requires from ten to twelve hours of work per week that includes eight to ten hours at the placement, supervisory conferences, and research. The remaining hours will consist of completing readings and written assignments connected with the internship.

## SUPERVISION

Students must have a faculty supervisor from the department. An internship must also have at least one person at the field placement to whom the intern is responsible and who agrees to evaluate the intern's work. The department requires that field supervisors offer regular supervision to the student in the placement.

When faculty supervision is available, internships may be undertaken during the summer for sociology credit. Students then need to register through COPACE. As with all summer credits, however, permission must be obtained first through Academic Advising. See your advisor to discuss possibilities.

## RELATIONSHIP TO TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC WORK

The department faculty assumes that an intern will either (1) work on a bibliography with the supervising faculty member as part of the internship agreement or (2) pursue such bibliographical material as the faculty member suggests in the course of an ongoing faculty-student learning contract.

Regular conferences with faculty members will include discussion of problems at the internship placement and review of relevant literature. Some examples of written work that may be required (depending on the placement) are a journal of work and supervisory experience, interim or final project reports, and research papers.

## EVALUATION

University regulations require that all internships be taken CR/NR (credit/no record). In extraordinary circumstances, students may petition the dean of the college for a grade.

## LIMIT

No more than two credits of internship may be counted toward the sociology major, and no more than one credit may be counted toward the minor.

## READINGS AND PROJECTS

In any given semester, students may take up to two full course credits in Directed Study (SOC 299). There is no limit to the number of such courses that may be counted toward the degree.

## DEPARTMENT HONORS AND AWARDS

### ADDAMS-MILLS AWARD

In 1983-84, the Sociology Department established the Addams-Mills Award. This award is given annually to honor one or two graduating sociology majors who exemplify the ideas and activism ideals of Jane Addams, a founder of community-based social work and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and C. Wright Mills, an outspoken sociologist and critic of American power structures. To be considered for this award, a student must have a GPA of 3.5 or higher. Students who wish to apply must submit a one-page description of their community service since coming to Clark. This award is given at commencement.

### ALPHA KAPPA DELTA HONOR SOCIETY

The Sociology Department has been accepted as a charter member of Alpha Kappa Delta, the International Sociology Honor Society. The purpose of Alpha Kappa Delta is to promote human welfare through the association of a fellowship group interested in developing scientific knowledge that may be applied to the solution of social problems.

Student scholarship is recognized by Alpha Kappa Delta in several ways. The society sponsors student travel to regional meetings, supporting those who want to present their work and learn from the scholarly presentations of others. For example, one of our past graduates received an award to travel to the American Sociological Association meeting. Alpha Kappa Delta sponsors annual student paper contests, presenting awards that include monetary prizes, travel support, and scholarships. In addition, by funding research symposia and honoraria for guest speakers, the society supports chapter activities that further education.

Students who are sociology majors in their junior or senior year with an average GPA of 3.3 and at least 3.0 in the sociology major are eligible for lifetime membership in Alpha Kappa Delta.

# SENIOR HONOR THESIS

The senior thesis is intended to give the exceptional student an opportunity to pursue an intensive course of independent study under the direction of a department faculty member. The course culminates in a thesis completed during the senior year. Students enrolled in Honors (SOC 297) may be eligible for graduation with honors in sociology. Graduation with honors in sociology requires an acceptable senior honors thesis.

A student who wishes to have a thesis considered for honors should have the approval of the thesis advisor and must submit the thesis to a committee for evaluation. A thesis committee comprises one thesis advisor/supervisor and two additional readers, one of whom may be from outside the Sociology Department. Theses that have been considered or awarded honors in the department are on file in the Sociology Department office.

The senior honors thesis is an intensive course of study conducted under the direction of a department advisor. The project is a major undertaking during the senior year in which a student addresses a research question in consultation with faculty. Thesis projects vary from highly theoretical to heavily empirical, but all theses are expected to provide a critical overview of the relevant literature in the discipline, address a well-defined problem raised by this literature, and engage in the rigorous analysis of the research question. Through the research process students demonstrate mastery of the discipline by exceeding the expectations of regular course work and directed study.

## CRITERIA FOR WRITING AN HONORS THESIS

Majors who have maintained at least a 3.2 average in sociology courses are eligible for admission to the honors program. Others can be admitted only through a special petition process. Admission to the honors program does not automatically guarantee the awarding of honors. Students must first complete a satisfactory thesis involving research and writing over two semesters and defend the thesis near the end of the spring semester. Awarding of honors is the decision of the thesis committee.

Students who are accepted into the program but whose work does not ultimately meet the criteria for an honors designation will still be eligible for course credit, either for a semester of directed study or for a senior thesis without honors, depending on the level of progress. Students may also elect to withdraw from the program at certain junctures.

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR A THESIS

The Sociology methods course is The Social Research Process (SOC 202). Students needing an additional research methods course that covers the methods planned in their thesis should review options with their advisors.

Students planning to study away or abroad should begin discussion of a thesis project well in advance. Ideally, a student planning to be away from Clark in the second semester of the junior year should draft a thesis proposal in the preceding semester. Students studying off campus are still required to meet deadlines for submitting proposals.

# PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

By early in the spring of the junior year, the prospective thesis candidate should approach at least one faculty member and discuss potential research topics. The prospective candidate should then designate a proposal advisor who will oversee the development of a research strategy and written proposal. Although a prospective thesis candidate may consult with any number of faculty members, one member of the Sociology Department faculty should be designated the proposal advisor.

By **March 15** of the spring semester, an application for admission to the program must be submitted to the Sociology Department. This application should include

- A transcript
- A proposal (approximately five pages)

The research proposal should contain

- A clear statement of the central research question to be explored
- A description of the principal methods that will be used in the study
- A brief review of relevant scholarly work on the topic
- A preliminary bibliography indicating studies and documents, both those to be reviewed and those already consulted

By **April 1**, the Sociology Department will let students know whether their applications have been approved or denied. In some cases, the department may suggest that an applicant revise the proposal and resubmit it by a designated date.

A student who has not received final approval for beginning thesis research should register for four courses in the fall semester. Once a student's proposal is approved, the student registers for Advanced Research (Directed Study, SOC 299), with the thesis advisor and may then drop one course for which the student has registered.

Students must submit copies of their approved proposals to the Department Office.

## Fall Semester of Senior Year: Progress in Research and Writing

Students who are accepted into the honors program register for Advanced Research (Directed Study, SOC 299) during the fall semester of the senior year. This Directed Study counts for one credit.

In consultation with the thesis advisor, the candidate should select a thesis committee consisting of three people: the thesis advisor, one other member of the Sociology Department, and a third member either from the Sociology Department or from a department that is relevant to the thesis topic.

During the fall semester, most of the data collection and literature review should be completed, with periodic review by the thesis advisor. By **December 1**, a chapter, usually the literature review, and a detailed outline of the entire thesis must be submitted to the committee. A student wishing to submit the equivalent of a chapter (that is, several completed sections of different chapters) needs the approval of the advisor.

On the basis of the submitted chapter, the committee determines whether the student has a reasonable prospect of completing the thesis during the spring semester. The committee members may recommend either continuation or withdrawal. At this point, the student may independently decide to withdraw from the honors program and still receive credit for Advanced Research (Directed Study, SOC 299). Ordinarily, only Honors (SOC 297) fulfills the capstone requirement for the sociology major. Under very special circumstances, a student who has been advised to withdraw from thesis work can petition the Sociology Department for a change in this policy.

## Spring Semester of Senior Year: Completion and Evaluation of Thesis

During the spring semester of the senior year, the prospective honors student registers for Honors (SOC 297) for two credits. Chapters or sections of the thesis must be presented to the advisor according to a defined schedule worked out between student and advisor.

By **March 10**, a first draft of the entire thesis must be completed and handed to the thesis advisor. The student is then expected to act on the recommendations of the advisor to revise or conduct additional research. A final draft of the thesis must be completed by **April 1** and submitted to all members of the thesis committee. The thesis committee will meet to hear an oral "defense" of the thesis by **April 15**.

Failure to meet deadlines or to make the required revisions means the student forfeits the opportunity to receive honors. The student, at this point, may also elect to withdraw from further consideration for honors. In either event, the student must still complete an extensive written project to receive course credit and a grade.

The thesis committee will make the final determination of the awarding of honors. Two votes from the committee are needed for granting honors. The committee may also require revisions to be made after the defense. The thesis advisor is responsible for notifying the Registrar of the outcome of the oral defense.

***The Sociology Department requires one copy of the final thesis.***

## Schedule for an Honors Thesis Program

- **Before Spring Semester Junior Year:** Attend information session or discuss thesis requirements with a faculty member.
- **By the end of the Fall Semester Junior Year:** Complete at least two research methods courses.
- **February 15 Junior Year:** Identify advisor for completing proposal.
- **March 15 Junior Year:** Submit proposal to the Sociology Department. The proposal must be approved by the advisor before submission to the department.
- **April 1 Junior Year:** Receive notification about application (approval, required revision, deadline for resubmission, etc.)

- **April 15 or date designated by department:** Submit copy of approved proposal to the Sociology Department office.
- **Fall Semester Senior Year:** Register for Advanced Research (Directed Study, SOC 299).
- **November 15 Senior Year:** Form thesis committee with two additional members. At least one of these members must be in the Sociology Department.
- **December 1 Senior Year:** Submit a chapter, a detailed outline, and a full bibliography to all members of the thesis committee. Committee members then recommend continuation or withdrawal from the honors program.
- **For Spring Semester Senior Year:** Register for Honors (SOC 297) for two credits.
- **March 10 Senior Year (or after spring break):** Submit draft of entire thesis to advisor.
- **April 1 Senior Year:** Submit final draft of the thesis, including any revisions suggested by advisor, to designated thesis committee members.
- **April 15 Senior Year:** Conduct oral defense. Thesis committee decides about honors.
- **April 25 Senior Year:** Submit bound copy of the approved thesis to the Sociology Department office.
- **Graduation Senior Year:** Recognition granted to honors recipient.

# ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET FOR THE SOCIOLOGY MAJOR

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

The major consists of eleven sociology courses.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Check when completed.

I. Five core courses:

\_\_\_\_\_ SOC 10 or SOC 12 Introduction to Sociology (SOC 10 offered every semester)

\_\_\_\_\_ SOC 201 Classical Sociological Theory (offered every semester)

\_\_\_\_\_ SOC 202 The Social Research Process (offered every Fall)

\_\_\_\_\_ SOC 208 Class, Status and Power (offered every semester)

\_\_\_\_\_ One capstone seminar (offered every semester)

II. Six additional courses, at least three must be at the 200 level (list titles of courses):

\_\_\_\_\_ 6.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10.

\_\_\_\_\_ 11.