



Question of the Month: Why choose a major or minor in Sociology?

While many students take and enjoy sociology courses during their college career, many shy away from a major in sociology unsure of what that major may lead to in the future. Recently the American Sociological Association conducted a study of recent sociology graduates to explore the range of careers entered by those with degrees in sociology as well as the ways in which the sociology curriculum has helped them in their chosen careers. Students in Sociology at Meredith College participated in this study along with students in sociology at 95 other schools.

Why Choose Sociology?

When asked for the reasons that they chose a major in sociology, the following responses emerged as the top five reasons: the sociology had interesting concepts (94.6%), that they enjoyed their first course (77.7%), that it helped them understand the relationship between social forces and the individual (63.3%), they wanted to help change society (38.1%), and that it helped them understand their own life (39.5%).

When the researchers looked at the responses by gender they found that women more so than men also indicated that they majored in sociology in preparation for gradu-

ate school (33.2%) and to prepare themselves for different kinds of research experiences (32.5%).

What Skills are Learned?

While there may not be employers who specifically advertise for a sociologist, there are skills that sociology majors acquire that employers are seeking. Respondents to the survey indicated that they gained the following skills through their sociology major: identify ethical issues in research, develop evidence based arguments, evaluate different research methods, write a report understandable to non-sociologists, form causal hypotheses, use computer resources to develop a reference list, interpret results of data gathering, and use statistical software. When writing their resumes, the respondents indicated that these were skills that the included for employers to see.

Additionally those who majored in sociology indicated that the experience afforded them opportunities that were helpful in searching for a job following graduation. These activities included: internships, community, political and volunteer activities, service learning, career related mentoring or other networking programs, faculty mentoring, departmental honors, faculty research project partnerships, and attendance/

participation in local, regional or national sociology meetings.

What does the future hold?

With the skills offered by the sociology major, respondents indicated that they were well equipped to find a job following graduation. The fields that the respondents planned on entering varied, but included: education, counseling, applied sociology, criminology, medical, business, public affairs, and communication. Respondents also planned to pursue law degrees, Master's degrees in Social Work and Sociology, and Doctorates in Sociology.

This study will continue to follow these respondents in the coming years to see how their sociology major has helped them in their employment and where they end up as employees. You can access the full report through the following link from the American Sociological Association's webpage. http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/B&B_first_report_final.pdf

While you are at the website check out the resources that they have there for those in sociology. If you are thinking of sociology as a major or minor talk with one of the sociology faculty members about the possibilities!

Poem of the Month:

**White voices all dead
Men with frowns send warning codes
Mountains open up**

Written by Dr. Rhonda Zingraff in honor of the classical theorists of sociology.

Write your own sociology haiku (3 line poem with 5 syllables in the 1st line, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third) and submit it to Dr. Cokely—cokelyc@meredith.edu for inclusion in a future edition of the newsletter!

Weird Science : New and 'Interesting' Research in Sociology

Martin S. Weinberg and Collin J. Williams explore defecation and the gender system through interviews with college students. Their research argues that 'while everyone tries to suppress the sights, sounds, and smells of defecation, some groups are more lax than others.' In comparing four groups, heterosexual men, heterosexual women, gay men and lesbians the researchers conclude, 'standards for feces control are lower for heterosexual men than for the other three groups. They suggest that this reflects men's power in the gender system, which allows for fewer bodily restrictions. Because squeamishness about feces is often seen as a feminine trait, men may embrace the sights, sounds, and smells of defecation and flatulence in an effort to exert their masculinity.' (Contexts, 5, 2, p. 9)

Neal Shover, Glenn Coffey and Clinton Saunders explore the phenomenon of telemarketers who have been arrested for fraud. They find that most of these individuals come from 'middle class families with managerial and entrepreneurial backgrounds.' Using strain theory they argue that 'the inability of these people to match their aspirations with their opportunities, paired with their families' background in managerial work, facilitates their transition to a life of crime. Their frustrations at making money and achieving success lead them to commit fraud. Telemarketing to them is a godsend.' Additionally the telemarketers committing fraud rationalize their actions in order to maintain a positive self image. They argue that they are exploiting a person's greed or gullibility through legitimate business practices. (Contexts, 4, 2, p.9)

Kerry Ferris undertook a study to examine social norms around interacting with celebrities in public. Through interviews with 75 individuals in Los Angeles, Ferris discovered that most people report treating the celebrity as an unrecognized stranger. She argues that this may occur for two reasons. 'First, civil inattention is the usual norm for social interactions between ordinary strangers. For most people this rule overrides the exciting possibilities of a brush with fame. Second, many people feel obliged to protect a celebrity's right to privacy despite later feeling free to brag about the incident.' Additionally, her respondents indicated that the celebrity should also abide by rules and should not try too hard to disguise themselves or to be recognized. (Contexts, 3, 4, p.8)

Alumna Spotlight: Danielle Guillon

This year we will again be showcasing graduates of the Sociology program at Meredith and ways that they use their Sociology training in their careers. This month's alumna is Danielle Guillon who is currently employed as an account executive for the wholesale residential lending division at Bank United, FSB. In thinking about how her Sociology degree helps her in her career Danielle writes, "In my job in order to make loans work I need to think

outside the box often. There are many different components to analyzing the risk of a loan. Having a background in Sociology has helped me with my critical thinking skills as well as my creative thinking skills... (It) also gives you the ability to analyze the connection between institutional decisions and individuals. In mortgage banking the government's decisions relating to the bond market, interest rates, unemployment and various other

issues directly affect the individuals wishing to obtain mortgages." In reflecting upon her time at Meredith, Danielle enjoyed the personal relationships that she had with her professors in the SOC program. The one piece of advice she would give to students in SOC is to take advantage of knowledge and willingness to help that the professors offer. You can connect with Danielle via email at d_guillon@hotmail.com.

Check out these new offerings at the library!

World Data on Education (web resource) The International Bureau of Education (IBE) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) presents the World Data on Education (WDE) database. The database contains basic descriptions of the characteristics of the organization and functioning of national education systems.



Sernau, Scott. 2006. World's Apart: Social Inequalities in a Global Economy. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Heimer, Karen and Candace Kruttschnitt. 2006. Gender and Crime: Patterns of Victimization and Offending. New York: New York University.

Upcoming Events

As the semester comes to an end keep in mind the following upcoming events:

November 8-16th: Pre-registration — sign up for your sociology classes!

November 13-17th International Education Week — see news for events

November 20th: 12-1pm Women's Studies Brown Bag Lunch. Bring your lunch to the Wyatt Room, basement of BDH and hear Dr. Jody Roubanis present her research entitled Critical Experiences of Women Leaders which looks at the experiences of female college Presidents