

Sociology and Public Health

School

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (<http://www.stmarytx.edu/humanities/>)

School Interim Dean

Betsy Smith, Ph.D. (nlagreca@stmarytx.edu)

Department

Sociology (<https://www.stmarytx.edu/academics/department/sociology/>)

Department Chair

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Sociology at St. Mary's University is designed to foster the goals of a twenty-first century liberal arts and sciences education. We educate our students to think systematically, intellectually, ethically, and critically about society. Our goal is to better understand the social lives of individuals, groups, institutions, communities, and societies in all of their complexity and interconnectedness. The Sociology student develops analytic, research, and communication skills, and learns how to ask and answer social research questions by using data. Our rigorous and academically challenging program builds a course foundation vital to a variety of fields and careers, and students are encouraged to complement their course experiences with professionalizing opportunities outside of the classroom, campus, or country. Sociology at St. Mary's University prepares students to contribute to solutions for some of the most complex and challenging social issues we experience in society today.

Majors in Sociology

- B.A. in Sociology (<https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/undergraduate/majors-programs/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/sociology-ba/>)
- B.S. in Public Health (<https://catalog.stmarytx.edu/undergraduate/majors-programs/humanities-social-sciences/sociology/public-health-ba/>)

Minor in Sociology

Certificate in Public Health

SC 1311. Introductory Sociology. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to the scope and methods of sociology, emphasizing the concepts of social structure, organization, institution, culture and socialization, and including analyses of primary and secondary groups, sex roles, social control, stratification, minorities, collective behavior, and population dynamics. Prerequisite for all courses in the Criminology and Sociology program.

SC 2321. Social Issues. 3 Semester Hours.

Current discussions of contemporary social problems, including issues related to family and sexuality, health and substance abuse, education, poverty, prejudice and discrimination, population and environment, war and peace.

SC 2371. Race and Ethnic Relations. 3 Semester Hours.

The study of race and ethnic relations among Asians, Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos/Latinx, Native Americans, and Whites in the United States. The goal of this course is for students to understand how the U.S. history of race and ethnicity shapes opportunity structures in, for example, education, employment, housing, and health. Through this course students will gain a better understanding of how race and ethnicity stratifies the lives of individuals, groups, and communities.

SC 2384. Sociological Lens: Micro and Macro Perspectives and Theories. 3 Semester Hours.

An overview of major global and U.S. social theorists in classical and contemporary eras and their influence on current sociological research and applications. The most common theoretical perspectives—structural functionalism, social conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism will be introduced and explored as different lens that change the way we see and engage in our social worlds.

SC 3155. Internship in Sociology. 1 Semester Hour.

Experiential education related to the theoretical and research topics studied in sociology. The student shall complete a minimum of 40 hours at a site or agency approved by the department chair, with an evaluation of satisfactory performance, to earn the one-credit internship from SC3155. Involves written sociological analysis. 1 to 6 semester hours of credit, with a maximum of 3 hours per semester. Junior/Senior status and at least 9 hours of upper-division sociology are prerequisites (fall, spring, or summer).

SC 3255. Internship in Sociology. 2 Semester Hours.

Experiential education related to the theoretical and research topics studied in sociology. The student shall complete a minimum of 80 hours at a site or agency approved by the department chair, with an evaluation of satisfactory performance, to earn the two-credit internship from SC 3255. Involves written sociological analysis. 1 to 6 semester hours of credit, with a maximum of 3 hours per semester. Junior/Senior status and at least 9 hours of upper-division sociology are prerequisites (fall, spring, or summer).

SC 3300. Special Topics in Sociology. 3 Semester Hours.

Topics will vary from semester to semester. May be retaken for additional credit when a different topic is offered. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology –SC1311.

SC 3305. Interviewing Techniques. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to in-depth interview techniques and designs in Sociology. This course teaches students how to engage in scientific research using question-based data and conduct their own in-depth interview project based on original interview data. The course is open to majors, and non-majors who might use interview techniques in future academic or professional settings. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology –SC1311.

SC 3306. Qualitative Research Methods. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to the methods used to conduct qualitative research in natural social settings. An examination of the methods of ethnography, participant observation/non-participant observation, focus group, interview, and use of documentary sources will be included. Students may have the opportunity to engage in hands-on research. Additional topics include data coding, data analysis and research ethics. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology –SC1311. Junior standing, nine completed hours of sociology courses.

SC 3308. Sociology of Religion. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to basic issues in the sociology of religion, including alternative definitions of religion, the relationship of religion to economic, political and other social institutions, and the influence of religion on personal development, social order, conflict, and change. Religious institutions are viewed in historical and cross-cultural perspective. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3310. Sociology of Sex and Gender. 3 Semester Hours.

An examination of what it means to be male-female and masculine-feminine and the associated inequalities in US societies. Topics include sexual identity, gender stereotypes, cross-cultural differences in gender roles and socialization, and changes in these roles in contemporary society. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3315. Future Societies. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to social forecasting and the sociology of the future. This course explores a range of alternative possibilities for the future of human societies, including both optimistic and pessimistic scenarios. Topics include the impact of technology on social relations, the future of major social institutions, and prospects for the solution of global problems. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3320. Social Stratification. 3 Semester Hours.

An analysis of social stratification utilizing social class as the unit of study. The course will focus on the structure of social classes in the U.S. as a major factor influencing individual and group life chances with regards to education, crime, health, and disease, world views and life styles. Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311, Junior standing, nine completed hours of sociology courses.

SC 3342. Social Organizations. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to basic concepts, theories, and topics in organizational sociology. Special emphases will be placed on: the social impacts of organizations; the characteristics of business, government, and not-for-profit organizations; approaches used to study organizations; and empirical analysis of organizational processes. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology- SC 1311.

SC 3343. Sociology of Families. 3 Semester Hours.

This study of families as a constantly-evolving social institution in the United States. Includes an historical and demographic overview of families, definitions of "family" and the social, economic, and political implications of such a definition, and relationships between social inequality in families with a particular focus on gender, race, and class. Topics may include marriage, cohabitation, divorce, dating, work-family balance, parenting, nonmarital sex and childbearing, step family formation, interracial marriage, and same-sex relationships. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology- SC 1311.

SC 3345. Social Work Profession and Practice. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is a general introduction to the social work profession, and to working with diverse populations in social service settings. It explores the basic concepts of the profession, understanding how the theories and techniques are applied in the field. Students investigate a variety of methods for intervention in working with individuals, families and groups; as well as general practice in agencies and community settings. Finally, students explore the breadth of the profession and study a sampling of the populations served by social workers. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3351. Social Psychology. 3 Semester Hours.

This course addresses human behavior and personality development as affected by social group life. Major theories will be compared. The interaction dynamics of such substantive areas as socialization, normative and deviant behavior, learning and achievement, the social construction of the self, and the social identities will be considered. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3352. Group Dynamics. 3 Semester Hours.

An analysis of the structure, functions and processes of small groups from a social-psychological perspective. Practical applications are explored for education, counseling, social work, business, and law. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3353. Public Opinion and Propaganda. 3 Semester Hours.

An examination of the nature, extent, and purposes of propaganda and of other social and psychological influences on public opinion. Topics include techniques of persuasion and the role of mass media and advertising in shaping public attitudes. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology –SC1311.

SC 3355. Internship in Sociology. 3 Semester Hours.

Experiential education related to the theoretical and research topics studied in sociology. The student shall complete a minimum of 120 hours at a site or agency approved by the department chair, with an evaluation of satisfactory performance, to earn the three-credits internship. Involves written sociological analysis. 3 to 6 semester hours of credit, with a maximum of 3 hours per semester. Junior/Senior status and at least 9 hours of upper-division sociology are prerequisites (fall, spring, or summer).

SC 3361. Urban Sociology. 3 Semester Hours.

An analysis of cities, their historical development and social organization. Topics include urbanization in developed and developing societies, urban stratification and lifestyles, and urban, metropolitan and regional planning. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3362. Population and Society. 3 Semester Hours.

The course takes a global perspective to examine the causes and consequences of population size, composition, distribution, and change; providing an overview of how social factors influence population characteristics and how these characteristics in turn affect society. The course explores many demographic questions, including: Why do some countries have rapid population growth while others face population decline? Why is there a large variation in birth rates around the world today? Why are some people more likely to die younger than others? Why do some people try hard to migrate while others do not? Topics include demographic measurement, theory and data, fertility, mortality, morbidity, immigration, age and sex composition, and family formation. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 3363. Family Violence. 3 Semester Hours.

The family is the last place one would expect to find violence for it should be a safe haven for individuals. However, violence in the family is widespread, containing both perpetrators and victims. This course will examine definitions of family violence, explanations for why families are violent, different groups impacted by violence, and policy and prevention strategies.

SC 3371. Advanced Topics in Race and Ethnic Relations. 3 Semester Hours.

Intensive examination of a specialized topic in race and ethnicities and/or intersectionality of race/ethnicities/ class/gender. The specific topic of the course varies depending on the faculty offering it.

SC 3373. Sociology Of Childhood & Youth. 3 Semester Hours.

This course examines definitions, conceptions, and empirical research related to the sociology of childhood, adolescence, and the transition to adulthood in the United States. This will include historical and contemporary views of these life stages, peer cultures, race, class, gender, adolescent romantic relationships, and a variety of social problems.

SC 3381. Introductory Statistics. 3 Semester Hours.

This course introduces the social science application to statistical techniques and introduces both descriptive and inferential statistics. It examines statistics as a tool to understanding differences between social groups, to determine if social programs and policies are meeting their objectives, and to explore how and why variables are related to each other. We discuss how to critically assess and interpret the statistical data and conclusions shown in the media, the diverse way social scientists gather, interpret, and evaluate data, and the real-life application of statistical techniques to sociological data and the interpretation of results. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology –SC1311 and MT 1301 or MT 1302 or MT 1303 or MT 1305. MT 1302 preferred. Additional fee associated with this course. See fee schedule for details at <https://www.stmarytx.edu/admission/financial-aid/tuition/>.

SC 3383. Understanding Fertility and Reproductive Health. 3 Semester Hours.

This course focuses on fertilities in societies and childbearing among individuals and couples. In particular the cross-cultural approaches to women's reproductive health issues. We will explore classical theories of fertility change at the societal level and contemporary critiques of these theories. We will also examine the determinants of fertility and reproductive health with special attention to the effects of racism, sexism and poverty in developed and developing countries.

SC 3397. Data Visualization. 3 Semester Hours.

This is a "hands on" methods course designed to bring awareness to mixed methods or the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same study. The course will review the major tenets of this "third methodological movement" including the underlying research paradigms. The course will highlight both the important roles mixed methods play in the development of Sociology among other fields (e.g., health sciences, psychology, education) and cover formulating research questions, collecting and analyzing different types of data, choosing the appropriate mixed methods designs, and interpreting mixed method research results. Prerequisites: SC3381 or equivalent and at least one methods course (SC3306, SC4383, or equivalent).

SC 3399. Mixed Methods. 3 Semester Hours.

This is a "hands on" methods course designed to bring awareness to mixed methods or the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same study. The course will review the major tenets of this third methodological movement including the underlying research paradigms. The course will highlight both the important roles mixed methods play in the development of Sociology among other fields (e.g., health sciences, psychology education) and cover formulating research questions, collecting and analyzing different types of data, choosing the appropriate mixed methods designs, and interpreting mixed method research results. Prerequisites: SC3381 or equivalent and at least one methods course (SC3306, SC4383, or equivalent).

SC 4300. Sociology of Aging. 3 Semester Hours.

This course provides a demographic overview of the social processes of aging in the United States and explores the social and cultural factors influencing the views of aging that are prevalent in our society. We examine how social factors, like gender, race, and social class, shape the experience of aging and create diversity among older adults. The course asks several key questions: How do we define the Sociology of Aging? What are the field's origins and current areas of focus? What are the physiological and cognitive changes linked with aging, as well as the theories that explain such changes and adaptations to those changes? What is the social context of older adulthood, such as living arrangements, employment, family support, and discrimination; and finally, what are the social policies and social problems affecting older adults in the United States. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 4305. Death and Dying. 3 Semester Hours.

A holistic treatment of the dying person and his/her environment. Topics include cross-cultural differences in grief and mourning behaviors, psychological process of the terminally ill, funeral practices, hospice alternatives, and ethical problems related to the medical extension of life. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311.

SC 4383. Sociological Research. 3 Semester Hours.

An introduction to the history and methods of sociological research. Topics include the logic of scientific research, observation, questionnaires, interviews, content analysis, experiments, descriptive statistics, sampling, computerized data analysis and presentation. Students conduct research project. Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311, Junior standing, nine completed hours of sociology courses or Prerequisite: Introduction to Sociology – SC 1311, Junior standing, nine completed hours of sociology courses OR CJ 1301 Introduction to Criminal Justice and CR 3325 Criminology. (fall only) Additional fee associated with this course. See fee schedule for details at <https://www.stmarytx.edu/admission/financial-aid/tuition/>.

SC 4384. Sociological Theory. 3 Semester Hours.

An overview of major global and U.S. social theorists in classical and contemporary eras and their influence on current sociological research and applications. The most common theoretical perspectives—structural functionalism, social conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism will be introduced and explored as different lens that change the way we see and engage in our social worlds.

SC 4390. ProSem: Professional Seminar in Sociology. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to provide resources for the college-to-career pipeline for Sociology majors. The course includes three modules centered on forms of capital to provide a general set of tools and guidelines for professional careers after St. Mary's. The course is an introduction to the professional field of sociology and the related employment industries and a guide to skills required to succeed in graduate school and professional careers. Topics and activities will include, for example: professional development, career searches, network development including online profile revision or preparation, assessment of cultural competencies, and refining professional portfolio materials and experiences. At the completion of the course, students will have professional college-to-career pipeline resources and an increased confidence about multiple options exist for them in their postbaccalaureate lives.

CPH 1301. Introduction to Public Health. 3 Semester Hours.

This course focuses on health problems and issues of public health from the social sciences perspective. The course will enable students to describe one or two core theoretical perspectives from social science disciplines and cover the major social and behavioral science models used in health promotion and disease prevention. The course will also cover existing social inequalities in health status related to race, social class, and gender, and the critical intersection between social risk factors, behavioral risk factors, and the development and implementation of public health interventions.

CPH 2301. Environmental Health. 3 Semester Hours.

This course develops a general awareness of how the human-made environment and natural ecosystem interact to affect health and the quality of life. A review of relevant principles from the natural sciences, and discussions of issues influencing the solutions to environmental health problems included.

CPH 3301. Fundamentals of Epidemiology. 3 Semester Hours.

This course introduces students to principles and concepts in epidemiology, methods of epidemiologic investigation, and the design, interpretation, and evaluation of epidemiologic research. Students are introduced to the strategies adopted by public health professionals to study distribution and identification of important biological, social, and environmental determinants of diseases and health-related states in specific populations. Prerequisites: CPH 1301; and CPH 2301; and 1 course with statistics emphasis (CJ 3332, CR 3332, MT 2303, PO 2311, PS 3381, or SC 3381).

CPH 3357. Intro to Health Informatics. 3 Semester Hours.

This course is designed to provide a discussion of the various facets of health informatics of interest to emerging healthcare, public health, and population health professionals. It is designed for current and future professionals who wish to develop health informatics expertise or specialization in a field dedicated to the optimal use of data, information, and knowledge to advance individual health, health care, public health, and health-related research. This course will define health informatics and public health informatics and tackle obstacles in this emerging field by: presenting the knowledge, infrastructure, functions, and tools of health informatics; exploring technology, planning and management, and applications in public health and healthcare; and contrasting differences in roles, needs, and solutions among major players in the national and commercial health informatics communities. The course will apply available sources of data, information, and knowledge to address healthcare and public health problems. Students will learn the application of informatics skills and knowledge to health-related problems. Application activities will include simple data analysis and visualization of clinical data and answering clinical questions using information retrieval methods. Prerequisites: CPH 3301, CPH 4301, and approved research methods course.).

CPH 3367. Consumer Health Informatics. 3 Semester Hours.

Consumer health informatics (CHI) is a rapidly expanding area of informatics practice, with career opportunities emerging in the public, non-profit, and private sectors. Broadly, the field aims to give individual health care consumers, as well as their families and communities, the information and tools that they need to help them become more involved in their health and health care. In this course, students will become familiar with a range of CHI applications, including the needs/problems that the applications address, their theoretical bases and designs, and relevant evaluation results. The course will cover an overview of health behavior theories that are relevant to health behavior change and health information behavior and explore how they might be applied to promote changes in health behavior and/or explain health consumers' behaviors. The course will also introduce key issues such as health literacy, patient-centered communication, patient empowerment, patient-generated data, participation, and privacy with a special focus on the application of CHI in areas of public health, including surveillance, prevention, preparedness, and health promotion. At the end of the course, students will have an ability to evaluate existing applications, and to generate theory-informed design and implementation strategies for CHI applications for potential users with a particular focus on groups that experience health care and information access disparities. Prerequisites: CPH 3301, CPH 4301, and approved research methods course.

CPH 3372. Health Promotion in Public Health. 3 Semester Hours.

Health Promotion in Public Health is ideal for students interested in managing public health programs that address health behavior, disease prevention, and health equity. Students will learn about commonly used theories and models, community engagement, health equity, needs assessment, and program design, implementation, and evaluation. Throughout the semester, students will improve communication skills while applying newly acquired knowledge related to public health problems. (3 credits). Prerequisite: CPH1301 Introduction to Public Health.

CPH 3377. Electronic Health Records. 3 Semester Hours.

The course is aimed at exposing students to Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems and coding, with a strong emphasis on the role of EHR systems in health care operations and patient care as called for in recent US government regulation. The course includes: common coding systems or language and functions and an overview of EHR software programs, legal and regulatory issues, the role of EHR in quality of care and evidence-based practice, and applications of EHR systems and healthcare data in patient care. Students will gain hands-on experience with a virtual EHR and examine the impact of EHRs on healthcare particularly in terms of ensuring quality of patient care and evidence-based practice, adhering to standards set by accreditation bodies and government organizations, and promoting ongoing public health surveillance and for assessing outbreaks of community-wide diseases and other threats to public health. Prerequisites: CPH 3301, CPH 4301, and approved research methods course; CS1300 or CS3300.

CPH 3387. Healthcare Project Management. 3 Semester Hours.

Much of the work in healthcare and public health is project based, whether it is training healthcare workers implementing an intervention, adopting a health information system, or evaluating a practice for quality improvement. Good project management is crucial for the success of these endeavors. Students will be introduced to the theory and concepts of project management and the tools to manage projects with a specific focus on healthcare and public health. At the end of this course, students should be able to develop, execute, and control a basic project plan that is capable of supporting organizational objectives linked to measures of success for a single project as it applies to healthcare and/or public health. Prerequisites: CPH 3301, CPH 4301, and approved research methods course.

CPH 3392. Public Health Ecology and the Human Environment. 3 Semester Hours.

This course provides an overview of the basic principles underpinning public health ecology and environmental health. Students are provided with foundational knowledge in public health ecology, principles of environmental health, and an introduction to environmental policies & controls including the forces that influence the development of environmental health policy. Applications of this knowledge will be applied to an environmental case study, wherein students will use a systems thinking approach to identify the key elements of the problem, develop solutions, and articulate a dissemination plan. In addition, inter-professional engagement simulations will be used to provide students with skills for engaging stakeholders, including community members, policymakers/enforcers, and other healthcare professionals. (3 credits). Prerequisite: CPH 1301 Introduction to Public Health and CPH 2301 Environmental Health.

CPH 3397. Data Visualization. 3 Semester Hours.

In our increasingly data-reliant world, data to generate insights have the power to change the world. Data visualization and storytelling is a crucial skill for today's workplace across several diverse fields including public health and health related fields. The ability to depict surveillance and other complex health-related data in a visual manner promotes sound public health practice by supporting the three core functions of public health: assessment, policy development, and assurance. With the advent of visualization tools that do not require coding, data storytelling is an attainable skillset for people with varying levels of technical ability. This hands-on introductory course will teach students how to develop meaningful data stories that reveal visual insights accessible for relevant audiences. Students will learn how to use Tableau, the industry standard in data visualization tools, to make sense of and visualize publicly available data. Students will leave the course with a portfolio of data visualization projects that demonstrate the application of data storytelling for healthcare and public health. Prerequisites: CPH1301 and SC3306, SC4383, 3381 or equivalents for research methods and statistics courses.

CPH 4301. US Healthcare System. 3 Semester Hours.

The course is designed to assist the student in understanding and preparing for the unique challenges presented to managers in a health services administration career. History and current environment of U.S. health care are considered, as well as the ever-changing infrastructure of the health-services industry including the organization, structure, and operation of the nation's health care system.

CPH 4302. Advanced Epidemiology. 3 Semester Hours.

This course provides a strong foundation in concepts, principles, and methods specific to advanced epidemiology. By the end of this course, students should be able to apply these skills to (a) assess the health of a population; (b) describe the natural history, distribution, and determinants of health-related states and events; and (c) evaluate programs designed to improve public health. To accomplish this, the course considers epidemiology in the context of core public health functions and services. Pre-Requisite: CPH 3301. Introduction to the Fundamentals of Epidemiology.

CPH 4304. Management and Policy Concepts in Public Health. 3 Semester Hours.

This course provides an overview of theory and practice in the management and policy sciences applied to the field of public health. Topics include public health in the U.S. health system/legal bases of public health, public policy institutions, planning and management to promote health, emergency preparedness, public sector institutions, management, and decision-making. Students will gain skills in oral and written communication with individual and group projects. This course will introduce students to the public health system, public health policy development, and fundamental management concepts for managing public health organizations. Topics covered include organization, financing, and history of public health, public health policy-making, advocacy, and basic principles of finance and human resource management in public health organizations. (3 credits). Prerequisites: CPH 1301 Introduction to Public Health and CPH 4301 US Healthcare Systems.

CPH 4390. ProSem and Internship. 3 Semester Hours.

This is a three-credit high impact learning experience course. This course is designed to provide resources and experiential learning for the college-to-career pipeline for Public Health majors. It is an introduction to the professional field of public health and the related employment industries and will serve as a guide to skills required to succeed in graduate school and professional careers. Topics and activities will include, for example: professional development, assessment of cultural humility skills, and refining professional portfolio materials and experiences. At the completion of the course, students will have professional college-to-career pipeline resources and an applied intern experience that should increase confidence about multiple public health career options in their postbaccalaureate lives. All students will complete 20 hours per week at an approved healthcare and/or public health site. Program director approval required. Prerequisites: Junior standing and (12) of the Public Health Core credits (CPH1301, CPH2301, CPH3301, CPH4301).

CPH 4482. Introduction to Biostatistics in Public Health. 4 Semester Hours.

This course is designed as the first biostatistics course for students who have not previously taken a course in biostatistics; it is a designated core course for MPH students. Students will learn how to analyze quantitative data using appropriate biostatistical methods and software and interpret analysis results for This course is designed as the first biostatistics course for students who have not previously taken a course in biostatistics; it is a designated core course for MPH students. Students will learn how to analyze quantitative data using appropriate biostatistical methods and software and interpret analysis results for a given public health context. (4 credits). Prerequisite: any approved statistics courses and CPH1301 Introduction to Public Health.