

## Sociology

The mission of the Department of Sociology is to provide students with an understanding of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology, knowledge about and the ability to use sociological concepts in the analysis of social phenomena, opportunities to develop critical thinking as well as written and oral communication skills using a sociological perspective, an understanding of sociocultural diversity within and among societies, and qualitative and quantitative research skills including the appropriate use of computer technology.

Sociology is the study of social life and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociology's subject matter ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob, from crime to religion, from the divisions of race and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture, from the sociology of work to the sociology of sport. Few fields have such broad scope and relevance.

Training in sociology provides students with a perspective on human development and social life that is an especially important part of a college education. Social theory and research methods provide the foundation for study in sociology. On this foundation, programs with electives can be built to meet the needs of students with different goals and interests. The research emphasis trains in data gathering, analysis, and report writing — these are valuable in many careers. In addition, an understanding of the relationships between individuals and groups can prove useful in everyday life as well as at work.

## Faculty and Facilities

All full-time faculty members hold Ph.D.s in sociology and share a commitment to excellence in teaching. Their areas of interest are diverse including social change, deviance, gender, social stratification, social psychology, social theory, and research methods. Most are actively involved in research, independently or through the Center for the study of Social Life in the San Joaquin Valley. Recent faculty research has included studies of opinions on various issues, stereotypes and ethnic prejudice, the social organization of sport.

The department encourages students to obtain research experience as undergraduates. Some students conduct their own research projects; others assist faculty or work with

the Social Research Laboratory and the Center for the study of Social Life in the San Joaquin Valley. The laboratory conducts applied research on topics of regional interest. It regularly conducts the Fresno area survey and examines the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley. Other projects have studied suspected cancer clusters, residents' perceptions of community problems and solutions, taxes for local projects, and local issues. The opportunity to gain practical experience while working closely with faculty adds a special dimension to education in sociology at California State University, Fresno. Students often apply their sociological training through service learning experiences in local social service agencies.

## Career Opportunities

Students trained in sociology at California State University, Fresno have entered a wide variety of occupations. A few have become professional sociologists. While most professional sociologists teach at colleges and universities, an increasing number hold research, administration, or policy positions in a variety of settings. Many students have used sociology as a preparation for law or other professions such as social work, counseling, public health, library science, criminology, and public administration. Students who begin work immediately after completing a bachelor's degree in sociology usually enter careers in human services, administration/management in nonprofit

College of Social Sciences

## Department of Sociology

Robert S. Palacio, *Chair*

Betsy Swift, *Department Administrative Coordinator*

Linda Ragus, *Administrative Support Assistant*

Social Science Building, Room 211

559.278.2234

[www.csufresno.edu/sociology](http://www.csufresno.edu/sociology)

## B.A. in Sociology

### Minor in Sociology

### American Humanics Nonprofit Administration Certificate

public or private agencies, or research in a variety of organizations.

## Faculty

Robert S. Palacio, *Chair*

Matthew A. Jendian, *Coordinator for American Humanics*

Bridget Conlon

Xuanning Fu

Margaret Gonsoulin

Deborah Helsel

Andrew Jones

Timothy Kubal

Edward E. Nelson

