Why Sociology at Brandeis?

Sociology at Brandeis provides a distinct and renowned combination of critical scholarly analysis, hands-on fieldwork experience, service learning, and leadership. Through active and collaborative learning, our students master advanced theory and research techniques and have opportunities to engage in the community and the world as active, self-reflective change agents.

Brandeis has a higher percentage of sociology majors than any other college or university in the country.

Curriculum Overview

Students must take eight sociology courses, plus two courses above the introductory level in other departments within the School of Social Science. The sociology courses must include one introductory course, and at least one course from three of the following five core areas.

Gender and Family: Includes courses on gender, families, sexuality, women's biography, gender and race, women's leadership, women's intellectual work, women and development

Politics and Social Change: Includes courses on political sociology, welfare state, social movements, community power, globalization, war and peace, and social policy

Health, Illness, and the Life Course: Includes courses on body and health, health care systems, medicalization of social problems, aging, disability, genetics, and policy

Theory and Methods: Includes courses on classical, critical, psychoanalytic, existential, and cultural theory, as well as qualitative, quantitative, comparative, and historical methods

Institutions, Communities, and Culture: Includes courses on law, mass communications, consumption, culture, religion, human services, youth, popular music, work, science and technology, education, environment, and professions

Hands-On Learning Experience

Through various internships, service learning, and experiential courses, students can combine classroom learning with active engagement or action research in community organizations; social movements; human service and healthy community coalitions; peace, environmental, and social justice groups; and policy organizations. Some examples of recent internships include:
• Convening a “Wingspread” youth summit among major national student organizations and Campus Compact, as well as four national leadership conferences on civic engagement
• Conducting Peace Games for schools, families, and young adult volunteers in Roxbury
• Developing a hunger relief curriculum for Waltham Community Farms
• Providing case worker services to seniors at the Springwell Senior Citizen Center
• Developing young women’s leadership with the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance

Other Academic Opportunities

The sociology department is a hub of several interdisciplinary programs (Peace, Conflict, and Coexistence Studies; Women’s and Gender Studies; Social Justice and Social Policy; Health: Science, Society, and Policy). Students have the opportunity to become peer teaching assistants, work on faculty research projects, and present senior thesis research at an annual miniconference.

Career and Education Opportunities

Sociology graduates pursue a broad range of careers in nonprofit organizations, business, public service, education, human services, health care, policy, communications, advocacy, and consulting. Many are accepted to professional and graduate schools in law, medicine, social work, communications, and social sciences. Ask for our guide to careers.

Faculty

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

• Carmen Sirianni, chair
  Civic engagement and innovation, public policy for democracy, political sociology

• Wendy Cadge
  Sociology of religion, sociology of culture, health and medicine, immigration, sexuality

• Peter Conrad
  Sociology of health and illness, deviance, field methods

• David Cunningham
  Social movements, organizations, community structure, quantitative inquiry

• Gordon Fellman
  Marx and Freud, social class, peace and conflict studies, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

• Karen V. Hansen
  Feminist theory, sociology of the family, historical sociology, sociology of gender

• Gila Hayim
  Classical and contemporary social theory, critical theory, social movements, existential sociology

• Nadia Kim
  Gender, race, class; international migration; race, ethnicity, nationhood; cultural globalization

• Marty Wyngaarden Krauss, university provost
  Disability policy, family caregiving, mental retardation, human services

• Laura J. Miller, undergraduate advising head
  Sociology of culture, mass communication, urban sociology, consumption and marketing

• Shulamit Reinarz
  History of women in sociology, qualitative and feminist methodology, Jewish women’s studies

• George Ross, graduate chair
  Political sociology, social theory, economy and society, comparative social structures

• Thomas Shapiro
  Stratification, race

• Sara Shostak
  Sociology of health and illness; science and technology studies; sociology and bioethics