

LEARNING GOALS FOR THE SOCIOLOGY MAJOR¹

**Sociology Department
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
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Through our major programme, the sociology student should study, and demonstrate understanding of the following:

1. The discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social order and its changes, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe how sociology differs from and is similar to other social sciences and to give examples of these differences; (b) describe how sociology contributes to the understanding of social reality; and (c) apply the sociological imagination, sociological principles, and concepts to her/his own life.
2. The role of theory in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) define theory and describe its role in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast basic theoretical orientations; (c) show how theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed; and (d) describe and apply some basic theories or theoretical orientations in at least one area of social reality (e.g. stratification, organization and social development).
3. The role of evidence and qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe the general role of scientific methods in building sociological knowledge; (b) compare and contrast the basic methodological approaches for gathering and interpreting data; (c) design a research study in an area of choice and explain why various decisions were made; and (d) critically assess a published research report and explain how the study could have been improved.
4. The technical skills involved in retrieving information and data from the Internet and using computers appropriately for data analysis. The student should also be able to do scientific technical writing that accurately conveys data findings and to show an understanding and application of principles of ethical practice as a sociologist.
5. Basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations, such that the student will be able to define, give examples, and demonstrate the relevance of culture; social change; socialization; stratification; social structure; institutions; and differentiations by race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, etc.
6. One areas of concentration whenever appropriate. Besides obtaining general and broad-based training in sociology, the sociology major is encouraged to specialize in one or more areas of study (China studies, social research, and sociology and liberal studies) and prepare for his/her career development in Chinese management, applied social research and teaching.
7. Chinese communities and their place in the global and regional context, such that the student will be able to: (a) describe and appreciate the significance of social and regional

¹ Adopted with modification from ASA Task Force on the Undergraduate Major. 2004 *Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major Updated*. New York: American Sociological Association.

variations; and (b) know how to locate current events in a broader social and historical context.

8. Thinking critically, such that the student will be able to: (a) move easily from recall analysis and application to synthesis and evaluation; (b) identify underlying assumptions in particular theoretical orientations or arguments; (c) identify underlying assumptions in particular methodological approaches to an issue; (d) show how patterns of thought and knowledge are directly influenced by political economic social structures; (e) present opposing viewpoints and alternative hypotheses on various issues; and (f) engage in teamwork where many or different viewpoints are presented.

9. Transferable skills beyond disciplinary requirements, such that the student will further develop:

(a) written and oral communication skills in a variety of contexts and modes;

(b) statistical and other techniques in processing and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data

(c) information retrieval skills in relation to primary and secondary sources of information;

(d) presentation, communication and information technology skills;

(e) skills of time planning and management;

(f) group work skills.

10. Development of values, such that the student will see:

(a) the utility of the sociological perspective as a useful and meaningful perspective on social reality and individual biography;

(b) the importance of ethics, honesty, and transparency in research and academic settings.

(c) the importance of sociological analyses for reflection of value positions and life choices;

Without prescribing any specific positions, we will encourage students to develop an understanding and appreciation of the following values:

(a) Concern with social well-being; passion for social participation, community service and social betterment;

(b) Awareness of current social issues and problems and the diversity of values and interests in society;

(c) Understanding of the rationale behind the impact of social policies;

(d) Creative use of ideas for designing and assessing social action programmes for the betterment of community life; and

(e) Adoption of a cosmopolitan outlook that highlights the interrelations between individual, local and global events and structures.