

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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asundergrad.pitt.edu

Questions or concerns? E-mail us at pittpride@as.pitt.edu.



University of Pittsburgh

**Kenneth P. Dietrich School
of Arts and Sciences**
Undergraduate Studies
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Undergraduates Participate in International Field Studies Program

The Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (OUR) sponsored its first international field studies program this past summer. Led by Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies John Twyning and exploring Word and Image, 13 undergraduates traveled to London, England, where they spent two weeks conducting intensive research to enhance their term-long research projects.

“Undergraduates originally suggested the idea of an international field studies program,” says Patrick Mullen, director of OUR, who also participated in the program. “Upon joining the OUR, I asked students what kinds of opportunities they thought would enhance their education, and many described a desire to expand their research and creative endeavors beyond the bounds of Pittsburgh. With the support and guidance of Associate Dean Twyning, we were able to offer our first international program.”

The program attracted students from a diverse range of Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences departments, including history of art and architecture, psychology, sociology, music, and the school’s film studies program. The students conducted research

at such diverse locations as the Royal Horticultural Society’s Lindley Library London, the Dulwich Festival Street Art, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Cheek of It! School of Burlesque.

Preplanned cultural activities complemented the experience and reinforced the Word and Image theme. In addition to attending special exhibits at the Tate Modern gallery and Cartoon Museum, the students also attended the Royal Opera House’s ballet interpretation of *The Winter’s Tale* and witnessed one of the most visceral of all of William Shakespeare’s plays, *Titus Andronicus*, at the Globe Theatre.

Upon returning from the program, undergraduates used their research to enhance their term-long research projects. Most used their research to write a departmental or honors thesis. “We feel fortunate to have been able to offer students a way to transform not just their research but also their broader academic experience at Pitt,” says Mullen.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- 24** Fall term deadline for students to submit Monitored Withdrawal forms to the dean’s office; last day to resign from all classes with the student appeals office and receive a partial refund
- 27** Spring term enrollment appointments begin

November

- 7** Deadline to apply for April 2015 graduation; last day for spring term enrollment appointments
- 8** Spring term open enrollment period begins
- 26–30** Thanksgiving recess for students (no classes)
- 27–28** Thanksgiving recess for faculty and staff (University closed)

December

- 1** Last day to withdraw from all classes in the dean’s office
- 5** Last day for undergraduate day classes; spring term deadline for continuing students to register without a penalty fee
- 6** Reading day
- 6–13** College of General Studies classes, graduate classes, and evening classes will continue to meet during this period; final examinations should be held during the last scheduled class meeting
- 8–13** Final examination period for undergraduate day classes
- 13** Fall term ends; official date for degrees awarded in fall term
- 14** Residence halls close
- 14–January 4, 2015** Winter recess for students (no classes)
- 17** Fall term grades must be approved by instructors
- 18** Fall term grades available online
- 24–Jan. 2, 2015** Winter recess for faculty and staff

For the online academic calendar, go to
www.provost.pitt.edu/information-on/calendar.html.

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For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs, please contact: University of Pittsburgh; Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; Carol W. Mohamed, Director (and Title IX, 504 and ADA Coordinator); 412 Bellefield Hall; 315 South Bellefield Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

For complete details on the University’s Nondiscrimination Policy, please refer to Policy 07-01-03. For information on how to file a complaint under this policy, please refer to Procedure 07-01-03.

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY:

*Unlocking the Mysteries of
Human Behavior*

College students of today are more concerned than ever before about the world around them. They see the changes, good and bad, that are occurring around the globe and in their own communities and are asking why. They are curious people who want to be active participants in the dialogue to search for answers. The study of sociology, originally known as the science of society, teaches students how to learn about and understand the real world. Because sociological insights can be applied to all groups—from families to large institutions to nations—students studying sociology are in a unique position to unlock the mysteries of human behavior and improve the quality of human life.

“We believe that the goals of sociology are strongly consistent with the objectives of the liberal arts tradition,” explains Suzanne Staggenborg, professor in and chair of the Department of Sociology in the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. “The sociological lens provides a powerful analytical tool for explaining, predicting, and understanding human behavior. Sociology teaches students how to think and to analyze, how to question what is going on around them, and how to better understand the process of social change.”

The Department of Sociology, established in 1926, focuses its research and curriculum on the central problems of sociology and has specific expertise in the areas of social movements and politics and culture. The major consists of 27 credits in the discipline and four credits in statistics. Within the major, the department also offers five thematic clusters. These clusters enable students to tailor the major to fit their specific area of interest. The thematic topics are global and area studies; social movements/inequality; race, gender, and sexuality; the helping professions; and health, environment, and technology.

Students who plan to pursue a graduate degree should strongly consider the department’s honors program, which requires a departmental GPA of 3.5, a cumulative GPA of 3.25, and the completion of an honors seminar and an honors thesis written under the supervision of a faculty member. Students seeking an even more challenging academic experience should consult with their advisor about the option of pursuing a Bachelor of Philosophy degree in conjunction with the University Honors College.

Many students choose to double major, pairing their sociology course work with a major in psychology, history, communication, political science, biological sciences, or chemistry. “Sociology also is an excellent major for premed and pre dental students, because course work examines disease in a social context. For example, sociologists study the relevance of socioeconomic factors in the prevalence of disease and the delivery of health care services,” says Daniel Romesberg, director of undergraduate studies, internship coordinator, senior lecturer, and undergraduate advisor.

With 220 students in the major and 16 full-time faculty members, the sociology department feels and acts like a small community within the Dietrich School. Faculty and staff members know all of the students by name and meet individually with them, providing them with career guidance and academic stability. “The department requires students to meet at least once per term with their advisor to review their academic progress and career plans. We make sure that every student has a strong sense of purpose and direction in his or

DID YOU KNOW?

- Romesberg was the inaugural recipient of the Ampco-Pittsburgh Prize for Excellence in Advising.
- The Sociology Students Association invites all students interested in sociology to participate in group meetings and events. Activities include informal talks by sociology faculty members on topics such as careers, graduate school experience, and current research.
- Students can have their research published in the *Pitt Sociology Review*, a student-run journal printed annually by the department.

her studies and completes degree requirements in a timely fashion,” says Romesberg. “We also encourage students to combine real-world experience with classroom learning by doing an internship or by adding another dimension to their academic experience with a study abroad program.”

Faculty members also encourage students to get involved in experiential learning opportunities by participating in undergraduate research as early as the second term of their freshman year through the First Experiences in Research program. “We look forward to taking on freshmen, to bringing them into the major, and to developing their skills,” says Staggenborg. “We also encourage our students to reach out to faculty members and work as research assistants. They will work alongside faculty members who are dedicated teachers and researchers invested in the central problems of sociology.”

Many who have a degree in sociology pursue careers in nonprofit organizations and social services. A steadily growing number are pursuing graduate degrees, especially in medicine and other health-related professions.

For more information on the Department of Sociology, visit sociology.pitt.edu.



MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

Building a Strong Foundation

The Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences prides itself on providing students with a broad educational foundation grounded in scholarly excellence. We offer students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, analytical tools, and communication skills necessary to become perceptive, reflective, and intellectual citizens. In today's increasingly competitive world, a liberal arts education equips students with the problem-solving and critical thinking skills needed to excel in careers that span the health sciences, business, law, education, and beyond. To see how Pitt students have successfully combined majors across disciplines, please visit our new humanities Web site at yourworld.pitt.edu.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) recently affirmed the importance of a liberal arts education by approving substantial changes to the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) for the first time in more than 20 years. The MCAT will include several new and revised sections that place greater emphasis on the disciplines of psychology, sociology, critical reading, and biology. A critical analysis and reasoning skills section replaces the current verbal section and will focus on cultural studies, ethics, and philosophy. The exam also places a renewed importance on experiments and experimental design, requiring students to use reasoning and critical thinking skills to solve problems that demonstrate their readiness for medical school.

In approving these changes, which will go into effect for the March 2015 exam dates, the AAMC recognizes that the doctors of tomorrow need not only an in-depth knowledge of the natural sciences but also a deep awareness and understanding of the human and social components of health. By integrating social and behavioral sciences into the medical curriculum, the AAMC acknowledges that this will prepare students to be better doctors and, ultimately, improve the health of all patients. Students should contact their academic advisor regarding the recent changes to the MCAT and to make certain that all requirements are being met.

The Dietrich School curriculum plays a vital role in providing students with a range of courses across a number of departments that examine, predict, and explore social behavior. Because such insights and findings can be applied in multifarious ways, they can be especially relevant when analyzing the evolving dynamics of a health care system that seeks to address the needs of an aging and increasingly diverse population. Students interested in acquiring these skills and navigating the curriculum in order to achieve their career goals should consult their academic advisors.

Please also take time to visit the newly launched undergraduate studies Web site at asundergrad.pitt.edu to learn about the outstanding programs available to Dietrich School undergraduates.

May you have a wonderful fall season,

John A. Twynning

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies



FACULTY PROFILE

Sociology Interest Fuels Research



“I would love my students to come away with the knowledge that the study of social sciences provides the cornerstone of their liberal arts education.”

A professor's passion for social science research ignited such an interest in Melanie Hughes that she began to question a career path that for many years had seemed so certain. Hughes, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology, readily admits that she came to the sociology major quite late in her college career. As an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Austin, she was a senior government major ready to graduate and head off to law school. Instead, Hughes double majored in government and sociology, nixed law school, and headed to Ohio State University to immerse herself in the study of sociology while completing her master's and doctoral degrees.

A University of Pittsburgh faculty member since 2008, Hughes is a political sociologist, combining her love of politics and sociology. Her research interests revolve around how gender intersects with other forces of marginalization to influence women's political power. She has published numerous articles on this topic in peer-reviewed journals, including *American Sociological Review*, *American Political Science Review*, and *Social Problems*. In addition, she coauthored a book titled *Women, Politics, and Power: A Global Perspective*, now in its second edition.

Hughes' passion is apparent in the classroom, where one of her favorite courses to teach is Social Research Methods, the same class that changed her career trajectory as an undergraduate. “Research Methods is a wonderful introductory class for all students because they learn to see things through a different lens and with a critical eye. Throughout the class, we look at how research is consumed, how to make sense of that research, and how to examine the reliability of the research.”

She encourages students to enroll in this introductory research course no matter what their intended major. “Students taking this course to fulfill a general education requirement will receive a strong foundation in general research strategies. For sociology majors, this class develops critical thinking and evaluation skills, which can transfer to any job. Additionally, because of the recent Medical College Admission Test changes, students interested in pursuing a medical career are required to have a basic understanding of research methods and to demonstrate reasoning ability. Regardless of their future plans, all students should be able to walk away from this course with a more critical eye to the daily things around them.”

Hughes has been a strong proponent of students' getting involved in research very early in their academic careers. For the past four years, she has been a faculty mentor for the First Experiences in Research program offered through the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity. “I love working with freshmen and teaching them the fundamentals of research. Through the First Experiences in Research program, students meet other undergraduates and begin to build important relationships with faculty mentors,” she says.

In the classroom, Hughes keeps her students engaged by incorporating media technology into her lectures. She also is an advocate of bringing outside speakers into the classroom to talk about their experiences. Reflecting on her own academic career, Hughes still remembers how impacted she was after hearing about the atrocities endured by a Holocaust survivor.

“When students finally grasp a concept and I see the lightbulb go on, that is most gratifying for me,” says Hughes. “More than anything, I would love my students to come away with the knowledge that the study of social sciences provides the cornerstone of their liberal arts education. The critical thinking, communication, and writing skills they learn will be extremely valuable in a broad range of careers.”

Lecture Series Focuses on Social Movement Issues

The Pittsburgh Social Movements Forum in the Department of Sociology sponsors a lecture series that brings together prominent researchers in the field to discuss major social movement issues. The department encourages all students to attend these lectures to hear from top sociologists from across the country about new ideas in social movement studies as well as work in progress.

Past lectures have focused on state repression of social movements, global labor organizing, race and collective action in prisons, emotions in social movement research, Eastern European and democratization movements, sexual minority movements, and global anti-Semitic movements.

The department also sponsors a lecture series that brings prominent speakers to campus to discuss politics and culture and how they intersect. Areas of interest range from intergroup interaction to studies of global processes.

All lectures are held in the Sociology Colloquium Room in Wesley W. Posvar Hall. For a complete list of lectures, visit sociology.pitt.edu.

FUTURE LEADERS LEARN TODAY

Looking Through the Sociological Lens

Fate and family brought Karl Gibson, a sixth-year senior, to the University of Pittsburgh. While attending a private college north of Pittsburgh, he was seriously injured in a car accident. Medical treatment necessitated him to be closer to home, and Pitt was the logical place for him to continue his studies. Gibson is triple majoring in sociology and psychology through the Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and natural sciences through the College of General Studies. He already has completed a chemistry minor and a conceptual foundations of medicine certificate.

Gibson comes from a long line of family members who have graduated from Pitt, including his grandparents, mother, and brother. His younger sister is currently enrolled at Pitt and also is majoring in sociology. "I love the field of sociology. It is so versatile and prepares students to think creatively and critically. This major has taught me to synthesize problems and approach challenges in a different and more creative way, skills that will be very beneficial when taking the revised Medical College Admission Test," says Gibson.

Six years ago, Gibson dove into research through the First Experiences in Research program. "There is nowhere better to be, especially if you want to go into the medical field, than at the University of Pittsburgh. It's absolutely incredible to be able to work in a research lab your freshman year alongside some of the top researchers in their fields. This is unheard of at most colleges and universities," exclaims Gibson.

Throughout his academic career, Gibson has continued to build on his research experience by reaching out to faculty members. He worked as a research assistant in two capacities in the Learning Research and Development Center, analyzing player behavior in the video game World of Warcraft and examining the effects of stress on the immune system. In 2013, he assisted Kathleen Blee, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and associate dean for graduate studies and research, in compiling literature reviews on hate crimes and right-wing movements. On working with world-class faculty members, Gibson enthuses, "I was so excited to come to Pitt and take Professor Suzanne Staggenborg's classes. Her reputation precedes her. She and Distinguished Professor Kathleen Blee are absolutely famous in their field of social movement and social problems."

Gibson was a 2014 Avery Award for Undergraduate Students runner-up and the 2014 recipient of a Brackenridge Summer Research Fellowship that allowed him to continue his research on his Bachelor of Philosophy thesis, titled "Of Death and Dying: A Spatial Analysis of Demographic Factors and Community Networks' Influence of Suicide Rates in Pittsburgh." Gibson used statistical methods, including multiple regression, to model and investigate suicide rates in Pittsburgh's 90 neighborhoods.

Gibson continues to challenge himself this term by taking a course load of 21 credits. His past courses included an honors organic chemistry sequence, a graduate qualitative research methods class, and a combined undergraduate/graduate course. "The upper-level classes really taught me to think through problems in a new and novel way, and the graduate class strengthened my writing and communication skills because it was very discussion oriented and writing intensive," he says.

During his free time, Gibson volunteers as a teaching assistant for general chemistry, physics, and cognitive psychology courses. His community involvement includes volunteering as stage crew director and coordinator for an Upper St. Clair middle school's musical production.

After graduating in spring 2015, Gibson plans to enter the workforce to gain more experience in the medical field and eventually attend medical school, with plans to specialize in primary care or psychiatry.



Sociology Department Promotes Internship Program

The Department of Sociology encourages all majors to complete an internship as part of their academic experience. Internships enable students to apply their sociological skills in a real-world setting, enhance their chances of admission to graduate or professional school, and increase their prospects for finding satisfying and meaningful employment. Internships also help to strengthen their spirit of community involvement and foster the development of solution-oriented approaches to sociology.

According to Daniel Romesberg, internship coordinator, "There appears to be a synergistic relationship between participation in internships and overall academic performance. Students who participate in sociological internships seem to become more enthusiastic about sociology as a discipline. As a result, they tend to become more responsible and motivated students."

Students have participated in internships with a wide variety of organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, Pennsylvania Bureau of Consumer Protection, Allegheny County coroner's office, Make-A-Wish Foundation of America, Homeless Children's Initiative, and National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Internships also are available that involve childhood counseling and education, hospital and health care, psychological and substance abuse counseling, criminal justice, business, and law.

Students who are majoring in sociology and are interested in applying for an internship should e-mail Romesberg at romesber@pitt.edu.



DEALING WITH LONELINESS

by Mary Koch Ruiz, University Counseling Center

Loneliness is an emotion that most college students experience at one time or another during their academic careers. It may be precipitated by change or even personal growth. For some, the experience of loneliness may be brief, whereas for others it may be more debilitating and may negatively impact their academic performance and sense of self.

Loneliness can occur when making a major life change, such as moving to a new city, leaving home to attend school, changing jobs, or even ending a relationship. Feeling disconnected or not belonging can occur when separated from what is familiar. As new friendships develop and the new environment becomes familiar, the feeling of loneliness usually wanes.

Individuals experience loneliness differently. Loneliness may manifest itself in the following ways:

- feeling disconnected from people
- believing there is no one with whom you can share your experiences and feelings
- being alone and thinking you have no other choice
- avoiding new social interactions for fear of rejection
- feeling depressed, anxious, and/or angry
- relying on returning home on weekends for emotional relief
- self-medicating with food, alcohol, or other drugs

How can you help your son or daughter to cope with change and loneliness?

- **Challenge** any negative thinking; find evidence to contradict negative thoughts (for example, you had friends in high school; you can make new friends in college).
- **Encourage** him or her to join a student group or organization to meet others. The Student Organization Resource Center on Pitt's campus is a great source for information about student groups.
- **Normalize** expressed and unexpressed feelings of missing home and loneliness.
- **Keep in touch** via phone calls, e-mails, and text messages.
- **Encourage** the exploration of campus. More familiarity with new surroundings helps to decrease the feeling of loneliness.
- **Suggest** talking with someone, such as a resident assistant or a counselor in the University Counseling Center.

When your loved one has experienced a change in his or her life and/or is separated from family, friends, and familiar places, remember that such loneliness can be short lived. It will pass if positive action is taken.

RESOURCES

University Counseling Center
Wellness Center
Mark A. Nordenberg Hall,
Second Floor
111 University Place
412-648-7930
counseling.pitt.edu

Student Organization
Resource Center
833 William Pitt Union
412-624-7115 or 412-624-7116
studentaffairs.pitt.edu/sorchome