



SOCIOLOGY

Challenging ourselves—students, thinkers, and social beings—to understand today's most vexing problems

Michigan's Department of Sociology is one of the nation's oldest and most distinguished programs. Consistently rated as one of the very top departments, we have played a key role in defining the discipline. Our distinguished faculty pursues research covering all the continents, putting our department and our students at the forefront of global issues. The department is known for its methodological breadth, from training in survey, demographic, network-analytical, "big data" and other quantitative methods, to rigorous archival and historical work, to cutting edge, deep ethnographic research, and other fieldwork methodologies. We offer first-rate, rigorous methodological training to study the social world around the globe.

The study of sociology provides fascinating and distinctive perspectives on the social world, generating new ideas while critiquing the old. The field offers a range of research techniques that can be applied to virtually any aspect of social life. We study urban and suburban communities, social inequality and social stratification, culture, nationalism, organizations and corporations, the economy, families and family change, poverty, immigration, health, education, and more. Because sociology addresses the most challenging issues of our time, it is a rapidly expanding, intellectually dynamic field with broad policy implications. Indeed, sociologists are increasingly involved in crafting the policies and programs that shape our world. Students develop strong writing, analytical, statistical, and methodological skills. Michigan sociology students have developed successful careers in a variety of fields, including architecture, business, education, criminal justice, international relations, law, medicine, public administration, social research, and social work.

To maintain the stature and national respect that the department enjoys, we must continue to attract the best faculty and students, and support them in their efforts to conduct cutting-edge research. Gifts will provide the resources to aggressively build the most promising of our current areas of scholarly and pedagogical strength, as well as to develop new areas of research and teaching that, when leveraged with our current strengths, would position the department as a leader in the discipline.

GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

To compete for the most outstanding graduate students, who will work closely with faculty on research and teach undergraduate students, we must offer competitive support. One of our greatest needs is support for our most promising students from developing countries. Collaborating with a faculty member is one of the most educationally rewarding experiences a student can have during their academic career and often takes place in the summer when students leave Ann Arbor to conduct archival research and fieldwork. Our goal is to ensure that every student is able to take advantage of these rich collaborative opportunities regardless of financial need. Graduate student support for international research—to access and reside in field sites, and collect and transport data back to Ann Arbor—would greatly enhance the department’s intellectual culture with a strong research orientation among the faculty in international sociology. Annual funding of \$50,000 is needed, or an endowed gift of \$1M, to ensure all graduate students are able to participate in these important opportunities.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE

The department seeks to establish a formal conduit through which we can help translate scholarship to the public, especially the local region and the state of Michigan. Gifts will make possible initiatives that address public concerns and issues in Detroit and Michigan, and will provide opportunities for our undergraduates to engage directly with the community by connecting scholarship to practice. Funds of \$50,000 - \$100,000 annually could be used to enrich the Project Community courses, thereby enabling more students to have the opportunity to gain service-learning experiences in education, criminal justice, public health, education, or community development settings. In this way, students will be able to get acquainted with the “real-life” applications of sociology by developing and honing communication skills to make meaningful connections and contributions to communities in metro-Detroit, as well as in other parts of Michigan.

NAMED PROFESSORSHIP

Endowed professorships have long been recognized as both a hallmark of academic quality and a means by which a university honors its most esteemed scholars and teachers. Professorships are reserved for scholars of national or international stature with highly distinguished records of teaching, research, and publication. They constitute a time-honored way to recruit or retain scholars with exceptional records of achievement and, thereby, strengthen the position of the department among peer institutions. A gift of \$2.5M would create an endowment to support a professorship.



“I had always been passionate about a variety of social issues, but never fully understood how to go about fixing them as an individual. I realized that by understanding the relationships between systems, institutions, and the individuals that comprise them, I could better understand how these social issues came to be, and how we can go about addressing them.”

—Kseniya Dzhalala, A.B. '23



SOCIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The department has a popular Sociology Undergraduate Research Opportunity program (SURO), whereby undergraduates work with faculty on their research projects. Opportunities for scholarship support will greatly expand the number of students who can participate, especially for those who are most financially challenged. Annual gifts of \$15,000 are needed to support the students eager to engage in this initiative.

SOCIOLOGY OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE LEADERS

In sociology, we recognize that first-generation college students at the University of Michigan face unusual social, academic, and financial challenges. But we also find that such students possess a unique set of qualifications and capabilities: curiosity, conscientiousness, persistence, risk-taking—in a word, grit. These are the characteristics of leaders. In order to nurture those characteristics, the Department of Sociology has created a program designed to cultivate and support our first-generation leaders in Sociology—Sociology Opportunities for Undergraduate Leaders, or SOUL. Students in the program get paid Research Assistantships and faculty mentorship, attend the Barger Leadership Institute Leadership Lab, take a class only open to SOUL students, receive mentoring and tutoring from graduate students, have a peer mentor, and more. Scholarship support of \$10,000 annually for SOUL will help the program continue to grow and ensure that a greater number of first-generation students are afforded the tools and opportunities to flourish.

SOCIOLOGY STRATEGIC FUND

Each year, expendable funds are a vital the continuing success and growth of the department, providing key resources, and increasing our ability to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Contributions of all sizes to the Sociology Strategic Fund are critical to support our undergraduates as they pursue study abroad, internships, and research projects that are not funded by other sources.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.

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