



Active Minds Changing Lives
Department of Sociology

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February 7, 2012

Dear Sociology Majors and Pre-Majors:

I am writing with news of changes to the course requirements and admissions process for sociology majors at Western.

Over the past two years, departmental faculty and staff have been engaged in discussions about how to provide our students with the best possible experience. The changes that the department is implementing are motivated by three primary goals. The first goal is to ensure that the required coursework matches the learning objectives we have for our graduates. The second goal is to increase students' access to the major. A third goal is to reduce the number of "sequenced" courses so that students who want to become sociology majors can move through the required coursework in a timely manner.

There will inevitably be questions that arise as we make this transition in course requirements. Please rest assured that your professors and advisors are aware of these changes. We are all motivated to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible for everyone. My main comment for those of you who are uncertain about what will be expected or required of you is this: We will work it out.

- You are still on track to graduate under the current requirements.
- We can switch you to the new requirements as appropriate.

The following changes will be implemented for the Fall of 2012:

- The main statistics course will be Sociology 304. It will primarily incorporate material from the former Soc 215.
- The main research methods course will be Sociology 306. It will be worth one writing proficiency credit, and it will combine material from the former Soc 210 and Soc 310.
- You will be able to enroll in Sociology 302, 304, and 306 in any order, or simultaneously.
- Sociology 310 ("Methodological Applications in Social Research") will no longer be a required course in the sociology core. It will not disappear entirely, since at least one new capstone will be based on it, and some of its material will move to Soc 304 and 306.

- There will no longer be a requirement that majors specialize in two areas (i.e. “Family,” “Law/Crime/Deviance,” “Population Studies, or “Social Organization/Social Inequality”). Further, courses will no longer have these area designations. This does not mean you cannot specialize in areas of your choosing by enrolling in the relevant coursework.
- Internships will be offered as Sociology 371. This will allow students to participate in internships earlier in their academic career.
- Students with a cumulative GPA of 2.85 or higher will be able to declare as sociology majors at any time. Students not meeting this threshold will apply as in the past, although some small changes to admissions criteria will be adopted.
- For more details, see the [departmental advising webpage](#).

There are a couple of temporary adjustments that are necessary to get us through the transition.

- For 2012-13, all capstones will offer 3 credits of Writing Proficiency.
- For Spring 2012, only 1 section of Sociology 310 will be offered. Students who are unable to enroll in that section of 310 will not be required to complete Sociology 310, even if they became majors under the “old system.”

Our department advisor, Linda Clark, will have a big task on her hands as we go through the transition. She is extremely knowledgeable about our curriculum, and she will be working in close collaboration with me and the other faculty as we implement this change. You can contact Linda at Linda.Clark@wwu.edu to discuss details about your plan of study and graduation requirements.

We are excited about these changes. Our department is fortunate to be filled with excellent instructors who are committed to teaching students how to think sociologically. And although you don’t always see the “other side” of faculty work, your sociology instructors are also publishing research at the highest levels.

Feel free to drop by my office if you have questions about these changes or other thoughts about sociology at Western.

Regards,

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