

What makes you employable as a Sociology student?

All too often students identify themselves by their area of study rather than by the skills they possess. Your degree does not define you. Your skills and abilities are what make you employable.

What transferrable skills have you developed throughout your Arts Degree?

- Critical Thinking
- Analytical Skills
- Problem Solving
- Decision Making
- Research Skills
- Organization and Time Management
- Presentation Skills
- Drive and Motivation
- Interpersonal Skills
- Teamwork Abilities
- Leadership Skills
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Written and Oral Communication Skills

What skills do you possess as a Sociology student?

When speaking with employers, it is important to reflect on what skills you may have to offer and how you can apply them to respond to the employers' needs.

| Skills | How university helps you develop these skills | Why these skills are sought by employers |
|--|---|---|
| Appreciation and understanding of social problems | Studying how people and environments (such as family, school, medicine and society) are interconnected gives you insight into the critical issues facing North American society today including crime, substance abuse, violence against women, poverty, homelessness, and environmental degradation. | This insight is valuable in resolving group conflicts as you bring an appreciation of the various outside forces that affect these problems. Understanding the various factors that contribute to conflict helps to create solutions to complex issues. |
| Ability to employ research methods and collection of data | Studying an issue, analyzing the variables involved, then determining if there are any causal links between variables | This analytic and systematic thinking process can be transferred to the designing of proposals and programs. Drawing links between issues is beneficial in both explaining ideas and promoting their importance |
| Appreciation for the complexity and diversity in race and ethnic relationships, class and gender | Through in-depth study of various issues where you engage in analysis to determine the best course of action. This also involves recognizing that communities are different and therefore behave differently and have their own belief systems | This skill shows the employer that you are capable of dealing with controversial topics with professionalism and are open to different perspectives. |

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| Understanding of how crime and society are interrelated | By studying courses that focus on criminal justice, crime, deviance, and the sociology of prisons | An understanding of these elements helps you develop safety strategies in the workplace and helps organizations intervene in individuals' lives to prevent, curtail or incapacitate the involvement in crime and support people in making productive and positive decisions related to work and life |
| Understanding and appreciation of the social influences of popular culture, music, politics and media | Through classes that critically examine how popular culture and knowledge are produced, disseminated, consumed, interpreted, and experienced | This 'inside' knowledge of how people in society will generally behave can be very beneficial in marketing concepts and gives you insight into how to capture the attention of your target audience |
| Understanding of classical and contemporary social theory | By using analytical thought and theory to develop an argument for your research papers and class discussion | Balancing both classical and contemporary theory shows the employer that you can build upon old concepts to create new and innovative knowledge |
| Understanding of the implications of an urban society | Studying how an urban society influences the cultural identity of rural communities and how rural communities are affected by globalization, urbanization, industrialization and transportation developments | Beneficial in recognizing the uniqueness of communities and providing solutions to help maintain identity and independence |
| Appreciation for the impacts of an aging society | By studying the changing age demographic of society over time | Our workforce currently has five generations actively working in it. Understanding the impact of aging is an essential skill for guiding a changing socio-economic culture and helps to combat stereotypes related to aging. Appreciation and understanding of the strengths that each generation brings helps to create a positive work environment |
| Appreciation for questions related to social structure and change and the causes and consequences of human behaviour | Observing and studying the behaviour of people as members of a group, rather than as individuals | Helping employers understand the discord between belief and behaviour can help you create incentives in the workplace that aim at reducing the gap |

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| Ability to identify group dynamics and how they work | Participating in your own group dynamics through class assignments and theory and examining cooperative relationships, leadership qualities, competitiveness within groups | Understanding how groups work and how individuals handle themselves in a variety of group settings can help you create strong teams in the workplace even when people come from different backgrounds and areas of expertise |
| Ability to investigate values and beliefs while respecting differences among them | Analyzing political organizations that have one common goal yet have smaller divisions and beliefs within them | Understanding how values differ between people can help you bridge gaps between co-workers and help you achieve a higher level of results |
| Understanding of what makes people want to connect with one another and under what circumstances | Examine social institutions such as family, marriage, education, religion and politics | Help an organization connect with their clients by creating policies, procedures and a workplace that supports individual needs and desires |
| Appreciation that our society does not become simpler over time; it becomes more complex | Focusing on the evolution of society and how television, communications, internet, and social media have changed the way we interact with one another | Helping employers grasp complex communication tools such as social media and harness their power to connect effectively with clients and staff |
| Understanding and appreciation of mentorship and its benefits | Studying how communities become stronger through helpful supports and identifying individuals who have paved the way and learning how they support future leaders | Mentorship saves money, creates a positive work environment and allows for greater creativity at work, thus making for a productive workplace |
| Ability to identify trends | Exploring major adjustments and transitions in life such as high school to college or university, child to adult, retired into geriatric | Being aware of trends and fads in our lives allow you to target messaging in a way that connects with people in a meaningful way |
| Ability to target information to a variety of audiences | Assignments through Community Service Learning (CSL) require that you tailor your knowledge and research to the particular audience or group in order to produce a result | Applying your knowledge of how to effectively target various groups allows you to develop effective in-service training, conferences, seminars and daily schedules |

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| Ability to connect individuals with needed resources within the community | Making contacts and connections within the U of A community through student groups, group work and interactions with your professors | Being resourceful and being able to advocate for collaboration with others so as to not duplicate efforts is an effective way to manage an organization |
| Understand the distinction between advocacy, mediation, helping, and counseling | Exploring how clarifying, exploring problems, setting realistic goals, closing a helping exchange, and referral procedures work | True professionals know their limitations and understand the importance of avoiding burnout when helping people through their personal struggles and applying appropriate detachment in order to create a healthy work environment |
| Appreciation for interdisciplinary workplaces | Exploring how human behaviour is influenced by the interconnectedness of psychology, medicine, economics, statistics, urban planning, politics, anthropology, and law | We no longer work in silos. Employees are expected to work together effectively to achieve goals and have the ability to see how other disciplines can complement one another to evolve and problem solve in the workplace |
| Appreciation for the complexity of factors influencing every individual | Exploring the social fabric that contributes to problems and the difficulties in solving them | Being aware that problems don't always have simple solutions allows you to help an organization identify resources to help with the change process |

Resources:

Lambert, S. (2009). *Great jobs for sociology majors*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Billson, J. M., & Huber, B. J. (1993). *Embarking upon a career with an undergraduate degree in sociology*. Washington: American Sociological Association.

Reiss, Albert J. (1986). *Why Are Communities Important in Understanding Crime? Crime and Justice*. The University of Chicago Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147423> Accessed 02.21.12