

Tips for Student Learning and Academic Success in the Sociology Major

Department of Sociology and Anthropology Illinois State University

This page offers tips to help you take a more active and autonomous role in your learning, a key to academic success. These tips come from [research on the learning process](#). You may also benefit from reading one or more [books offering advice to students on learning](#) and success in college.

Research shows you will learn more if you:

- **Participate in out-of-class learning opportunities** (e.g., join [Sociology Club/AKD](#) and other [RSOs](#); get involved in faculty research through [Research Assistantships](#); do an [Independent Study](#) project; participate in [Department events](#); engage in [University-sponsored volunteer work](#)).
- **Reflect on your academic work and your learning** (e.g., do any reflection assignments offered in class; create a portfolio of your academic work; keep a journal reflecting on what you are learning over the course of the major; discuss the learning process with other sociology students).
- **Engage in hands-on learning opportunities** (e.g., do [Internships](#) and academically-relevant volunteer work or jobs; take courses that involve active learning assignments; participate in the [ISU Undergraduate Research Symposium](#)).
- **Form academic relationships** (e.g., talk to [faculty](#) and peers about sociology outside of class; participate in group projects; form a study group; do an [Independent Study](#) with a faculty member).
- **Obtain and use feedback you receive about your work** (e.g., read the comments instructors put on your assignments and ask questions about them; submit drafts of assignments to instructors for early, formative feedback; meet with your instructors to discuss ideas for papers or assignments; have a knowledgeable peer look at drafts of your work).
- **Take challenging courses and instructors** (sign up for [courses](#) where the instructor has high expectations and you are required to read more than 40 pages per week and write more than 20 pages during the semester per course).

Sociology majors tell us they learn by *connecting*:

- **Connecting to others** (e.g., by collaborating with fellow students; discussing course material; and teaching it to each other).
- **Connecting sociological ideas and skills to each other** (e.g., through review and repetition using different study strategies; spacing out your studying over time rather than "cramming"; and spending plenty of time on study tasks).
- **Connecting sociological theories, concepts, and skills to your life and the real world** (e.g., to your hobbies, interests, jobs, values, and goals).
- **Connecting courses to one another** (e.g., by making explicit connections among material in different courses through connecting assignments or readings across courses; completing a relevant minor).

- **Connecting to the discipline** (e.g., by joining the [American Sociological Association](#), the [Midwest Sociological Society](#), or the [Illinois Sociological Association](#); attending academic conferences with faculty; selecting assignment topics that truly interest you).