Social Sciences

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- Anthropology and Geography – **BS, Minor**
- Latin American Studies – **Minor**
- Social Sciences - **BS**
- Sociology – **BA, Minor**

The Social Sciences Department provides a broadly based, multicultural and multidisciplinary perspective on humanity, society, the environment and development.

In addition, the department offers general education courses that provide an understanding of the complexity and diversity of the world's peoples and their problems. Courses have an American and international orientation and address issues such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, past and present diversity of world societies, political economy, physical environments, and environmental sustainability.

**BS ANTHROPOLOGY and GEOGRAPHY**

The Anthropology and Geography major provides students with the skills for understanding and examining patterns of human activity and resource utilization across space and time, as well as the interactions between humans and the natural environment. Interdisciplinary in nature, this program focuses on the applied areas of cross-cultural studies, international development, ecological research design and method, the evolution of humans, environmental assessment, and sustainability. Courses in Anthropology and Geography train students to examine human ecology from the ancient past to the modern present through courses in biological evolution, cultural adaptations, behavioral ecology, environmental impacts, and the ecology of human health and disease. In addition, students gain an understanding of the physical environment in which humans are placed, through courses in physical geography, resource management, biogeography, and climatology. Students are trained in relevant skills, including Geographic Information Systems, remote sensing, and quantitative methods.

Students interested in this major should be curious about the relationships between humans and the environment (including biology, behavior, climate and landscapes) from a broad hands-on perspective. Our students typically have particular interest in study abroad and involvement in international opportunities.

The program offers a four-year curriculum leading to a BS degree that prepares students for careers in environmental and regional planning, cultural resources management, archaeology, international development, climatology, science education, international health research, and federal government work in behavioral analysis.

**Internship or Study Abroad Requirement.** As a means of promoting relevant job skills, hands-on learning, and field experience, majors are required to complete either an approved internship or study abroad program. Students who do an internship will receive a minimum of 4 units of credit (ANT 465 or GEOG 465 Internship). The department will assist students in identifying suitable internships. However, students are encouraged to explore options for themselves based on their interests. In place of an internship, students may choose to participate in a study abroad program. Four units of approved coursework taken while studying abroad will be substituted for the internship course.

**CONCENTRATIONS**

Students may select one of the following concentrations or the individualized course of study.

**Cross-Cultural Studies and International Development.** Provides students with the theoretical knowledge and applied skills necessary for the study and practice of international development in cross-cultural settings. Students attain an in-depth knowledge of the social, political, economic, and ecological dimensions of international development and gain practical skills through research projects, international study, and applied internships. The concentration provides expertise and training for internationally-focused careers including public and private development institutions, the Peace Corps, the public health field, education, and numerous careers where cross-cultural understanding is essential.

**Environmental Studies and Sustainability.** Provides students with an understanding of human environmental relationships, resource utilization, and the human impact on the Earth. Current environmental issues are explained and evaluated in a global and historical context. Students learn the importance of sustainable land use practices and techniques for their successful implementation. Applied and technical skills important to assessing the environment and promoting sustainability are emphasized.

**Human Ecology.** Students learn about the natural environment, human behavioral and cultural systems, and the complex interrelationships between the three. Major concepts
and practice emphasize broad spatial and temporal perspectives. Students acquire knowledge and skills related to global and regional climate and physical geography, human evolution, cultural ecology, behavioral ecology, prehistoric and recent environmental change, indigenous cultures of the new world, methods for analyzing climate change and related human responses in the past and present.

**Individualized Course of Study.** An opportunity to pursue a course of study which meets a student’s individual needs and interests. It consists of 28 units at the 300–400 level that are selected by the student in consultation with an advising faculty member. The student must also provide a written justification for the courses and the way they constitute a cohesive, integrated course of study. The list of courses is a contract between the student and the Department.

**Teaching.** With additional coursework as prescribed by the College of Education, students may pursue the Multiple Subject Credential (for elementary school teachers) or the Single Subject Credential (for secondary school social science teachers of anthropology, economics, geography, government, history, political science, psychology, or sociology). This concentration prepares a candidate for Subtest I of the CSET Multiple subjects exam and strengthens a candidate’s knowledge in all 16 History-Social Science Content Standards established by the California State Board of Education. For more information regarding teacher credential programs, please see the College of Education section.

**BA SOCIOLOGY**

Sociology explores the nature and dynamics of human society and the interrelationship between individuals and their social groups. The goal of sociological study at Cal Poly is twofold. The first objective is to develop a sociological imagination that enables students to see their personal circumstances and problems in context of the broader, local, national, and global forces that shape their lives. The second objective is to prepare students for graduate studies and careers in such fields as criminal justice, law, social services, complex organizations, and teaching. Sociology also offers general education courses that provide an understanding of the complexity and diversity of the world’s peoples and their problems. Some courses focus on American society, emphasizing issues of class, race, ethnicity and gender. Other courses have a global orientation dealing with both the past and present diversity of the world’s societies, economies, politics and religions.

**Internship Requirement.** As a means of promoting relevant job skills, hands-on learning, and field experience, majors who select the criminal justice or social services concentrations are required to complete an approved internship. Majors who select the organizations concentration will be encouraged to complete an internship, but will not be required to do so. These internships in criminal justice or social services will be up to one year, but with a minimum of two quarters, and count for 8 to 12 units of credit (SOC 440). The department will assist students in identifying suitable internships. However, students are encouraged to explore options for themselves based upon their interests.

**CONCENTRATIONS**

**Students are required to take one of the following concentrations or the individualized course of study.**

**Criminal Justice.** Prepares students for careers in law, law enforcement, corrections, detention, probation, parole and other criminal justice agencies.

**Individualized Course of Study.** An opportunity to pursue a course of study which meets a student’s individual needs and interests. It consists of 28 units at the 300–400 level that are selected by the student in consultation with an advising faculty member. The student must also provide a written justification for the courses and the way they constitute a cohesive, integrated course of study. The list of courses is a contract between the student and the Department.

**Organizations.** Students learn to apply the general principles of human behavior to the understanding of modern organizations. It prepares them for careers in business, government or non-governmental organizations.

**Social Services.** Provides the general principles of human social behavior and specialized professional courses to prepare for careers in the helping professions such as social work and counseling.

**BS SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Effective Fall 2010, students will no longer be admitted to the BS Social Sciences program. Instead, they should apply to either BS Anthropology and Geography or BA Sociology.

The BS in Social Sciences consists of courses in anthropology, geography and sociology, and students have an opportunity to examine human experience from a variety of viewpoints.

Concentrations are available in criminal justice, cross-cultural studies and international development, environmental studies and sustainability, human ecology, organizations, social services, teaching, and/or an individualized course of study.

**Other Concentrations.** With prior approval of the Social Sciences Department and the department offering the concentration, students may select one of the following: Pre-Law, or Global Politics - formerly International Affairs (Political Science), Management, or International Business (Orfalea College of Business).  

(August 25, 2009)