

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Dr. Jennifer Scroggins, Chairperson

LA 802, (406) 657-2311

jennifer.scroggins@msubillings.edu

Advising Information

Students are encouraged to meet with their advisor each semester to confirm that their plan of study is accurate and complete. If necessary, changes and updates should be made in order to ensure that program requirements can be completed in a timely manner. Faculty advisors work with students to explore appropriate internships, cooperative education placements and/or experiential learning opportunities which will enhance the student's academic program. In addition, advisors provide assistance in selecting elective courses which support the student's interests, career plans and plan of study.

Academic advising services for all freshmen Liberal Arts and Social Sciences majors are provided through the Advising Center on McMullen Hall first floor west. Upon declaring a specific major, Liberal Arts and Social Science majors will be assigned to a faculty advisor in their department for upper-division advising. Advising files for all upper-division students are maintained in the departmental office of the program in which the student is majoring. Although advisors are available to assist students in designing their Plans of Study, students are ultimately responsible for meeting degree requirements.

The Department of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies combines four scholarly disciplines, each with its separate faculty and academic programs. The four-year program in Sociology leads to a Bachelor of Science degree or a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. The four year program in Environmental Studies leads to a Bachelor of Arts degree. The department offers minors in Political Science, Native American Studies, Sociology, and Women's Studies.

Criminal Justice

The criminal justice program at MSU Billings is designed to provide students with an understanding of the principles and practices of the criminal justice system in the United States. Students will learn about the essential components of the criminal justice system, including police, courts, and corrections. The program is especially suited for people who are planning a career with a criminal justice agency as well as those who are interested in the study of crime and criminal justice. A degree in criminal justice provides the background for a student to enter a variety of occupations in the criminal justice field such as law enforcement officer at the local, state, or federal level; corrections officer; or probation officer. Students with a degree in criminal justice may also find employment with regulatory agencies, social service agencies, and in business. The major also prepares students to enter graduate programs in criminal justice, sociology, and public administration.

Environmental Studies

Mission Statement

Our students benefit from living in one of the most ecologically diverse, environmentally spectacular, and managerially complex regions of North America. Yellowstone National Park, the northern Rockies, and the northern Great Plains are all within a short drive of the MSU Billings campus. Located thus, the Environmental Studies program provides a well-rounded interdisciplinary approach to understanding our natural systems and the role of humans in those systems. The program is dedicated to experiential learning opportunities and community collaboration.

Program Overview

The curriculum builds students' understanding of environmental issues as reflections of societal values and behaviors, environmental technologies and sciences, and environmental policies. As an interdisciplinary program, students have course options in beginning and advanced Geographical Information Systems (GIS), advanced ecology, environmental advocacy and applied social media campaigns, historical perspectives of the environmental movement, Native American perspectives on environmental issues, environmental sociology, artistic and literary representation of the environment, and more.

For this major students will select a "Career Track" to guide their course selections that will simultaneously move them towards graduation and particular careers:

a) Environmental Studies with skills in Geographical Information Systems; b) Environmental Advocacy; c) Environmental Management and Policy; and/or d) Environmental Studies with skills in Eco-spatial Analyses. An internship experience is required and enhances skills and job marketability. Students will work with their major advisor to select and design this opportunity, typically with local, state, and federal agencies, private firms, laboratories and/or in the field. Students may add Minor Fields of Study to broaden their career opportunities.

The faculty of the Environmental Studies program are drawn from existing academic programs across the University. Many are involved in environmental research supported by research grants. They also publish scholarly works and regularly attend national conferences. Students are encouraged to participate in faculty-mentored research opportunities, present at conferences, and earn degree credit for their scholarly work. The faculty also serve in various capacities within community organizations and agencies. Their involvements outside the classroom enhances the curriculum and the learning objectives of the program. Occasionally, courses are taught by individuals from the community of environmental professionals in the Billings area, thus bringing the "real world" directly into classroom.

The program has a proven record of preparing students to succeed in environmental occupations found in public and private sectors of the Montana and regional economy. As well, the program has successfully advanced students into numerous masters and professional degree programs, including Urban and Regional Planning, Natural Resources Management, Environmental Sciences, Environmental Management, Masters of Business Administration, and Forestry and Fire Management.

Native American Studies

Mission Statement

The Native American Studies program at MSU Billings is dedicated to providing outstanding courses in Native American Studies, support for all students, and working cooperatively with Tribal communities and organizations. All Native American Studies programs incorporate traditional indigenous philosophies of maintaining balance in a holistic environment.

Native American Studies began at Montana State University Billings in 1970 and has continued to develop in response to internal and external needs and provisions. The Native American Studies staff supports other Native American related programs at MSU Billings including Native American Achievement Center and the All Nations Club. The academic offerings in Native American Studies include classes which examine past and present Native American cultures as living, vital cultures; explores issues in Native American history, education, and the behavioral sciences; and identifies factors that contribute to the unique cultural and legal status of Native American people. Special workshops and classes are held which are responsive to the contemporary needs and concerns of the Native American populations in Montana. NASX courses provide a background for any career involving work with people from different cultures and especially with Native American communities. MSU Billings actively supports, encourages, and instructs in MCA 20-1-501, commonly called

Indian Education for All. An academic minor of 21 credits is offered for the Liberal Arts and Social Science, Education, or Business student.

Political Science

Mission Statement

Political Science is the study of politics, government, and public affairs. It provides the student with knowledge and understanding of the theory, organization, functions, and processes of domestic and international systems and institutions of politics and government, including the role of individual and group relations.

Sociology

Mission Statement

The sociology program at MSU Billings is dedicated to promoting the values of social responsibility, respect for diversity, and a commitment to lifelong learning. Our sociology program takes a holistic approach to learning, an approach that directly links academic work with understanding of the structure of social institutions, changes in them, and their impacts on the lives of individuals. Our program also conveys insights into the dynamics of social processes, and the manners in which individuals both shape and are shaped by these processes. Finally, the sociology program at MSU Billings imparts knowledge about the self as it relates to various social contexts.

Objectives

The study of sociology at MSU Billings is based on a core of theory and method courses: (1) how to understand social life as a sociologist (theory) and (2) how to observe social life and draw conclusions from what one sees (method).

Courses involving theory and method are required for every major.





In the interest of building a broad sociological foundation, each student is required to take at least two courses in the lower division core and at least one course from each of the five areas in the program:

1. General Sociology,
2. Family and Relationships,
3. Crime and Criminal Justice,
4. Social Inequalities, and
5. Health and Environments.

Based on this foundation, students are strongly encouraged to focus their academic interest on one of the four areas. To provide opportunity for students to integrate their academic knowledge in sociology and the wider social world we live in, the department requires a minimum of 135 hours of work experience with an organization.

A degree in Sociology provides a solid foundation for a student to enter into either graduate study or occupation in government, industry or business. For instance, with a concentration in program area two or three, a student can find job opportunities in human services or the criminal and/or juvenile justice related fields. A Bachelor of Science degree program puts an emphasis on familiarity with Mathematics and Computer Science to prepare a student for entering the labor market right after graduation. Regardless of one's special interest, one might wish to emphasize research methods and statistics. Because of the growth of computer use, these two skills are cited as most valuable by sociology graduates employed in nonacademic jobs.

Extended major: in lieu of a minor, students may choose the Sociology major extended option. This option requires 15 additional credits from the list of Sociology courses.

- Criminal Justice Bachelor of Science Degree (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/bs-criminal-justice/>)  Offered Online
- Environmental Studies Bachelor of Arts Degree (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/ba-environmental-studies/>)
- Political Science Bachelor of Science Degree (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/bs-political-science/>)
- Sociology Bachelor of Arts Degree *Program placed on moratorium* (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/ba-sociology/>)
- Sociology Bachelor of Science Degree (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/bs-sociology/>)  Offered Online
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- Criminal Justice Minor (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-criminal-justice/>)  Offered Online
- Environmental Studies Minor *Program placed on moratorium* (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-environmental-studies/>)
- Geography Minor *Program placed on moratorium* (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-geography/>)
- Native American Studies Minor (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-native-american-studies/>)
- Political Science Minor (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-political-science/>)
- Political Science Teaching Minor (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/teaching-minor-political-science/>)
- Sociology Minor (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/minor-sociology/>)  Offered Online
- Sociology Teaching Minor *Program placed on moratorium* (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/teaching-minor-sociology/>)
- Social Science (Broadfield) Endorsement Licensure (<https://catalog.msubillings.edu/undergraduate/college-liberal-arts-social-sciences/department-social-sciences-cultural-studies/social-science-broadfield-endorsement-licensure/>)