SOCIOLOGY PREPARES ME FOR A CAREER IN LAW

There is a close fit between sociology and law.

Sociology helps you understand the problems that people in the legal field (attorneys, judges, government officials) are trying to solve. Sociology gives you research and analysis skills, which is important since people in the legal field have to analyze data as a basis on which to make judgments about what is the best course of actions. Sociology also teaches you critical reading and writing skills, which are vital in the legal field.

Law schools are looking for diversity in their student body. Since Political Science and English are really popular majors for prelaw students, unless you are really excited about Political Science or English, it’s a good idea to major in something else instead.

It is said that getting into law school is 50% LSAT score, 40% GPA, and 10% other things. So make sure you have a high LSAT score and a high GPA. However, typically there are more people getting high LSAT scores and GPAs who apply to law school than there are openings. This is where that 10% matters. Of the students with high LSAT scores and high GPAs, it’s the applicants who are strong and diverse in the other 10% who actually get admitted.

LSAT

► Prepare for the LSAT by studying 300-400 hours (4-6 months, 15 hours/week).
► We recommend taking an LSAT preparation course.

GPA

► Major in something you are interested in, so that you do well in your classes.
► Take classes that develop your critical reading and writing skills.
► Sociology classes that can be helpful for prelaw students:
  ► Research methods and statistics: Stats 121, Soc 300, 301, 307, 404, 405
  ► Sociological theory: Soc 310, 311
  ► Crime, deviance, and delinquency: Soc 380, 383, 481
  ► Electives on social problems and institutions

Other

► Do well in classes and do research with professors so they can write you good letters of recommendations.
► Get diverse life experiences. “Diverse experiences” means more than just a list of items you can check off. It means that you have been involved in a range of interesting and important things and you are able and willing to discuss how those things have affected how you think. Here are some ways to get experiences that can help you add to diversity in law school. Whatever you choose, doing it a little bit every week over a long period of time is much better than doing it all day long just for a short time.
  ► Get involved in research.
  ► Do an international program (field research, study abroad, internship, etc.)
  ► Learn a foreign language.
  ► Participate in a political campaign.
  ► Do community service.
  ► Consider taking prelaw classes at BYU, such as Phil 205 (Deductive Logic); St Dev 168R (Law Lecture Series); St Dev 214 (Legal Literature); St Dev 260 (Constitutional Research); St Dev 268R (Prelaw Leadership); St Dev 364: Mediation Techniques and Practices; St Dev 365: Legal Education and Practice; St Dev 368R (Prelaw Review Journal Writing); St Dev 496R (Advanced Legal Internship)
  ► Consider doing the University Honors Program. It’s good for a line on your resume, but the biggest benefits are indirect: By doing an Honors Thesis, you get research and writing experience. The professor who supervises your thesis can write you a better letter of recommendation. By doing the Great Works requirement, you become better at critical reading and familiar with a range of disciplines. The service requirement also gives you a more diverse range of experiences.
  ► Consider getting a masters degree before going to law school. This is especially helpful
if you want to do research on social issues and then push for better laws, or if you want to understand the research that laws are based on. A masters degree can also make you more competitive to get into a really good law school.

- The masters program in Sociology at BYU is one of the best in the country. Our best masters students have gone on to some of the best law schools, including Michigan, Northwestern, and Stanford.

CONTACT

Any faculty member is good to study under if you want to go to law school.

Visit the Prelaw Advisor:

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  If you want to talk about how sociology can prepare you for a career in law, see
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