RESEARCH SPECIALIZATIONS

DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH STRENGTHS

UW Sociology is a research-focused department. Our faculty specialize in theory driven, empirical research in a wide range of social topics. We disseminate the results in articles and books, in our teaching, and other public fora. Faculty research is supported by UW interdisciplinary centers as well as the department. Current research strengths include demography and health, criminology, law and deviance, analysis of states, markets and societies (which includes comparative historical sociology, economic sociology, social movements, ethnic conflict and the sociology of religion), social inequality, migration studies, and research design, statistical analysis and data-intensive social science.

DEMOGRAPHY & HEALTH

AFFILIATED FACULTY: CROWDER, CURRAN, HERTING, LAVELY, MCCORMICK, RAFTERY, STOVEL, WILLIAMS

The UW tradition of excellence in population studies owes much to the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, an NIH-funded population center. UW demographers embraced the data revolution, extending our long-standing strengths in fertility, mortality, and mobility through research on population projections, global health, health disparities and data science. Faculty exploring these issues work not only with CSDE but the eScience Institute and the University’s new Population Health Initiative.

INEQUALITY

AFFILIATED FACULTY: BRINES, BURT, CROWDER, HARRIS, MATSUEDA, QUINN, SCHWARTZ, STOVEL.

The study of stratification and inequality is the core of our discipline. Our focus on inequality builds on our traditional strength in sex and gender, and race and ethnicity studies, which we combine with a new focus on labor markets, housing, environmental inequality, and racial and ethnic disparities. Faculty working on these topics have links to the Evans School, the West Coast Poverty Center, eScience, and the Bridges Center for Labor Studies.

RESEARCH METHODS, SOCIAL STATISTICS, AND DATA-INTENSIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE

AFFILIATED FACULTY: BRINES, CROWDER, CURRAN, HARRIS, HERTING, KISER, MATSUEDA, MCCORMICK, PFAFF, RAFTERY, STOVEL, QUINN, WILLIAMS

Faculty at the UW are at the forefront of a revolution in statistical analysis of new types of data. We are internationally recognized for developing methods for theoretically and statistically rigorous analysis of digital data. While our faculty is notably strong in social statistics, network methods, and computational demography, attention to methods and study design is central to our research mission and graduate training. Faculty also employ big data, field experiments, and qualitative methods including ethnography and field methods, comparative and historical methods, and case-based approaches in their research. Our focus on methods is evidenced by close ties with CSSS, CSDE, the eScience Institute, and the University’s QUAL Initiative.

CRIME, LAW & DEVIANCE

AFFILIATED FACULTY: BECKETT, BURT, HARRIS, HERTING, MATSUEDA

UW Sociology is well known for its research on crime, law, and deviance. Current faculty interests continue this focus, using perspectives from social control, socio-biology, socio-legal studies, and the sociology of punishment to study determinants of criminal behavior and nature of legal and justice institutions. The specialization profits from strong ties to Law, Societies and Justice and the School of Law.
MIGRATION STUDIES

AFFILIATED FACULTY: CROWDER, CURRAN, PFAFF, STOVEL, WILLIAMS

Migration studies is as an emerging strength in our department. Our research includes the study of demographic processes as well as the social, economic and political consequences of immigration and spatial mobility. This specialization has broad sociological relevance, is open to varied methods, and is important for understanding contemporary politics and society. It builds on links to CSDE, the Jackson School of International Studies, and the Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

STATES, MARKETS & SOCIETY

AFFILIATED FACULTY: KISER, PFAFF, STOVEL, QUINN

Comparative and historical analysis of states and markets has long been a hallmark of UW Sociology. Scholars in this area are interested in macrosociological perspectives and the origins, functions, and transformation of social institutions. Their research explores states' and market institutions' engagement with their societies and transnational actors and processes, and benefits from strong links to the Jackson School and the Political Science Department.