Innovative research explores how employment and incarceration status can change racial perceptions, how social networks affect gang violence and emergency response to hurricane Katrina, and how social movements can impact democracies.

Faculty play leading roles in the Center for Immigration, Population & Public Policy; Center for the Study of Democracy; Center for Organizational Research; Center in Law, Society & Culture; Center for Global Peace & Conflict Studies; and Center for Demographic and Social Analysis.

Nearly 500 undergrads pursue majors in sociology each year and an additional 12,000 enroll in sociology courses. More than 80 graduate students study alongside the department’s 28 distinguished faculty in areas of culture; economy, organizations and labor; education; gender and family; global inequality and change; immigration; political sociology and social movements; population; race and ethnicity; and social networks.

UCI sociological research findings impact international population policy, the design and implementation of the U.S. Census, and the development of more effective communication plans for times of crisis. These findings are consistently published in the top sociological journals, one of which – International Journal of Comparative Sociology – is currently hosted at UCI under the editorship of professor David Smith, while associate professor Nina Bandelj serves as coeditor of the Socio–Economic Review.
alumni & rankings:
Undergraduate and graduate alumni have gone on to pursue careers in academic and professional environments including:
- Pennsylvania State University
- Princeton University
- University College London
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Chicago
- University of Massachusetts
- University of Southern California
- University of Tokyo
- University of Washington
- U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. News & World Report ranks the sociology graduate program in the top 25 in the country.

faculty
Edwin Amenta (Ph.D., University of Chicago) political sociology, comparative/historical sociology, quantitative methodology
Jacob Avery (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) social inequality, communities, culture, human service organizations, sociology of knowledge, ethnography
Stanley R. Bailey (Ph.D., UCLA) race & ethnicity, religion, latin america
Nina Bandelj (Ph.D., Princeton University) economic sociology, organizations, culture, social networks, comparative sociology, europe
Frank D. Bean (Ph.D., Duke University) international migration, demography, racial & ethnic relations, economic sociology, family
Catherine Bolzendahl (Ph.D., Indiana University) political sociology, gender, comparative sociology, quantitative methodology, family
Susan K. Brown (Ph.D., University of Washington) immigration, inequality, urban sociology
Carter Butts (Ph.D., Carnegie Mellon University) mathematical sociology, social networks, quantitative methodology, human judgment & decision making, economic sociology
Katherine Faust (Ph.D., UC Irvine) social networks, research methods
Cynthia Feliciano (Ph.D., UCLA) race/ethnicity/minority relations, migration and immigration, education
David John Frank (Ph.D., Stanford University) race & ethnicity, the natural environment, higher education
Ann Hironaka (Ph.D., Stanford University) civil war, culture & identity, environment, globalization
Matt Huffman (Ph.D., UC Santa Barbara) race & gender inequality, labor markets, organizations
Jennifer Lee (Ph.D., Columbia University) immigration, race & ethnicity, social inequality, asian american studies
David S. Meyer (Ph.D., Boston University) social movements, public policy, peace & war, social justice
Andrew Penner (Ph.D., UC Berkeley) gender, inequality, education, family, race
Francesca Polletta (Ph.D., Yale University) political sociology, cultural sociology, law, society
Charles Ragin (Ph.D., University of North Carolina) comparative & historical sociology, social inequality, political sociology, qualitative & quantitative methodology
Belinda Robnett-Olsen (Ph.D., University of Michigan) social movements, race & ethnicity, gender, social change, african americans
Rubén G. Rumbaut (Ph.D., Brandeis University) international migration, the “1.5” generation, comparative race & ethnic relations, structural inequality, identity, health & mental health
Evan Schofer (Ph.D., Stanford University) comparative political sociology, education, quantitative methods & statistics, globalization, environment, organizations
David A. Smith (Ph.D., University of North Carolina) world systems analysis, urbanization, development, comparative/historical sociology, dependent development in east asia
David Snow (Ph.D., UCLA) collective behavior & social movements, social psychology, urban, social problems, culture, qualitative methodology
Judith Stepan-Norris (Ph.D., UCLA) labor unions, sociology of work, political sociology, american society, research methods, historical/comparative methods, class formation
Yang Su (Ph.D., Stanford University) social movements & collective action, political sociology, china’s political transition
Judith Treas (Ph.D., UCLA) family, social demography, aging, social stratification
Kristin Turney (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania) demography, family, health, poverty, social support, inequality, life course transitions, education
Wang Feng (Ph.D., University of Michigan) social demography, social inequality in state socialisms, contemporary chinese society

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Cynthia Feliciano, sociology professor, has found that online dater shows race-based preferences prevail, especially among whites.