

## New Freshman Seminar

### SOC 111: Introduction to Sociology

Why take sociology? What are you going to DO with sociology? These are questions you might have asked when considering sociology as a choice for the new freshman seminar (NFS). You might be surprised to find that sociology will be a great help to you both personally and practically. On a personal level, sociology helps us understand how major institutions like families, schools and the workplace shape us: the way we think, act and see the world. On a practical level, a sociological perspective helps us develop skills that will help us more effectively address major social problems affecting those institutions such as poverty, race and gender inequality, discrimination, divorce, drug abuse, unemployment and crime. That sounds like a lot, but sociology's strength is the broadness of its perspective and its ability to help us understand the relationship between our personal lives and the larger society we live in.

One way we will explore these areas of social life in the NSF is to debate major social issues and policies such as same-sex marriage, the effects of divorce on children, affirmative action, immigration, the gender wage gap, welfare, the decriminalization of drugs, and street crime v. white collar crime.

In confronting these issues, we may find that some of our most basic values, beliefs and common sense notions may be challenged or shaken. It is difficult to understand why we believe something if we have always believed it. Our job will be to find out **why** we see the world in a particular way and not another, and what the consequences are because we hold these beliefs. New sociological concepts and ideas may cause you to change your views or reinforce the ones you already have- but isn't that what learning is all about? Perhaps as we discuss these issues it will become apparent that there is a lot more you can **do** with sociology than you might have imagined. We will especially be interested in job and career related goals that a sociological perspective can help you accomplish.