

Careers for Sociologist and Social Scientists

SARAH WHITLEY: Welcome, everyone. My name is Dr. Sarah Whitley and I serve as a clinical assistant professor and the career and professional organization advisor for the Department of Sociology. I'm an alumna of WSU. I earned my PhD in 2013. I went away to California for a couple of years, teaching down at Fresno State, and now I am back again teaching at WSU, and I'm happy to be here.

I enjoyed mentoring undergraduate students on their career path, some professionalization, and helping students understand how they can apply their sociological knowledge in the professional setting. So as I'm going through my presentation, if you have questions, please type them. And we can stop and I can give you some answers as those questions come up.

So let's get started. Sociology is practiced in a variety of ways and settings beyond academia. In fact, most ways sociology is practiced is outside of the academic setting. There are actually five identified roles of sociologists and those include being decision makers, educators, commentators and critics, researchers, and consultants. Notice that none of these roles have the term sociologist within them, yet people are doing sociology, using sociological methods and skills, or playing their sociological imagination in their work, even though sociologist is not part of their job description or part of their title.

For example, I earned my bachelor's and, before going to graduate school, I worked as a program manager for an organization counseling adolescents convicted of hate crimes. And I also worked as a community relations consultant and educator for a local Humane Society. So I used my sociological skills and knowledge in each of these positions, but again, notice that sociologist was not part of those position titles.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, many sociology and social science bachelor's degree holders find positions in related fields, such as social services, education, and public policy. Recently, the American Sociological Association reported that about 20% of full-time working graduates were employed in social services and counseling occupations. So on this slide and on the next one, I'm going to list a variety of different related interest areas that sociologists find jobs in. And then later on, we'll come back and we'll explore more in-depth what some of our recent graduates are doing with their degrees.

OK, so it might not seem intuitive, but we have a lot of students that do go into business. So they go into anything from consumer research-- some of our students are really interested in entrepreneurship. We have a variety of students interested in human resources or personnel management, marketing and sales, media, public relations, and then we're seeing a growing trend of students interested in real estate, and then through human resources, various types of business training. Students are also interested in community services, so they're going to left field doing advocacy work, child care, community development, working with environmental groups, non-profit agencies, and urban planning. And we also see a growing segment of our

majors and minors that are focusing on careers and health services, so anything from public health and family planning to hospital admissions, insurance providers, rehabilitation counseling, and substance abuse education.

Other type of career tracks include majors entering into education. So I'm showing here at higher education options. So anything from administrative support, admissions, a lot of students interested in advising, alumni relations, development. I don't have it listed on the slide, but we're seeing a growing presence of students interested in careers in student affairs. They received a lot of help entering higher education, so they want to give back, and they want to give back to departments that they found useful when they were in their undergraduate careers.

We have students that are interested in law, so they might go to law school and become attorneys. But we have a lot of students that are interested in a variety of criminal justice careers, doing investigation, judicial affairs, law enforcement, paralegal work, and then probation and parole administration. Some students really enjoy the research methods and statistical courses. So they're doing more things along the line of doing data analysis, research, professional writing, grant writing, editing, and journalism.

Students can also pursue careers in social services. So, social service administration, caseworkers, as social workers, acting as representatives for local, state, and federal agencies. Some of our students are really interested in pursuing social services and the recreation aspect that often deals with working with youth, different types of rehabilitation, social work, and then youth and elderly services. And we're going to continue to see a upsurge in especially elderly services as our baby boomers are aging and there's more professionals that are needed in that area. So a big portion of our students are really interested in a variety of social services. They're also interested in social justice issues and looking at things like human and civil rights and various types of professions associated with that.

And then we have students that are interested in education, but not at the higher education level. So they're really looking to get into elementary, secondary, special education, teaching English as a second language, things along those lines. So we'll come back in a little bit to explore the various careers in a little bit more detail, and especially giving you examples of what our recent graduates are doing, recent graduates in the last five years or so that are coming out of our program to give you more of an idea about position title specific, and then what their experience has been professionally.

Before we do that, though, I always like to show a little study that's taken place. And this is a study-- it's annually done. It's a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. So they both ask employers, what are the type of skills that you are really requiring out of students? And then they ask students who are graduating, how proficient do you feel you are in these skills?

So this next part of this slide is interesting in that these are the skills that employers are really looking for. And a lot of times we might consider these kind of soft skills, but these are also skills that you're getting throughout your coursework in sociology and social sciences. So we focus a lot on oral and written communication. Communication is key to any type of profession that you're going to be entering, so being really fluent and proficient and articulating yourself orally, giving presentations, speaking one on one with individuals and groups, but also your written communication as well.

Employers are looking for individuals that have strong critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and a lot of our coursework is focused on the development of critical thinking and problem solving, especially around social issues that we're experiencing, and thinking about how are we addressing them, what does policy look like, evaluating how effective that policy is, things along those lines. Applying skills in the real world setting. So they want to be able to see what tangible projects have you worked on, and what are the outcomes of those projects, and being able to give strong examples of those.

Professionalism and work ethic. So knowing to be disciplined, being on time, handling yourself in ethical ways. There's a lot of problems in terms of people being unethical and lawsuits associated with that. So there's a real focus on professionalism and work ethic. Intercultural fluency, so cultural competency, understanding about diverse populations, understanding about how to interact with diverse populations is really important to employers. And then leadership and teamwork, that there's a give and take in a professional setting, so understanding how to work in a team setting, but also understanding how to step up as a leader when that's needed, making decisions, being creative about it, and coming to a problem solving decisions.

So the interesting thing about this survey is employers think that all of these things are really important. And students think that they're graduating with these skills and they think they're very strong in them. However, employers are saying they don't think students are very strong in them. So there's a disconnect there in terms of the-- we know what employers want, but students have the perception that they're very strong in them. And it very well could be that they are, but they might not be presenting to that employer, either through their interviewing skills or how they're entering the profession, how they're displaying and marketing themselves through their resumes, through their cover letters, email communication, things along those lines.

So I always think this is important to throw up there again, because these soft skills are really important. When you look at your learning outcomes for your classes, oftentimes these types of skills are implicit. They might not be explicitly showing up in those learning outcomes, but these are things that every instructor is looking for their students to be able to demonstrate. And it's a matter of knowing that when you hit the job market, that you have developed these skills, and that you know how to market them in a way that employers see that you have them, and you know how to market them strongly.

So students sometimes are often surprised hearing that. Students think they're strong and these skills and employers think they still need some work in these skills. And from the professional setting, employers are really pushing institutions of higher education to reinforce these skills as much as possible. So, again, I just want to stress that it's not necessarily that students don't have these skills, but they might not be showing them in the way that employers want to see them, again, for being successful in the labor market, and these are things that you'll get in all of your classes from introduction to developing, reinforcing, and mastering is analytical problem solving.

So sometimes students aren't as interested in taking courses like research methods or statistics, but that's where you're going to get a lot of your foundation of analytical skills and analytical problem solving. So it's really important to take what you can from those classes and apply them to major social issues that we're experiencing, having creativity, so being able to think outside the box and apply that in the professional setting. Critical thinking, collaboration. We work with others, we have to interact with others and communicate with others. So the more we practice that the more comfortable we become and the better we become at displaying that.

Again, expressive and persuasive oral and writing skills, strong communication skills. And, again, all of these things, it's a matter of-- it's a lifelong learning process. So the more that we practice them, the better we become at them, and I often hear from students, "Well, I'm not a good writer." And many of us aren't great writers when we start, but it's perseverance and resiliency and continuing to practice those types of skills.

Having innovation. And then, again, this multicultural and global understanding, so having that strong foundation in diversity and cultural competency. And you'll get these from sociology classes, but you'll also get them from a variety of other social science courses that you would be taking as well.

So the next series of slides-- and there's probably about, I would say, eight or nine of them-- are really going to look at specific positions that our graduates have gone into in the last five years. And I'm going to give you a little background on what's required for these positions. But I'm a qualitative researcher, so I'm also going to provide quotes from students about what their experience has been in these positions. So

We're going to start with social work because that's huge area of interest for our majors. And some statistics here. In 2012, our national organization did a survey of BA sociology graduates, and they were asking about postgraduate plans and what students were doing a couple years out of graduation. And what they found was that the largest category of alums were working full-time and were employed in social service in counseling occupations, so about 25%.

When we're thinking about social work, it's the primary occupation field in the social services. And preparing for a career as a social worker, it can be a little bit ambiguous, because there's a

wide variety of type of social workers, and positions vary quite widely. You can do anything from being a case worker to a mental health assistant to clinical social worker.

So when students say, "Oh, I want to go into social work," I always talk to them a little bit further. Well, what type of social work do you want to do? Or is there a topic or population that you're most interested in working with? So we can talk a little bit more about the variety of positions that entail a career in social work.

So to enter a field in social work, a bachelor's degree is the most common requirement. Most students, though, are going to want to take positions in clinical setting or clinical positions, and those are typically going to require a master's degree and up to two years of experience. So students who are interested in pursuing these types of careers, it would be thinking about case management in human and social services, working in Child Protective Services, acting as a medical social worker at a hospital, or a hospice agency.

Those would all the clinical type positions. They would require pursuing a master's in social work and then being certified. And those certifications are by stat. So you want to have a good idea about what are the requirements for certification in the state you're thinking about being a clinical social worker in, and seeing what those requirements are.

So I'm going to give some information of one of our graduates named Clara. And she completed her sociology degree and then she went on to earn her master's of social work degree here in Washington. And she talked a lot about that her internship was really influential in her career path. So Clara says, "I was unsure what direction my degree would take me in until I had the experience of working with Child Protective Services. Once I had this opportunity, I knew I wanted to attend graduate school and become a social worker."

So internships are very important. If you're really unsure about what you want to do, I would encourage students to do one or more internships. It also gives you an idea of testing the water a little bit. Sometimes I see students that say I want to work with children and then I urge them to go do an internship. And for some of them, that really solidifies they want to work with children, and others they decide, oh man, I really don't want to work with children, and now I kind of have to strategize. Well, what else could you do that's related in that field, but maybe be working with adults instead of working with children?

So for Clara, her past experience with family members-- She had several family members who were ill. Her family really relied on working with medical social workers to help them find resources and work them through that experience. So she has ended up as a medical social worker. And, again, that interest really was driven by her own personal experience. But then also getting a taste of what are other types of social work going to be like through her internship study.

OK. We've also had a series of students that have gone on to active legal assistants or active as paralegals, with the intention of eventually they're going to go on to law school. One thing to

note, if you're thinking about doing law school, you want to become an attorney, oftentimes they don't want students applying directly after they earn their bachelor's degree. They want students to go out, have a couple years experience, and being a paralegal or a legal assistant is a good way to do that, to stay in the field you're interested in, but gain that experience. So take two or three years of doing that and then apply to law school, and that tends to be-- it makes your application a lot stronger if you're going to go into law.

So paralegals and legal assistants, they do a variety of tasks to support lawyers and law firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies. Many firms will utilize paralegals and legal assistants to bring down the cost of legal expenses for their clientele and to provide efficiency in the legal services that they're providing. So Marcus was a student who-- he took this path. So he originally wanted to work for a police department or correctional facility after he graduated, but he was hired as a legal assistant for a county prosecutor's office. And he's currently assigned to the family support division, doing mostly clerical work, interacting with clients, organizing files and documents, scheduling hearings, and mailing out notices of court dates.

So law firms will generally hire college graduates with a bachelor's degree for these types of positions. And in a lot of cases, previous work or experience isn't necessary to be able to enter these types of positions. Again, Marcus spoke a lot about his internships and how that influenced his avenue into paralegal and legal assistant work. Marcus talks about, "Although they may have not been related to my job now, my previous employers give me excellent references for my work ethic and skills. At the end of the day, all an employer wants is a good worker and someone they can see themselves working with. I believe it was my interview and references that gave me this job."

So Marcus didn't have past experience. There weren't positions in the police force or in the correctional facility at the time he graduated. So he really relied on his strong work ethic when he was doing this internships to get strong recommendation letters. And I think that speaks to also another important thing to keep in mind is to be building your social network. Think about presentation of self. You should also always be presenting yourself in a professional manner. And you never know the people that you're coming in contact with, how they're going to be beneficial for you in the future in terms of the professional setting.

So Marcus had a couple other tips for students. He talked about do as many internships and volunteer positions as you can. Again, he related this to building his social network and that those connections were invaluable to him in the future. Apply for as many jobs as possible. Many employers take a long time to hire someone, so that was kind of his experience. He wasn't sure how long it was going to take before he heard back from employers that he was applying for positions for, but it took a lot longer than he anticipated. So he thought that that was good information to share with students.

And also to visit any and all preparedness workshops. Especially if you want to enter governmental jobs, there's a lot of different types of workshops that will be held to help you navigate that process a little bit easier.

OK, so thinking about going from paralegal and legal assistants to law, we have several students that they have gone through law school, or they're currently going through law school, and they've made law career. So Jake is one of our graduates who has made it through. And he talks about, "To me, lawyering is the height of service." So he was really interested in giving back to his community, giving back to individuals. He had a very strong social justice focus when he was going through school. And so for him, he feels like this is a career that really fits, that he's giving back in, and being a lawyer is a way for him to do that.

Earning a juris doctor degree, it usually takes seven years of full-time study. So completing an undergraduate degree, followed by three years of law school. Most states require practicing lawyers to earn their degree from an accredited American Bar Association program. We have over 200 law programs in the United States that are accredited.

And a majority of schools require that applicants take the law school admissions test, often known as the LSAT. So there's a lot of resources and workshops on campus to help prep students for the LSAT. There is the Pre-Law Center that also has a lot of information online, sample tests for the LSAT. things along those lines, so a lot of resources to help students prep for applying for law school.

In the second and third year of law school, students generally customize their coursework for a particular area of law practice. So prior to that, it's pretty general. What's a system like? And how does their jurisprudence function and work? Things along those lines. And then in that second or third year, students would specialize in a topic area and their coursework would be specialized. So I included some popular areas that individuals go into for law bankruptcy, business.

For sociologists, there's a real push for students that are interested in civil rights. I didn't list on here, but immigration law is a big area. Criminal law, environmental, family, labor and tax law. So that gives you an idea of the different types of specific areas of law that, if you're interested in, that you could go into. And some students have a pretty good understanding about that variety and others just aren't really aware of the variety that's available.

So the one other quote I had from Jake was thinking about how he does sociology as a lawyer. And, again, as a lawyer, a sociologist is not in that position title, but in this quote here he's talking about how he's using his sociological skills pretty regularly in his field. So he says, "In my field, we often have to consider the perception, especially when representing the corporation. If we have multiple lawyers, will it look bad? If we have too much technology, does it look like the poor opposing party is just being outspent? There are numerous things to consider. Sociology is also beneficial when picking a jury. You have to consider your client and how he or

she will be judged by the person who sits before them on a panel based on things such as their race, their social class, job position, relationships, and community involvement."

So I really like this quote because, again, it's talking about how Jake is doing applied sociology. He is doing it in his law career and how he sees that those skills that he learned as an undergraduate are becoming very useful for him in his professional career.

We have many students that are interested in a variety of different careers in education, anything from elementary, junior high, high school, into higher education. I picked one particular student who entered an afterschool program and this is an entryway into-- eventually, they're going to go on and get their master's in education administration. And they want to work at a district level to provide more equal education across the district to the variety of schools that are in there.

So, again, this is an example of a student coming straight out with her degree, thinking about that she needs to enter at an entry level something related to education and this afterschool program was something that popped up for her and that she was interested in pursuing. So there are a lot of these afterschool programs. Their goal is to provide a safe, structured learning environment to students outside their regular school day. They typically operate for a couple of hours after the school setting. Sometimes they are sponsored by the district themselves. Sometimes they're sponsored by nonprofit organizations, so they take a variety of forms.

They tend to address one or more focuses for the student. So it could be anything from academic-- so, tutoring and helping students with homework, enrichment. So our public schools have moved away from providing a lot of extracurricular-- so, sports and arts and PE and things along those lines-- so they might focus on providing those opportunities to students. Service, so getting students involved in their community and building their civic [INAUDIBLE] and their engagement in the community. Or focusing on vocational and college preparation for the students. And, again, it varies on the age of the students and what the goal is of that specific afterschool program. Often, they'll do a variety of these topics in the programs.

So Hayley is our student here and she acts as a tutoring and resource center coordinator in a nonprofit organization. Again, this is kind of getting her foot in the door. So she wants to pursue a much larger professional track of doing education administration and really providing equity at the public school district level. But this was what was available.

So she's in this position on the west side of the state. She has many different tasks or elements that she has to do in this position, coordinating homework tutoring, running structured program for student groups, and forming and maintaining community partnerships with principals and counselors. So Haley, in this next quote, she talks about how sociology gave her a new perspective. She says, "I try to help my students think about how they fit into the world. Sociology is embodied in the work I do. For example, last year my staff and I focused on the content that we provide to our youth. Many of our families are immigrant and refugee families

who live in a subsidized housing community. Our focus lately has been encouraging our youth to learn more about their racial identity and the empowerment of their culture. "

So having that diversity, having that cultural competency has been very important Hayley being able to use her sociological imagination and consider what is most beneficial for the students attending her afterschool education program has been important. And she had a couple of suggestions for students as well. She said that a mentor really helped her think about the variety of different careers that she could go into. So if you don't have a mentor now, I really encourage you to seek a mentor out. That can be a faculty member. It can be an advisor

Hayley, again, talks about networking with colleagues. So, again, this issue of building your social network and networking. And you never know how somebody is going to be able to connect you in the future and provide resources to you in the future and vice versa. So it's kind of a give and take.

And then she talks about remaining active in your community. So for Hayley, it was really important-- she's serving students in this afterschool program in an area where she doesn't necessarily reside. But she serves in that community in other capacities, so she has a better understanding of the needs of that community and what the students that are coming to her program might need. And I think that really important to consider, especially if you're going to pursue a career that's working with individuals in the community, addressing community issues, not just assuming you understand what populations need, but that you actually take the time and energy to really be involved in the community and hear from those that have the need from their perspective what it is that they really want and are seeking.

We are seeing more of a variety of students that want to go into medicine. A lot of our students want to do nursing, but in the last several years, we've had more students that have actually been pursuing medical degrees, so going into medical school. And these types of programs are requiring that students actually take more sociology classes, which is great, because they're going to come in contact with a variety of different patients.

So in terms of medicine, if we're thinking about medical school, physicians complete four years of undergraduate, four years of medical school, and three to eight years in an internship or residency program, depending on the type of specialty that they're going into. There is no specific major that's required to apply to medical school. So, again, we do have sociology students and other social science students that are going to pursue that. But students still have to complete their prerequisite coursework in disciplines like biology, chemistry, physics, English, mathematics, and in humanities. So medical schools are really looking for students that are well-rounded, have the hard science bio side of it, but also have the social science and humanities side of it as well.

Let's see here. So this is a quote from Kayla and it's talking about how sociology brought her to medicine. So she says, "Sociology, in many ways, is what brought me to medicine. To my knowledge, there are not many physician sociologists, but I believe that is beginning to change,

primarily because our country is currently engaged in big conversations about the future of health care in our country from a social" detriment of health, I'm sorry, "determinants of health to health equity. On the patient care side of things. I believe that my sociological imagination makes me a more aware, sensitive, and thoughtful physician. Although it is easy to become caught up in the science of medicine, my soci-brain has a tendency to make me pull back, think about a patient's social context, and then use that perspective to shape the encounter and care of the patient."

So, again, I think that this quote really does highlight what a lot of different professions in medicine are moving to, that they want people to have a sociocultural understanding. They want people to be able to use that sociological perspective and take a step back, understand the social context that patients are dealing with before they're devising a plan of care for them. And we're seeing that more and more now.

Here's another quote by Kayla. And she is talking about just a passion for thinking about career. Do what do what you're passionate about and do what you're interested in. So she says, "Do what excites you. Even if you do not immediately see how it connects to sociology. Sure, there are traditional sociology careers that are great for some, but do not let yourself feel locked into something that you're not enthusiastic about. That's one of the best things about sociology. It helps us to be aware of the boxes that contain us in everyday life and step outside of them. Sociology is more than a skill set. It's a way of thinking that I believe can make you more successful in any field."

So I think that she gives great advice here and that, again, you're never going to see a position that's titled as a sociologist. And our graduates go into applied sociology in such a wide variety of different careers, but you've want to choose a career that you're passionate about and that you can see yourself doing long term, and then apply the skills that you're learning in your classes, that sociological perspective, to the career path that you find yourself in.

OK, I have a couple more here. We'll go through them pretty quickly. Got about 20 minutes left here. So another sub-segment, so this kind of builds on medicine, is public health. We're seeing more students that-- they don't necessarily want to go into nursing or go to medical school and be a physician, but they want to work in medical in some capacity. And that's where public health comes in.

So I have a little description up here. Unlike doctors and nurses who treat the sick or injured, public health professionals also address disease prevention through education programs, research, and public policy. And that's really what public health is about. So if you're thinking about-- you could think about the Center for Disease Control, for example. And recently we've had a measles outbreak in the last couple of years. The Center for Disease Control would be hiring public health folks to track where did that disease start, how far did it spread, how many people were infected by it. So, again, public health is really looking at prevention, but also looking at knowledge of what's happening health-wise in our society. So prevention through educational programs, research, and then public policy as well.

So educational requirements for employment and public health sector vary. A bachelor's degree is a minimum requirement to become a health educator or community worker. And we do see a lot of students that are interested in that. In the past couple years, I've seen interested students that are want to work in health education related to the opioid epidemic to teen pregnancy, things along those lines. But to work as an epidemiologist, or studying the patterns and causes of disease and injury in humans, you need at least a master's degree. So students would be pursuing a master's of public health degree.

And I have an example here of a student who, that's exactly what she did. She earned her sociology degree. She went on to a master's of public health program. And now she works on tracking diseases and strategizing about how to track diseases, both internationally and in the US as well. So I'll throw a quote up here of Erika. And this is talking about her experience of working on an international public health issue.

So, "In response to the Ebola epidemic, the Center for Disease Control put together basic surveillance training for frontline staff-- so, nurses, community health care workers, labor and delivery staff-- to teach them about disease reporting. We have to work with the Ministries of Health in 10 countries to make sure the reporting system is culturally relevant and that there is the administrative capacity to handle what we're hoping will be an upswing in reporting of outbreaks. We have to carefully navigate the political and social structures that hold decision making power."

So, again, this is one example of-- she spent a lot of time in Africa right after she got her master's of public health, working on Ebola and other types of diseases as well. She's now back in the United States and she was one of the Centers for Disease Control data analysts that was looking at the measles outbreak recently and trying to track that down. So that's another big area where students want to enter, again, health, health in some capacity, but more research, public policy, and educational programming around health problems that we're seeing in society.

We've also seen students that go at a completely different path. They have computer science or other type of engineering backgrounds, but they have found themselves in sociology. And they've been able to navigate careers in software development. So the labor statistics recently came out and talked about creative minds are those who are behind our computer programming. So you don't necessarily have to have a computer science degree to do this type of work.

There are two types of software developers, application software developers, who design computer applications such as games, and then systems software developers, who create operating systems for computers. So we can see more students that they've taken a handful of computer science courses. They're not going to receive their degree in computer science, but they're interested in potentially pursuing paths in software development as a career track.

And so I have a quote here from Francis, looking at this opportunity. So he helps "build digital projects which balance client business needs and end user needs well and are useful, easy to use, and provide a positive experience. A large part of my work is being able to ignite empathy among our team and clients, so that they can walk in the shoes of our apps' end users. I frequently use interviewing, surveys, and do the equivalent of literature reviews of relevant resources. I've also given talks and run workshops that teach people how to use research methods in order to uncover people's needs and find patterns in individual stories."

So this is an example of a student who he's really using his research methods, data analyst skills. He's applying them to the software development community, but also using a sociological perspective of talking to his colleagues about them placing themselves in their clients' shoes and understanding what app users actually want, and then developing the software around that, so people will actually purchase that software. So I think that's kind of a creative way where-- when I see students a lot, they think, "Oh, what else can I do besides social work?" And this is a really thinking outside the box of taking an interest that you have in computer science, having a couple courses and knowledge surrounding that, and being able to run with that in the professional setting.

We do have students that are interested in law enforcement. So one entry way into that might be starting in probation and parole as parole officers. So they work with and monitor offenders to reduce the risk of reoffending or committing other crimes. We have a graduate recently named Noah and he talks about his experience managing the caseload-- so he's "managing a caseload of high risk offenders released from jails and prisons to complete a term of community supervision."

He talks about, "I'm required to hold offenders accountable while in supervision to ensure they abide by sentences imposed by the court, while also promoting change through programming and other interventions." For this type of work, oftentimes you can enter it with just a bachelor's degree. There are a couple things to keep in mind. So candidates should be at least 21 years of age and sometimes that is an issue, especially for students I've seen that have done Running Start, or something along those lines. They might be graduating at a pretty young age.

They can't have any felony convictions and must submit to drug testing. Most employers that require applicants to pass a series of oral, written, and psychological exams. So there are quite a few hoops to jump through in order to pursue these types of positions, but again these would be the types of positions that individuals could enter just with a bachelor's degree.

So Noah talks here about, "Using different ideas and theoretical conclusions to develop case plans has been helpful." So he's using a lot of that theoretical knowledge that he gained to think about plans for individuals on his caseload. "Every offender has chosen to engage in criminal behavior for various reasons, and by reflecting on different theoretical perspectives, I'm able to develop case plans for effective case supervision." So this is another example of using a variety of different sociological skills that he gained through his classes and applying them specifically to the position that he's found himself in professionally.

Some students really want to do a lot of community work. They want to give back to their community, or they want to advocate a particular social topic, or for a particular population. So we see a variety of students doing nonprofit work. Oftentimes, it's because of their interests, their commitment to similar goals of the organizations. They might be interested in it because it's a topic that they have personally experienced.

So nonprofit organizations that are neither for profit for business or government agencies. They can include things like hospitals, private schools, churches, social welfare organizations, and charitable organizations. Oftentimes, you can enter entry level positions in nonprofit with just a bachelor's degree. But if you're going to intend to move up to management or administrative, it oftentimes takes a master's. And oftentimes that's in business, public policy, or a closely related field.

So just kind of keeping that in mind. An upside of nonprofit work is you get a lot of personal satisfaction from either helping the community or individuals or the topic. That's an organization that's a part of-- kind of a flip side of that is a lot of times nonprofit work is not monetarily as high. So you're not going to earn as much as other types of professions that you could go to. So it's kind of a tradeoff of what's most valuable to you and are you willing to take a little cut in pay to work for a nonprofit organization.

Julie was one of our students who decided to go that route. So she says, "My primary goal on a day to day basis is to engage donors at a highly personal level, partner with board members to engage donors, and stay engaged with our education programs, and the impact these programs are having on students, teachers, and the community." So this will be an example of-- Julie started out at an entry level. And then she actually didn't go on and get a master's, but she was able to use her years of experience with the nonprofit to move more into a development coordinator capacity, where she is required to engage with donors for financial purposes and kind of wine and dine them, showing that the organization actually has a tangible outcome, so that when people are providing funding, they can see what that funding is going to and what the outcomes are for that.

And she has gained a lot of satisfaction from that. So "My foundation of sociology," she says, "has helped me to see the people I interact with through my profession, including my colleagues, the students and teachers my organization serves, and the donors I communicate with as unique individuals as well as people that are impacted by a larger social system that helps them form their world views, opportunities, and preferences." So she's really using a sociological perspective and imagination for the variety of individuals she's coming in contact with, from the donors to the people that are being served to the colleagues that she's working with.

And she talks about, "This has allowed me to excel at working with diverse groups of people, keeping an open mind about people's experiences and personal history, and communicating effectively." And this was one area that, for her, because she was so effective and she was able to use those skills, she was able to use her years of experience to move up in the nonprofit that

she's working for and move more towards that administrative and management coordinator position without having to go and get her master's degree.

And the last two opportunities here I have, we have students that they're really strong in research skills. We're seeing a lot of both public, private, and governmental that are looking for research scientists. That's often the job title that you'll see. It's basically analysis, doing analysis of data, and being able to report on it clearly. So we have a variety of coursework-- methods, statistics-- that are going to provide these important skills.

Again, sometimes those are courses that students aren't super excited about taking, but if you can hang with it and you're strong in these skills, it opens yourself up to a wide variety of professional positions that are, again, government, public, and private, and that pay pretty darn well. Because a lot of people are collecting data, but they don't know what to do with it. So they're looking for people that have those skills to help them.

As employees, they could be responsible for the whole research process-- data collection, analysis, reporting-- or maybe only pieces of that. Guadalupe entered one of these fields. So she talks about, "Daily I'm working with law enforcement agents, both tactically and strategically, to ensure that they are being provided accurate information regarding subjects and subject matter." So she's doing data analyst, but in law enforcement. "I run information through, pull from, and input data into databases, create link analysis charts, write intelligence reports, and assist with making connections among individuals conducting illegal activities."

So this might be an area where oftentimes, when we think about research and data analytics, we might think about the private sector and corporations, but this would be an example of where it's taking place in government, and specifically in law enforcement, and utilizing those skills, and also utilizing Guadalupe's interest in criminal justice and law enforcement, but not having to be a beat cop or be out on the street. She talks about, "Using sociology at work occurs even when I'm not realizing I'm using it. The job requirements require the use of sociology. Every day there is analysis of social behavior, organizations, and institutions. Within the law enforcement and intelligence realm, there are always changes occurring with social order. In order to appropriately report on social order and disorder utilizing empirical investigation and critical analysis is imperative."

So we've seen through a lot of the examples that the analytic skills, the data, the statistical skills are really important. And this is just one example of how that's been utilized to be a data scientist as a professional position.

And then we have students that want to go to graduate school. So they already know they want to go to graduate school. I'm just going to-- oops, I'm just going to throw all this information up here. Most of our students are probably going to go to master's programs, so they want to do more applied work. That could be anything from doing a master's in sociology, because they want to go teach sociology at a community college, to doing a master's of social work, master's of public health. Maybe going and getting their MBA.

We have students that are interested in doing a master's in criminal justice and then maybe doing more education or advocacy work around that. Education administration, clinical counseling, family and marriage counseling, education counseling, master's for advising at the higher ed level. So most of the students that are going to go on to graduate school, they'll probably go on and do these master's programs. They tend to be two to three year programs.

Other students want to go into academia or want to be a more advanced researcher. And so they'll go on and get their PhD either in sociology or a closely related discipline, or they'll go to law school. So that's another avenue that students pursue.

So thinking about what you can do now in order to plan. Really working on effective communication is key to anything that you're going to do. That's often an area where we might not practice it as much because it can be uncomfortable. And we might think in our head, "Oh, when I get out there, I'm going to be able to do it really well." But it's one of these skills that, both orally and in writing, we need to practice and practice a lot in order to be effective at it.

Find ways to refine and further develop soft skills. So whether that's in your classes or whether that's an internship or paid employment that you have now, just furthering those, taking professional development workshops, things along those lines, as much as you can. Seeking out mentors and advisors, and also building your social network. You never know what somebody is going to be able to do for you or vice versa.

And I think I will end it there and see if there is-- that was a lot of information dump, so if anybody has questions. Or I can just move forward and put my contact information. I'm always available through phone, through email.

SPEAKER: It sounds like you can really use the degree for a multitude of disciplines.

SARAH WHITLEY: So it's really a matter of knowing what are the skills you're coming out with and how can you market them.

SPEAKER: Perfect, and we do have a question. How soon should you seek out a mentor? Like, what year in your education?

SARAH WHITLEY: I would say the sooner, the better. Because as you go through coursework, your ideas about what you want to do might change. And so they can see the development of that change over time. And they can also talk to you about the different types of careers. So it is one of these majors where you're not going to see any positions that are asking for a sociologist, and you can do a wide variety of things. But that can also be challenging in terms of students narrowing down with, "OK, I can do this breadth of things, but what should I narrow down to?" So talking to a mentor can help and it also starts building that relationship for folks you'll be asking for recommendations letters for, and connecting in with their social network.

SPEAKER: Any suggestions for how to expand our network or find a mentor if we're online students?

SARAH WHITLEY: So I would say contacting an advisor like myself that's there for career and professionalization advising. WSU also has ASCC, which is Academic Support and Career Center that has a variety of advisors as well. Connecting with your faculty members, so through discussion, emailing them, letting them know what your future plans are. If you can find a mentor if you're doing paid employment now, or with an internship. So it could be somebody in academia, or it could be somebody outside of academia as well.

SPEAKER: Would a BS in anthropology and sociology have similar applications?

SARAH WHITLEY: Hmm. I guess that would depend on the type of anthropology you're focusing on. But certainly there are similar types of skills that you would be getting with a BS in anthropology. So, again, that's another discipline that you're learning a lot of those important skills, but how are you going to market them? And I'm thinking of-- I know a lot of students that do history or anthropology, and then they work for national parks, for example, or working on researching particular cultures or populations or things along those lines. So you're getting similar types of skills, but it's a matter of really realizing how to market those skills for the positions you're interested in.

Great, so thank you so much for attending or viewing if you're watching at a later date. Again, please feel free to contact me if you have other questions. My email is up there. You can find me on the department website. And my phone number is 335-2659 and I'd be happy to answer your questions.