

THE UNDERGRADUATE SOCIOLOGY CURRICULUM AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

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In the 1990s, Santa Clara University embarked upon an ambitious effort to re-make its Sociology curriculum, informed by “best practices” discussions then taking place within the American Sociological Association. These efforts garnered special recognition when, in 1998, the program won the American Sociological Association’s Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award.

Since that time, the Sociology Department has continued to consciously improve the structure of its curriculum in order to insure that all students (1) acquire methodological tools and conceptual frameworks for analyzing the world around them, and (2) have meaningful opportunities to apply their sociological skills through two vehicles for professional preparation: by designing and executing a professional quality research study (research capstone) and/or participating in an applied project (applied capstone). The research capstone experience illustrates the level of academic sophistication students can achieve by the time they complete their undergraduate study.

Research papers included in Volume 13 of *Silicon Valley Notebook* demonstrate the very high quality of student work produced by undergraduate sociologists in the Santa Clara University’s graduating class of 2015. It is with great pride in our students, and eager anticipation for the bright future that awaits each of the authors showcased in *Silicon Valley Notebook*, that we share Volume 13 with you.