

Why Sociology Matters?

We read in *The Perspective of Sociology* that “studying sociology can help you gain a new perspective on, or view of, yourself and the world around you”. As you watch the film “Hotel Rwanda” consider the following statements by sociologist Dr. Allen G. Johnson:

1. I practice as a consultant in corporations to help solve the dilemmas of a diverse and difficult world in which race, gender, sexual orientation, and other issues of difference cast dark shadows over people’s lives.
2. I practice it because there is so much unnecessary suffering in the world, and to do something about it we need to understand where it comes from.
3. It is impossible to study social life for very long without coming up against the consequences that social life produces, and a lot of these consequences do such damage to people’s lives that, unless we find ways to deny or ignore the reality of it, we feel compelled to ask “why”?
4. And once we ask that question, we need tools to help make sense of where it leads and to imagine how we might go from these toward something better.
5. We can’t change the world all by ourselves, but we can make informed decisions about how to participate in it, and how that can help turn the world toward something better, even if it’s just in our neighborhoods or families or where we work.
6. I believe the choices we make as individuals matter beyond our lives more than we can imagine, that things don’t have to be the way they are, but that they won’t get better all by themselves.
7. We need systematic ways to figure things out, and that is what sociological practice offers.
8. It’s also about us in the world and the connection between the two which means it can take us toward basic truths about who we are and what our lives are about.

The Social Sciences

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Studies</i>	<i>Focuses On</i>
Anthropology	The origin, behavior, and physical, social, & cultural development of human beings	Cultures
Economics	The human production, distribution, and consumption of goods & services	Theory & management of economies or economic systems
Geography	Earth & its features and the distribution of life, including human life, on the planet	Patterns of activity as they are distributed on Earth
History	The record of past human events	Change and the past
Political Science	Governments & its processes, principles, & structures	How governments work
Psychology	Mental processes & behavior in humans and animals and how they are affected by the individual's physical states, mental states, and external environment	Individual behavior
Sociology	Human social behavior and groups	Groups in society, how they work, and what it means to be a member of a given group