

# Community Studies at UCSC

## What is the Community Studies major about? Is it a new major?

Founded in 1969, Community Studies is the oldest interdisciplinary program at UCSC. Community Studies was a national pioneer in the field of experiential education and its civic engagement model has been emulated widely. Community Studies was also a pioneer in addressing principles of social justice, specifically inequities arising from race, class and gender dynamics in society at large, and in critically assessing strategies for achieving social change.

The undergraduate major offers highly motivated and focused students the opportunity to pursue a rigorous course of study combining on and off campus learning. On campus, students enroll in topical courses and complete a core curriculum enabling them to identify, analyze, and help construct sites for social justice movements, nonprofit sector advocacy, public policy making, and social enterprise. Off campus, students commit to spending six months immersed in a setting where they participate in and analyze the social justice work of an organization, with a goal of making a meaningful contribution to the organization's mission. This intensive and extended immersion is a distinguishing feature of the Community Studies major.

## During my first year, how can I best prepare for the major?

While you are taking your General Education requirements, look for classes that give you a background in the program's areas of focus: health justice and urban/regional political economy. In general, classes in politics, psychology, sociology, Latin American/Latino Studies, Feminist Studies and anthropology can be helpful.

## When can I begin taking courses in the major? What are the first required courses to take?

We recommend you begin by taking CMMU 10, *Introduction to Community Activism*, offered every Fall quarter. During the second year, begin taking topical courses from the approved list. This will allow you to declare the major by the end of your second year, per UCSC policy.

## I'm a transfer student. Can I still major in Community Studies?

ABSOLUTELY! We have a long and proud track record of transfer student excelling in the major.

## Okay, so what should I do to prepare for the major?

It's important that you contact the Program Advisor prior to the beginning of Fall quarter to help you develop an academic plan. Because of the sequential nature of the major, you will need to pay particular attention to scheduling each quarter's classes. Make sure to attend the orientation just before classes begin in September (check the online course schedule and Community Studies website for time and place).

## As a transfer student; what classes do I need to take to be able to declare the major?

You must take CMMU 10, *Introduction to Community Activism*, Fall quarter, along with a topical course from the approved list. This will allow you to declare the major by the end of Winter quarter, per UCSC policy.

## What are the topical courses?

Topical courses develop expertise in health justice and urban/regional political economy. You are encouraged to take as many topical courses as possible prior to your field study.

## What is 'health justice'? What is 'urban/regional political economy'?

Health is a multidimensional concept with objective and subjective aspects; justice refers to equity, not simply equality but the more complex notion of fairness. We define health broadly, to include both a state of well-being (physical, mental, social) and a capacity to create and improve health at individual, community, and institutional/structural levels. In this context, health justice refers to the fair distribution of health care and fair distribution of opportunities to prevent illness, enhance vibrant well-being for all, and reduce human suffering wherever possible.

Political economy refers to the study of the social relations, and especially the power relations (for example of race, class, gender, and sexuality), shaping the production, distribution and consumption of resources in society. In Community Studies, the political economy of cities and regions can be usefully thought of as the political economy of place. The focus developing knowledge about how people and communities gain access to basic human needs like housing, jobs, credit, even food. How are those markets structured, why and by and for whom?

What are the relationships among private enterprise, the public sector (government at all levels) and the nonprofit (or third) sector in meeting human needs?

What is a directed elective?

Directed electives are courses designed to insure that you develop knowledge of the history, culture and political economy of the place where you will be doing your field study and also an understanding of your own social location. Two directed electives are required, one related to race/class/privilege and the other in regional/historical contexts.

How do I know which courses to take?

A list of approved topical requirements and directed elective courses is available on the Community Studies website. It is a good idea to meet with the student advisor and/or program faculty to learn more about these courses and which are the best fit with your interests.

What is the full-time field study?

The full-time field study is the centerpiece of the core curriculum and consists of six months working with an organization where you will participate in and analyze its social justice work, with the goal of making a meaningful contribution to the organization's mission.

When do I go on field study?

The field study is completed during two consecutive quarters: the summer after junior year and fall quarter of the senior year.

Do I receive academic credit for my full time field study?

YES! You are enrolled for 15 units (CMMU 198A,B,C) during each of the two quarters (for a total of 30 field study units). You will be working independently in an organization but with active guidance from both campus faculty and an on-site supervisor from the field study organization.

What is a senior capstone? What are my options for the capstone?

The senior capstone is the culmination of the core curriculum because it provides an opportunity to integrate insights gained on field study with knowledge first encountered in the classroom. Options for the capstone include a senior essay completed during Community Studies 194, a senior thesis typically completed in the spring quarter following Community Studies 194, or teaching a student-directed seminar, also after Community Studies 194.

What kind of careers do Community Studies graduates pursue?

Community Studies graduates enter a wide array of careers! A sample of the many possibilities over the past four decades includes the following: labor organizing, law, public health, social work, medicine, community development, arts, city planning, community organizing, education, journalism, government service and nonprofit management.

What kinds of graduate study do Community Studies majors pursue?

Master's degree graduate programs include public health, urban/regional planning, sustainable development, public policy, teaching, social work, and counseling psychology. Doctoral programs include medicine, law, and higher education in the social sciences and humanities.

Does the Community Studies major work with other majors, if I want to double major or do a major/minor?

Some students choose to do a double major or major/minor and with careful planning, it can work. It is important to meet with advisors from both programs and begin on both as soon as possible.

How can I find out more about the major?

Go to the Community Studies website: <http://communitystudies.ucsc.edu/> or contact the Program Advisor.

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