

**Department/School:** Sociology

**Vision:** Sociology examines social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior. Sociologists investigate the structure of groups, organizations, and societies and how people interact within these contexts. Since all human behavior is social, the subject matter of sociology ranges from the intimate family to the hostile mob; from organized crime to religious traditions; from the divisions of race, gender, and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture; and from the social dynamics of the minor emergency to the large-scale disaster.

**Mission:**

**Conduct research and analyze data:** Learn both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This will allow you to recognize trends and patterns and produce social statistics such as those used in market research, opinion polling, sales, and countless other applications.

**Communicate skillfully:** Learn how to convey your ideas effectively in writing and presentations.

**Practice critical thinking:** Learn to look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why". Build your analytical skills. Solve problems and identify opportunities.

**Gain a global perspective:** Learn about different cultures and how to analyze the interactions of groups and societies through a global and historical perspective.

**Prepare for graduate school:** An undergraduate major in sociology provides an excellent foundation for graduate study in a wide range of fields including law, business, social work, medicine, public health, public administration and, of course, sociology.

**Develop tomorrow's disaster professionals:** The graduate degree program in disaster studies trains emergency professionals to save lives, mitigate disasters, build disaster resiliency, and develop sustainable practices in coping with future disasters.

**PROFILE**

**Majors:** BA – Sociology

**Graduate Programs:** MS – Sociology and MA – Disaster Studies

**Students**

- Number of Students: 300
- Characteristics: (e.g., graduate, undergraduate) 250 undergraduate majors; 50 graduate majors

**Faculty**

- Number of Faculty:
- Ranks: Professors \_\_1\_\_ Associate Prof. \_\_5\_\_ Assistant Prof. \_\_4\_\_ Lecturers \_\_5\_\_

## Campus Program Offering

100% of program/courses are available at both campuses (*face-to-face, online, hybrid, or ITV*)

100% of program/courses in the first 2 years of study per major map are available at both campuses (*face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV*)

100% of program/courses in the upper division are available at both campuses (*face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV*)

99% of graduate program/courses are available at both campuses (*face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV*)

*Note: You may include details of availability by campus and any other related information that would be helpful.*

## Stats & Highlights:

- **Students are actively engaged in the department and discipline through the Sociology Club**
- **The department offers a wide range of courses focused on religion, environment, gender, race, social movements, crime, and so on.**
- **Home to a Chapter of the Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD) Sociology Honor Society.**



## Success Stories/"Bragging":

The Department of Sociology is deeply committed to student success. Below are examples of our students who have gone on to do great things in private industry, public institutions, and academia:



### **Alma Provencio**

Alma Provencio graduated with an MA in Disaster Studies in Fall 2019. After graduating, she joined GIS Department as a GIS Analyst in the City of Pharr, Texas, eventually attaining the rank of GIS Manager. Her thesis study measured disaster resiliency in the Rio Grande Valley through an application of GIS methods.



### **Cristina Madrid**

Cristina Madrid works as a researcher in the Economic Development and Tourism Division at The Office of the Texas Governor, Austin, Texas. She graduated with an MA in Disaster Studies in Fall 2018.



**Yajaira Ayala**

Yajaira Ayala is currently a doctoral degree student in The Disaster Science and Management program at the University of Delaware. She graduated with a MA in Disaster Studies degree in Spring 2019. Her thesis research focused on understanding social vulnerability in the Rio Grande Valley.



**Mayra Montoyo**

Mayra Montoyo works as Coordinator of Academies and High School Projects at South Texas College. After receiving her MA in Disaster Studies in Spring 2018, she is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Our Lady of the Lake University.

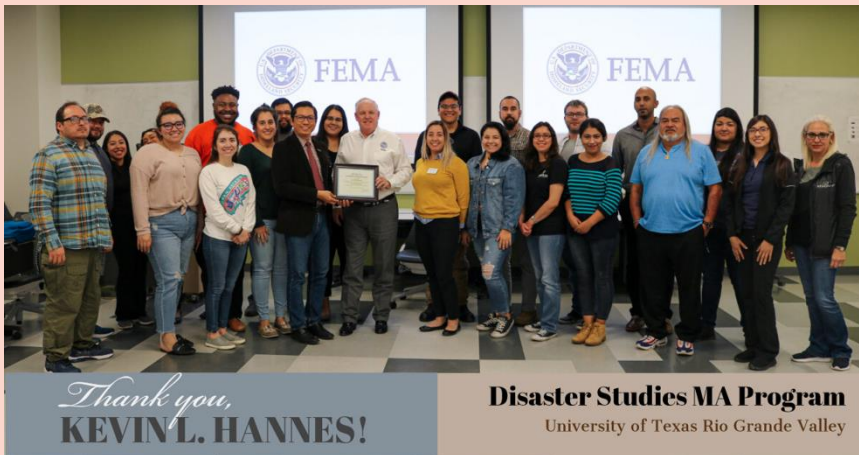


**Diana Chimal**

Diana Chimal successfully completed 118 internship hours at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's Homeland Security Program. She received her MA in Disaster Studies in Fall 2019.

**Traditions:**

**Service-Learning courses**



The Department of Sociology offers undergraduate and graduate courses with service-learning designation. The service-learning courses provide students firsthand experiences with professionals and offer opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in a professional setting. These courses include: SOCI 3348 Disaster & Society, SOCI 6331 Disaster and Society, and SOCI 6332 Geographic Information System (GIS) for Disaster Management. The picture above shows a group of graduate students and Kevin Hannes, Team Leader for National Incident Management in The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), who shared his firsthand experiences and insights on disaster response operations in the Department's SOCI 6331 Disaster and Society class on December 3, 2019.

**A new graduate certificate program:**



# Graduate Certificate in Disaster Management and Sustainability



President

Department of Sociology

A graduate certificate program in Disaster Management and Sustainability will be available in the near future. The program will be delivered fully online. This 12-credit certificate program aims to develop essential knowledge and skills among emergency professionals towards building more resilient communities. Graduates from this certificate program are expected to become professionals in the field of emergency management who serve the Rio Grande Valley and beyond.

**Research collaboration:**

Progress in Disaster Science 5 (2020) 100061

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Progress in Disaster Science

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/pdisas](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/pdisas)

Regular article

Empirical evaluation of disaster preparedness for hurricanes in the Rio Grande Valley

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The Department of Sociology provides research opportunities to graduate and undergraduate students. Recently, a group of graduate students from the Disaster Studies program co-authored with their professor on a recently published manuscript. The study focuses on evaluating disaster preparedness for hurricanes in the Rio Grande Valley. The article is located at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pdisas.2019.100061>

**CERT Training:**



The Department of Sociology, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and The City of Weslaco Emergency Management Office jointly offered a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to about 90 students in Spring 2018. The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and offers training in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks.

**Mantra/Slogan:** *“Building equitable and resilient communities.”*