

Sociology

Social Sciences Division

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Sociology involves the systematic examination of human social activity, from everyday face-to-face encounters to the movements of civilizations throughout history. Unlike disciplines that focus on a single aspect of society, sociology stresses the complex relationships governing all dimensions of social life, including the economy, state, family, religion, science, social inequality, culture, and consciousness. Its inquiry is guided by several theoretical traditions and grounded in the empirical observation of social reality.

The discipline emerged in the nineteenth century as a critical analysis of modern, western society; yet it is informed by philosophers and theorists from earlier centuries. Today, sociologists study ways in which the modern world continues to change, often by making comparisons with societies at other times and in other places. Sociology majors go on to take active roles in corporate boardrooms, law offices, government departments, social service agencies, classrooms, and policy think tanks. In a broader sense, everyone can benefit from sociology's unique understanding of our common humanity and the diversity of social life.

Beginning Studies in Sociology

Students may begin their study of sociology in any of the sections of our foundation course, SOCY 101. Each section combines lecture and discussion and has an enrollment limit of twenty-five students. All of these sections apply the theory and methods of sociology to achieve an understanding of the character of life in modern societies, especially our own. The sections are distinguished by their particular thematic focus and course materials. Look for the ♦ symbol, which designates those courses particularly appropriate for first-year students or upper-class students new to the sociology curriculum.

The Sociology Curriculum

The sociology curriculum places emphasis on four substantive areas of sociological investigation:

Institutions and Change studies the forms and dynamics of institutional life, with emphasis on structural, historical, and comparative perspectives.

Culture and Identity explores the construction and transformation of cultural and symbolic forms and the development of self within the social process.

Social Theory examines the historical development of the discipline, the works of major contributors, and the particular schools of sociological thought.

Research Methods investigates the assumptions and tools of sociological research as well as the connection between research and theory in sociological study.

The Sociology Major

Students majoring in sociology must complete a minimum of 5 units of work in the discipline which meet the following requirements:

Introductory foundation course. One course (.5 unit) is required.

Area courses. Eight courses (4 units) are required. At least one course (.5 unit) must be taken in each of the four areas of the sociology curriculum (institutions and change, culture and identity, social theory, research methods) and at least two courses (1 unit) must be taken in three of these areas.

Core courses. Sociology majors are required to take SOCY 262 and SOCY 271 as early as possible. Majors are also required to take one more 300-level theory or methods course. These core courses also count toward completion of area requirements. Students planning to attend graduate school in sociology or related fields are strongly encouraged to take four core courses.

Senior Seminar. SOCY 489 (.5 unit) is required and taken in the fall of the senior year.

With departmental approval, students who do not receive sociology credit from off-campus study may count up to 1 unit of work in other disciplines toward the major requirements.

The Senior Exercise

The Senior Exercise is designed to provide majors with an opportunity to (1) undertake original scholarship on topics of their own choosing, (2) present the results of this scholarship to students and faculty members in a professional setting, and (3) produce high-quality papers through a process of discussion and rewriting.

Each student submits a paper proposal in September, to which faculty members participating in the exercise respond in writing. The student then prepares the paper in consultation with faculty members. Faculty members provide written comments on the paper to each student. All Senior Exercise participants will present their research and answer questions from peers and faculty. Following these sessions, each student revises the paper in light of faculty and student comments. The final paper is submitted in January.

Faculty members evaluate student work with regard to the quality of the final paper, the clarity and effectiveness of the oral presentation, and the extent and quality of student participation in discussion. Written notification of the results of the evaluation is provided within a month; included is notice of whether or not the student has passed and earned distinction. Students who fail the Senior Exercise are required to take a written or oral comprehensive examination, at the option of the faculty, covering material presented in the major program.

Honors

The honors program is designed to facilitate significant independent research by our department's finest students. Typically, the student will

propose a topic for research in consultation with a member of the faculty who agrees to serve as the project advisor. The department will then approve (or decline to approve) the honors research on the basis of the merit of the proposal itself as well as the student's past classroom performance, motivation to excellence, and demonstration of the organizational skills required for successful completion. In consultation with the project advisor, the student will then build an honors committee consisting of two members of the sociology faculty (including the advisor), one member from another department on campus, and one member from another institution of higher education (chosen by the advisor). The student will then spend the senior year conducting the research and writing an honors thesis. The thesis is finally defended orally before the honors committee, the members of which then determine whether to award no honors, honors, high honors, or highest honors.

Students interested in reading for honors should meet with a faculty member no later than January of the junior year to discuss procedures and develop a proposal. Students approved for participation in the honors program will enroll in two semesters of independent study (SOCY 497, 498) in their senior year.

The Sociology Minor

The department offers a limited number of structured minors. All minors require a minimum of 2 .5 units of coursework, including one introductory foundation course. Additional courses are specified for each particular program of study. Minors are currently offered in the following subjects: Sociological Perspective, Sex and Gender, Race and Ethnicity, Social Class, Law and Society, Social Theory, Social Institutions, and Culture. Students should meet with any member of the faculty to learn more about minoring in sociology.

First-Semester Courses

Human Society

◆ SOCY 101.02 (.5 unit)
Macionis

This introductory course in sociology explores what is surely the most fascinating of this planet's life forms, *Homo sapiens*. Humans stand out in this world as thinking creatures who are, biologically speaking, unfinished at birth. Lacking a genetically fixed "nature," humans go about completing themselves as they construct societies. Understanding how we accomplish this task is the focus of this course.

The course begins by describing the perspective and methods of sociology and then applies these tools to the exploration of human societies. Discussions raise issues such as how and why cultures differ and how people are socialized into their particular way of life; and explore the experience of confronting cultural practices that violate one's own standards. Additional concerns include a comparison of traditional and modern social organization, with particular emphasis on the expansion of bureaucracy and changing patterns of social inequality. The course helps to develop student writing skills and highlights applications of sociological research and theory to various occupations. (Formerly SOCY 110.)

American Society

◆ SOCY 101.07 (.5 unit)
Besocke

Sociology is based upon the notion that a society is more than just a collection of individuals, just as a song is more than just a collection of notes. Societies are characterized by patterns and dynamics that are different from the patterns and dynamics that characterize individuals within that society. This course examines the ways that patterns of American social life influence, and are influenced by, individual lives. We emphasize the four themes of identity, cultural and social structures, systems of domination, and citizen participa-

tion and social change. We consider these themes in relation to original sociological research about emotions, gender, race, class, social rationalization, and social activism in American society. Students also complete a semester-long empirical sociological research project investigating how people's opinions on issues of the day are informed by networks of social symbols. Ultimately, students will take away a taste of what sociology, the study of social groups and their actions, is about. (Formerly SOCY 111.)

Society in Comparative Perspective

◆ SOCY 101.08 (.5 unit)
Johnson

From our vantage point in the twenty-first century, we perceive that the nature and fate of American society is increasingly connected to the nature and fate of society in other parts of the world. But what is "society" and how does it change over time? How, exactly, does society shape the human experience and human behavior in the United States and elsewhere? And how can we understand the ties that bind society "here" to society "there"? Sociology crystallized in the nineteenth century to address big questions like these in light of the profound uncertainty and human suffering that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism, rapid urbanization, and the consolidation of the centralized bureaucratic state. This course introduces students to the discipline by revisiting the work of early sociologists, then using the analytical lenses they developed to examine concrete cases of social change and globalization. (Formerly SOCY 115.)

Introduction to Sociology: Culture and Society

◆ SOCY 101.09 (.5 unit)
Sun

This course introduces students to the field of sociology through studying the role of culture in society. The primary goal of the course is to help students acquire what C. Wright Mills calls the "sociological imagina-

tion": the ability to think beyond our personal experiences and to connect the private lives of individuals with the public issues of social structure.

In this course, we examine the connections between culture and society in three different stages. First, we study the conceptual tools necessary for analyzing our social life; concepts such as society, structure, institutions, and culture will be introduced through concrete case studies. Second, we learn about the analyses of culture in the work of the classical social theorists Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, which allow us to understand culture in a broader theoretical context. Third, we move on to recent research that proposes new understandings of culture, from Wendy Griswold's notion of the "cultural diamond" to Ann Swidler's idea of culture as a "tool kit" for creative action.

This course helps students develop sociological ways of thinking and familiarity with research methods and social theories.

Social Movements

SOCY 229 (.5 unit)
Thomas

This mid-level course will examine social movements as attempts to bring about social change through collective action. The major goals of the course are: (1) to acquaint students with the sociological literature on social movements; (2) to examine the development, life cycle, and impact of several important social movements in the United States; (3) to examine issues of race, class, and gender within social movements; and (4) to develop students' skills in thinking sociologically about social discontent and social change. This course also includes a service-learning component. Each student will work with a community agency 2-3 hours per week. Prerequisite: introductory course or permission of instructor. This course may be counted toward the major in American studies.

Sexual Harassment

SOCY 232 (.5 unit)
Kohlman

This mid-level seminar provides the opportunity for students to become conversant with the wide range of experiences that may appropriately be called "sexual harassment." The course is guided by the principle that sexual harassment is not, as many seem to think, simply a by-product of sexual desire or misguided attraction. Sexual harassment is about power—gaining power or retaining power in institutional settings. We will explore this concept both as legal construction, calling for specific determinants, and as a normative concept which arises in casual conversation and lived experience.

Prerequisite: introductory foundation course or permission of the instructor. This course also satisfies a requirement of the concentrations in African and African-American studies and law and society, and it may be counted toward the major in American studies and women's and gender studies.

Sociology of Deviance

SOCY 240 (.5 unit)
Macionis

Our common sense tells us that certain acts are "wrong," that particular persons who engage in them are "deviant." But common sense suggests little about how and why a particular act or actor comes to be understood in this way. This course explores the origins and significance of deviance within social life. The distinction between being different and being deviant is carried throughout the semester. Emphasis is also given to the increasing importance of psychotherapy in our response to the deviant. This course provides a substantial introduction to criminology with consideration of the social characteristics of offenders and victims, crime rates, and various justifications of punishment. This course should be of interest to students within many majors who are concerned with theoretical, practical, and ethical questions concerning the concepts of good and evil as foundations of human society.

Prerequisite: introductory foundation course or permission of instructor.

Knowledge of the Other: Journey to the East

SOCY 249 (.5 unit)
Sun

How do we understand a culture or society that is radically different from our own? The course has two parts. First, we read theoretical texts such as Edward Said's *Orientalism*, excerpts from Kant's and Hegel's writing on race and world history, essays on Asian religions by Max Weber, Wendy Doniger, Donald Lopez, and Tomoko Masuzawa, and debates about the "clash of civilizations" and the "geography of thought," in order to conceptualize the notion of "the Other" and our relationship with "the Other." Then, we focus on writings about Asia (Tibet, Japan, and China), such as travel writing, historical analysis, and fiction. By analyzing these accounts of the journey to the East, we learn to recognize the complex relationships we have with the cultural, religious, and social traditions that are radically different from our own, with the hope that we can develop a meaningful connection with them through a more reflexive understanding. This course helps both sociology and Asian-studies students to theorize the complex and creative relationship between oneself and "the Other," and it is of use to students who have recently returned from studying abroad (particularly in Asia), as well as the ones who are preparing to go abroad. Prerequisite: introductory foundation course or permission of instructor.

Methods of Social Research

SOCY 271 (.5 unit)
Thomas

Knowing how to answer a question, including what constitutes good evidence and how to collect it, is a necessary ability for any sociologist or for any student reading the sociological research of others. This course provides an introduction to the conduct of research, including scientific, interpretive, and critical approaches. The primary goal is to understand when and how to use re-

search strategies such as experiments, survey questionnaires, interviews, fieldwork, and analysis of historical documents. Students will conduct small-scale research projects using these techniques. This course is required for all sociology majors. At the same time, the course welcomes anyone who wishes to gain competence in basic research skills. Prerequisites: introductory foundation course or permission of instructor.

Special Topic: Borders and Border Crossings

SOCY 291 (.5 unit)
Johnson

Popular conceptions of globalization often allude to the growing magnitude of global flows and the stunning rapidity with which capital, commodities, culture, information, and people now cross national borders. From this characterization, we might conclude that national borders—and indeed nation-states themselves—are becoming increasingly porous and irrelevant as sources or sites of social regulation and control. This mid-level course examines the material reality of border regions and movement across them as a means of interrogating these assumptions and exposing how globalization rescales and reconfigures power differentials in human society but does not eliminate them. It scrutinizes the technological, economic, political, and ideological forces that facilitate border crossings for some groups of people under particular circumstances and then explores the seemingly contradictory tendency toward border fortification. Topics include regional trade integration and political economy of border regions, the global sex trade and illegal trafficking of economic migrants, global civil society and sanctuary movements, paramilitary and vigilante border patrols, and the technology of surveillance. Prerequisite: foundation course in sociology.

Classical Social Theory

SOCY 361 (.5 unit)
Sun

This course examines the development of classical social theory in the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the first part, we will stress the philosophical and intellectual foundations of classical theory. We will examine how social theory integrated modern philosophy, political science (law), and historical political economy in the formation of a new discipline. Distinguishing itself from the other social sciences, classical sociology, for the most part, rejected the Enlightenment view of positivism and natural science as the foundation for social science as it turned instead to German idealism and existentialism for guidance. The second part of the course will examine the classical analysis of the historical origins of Western society in the structures and culture of alienation (Marx), rationalization (Weber), and anomie and division of labor (Durkheim).

Of special interest will be the analysis of the early humanistic works of Marx, his ethical and political writings, and his later critique of political economy; Weber's historical sociology and theory of Western and non-Western religions and their relation to the development of capitalism; and, finally, the foundations of "positivist" social science in Durkheim's work on suicide and law and his later "idealist" sociology in his theory of primitive classifications, religion, and sociology of knowledge. At the methodological level, we will study the three different views of classical "science": critical science and dialectical method (Marx), interpretive science and historical method of understanding and value relevance (Weber), and positivistic science and method of naturalism and realism (Durkheim). Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

Intersection Theory

SOCY 463 (.5 unit)
Kohlman

This upper-level seminar explores the emerging paradigm of intersection theory. Its principal objective is to develop an understanding of the ways in which the salient identities of class position, race, and gender function simultaneously to produce

the outcomes we observe in the lives of individuals and in society. While there is a large body of literature in each of the three areas (class, race, and gender), only recently have theorists and researchers attempted to model and analyze the “simultaneity” of their functioning as one concerted force in our everyday lives. We will pursue this objective in this seminar by exploring the roles of gender and race/ethnicity in the United States during the early development of capitalism and in the present, by reexamining key concepts in conflict theory through the lens of intersection theory, and by studying the roles of class, gender, and race/ethnicity at the level of the global economy today as in the past. Prerequisites: SOCY 361, SOCY 362, or permission of the instructor. It is also recommended that students have taken SOCY 231 or SOCY 241. This course also satisfies the senior seminar requirement of the African and African-American studies concentration and may be counted toward the American studies and women’s and gender studies majors.

Senior Seminar

SOCY 489 (.5 unit)
Besecke

This advanced seminar, required of all senior majors, explores fundamental issues regarding the process of sociological inquiry and the promise of the discipline. Faculty forums and student-directed discussions will consider the boundaries and purposes of sociology, the relationship between theory and research, sociological writing, and the planning and execution of scholarly research. Students will apply their understanding of these issues through individual projects on subjects of their own choosing, presenting their work in progress for critical discussion. Prerequisite: This course is limited to senior sociology majors.

Individual Study

SOCY 493 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students who wish to do advanced work beyond

regular courses or to study topics not included in course offerings. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

SOCY 497 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students pursuing departmental honors. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Second-Semester Courses

Human Society

◆ SOCY 101.02 (.5 unit)
Macionis

See first-semester course description.

Institutions and Inequalities

◆ SOCY 101.05 (.5 unit)
Thomas

This introductory course will focus on an analysis of social structure and its impact on the experiences of individuals. We will look at the ways in which social structures construct and constrain reality for individuals and how society and social institutions shape individual values, attitudes, and behaviors. The course will examine sociological concepts through an analysis of culture, social inequality, social institutions, and social change. The first portion of the class will focus on understanding culture and how we come to be social beings. We will then move to an examination of social stratification and inequalities, paying particular attention to the impact of race, class, and gender on the lives of individuals in American society. We will look at recent changes in the institutions of economics, politics, and education and the impact these changes have had on individuals and society. We will end the semester by looking at social change. By the end of the course, students should understand common sociological concepts and perspectives and be able to consider aspects of the social world through the sociological lens. (Formerly SOCY 114.)

Social Issues and Cultural Intersections

◆ SOCY 101.06 (.5 unit)
Kohlman

The objective of this introductory-level course is to critically examine social problems in the United States by using sociological perspectives to investigate the cultural and structural foundations of our society. Toward that end, students will learn sociological and criminological perspectives that provide a basic understanding of the principles of social problems research from a sociological perspective. Accordingly we will discuss the social problems endemic to social institutions in society. Among the topics to be covered are education, crime, the family, work, etc. using examples from the Age of Enlightenment up the present day.

The most fundamental expectations of students in this course will be to use their sociological imaginations each and every class period to engage in focused discussion of the readings and assignments completed outside of class. This is expected to aid students in the goal of mastering the necessary skills of critical thinking and discussion, both verbally and in their writing about contemporary topics of interest and concern. (Formerly SOCY 113.)

American Society

◆ SOCY 101.07 (.5 unit)
Besecke

See first-semester course description.

Society in Comparative Perspective

◆ SOCY 101.08 (.5 unit)
Johnson

See first-semester course description.

Religion in Modern Society

SOCY 221 (.5 unit)
Besecke

The world’s religions are repositories of human wisdom throughout the ages. In this course, we will consider these traditions sociologically; that is, we will distinguish the variety of social forms that religion takes from the wisdom that religion attempts to manifest. We will consider the complex relationships between reli-

gious expression and social context. Questions we will consider include: How can religious experience be understood sociologically? How does religion change as society modernizes? What role does religion play in effecting social and political change? How are contemporary Americans relating to religious traditions? How do cultures decide what's religious and what's secular? A strong theoretical orientation will serve as a foundation for an exploration of current socio-religious issues such as secularization, privatization of religious experience and authority, the resurgence of religion in political life, divisions between liberal and conservative religion, and religious themes in popular culture. Prerequisite: SOCY 101 or permission of instructor.

Sociology of Health and Illness

SOCY 224 (.5 unit)
Thomas

Critics of the health-care system charge that the current system delivers “sick” care, not “health” care. Policies emerging from the 1980s-era opposition to government involvement, the critics argue, have left us with skyrocketing medical costs, increasingly unequal access to health care, little public accountability, and increasing rates of chronic illness. This class will examine these charges by first discussing the social context of health and illness: who gets sick, who gets help, and the medicalization of social problems. We will then look at the health care system (historical development, medical education, institutional settings). We also will explore the interaction between people and their health-care providers with respect to language, information exchange, and power relationships. We will then look at the advent of managed care and how it has changed the system in the United States. Several administrators and providers from the community will share their perspectives on these trends. The course will close with a discussion of reform and change within the medical institution and a brief look at health-care sys-

tems in other countries. Prerequisite: introductory foundation course.

Sociology of Law

SOCY 226 (.5 unit)
Johnson

This mid-level course examines the social conditions that give rise to law, how changing social conditions affect law, and how law affects the society we live in. In the first few weeks, it focuses on how classical social theorists—the so-called founders of sociology—viewed the law and its relationship to the rapid social change unfolding before their very eyes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the next several weeks, it explores how social actors such as the environmental, civil rights, and free speech movements attempt to use the law, litigation, and legal institutions as instruments of social change. Turning this question around, it then looks at how legal processes, actors, and institutions—criminal trials, lawyers, and the courts, to name a few—interact with the media to shape public opinion, to protest, and to take collective action. This course also explores the diverse ways in which individuals experience and interpret the law and why this matters for understanding how law operates in the real world. In the final weeks of the semester, it probes how broader cultural shifts in American society are radically redefining the role and scope of our legal system. Prerequisite: foundation course in sociology.

Class Studies

SOCY 247 (.5 unit)
Hurst

Class studies is an emergent area of sociological study. This course serves as an introduction to that broad area. We will discuss theories of class, questions of class cultures, and the political relevance of class analysis (issues of class struggle). The readings will cover cultures and issues relevant to the working, middle, and elite classes. Throughout the course we will pay close attention to how class intersects with other social identities, such as those of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, and

nationality. Prerequisite: foundation course in sociology.

Linking Classical Tradition to Contemporary Theory

SOCY 262 (.5 unit)
Kohlman

The purpose of this course is to guide students to draw linkages from classical tradition to the formation of contemporary sociological theory. To achieve this objective, discussion will be guided by the personal biography of each theorist: their family background, where they were educated, and what events or persons they were influenced by as they formulated the theories for which they are known. As such, the emphasis here is placed upon acquiring breadth of knowledge, rather than depth. (For a more comprehensive understanding of the theorists discussed in this class, students are directed to SOCY 371 [Classical Theory] and SOCY 362 [Contemporary Social Theory].) Prerequisites: One introductory course in sociology or permission of the instructor. Required for all sociology majors.

Qualitative Methods

SOCY 373 (.5 unit)
Johnson

This course focuses on learning to use qualitative methods to answer questions about social life. We will discuss individual and group interviews, observational techniques, and content analysis of documents and visual images. Students will practice using these techniques by carrying out a semester-long research project using these methods. We will also discuss the “nuts and bolts” of designing a research project, writing research proposals, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing up qualitative research. Finally, we will contextualize this practical instruction with discussions of research ethics, issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research, the relationship between qualitative methods and theory-building, and the place of qualitative methods in the discipline of sociology. Enrollment limited to fifteen. Prerequisite: one introductory course in sociology and at least one other sociology course.

Meaning in Modern Society

SOCY 430 (.5 unit)
Besecke

Sociologists consider modern societies to be faced with a crisis of meaning. Meanwhile, many Americans are responding to this crisis of meaning, using words like “spirituality” and “soul” to talk about a dimension of life that they feel is neglected in modern society. This dimension has something to do with religion, and yet it’s different from what many people think of when they think about religiosity. Often, when people talk about spirituality, they are describing an interest in meaningfulness and a deeper experience of life.

Americans’ interest in spirituality can be studied sociologically, and many of our greatest classical and contemporary sociologists have spoken to questions of modern meaningfulness. This course is an introduction to the sociological conversation about contemporary spirituality and the search for ultimate meanings in modern society. We will consider the following questions: (1) What is meaning, and what makes a society comparatively meaningful or meaningless? (2) What about modern society makes meaning a problem, and what resources does modern society offer for renewed meaningfulness? (3) What are modern people doing to bring a sense of meaningfulness into life, and how can we understand their efforts sociologically? Prerequisite: previous coursework in sociology or religious studies or permission of the instructor. Limited to fifteen students.

Individual Study

SOCY 494 (.25 unit)
Staff

This course is for students who wish to do advanced work beyond regular courses or to study topics not included in course offerings. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

Senior Honors

SOCY 498 (.5 unit)
Staff

This course is for students pursuing departmental honors. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and department chair.

The following courses may be offered in 2008-09:

SOCY 110 Human Society
 SOCY 111 Identity in American Society
 SOCY 112 Dreamers and Dissenters
 SOCY 113 Social Issues and Intersections
 SOCY 114 Institutions and Inequalities
 SOCY 220 Social Problems and Policies
 SOCY 224 Health and Illness
 SOCY 232 Sexual Harassment: Legal Questions and Normative Expectations
 SOCY 239 Social Movements and Social Change
 SOCY 271 Logic and Methods of Social Research
 SOCY 362 Contemporary Social Theory
 SOCY 372 Research Practicum: Doing Social Research
 SOCY 461 Modern German Social Theory
 SOCY 463 Intersection Theory
 SOCY 477, 478 Fieldwork: Rural Life
 SOCY 489 Senior Seminar
 SOCY 492 Women, Health, and Medicine