SOCIETY

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FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Assistant Professors Rene Almeling, Emily Erikson, Lloyd Grieger, Marcus Hunter, † Sigrun Kahl, Vida Maralani, Christopher Wildeman, Jonathan Wyrtzen

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Sociology provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding how societies function and how they change over time. Sociologists are interested in the causes and consequences of processes such as the social construction of groups and identity, the evolution of culture, intersubjective meanings, intergroup relations, and hierarchies and social norms. They conduct research on individual behavior and outcomes such as educational attainment, jobs and careers, religious commitment, and political involvement; interpersonal processes such as intimate relationships, sexuality, social interaction in groups, and social networks; the behaviors of organizations and institutions; the causes and consequences of group differences and social inequality; and social change at the societal and global level.

The Sociology major provides both a solid foundation for students interested in careers in the social sciences and a strong background for a variety of professions in which knowledge about social processes and how societies work is relevant. Many recent graduates have gone on to law school, medical school, or graduate programs in public health, business, education, urban planning, criminology, or sociology. Others work in finance, consulting, publishing, marketing, city planning, teaching, research, and advocacy.

The Sociology department offers two undergraduate programs leading to the B.A. degree. The standard program focuses on sociological concepts, theories, and methods. The combined program provides students with the option to combine sociology with a concentration in another field. For example, students interested in business careers can combine sociology with economics. Students interested in the major are encouraged to contact the director of undergraduate studies early in their academic careers to discuss potential options.

Admission to the major Students interested in the Sociology major should complete either a freshman seminar or at least one introductory course (numbered 110–149) by the end of the sophomore year. This course may be applied toward the requirements of the major. The director of undergraduate studies can waive the introductory course requirement for students who demonstrate adequate preparation for advanced course work in sociology. All students interested in the Sociology major should meet with the director of undergraduate studies no later than the beginning of the junior year to elect a program of study.

Division of courses Courses in Sociology are divided by level, with introductory courses numbered from 110 to 149, courses in sociological theory from 150 to 159, courses in sociological methods from 160 to 169, intermediate courses from 150 to 299, advanced courses in the 300s, and individual study and research courses in the 400s. Freshman seminars are numbered below 100 and count as introductory or intermediate courses. In addition, qualified students may elect to enroll in graduate courses, with permission of the instructor and of the director of graduate studies. A list of graduate courses and descriptions is available from the director of undergraduate studies.

Program I. The Standard Program

The requirements for the standard program are:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the senior colloquium), of which normally no more than two may be drawn from outside the Sociology department. At least one must be an introductory Sociology course or a substitute approved by the director of undergraduate studies, but no more than two introductory courses may count toward this total. A maximum of two courses taken Credit/D/Fail may count toward the requirements of the major.

2. Two courses in sociological theory and two in sociological methods, normally completed by the end of the junior year. SOCY 151, Foundations of Modern Social Theory, and 152, Topics in Contemporary Social Theory, are the required courses for theory. SOCY 160, Methods of Inquiry, and one additional Sociology course numbered between 161 and 169 are required for methods. Students planning to study abroad in their junior year are strongly encouraged to begin meeting the theory and methods requirements in their sophomore year. They should also discuss the options for their course of study with the director of undergraduate studies before finalizing their plans.

3. One advanced seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399).
4. For students in the intensive major, a two-term senior essay and colloquium, SOCY 493, 494. This yearlong biweekly colloquium provides students in the intensive major with an opportunity to share their research experiences. Students in the nonintensive major take one additional 300-level seminar in Sociology and write a one-term senior essay in SOCY 491.

**Program II. Sociology with Another Subject**

The combined program allows students to unite the study of sociology with the study of another discipline or substantive area. The requirements are:

1. Thirteen term courses (including the senior colloquium), of which at least nine and no more than ten are selected from Sociology, the remainder being chosen from another department or program. At least one must be an introductory Sociology course or a substitute approved by the director of undergraduate studies, but no more than two introductory courses in any department or program may count toward this total. The courses outside Sociology must constitute a coherent unit alone and form a logical whole when combined with the Sociology courses. A maximum of two courses taken Credit/D/Fail may count toward the requirements of the major.

2. Two courses in sociological theory and two in sociological methods, normally completed by the end of the junior year. SOCY 151, Foundations of Modern Social Theory, and 152, Topics in Contemporary Social Theory, are the required courses for theory. SOCY 160, Methods of Inquiry, and one additional Sociology course numbered between 161 and 169 are required for methods. Students planning to study abroad in their junior year are strongly encouraged to begin meeting the theory and methods requirements in their sophomore year. They should also discuss the options for their course of study with the director of undergraduate studies before finalizing their plans.

3. One advanced seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399).

4. A one- or two-term senior essay in which the student integrates sociology and the other subject chosen. Students in the intensive major write a two-term senior essay and attend a yearlong biweekly colloquium (SOCY 493, 494). The colloquium provides students with an opportunity to share their research experiences. Students in the nonintensive major take one additional 300-level seminar in Sociology and write a one-term senior essay in SOCY 491.

The combined program allows students to design a program to satisfy their own substantive interests and future career plans. By the beginning of the junior year, participants in the combined program are expected to consult with the director of undergraduate studies in order to obtain approval for their course of study.

**Senior requirement for the nonintensive major** Students electing the nonintensive major take one additional seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399) and write a one-credit senior essay during the senior year (SOCY 491). The senior essay for nonintensive majors is intended to be an in-depth scholarly review and critical analysis based on secondary sources. Students select a controversial topic in any sociological field and write a literature review that evaluates what is known about the topic. All nonintensive majors are required to enroll in SOCY 491 to receive credit for the senior essay. To register for this course, students must submit a written plan of study approved by a faculty adviser to the director of undergraduate studies no later than the end of registration period in the term in which the senior essay is to be written. Nonintensive majors are not eligible to graduate with Distinction in the Major.

**Senior requirement for the intensive major** The intensive major gives students an opportunity to undertake a yearlong program of original research resulting in a contribution to sociological knowledge. The yearlong project requires substantial independent research and knowledge of a sociological subfield. Students use research methods such as data gathering through participant observation, in-depth interviewing, conducting of small-scale surveys, or secondary analysis of existing data. They may present findings in a variety of forms, from ethnographic narratives to analytical statistics. Students select primary and secondary advisers from the faculty. Students in the intensive major enroll in SOCY 493, 494, Senior Essay and Colloquium for Intensive Majors, during their senior year. The colloquium provides a forum for discussing the research process and for presenting students’ research at various stages. Intensive majors are eligible to graduate with Distinction in the Major if they meet the grade standards for Distinction (see under "Honors" in Undergraduate Curriculum) and submit a senior essay written in SOCY 493, 494.

**Admission to the intensive major** Students should apply to the director of undergraduate studies by the last day of classes in the spring term of their junior year. In special circumstances, applications may be accepted through the end of registration period in the first term of the senior year. Applications should include a one-page statement of interest that includes a list of relevant courses taken and identifies a prospective senior essay adviser. Admission is based on performance and promise. The director of undergraduate studies and the senior essay adviser serve as advisers to candidates for the intensive major.

**Requirements of the Major**

**Prerequisite** 1 freshman sem or intro course (SOCY 110–149) or equivalent

**Number of courses** 13 term courses (incl prereq and senior essay)

**Specific courses required** SOCY 151, 152, 160, 1 addtl Sociology course numbered 161–169

**Distribution of courses** Program I—at least 11 courses in Sociology at intermediate and advanced levels, 1 Sociology sem at 300 level; Program II—9 or 10 courses in Sociology; at least 1 Sociology sem at 300 level; no more than 2 intro courses in any dept or program

**Senior requirement** Nonintensive major—1 addtl 300-level Sociology sem and senior essay (SOCY 491); Intensive major—senior essay (SOCY 493, 494)
Freshman seminar

*SO 086a, Chinese Society since Mao  Deborah Davis
An overview of the major social institutions in contemporary China, with a focus on the changing relationship between individual and society. Use of print and visual sources to explore the social consequences of China’s recent retreat from socialism and its rapid integration into the global economy. May count toward the Sociology major as an intermediate course. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program.  SO

Introductory courses

SO 116b, Markets, Culture, and Globalization  Frederick Wherry
The effects of the global economy on indigenous cultural and economic practices. The arguments presented by proponents and opponents of globalization. Definitions of globalization and culture; cultural tourism and branding; cultural markets; fair trade.  SO

SO 126b / HLT 140b, Health of the Public  Nicholas Christakis
Biological and social factors that jointly determine the health of individuals and populations. The influence of medical care, social networks, and socioeconomic inequality on illness, recovery, and death.  SO

SO 133a, Computers, Networks, and Society  Scott Boorman
Comparison of major algorithm-centered approaches to the analysis of complex social network and organizational data. Fundamental principles for developing a disciplined and coherent perspective on the effects of modern information technology on societies worldwide. Software warfare and algorithm sabotage; blockmodeling and privacy; legal, ethical, and policy issues. No prior experience with computers required.  SO  RP

SO 135a / AFST 280a / MMES 196a, Islamic Society, Culture, and Politics  Jonathan Wyrtzen
The historical development of the global Muslim community, from its origins in seventh-century Arabia through its spread over subsequent centuries into the Middle East, Africa, Central, South, and Southeast Asia, and the West. The tremendous variation and complexity expressed in society, culture, and politics across the Islamic world; Islam as a unifying factor on critical issues such as religious practice, political structure and activism, gender, and cultural expression.  SO

Courses in sociological theory

SO 151a / HUMS 302a / PLSC 290a, Foundations of Modern Social Theory  Emily Erikson
Major works of social thought from the beginning of the modern era through the 1920s. Attention to social and intellectual contexts, conceptual frameworks and methods, and contributions to contemporary social analysis. Writers include Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith, Marx, Freud, Peirce, Weber, and Durkheim.  SO

*SO 152b, Topics in Contemporary Social Theory  Ron Eyerman
An examination of central issues in contemporary social theory. Influential thinkers and their responses to changes in the modern world since the Second World War. Topics include the nature of modern society and the human condition, the selection of rulers, power, punishment, torture, national trauma, and individual and collective identity.  SO

Courses in sociological methods

*SO 160a, Methods of Inquiry  Matthew Mahler
The theory and practice of social inquiry. How social scientists – and aspiring social scientists – actually do their work, including designing research, sampling and measuring, and interpreting results. Examination of thesis proposal writing; ethical quandaries involved in social research assumed.  SO

*SO 162a, Methods in Quantitative Sociology  Vida Maralani
Introduction to methods for reading and conducting quantitative sociological research. Data description and graphical approaches to data analysis; elementary probability theory; assumptions and properties of bivariate and multivariate linear regression; regression diagnostics.  QR, SO

*SO 167b, Social Networks and Society  Emily Erikson
Introduction to the theory and practice of social network analysis. The role of social networks in contemporary society; basic properties of network measures, matrices, and statistics. Theoretical concepts such as centrality and power, cohesion and community, structural holes, duality of persons and groups, small worlds, and diffusion and contagion. Use of social structural, dynamic, and statistical approaches, as well as network analysis software. No background in statistics required.  SO

Intermediate courses

The prerequisite for intermediate courses is one introductory Sociology course or permission of the instructor.
SOCY 170b / LAST 214b / PLSC 378b, Contesting Injustice  Elisabeth Wood
Exploration of why, when, and how people organize collectively to challenge political, social, and economic injustice. Cross-national comparison of the extent, causes, and consequences of inequality. Analysis of mobilizations for social justice in both U.S. and international settings. Intended primarily for freshmen and sophomores.  so

SOCY 172b / PLSC 415b, Religion and Politics  Sigrun Kahl
Challenges to the view of religion as an archaic force destined to dwindle away in a secularized society. A historical and comparative investigation of the relationship between religion and politics in Europe and the United States, with comparisons to the Muslim world.  so

*SOCY 202b G / HUMS 335b, Cultural Sociology  Jeffrey Alexander
Collective meanings that make a profound difference in modern societies; that are symbolic but also sensual, emotional, and moral; that inspire ritual as well as creative performance and strategy. Examination of codes, narratives, icons, and metaphors to analyze how cultural structures energize capitalism, direct politics, create institutions, inspire social movements, and motivate war and peace.  so

*SOCY 208a G, Guns in the United States  Tracey Meares and Andrew Papachristos
Survey of historical, sociological, psychological, legal, and political research on the multifaceted role guns play in the United States. Historical and constitutional origins of the Second Amendment; the prevalence and distribution of guns; attitudes about gun ownership, possession, and use; illegal and legal gun markets; gun crime and injuries and responses to them, including legislative and political processes.  so

*SOCY 216a / EP&E 267a / WGSS 314a, Social Movements  Ron Eyerman
An introduction to sociological perspectives on social movements and collective action, exploring civil rights, student movements, global justice, nationalism, and radical fundamentalism.  so

*SOCY 228a, Norms and Deviance  Elijah Anderson
A sociological analysis of the origins, development, and reactions surrounding deviance in contemporary society. Group labeling, stigma, power, and competing notions of propriety.  so

*SOCY 232b G / AFST 348b / MMES 291b, Islamic Social Movements  Jonathan Wytzten
Social movement and network theory used to analyze the emergence and evolution of Islamic movements from the early twentieth century to the present. Organization, mobilization, and framing of political, nonpolitical, militant, and nonmilitant movements; transnational dimensions of Islamic activism. Case studies include the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbollah, Al-Qaeda, Al-Adl wa-Ihsann, and Tablighi Jama’at.  so

*SOCY 253b / PLSC 269b, Ethnography of Everyday Political Life  Matthew Mahler
Introduction to ethnographic research for examining the sociological underpinnings that shape, structure, and inform everyday political life in the United States. Empirical realities of organized political life are approached through close analysis of political memoirs and biographies. Various sociological theories are introduced, including interactionism, dramaturgy, cultural sociology, phenomenology, and practice theory.  so

Advanced courses

Courses in this category are open to students who have completed one intermediate course and any other specified requirement, or by permission of the instructor. Preference is given to Sociology majors in their junior and senior years.

*SOCY 306a G / EP&E 337a, Empires and Imperialism  Peter Stamatov
Empire as a territorial organization of political power. Comparison of empires in historical periods from antiquity to European overseas expansion in the fifteenth through twentieth centuries, and in different geographic contexts in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Economic, political, and cultural theories of imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization.  WR, so

*SOCY 310b G / EAST 410b, Civil Society, Public Sphere, and Civic Life in Contemporary China  Deborah Davis
The changing character of civil society and the public sphere under various political conditions in modern China. Key themes are the possibilities for civic action, citizenship, and state-society relations. Prerequisite: a previous course on modern China or extended residence in Taiwan, Hong Kong, or the People’s Republic of China. Preference to majors in Sociology or East Asian Studies in their junior and senior years.  so

*SOCY 314a / AFAM 273a, Inequality in America  Vida Maralani
Empirical, theoretical, and methodological issues involved in the study of inequalities in occupation, income, wealth, education, health, and neighborhoods. Intergenerational mobility, marriage and family processes, and inequalities of race, ethnicity, and gender. Questions include whether the United States is a land of opportunity and how different social groups fare and why.  WR, so

*SOCY 318b / EP&E 274b / PLSC 337b, Debates over Capitalism  Thomas Donahue
Theories and arguments that explore capitalism’s positive and negative aspects. The role of capitalism in the production of freedom, wealth, stable democracy, efficiency, exploitation, democratic dysfunction, hierarchical business firms, and environmental destruction. Justifications and critiques of capitalism by Smith, Mill, Marx, Hayek, Schumpeter, Friedman, Nozick, and utopian socialists.  so
The role of culture and politics in shaping markets, with attention to taboo, intimate, and standard market exchanges. The institutions and cultural codes underpinning these markets and the variety of logics actors deploy in making and understanding deals. The influence of morality across all types of markets; ways in which cultural categories steer marketplace practices; the effects of social relationships on economic strategies. No previous knowledge of sociology or economics required.

Massive increases in the American imprisonment rate since the mid-1970s that have rendered contact with the criminal justice system a common event for marginalized Americans. Effects of these increases on inequality in the labor market, family life, politics, and health.

Approaches to developing explanatory theories aimed at addressing specific empirical questions in contemporary sociology. Rational choice, game theory, and social (or endogenous) interaction models. The use of agent-based models and other simulation techniques in building models of social phenomena. Testing of explanatory models against empirical data.

The historical evolution of political order from Morocco to Central Asia in the past two centuries. Focus on relationships between imperialism, insurgency, and state building. Ottoman, European, and nationalist strategies for state building; modes of local resistance; recent transnational developments; American counterinsurgency and nation-building initiatives in the region.

The formation and effectiveness of antipoverty policies in the United States examined from sociological and public-policy perspectives. Origins of the modern social safety net; the federal government's role in antipoverty policy and the growth-of-dependency argument; the labor market and low-wage work; employment- and family-based policy strategies for alleviating poverty.

Exploration of how and why modern and postmodern societies have continued to sustain material symbolism and iconic consciousness. Theoretical approaches to debates about icons and symbols in philosophy, sociology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and semiotics. Iconography in advertisements and branding, food and bodies, nature, fashion, celebrities, popular culture, art, architecture, and politics.

The relationship between religious and economic thought and practice in Marxism, structural functionalism, and modernization theory. The basic claims and concerns of the three theoretical approaches; depictions of religion, of the economy, and of the interactions between them; ways in which the encounter between religion and economy is fundamental to each theory's broader explanation of modern society.

The "city problem" of crime contrasted in a variety of neighborhoods; reasons why some neighborhoods have higher rates of crime than others. Topics include street gangs, the underground economy, immigration, and mass incarceration. Attention to ecological, social structural, and cultural aspects of city life.

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Comparative survey of research in demography. The interplay of population processes and socioeconomic development; trends in fertility, mortality, aging, and health in both richer and poorer nations; the relationship between women's status and health and demographic outcomes. Readings from a variety of fields, including demography/sociology, economics, epidemiology, and public health.

The contemporary family as viewed by family sociologists and demographers. Marriage, cohabitation, childbirth, and union disruption; gender, racial, and socioeconomic variations; the relationship between social policy and family, particularly among the poor; feminist critiques of the family; representations in popular culture; nonnormative family arrangements.

Exploration of the explosion of genocide and violent ethnic conflict in the past seventy years, including contributory historical and political elements. Consideration of ways to prevent or resolve such conflicts. Focus on questions of identity, religion, class, and nationhood as related to violence and conflict. An analytical framework developed from four case studies: the Holocaust, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda.

Citizenship as a complex phenomenon: an instrument of social closure, a determinant of social policies, a normative ideal in political philosophy, and a model for political participation. Meaning and forms of citizenship and civic engagement in historical and theoretical perspective. Debates on the decline of civic participation and on the emergence of global civil society.
SOCY 369a / EP&E 258a / PLSC 446a, Welfare States across Nations  Sigrun Kahl
How different societies counterbalance capitalism and deal with social risks. Welfare state regimes and their approaches to inequality, unemployment, poverty, illness, disability, child rearing, and old age. Why the United States has an exceptionally small welfare state.  

SOCY 372a / AFST 372a / MMES 105a, Comparative Nationalism in North Africa and the Middle East  Jonathan Wyrtzen
The rise of nationalism in the Maghreb (or Arab West) and Mashriq (or Arab East). Introduction to major debates about nationalism; the influence of transnational (pan-Islamic and pan-Arab) ideologies, ethnicity, gender, and religion. Case studies include Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies, Morocco, Western Sahara, Algeria, and Berber and Kurdish movements.  

SOCY 386b, The United States as an Empire in Historical and Global Context  Nicholas Wilson and Sarah Kinkel
Development of a definition and theory of empire through analysis of historical examples from around the world. Application of this definition to events and periods in U.S. history. Attention to ways in which the experiences of both colonizing and colonized populations shape the meaning of rule.  

SOCY 395a / EAST 408a / EP&E 269a, Wealth and Poverty in Modern China  Deborah Davis
The underlying causes and consequences of the changing distribution of income, material assets, and political power in contemporary China. Substantive focus on inequality and stratification. Instruction in the use of online Chinese resources relevant to research. Optional weekly Chinese language discussions. Prerequisite: a previous course on China since 1949.  

SOCY 398a / AFST 398a / ER&M 398a / PLSC 422a, Race and Class in Comparative Perspective  Jeremy Seekings
The evolution and character of class stratification and racial inequalities in South Africa, Brazil, and the United States. Twentieth-century analyses of the three societies, including studies of caste and their critiques by Marxist theory. Contemporary issues such as urban inequalities, middle classes and underclasses, identity, and political mobilization.  

Individual study and research courses

SOCY 471a and SOCY 472b, Individual Study  Philip Gorski
Individual study for qualified juniors and seniors under faculty supervision. To register for this course, each student must submit to the director of undergraduate studies a written plan of study that has been approved by a faculty adviser.  

SOCY 491a or b, Senior Essay and Colloquium for Nonintensive Majors  Frederick Wherry
Independent library-based research under faculty supervision. To register for this course, students must submit a written plan of study approved by a faculty adviser to the director of undergraduate studies no later than the end of registration period in the term in which the senior essay is to be written. The course meets biweekly, beginning in the first week of the term.  

SOCY 493a and SOCY 494b, Senior Essay and Colloquium for Intensive Majors  Philip Gorski
Independent research under faculty direction, involving empirical research and resulting in a substantial paper. Workshop meets biweekly to discuss various stages of the research process and to share experiences in gathering and analyzing data. The first meeting is in the second week of the term.