Sociology

493 College Street, 203.432.3323
http://sociology.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Philip Smith

Director of Graduate Studies
Ron Eyerman

Professors Julia Adams, Jeffrey Alexander, Elijah Anderson, Scott Boorman, Nicholas Christakis, Deborah Davis, Ron Eyerman, Philip Gorski, Grace Kao, Andrew Papachristos, Philip Smith, Frederick Wherry

Associate Professors Rene Almeling, Emily Erikson, Jonathan Wyrtzen

Assistant Professors Lloyd Grieger, Joscha Legewie

FIELDS OF STUDY
Fields include comparative sociology/macrosociology; cultural and historical sociology; economic sociology; life course/social stratification; mathematical sociology; medical sociology; methodology (qualitative and quantitative approaches); networks; political sociology; race/gender/ethnic/minority relations; social change; social demography; social movements; theory (general, critical, hermeneutic); urban sociology.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE
Qualification for admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. will take place during the student’s first three years of study at Yale. A student who has not been admitted to candidacy will not be permitted to register for the seventh term of study. To qualify for candidacy the student must take twelve seminars to be completed in years one and two, four required courses (SOCY 542, SOCY 578, SOCY 580, SOCY 581), and eight electives, including at least one workshop. After completion of courses, students prepare a research paper and one field exam and defend a dissertation prospectus.

Teaching is an important part of the professional preparation of graduate students in Sociology. Students teach therefore in the third and fourth years of study.

COMBINED PH.D. DEGREE IN SOCIOLOGY AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
The Department of Sociology offers, in conjunction with the Department of African American Studies, a combined Ph.D. degree in Sociology and African American Studies.

Students accepted to the combined Ph.D. program must meet all of the requirements of the Ph.D. in Sociology with the exception that, excluding the courses required, a research paper, and a field exam, combined-degree students may substitute African American Studies courses for six of the twelve term courses required to qualify for the Ph.D. in Sociology. For further details see African American Studies.

MASTER’S DEGREES
M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Eight term courses are required for the M.A. degree. Two of these courses must include statistics and theory. A grade of High Pass or Honors must be achieved in five of the eight required courses. A student may petition for the M.A. degree in the term following the one in which the student completes the course requirements.

Program materials are available at http://sociology.yale.edu.

COURSES

SOCY 503b / PLSC 522b, Historical Approaches to the Study of Politics Steven Wilkinson
An overview of the how-to, and the payoff, of a historical approach to the study of politics. The course covers a wide range of topics, from the classics of political science and sociology to recent comparative historical work.

SOCY 506a, Designing Social Research Balazs Kovacs
This is a course in the design of social research. The goal of research design is “to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial [research] question as unambiguously as possible” (de Vaus 2001: 9). A good research design presupposes a well-specified (and hopefully interesting) research question. This question can be stimulated by a theoretical puzzle, an empirical mystery, or a policy problem. With the research question in hand, the next step is to develop a strategy for gathering the empirical evidence that will allow you to answer the question “as unambiguously as possible.”
SOCY 508a / PLSC 505a, Qualitative Field Research  Elisabeth Wood
In this seminar we discuss and practice qualitative field research methods. The course covers the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing ethnographic data, with an emphasis on the core ethnographic techniques of participant observation and in-depth interviewing. All participants carry out a local research project. Open to undergraduates with permission of the instructor.

SOCY 544a, Cultural Sociology  Jeffrey Alexander
Cultural sociology studies “irrational” meanings in supposedly rational, modern societies. Social meanings are symbolic, but also sensual, emotional, and moral. They can deeply divide nations but also powerfully unite them. They affect every dimension of social life, from politics and markets to race and gender relations, class, conflict, and war. We look at how this cultural approach developed, from counterintuitive writings of Durkheim and Weber a century ago, to the breakthroughs of semiotics and anthropology in midcentury, the creation of modern cultural sociology in the 1980s, and new thinking about social performance and material icons today. As we trace this historical arc, we examine ancient and modern religion, contemporary capitalism, the coronation of Elizabeth II, professional wrestling, Americans not eating horses, the Iraq War, the impeachment of Bill Clinton, Barack Obama’s first presidential campaign, and the new cult of vinyl records.

SOCY 542a, Sociological Theory  Emily Erikson
The course seeks to give students the conceptual tools for a constructive engagement with sociological theory and theorizing. We trace the genealogies of dominant theoretical approaches and explore the ways in which theorists contend with these approaches when confronting the central questions of both modernity and the discipline.

SOCY 545b, Sociology of Markets  Staff
This seminar explores the links between social networks and employment discrimination, religion and wealth, social relationships and financial troubles, culture and industry, and the moral dimensions of selling organs and intimacy.

SOCY 548b / AFST 548b, Islamic Social Movements  Jonathan Wyrtzen
Social movement theory used to analyze the emergence and evolution of Islamic movements from the early twentieth century to the present. Organization, mobilization, political process, and framing of political, nonpolitical, militant, and nonmilitant movements; transnational dimensions of Islamic activism. Case studies include the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hizbollah, Al-Qaeda, Gulen, Al-Adl wa-Ihsann, Islamic State, and others.

SOCY 551a, Comparative and Historical Methods  Philip Gorski
The course provides a hands-on introduction to the craft of comparative and historical analysis. Through a series of small-scale, individual, and group projects, students learn how to frame researchable problems, how to use comparisons to address them, how to work with different types of primary sources, how to transform them into “data,” and how to manage this data. In order to create a substantive focus for the course, and to exploit the strengths of Yale’s libraries and archives, the readings and assignments are centered on English history and historiography. The course is designed for graduate students in history and the social sciences but is also open to undergraduates with a strong interest in research.

SOCY 554a, Research Topics on Human Nature and Social Networks  Nicholas Christakis
This seminar focuses on ongoing research projects in human nature, behavior genetics, social interactions, and social networks.

SOCY 560a or b / PLSC 734a or b, Comparative Research Workshop  Julia Adams
This weekly workshop is dedicated to group discussion of work-in-progress by visiting scholars, Yale graduate students, and in-house faculty from Sociology and affiliated disciplines. Papers are distributed a week ahead of time and also posted on the website of the Center for Comparative Research (http://ccr.yale.edu). Students who take the course for a letter grade are expected to present a paper-in-progress the term that they are enrolled for credit.

SOCY 563b / AFST 573b, Imperialism, Insurgency, and State Building in the Middle East and North Africa  Jonathan Wyrtzen
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.

SOCY 580a, Introduction to Methods in Quantitative Sociology  Lloyd Grieger
Introduction to methods in quantitative sociological research. Covers data description; graphical approaches; elementary probability theory; bivariate and multivariate linear regression; regression diagnostics. Includes hands-on data analysis using Stata.

SOCY 581b, Intermediate Methods in Quantitative Sociology  Joscha Legewie
Second part of a two-term introduction to methods for quantitative social science research. Covers review of linear regression; introduction to models for categorical and count data, the analysis of time data, and longitudinal data; overview of missing data and weighting; and discussion of data that are complicated by issues of nonrandom design. Prerequisite: SOCY 580.

SOCY 584b / AFAM 584b, Inequality, Race, and the City  Elijah Anderson
Urban inequality in America. The racial iconography of the city is explored and represented, and the dominant cultural narrative of civic pluralism is considered. Topics of concern include urban poverty, race relations, ethnicity, class, privilege, education, social networks, social deviance, and crime.
SOCY 595a or b, Inequality and Life Course Workshop  Staff
In this workshop we present and discuss ongoing research work, primarily but not exclusively quantitative analyses. In addition, we address theoretical and methodological issues in the areas of the life course (education, training, labor markets, aging, as well as family demography), social inequality (class structures, stratification, and social mobility), and related topics.

SOCY 596a / EAST 596a, 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: permission of the instructor.

SOCY 598a and SOCY 599b, Independent Study  Staff
By arrangement with faculty. When students register for the course online, the dropdown menu should be completed.

SOCY 615a, Neighborhoods and Crime  Andrew Papachristos
Crime is often considered a city problem and one that concentrates in particular places. This course delves into the social scientific research examining why some neighborhoods have higher rates of crime than others. Topics include street gangs, the underground economy, immigration, and mass incarceration. Attention is paid to ecological, social structural, and cultural aspects of city life.

SOCY 625a, Analysis of Social Structure  Scott Boorman
Emphasizing analytically integrated viewpoints, the course develops a variety of major contemporary approaches to the study of social structure and social organization. Building in part on research viewpoints articulated by Kenneth J. Arrow in The Limits of Organization (1974), by János Kornai in an address at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences published in 1984, and by Harrison C. White in Identity and Control (2nd ed., 2008), four major species of social organization are identified as focal: (1) social networks, (2) competitive markets, (3) hierarchies/bureaucracy, and (4) collective choice/legislation. This lecture course uses mathematical and computational models—and comparisons of their scientific styles and contributions—as analytical vehicles in coordinated development of the four species.

SOCY 628a or b, Workshop in Cultural Sociology  Staff
This workshop is designed to be a continuous part of the graduate curriculum. Meeting weekly throughout both the fall and spring terms, it constitutes an ongoing, informal seminar to explore areas of mutual interest among students and faculty, both visiting and permanent. The core concern of the workshop is social meaning and its forms and processes of institutionalization. Meaning is approached as both structure and performance, drawing not only on the burgeoning area of cultural sociology but on the humanities, philosophy, and other social sciences. Discussions range widely among methodological, theoretical, empirical, and normative issues. Sessions alternate between presentations by students of their own work and by visitors. Contents of the workshop vary from term to term, and from year to year. Enrollment is open to auditors who fully participate and for credit to students who submit written work.

SOCY 630a and AFAM 773a, Workshop in Urban Ethnography  Elijah Anderson
The ethnographic interpretation of urban life and culture. Conceptual and methodological issues are discussed. Ongoing projects of participants are presented in a workshop format, thus providing participants with critical feedback as well as the opportunity to learn from and contribute to ethnographic work in progress. Selected ethnographic works are read and assessed.

SOCY 632b, Social Network Analysis  Emily Erikson
Social Network Analysis (SNA) refers to both a theoretical perspective and a set of methodological techniques. As a theoretical perspective, SNA stresses the interdependence among social actors. This approach views the social world as patterns or regularities in relationships among interacting units and focuses on how such patterns affect the behavior of network units or actors. A "structure" emerges as a persistent pattern of interaction that can influence a multitude of behaviors, such as getting a job, income attainment, political decision-making, social revolutions, organizational merges, global finance and trade markets, delinquent youth behaviors, the spread of infectious diseases, and so on. As a methodological approach, SNA refers to a catalog of techniques steeped in mathematical graph theory and now extending to statistical simulation and algebraic models. This course surveys the growing field of SNA, emphasizing the merger of theory and method, while gaining hands-on experience with network data and software.

SOCY 633a, Sociology of Education  Grace Kao
This seminar introduces students to studies in the sociology of education. The class emphasizes studies in the United States and also focuses on studies of stratification by race, ethnicity, immigrant status, class, and gender. We also examine empirical studies of youth from early childhood to post-college, and we think more broadly about how longitudinal studies affect our understandings of how schools may help to provide more equal opportunities to students or whether they exacerbate inequality.

SOCY 636b / E&EB 636b, Biosocial Science  Nicholas Christakis
This seminar (with limited enrollment, but open to anyone) covers topics at the intersection of the natural and social sciences, including behavior genetics, gene-environment interactions, social epigenetics, and diverse other topics.

SOCY 656a, Professional Seminar  Ron Eyerman
This required seminar aims at introducing incoming sociology graduate students to the department and the profession. Yale Sociology faculty members are invited to discuss their research. There are minimum requirements, such as writing a book review. No grades are given; students should take for Audit. Held biweekly.
SOCY 660a / AFAM 825a, Black Urban America As Sociological Memoir  Gerald Jaynes
This interdisciplinary course traces formation of contemporary African American class and family structures through investigation of how evolving racialized class-gender relations shaped twenty-first-century populations of poor and affluent blacks. Sources drawn from social sciences, history, literature to explore relationships between social behavior (agency) and blocked opportunity (structure).