SOCIOMETRY

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

Chair
Philip Gorski

Director of Graduate Studies
Rene Almeling

Professors Julia Adams, Jeffrey Alexander, Elijah Anderson, Scott Boorman, Nicholas Christakis, Philip Gorski, Grace Kao, Philip Smith

Associate Professors Rene Almeling, Emily Erikson, Jonathan Wyrtzen

Assistant Professors Daniel Karell, Alka Menon, Rourke O’Brien, Emma Zang

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. PROGRAMS

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.
Sociology and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Department of Sociology also offers, in conjunction with the Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, a combined Ph.D. in Sociology and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. For further details, see Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality 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. The M.A. is normally conferred in the term that follows completion of the course requirements. In special circumstances, students may petition to receive the degree in the same term.

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

COURSES

SOCY 508b / PLSC 505b, Qualitative Field Research  Daniel Mattingly
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 534b, 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  Julia Adams
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 551a, Comparative and Historical Methods  Jonathan Wyrtzen
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 578a, Logic of Empirical Social Research**  Rourke O’Brien

The seminar is an intensive introduction into the methodology of the social sciences. It covers such topics as concepts and indicators, propositions and theory, explanation and understanding, observation and measurement, methods of data collection, types of data, units of analysis and levels of variables, research design inference, description and causal modeling, verification and falsification. The course involves both the study of selected texts and the analysis and evaluation of recent research papers.

**SOCY 580a, Introduction to Methods in Quantitative Sociology**  Staff

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 592b / WGSS 592b, Qualitative Research Methods**  Rene Almeling

The goal of this course is to introduce graduate students in the social sciences to qualitative research methods. The course is designed to walk students through the process of conducting qualitative research, from the initial steps of deciding on a topic and developing research questions to collecting and analyzing data. To learn how qualitative researchers write books and articles, we examine the relationship between theory, method, and data in four award-winning books based on dissertations and journal articles published in top journals. Throughout the term, students also gain practical experience with typical qualitative methods, learning how to do observations, content analysis, and open-ended interviews. All students do the same observation exercise (going to a grocery store), whereas content analysis and interviews are shaped by each student’s research interests. The course culminates in a final paper, which can either be an analysis of the student’s qualitative data or a proposal for a qualitative research project. Permission of the instructor is required for all students. This course involves intensive reading and writing throughout the term. A few undergraduate juniors majoring in Sociology and intending to use qualitative methods in a yearlong senior thesis may be admitted. No auditors are allowed.

**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 629a / AMST 690a / WGSS 629a, Politics of Reproduction**  Rene Almeling
Reproduction as a process that is simultaneously biological and social, involving male and female bodies, family formation, and powerful social institutions such as medicine, law, and the marketplace. Sociological research on reproductive topics such as pregnancy, birth, abortion, contraception, infertility, reproductive technology, and aging. Core sociological concepts used to examine how the politics of reproduction are shaped by the intersecting inequalities of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

**SOCY 630a / 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 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 636a or b / E&EB 636a or b, 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 653a, Workshop in Advanced Sociological Writing and Research**  Philip Smith
This class concerns the process of advanced writing and research that converts draft material into work ready for publication, preferably in refereed journals, or submission as a substantial grant proposal. It investigates problem definition, the craft of writing, the structure of argument and data presentation, and the nature of persuasion more generally. The aim is to teach a professional orientation that allows work that is promising to become truly polished and compelling within the full range of sociological
genres. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor; participants must enter the class with suitable draft material for group analysis and discussion.

**SOCY 656a, Professional Seminar**  Rene Almeling  
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.