SOCIETY

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

Chair
Grace Kao

Director of Graduate Studies
Philip Gorski

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

Associate Professors Rene Almeling, Emily Erikson, Jonathan Wyrten

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. 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 503a / PLSC 522a, 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 508b / PLSC 505b, Qualitative Field Research  Staff
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 530b, Computational Sociology  Staff
The combination of digital (and digitized) data, computationally driven analytical techniques, and groundbreaking scholarship has given rise to the field of computational social science (CSS). Some CSS research engages core sociological theories and questions, which, in turn, is helping to develop computational sociology. This course provides an introduction to computational sociology. We review recent
scholarship in computational sociology and CSS; learn the skills necessary for conducting original computational sociology research; and discuss the new, imaginative, and previously unconsidered questions, project designs, and logics of inference afforded by computational sociology. Topics include digital data collection, the use of historical and archival data, neural networks, text and image analysis, and digital experiments.

**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 542b, Sociological Theory** Jonathan Wyrzen

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 554a or b, 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 578b, 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 580b, 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 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, Stratification and Inequality Workshop** Staff

In this workshop we present and discuss ongoing empirical 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 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.
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**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 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 647b, Social Processes**  Scott Boorman  
Focus is on identifying and exploring robust alternatives/complements to the rational choice models that have come to dominate so much of the analysis of social (including organizational) processes in recent years. Specifically, emphasis is placed on a range of mathematical models and related analytic approaches originating outside of the rational choice literature—in fields such as social network analysis, evolutionary biology, organization theory, and the law. Possible starting points include the Boorman-Levitt network matching model and its applications to nonprofits and complex statutes; weak ties models of job information transmission and other information transfer in elite social networks; and “garbage can” models of the internal problem-solving dynamics of complex organizations.

**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 656b, Professional Seminar**  Philip Smith  
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 659b, Law and Sociology**  Monica Bell  
This course introduces sociological perspectives on law, legal institutions, and regulated individuals and groups. The course, which includes lecture, small-group discussion, and seminar components, is divided into three parts. Part I focuses on fundamental concepts in sociology and the sociological analysis of law, covering topics such as class, culture, solidarity, legitimacy, bureaucracy, power, social control, and social capital. Part II provides a very brief introduction to sociological methods (qualitative and quantitative), with emphasis on learning to interpret and critique empirical research. Part III, the largest portion of the class, applies theory and methods to contemporary legal institutions and social problems. It covers a wide variety of topics, including understandings of law in everyday life, neighborhoods and residential segregation, race and racism, gender and sexuality, stigmatization and discrimination, diversity and affirmative action, poverty and the welfare state, housing law and housing inequality, family law and inequality, violence, policing, punishment, and immigration enforcement. In addition to a final exam or paper, students are expected to submit a small number of reading responses, participate in several small-group class discussions, and give one presentation during the latter half of the course. Permission of the instructor required. Also LAW 21368.