SOCIETY (SOCY)

* SOCY 081b / ER&M 081b / MUSI 081b, Race and Place in British New Wave, K-Pop, and Beyond  Grace Kao
This seminar introduces you to several popular musical genres and explores how they are tied to racial, regional, and national identities. We examine how music is exported via migrants, return migrants, industry professionals, and the nation-state (in the case of Korean Popular Music, or K-Pop). Readings and discussions focus primarily on the British New Wave (from about 1979 to 1985) and K-Pop (1992-present), but we also discuss first-wave reggae, ska, rocksteady from the 1960s-70s, British and American punk rock music (1970s-1980s), the precursors of modern K-Pop, and have a brief discussion of Japanese City Pop. The class focuses mainly on the British New Wave and K-Pop because these two genres of popular music have strong ties to particular geographic areas, but they became or have become extremely popular in other parts of the world. We also investigate the importance of music videos in the development of these genres. Enrollment limited to first year students. Pre-registration required: see under First Year Seminar Program.  so

SOCY 101b, Introduction to Sociology  Philip Smith
The class opens a doorway to sociology as an academic discipline. This is the systematic and rigorous study of society at all levels from the interpersonal, through institutions, organizations, and groups, to the level of the nation and world system. We cover the major research methods, forms of explanation, core concepts, and theoretical models. Substantive topics include inequality, race, gender, networks, culture, deviance, social change, and social behaviors among others.  so

SOCY 102b / HIST 381b / MMES 102b / NELC 102b, Introduction to the Middle East  Jonathan Wyrtzen
Introduction to the history, politics, societies, and cultures of the Middle East. Topics and themes include geopolitics, environment, state formation, roles of Judaism/Christianity/Islam, empire & colonialism, nationalism, regional & global wars, Palestine-Israel conflict, US and other Great Power intervention.  hu, so

SOCY 112a / EDST 110a, Foundations in Education Studies  Mira Debs
Introduction to key issues and debates in the U.S. public education system. Focus on the nexus of education practice, policy, and research. Social, scientific, economic, and political forces that shape approaches to schooling and education reform. Theoretical and practical perspectives from practitioners, policymakers, and scholars.  so

SOCY 127a / ER&M 127a / EVST 127a / WGSS 127a, Health and Illness in Social Context  Alka Menon
Present-day medicine and health care provide solutions to an ever-increasing array of human problems. Yet the achievement of health can be elusive. This course provides a broad introduction to the domains of health and illness in the U.S., with some coverage of international trends and topics. Students analyze how our personal health and public health are shaped by social structures, political struggles, expert knowledge, and medical markets. Topics include the cultural and social meanings associated with health and illness; inequalities in health and health care access and provision; controversies surrounding healthcare, medical knowledge production, and medical decision-making; and the social institutions of the health care industry. None  so

SOCY 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

SOCY 134a / AMST 134a / ER&M 264a / WGSS 110a, Sex and Gender in Society  Rene Almeling
Introduction to the social processes through which people are categorized in terms of sex and gender, and how these social processes shape individual experiences of the world. Sex and gender in relation to race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, education, work, family, reproduction, and health.  so

SOCY 147b, Introduction to Social Policy Analysis  Scott Boorman
The capabilities and limitations of four fundamental tools of policy: markets, networks, bureaucracy, and legislation. Examples from the policy history of the United States since the 1930s and from formal models of social structure and process.  so

SOCY 152a / PLSC 290a, Foundations of Modern Social Theory  Emily Erikson
Major works of social thought from the beginning of the modern era through the 190s. Attention to social and intellectual concepts, conceptual frameworks and methods, and contributions to contemporary social analysis. Writers include W.E.B. Du Bois, Simone De Beauvoir, Adam Smith, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx.  so

* SOCY 152b, Topics in Contemporary Social Theory  Philip Gorski
In-depth introduction to recent developments in social theory, with particular emphasis on the last twenty years. Focus on three distinct areas of study: the building blocks and contrasting understandings of human persons and social action; the competing theories of the social structure of markets, institutions, cultures, social fields, and actor-networks; and the theoretical controversies concerning nations, states and empires, ethnic and racial identity, and the relation between facts and values in social research. Authors include Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu and Bruno Latour. None. Though "Foundations of Modern Social Theory" or equivalent is strongly recommended.  wr, so
SOCY 153a / AFAM 118a / ER&M 249a / PSYC 336a, Is That Racist?: Theory and Methods for Diagnosing and Demonstrating Racism
Phillip Atiba Goff

How do we know when something is racist? And how do we prove it to those who are skeptical? This course is designed to allow students to go beyond armchair pontificating about racism by exploring a broad range of ways social theorists have defined the term and methods they have used to demonstrate it. Together, we have the opportunity to read, critique, and synthesize scholarship from across disciplines, with the goal of refining our own definition of the term. To accomplish this, we examine the stakes of calling something racist, who benefits and who suffers from a given definition, and how racism functions across contexts (mostly) within the United States. We also learn about popular methods for demonstrating that an idea, feeling, behavior, person, or institution is racist and evaluate how evidence about racism (or lack thereof) can obscure a diagnosis of racism—or lead to an erroneous one. Throughout the course, we take opportunities to translate the theoretical and methodological lessons we learn to the world we live in today, from popular culture to dinner table conversations. While there are no statistical prerequisites, students will be asked to think about the logic of statistical analysis and should be comfortable reasoning about numbers. HU, SO

* SOCY 160b, Methods of Inquiry
Alka Menon

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. No background in social research assumed. SO

* SOCY 162a / EDST 162a, Methods in Quantitative Sociology
Daniel Karell

Introduction to methods in quantitative sociological research. Topics include: data description; graphical approaches; elementary probability theory; bivariate and multivariate linear regression; regression diagnostics. Students use Stata for hands-on data analysis. Q8, SO

* SOCY 163b / S&DS 175b, YData: Measuring Culture
Daniel Karell

Culture is increasingly digital. Cultural objects, such as songs and artwork, are frequently digitized. Creating culture objects often involves digital tools and takes place in digital domains. The effects of culture on our social lives are now typically mediated by digital platforms and devices. In this introductory course, we explore how data science is being used to measure the cultural landscape, the consumption and production of culture, and the impact of culture on society. To do so, we review current theories and methodologies, as well as conduct our own analyses of popular culture, the rhetoric and social connections underlying online extremist communities, and other topics. The course provides opportunities to practice the data science skills presented in S&DS 123 with applications to the social scientific study of culture. This course can be taken concurrently with S&DS 123 or after successfully completing it. Q8, SO

SOCY 170a / AFAM 186a / LAST 214a / PLSC 378a, 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 172a / EP&E 241a / PLSC 415a, Religion and Politics in the World
Katharine Baldwin

A broad overview of the relationship between religion and politics around the world, especially Christianity and Islam. Religions are considered to constitute not just theologies but also sets of institutions, networks, interests, and sub-cultures. The course’s principal aim is to understand how religion affects politics as an empirical matter, rather than to explore moral dimensions of this relationship. SO

SOCY 190a / AFAM 196a / AMST 196a / ER&M 226a / EVST 196a, Race, Class, and Gender in American Cities
Laura Barraclough

Examination of how racial, gender, and class inequalities have been built, sustained, and challenged in American cities. Focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Topics include industrialization and deindustrialization, segregation, gendered public/private split, gentrification, transit equity, environmental justice, food access, and the relationships between public space, democracy, and community wellbeing. Includes field projects in New Haven. SO

* SOCY 202b, Cultural Sociology
Jeffrey Alexander

Study of “irrational” meanings in supposedly rational, modern societies. Social meanings are symbolic, sensual, emotional, and moral. They affect every dimension of social life, from politics and markets to race and gender relations, class conflict, and war. Examination of century old counter-intuitive writings of Durkheim and Weber, breakthroughs of semiotics and anthropology in mid-century, creation of modern cultural sociology in the 1980s, and new thinking about social performance and material icons today. Topics include: ancient and modern religion, contemporary capitalism, professional wrestling, the Iraq War, impeachment of Bill Clinton, Barack Obama’s first presidential campaign, and the new cult of vinyl records. SO

* SOCY 209b, The Sociological Imagination
Julia Adams

Introduction to the study of sociology and modernity. Topics include the rise and transformations of capitalism; colonialism and empire; the linked advent of democracy and bureaucracy; the world-historical invention of the individual, and the modern and postmodern city. The course culminates in individualized student final projects, and includes a student-run class blog that discusses readings from classical and contemporary authors. Recommended for sophomores and juniors. SO

* SOCY 221b / MGRK 236b / PLSC 138b, The Euro Crisis
Paris Aslanidis

Examination of how Europe continues to struggle with the social and economic repercussions of the Great Recession and the impact of socioeconomic asymmetries in countries such as Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Italy, and Greece. Topics include the euro as a viable common currency; why and how the Euro crisis erupted and spread; how the COVID-19 fallout will impact the Union. SO
Introduction to the study of ethnic and national identity, their determinants and consequences in comparative perspective.  

* SOCY 228b, 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.  

* SOCY 304a / PLSC 337a, Social Science in Action  
David Simon  
What are the social sciences for? What role do they play in society? Do they have a political, ideological, or moral component? To what extent and how can they inform public policies, shape legal decisions, and influence the broader culture? How are they in turn influenced by extra-scientific actors controlling access to funding, education policy, and legal limitations to social research? How did the relations between the social sciences and society change over time and across countries? How are students and scholars in these fields different from other social groups and how do they relate to them? Are the social sciences traversed by the same fault lines that divide society at large? Drawing on historical, sociological, and philosophical scholarship, this course considers the social sciences as an object of study.  

* SOCY 320b / HIST 324Jb / MMES 322b, World War I and the Making of the Modern Middle East  
Jonathan Wyrtzen  
WWI fundamentally transformed the Middle East, unmaking the Ottoman Empire and unleashing competition among colonial and local actors to reshape region's political order that lasted well into the 1930s. This seminar examines what can be called the "Long Great War" in the Middle East. The first part examines the road to World War I and the course of the war in the Middle Eastern theater's principle fronts (Caucasus, Mesopotamia, Sinai/Syria, North Africa, Dardanelles). We then look at the period immediately following the October 1918 Mudros Armistice (that technically ended Allied/Ottoman hostilities). During this violent "Wilsonian Moment" in the Middle East, local aspirations for self-determination were articulated, reformulated, and argued locally and internationally while colonial actors—British, French, Italian, and Spanish—mobilized competing state-building projects. The last section of the course looks at the climax points of conflict between these competing projects in the mid to late 1920s—including the Great Syrian Revolt, the Rif War, Kurdish Revolts, Saudi wars of consolidation, and the Italo-Sanusi war in Libya—and how present-day political units were finally negotiated. We conclude discussing how the Long Great War continues to echo and resonate in contemporary upheaval in the Middle East a century later.  

HU, SO  

* SOCY 342a / AFAM 329a, Managing Blackness in a "White Space"  
Elijah Anderson  
"White space" is a perceptual category that assumes a particular space to be predominantly white, one where black people are typically unexpected, marginalized when present, and made to feel unwelcome—a space that blacks perceive to be informally "off-limits" to people like them and where on occasion they encounter racialized disrespect and other forms of resistance. This course explores the challenge black people face when managing their lives in this white space.  

* SOCY 351a, Race, Medicine, and Technology  
Alka Menon  
Medicine and technology are important sources of authority and institutionalization in modern societies. Drawing insights from across sociological subfields, the course offers an in-depth investigation of race, medicine, and technology in the 20th and 21st centuries. This course examines the role of medicine and related technologies in defining race and perpetuating racism. We trace how race became an important component of biomedical research in the U.S. We also follow particular medical technologies across borders of time and space, using them to understand race and nationhood in transnational perspective. Taking a broad view of technology, we analyze cutting-edge, state-of-the art technologies alongside older, more mundane technologies and infrastructures. Ultimately, we consider how medical technologies are not just treatments for individual patients but also windows into broader social and cultural structures and processes.  

Prerequisite: Introductory social science or ER&M course.  

* SOCY 352b / HUMS 247b, Material Culture and Iconic Consciousness  
Jeffrey Alexander  
How and why contemporary societies continue to symbolize sacred and profane meanings, investing these meanings with materiality and shaping them aesthetically. Exploration of "iconic consciousness" in theoretical terms (philosophy, sociology, semiotics) and further exploration of compelling empirical studies about food and bodies, nature, fashion, celebrities, popular culture, art, architecture, branding, and politics.  

* SOCY 389a / GLBL 215a / LAST 386a / MGRK 237a / PLSC 375a, Populism  
Paris Aslanidis  
Investigation of the populist phenomenon in party systems and the social movement arena. Conceptual, historical, and methodological analyses are supported by comparative assessments of various empirical instances in the US and around the world, from populist politicians such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, to populist social movements such as the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street.  

* SOCY 491a and SOCY 492b, Senior Essay and Colloquium for Nonintensive Majors  
Emily Erikson  
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  
Emily Erikson  
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.