SOCIOLOGY (SOCY)

SOCY 100b, Introduction to Population Studies  Emma Zang
This course offers an introduction to population studies/demography. Population studies cover all aspects related to human populations. The topics that demographers or population scientists study range from health disparities in the United States, the impact of AIDS on population health in Africa, migration patterns from Latin America, the reasons behind sex-selective abortions in Asia, the implications of low fertility in Europe, and the socioeconomic impact of COVID19. Understanding population dynamics is crucial to professionals in a diversity of careers and industries. For example, city planners, environmental engineers, and health policy experts all use demographic expertise about population growth, migration patterns, and health and longevity in decisions on issues such as how many schools a city should build, how much water a region needs over twenty years, and what type of public health initiatives would best serve a community. Professionals in business also rely on demographic knowledge to make decisions about which markets to enter, what products are needed, and how to best market their products. In this course, students explore the key concepts and measures used to study population dynamics. SC, SO

SOCY 101a, 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 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 126b / HLTH 140b, Health of the Public  Nicholas Christakis
Introduction to the field of public health. The social causes and contexts of illness, death, longevity, and health care in the United States today. How social scientists, biologists, epidemiologists, public health experts, and doctors use theory to understand issues and make causal inferences based on observational or experimental data. Biosocial science and techniques of big data as applied to health. 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 132a, 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. RP

SOCY 138a / ANTH 140a / ER&M 241a, The Corporation  Douglas Rogers
Survey of the rise, diversity, and power of the capitalist corporation in global contexts, with a focus on the 20th and 21st centuries. Topics include: the corporation as legal entity and the social and cultural consequences of this status; corporations in the colonial era; relationships among corporations, states, and non-governmental organizations in Western and non-Western contexts; anti-corporate critique and response; corporate social responsibility; and race, gender, and indigeneity. HI, SO

SOCY 144a / EDST 144a / ER&M 211a / EVST 144a, Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration  Grace Kao
Exploration of sociological studies and theoretical and empirical analyses of race, ethnicity, and immigration, with focus on race relations and racial and ethnic differences in outcomes in contemporary U.S. society (post-1960s). Study of the patterns of educational and labor market outcomes, incarceration, and family formation of whites, blacks (African Americans), Hispanics, and Asian Americans in the United States, as well as immigration patterns and how they affect race and ethnic relations. SO

SOCY 145a / EAST 380a, Inequality and Social Change in China  Emma Zang
This course offers an introduction to major social and economic issues in contemporary China. It provides a survey of the ongoing reforms and the Chinese society in transition with a focus on selected policy issues. In most weeks, the first session is reserved for a lecture by the instructor or a guest lecturer, and the second session is reserved for student-led discussions of pre-circulated questions. 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 151a / PLSC 290a, Foundations of Modern Social Theory  Emily Erikson
Major works of social thought from the beginning of the modern era through the 1900s. 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 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 162b / EDST 162b, Methods in Quantitative Sociology  Staff
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. QR, SO

* SOCY 160b, Visual Sociology  Philip Smith
Introduction to themes and methods in visual sociology. The role and use of visual information in social life, including images, objects, settings, and human interactions. Ethnographic photography, the study of media images, maps and diagrams, observation and coding of public settings, unobtrusive measures, and the use of internet resources. 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 202a, 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 218a / AFST 345a / URBN 440a, Space, Time, and the African City  Denise Lim
Definitions of the urban often vary according to country and culture. In the United States, the city is often broadly defined by sociologists as a relatively large and dense human settlement composed of heterogeneous individuals. In some definitions of the urban, these can include spatial constructs of the “town,” “suburb,” “city,” or “megacity” with populations as small as 200 or as large as 10 million people. This seminar aims to explore how culturally-constructed notions of space, time, and the city inform African urban theory and practice. This course delineates sociological theories of urban space and time in the U.S. and Europe, explores how postcolonial theory challenges Western concepts, and examines six case-studies of contemporary African cities. As spaces with complex colonial legacies and transnational connections, a rich collection of cultural artifacts such as film, the novel, photography, music, and visual art are used to research the spatial and temporal politics of urban life in Accra (Ghana), Cape Town (South Africa), Cairo (Egypt), Lagos (Nigeria), Nairobi (Kenya), and Johannesburg (South Africa). Sophomore Seminar: Registration preference is given to sophomores. Urban studies majors writing their senior essay or African studies students in need of writing supervision are welcome to apply. This course is not normally open to first-year students. WR, SO

* SOCY 221a / MGRK 236a / PLSC 138a, 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

* 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. SO

SOCY 234b, Inequality, Economic Mobility & Public Policy  Rourke O’Brien
This course provides an introduction to the sociological analysis of economic inequality and social mobility with a focus on the contemporary United States. We begin with an overview of core concepts in the study of inequality and mobility including measurement and recent trends. We then proceed by examining the role of institutions — including the family, schools, neighborhoods, labor markets,
and the criminal justice system—in mitigating, maintaining, or reproducing inequalities within and between groups. We also critically evaluate public policy proposals aimed at reducing inequality and promoting economic mobility.  

* SOCY 310a / AFAM 390a / ER&M 419a, Ethnography of the African American Community  Elijah Anderson
An ethnographic study of the African American community. Analysis of ethnographic and historical literature, with attention to substantive, conceptual, and methodological issues. Topics include the significance of slavery, the racial ghetto, structural poverty, the middle class, the color line, racial etiquete, and social identity.  

* SOCY 341a, Poverty and Social Welfare Policy in the United States  Rourke O’Brien
Formation and effectiveness of anti-poverty policies from a sociological and public policy perspective. Consideration of who is poor and who deserves federal assistance. Topics include: origins of the modern social safety net; the federal government’s role in constructing and implementing anti-poverty policy; realities of low-wage work; the ‘culture of poverty;’ and employment- and family-based policy strategies for alleviating poverty. Applied understanding of quantitative social science research methods is helpful, but not required.  

* SOCY 368a / MMES 370a / RLST 226a, Transnational Islam and Muslim Communities  Mehmet Kurt
This seminar explores key themes, concepts, and discussions on Islamic movements and Muslim communities living in the West. It examines the relationships between Muslim communities and the state/wider society within global and transnational processes. Students gain a comprehensive understanding of diversity and complexity of transnational Islamic mobilizations through readings and discussions of representative case studies. The seminar begins with a historical and anthropological account of locating Muslim communities in the West and proceeds with the discovery of key themes and debates. Throughout the term, students explore key issues around Islamophobia and radicalization, governance of Muslim practices, ethno-religious and cultural diversity of Muslim communities, gender and sexuality, as well as the ways in which these shape perceptions, policies and public debates in the ‘host’ countries.  

* SOCY 380a / 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 390a / ER&M 360a / HLTH 370a / HSHM 432a / WGSS 390a, 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 396b / EDST 240b, Cities, Suburbs, and School Choice  Sarah Camiscoli
The changing dynamic between cities and suburbs and the role of individuals and institutions in promoting desegregation or perpetuating segregation since the mid-twentieth century. The government’s role in the expansion of suburbs; desegregating schools; the rise of school choice through magnets and charters; the effects of inner-ring suburban desegregation and of urban gentrification on the landscape of education reform. Recommended preparation: EDST 110. Preference to Education Studies Scholars.  

* SOCY 491a and SOCY 492b, Senior Essay and Colloquium for Nonintensive Majors  Jonathan Wyrtzen
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  Jonathan Wyrtzen
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.