SOCIOLOGY

Director of undergraduate studies: Jonathan Wyrtzen (jonathan.wyrtzen@yale.edu); sociology.yale.edu

Sociology provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding how societies function and how they change over time. Sociologists are interested in the causes and consequences of processes such as the social construction of groups and identity, the evolution of culture, intersubjective meanings, intergroup relations, and hierarchies and social norms. They conduct research on individual behavior and outcomes such as educational attainment, jobs and careers, religious commitment, and political involvement; interpersonal processes such as intimate relationships, sexuality, social interaction in groups, and social networks; the behaviors of organizations and institutions; the causes and consequences of group differences and social inequality; and social change at the societal and global level.

The Sociology major provides both a solid foundation for students interested in careers in the social sciences and a strong background for a variety of professions in which knowledge about social processes and how societies work is relevant. Many recent graduates have gone on to law school, medical school, or graduate programs in public health, business, education, urban planning, criminology, and sociology. Others work in finance, consulting, publishing, marketing, city planning, teaching, research, and advocacy.

The Sociology department offers four undergraduate programs leading to the B.A. degree: (1) the standard program focuses on sociological concepts, theories, and methods; (2) a combined program allows students to combine sociology with a concentration in another field; (3) a concentration in markets and society focuses on the cultural frameworks, social ties, and social institutions that give rise to markets and that shape economic behavior; (4) a concentration in health and society emphasizes social processes as they affect health and medicine. Students interested in the major are encouraged to contact the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) early in their academic careers to discuss potential options.

COURSE NUMBERING

Courses in Sociology are divided by level, with introductory courses numbered from 110–149, courses in sociological theory from 150–159, courses in sociological methods from 160–169, intermediate courses from 150–299, advanced courses in the 300s, and individual study and research courses in the 400s. First-year seminars are numbered below 100 and count as introductory or intermediate courses.

PREREQUISITE

Students interested in the Sociology major should complete either a first-year seminar or at least one introductory course (numbered SOCY 110–149), ideally by the end of the sophomore year. This course may be applied toward the requirements of the major. The DUS can waive the introductory course requirement for students who demonstrate adequate preparation for advanced course work in sociology.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Program I. The standard major The requirements for the standard major are:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the prerequisite and senior colloquium), of which normally no more than two may be drawn from outside the Sociology department. At least one must be an introductory Sociology course or a substitute approved by the DUS, but no more than two introductory courses may count toward the total.
2. Two courses in sociological theory and two in sociological methods, normally completed by the end of the junior year. SOCY 151 and 152 are the required courses for theory. SOCY 160 and one additional Sociology course numbered SOCY 161–169 are required for methods. Other methods courses from outside the department can be approved at the discretion of the DUS. Students planning to study abroad in their junior year are strongly encouraged to begin meeting the theory and methods requirements in their sophomore year. They should also discuss the options for their course of study with the DUS before finalizing their plans.
3. One advanced seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399).
4. The senior requirement.

Program II. Sociology with another subject The combined program allows students to unite the study of sociology with the study of another discipline or substantive area, and to design a program that satisfies their own interests and career plans. By the beginning of the junior year, participants in the combined program are expected to consult with the DUS in order to obtain approval for their course of study. The requirements for Program II are:

1. Thirteen term courses (including the prerequisite and senior colloquium), of which at least nine and no more than ten are selected from Sociology, the remainder being chosen from another department or program. At least one must be an introductory Sociology course or a substitute approved by the DUS, but no more than two introductory courses in any department or program may count toward the total. The courses outside Sociology must constitute a coherent unit alone and form a logical whole when combined with the Sociology courses.
2. Two courses in sociological theory and two in sociological methods, normally completed by the end of the junior year. SOCY 151 and 152 are the required courses for theory. SOCY 160 and one additional Sociology course numbered SOCY 161–169 are required for methods. Other methods courses from outside the department can be approved at the discretion of the DUS. Students planning to
study abroad in their junior year are strongly encouraged to begin meeting the theory and methods requirements in their sophomore year. They should also discuss the options for their course of study with the DUS before finalizing their plans.

3. One advanced seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399).

4. The senior requirement, integrating sociology and the other subject chosen.

Program III. Concentration in markets and society  Students in the markets and society concentration gain a broad understanding of markets and their relationship to social networks, religion, the state, and culture. Students explore the field of economic sociology, develop insights into market logics and economic outcomes, and develop skills in network analysis.

Students in the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021 With DUS approval, the following changes to the concentration in markets and society may be fulfilled by students who declared their major under previous requirements.

Students in the Class of 2022 and subsequent classes The changes to the concentration in markets and society are:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the prerequisite and senior colloquium). At least one must be an introductory Sociology course or a substitute approved by the DUS, but no more than two introductory courses in any department or program may count toward the total. Up to four courses may be drawn from outside the Sociology department, with approval from the DUS.

2. SOCY 160 and one theory course (SOCY 151 or 152).

3. SOCY 321 and one additional intermediate or advanced course in economic sociology.

4. At least one intermediate or advanced course in microeconomics (e.g., ECON 121 or 125).

5. The senior requirement, integrating sociology with business, markets, or economic behavior.

Program IV. Concentration in health and society  Students in the health and society concentration gain a broad understanding of how supraindividual factors such as socioeconomic inequality, demographic processes, neighborhood environments, cultural norms, and social networks affect health and medical care. Students explore the fields of medical sociology, stratification, demography, and network science. The core courses in the concentration satisfy the social science requirements of premedical programs while also providing a solid foundation for students interested in public health, health policy, and global health. Requirements for the concentration are:

1. Thirteen term courses in Sociology (including the prerequisite and senior colloquium). Up to five course credits may be drawn from outside the Sociology department, with approval from the DUS.

2. SOCY 127, the gateway course for the concentration (or other similar course, with approval of DUS).

3. SOCY 151

4. A course in statistics: SOCY 162, S&DS 103, GLBL 121, or a higher-level statistics course approved by the DUS.

5. SOCY 160 or a comparable course approved by the DUS.

6. In order to build a broad base of interdisciplinary knowledge on health, students may take up to five course credits from outside the Sociology department. It is recommended that students select at least one course credit from the following: BIOL 101, BIOL 102, BIOL 103, BIOL 104; MATH 112 or higher-level MATH course; ECON 170.

7. Two upper-level Sociology seminars (200 or 300 level), or other courses approved by the DUS.

8. The senior requirement, integrating sociology with health and medicine.

Credit/D/Fail courses A maximum of two courses taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the requirements of the major.

SENIOR REQUIREMENTS

For the nonintensive major Students electing the nonintensive major take one additional seminar in Sociology (SOCY 300–399) and write a one-credit senior essay during the senior year (SOCY 491). The senior essay for nonintensive majors is intended to be an in-depth scholarly review and critical analysis based on secondary sources. Students select an important topic in any sociological field and write a literature review that evaluates what is known about the topic. All nonintensive majors are required to enroll in SOCY 491 to receive credit for the senior essay. To register for this course, students must submit a written plan of study approved by a faculty adviser to the DUS no later than the end of registration period in the term in which the senior essay is to be written. Nonintensive majors are not eligible to graduate with Distinction in the Major.

For the intensive major The intensive major gives students an opportunity to undertake a yearlong program of original research resulting in a contribution to sociological knowledge. The yearlong project requires substantial independent research and knowledge of a sociological subfield. Students use research methods such as data gathering through participant observation, in-depth interviewing, administration of small-scale surveys, or secondary analysis of existing data. They may present findings in a variety of forms, from ethnographic narratives to analytical statistics. Students select primary and secondary advisers from the faculty. Students in the intensive major enroll in SOCY 493, 494 during their senior year. The colloquium provides a forum for discussing the research process and for presenting students’ research at various stages. Intensive majors are eligible to graduate with Distinction in the Major if they meet the grade standards for Distinction – see the Undergraduate Curriculum, Honors – and submit a senior essay written in SOCY 493, 494.
ADVISING

All students interested in the Sociology major should meet with the DUS no later than the beginning of the junior year to elect a program of study. Qualified students may petition to enroll in graduate courses, with permission of the instructor and the director of graduate studies. A list of graduate courses and descriptions is available from the DUS.

Admission to the intensive major Candidates for the intensive major should apply to the DUS by the last day of classes in the spring term of their junior year. The intensive major is especially recommended for students considering graduate school or social research. In special circumstances, applications may be accepted through the end of registration period in the first term of the senior year. Applications should include a one-page statement of interest that includes a list of relevant courses taken and identifies a prospective senior essay adviser. Admission is based on performance and promise. The DUS and the senior essay adviser serve as advisers to seniors in the intensive major.

STUDY ABROAD

Students planning to study abroad in their junior year are strongly encouraged to begin meeting specific requirements in their sophomore year. They should also discuss the options for their course of study with the DUS before finalizing their plans.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Prerequisite 1 first-year sem or intro course (SOCY 110–149) or equivalent

Number of courses 13 term courses (incl prereq and senior essay)

Specific courses required Programs I and II — SOCY 151, 152, 160, 1 addtl course from SOCY 161–169; Program III — SOCY 151 or 152, SOCY 160, SOCY 321; Program IV — SOCY 127, SOCY 151, SOCY 160, or a comparable course approved by the DUS

Distribution of courses Programs I, II, and III — at least 1, but no more than 2 intro courses; Program I — 1 sem from SOCY 300–399; Program II — 9 or 10 courses in Sociology; 3 or 4 courses from another dept; 1 sem from SOCY 300–399; Program III — at least 1 intermed or adv course in microcon; Program IV — 1 course in stat, as specified; 2 upper-level sems, as specified

Substitution permitted Program I — up to 2 courses from other depts; Program III — up to 4 courses from other depts, with DUS approval; Program IV — up to 5 courses from other depts, with DUS approval

Senior requirement Nonintensive major — 1 addtl 300-level Sociology sem and senior essay (SOCY 491); Intensive major — two-term senior essay (SOCY 493, 494)

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Professors Julia Adams, Jeffrey Alexander, Elijah Anderson, †James Baron, Scott Boorman, Nicholas Christakis, †Paul Cleary, Ron Eyerman, Philip Gorski, Grace Kao, †Peter Salovey, †Vicki Schultz, Philip Smith, †Olav Sorensen

Associate Professors Rene Almeling, Emily Erikson, †Justin Farrell, †Marissa King, †Issa Kohler-Hausmann, Jonathan Wyrtzen

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

†A joint appointment with primary affiliation in another department or school.

Introductory Courses

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 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 141b, Sociology of Crime and Deviance Mattias Smangs
An introduction to sociological approaches to crime and deviance. Review of the patterns of criminal and deviant activity within society; exploration of major theoretical accounts. Topics include drug use, violence, and white-collar crime.  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
Courses in Sociological Theory

Open to all students without prerequisite.

**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 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**  Mattias Smangs
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

Courses in Sociological Methods

* **SOCY 160b, Methods of Inquiry**  Julia Adams
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**  Mattias Smangs
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 167a, Social Networks and Society**  Mattias Smangs
Introduction to the theory and practice of social network analysis. The role of social networks in contemporary society; basic properties of network measures, matrices, and statistics. Theoretical concepts such as centrality and power, cohesion and community, structural holes, duality of persons and groups, small worlds, and diffusion and contagion. Use of social structural, dynamic, and statistical approaches, as well as network analysis software. No background in statistics required.  so

Intermediate Courses

The prerequisite for intermediate courses is one introductory Sociology course or permission of the instructor.

* **SOCY 172b / EP&E 241 / PLSC 415b, 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 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 223a / ER&M 206a / PLSC 437a, The Politics of Ethnic and National Identity**  Maria Jose Hierro
Introduction to the study of ethnic and national identity, their determinants and consequences in comparative perspective.  so

* **SOCY 238b / PLSC 276b, Wrongful Convictions in Law and Politics**  Nilakshi Parndigamage
This course will examine the problem of wrongful convictions and the various political and social factors that result in innocent people being convicted of serious crimes. Topics include eye-witness misidentifications, unreliable forensic science, false confessions, jailhouse informants, prosecutorial and law enforcement misconduct, race and gender, criminal justice reform, and varied approaches to wrongful convictions across the world.  so
Advanced Courses

Courses in this category are open to students who have completed one intermediate course and any other specified requirement, or by permission of the instructor. Preference is given to Sociology majors in their junior and senior years.

* SOCY 307b / ER&M 376b / MGRK 304b / PLSC 376b, Extreme and Radical Right Movements  Paris Aslanidis
  Extreme and radical right movements and political parties are a recurrent phenomenon found in most parts of the world. Discussion of their foundational values and the causes of their continuous, even increasing, support among citizens and voters.  SO

* SOCY 314a, The Social Meaning of Money  Rourke O’Brien
  This course provides an introduction to the sociological analysis of economic behavior. We begin by introducing various theoretical models for understanding economic behavior, from *homo economicus* to the socially embedded actor. The course then turns to consider sociological perspectives on different aspects of economic life including transactions, credit, consumption, compensation, household work and intimate economies.  SO

* SOCY 319a / 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 etiquette, and social identity.  SO

* SOCY 321b / EP&E 477b, Advanced Topics in Economic Sociology  Emily Erikson
  The role of institutions, networks, culture, and politics in shaping markets. We address several themes around the relational nature of exchange: How do markets emerge? What social relations and institutions shape them? What are the causes of industrial development? How does economic theory shape economic behavior?  SO

* SOCY 331b / HIST 287jb / RLST 347b / WGS 291b, Sexual Minorities from Plato to the Enlightenment  Igor De Souza
  This interdisciplinary course surveys the history of homosexuality from a cross-cultural, comparative perspective. Students study contexts where homosexuality and sodomy were categorized, regulated, and persecuted and examine ancient and medieval constructions of same-sex desire in light of post-modern developments, challenging ideas around what is considered normal and/or natural. Ultimately, we ask: what has changed, and what has remained the same, in the history of homosexuality? What do gays and lesbians today have in common with pre-modern sodomites? Can this history help us ground or rethink our sexual selves and identities? Primary and secondary historical sources, some legal and religious sources, and texts in intellectual history are studied. Among the case studies for the course are ancient attitudes among Jews, early Christians, and Greeks; Christian theologians of the Middle Ages; Renaissance Florence; the Inquisition in Iberia; colonial Latin America; and the Enlightenment’s condemnation of sodomy by Montesquieu and Voltaire, and its defense by Bentham.  HU

* 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.  HU, SO

* SOCY 365a / PLSC 241a, The Making of Political News  Matthew Mahler
  The processes through which political news gets made. How the form and content of political news are shaped in and through the ongoing relationships between political operatives and journalists; ways in which these actors attempt to structure and restructure such relationships to their benefit.  SO

* SOCY 396b / EDST 240b, Cities, Suburbs, and School Choice  Staff
  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.  SO

Individual Study and Research Courses

* SOCY 471a and SOCY 472b, Individual Study  Jonathan Wyrtzen
  Individual study for qualified juniors and seniors under faculty supervision. To register for this course, each student must submit to the director of undergraduate studies a written plan of study that has been approved by a faculty adviser.  SO

* 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.  SO

* 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.
* 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. The first meeting is in the second week of the term.