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 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 requirements for 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 or SOCY 492). 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 or SOCY 492 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:

Program 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:

Program 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 economic sociology and 1 in microecon; 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 or SOCY 492); Intensive major—two-term senior essay (SOCY 493, 494)

Sociology provides the foundation for understanding how societies function and how they change over time. Sociological research involves the study of individual behavior and group outcomes, such as educational attainment, jobs and careers, health outcomes, religious commitment, and political involvement; of interpersonal processes, such as intimate relationships, sexuality, social interaction in groups, social networks, economic transactions, and behavior of organizations and institutions; causes and consequences of group differences and social inequality; and social change at the societal and global level.

The Sociology major provides a solid foundation for students interested in careers in the social sciences, but knowledge about social processes and how societies work is also relevant for students in other fields. Recent graduates have attended law school, medical school, or graduate programs in public health, business, education, urban planning, public policy, criminology, and sociology. Others work in advertising, finance, consulting, publishing, marketing, city planning, teaching, research, and advocacy.

The Sociology department offers a standard program, a concentration in markets and society, a concentration in health and society, and a combined program that pairs sociology with another subject. Students in the markets and society concentration take intermediate economics and use sociological tools to study economic behavior. Those in the health and society concentration do course work in sociological analysis and take courses recommended for the MCAT. Interested students are encouraged to contact the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) early in their academic careers to discuss program options.

First-year seminars in Sociology include:

- SOCY 031, Conservative Politics in a Time of ‘Fake News’ and Irrelevant Truths
- SOCY 086, China in the Age of Xi Jinping

Introductory courses that provide a broad overview of sociological thinking include:

- SOCY 131, Foundations of Modern Social Theory

Other courses focus on particular topics:

- SOCY 133, Computers, Networks, and Society
- SOCY 134, Sex and Gender in Society
- SOCY 144, Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration
- SOCY 147, Introduction to Social Policy Analysis

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Professors: Julia Adams, Jeffrey Alexander, Elijah Anderson, †James Baron, Scott Boorman, Nicholas Christakis, ‡Paul Cleary, Philip Gorski, Grace Kao, †Marissa King, †Peter Salovey, †Vicki Schultz, Philip Smith, †Olav Sorensen
**Associate Professors**  Rene Almeling, †Monica Bell, Emily Erikson, †Justin Farrell, †Marissa King, †Issa Kohler-Hausmann, Jonathan Wyrtzen

**Assistant Professors**  †Julie DiBenigno, Daniel Karel, †Balázs Kovács, Alka Menon, Rourke O’Brien, Emma Zang

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

View Courses