

# SOCIOLOGY

**Director of undergraduate studies:** Rourke O'Brien (rourke.obrien@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 six undergraduate pathways leading to the B.A. degree: (1) the standard major focuses on sociological concepts, theories, and methods; (2) the concentration in economy and society focuses on the cultural frameworks, relationships, and social institutions that give rise to markets and shape economic behavior; (3) the concentration in health and society emphasizes social processes as they affect health and medicine; (4) the concentration in data and society studies methods of analysis; (5) the concentration in inequality, race, and society considers the dimensions of how discrimination shapes society; and (6) the student-designed program combines sociology with a concentration in a different subject area. 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 001–149, 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.

## PREREQUISITE

There are no prerequisites for the Sociology major. Completing either a first-year seminar or one introductory course by the end of the sophomore year is recommended.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

Students in the standard major get broad exposure to the sociological imagination, methods, and substantive areas of inquiry. Students are provided with theory and

methods used to diagnose and resolve social problems, understand and analyze social processes, and describe and investigate collective behavior and its determinants.

Requirements for the standard major include the following:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the senior requirement). At least one must be an introductory Sociology course, but no more than two introductory courses may count toward the total.
2. Two courses in sociological theory (SOCY 151 and 152)
3. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year.
4. One course in a social science methodology (e.g., S&DS 105).
5. The senior requirement

**Students are held to the concentration-specific requirements that were in place when they declared their major.** However, with approval from the DUS, the following requirements, updated for the academic year 2024-2025, may be fulfilled by students who declared the major in a prior term.

**Concentration: Economy and Society** Students in the Economy and Society concentration gain a broad understanding of the social dimensions of economic behavior, including the relational dimensions of market interactions, the relationship between the state and markets, religious and cultural effects, valuation processes, social networks, and the causes and consequences of inequality and discrimination in markets. Requirements for the concentration include the following:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the senior requirement). Up to four courses relevant to the concentration (i.e. economic processes and/or their social dimension) may be drawn from outside the Sociology department with approval from the DUS.
2. One course in sociological theory (SOCY 151 or SOCY 152)
3. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year.
4. One intermediate or advanced course in microeconomics (e.g. ECON 121 or 125)
5. One course in a social science methodology (e.g., S&DS 105).
6. Two intermediate or advanced courses on inequality or economic sociology (e.g. SOCY 234, 314, 321, or other)
7. The senior requirement, integrating research on markets, businesses, economic behavior, or inequality

**Concentration: Health and Society** Students in the Health and Society concentration gain a broad understanding of how 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 include the following:

1. Thirteen term courses in sociology (including the senior requirement). Up to five courses relevant to the concentration may be drawn from outside the Sociology department with approval from the DUS.
2. SOCY 126 or SOCY 127, the gateway courses for the concentration (or other similar course, with approval of DUS)
3. One course in sociological theory (SOCY 151 or SOCY 152)
4. One course in a social science methodology (e.g., S&DS 105).
5. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year.
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, with approval from the DUS. It is recommended that students select at least one course credit from the following: BIOL 101, 102, 103, 104; MATH 112 or higher-level MATH course; ECON 170.
7. Two intermediate or advanced Sociology courses relevant to the concentration
8. The senior requirement, integrating sociology with health and medicine

**Concentration: Data and Society** Students in the Data and Society concentration gain a broad understanding of the methods used to analyze systematic features of social behavior and the wide range of possible sources that can be used to research social patterns. This concentration focuses on methods of analysis, such as social networks, computational sociology, statistics, computational modeling, natural language processing, and others, but students are expected to also expose themselves to substantive areas of research to gain insight in the application of these methods to social problems. Requirements for the concentration are the following:

1. Thirteen term courses (including the senior requirement). Up to four courses relevant to the concentration may be drawn from outside the Sociology department with approval from the DUS.
2. One course in sociological theory (SOCY 151 or 152)
3. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year
4. One introductory course in statistics (e.g. S&DS 105, GLBL 121)
5. One intermediate or advanced course in statistics (e.g. SOCY 580, 581)
6. Two additional methods courses
7. One semester of independent study as a research assistant on a sociological topic, ideally with Sociology faculty
8. The senior requirement, integrating data-intensive approaches to social science

**Concentration: Inequality, Race, and Society** Students in the Inequality, Race, and Society concentration gain a broad understanding of the ways in which inequality, race, and various forms of discrimination shape society. Inequality will be considered on numerous dimensions including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion. Requirements for the concentration are the following:

1. Thirteen term courses (including the senior requirement). Two courses relevant to the concentration (i.e. economic processes and/or their social dimension) may be drawn from outside the Sociology department with approval from the DUS.
2. SOCY 144, the gateway course for the concentration (or other similar course with approval of DUS)
3. One course in sociological theory (SOCY 151 or 152)
4. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year
5. One course in a social science methodology (e.g., S&DS 105).
6. Five courses related to race or inequality, up to two from outside the department
7. The senior requirements, integrating research on race and/or inequality

**Concentration: Student-Designed** This program allows students to combine the study of sociology with the study of another discipline or substantive area and to create a program that satisfies their own interests and career plans. By the beginning of the junior year, participants in the self-designed program are expected to consult with the DUS to obtain approval for their course of study.

1. Thirteen term courses (including the senior requirement).
2. Up to four courses relevant to the concentration (i.e. economic processes and/or their social dimension) may be drawn from outside the Sociology department with approval from the DUS. The courses outside Sociology must constitute a coherent unit alone and form a logical whole when combined with the Sociology courses.
3. Two courses in sociological theory (SOCY 151 and 152)
4. One course in research design (SOCY 160), usually completed in spring of junior year
5. One course in a social science methodology (e.g., S&DS 105).
6. One intermediate or advanced seminar in Sociology
7. The senior requirement must integrate sociology and the other subject chosen

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

**Searchable attributes** YC SOCY: Sociological Methods, YC SOCY: Economy & Sociology, YC SOCY: Health & Society, YC SOCY: InequalityRaceSociety

## SENIOR REQUIREMENTS

**For the non-intensive major** Students electing the non-intensive 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 non-intensive 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 non-intensive 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. Non-intensive 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 sub-field. 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 and submit a senior essay written in SOCY 493, 494. See The Undergraduate Curriculum, Honors.

### 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 indicate interest to the DUS by registration period in the spring for the fall term of their senior year. The intensive major is especially recommended for students considering graduate school or social research. 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.

## SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisite** None

**Number of courses** 13 term courses (incl senior req) for standard major and all concentrations

**Distribution of courses** *Standard major*—at least 1, but no more than 2 intro courses, SOCY 151, 152, 160, and a course in social science methods; *Economy & Society concentration*—SOCY 151 or 152, SOCY 160, 1 intermed or adv course in microeconomics, 1 social science methods course, 2 intermed or adv courses on inequality or economic sociology ; *Health & Society concentration*—SOCY 126 or 127, SOCY 151 or 152, SOCY 160, 1 social science methods course, 2 intermed or adv seminars, relevant to concentration; *Data and Society concentration*—SOCY 151 or 152, SOCY 160, 1 intro stat course, 1 intermed or adv stat course, 2 quantitative methods courses, 1 indep study; *Inequality, Race, and Society concentration*—SOCY 144, SOCY 151 or 152, SOCY 160, 1 social science methods course, 5 courses related to race or inequality; *Student-designed concentration*—SOCY 151, 152, 160, and a course in social science methods, 1 intermed or adv sociology course

**Substitution permitted** *Economy & Society, Data & Society, and Student-Designed concentrations*—up to 4 courses from other depts, with DUS approval; *Health & Society concentration*—up to 5 courses from other depts with DUS approval; *Inequality, Race, and Society concentration*—up to 2 courses from other depts with DUS approval

**Senior requirement** *Standard major and all concentrations*—1 addtl intermed or adv Sociology sem and senior essay (SOCY 491 or SOCY 492); *Intensive major*—two-term senior essay (SOCY 493, 494)

### Requirements for the Standard Major

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 151
- SOCY 152
- SOCY 160
- 1 additional sociological methods course
- 7 electives, at least 1 of which, but no more than 2 should be an introductory course
- Senior requirement: SOCY 491 or SOCY 492 and 1 300-level Sociology seminar

### Requirements for the Intensive Major

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

Students follow the same requirements as for the standard major or one of the concentrations, only the senior requirement is different.

- SOCY 493 and SOCY 494

### Concentration Specific Requirements

#### Economy and Society concentration

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 151 or SOCY 152
- SOCY 160
- 1 microeconomics course, such as ECON 121 or ECON 125 (counts toward the 4 courses allowed outside the sociology department)
- 1 course in social science methodology
- 2 intermediate or advanced courses in economic sociology (e.g., SOCY 234, SOCY 314, SOCY 321)
- 5 relevant electives, 4 of which may be drawn from outside the Sociology department
- 2 courses for the senior requirement (see standard major or intensive major), integrating research on markets, businesses, economic behavior, or inequality

#### Health and Society concentration

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 126 or SOCY 127 or a comparable course
- SOCY 151 or SOCY 152
- SOCY 160
- 1 course in social science methodology
- 2 intermediate or advanced sociology seminars relevant to the concentration
- 5 electives courses relevant to the concentration may be drawn from outside the Sociology department
- 2 courses for the senior requirement (see standard major or intensive major), integrating health and medicine

### **Data and Society concentration**

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 151 or SOCY 152
- SOCY 160
- 1 introductory statistics course
- 1 intermediate or advanced statistics course
- 2 methods courses
- 1 independent study course as a research assistant on a sociological topic, ideally with Sociology faculty
- 4 electives courses relevant to the concentration may be drawn from outside the Sociology department
- 2 courses for the senior requirement (see standard major or intensive major), integrating data-intensive approaches to social science

### **Inequality, Race, and Society concentration**

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 144
- SOCY 151 or SOCY 152
- SOCY 160
- 1 social science methods course (see Overview)
- 5 electives related to race or inequality, 2 of which may be drawn from outside the Sociology department
- 2 additional electives
- 2 courses for the senior requirement (see standard major or intensive major), integrating research on race and inequality

### **Student-Designed concentration**

13 courses (13 credits), including the senior requirement

- SOCY 151 and SOCY 152
- SOCY 160

- 1 social science methods course
- 7 relevant electives to include 1 intermediate or advanced SOCY seminar and up to 4 of which may be drawn from outside the Sociology department
- 2 courses for the senior requirement (see standard major or intensive major), integrating sociology and the other chosen subject

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 (1) the non-intensive and intensive programs, (2) a concentration in economy and society, (3) a concentration in health and society, (4) a concentration in data and society, (5) a concentration in inequality, race, and society, and (6) a student-designed combined program that pairs sociology with another subject. Students in the economy and society concentration take intermediate economics and use sociological tools to study economic behavior. Those in the health and society concentration do coursework 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 o81, Race and Place in British New Wave, K-Pop, and Beyond
- SOCY o86, China in the Age of Xi Jinping

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

- SOCY 151, Foundations of Modern Social Theory
- SOCY 152, Topics in Contemporary Social Theory

Other courses focus on particular topics:

- SOCY 133, Computers, Networks, and 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

**Associate Professors** Rene Almeling, †Monica Bell, Emily Erikson, †Justin Farrell, †Issa Kohler-Hausmann, Jonathan Wyrzten

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

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

See the visual roadmap of the requirements.

[View Courses](#)