Sociology

The Department of Sociology strives to understand the origins and reproduction of social inequality, especially as it relates to issues of pressing public concern. Our particular areas of focus include race/ethnicity, gender, the sociology of work and the workplace, immigration, social movements, and economic inequality.

Sociological analysis begins from theoretical perspectives that explain how the structures that organize and govern social systems emerge and change. Our curriculum and research emphasize an understanding of social processes that is well grounded in empirical data on how societies actually function. We also seek to engage with social policies and social institutions to better understand the world in which we live and to help guide social change.

Re-established in 2015 after a hiatus of more than two decades, the department offers undergraduate major and minor programs with wide-ranging course offerings every semester. The curriculum provides students with research tools to examine critical social issues and to apply their understanding of sociology to activities outside the university.

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Majors

The Major in Sociology

The major in sociology provides students with a rigorous understanding of the ways in which social relations and settings shape individual and group experiences and outcomes, with an emphasis on how various forms of inequality are created and propagated through time. Reflecting the diversity of social settings that motivate sociological inquiry, students will enroll in multiple introductory-level courses. We intend that these first courses will help students develop a sociological lens through which they can better understand the baseline determinants of inequality, social order and change. Because the discipline draws on diverse theoretical and methodological tools to engage with these core issues, required course work ensures that students develop expertise in classical and contemporary theoretical concepts as well as both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Upper-level seminars provide majors and minors with an opportunity to apply these substantive, theoretical, and methodological perspectives to a focused and deep study of specific sociological topics. The major additionally features a capstone experience, enabling students to deploy sociological tools to undertake original work connected with a research project, internship or honors thesis.

The sections that follow provide a detailed overview of the sociology major, with an emphasis on providing answers to many of the questions likely to arise at each stage, as well as a guide to related opportunities available to our majors and minors.
Major Requirements

The major requires successful completion of 10 courses, distributed as specified below. Courses that satisfy major requirements must be completed with a letter grade of C- or better (Credit/No Credit courses do not satisfy requirements).

a. **Introductory requirement** (6 credits total): Any two 200-level sociology courses (Students may substitute an upper-level sociology course for one of their two introductory courses with the written approval of their major adviser.)

b. **Theory requirement** (3 credits): SOC 3001 Social Theory

c. **Methods requirement** (6 credits): SOC 3030 Introduction to Research Methods and SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology. As SOC 3050 draws on specific sociological applications of statistical analyses, we strongly encourage students to enroll in our department's Sociological Statistics course. However, with the written approval of their major adviser, students may substitute Math 2200, Math 3200, or a disciplinary statistics course from another social science for SOC 3050. Majors who receive approval to fulfill this requirement with a course from another department or university are required to take an additional upper-level Sociology course in lieu of SOC 3050.

d. **Upper-level sociology electives** (15 credits): Any five 300-400-level seminar courses

e. **Sociology in action** (non-credit bearing): All majors are required to attend a minimum of five department-sponsored events (this co-curricular requirement can be fulfilled at any point following a student's initial declaration as a sociology major). We will maintain a list of qualifying events on our website, and our department administrator will coordinate a sign-in procedure to verify attendance at events.

f. **Capstone**: Majors will choose any one of the following options:

i. **Capstone paper tied to upper-level course** (1 credit) — Students electing this option may align the research paper with any upper-level sociology course taken during or prior to the semester in which they undertake this accompanying capstone paper. Capstone research papers typically are 10-15 pages in length and represent some application of course content to a related topic developed by the student in consultation with the instructor. Students interested in this option should register for the section of SOC 4900 Research in Sociology assigned to the relevant instructor, who will then (1) approve the capstone paper topic at the outset of the semester, (2) be available for consultation at all stages of the project, (3) assign a final grade for this 1-credit course, and upon completion (4) certify the final product as fulfilling the capstone requirement. Students should request to schedule a meeting with the relevant instructor at the start of the semester (i.e., prior to the end of the add/drop period), to obtain the required approval for enrollment in SOC 4900 and to discuss the paper.

ii. **Internship** (2 credits) — Students electing to complete a field internship are able, in consultation with their internship adviser, to identify and select a position with an organization of their choosing. For help identifying options in St. Louis, we recommend that students reference the Gephardt Center's internship opportunities listings (https://gephardtinstitute.wustl.edu/tag/internship) as well as the Career Center's CAREERlink database (https://careercenter.wustl.edu/tools/careerlink/Pages/Students.aspx). Over time, our department website will also provide resources to connect with local organizations in need of student interns with a background in sociology. Capstone internships are intended to integrate and apply knowledge gained in the classroom to community and organizational settings, and as such, students are required to identify a faculty adviser of their choosing to approve and oversee the experience in consultation with the on-site internship manager (note that the internship adviser need not be the same as the student's major adviser).

To receive credit for the internship, students should first obtain approval for the proposed experience in advance of the internship start date from their preferred internship adviser, who will then provide the required permission to enroll in the adviser's assigned section of SOC 4910 Internship in Sociology. Note that the dean's office requires all internship students to complete and file an Internship Learning Agreement (PDF) (https://careercenter.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Learning-Agreement-Form.pdf) no later than two weeks after the first day of the internship. As the university stipulates 45 hours of work for each academic credit earned, students will need to complete at least 135 internship hours, along with a series of reflective assignments arranged in consultation with their adviser, to fulfill their capstone requirement.

iii. **Honors thesis** (6 credits) — Students who opt for the thesis capstone option can apply 3 of their thesis credits toward their major elective requirement (d), meaning that — in addition to their thesis project — they would need to complete four (rather than five) additional 300-400-level seminar courses. To be eligible for Latin honors in Sociology, students must complete an Honors thesis. For more information about honors work in the department, please visit our website (http://sociology.wustl.edu/undergraduate/sociology-major-and-minor).
Minors

The Minor in Sociology

Minor Requirements

a. Introductory requirement (3 credits total): One 100- or 200-level sociology course
b. Theory requirement (3 credits): SOC 3001 Social Theory (offered every year)
c. Methods requirement (3 credits): Either SOC 3030 Introduction to Research Methods or SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology
d. Additional upper-level sociology electives (6 credits): Any two 300- or 400-level courses

Courses


L40 SOC 2030 Social Movements
Social movements are collective efforts to produce political, economic and/or cultural change. This course draws on a range of historical and contemporary case studies to analyze such collective actions by interrogating distinctive aspects of movements and their associated campaigns. Key questions include: When and where do movements occur, who participates and why, how do protest strategies and tactics develop, how do police and other movement targets react to challenges to the status quo, and how can we assess the direct and indirect impacts of contention? Introductory level, no prerequisites.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 2110 Social Inequality in America
Americans face different challenges and opportunities that depend on a variety of characteristics, including race, class, gender and sexual orientation. This class examines these intersecting categories from a sociological perspective — not simply as ways to classify people, but as social constructions that help to explain social inequality. We examine these systems in a variety of institutional contexts, such as popular culture, family life, education, the criminal justice system and the labor force. Introductory level, no prerequisites.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 2510 Sociological Approaches to American Health Care
Exploration through the sociological lens of how health, illness, and health care delivery in the United States are influenced by the social structure in which they are embedded. With the backdrop of the ongoing crisis of health care in the United States and the controversy surrounding the Affordable Care Act, we focus on the intersection of diversity factors including such as race, social class, gender, sexuality that predict risks in navigating the health care system. Professionals representing a variety of health-oriented settings and serving the needs of a diverse constituency will share their perspectives. No prerequisites.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 2910 Alternative Facts: An Introduction to the Social Construction of Reality
Introduction to the concept of social construction — the idea that our “objective” reality is shaped by our social positions and through social interactions. Recent political events and social conflicts highlight deep divisions in American society, raising critical questions about the media and objectivity (e.g., alternative facts and “fake” news), networks and segregation (e.g., who talks to whom), who gets to decide what is viewed as “truth,” and the role of researchers and academia in combating (or contributing to) misinformation. This course explores these questions with a sociological lens. We will use foundational sociological theories to learn how to recognize the existence of multiple realities, and consider the implications of social constructionism for key domains of everyday life, American politics, and the production of knowledge. We will also discuss the ways that cutting-edge technological innovations and academic research can — or cannot — help us distinguish facts from “alternative” facts. Introductory level, no prerequisites.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S
L40 SOC 3001 Social Theory
Overview of major theoretical frameworks used by sociologists to understand social behavior and group patterns. Explores classical theories, including those developed by Marx, Weber, and Durkheim along with contemporary perspectives such as exchange and feminist theories. Class discussions and writing assignments emphasize application of theory to understand current social experiences and structures. The course has no specific prerequisites, but students should be prepared for intensive study of challenging ideas and the application of these ideas in new contexts relevant to modern society.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3030 Introduction to Research Methods
Overview of research methods commonly used to investigate sociological phenomena including experiments, surveys, ethnographic field research, and analysis of existing data. The course explores general issues in sociological research, such as research design, conceptualization and measurement, reliability, validity, sampling and ethical conduct. We also review applications of research methods in specific sociological studies and analyze how research results are communicated. This is a core course in the study of sociology. It has no specific prerequisites but some familiarity with sociological analysis is recommended.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3050 Statistics for Sociology
Introduction to descriptive and inferential statistical techniques used in sociological research. Topics addressed include probability distributions, data presentation and visualization, confidence intervals, hypothesis testing, and linear regression. Applications of statistical analysis drawn from sociological research and other social science data sources, such as polling and economic data. Students will use statistical software to complete assignments. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, AN Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

L40 SOC 3212 The Social Construction of Race
Examination of race, ethnicity and racism from a sociological perspective to understand race as a socially constructed phenomenon manifested in a wide range of social institutions. The course focuses on how race and racism impact contemporary social problems and public policy issues including immigration, affirmative action, education, media representation and work. Application of sociological analysis to understand current race-related events. This course has no specific prerequisites but completion of an introductory course in sociology is recommended before enrollment.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3310 The New Inequality
Exploration of recent trends of economic inequality in the United States that have reached levels not seen since before the Great Depression. We examine factors that account for the decades-long increase in economic disparities, paying particular attention to patterns in educational attainment, political developments, and the role of technological change. We will also compare recent movements in economic inequality and macroeconomic performance in the U.S. with other advanced industrialized nations. This course has no specific prerequisites but completion of an introductory course in sociology is recommended before enrollment.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD WI Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3320 Getting Paid: A Sociological Investigation of Wages and Salaries
A Burger King worker in the U.S. today performs the same duties and requires the same skills as a Burger King worker in Denmark. Yet the Denmark worker earns two-and-a-half times as much. Why? A full-time construction worker in the U.S. today earns $10,000 less per year, adjusted for inflation, than in 1973. Construction work cannot be shipped overseas, so why the decline? What determines our pay? Are we paid fairly? How do we know? This course seeks to answer these questions. We will draw on a range of comparative, historical, and contemporary case studies to explore changes in the ways in which American workers get paid. Key areas of focus include employer strategies to prevent workers from realizing their market value, to the role Wall St. plays in influencing pay, to ongoing efforts to measure and reward individual productivity. The ultimate goal of the course is to upend our taken-for-granted assumptions about pay-setting, and provide students with a richer, more complex understanding of the contemporary world of wage and salary determination.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC BU: ETH EN: S

L40 SOC 3350 Poverty and the New American City
Exploration of structural changes that are transforming the American urban landscape, especially for low-income populations. We begin with a review of classic theories of urban poverty and consider their relevance in the modern context. We then analyze key political, economic, demographic, and geographic shifts in how urban poverty is organized and reproduced, including gentrification, immigration, social policy reform and the credit crisis. Special attention will be devoted to exploring the social and political implications of changing urban policy approaches, as well as the "suburbanization" of poverty. We will conclude by discussing how urban poverty interfaces with broader social structures, including law, markets and the state. Prerequisite: an introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3410 Gender in Society
Introduction to the sociological study of gender. The primary focus is U.S. society, but we will also discuss gender in an international context. From the moment of birth, boys and girls are treated differently. Gender structures the experiences of people in all major social institutions, including the family, the workplace and schools. We will explore how gender impacts lives and life chances. The central themes of the course are historical changes in gender beliefs and practices; socialization practices that reproduce gender identities; how race/ethnicity, class and sexuality shape the experience of gender; and the relationship between gender, power and social inequality. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S
L40 SOC 351 Topics in Sociology
Improving the health of the U.S. population and reducing disparities in health are national priorities. To reach these goals, much research has sought to determine the factors that influence health status beyond health care quality and access. This course explores the broad area of study termed the “social determinants of health,” while placing special emphasis on the exploration of health disparities in the United States. We will examine the social conditions that relate to the health of populations with particular attention to how patterns of health vary by social class, race/ethnicity and gender. We will also consider mechanisms that produce and maintain these differences. In addition to sociology, we will draw upon the work of multiple disciplines including public health, demography, anthropology, public policy, economics and medicine to understand what makes our populations sick and what might make them better. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units.

L40 SOC 352 Topics in Sociology: Growing Up Poor Across America — An Application of Sociological Reasoning to Data
Advanced seminar on poverty in America, with a special focus on exploring relevant data. The American Dream is built around the idea that anyone, regardless of his or her origins, can have a fair start in life. Yet recent research shows that the promise of the American Dream is uneven across the nation. Poor children growing up in San Jose, CA are three times more likely to escape poverty than those in Charlotte, NC. What might be driving these geographic differences in opportunities for low-income youth? We will investigate factors that might drive these differences by working with interesting data. We will explore cutting-edge research on poverty and mobility in America to develop our own research questions. We will also develop the computational and statistical skills to put our ideas into practice by learning to manipulate and make graphs that communicate our findings effectively. The ultimate goal of this course is to learn to connect sociological reasoning and understanding of poverty and inequality with data analysis. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor; Introduction to Research Methods (SOC 3030) and/or an introductory statistics course (SOC 3050 or equivalent) are encouraged.
Credit 3 units. BU: BA

L40 SOC 3550 Sociology of Work
Sociological understanding of work and, in particular, how work reduces or replicates inequality. Classic and contemporary sociological theories of work; how work in the U.S. has changed over time; and how workers are matched to “good” and “bad” jobs. Threaded through the course is the exploration of barriers to racial, gender, and class inclusion and advancement at work. We will explore how organizational structures, policies and practices can increase or decrease those barriers. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch; SSC Art; SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3660 Social Conflict
Comparative and historical examination of conflict between social groups, including groups defined by race, ethnicity and class. Readings combine classical and contemporary perspectives on collective conflict with in-depth analyses of historical and contemporary episodes. We discuss various ways in which conflicts can manifest, including the formation and hardening of divisive attitudes, discriminatory lawmakers and criminal justice practices, riots and collective violence, residential segregation, and sustained social movement activity. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch; SSC Art; SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3710 Sociology of Immigration
A review of theoretical and empirical research on how and why people migrate across international borders, and the consequences of international migration for immigrants and natives in the United States. While immigration is one of the most controversial issues in the contemporary United States, these contentious debates are not new. Americans once voiced the same concerns about the economic and social impact of Southern and Eastern European immigrants that today are aimed at immigrants from Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. In this course we will compare historical (1880-1920) and contemporary (1965-present) waves of immigration to the United States. We will explore why and how people migrate, immigrant integration, the impact of immigration on native-born Americans, and how government policies — at the national, state, and local level — shape immigrant assimilation and what it means to be considered truly “American” in a social as well as a legal sense. Prerequisite: completion of an introductory sociology course or consent of the instructor.
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch; SSC Art; SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3910 Economic Realities of the American Dream
Exploration of the realities of economic life in the U.S. and how they correspond to the American Dream. Interdisciplinary perspectives from economics, sociology and other areas of social inquiry. Emphasis on the consistency between empirical data and different concepts of the American Dream. Specific topics to include sources of economic growth and changing living standards, unemployment, impact of globalization on U.S. citizens, economic mobility, poverty and inequality, and social justice. Prerequisites: Econ 1011 and Econ 1021, or consent of the instructors.
Same as L11 Econ 348
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC Arch; SSC Art; SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 3950 Culture and Identity: Urban Ethnography in St. Louis
Topics course focusing on instances of identity and culture within the American scope. Varies by semester, refer to course listings for description of current semester’s offering.
Same as L98 AMCS 330D
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Arch; HUM Art; HUM BU: BA, HUM EN: H

L40 SOC 4110 Applied Sociological Research
Advanced seminar that connects sociological reasoning with data analysis. The instructor chooses current issues in modern sociology and identifies relevant data that students use to explore a variety of research questions. The course develops computational and statistical skills to put ideas into practice by learning to manipulate and analyze data and present results in ways that communicate research findings effectively. Topics vary with the instructor. In fall 2018 the course begins with the
American Dream idea that anyone, regardless of his or her origins, has an opportunity to succeed in life. Yet recent research shows that the promise of the American Dream is uneven across the nation. For example, poor children growing up in San Jose, CA are three times more likely to escape poverty than those in Charlotte, NC. What might be driving these geographic differences in opportunities for low-income youth? We will explore cutting-edge research on poverty and mobility in America to develop our own research questions and then work to answer them with original data analysis. Prerequisite: introductory course in sociology or consent of the instructor; Introduction to Research Methods (SOC 3030) and/or an introductory statistics course (SOC 3050 or equivalent) are encouraged. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: NSM

L40 SOC 4289 Neighbors, Schools, and Social Inequality
A major purpose of the course is to study the research and policy literature related to neighborhoods, schools and the corresponding opportunity structure in urban America. The course will be informed by theoretical models drawn from economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, education and law. A major focus is to gain greater understanding of the experiences and opportunity structure(s) of urban dwellers, in general, and urban youth, in particular. While major emphasis will be placed on data derived from the interface of urban environments and the corresponding institutions within them, the generational experiences of various ethnic groups will complement the course foci. Same as L12 Educ 4289 Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA EN: S

L40 SOC 4610 Seminar in Selected Topics in Learning & Memory: Collective Memory
This course provides an overview and analysis of phenomena of people remembering as part of a group — one’s country, one’s state, one’s university, one’s family. Collective memories are critical for one’s identity, for knowing who we are and how to interpret the world around us. We will consider narcissistic tendencies of group memories in specific contexts (e.g., the Russian vs. American interpretation of world events; views of Trump supporters vs. Clinton supporters on events in the U.S.). The course will range from humanistic, anthropological, psychological, and sociological perspectives on memory. Prerequisites: Psych 100B and a course on human memory or permission of the instructor. Same as L33 Psych 461 Credit 3 units.

L40 SOC 4621 Politics of Education
Politics is interpreted broadly to include not just government, but any situation in which people have to solve a problem or come to a decision. This course focuses on schools and the processes through which certain stories, identities and practices are promoted, and others, not. Same as L12 Educ 462 Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Art: SSC EN: S

L40 SOC 4750 Sociology of Education
This course provides an overview of sociological theory and research on education in contemporary U.S. society. Drawing from sociological perspectives, it covers the implications of schools and schooling for social inequality, mobility and group relations. It examines major theoretical perspectives on the purpose and social organization of mass education in the United States, and topics related to the organization and function of schools, access to educational resources, and group disparities in school experiences and outcomes. Same as L12 Educ 453B Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Arch: SSC Art: SSC BU: BA, ETH EN: S

L40 SOC 4810 Global Structures and Problems
This course examines social problems around the world and their relationship to globalization — that is, the increasing connectedness of social and economic life across borders. We will look at a range of problems — such as environmental degradation, labor exploitation, human rights abuses, ethnic conflict, poverty, and inequality — and their links to both personal experiences and larger social structures. The course is premised on the idea that to understand current global social problems, we have to understand the evolution of markets, states, civil society and social movements, gender hierarchies, ethnic categories, and global governance over the past century. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: LCD, SSC Arch: SSC Art: SSC, SSP BU: IS EN: S

L40 SOC 4900 Research in Sociology
Independent work linked to the material covered by an associated 300- or 400-level class in sociology leading to completion of a research paper. Work is supervised by the faculty member teaching the associated class. Registration may be concurrent with the associated course or after the course is completed. Successful completion of this paper satisfies the capstone requirement for the sociology major. Students will normally receive 1 credit for this course, but students may register for up to 3 credits with the approval of their faculty supervisor. Open to sociology majors only; register for the section assigned to the faculty supervisor. Prerequisite: approval of faculty supervisor. Credit variable, maximum 3 units.

L40 SOC 4901 Sociology Honors Thesis
Independent work linked to the sociology honors thesis. Successful completion of the thesis paper satisfies the capstone requirement for the sociology major. Open to sociology majors only; register for the section assigned to the faculty supervisor. Prerequisite: 3 credits of Sociology 4900 in the prior semester, with approval by the faculty supervisor to advance the thesis project. Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC EN: S

L40 SOC 4910 Internship in Sociology
Students may receive up to 3 units of credit for an approved, faculty-sponsored internship that relates to the study and application of sociological material. Credit determined by the number of hours worked. Specific requirements are set by the faculty supervisor in consultation with the supervisor in the organization where the internship work is completed. Students should complete a learning agreement provided by the Career Center. Successful completion of an internship approved by the student’s major adviser satisfies the capstone requirement for the sociology major. Open to sociology majors and minors only; register for the section assigned to the faculty supervisor. Prerequisites: completion of the “Learning Agreement” provided by the Career Center and approval of faculty supervisor.
Credit variable, maximum 3 units.