
SOCIOLOGY

Chair, Professor Neil Gross

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Sociology is the scientific study of society—of patterns and processes in human social relations and behavior. The Sociology Department at Colby provides students with conceptual frameworks and analytic skills necessary to understand how social forces affect people's lives and how people shape and transform society. Courses focused on a wide range of issues and problems help students analyze institutions and organizations, social and cultural change, persisting inequalities, and much more. Opportunities for intensive discussion and closely supervised research foster the development of critical and creative thinking. Sociology students are prepared to participate in the private and public sectors of a diverse democracy and world.

A note on course prerequisites: Students who feel they have satisfied a prerequisite in an alternative way are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor to obtain authorization to enroll.

Study Abroad

The department prefers that students majoring in sociology complete Sociology 215 and 271 prior to study abroad. Students may receive credit toward the major for up to two courses taken abroad; preferably those courses should be approved in advance. Students majoring in sociology are urged to seek advanced approval for a range of courses and to be prepared for possible cancellation of an approved course in any program abroad.

Study Abroad

The department prefers that students majoring in sociology complete Sociology 215 and 271 prior to study abroad. Generally, students will receive credit toward the major for one course per semester taken abroad; preferably that course should be approved in advance. Students majoring in sociology are urged to seek approval for a range of courses, in advance, to be prepared for possible cancellation of an approved course in any program abroad.

Requirements for the Major in Sociology

The sociology major requires 11 courses, including Sociology 131, 215, and 271. Among the eight elective courses, an extra methods course is encouraged. At least one elective must be centrally concerned with inequality, and at least two electives must be 300-level seminars. One course in another social science at the 200 level or above may be substituted for one 200-level sociology elective (but this cannot be used to fulfill the inequality requirement). Two electives may be taken in a study-abroad program with prior approval from the department. Sociology 215 and 271 should be completed before the senior year, preferably during the second year.

Requirements for the Minor in Sociology

Seven courses including Sociology 131, 215, and 271; four electives, at least one at the 300 level or above. One course in another social science at the 200 level or above may be substituted for a 200-level elective. Electives may include an independent study (Sociology 491 or 492) for at least three credits.

Note: Sociology 271 fulfills the quantitative reasoning (Q) requirement.

Honors in Sociology

The Honors Program in Sociology (Sociology 483, 484) provides a special opportunity for independent sociological research. Seniors majoring in sociology may apply for the honors program by securing a faculty sponsor in the department, a secondary faculty reader, and approval of the department as a whole. To apply, a student must have a 3.25 overall grade point average and a 3.6 grade point average in the major. Exceptions require a petition for approval of the department. Students may apply for the program at the end of the term prior to the semester in which they would begin honors work and no later than the second week of the term during which honors work begins. A maximum of six credits may be received, none of which may count toward the required elective credits in the major. Enrollment options include spring semester; spring semester and Jan Plan; fall semester; fall semester and Jan Plan; fall, Jan Plan, and spring semesters. The final product is expected to be an extensive research paper of exceptional quality. With permission of the department, a thesis in the area of sociology, completed as part of the Senior Scholars Program, may be substituted for the honors thesis.

Distinction in the Major

Distinction in the major upon graduation requires a 3.75 grade point average in the major and a 3.5 overall grade point average.

Course Offerings

SO131fs Introduction to Sociology Sociologists study processes by which people create, maintain, and change their social and cultural worlds. They investigate contemporary social issues and strive to explain relationships between what happens in peoples' lives and the societies in which they live. Sociology's research methods and theories apply to the full range of human behavior, from individual acts to global environmental, political, and economic change. An introduction to how and why sociologists study social and cultural phenomena such as inequality, race and ethnicity, gender, power, politics, the family, religion, social and cultural change, crime, and globalization.

Four credit hours. **S, U.** GROSS, MAYRL

SO212f Introduction to GIS and Spatial Analysis Listed as Environmental Studies 214. *Four credit hours.* GIMOND

SO212Jf Introduction to GIS and Spatial Analysis Listed as Environmental Studies 214J. *Three credit hours.* GIMOND

SO213s Schools and Society Listed as Education 213. *Four credit hours.* **U.** ROY

SO214j African-American Elites and Middle Classes Classical and contemporary sociological theories of stratification and race relations are used to explore the intersection of class and race-ethnicity in the social origins and historical roles of elites and middle classes in the African-American experience. Particular attention to the writings of Du Bois, Frazier, Cox, and Wilson. Biographical and autobiographical perspectives provide rich description of socialization, family contexts, work, politics, ideologies, and the impacts of racism and social change. Includes additional evening meetings for film showings and special events. *Three credit hours.* **S, U.** GILKES

SO215f Classical Sociological Theory The history of sociology, and a critical survey of the systems of thought about society, centered on major schools of sociological theory and their representatives. The place of theory in social research as presented in works of foundational social theorists, including, but not limited to, Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Du Bois, Simmel, and Mead. *Prerequisite:* Sociology 131. *Four credit hours.* GROSS

[SO222] Migration and Migrants in the United States The United States is a nation of migrants, who together compose the largest immigrant population in the world. Migration has indelibly shaped the nation's history, economic development, and ethnic and racial diversity. We will examine the experience of different immigrant groups in the United States to gain an understanding of what motivates people to emigrate, how national policies determine who is admitted to settle, and how immigrants are incorporated into and reshape mainstream America. Previously listed as SO298A (Spring 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO232] Revolutions and Revolutionaries Throughout history, individuals have organized with others to bring about radical social change. We will explore the experiences of activists, radicals, and revolutionaries in a wide variety of settings. What is it like to be on the front lines fighting for social transformation? Why do people risk life and limb to do so? How do activists advance their goals? We will examine sociological research, biographical studies, political theory, and historical sources for insights into the lives of those who make social and revolutionary movements possible. *Four credit hours.* **S, I.**

[SO234] Capital Punishment in America Why does the United States continue to use the death penalty when nearly every other Western industrialized nation has abolished it? We will explore capital punishment's past, present, and future in America. Using academic sources, as well as journalistic case studies, we will examine how the death penalty is currently implemented, study its history, and debate its morality, legality, and efficacy. *Four credit hours.*

SO236f American Religion and Society Why do people join cults? Why is Sunday morning in America "the most segregated hour of the week?" Why is religion always bubbling up in American political debates? Is religion destined to disappear in the face of scientific progress? This course tackles these and other questions by examining the social side of religion: considering how social factors shape religious experience, meaning, and conflict; how religion helps to sustain and challenge social inequalities; and how religion influences politics and civil society. Previously offered as Sociology 297C (Fall 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.** MAYRL

SO238f State, Society, and Politics Investigates the relationships between the state—the most powerful and prominent political organization in modern life—and society, with a focus on the United States. Major topics addressed include: the nature of the state and how it works; the cultural and institutional dimensions of political life; the role of the state in producing and sustaining social inequalities; and how ordinary citizens influence state policy through social movements and other forms of political mobilization. *Four credit hours.* **S.** MAYRL

[SO243] College in Crisis? Some say America's colleges and universities are doing just fine: students are flocking to them at a record rate. Others claim the system has reached a breaking point. Critics point to what they see as signs of crisis: exorbitant tuition fees,

questions about how much learning is taking place in the classroom, an out of control party culture, the rise of exploitative for-profit schools, a mismatch between the curriculum and the job market for graduates, political acrimony on campus, and more. Do these charges have merit? Is the system actually in dire straits? And what can be done to fix it? We will take up these questions and others as we make our way through some of the best recent books on higher education by sociologists, political scientists, and journalists. *Four credit hours.*

[SO244] Urban Sociology in a Global Context An exploration of the complexities of city life in an increasingly globalized world, focusing on three broad topics. First, we will examine the main challenges of urbanization and hyper urbanization in both developed and developing societies: how to provide basic services for urban residents, avoid environmental degradation, and mitigate poverty, inequality, and violence. Second, we will discuss the economic role that cities have played during different historical periods. Third, we will consider how urban life may change in the future, looking especially at technology and climate change. Previously listed as SO298C (Spring 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO245] Careers in the New Economy Jobs are foundational in our lives—they structure how we use our time, who we interact with in our day-to-day lives, and the resources we have to secure health and well-being. Over the past 30 years, major social and economic changes have transformed the nature of work in the United States. This course provides a framework for understanding contemporary work life and labor markets. We will draw from a rich body of work in sociology to inform this framework, which in turn will be used to assist students in developing practical strategies to pursue their own career and job goals. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO246] Starting a Business or Nonprofit? Lessons from Sociology From Silicon Valley startups to grassroots political campaigns, there are many ways to organize people in order to accomplish collective goals. But how do organizations succeed in competitive environments? What can managers do to ensure employee cooperation? Which business models are most likely to thrive in the new economy? We will read cutting-edge scholarship from sociology and organizational studies to understand what organizations are and how they work. We will extend insights from a wide variety of case studies to discussing different approaches to solving common problems faced by new and changing organizations. Previously listed as SO298B (Spring 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO247] Universal Health Care: Could It Work Here? Why does the United States lack a universal health-care system? What would it take to implement such a system here? We analyze the historical evolution of the patchwork of institutions and organizations that make up American health care. We read recent sociological scholarship that compares the United States to other developed countries in order to understand how different health-care systems function. And we apply concepts from these readings to debate whether universal health care is a viable prospect. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO249] Life Sciences and Society What is social about the life sciences? We consider what happens when biology, medicine, and social order meet. We will look at cases where individuals and groups draw on ideas from biology to justify ill-conceived and dangerous social reform projects, from eugenics to more recent efforts at using genomics as a tool to identify populations at risk for criminal behavior. We will also explore the role social forces play in shaping science, from profit motive in the market for pharmaceuticals to political activism around medical conditions like HIV/AIDS. Previously listed as SO298D (Spring 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

SO252f Race, Ethnicity, and Society An examination of the roles of race and ethnicity in organizing complex stratified societies, in structuring systems of durable inequalities, and in organizing and shaping communities and enclaves within stratified societies. Using multiple sociological perspectives on race, ethnicity, minority groups, prejudice, discrimination, and institutional racism, special attention is paid to the United States with reference to immigration, slavery, conquest, annexation, colonialism, internal migration, social conflict, social movements, labor, citizenship, transnational adaptation, law, and public policy. *Prerequisite:* Anthropology 112 or Sociology 131 or sophomore or higher standing. *Four credit hours.* **U.** GILKES

SO262f Comparative Perspectives on Inequality How do social inequalities in contemporary American society compare to inequalities in other contemporary democracies and in American history? We will use a comparative perspective to better understand the causes and consequences of inequality and grapple with questions such as: How high are current levels of income and wealth inequality in the United States? How do gender, race, ethnicity, and the social class into which we are born affect life chances in different societies? What role do families, schools, labor markets, and governments play in generating inequalities? What are the consequences of inequality for economic growth, democratic vitality, health, and well-being? Previously offered as Sociology 297A (Fall 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S, I.** KESLER

[SO264] The Art and Science of Data Analysis We have access to more data than ever, but how can we actually use it to help us better understand the social world? Students will learn, through practice, how to find, access, and analyze quantitative data using statistical software. We will carefully study analyses in existing published research. Students will ask and answer research questions of their own and learn how to conduct basic exploratory analysis, especially in visual form, as well as to use more advanced techniques such as linear regression and regression with categorical outcomes. Previously offered as Sociology 297B (Fall 2017). *Prerequisite:* Government 281 or Sociology 271. *Four credit hours.*

[SO266] Gender, Work, and Family Some gender inequalities have changed dramatically over the course of the last half century, while others remain far more persistent. We will explore how gender inequalities take shape in two major intersecting life realms: the family and the workplace. We will pay special attention to how gender, work, and family issues vary by social class and race, and how work-family policies help balance work and caregiving responsibilities. Previously offered as Sociology 298A (Spring 2018). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

SO268s Social Policy and Inequality How does social policy shape inequalities in income, educational attainment, the job market, health, and housing? How do we assess the effects of such policies? We will consider examples of both small- and large-scale policies that target social inequalities. We will evaluate their effects and also consider the social forces that influence policymaking in the United States and other advanced democracies. *Four credit hours.* **S.** KESLER

SO271s Introduction to Sociological Research Methods Provides sociology majors with basic intellectual tools for understanding, evaluating, and conducting social science research. Specific objectives include (1) developing rudimentary statistical skills, (2) linking theoretical problems to hypothesis testing and statistical inference, (3) exploring major types of empirical research and their implications for problem solving (e.g., experiments, surveys, participant observation), (4) applying and refining knowledge of sociological methods through diverse readings in both the sociological literature (e.g., *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Sociological Methodology*) and in non-academic publications (e.g., the *Economist*, the *Atlantic*, the *New York Times*). *Prerequisite:* Sociology 131 and sociology major. *Four credit hours.* **Q.** KESLER

SO276f Sociology of Gender Gender shapes our everyday lives - what we decide to wear, how we develop relationships, how we envision our futures, and more. But how does this happen? Why does gender difference result in gender inequality? What does it mean to be "feminine" or "masculine"? What is the relationship between gender and sexuality? How does gender intersect with race, class, and other forms of difference? We will explore these questions by considering theories of gender and case studies that analyze gender at work, home, school, and in popular culture. *Four credit hours.* **S, U.** HIKIDO

SO298As Free Speech on Campus Are colleges and universities today institutions where students and faculty of any reasonable ideological persuasion are free to explore and debate their ideas? Or are pressures on conformity so strong as to make such exploration and debate impossible? These are among the charged questions we will consider as we examine the history, sociology, and philosophy of higher education, and of key concepts like free speech, academic freedom, and civil discourse. Although much of our focus will be on the U.S., we will also consider how this spectrum of issues plays out in other nations, both democratic and totalitarian. *Four credit hours.* **S.** GROSS

SO298Bs Sociology of Globalization What does it mean to live in a globalized society? How are we connected to people on the other side of the world? This course introduces theories of globalization and explores its economic, cultural, and social dimensions. We will investigate people's experiences in work, migration, and social movements to understand the link between the "local" and the "global." Throughout, we analyze how structures of race, class, and gender relate to these processes. *Four credit hours.* HIKIDO

SO298Cs Urban Sociology An increasing percentage of the world's population lives in cities. They are spaces of opportunity and inequality, of anonymity and intimacy, of deep conflict and unexpected alliances. What drives urbanization? How do institutions and everyday people make cities? What might future cities look like? We will explore these questions by focusing on poverty, suburbanization, gentrification, and tourism in the United States and abroad. *Four credit hours.* **S, U.** HIKIDO

SO322f Social Class and Schooling Listed as Education 322. *Four credit hours.* **U.** ROY

[SO324] Elite Schooling in Global Context Listed as Education 324. *Four credit hours.* **I.**

[SO355] African-American Women and Social Change Sociological analysis and historical overview of African-American women and their families, work lives, and community (especially religious and political) experience. A focus on the contradictions between lived experience and cultural expectations surrounding gender and on the distinctive experiences of African-American women as a force for social change. *Prerequisite:* An introductory social science course or American Studies 276. *Four credit hours.* **U.**

[SO357] Civil Rights, Black Power, and Social Change A seminar examining the impact of the civil rights and black power movements on sociological concepts, theories, and perspectives on race relations, racial stratification, social change, and ethnicity. The PBS series *Eyes on the Prize I and II* are used to introduce readings and discussions of sociological and ideological texts influenced or produced by activists and activities of the civil rights or black power movements. The connections among civil rights and black power movements and other social movements in the United States and other societies. *Prerequisite:* An introductory anthropology, sociology, government, history, or American studies course. *Four credit hours.* **S, U.**

SO358s The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois Intensive survey of the life and work of W.E.B. Du Bois, prolific scholar, activist, and founder of one of the oldest sociology departments and research centers. Sociology was Du Bois's chosen discipline at the same time he contributed to history, literature, and cultural studies and formed a foundation for African-American studies. This exploration of his sociological imagination assesses the importance of his work for understanding racial-ethnic relations and conflict in the United States and the world. Readings include *The Souls of Black Folk*, *The Philadelphia Negro*, selected topics from the Atlanta University studies, *The Gift of Black Folk*, appropriate biographical/autobiographical texts, and critical studies. *Prerequisite:* Any sociology course or American Studies 276. *Four credit hours.* **S, U.** GILKES

[SO359] Sociologies of Slavery and Slave Communities in the United States A multidisciplinary exploration of the experience of enslaved African Americans and the impact of that experience on culture and social institutions in the United States. Using the insights of sociology and anthropology, attention is paid to slave communities and the strategies enslaved women and men developed for physical and psychic survival as well as for resistance. Slavery is examined as a social institution and cultural force and as a site for the construction and reproduction of "race" and durable inequalities in the United States. Attention to the varieties of cultural inheritance generated during slavery, especially music, folklore, and religious expression and their persistent impacts on American popular culture and African-American consciousness. *Prerequisite:* Anthropology 112 or Sociology 131. *Four credit hours.* **S, U.**

SO364s Policing the American City Few weeks go by, it seems, without the release of a new video showing an American police officer mistreating or brutalizing someone. While defenders point out that in any large occupation there will inevitably be some bad apples, and that policing is dangerous work in which situations can easily spin out of control, critics see more sinister forces at play, including an effort to control and subordinate minority populations. We will discuss and debate these and many other issues as we read some of the best social science research on police and American cities. What exactly is the social role of the police? What factors shape police behavior? And how might relations be improved? *Four credit hours.* **S.** GROSS

[SO366] American Class Structure Class and class inequality are central to the American political conversation today. But what is class? How should it be conceptualized and measured? What does the American class structure look like under different conceptualizations? What makes class inequality tick—what are the social processes and dynamics that drive it? And how does class connect up to other forms of inequality? We will read books and articles that offer answers. While our main focus will be the United States, we will also consider the American class structure in comparative perspective. Previously listed as SO398 (Spring 2017). *Four credit hours.* **S.**

SO367f Art and Science of Data Analysis How can we use data to help us better understand the social world? In this class, you will learn, through practice, how to find, access, and analyze quantitative data using statistical software, and equally importantly, how to meaningfully interpret your analyses to better understand important topics in the social sciences. We will carefully study analyses in existing published research, and you will ask and answer research questions of your own. You will learn how to conduct basic exploratory analysis, especially in visual form, as well as to use more advanced techniques such as linear regression and regression with categorical outcomes. *Prerequisite:* Government 281, Sociology 271 or equivalent. *Four credit hours.* KESLER

SO372f Qualitative Research Methods What can we learn about the social world from people's everyday lives? Students will learn how to conduct qualitative research through interview and fieldwork methods. We will analyze how personal narratives and the mundane practices of daily life shape and are shaped by broader social patterns. We will also consider who gets to be a social science researcher and why it matters. *Prerequisite:* Sophomore standing or above. *Four credit hours.* **S.** HIKIDO

SO483f Honors Project *Prerequisite:* Senior standing, admission to the honors program, and permission of the supervising faculty member. *Two to four credit hours.* FACULTY

SO491f, 492s Independent Study Individual topics in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work. *Prerequisite:* Junior or senior standing and permission of the department. *Two to four credit hours.* FACULTY