
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

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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.

Requirements for the Major in Sociology

The sociology major requires 12 courses, including Sociology 131, 215, 271, one 300-level research methods course*, two semesters of Sociology 345, one elective at the 300 level or higher, and five electives at the 200 level or higher. Students with a double major or minor in another social science department that has a methods requirement focused on causal inference may choose to substitute that course for Sociology 271. Sociology 215 and 271 (or the equivalent) should preferably be completed during the second year. One elective in another social science at the 200 level or above may be substituted for one 200-level Sociology elective. Up to two approved electives, credited at the 200 level, may be taken on an Off-Campus Study program. One elective toward the major may be fulfilled with an independent study for at least three credits or a semester of senior honors thesis work for at least three credits. Note that a student can count a maximum of three courses from outside the Colby Sociology Department toward the major. Formally cross-listed courses do not count toward this maximum.

Requirements for the Minor in Sociology

The Sociology minor requires seven courses, including Sociology 131, 215, 271, one elective at the 300 level or higher, and three electives at the 200 level or higher. Students with a major or minor in another social science department that has a methods requirement focused on causal inference may choose to substitute that course for Sociology 271, if they select a 300-level research methods course* as an elective. One elective in another social science at the 200 level or above may be substituted for one 200-level Sociology elective. One approved elective, credited at the 200 level, may be taken on an Off-Campus Study program. One elective may be fulfilled with an independent study for at least three credits. Note that a student can count a maximum of two courses from outside the Colby Sociology Department toward the minor. Formally cross-listed courses do not count toward this maximum.

Honors in Sociology

The Honors Program in Sociology (Sociology 483, 484) provides a special opportunity for independent sociological research. The final product is expected to be an extensive research paper of exceptional quality. Seniors majoring in Sociology may apply for the honors program by securing a faculty thesis advisor 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, have a 3.6 grade point average in the major, and have completed Sociology 215, 271, and a 300-level research methods course* before the senior year. Exceptions require approval of the department. Students may apply for the program at the end of the junior year and no later than the second week of the first semester of the senior year. A student should enroll in at least three credits of thesis work each semester of the senior year. Honors thesis work may count toward one of the student's electives in the major. 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.

Off-Campus Study (OCS)

The department prefers that Sociology students complete Sociology 215 and 271 in the second year, prior to studying off campus. Students may receive credit toward the major for up to two courses taken on an OCS program and credit toward the minor for one course taken on an OCS program. These courses will be credited as 200-level electives. Students are urged to seek advanced approval for a range of courses and to be prepared for possible cancellation of an approved course.

*Approved 300-level research methods courses include Sociology 326 (Historical Sociology), Sociology 367 (The Art and Science of Data Analysis), and Sociology 372 (Qualitative Research Methods).

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

SO212Jj Introduction to GIS and Spatial Analysis Listed as Environmental Studies 214J. *Three credit hours.* GIMOND

SO213f Schools and Society Listed as Education 213. *Four credit hours.* **U.** HOWARD

[SO214] 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.**

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, MAYRL

[SO224] 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. Previously offered as SO298B (Spring 2020). *Four credit hours.* **S, I.**

[SO227] 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. Previously offered as SO298C (Spring 2020). *Four credit hours.* **S, U.**

[SO228] Social Movements Listed as Government 227. *Four credit hours.* **U.**

[SO236] 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. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO238] 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.**

SO241f Sociology of Creativity Creativity occurs everywhere, all the time: aspiring rappers learn to freestyle, elite chefs design new dishes, and artists create pieces for an exhibit. By examining the social dynamics of creative work, we will explore why creativity is inherently collective, the relationship between creativity and constraints, how creativity is judged and experienced, and how "cool" creative jobs can also generate inequality. We will compare research on creativity in various domains - artistic practices, creative industries, ordinary life, and organizations - in sociology and neighboring disciplines (anthropology and psychology) to identify common phenomena and better understand how creativity shapes all our lives. *Four credit hours.* **S.** FANG

[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.*

[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.**

SO248s Sociology of Culture From the world of Little League baseball to hiring practices at top-tier consulting firms, culture is everywhere and everything. But what exactly is culture? And how can we study it? The Sociology of Culture introduces students to one of the largest subfields within sociology, examining how culture shapes and is shaped by the social world. We first explore elements of culture (e.g., norms, values, beliefs, rituals) and culture at every scale (e.g., groups, organizations, cities, societies, globalization). Then, we focus on ?culture+? to understand culture?s structuring forces when it intersects with identities, networks, inequality, politics, and power. *Four credit hours.* **S.** FANG

[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. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

[SO252] 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.**

[SO262] 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? *Four credit hours.* **S, I.**

SO265s Criminology Why do some people resort to violence to settle disputes? What is the relationship between crime and social deprivation? What explains street gangs and other forms of organized crime? Under what conditions does white collar crime flourish? What are the effects of crime control policy on social inequality? This course surveys sociological approaches to crime, introducing students to current theoretical and methodological debates and to the latest research findings. Previously offered as SO298A (Spring 2021). *Four credit hours.* **GROSS**

[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. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

SO268f 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

[SO276] 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.**

SO322s Social Class and Schooling Listed as Education 322. *Four credit hours.* **U.** HOWARD

SO324s Elite Schooling in Global Context Listed as Education 324. *Four credit hours.* **I.** HOWARD

SO326f Historical Sociology Historical methods are foundational to analyses of social change. This class provides an in-depth survey of contemporary social-scientific methods for exploring processes of social transformation. Topics to be covered include how to formulate historical research questions; how to identify, collect, and interpret historical evidence; and techniques for inferring causality using historical materials, including comparison, process-tracing, and counterfactual analysis. *Prerequisite:* Sociology 271 or Government 281. *Four credit hours.* MAYRL

SO343f Sociology of Hollywood How did Hollywood films transform from entertainment to art? Who are the villains in action movies? How do minority actors and directors "make it" in Hollywood? What role do talent agents play in making movies? Does Hollywood still dominate global film markets? What can Hollywood predict about the future of work? This course examines sociological research on the production, distribution, and reception of Hollywood film and television. We will explore various social forces such as cultural gatekeeping, racial hierarchies, globalization, and censorship, and how these processes affect what Hollywood brings to the big screen. *Prerequisite:* Sophomore or above standing. *Four credit hours.* FANG

SO345fs Current Topics in Sociology An advanced reading and discussion class focused on analysis, critique, and application of works published in sociology in the past 18 months. Course is integrated with the department colloquium series; majors and minors who complete two semesters may count the course toward one elective requirement. *Two credit hours.* GROSS, MAYRL

SO346s China and the World Examines contemporary Chinese society in light of globalization, emphasizing both the global influence on China and Chinays impact on the world. We start with an analysis of the post-1978 economic reform and opening-up, and then explore pressing issues that have since emerged in China's engagement with the world. Primarily taking a sociological perspective, we analyze various topics: new forms of inequality, ethnicity, environment, new youth, media culture and technology, gender and sexuality, migration and urbanization, religion, and civil society. Coupling academic and popular works, the course aims to demystify contemporary Chinese society and provide you with new perspectives to better engage with a country that is shaping the world. *Four credit hours.* **S, I.** FANG

[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.**

[SO358] 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.**

[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. *Four credit hours.* **S.**

SO367s 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**

[SO372] 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.**

[SO483] Honors Project *Prerequisite:* Senior standing, admission to the honors program, and permission of the supervising faculty member. *Two to four credit hours.*

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.*
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