Department of Sociology

The Sociology department strives to help its students develop insights about the workings of the social world and the influence of social structure. Its goal involves not just understanding the world, but working to change it. The departmental curriculum aims to help students uncover root causes of social problems and refine their personal understanding of social responsibility and economic justice. The Sociology department embraces the goals of personal, community, and global citizenship. Ultimately, the department strives to provide guidance and teaching designed to help students live better lives in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

As a department engaged in public sociology, faculty strive to teach in ways that stress critical thinking joined with action, to advise and mentor students to prepare for lifelong learning and meaningful careers, to encourage students and faculty to collaborate with peers and partners in the community and contribute to the field, and to engage in service to prepare Sociology majors to act in complex settings at home and at work, in their communities and the world. The department encourages majors and minors to participate in study away/study abroad activities.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the Sociology major is based on maintaining acceptable grades in the general foundation requirements and interest in the field of Sociology. Interested persons may contact the Chair of the Sociology department for further information. Upon admission, each major is assigned an advisor and receives an orientation in Sociology.

- 4+1 Bachelor of Science in Sociology/Masters in Non-Profit Management
- Sociology Major
- Sociology Minor

Alex Briesacher, Assistant Professor (2015), B.S., Illinois State University; M.A., Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; Ph.D., Kent State University

Siri J. Colom, Visiting Assistant Professor (2019), B.A., Tufts University; M.A., University of Massachusetts; Ph.D., University of California Berkeley

Michelle Corbin, Department Chair, Associate Professor (2011), B.S. Western Michigan University; M.S. Eastern Michigan University; Ph.D. University of Maryland

Aldo V. Garcia Guevara, Professor (2006), B.A. University of North Carolina, Asheville; M.A., Ph.D. University of Texas, Austin

Matthew Johnsen, Associate Professor (2007), A.B. Dartmouth College; M.S. New Hampshire College; Ph.D. North Carolina State University

Francisco Vivoni, Associate Professor (2013), B.A. Universidad Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras; Ph.D. University of Illinois, Urbana

Courses

SO-100 Introduction to Sociology
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW
The nature of group behavior and social interaction viewed through analysis of structure, norms, and values.
3 Credits

SO-110 Cultural Anthropology
Cross-cultural analysis of the human capacity for adaptation and technological and ideological development. Significant field studies will be examined.
3 Credits

SO-190 Sport and Society
LASC Categories: HBS, USW, DAC
Analysis of sport as a social system. The implication of sport within interrelational contexts of other social systems.
3 Credits

SO-193 First Year Seminar Sociology
LASC Categories: FYS
Introductory level course covering topics of special interest to first year students. Offered only as a First Year Seminar.
Every year. 3 Credits

SO-199 Special Topics in Sociology
Foundations in a selected sub-field of sociology; announcement made at pre-registration time.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-200 Contemporary Social Problems
LASC Categories: HBS
Analysis of social, political, urban, and economic changes which have introduced specific problems into contemporary society.
3 Credits

SO-215 Medical Sociology
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW
Prerequisites: SO-100
The structure of health care delivery systems and levels of health care personnel, patients, and families of patients.
3 Credits

SO-220 Sociology of the Family
LASC Categories: HBS
Prerequisites: SO-100
A comparative approach to the study of the structure of family systems with emphasis on changing patterns of family life.
3 Credits

SO-228 Latina-Latino Experiences in the U.S. and the World
LASC Categories: TLC, USW, DAC
This course surveys current theoretical approaches used to explain Latina/o experiences and provides an empirical overview of how social institutions affect the daily lives of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. and the world.
3 Credits

SO-230 Political Sociology
Prerequisites: SO-100
Foundations of social movements in political phenomena, social conditions, and emerging political institutions; the structural basis of social change and politics.
3 Credits

SO-235 Music and Social Change
LASC Categories: CA, HBS
Using case studies, social theory and historical materials, this course explores the role of music in social change.
3 Credits
SO-240 Sociology of Education
Prerequisites: SO-100
Study of modern educational systems, emphasizing the social, political and economic factors that influence its organization and its functions.
3 Credits

SO-250 Sociology of Religion
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW, DAC
Prerequisites: SO-100
A cross-cultural comparative study of the nature of religious institutions as systems of socially determined and socially relevant beliefs and practices.
3 Credits

SO-255 Sociology of Disability
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW, DAC
Using theory and practical application, this course explores the impact of impairment and disability within a societal context.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-270 Social Theory I
LASC Categories: TLC, GP
Prerequisites: SO-100
Fundamental concepts and intellectual traditions, especially the contributions of Comte, Spencer, Marx, Toennes, Durkheim, and Simmel.
3 Credits

SO-275 Social and Behavioral Statistics
LASC Categories: QAC
Prerequisites: SO-100 and any 200 Sociology course. SO 280 recommended
Data tabulation; graphing; measurement of central tendency, variability, and correlation; hypothesis testing applied to psychological and sociological data. Hand and computer analysis. Prerequisite: SO 100 and any 200 Sociology course.
Fall and Spring. 3 Credits

SO-280 Research Methods of Sociology
Prerequisites: SO-100
An analysis of the research function in sociology; the conduct of research appropriate to undergraduate students; the formal presentation of research papers.
Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits

SO-285 Race, Class and Gender
LASC Categories: HBS, DAC
An introduction to dominant-minority group relations through the investigation of the patterns and dynamics of differentiation, inequality and discrimination.
Fall and Spring. 3 Credits

SO-295 Sociology of Death & Dying
LASC Categories: DAC, HBS, ICW
Prerequisites: SO-100
The course explores the sociological concepts and perspectives as they relate to death and dying and how American society deals with illness, dying, death and bereavement.
Every year. 3 Credits

SO-299 Special Topics: Sociology Concepts, Realities and Representations
Prerequisites: SO-100.
Intermediate level topics.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-300 Social Change
Prerequisites: 2 Sociology courses at 200 level, EN-102.
A study of the conditions, patterns, and consequences of social transformation with emphasis on institutional and individual patterns of adjustment and adaptation. Prerequisite: Two sociology courses at 200-level.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-305 Applied Sociology and Community Research
Prerequisites: SO-100 SO-280
Explores the theory and methods of applied sociology, including ethnographic, institutional, participatory research techniques in community settings.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-315 Social Movements
Prerequisites: two Sociology courses at the 200 level
Processes by which new norms and forms of social organization emerge from group behavior, aggregate behavior, and social movements. Prerequisite: Two Sociology courses at 200-level. Other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-330 Criminology
Prerequisites: 2 SO courses at 200-level or above.
Theoretical perspective on crime, criminals, and the social aspects of interrelationships within, and between, the components of the criminal justice system. Prerequisites: Two Sociology courses at 200-level. Every year. 3 Credits

SO-335 Juvenile Delinquency
Prerequisites: two Sociology courses at the 200 level
Social and legal phenomena surrounding youthful offenses and offenders, considered in the context of community response to the problem.
Every year. 3 Credits

SO-340 Social Psychology
Prerequisites: two Sociology courses at the 200 level
Dynamics of small group involvement and other environmental influences on the shaping of an individual's personality. Prerequisites: Two Sociology courses at 200-level. Other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-345 Sociology of Deviance
Prerequisites: 2 SO courses at 200-level or above.
The study of the social consequences and apparent causes of deviant behavior through the analysis of the processes of socialization, intra- and inter-group relations, and the social contexts within which deviation is defined. Prerequisites: Two Sociology courses at 200-level. Other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-350 Social Stratification
LASC Categories: HBS, WAC, DAC
Prerequisites: EN 102 and two Sociology courses at the 200-level or above.
Investigation of the recurrent patterns of social differentiation, social ranking, and the unequal distribution of rewards. Other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-355 Gender and Sexuality
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW, DAC
This course introduces the sociologist study of gender and sexuality. This course examines how social institutions and cultural norms construct particular gender roles and sexual identities within society.
Fall and Spring and every year. 3 Credits
SO-360 Urban Sociology
Prerequisites: 2 SO courses 200-level or above.
A cross-cultural study of urban social systems and the phenomena and problems connected with the planning process. Prerequisites: Two Sociology courses at 200-level.
Other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-375 Contemporary Social Theory
Prerequisites: SO-270
Analytical devices, conceptual schemes, and models used by contemporary theorists with emphasis on structural sociology.
Every 2-3 years. 3 Credits

SO-400 Independent Study
For advanced sociology majors only; topic to be approved by an independent study advisor. (Requires eight prior courses in sociology.)
1-6 Credits

SO-403 Environmental Sociology
Prerequisites: 9 credits from the Sociology Department or permission from instructor.
This course explores the relationship between environment and society through a focus on political ecology, sociological dimensions of environmental crisis and dynamics of social change.
Other or on demand and other or on demand. 3 Credits

SO-408 Directed Study
Directed study offers students, who because of unusual circumstances may be unable to register for a course when offered, the opportunity to complete an existing course with an established syllabus under the direction and with agreement from a faculty member.
1-3 Credits

SO-410 Field Work
Data collection based on participant observation within a social service organization; assignment approval by field-work advisor. (Requires eight prior courses in Sociology.)
Every year. 1-6 Credits

SO-420 Seminar in Sociology
Prerequisites: 9 credits from Department SO; Or permission from instructor.
Advanced study topics in selected areas of Sociology.
Every 2-3 years. 1-3 Credits

SO-425 Global Development
LASC Categories: HBS, GP, WAC
Prerequisites: EN-102
This course gives an overview of the field of development and processes of development and underdevelopment in developing countries.
Every year. 3 Credits

SO-435 Introduction to Social Enterprise
LASC Categories: HBS, ICW, WAC
Prerequisites: EN-102 and complete at least 60 undergraduate credits.
This course examines social entrepreneurship and social enterprise in a global context.
Every year. 3 Credits

SO-499 Sociology Capstone
LASC Categories: CAP
Prerequisites: SO-270 SO-275 SO-280 EN-102
This course is an overview of the discipline of sociology, emphasizing the mastery of the discipline at an undergraduate level.
Every year. 4 Credits