Sociology

The major and minor in sociology are administered by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology: Professors Moran (on leave Spring 2016), Townsley, Tucker (on leave Spring 2016); Associate Professor Banks.

Overview

Sociology is the systematic study of society and social relations. Sociology majors develop the critical tools to theoretically and comparatively understand social trends and problems, grasp the intersection of self and society, and analyze empirical data. They read the works of major sociological thinkers, from the classical figures who founded the discipline to contemporary theorists of society. The major requires courses in research methods and sociological theory. The faculty also offers classes in criminology, collective behavior and social movements, the sociology of gender, social inequality, political sociology, and the sociology of media.

Contact Info

Michelle Pietras, administrative assistant
Kenneth Tucker, chair
Department Office: 102 Porter Hall
Website: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/sociology
Telephone: 413-538-2283

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 36 credits in sociology

Courses

- 123, Introduction to Sociology
- 223, Development of Social Thought
- 225, Survey Research and Data Analysis
- 12 credits at the 300 level, including at least one of the following courses:
  - 317, Topics in Contemporary Social Thought
  - 333, Contemporary Social Theory
- 12 additional credits beyond the 100 level

Sociology 223 and 225 should be completed as early as possible but certainly by the end of the junior year.

Please Note: Proposal deadlines are strictly enforced for independent study at the 295 and 395 levels.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits in sociology, including:
- 123, Introduction to Sociology
- 4 credits at the 300 level
- 12 additional credits above the 100 level

Course Offerings

SOCI-123 Introduction to Sociology
Fall and Spring
This course uses a sociological framework to examine the nature and structure of modern industrial societies. To identify central trends in society and culture, this course covers several basic themes, such as social inequality and social interaction, that have appeared repeatedly in the works of major social thinkers.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
P. Banks, T. Malacarne, N. Michaud Wild
Credits: 4

SOCI-214 Racial and Ethnic Relations
Spring
In this course students will be introduced to the various sociological perspectives and theoretical frameworks used to understand racial and ethnic relations in the United States. Racial and ethnic identities remain an important aspect of how people view themselves and others. In this course, we will discuss the dynamics of individual racial and ethnic groups including African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and White Americans. We will also examine what the concepts of race and ethnicity mean and how they affect various aspects of American society.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
P. Banks
Prereq: Sociology 123.
Credits: 4

SOCI-216 Issues in Sociology

SOCI-216GM Issues in Sociology: 'Generations, Media, and Society'
Fall
This course will explore the concept of generation within sociology, and its differences from other structural concepts such as class and gender. In particular, the course will concentrate on the generational cultures of the 1960s, the 1980s, and the contemporary millennial generation. It will focus in large part on generational uses of media, and how media use contributes to the rise of generational cultures and consciousness.
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences
K. Tucker
Prereq: Sociology 123.
Credits: 4

SOCI-216LR Issues in Sociology: 'Latina/o Urbanism(s)'
Fall
This course will examine the urban as a social, political, cultural, and economic formation, and set of social relations, with focus on Latina/o identities and culture(s). Urban scholars have long studied the changing and evolving city -- this course explores this notion in relation to Latina/o research, populations, and urban social change movements. We will examine historical and contemporary conditions and cover a broad range of topics including: urbanization, urban planning, place-making, social policy, migration/immigration, segregation, urban education, language, and more.
Crosslisted as: Latina/o Studies 250LR
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives
V. Rosa
Credits: 4

Spring
Social networks are much more than the people you know on Facebook and Twitter. They affect everything from political beliefs to health outcomes to...
professional success. This course asks, ‘What are social networks?’ and examines their impact on contemporary life. Students will develop the analytical skills to understand the formation, evolution, and significance of different relationship structures and the way they shape individuals’ lives.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**T. Malacarne**

*Prereq: 4 credits in Sociology.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-223 Development of Social Thought**

*Fall*

This course examines the origins and development of sociological theory in the nineteenth century. Focusing on the three most important representatives of the classical tradition in sociology - Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim - we consider in detail the ideas of each, compare their perspectives on emerging industrial society, and assess their contemporary significance.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**K. Tucker**

*Prereq: Sociology 123.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-225 Survey Research and Data Analysis**

*Fall*

This course is an introduction to the use of quantitative data in sociology. It focuses on the ways in which data is collected, analyzed, and presented to make sociological arguments. Students will be asked to analyze data for both regular assignments and a final paper. The aim of the course is to show how to understand the uses of different types of survey data, and to create and analyze simple statistics and multivariate statistical models using statistical software.

*Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement*

**T. Malacarne**

*Restrictions: This course is offered to Sociology Majors only.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-231 Criminology**

*Fall*

This course focuses on the historical and theoretical development of the major approaches to crime and criminality. Criminology began in the second half of the nineteenth century when its pioneers asked the ‘big questions’ pertaining to crime, society, and human nature. As criminology progressed, it narrowed its focus, concentrating on special areas, such as violent crime and property crime. As sociology began to dominate criminology, new theories were developed to explain the social facts gathered in the last 50 years.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**R. Moran**

*Prereq: 4 credits in Sociology department.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-234 Social Problems**

*Spring*

This is a course on the social construction of social problems. It devotes almost exclusive attention to how a ‘problem’ becomes a social problem; examining how atypical cases become regarded as typical; how definitions are expanded to inflate statistics; and how claim makers and advocacy groups manipulate the media to market social problems and solutions to the public.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**R. Moran**

*Prereq: Sociology 123.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-295 Independent Study**

*Fall and Spring*

*The department*

*Instructor permission required.*

**Credits: 1-4**

*Course can be repeated for credit.*

---

**SOCI-316 Special Topics in Sociology**

---

**SOCI-316CC Special Topics in Sociology: ‘Cults, Conspiracies, and Moral Panics’**

*Fall*

Using case studies such as the Eugenics Movement, Jonestown, and the Kennedy Assassination, this course will examine how distrust of the government, originally motivated by logical concerns, has transformed the way people think about power in the postmodern era. The class will explore the difference between rational questioning of authority and blind distrust that leads to questionable claims. Through topics such as the War on Drugs, this class shows how the powerful are able to use biases and public fears to carry out their own, often counterproductive, measures. These case studies have issues like race and class at their core. We will examine how certain social issues have managed to endure.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**N. Michaud Wild**

*Instructor permission required.*

*Prereq: 8 credits in the department.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-316UC Special Topics in Sociology: ‘Unlawful Convictions in Death Penalty Cases’**

*Fall*

The Death Penalty in America: Unjustly Convicted Death Row Inmates. This course will examine in detail the cases of all 130 death row inmates exonerated in the post-Furman era (1976-2009). It will focus on how the 130 men ended up on death row, as well as the process by which they gained their freedom. In addition, the course will spotlight the many proposals, videotaped police interrogations, eyewitness identifications, forensic science procedures, etc., designed to correct sources of mistakes; and assess their likelihood of successfully preventing both unjust and wrongful convictions in capital cases.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**R. Moran**

*Prereq: 8 credits in the department including Sociology 231 or 234.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-316CW Special Topics in Sociology: ‘Applied Research Seminar: Campus Wide Web: Internet Usage at Mount Holyoke College’**

*Spring*

This course is an introduction to the use of quantitative data in sociology. It focuses on the ways in which data is collected, analyzed, and presented to make sociological arguments. Students will be asked to analyze data for both regular assignments and a final paper. The aim of the course is to show how to understand the uses of different types of survey data, and to create and analyze simple statistics and multivariate statistical models using statistical software.

*Applies to requirement(s): Meets No Distribution Requirement*

**T. Malacarne**

*Restrictions: This course is offered to Sociology Majors only.*

**Credits: 4**

---

**SOCI-316UC Special Topics in Sociology: ‘Unlawful Convictions in Death Penalty Cases’**

*Fall*

The Death Penalty in America: Unjustly Convicted Death Row Inmates. This course will examine in detail the cases of all 130 death row inmates exonerated in the post-Furman era (1976-2009). It will focus on how the 130 men ended up on death row, as well as the process by which they gained their freedom. In addition, the course will spotlight the many proposals, videotaped police interrogations, eyewitness identifications, forensic science procedures, etc., designed to correct sources of mistakes; and assess their likelihood of successfully preventing both unjust and wrongful convictions in capital cases.

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences*

**R. Moran**

*Prereq: 8 credits in the department including Sociology 231 or 234.*

**Credits: 4**

---
SOCI-324  Class in the Black Community  
Fall  
This course explores class in the black community from a sociological perspective. It focuses on how race fosters commonalities and how class fuels differences among blacks. We will examine the nature of these commonalities and differences within several contexts, such as neighborhoods, politics, work, and culture.  
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives  
P. Banks  
Prereq: 8 credits in Sociology.  
Credits: 4  

SOCI-333  Contemporary Social Theory  
Spring  
In this critical survey of the main theoretical perspectives in contemporary sociology, we focus specifically on structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, critical theory, feminism, and postmodernism. Besides gaining familiarity with these alternative perspectives, we try to identify the main axes of theoretical dispute in sociology and discuss the problems of evaluating and resolving conflict between theories.  
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences  
The department  
Prereq: Sociology 223 and an additional 8 credits from the Sociology department.  
Credits: 4  

SOCI-350  Sociology of Punishment  
Spring  
This seminar covers the social history of punishment, beginning with the birth of the prison in the late eighteenth century and continuing to the present. Emphasis on the shift in philosophy from public to private punishment, prison reform movements, and the death penalty.  
Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences  
R. Moran  
Prereq: Sociology 231 and 4 more credits from the Sociology department.  
Credits: 4  

SOCI-395  Independent Study  
Fall and Spring  
The department  
Instructor permission required.  
Credits: 1-8  
Course can be repeated for credit.