

Department of Sociology & Criminal Justice

Sociology and Criminal Justice Course Descriptions

Courses are offered each semester unless otherwise designated.

SOCI 195, 295, 395, 495 – Special Topics (1-12)

SOCI 198, 298, 398, 498 – Tutorial (1-3)

SOCI 101 – Introduction to Sociology (3) Sociology as study of human behavior, social groups, socialization, stratification and social change; a consideration of basic social institutions. Gen Ed: SA credit. Fall and Spring.

SOCI 102 – Contemporary Social Problems (3) American capitalism; nature of sexual, racial and economic inequality; contemporary American institutions: family, educational systems and systems of social control; and American culture. Gen Ed: SA, FC credit. Fall and Spring.

SOCI 103 – Intro Criminal Justice Studies (3) This course will introduce students to the debates, theories, and research methodologies that help us understand the organization and relationships that created and continue to maintain the criminal justice system.

SOCI 110 – Introduction to Africana Studies (3) A survey of the historical, economic, cultural, and social experiences of African peoples (i.e., the peoples of Africa and those peoples of the Americas who are descendants of Africans), and the knowledge of their presence, roles, and cultural contributions in the American historical milieu. By focusing on the life experiences of African peoples, this course seeks to provide knowledge and skills necessary to understand institutional arrangements and cultural construction that impact upon the current conditions of black communities in Africa, the U.S., the Caribbean, South America and elsewhere. As warranted.

SOCI 150 – Introduction to Women's and Genders Studies (3) This course provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies. It explores the biological, cultural, and structural debates surrounding issues such as gendered violence, gay vs. straight parenting, the gendered workplace, pornography, and the role of media in the social construction of masculinity and femininity. While the focus is primarily on the U.S., it does include a global perspective as well.

SOCI 300 – Sociological Theory (3) Explores the origin and development of classical sociological theories in the 19th and 20th centuries, their expression in contemporary sociological theorizing, and their relevance in the global society of the 21st century. Prerequisite: Six (6) sociology credits at SUNY Potsdam.

SOCI 305 – Sociology of the Family (3) Family as social institution. Emphasis on structure and function of family; cross-cultural comparisons; analysis of contemporary American family systems. Prerequisite: SOCI 101.

SOCI 309 – Sociology of Culture (3) Investigates the relationship between social structures and cultural expressions from a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective. Emphasis will be on the arts, media and popular culture. As warranted.

SOCI 310 – Racial and Ethnic Relations (3) Factors involved in intergroup relations; principal minority groups in United States, research findings in prejudice and discrimination; programs aimed at amelioration of intergroup tensions. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Fall.

SOCI 313 – Global Cultures (3) This course introduces students to cultural variation and fragmentation among the areas of the world referred to as the Third World. Geographically, the notion is identified with non-western cultures of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Gen Ed: XC credit. As warranted.

SOCI 315 – Research Methods (3) Research design in sociology: formulation of research problems, hypotheses, data-gathering techniques, measurement of variables and statistical analysis. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Fall and Spring.

SOCI 320 – Work and Complex Organizations (3) An examination of change in organization of work influenced by workers, management and global economic forces. Topics include: scientific management, human relations, employee involvement, deindustrialization, occupational hazards, gender and race relations, underground economy, influences of work in Japan, Sweden and Mondragon on U.S. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 325 – Sociology of Social Services (3) Organized and emerging public and private social service and social welfare efforts in terms of sociological and social science literature. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Fall.

SOCI 330 – Social Thanatology (3) Sociological and social-psychological aspects of dying and death; demography of death and its consequences for society; changing attitudes toward dying and death; medical personnel and dying; suicide and euthanasia; problems in defining when death has occurred; and functions of funerals. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Spring.

SOCI 333 – Technology and Society (3) Pessimistic assessment of the technological society, its threat to the core values of western civilization that looks to extend individuality, freedom, equality and toleration. Attacks misuse of scientific and technological reason in the area of the social. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 335 – Sociology of Aging (3) Social processes and problems of aging. Changes in age structure of society and how it affects societal institutions. Issues of older individuals; health, finances, work, sex, death and social policy. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Fall.

SOCI 336 – Caring for America (3) This course will examine the issue of caregiving across the life span from micro, macro, and global perspectives. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Spring.

SOCI 337 – Music and Society (3) The purpose of this course is to provide students with insight into the various functions popular music has in constructing, influencing, and maintaining human life. As a form of secondary socialization, media presentations of popular music from the Big Band era to the present will be examined through the lenses of the theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactionism. An historical retracing of the rise of popular music will be provided as grounding for examinations of current styles. As warranted.

SOCI 340 – Environment and Society (3) An examination of worldwide environmental crisis. Topics: energy, non-renewable resources, hazardous wastes, the ecological implications of technological change, agricultural and food issues, in the context of social systems, beliefs and institutions. Gen Ed: SA credit. As warranted.

SOCI 341 – Environmental Justice (3) This course will examine the relationship between social inequality and environmental issues. How are environmental goods and bads distributed across social groups? Course topics will include the citing of hazardous waste sites, the degradation of Native environmental amenities, among other topics. This course will explore the role of knowledge production, gender, and grassroots activism in environmental justice issues. The course will also provide students with a history of the Environmental Justice movement in the United States. Prerequisite: Sophomore standing. Fall.

SOCI 345 – Criminology (3) This course introduces the concepts of criminology, focusing on definitions and different approaches to understanding these phenomena. Social and psychological explanations of criminal acts as well as the topologies of crimes will be included. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Fall.

SOCI 350 – Social Movements (3) This course presents a sociological and historical examination of the major theoretical perspectives on social movements. The goal is to acquire an understanding of the processes of social movement emergence, development, and outcomes. We will investigate such movement dynamics as recruitment, organizational structure, leadership, tactics, and counter movements. Through our exploration of social movement theory we will examine a variety of specific movements, past and present. Minimum requirement of Junior standing. As warranted.

SOCI 353 – Comparative Criminology (3) An introduction to the major topics and issues in comparative criminology - the nature, causes, and responses to crime from a comparative perspective. Emphasis on comparative (2 or more societies) and cross-national studies of criminological phenomena. Prerequisite: Junior/Senior standing and SOCI 103. Gen Ed: XC & WI credit.

SOCI 355 – Individual and Society (3) Social influences on individuals. Socialization and development of the self. Authoritarianism, symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy. Shaping of identity in post-modern society. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 365 – Sociology of Gender (3) A critical examination of gender and its consequences from global, macro and micro perspectives. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Spring.

SOCI 366 – Sociology of Sexualities (3) This course takes a sociological perspective on sexuality, beginning from the premise that sexuality-sexual desire, preference, behavior and identity is shaped through social interaction and within the context of multiple social institutions. The course focuses on sexuality as a site of power struggles, struggles over the definition of which identities and behaviors are normative and which are deviant. Emphasis is on the ways in which sexuality and other social categories, such as gender, race and class intersect and overlap, creating different life experiences for individuals and their families. The course explores the connections between larger sociopolitical and economic processes and changing sexual beliefs, norms and identities. Contemporary sexual politics are analyzed, emphasizing topics about which there is significant public debate. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 150 or WMST 100 or instructor permission. Gen Ed: LA credit.

SOCI 370 – Sociology of Film (4) Explores the theoretical and practical concerns of sociology through film representation. Constructs critical sociological theories of film making and film viewing. As warranted.

SOCI 371 – Globalization and the Environment (3) This course examines the socio-environmental consequences of globalization. The course begins with a discussion of general understandings of globalization and the major social institutions involved (e.g. corporations, intergovernmental policy agencies before moving to an analysis of the socio-environmental consequences of globalization (e.g. climate change, biodiversity loss, infectious disease, urbanization). The course examines the connections between international political and economic policies, local environmental and social conditions, and international and intra-national inequality. Further, the course explores international policy responses to global environmental problems, as well as local and transnational social movements resisting globalization and its environmental consequences.

SOCI 375 – Women and Work (3) This course will examine different issues concerning “women’s work:” biological determination of the division of labor; the origin of women’s subordinate role in the workplace; the work experience of women of different classes and races; occupational sex segregation; sexual harassment; the gender gap in wages; and women in the professions. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Spring.

SOCI 376 – Women and Crime (3) This course focuses on the reciprocal relationship between gender and the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system acts as a major system of “gendered” social control, reinforcing the boundaries of socially appropriate femininity and masculinity. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Spring.

SOCI 380 – Family Violence (3) Violent phenomena in families. Theories of violence and extant research findings. Emphasis on child, spouse and elder abuse. Policies and programs which respond to family violence. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Spring.

SOCI 385 – The Sociology of Troubled Youth (3) This course explores, describes and analyzes various societal influences that shape young people toward or away from criminal and deviant involvements. Substantive topics include processes of subcultural formation, various meanings of style, influences of popular culture, media and technology, the family, school experiences, peer influences, part-time jobs, sports involvement, youth gangs, correctional facilities, and selected case studies. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Spring.

SOCI 386 – Victimology (3) Victimology provides an examination of criminal victimization in the United States via an overview of current theory, research, and trends within the context of specific victimization types. We will examine specific types of crime on victims and society, the role of victims within the criminal justice system, specific remedies, and victim rights and services. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. As warranted.

SOCI 387 – Sociology of Policing (3) Examines the processes and structures of policing in North America. Attention will be paid to the development of an analytic framework that incorporates historical, legal, economic and sociological perspectives. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. As warranted.

SOCI 388 – Violent Crime (3) This course examines the patterns, causes and prevention of violent crime in the United States. By examining violence as both a behavior separate from criminal activity as well as a criminal act, we will examine how violence is transformed into criminal violence as a social process. Through an examination of the social construction of violence throughout history and various cultures, this course will explore various categories of violent crime. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103.

SOCI 390 – Sociology of Mental Illness (3) Social influences on field of mental illness and mental health. Definition, causes and treatment of mental illness. Emphasis on current theories of mental illness, client rights, emerging trends in therapy and relationship between mental illness and crime. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Fall.

SOCI 401 – Sociology of Rural Community (3) People’s clustering together in space; social/historical analysis of specific American types: the industrial town, “small” towns, suburbs; alternative communities as religious, political or cultural experiments. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 405 – Religion in American Society (3) Interrelationships of religion and American life; religious evolution; broadening value consensus; religion as cultural system; civil religion; institutional role versus prophetic role; religious organization. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 415 – Sociology of Education (3) Social institution of education. Focus on functions and outcomes of educational process. Effects of major historical trends on nature of education. Inter-relationship with other social institutions. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 420 – Rich and Poor in America (formerly Social Class and Social Mobility) (3) Examines the causes, consequences and dimensions of inequality in the U.S. Course evaluates dimensions of educational, environmental, racial, and gender inequality. Looks at different interpretations to explain unequal control over power and wealth in the U.S. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 430 – City and Society (3) Factors associated with development of urban communities; characteristic urban institutions, suburban development; urban planning; ecological processes. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 435 – Correction and Punishment (3) Programs, processes, changing orientations and resistance to innovation in corrective system. Adjudication through probation, incarceration and parole; reintegration of offender; effects on inmates, administrations, policy makers and general public. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Offered yearly, Fall or Spring.

SOCI 440 – The Sociology of Food (3) This course is an examination of social and cultural forces shaping the production, distribution, preparation and consumption of food with an emphasis on the environmental and social impacts of the predominant global, industrialized agricultural system. Topics will range from the local to the global and will include consumption practices, food access and social problems related to the food system. Prerequisite: SOCI 315. Fall.

SOCI 450 – White-Collar and Organized Crime (3) Sociological examination of two pervasive forms of illegal behavior; focus: complex interrelationship of crime patterns to social, economic and political structures and cross-national aspects. Major emphases: analyses of recent research related to organizational facets of white-collar crime in corporate, professional and political dimensions; three major areas of organized criminal patterns, myths and reality of this aspect of the crime problem. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. As warranted.

SOCI 455 – Deviance and Social Control (3) Social definitions of deviance, i.e., changing perspectives and concepts related to legal and non-legal nonconformity. Relevant changing justifications and arrangements for social control. Socio-historical case-study approach analyzes and describes various types of deviant behavior. Prerequisite: SOCI 101 or SOCI 103. Spring.

SOCI 456 – Political Sociology (3) Political behavior. Emphasis on participation of individuals in political enterprise. Political socialization and public opinion formation; consequences of such phenomena as stratification, alienation and authoritarianism. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 460 – Population Studies (3) Interrelationship of population structure and processes and socio-cultural phenomena; social demographic theory, methods and measurement applied to processes of fertility, mortality and migration; international population change. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted.

SOCI 465 – Sociology of Health and Illness (3) Aspects of illness behavior and inter-face of individuals and health care system. Epidemiology of diseases, approaches to wellness, and health care policy are also examined. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Fall.

SOCI 470 – Field Research/Practicum (3-12) Fieldwork or placement at an agency of student’s choice under supervision of faculty member. A field study of sociologically significant situations, problems and/or issues will be completed. Pre-requisites:

Appropriate upper-division sociology or criminal justice studies coursework in consultation with sponsoring faculty member and permission. May be taken twice, but no more than 6 credits counted for major.

SOCI 475 – Senior Seminar (3) Methodology of sociological research; individual and cooperative investigation of selected topics; presentation and critique of findings. Prerequisites: Senior standing and permission. Gen Ed: SI, WI credit.

SOCI 510 – Readings in Sociological Theory (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in sociological theory.

SOCI 520 – Readings in Sociological Methods (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in research methods.

SOCI 540 – Readings in Urban Sociology (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in the field of sociology.

SOCI 550 – Readings in Sociology of the Family (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in the field of sociology of the family.

SOCI 560 – Readings: Deviance and Corrections (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in the fields of sociology of deviance and corrections.

SOCI 570 – Readings in the Sociology of Education (3) Individualized study consisting of a critical review of major works in the area of sociology of education.