

SOCIOLOGY

haverford.edu/sociology

The Sociology Department helps students learn how to “do sociology” by exposing them to exemplars of what sociology has been and by asking them to study micro and macro aspects of the social world. We believe that there are a variety of legitimate ways to “do sociology,” and we do not seek to privilege any one of them. Our individual courses construct arguments for students to consider, develop, and argue against, and they provide the analytical and methodological training students need to formulate theoretical arguments and to evaluate those arguments empirically. We want an active engagement from our students as they find their own points-of-view within the discipline, and we expect theoretical and methodological rigor and sophistication within the approaches they adopt.

The department is small, which allows students to work with a small number of people in depth and to develop a textured way of approaching the social world. Our goals are to facilitate the emergence of each student’s own arguments, allow them to develop their own intellectual agenda, and enable them to approach new, unfamiliar problems (both academic and social) with helpful ideas about their resolution.

Our graduates go on to a wide variety of careers. The analytic, statistical, and methodological skills acquired over the course of studies in sociology are an asset in sectors as different as government, service, education, and business. Our department has an excellent record of placing students in the top graduate programs in sociology.

LEARNING GOALS

We want our students to learn how to “do sociology.” Students who take our courses read exemplars of sociological research. The goal is not a mastery of theory and methods for their own sake, but the ability to think theoretically and to evaluate arguments empirically and systematically using the methodology best suited to the argument. The sociology they read in their courses is a means and not an end; these texts should be understood as a set of exemplifications of how sociology might be done. In addition, students are able to improve their writing skills through completing course assignments.

We expect that the completion of a major will enable them to do sociology autonomously, in a way that prepares them for careers in applied settings, different professions such as law or public health, and for graduate training at the discipline’s best departments.

CURRICULUM

To facilitate our student’s ability to accomplish the goal of “doing sociology,” each major enrolls in the two-semester Foundations in Social Theory seminar, where we provide a fundamental grounding in social theory. Our upper-division courses build on this foundation, specifying and developing the theory to address questions in substantive areas of the discipline. Ideally, the theory allows students to construct theoretically-insightful arguments about substantive areas not covered in our curriculum. We teach seminars in both quantitative methods and qualitative methods to enable students to acquire a wide range of research skills for addressing problems of interest to them.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A total of at least eleven courses, including:

- SOCL 155A and 155B (two semesters of Foundations in Social Theory)
- SOCL 215A, ECON 203, or the equivalent (Quantitative Methods, statistics)
- SOCL 450A and 450B (senior thesis)
- Six additional courses in sociology.

Students should consult their advisor about the possibility of receiving major credit for sociology courses taken at other campuses, including Bryn Mawr, Swarthmore and the University of Pennsylvania. Normally, the department will grant such credit if the courses enhance the integrity of a program grounded in the Haverford curriculum.

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

A total of at least six courses, including:

- SOCL 155A and 155B (Foundations in Social Theory)
- SOCL 215A (Quantitative Methods, or the equivalent)
- At least three 200- and/or 300-level courses

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in the department.

Students may take no more than four courses with a single professor.

SENIOR PROJECT

Sociology majors must complete a senior thesis, which is a year-long research project. The thesis serves as a culmination of the department's aims of having students "do sociology." In preparation they will have taken many classes inside the department that have provided them with opportunities to understand critical theoretical debates in the literature and have introduced them to different research traditions within the discipline. These courses also provide the opportunity to examine shorter theoretical topics, as well as write shorter research papers. The senior thesis is the longest and most involved writing assignment, and as such presents students with an opportunity to complete a real research project.

The senior thesis consists of two courses, 450A and 450B. Each senior is required to formulate a research topic that addresses a theoretical problem that they evaluate through empirical investigations. Each senior selects and works regularly with a primary advisor, with whom they meet weekly, as part of a group and/or individually. They spend the fall semester refining their argument, working to construct an answerable research question that is generally based on concerns that have come from their previous coursework. Each senior also presents their work periodically to all department faculty and seniors. Students present their research problem, a report on how the work is developing, and a draft of a theoretical or an empirical section. This process provides the opportunity for students to develop their oral presentation skills. The process also encourages and facilitates the ability of students to work with more than one member of the faculty on their theses. These meetings also serve to foster cooperation and support among the students.

The spring semester is spent further backing up their argument with their empirical work, and revising the thesis into a completed form. Students continue to meet with their primary thesis advisors, collectively and/or individually every week. They continue to make oral presentations to the faculty and seniors in the

department, culminating in a final public presentation before the department, including junior and newly declared sophomore majors, as well as invited guests.

Senior Project Learning Goals

The goals of the senior thesis process are to:

- provide students with an opportunity to pursue an original research question.
- allow them to develop arguments that are longer in length and more empirically supported than in research papers submitted in lower-level courses in the major.
- further develop research skills, including literature review and empirical analysis.
- improve their writing and oral presentation skills.

In regular classes faculty specify the nature of the work to be undertaken. Here students assume responsibility for their own work. They define their own research agenda autonomously—even if assisted by their advisors, and other faculty in (and outside of) the department—and they are expected to create a masterwork that manifests their ability to "do sociology."

Senior Project Assessment

Each student's work is then evaluated by all faculty in the department. Evaluation is based on whether the thesis:

- formulates a research problem in theoretical terms.
- makes a cogent, sophisticated theoretical argument.
- masters literature relevant to the main argument, and contextualizes the argument within it.
- completes systematic empirical work appropriate to the research question
- is presented well, in both oral and written formats.

CONCENTRATIONS

The department contributes to multiple concentrations, including Peace, Justice, and Human Rights, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, African and Africana Studies, and Gender and Sexuality Studies.

RESEARCH AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

There are plenty of resources on campus to fund student research projects, reading seminars, and

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other initiatives. Our majors receive support from both the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship (haverford.edu/CPGC) and the John B. Hurford '60 Center for the Arts and Humanities (haverford.edu/HCAH). The Eastern Sociological Society invites undergraduates to present their work at their annual meeting. We especially encourage seniors to present their thesis work in progress at this meeting to get feedback, as well as meet people they might want to work with in graduate school.

FACULTY

Mark Gould

Professor

Elise Herrala

Visiting Assistant Professor

Matthew McKeever

Chair and Professor

COURSES

SOCL H102 REPRODUCING DIFFERENCE: THE SOCIOLOGY OF TASTE, CONSUMPTION, AND LIFESTYLE

Elise Herrala

Social Science (SO)

A sociological examination of how consumption, lifestyle and taste come together to operate as a site of class difference and social reproduction. (Offered Fall 2017)

SOCL H150 SOCIOLOGY OF IMMIGRATION: IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S.

Matthew McKeever

Social Science (SO)

This course is an introduction to the social, economic, and political aspects of current immigration to the United States. The course begins with an overview of the history of immigration over the past 100 years, and how contemporary immigration differs from earlier eras. The course then explores the major issues of current immigration research in sociology, including demographic change, economic inequality, and assimilation. (Offered occasionally)

SOCL H155 FOUNDATIONS IN SOCIAL THEORY

Mark Gould, Matthew McKeever

Social Science (SO)

This seminar provides an introduction to sociology, to the doing of sociology, through an examination of selected major works in the discipline. We use these works as exemplifications of how we might do social theory, not as texts to be criticized. The two semesters of this course are autonomous; either semester in the sequence may be taken alone, and either semester may be taken first. Together, the two mesh into a systematically-constructed whole, leading to a more coherent perspective on the accomplishments and future tasks of sociology than either provides alone. (Offered Fall 2017, Spring 2018)

SOCL H208 SOCIOLOGY OF CULTURE

Elise Herrala

Social Science (SO)

This course explores the meaning of culture, where it comes from, and how it is produced. To do this, we look at how symbols, language, cultural production, and forms of knowledge and power interact to shape and create meaning in our lives. From there we will examine different theoretical and empirical approaches to culture in three parts: (1) Codes and Cognition, which examines symbolic codes and communal understandings; (2) Production and Consumption, which considers the roles of markets, globalization, and institutions in both what is produced in the “culture industry” (e.g., art, fashion, technology and television) and how and by whom it is consumed; and (3) Culture and Domination, with a particular focus on culture’s role in the reproduction of class difference.

Prerequisite(s): SOCL 155 or instructor consent. (Offered Fall 2017)

SOCL H215 QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Matthew McKeever

Social Science (SO), Quantitative (QU)

An introduction to the use of statistics and quantitative data analysis in sociological research. Prerequisite(s): SOCL 155A or 155B, or instructor consent. (Offered Spring 2018)

SOCL H217 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Elise Herrala

Social Science (SO)

This course examines and provides basic training in qualitative methods used in sociological research, including the application and conceptualization of theory, research design, sampling, strategies for framing research and

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interview questions, and data coding and analysis. Prerequisite(s): SOCL 155A or SOCL 155B, or instructor consent. (Offered Spring 2018)

SOCL H221 SOCIOLOGY OF ART

Elise Herrala

Social Science (SO)

The aim of the course is to introduce the relationship between art, culture, and society. Prerequisite(s): SOCL 155A, or SOCL 155B, or instructor consent. (Offered Spring 2018)

SOCL H233 TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY: CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

Matthew McKeever

Social Science (SO)

This course explores key contemporary research in particular fields within the discipline. The focus of the course changes across semesters and faculty who design it. (Offered Fall 2017)

SOCL H235 CLASS, RACE, AND EDUCATION

Mark Gould

Social Science (SO)

An examination of the effects of class and race on educational and occupational outcomes, emphasizing the contemporary United States. (Not offered 2017-18)

SOCL H270 MEASURING EDUCATION

Matthew McKeever

Social Science (SO)

This course explores contemporary political movements to measure learning outcomes in educational institutions. It covers such topics as NCLB legislation, standardized testing for college admissions, assessment of college education, and development of online learning tools. Crosslisted: Sociology, Education (Offered occasionally)

SOCL H277 POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Mark Gould

Social Science (SO)

This course examines the social organization of political power in the U.S., focusing on the State, the influence of economic power (corporations & the economic elite) on political decision making, and “democracy”: to what degree are we a democratic nation, what is the state of democracy now, and what might the future hold? We will explore the foundations of the major theories of state and social power—class (Marx), elite

(Weber), and pluralist (de Tocqueville) as well as more contemporary theories. (Offered Fall 2017)

SOCL H297 ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY

Mark Gould

Social Science (SO)

The sociological analysis of economic systems and the sociological reconstruction of microeconomic theory. (Not offered 2017-18)

SOCL H298 LAW AND SOCIOLOGY

Mark Gould

Social Science (SO)

An examination of the jurisprudential consequences derived from the sociological reconstruction of microeconomic and philosophical theories. (Offered Spring 2018)

SOCL H450 SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL STUDIES

Mark Gould, Elise Herrala, Matthew McKeever
Social Science (SO)

Thesis work, two semesters, required of majors in their senior year. (Offered Fall 2017, Spring 2018)

SOCL H480 INDEPENDENT STUDY

Staff

Social Science (SO)

Research papers and reading courses on special topics related to the individual interests of advanced students. Prerequisite(s): The instructor's approval of a research or reading proposal. (Typically offered every year)