Sociology Course Descriptions

Courses are offered each semester unless otherwise designated.

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

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

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 301 – Complex Organizations (3) Theory and research findings relevant to formal organizations. Analysis of bureaucracy and decision-making in large-scale organizations. As warranted.

SOCl 302 – Alcohol in Society (3) The past and present roles of beverage alcohol in societies throughout the world; theories of alcohol use and abuse; major controversies in the alcohol field. Prerequisite: SOCl 101. As warranted.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. Fall.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. Gen Ed: XC credit. As warranted.

SOCl 314 – Computer Applications in the Social Sciences (3) This course is designed to provide the knowledge and skills to understand and use contemporary computer technology in social science. Selected software types will be used to demonstrate computer usage in research and other social science work. Course topics include: data collection, presentation and management, using computers qualitative and quantitative data analyses, using and researching the internet, simulations and ethical issues in computing. Prerequisite: SOCl 101.

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

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. As warranted.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. Fall.

SOCl 330 – Social Thanatology (3) Sociological and social-psychological aspects of dying and death; demographics 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: SOCl 101. Spring.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. As warranted.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. Fall.

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

SOCl 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 retraction of the rise of popular music will be provided as grounding for examinations of current styles. As warranted.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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.

SOCl 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: SOCl 101. Fall.

SOCl 350 – Social Movements (3) This course presents a sociological and historical examination of the major theoretical perspectives on social
violent crime. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. Through an examination of the behavior separate from criminal activity as well as a criminal act, we will analyze frameworks that incorporate historical, legal, economic and specific types of crime on victims and society, the role and trends within the context of specific victimization types. We will examine influences, part of the criminological phenomena. Emphasis on comparative (2 or more societies) and cross-national studies of criminological phenomena. Prerequisite: Junior/Senior standing. Gen Ed: XC & WI credit. 
SOCI 355 – 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. Gen Ed: XC & WI credit. 
SOCI 361 – Race and the City (3) Course focuses on the ways in which the global economy has affected racial and ethnic change in the European and North American city. It will additionally focus on ways in which the city is divided by race and ethnicity in the areas of housing, education, work, health care, welfare and crime among others. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted. 
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 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 involvement of women in the Criminal Justice System as victim, offender and employee. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. 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. Spring. 
SOCI 386 – Victimization (3) Victimization 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. 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. 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. 
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. Fall. 
SOCI 400 – Social and Cultural Change (3) Socio-cultural forces accelerating or retarding social change. Emphasis on those which are operative in contemporary societies. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. As warranted. 
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 correctional system. Adjudication through probation, incarceration and parole; reintegration of offender; effects on inmates, administrations, policy makers and general public. Prerequisite: SOCI 101. 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. 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. 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 interface 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 coursework in consultation with sponsoring faculty member and permission. May be taken twice, but no more than 6 credits counted for major.

SOCI 473 – Service Learning Africa (3) SUNY Potsdam and Canton, in conjunction with Operation Crossroads Africa, offer a unique opportunity to live and work in an African community and earn college credit. Students participate in group-oriented cultural exchange and community development projects in Africa developed and supervised by OCA. Potsdam faculty provides academic orientation and research guidance. Projects typically involve village, town or city. Students will live in the community participating in its daily life.

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.