The distinguished American sociologist, David Riesman, who played a major role in the creation of the general education program in the social sciences at Chicago, once observed that it was only with a “marvelous hubris” that students were encouraged to range over such “large territory” in the social sciences. Indeed, since the 1940s, yearlong sequences designed to introduce students to different types of social scientific data and different forms of social sciences inquiry have become a permanent feature of the Chicago curriculum. Although considerable variety manifests itself in the way the social sciences courses in general education are organized, most of the sequences are informed, as Robert Redfield once suggested, by an attempt “to communicate the historical development of contemporary society” and by an effort “to convey some understanding of the scientific spirit as applied to social problems and the capacity to address oneself in that spirit to such a problem.” By training students in the analysis of social phenomena through the development and use of interdisciplinary and comparative concepts, the courses also try to determine the characteristics common among many societies, thus enabling the individual to use both reason and special knowledge to confront rapid social change in the global world of the late twentieth century.

The Social Sciences Collegiate Division offers several social science and civilization sequences in the general education program. It also offers specialized courses that provide a particularly interdisciplinary or comparative theoretical perspective and may be of interest to students in a variety of majors. The latter set of courses should also be considered as attractive possibilities for electives.

Courses: Social Sciences (sosc)

General Education Sequences

NOTE: Students registered in SOSC 10000–level sequences that meet general education requirements must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.

11100-11200-11300. Power, Identity, and Resistance. PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. G. Herrigel, Staff. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

11100. This quarter considers an array of distinctive macro theoretical formulations of modern economic process—otherwise known as capitalism. It examines topics such as the organization of exchange, the logic of the division of labor, the prevalence and character of exploitation in economic relationships, and the scope for political intervention in the economy. Also considered are the roles of values and culture in economic process, as well as the historical and cultural variability of the boundaries between the economy, society, and politics. Readings include classic works in modern political
In this quarter, we concern ourselves with the Autumn, Winter, Spring. 12100-12200-12300. Self, Culture, and Society. Studying the works of Freud, Mauss, Mead, Marcuse, Vygotsky, de Beauvoir, Fanon, and others.

Our considerations include issues of gender, sexuality, and ethnic identity, characterizing features of the modern world, with particular emphasis on its social-economic structure and issues of work, the texture of time, and economic globalization.

11200. PQ: SOSC 11200. Spring Quarter analyzes the way in which selected themes of the first two quarters worked themselves out in the history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. We consider questions of the proper role of the state in the economy; the difficulty posed to liberalism by specific identity characteristics of citizens (or noncitizens), including gender, race, and ethnic claims; and the relationship between liberal ideals and governing practices and the political ideals and governing practices of non-liberal/non-Western societies in the global environment. Readings include texts by Hayek, Polanyi, Freud, Fanon, de Beauvoir, Anzaldúa, Asad, and Huntington.

12100-12200-12300. Self, Culture, and Society. PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. M. Postone, B. Cohler, Staff. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

12100. In this quarter, we explore the nature and development of modern society through an examination of theories of capitalism. The classic social theories of Smith, Marx, and Weber, along with contemporary ethnographic and historical works, serve as points of departure for considering the characterizing features of the modern world, with particular emphasis on its social-economic structure and issues of work, the texture of time, and economic globalization.

12200. PQ: SOSC 12100. In this quarter, we focus on the relation of culture, social life, and history. On the basis of readings from Durkheim, Lévi-Strauss, Sahlin, Foucault, Benjamin, Adorno, and other anthropologists and cultural theorists, we investigate how systems of meaning expressed through metaphors, symbols, rituals, and narratives constitute and articulate individual and social experience across a range of societies, including our own, and how those systems of meaning change historically.

12300. PQ: SOSC 12200. In this quarter, we concern ourselves with the question of how personhood is constructed socially, culturally, and historically. Our considerations include issues of gender, sexuality, and ethnic identity, through the study of the wide range of approaches found in the works of Freud, Mauss, Mead, Marcuse, Vygotsky, de Beauvoir, Fanon, and others.

13100-13200-13300. Social Science Inquiry. PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. How much can we trust public opinion polls? Can we determine if people in one country are better off than another? How can we tell if conventional wisdom is correct? How can we judge whether or not a public policy is working? How do economists or psychologists see the world differently than sociologists or political scientists? This course seeks to answer these and other questions by examining classic works of social science and by teaching students how to conduct their own social science research. In the Autumn Quarter, the course starts by examining the history and philosophy of the social sciences. Then, using prominent examples from anthropology, economics, political science, psychology, and sociology, it explores the major epistemological approaches to social science including experimental methods, deductive methods (such as formal models and game theory), inductive methods (such as survey analysis, epidemiology, and econometrics), and ethnography. In Winter Quarter, students study the specific research tools that social scientists employ. Students learn how to collect data, how to conduct experiments, and how to make statistical inferences. Students gain hands-on practice at empirical analysis using the General Social Survey, the National Voting Studies, the World Values Survey, and other data sets. In the Spring Quarter, students study practical applications of social science and conduct their own empirical research on a topic they choose. From both classic examples and their own research, students learn what makes a good social science concept, how to translate their theories into testable hypotheses, how to report their results, and how to draw broader inferences from their findings. The goal is for students to produce a significant research paper by the end of this sequences. E. Oliver, Staff. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

14100-14200-14300. Mind. PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. This sequence takes an empirical, scientific approach to understanding the functions of the mind. Drawing on psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, and a number of other social as well as biological sciences, the course examines how the mind operates at multiple levels of analysis (e.g., biological, psychological, societal) and across a variety of time scales (e.g., exploring processes that unfold over the course of milliseconds as well as those that unfold over millennia). We examine issues such as how people apprehend reality, the development of thought across the life span, the impact of social contextual factors on mental processes, the ideal of rationality and systematic deviations from that ideal, how different languages and cultures represent different ways of seeing and thinking about the world. Cross-cutting these specific topic areas is a sustained exploration of the process by which contemporary social science is conducted. For example, we consider what constitutes a legitimate social scientific question, what counts as valid empirical evidence, and how data are used to test theories and to support causal claims. B. Keysar, A. Henly, Staff. Autumn, Winter, Spring.
15100-15200-15300. Classics of Social and Political Thought. PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. What is justice? What makes a good society? This sequence examines such problems as the conflicts between individual interest and common good; between morality, religion, and politics; and between liberty and equality. We read classic writings from Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas to such great founders and critics of modernity as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Constant, Tocqueville, Mill, Marx, Nietzsche, and Weber. Writing before our departmentalization of disciplines, they were at the same time sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, economists, and moralists; they offer contrasting alternative conceptions of society and politics that underlie continuing controversies in the social sciences and in contemporary political life. P. Cheney, J. Cooper, A. Dils, A. Glaeser, R. Gooding-Williams, M. Martin, P. Markell, J. McCormick, S. Mithu, R. Pippin, J. Pitti, S. Sankunanandan, W. Schweiker, N. Tarcov, L. Wedeen, L. Zerilli. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

Collegiate Courses

02980. Practicum. (=HUMA 02980) Must be taken for P/F grading; students who fail to complete the course requirements will receive an F on their transcript (no W will be granted). Students receive .25 course credits at completion of course. This course is for students who secure a summer internship. For details, visit frogs.uchicago.edu/internships/course_credit.cfm. Students write a short paper (two to three pages) and give an oral presentation reflecting on their internship experience. Course meets once in Spring Quarter and once in Autumn Quarter. Course fee $150; students in need of financial aid should contact Susan Art at 702.8609. Summer.

20200/30900. Survey Research Overview. (=SOCI 20118/30118) The goal for each student is to find a research question to guide his or her overall research design. The course walks students through the steps involved in survey research: finding funding, writing a grant proposal, sampling, questionnaire design, coding, cleaning, and data analysis. This is a useful introduction for students who are interested in survey research because it provides the big picture of what should be considered when designing survey research and how to approach the different tasks involved in a survey project. This single-quarter course is offered each Autumn and Winter Quarter. M. Van Haisma. Autumn, Winter.

21100-21200. Music in Western Civilization. (=HIST 12700-12800, MUSI 12100-12200) Prior music course or ability to read music not required. Students must confirm enrollment by attending one of the first two sessions of class. Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This two-quarter sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. It does not meet the general education requirement in the dramatic, musical, and visual arts. This two-quarter sequence explores musical works of broad cultural significance in Western civilization. We study pieces not only from the standpoint of musical style but also through the lenses of politics, intellectual history, economics, gender, cultural studies, and so on. Readings are taken both from our music textbook and from the writings of a number of figures such as St. Benedict of Nursia and Martin Luther. In addition to lectures, students discuss important issues in the readings and participate in music listening exercises in smaller sections.


21200. Music in Western Civilization: 1750 to the Present. Spring.

21700-21800-21900. Introduction to Linguistics I, II, III. (=ANTH 27001-27002-27003/37001-37001-37003, LING 21000-21200-21300/31000-31200-31300) These courses typically are taken in sequence. This course is an introductory survey of methods, findings, and problems in areas of major interest within linguistics and of the relationship of linguistics to other disciplines. Topics include the biological basis of language, basic notions of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, basic syntactic typology of language, phonetics, phonology, morphology, language acquisition, linguistic variation, and linguistic change. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

22000-22100-22200. Islamic Thought and Literature I, II, III. (=NEHC 20601-20602-20603/30601-30602-30603) Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence surveys Islamic civilization from the rise of Islam in the seventh century to modern times. Texts in English.

22000. Islamic Thought and Literature I. (=NEHC 20601/30601) This course covers the period from ca. 600 to 1100, concentrating on the career of the Prophet Muhammad; Qur’an and Hadith; the Caliphate; the development of Islamic legal, theological, philosophical, and mystical discourses; sectarian movements; and Arabic literature. T. Qutbuddin. Autumn.

22100. Islamic Thought and Literature II. (=NEHC 206012/30602) This course covers the period from ca. 950 to 1700. We survey such works as literature, theology, philosophy, sufism, politics, and history that were written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. We also consider the art, architecture, and music of the Islamicate traditions. Through primary texts, secondary sources, and lectures, we trace the cultural, social, religious, political, and institutional evolution through the period of the Fatimids, the Crusades, the Mongol invasions, and the “gunpowder empires” (Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals). F. Lewis Winter.

22200. Islamic Thought and Literature III. (=NEHC 20603/30603) This course covers the period from ca. 1800 to the present, exploring works of Arab intellectuals who interpreted various aspects of Islamic philosophy, political theory, and law in the modern age. We look at diverse interpretations concerning the role of religion in a modern society, at secularized and historicized approaches to religion, and at the critique of both religious establishments and nation-states as articulated by Arab intellectuals. Generally, we discuss secondary literature first and the primary sources later. O. Bashkin. Spring.

22500-22600. Introduction to African Civilization I, II. (=AFAM 20701-20702, ANTH 20701-20702, CHDV 21401 [20702], HIST 10101-10102) Completion of the general education requirement in social sciences recommended.
Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This year the African Civilization Sequence focuses primarily on the colonial encounter, with some attention, in the second quarter, to everyday life in the contemporary period. The first quarter focuses on West, North, and Central Africa. The second quarter focuses on Eastern and Southern Africa, including Madagascar. We explore various aspects of how the colonial encounter transformed local societies, even as indigenous African social structures profoundly molded and shaped these diverse processes. Topics include the institution of colonial rule, independence movements, ethnicity and interethic violence, ritual and the body, love, marriage, money, and popular culture. R. Jean-Baptiste, Autumn; J. Cole, Winter.

23000-23100. Introduction to the Civilizations of South Asia I, II. (=ANTH 24101-24102, HIST 10800-10900, SALC 20100-20200, SASC 20000-20100) PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This sequence introduces core themes in the formation of culture and society in South Asia from the early modern period until the present. The Winter Quarter focuses on Islam in South Asia, Hindu-Muslim interaction, Mughal political and literary traditions, and South Asia’s early encounters with Europe. The Spring Quarter analyzes the colonial period (i.e., reform movements, the rise of nationalism, communalism, caste, and other identity movements) up to the independence and partition of India. M. Alam, Winter; R. Majumdar, Spring.

23500-23600-23700. Introduction to the Civilizations of East Asia I, II, III. (=EALC 10800-10900-11000, HIST 15100-15200-15300) Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This is a three-quarter sequence on the civilizations of China, Japan, and Korea, with emphasis on major transformation in these cultures and societies from the Middle Ages to the present. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

24000-24100. Introduction to Russian Civilization I, II. (=HIST 13900-14000, RUSS 25100-25200) Taking these courses in sequence is recommended but not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This two-quarter, interdisciplinary course studies geography, history, literature, economics, law, fine arts, religion, sociology, and agriculture, among other fields, to see how the civilization of Russia has developed and functioned since the ninth century. The first quarter covers the period up to 1801; the second, since 1801. The course has a common lecture by a specialist in the field, usually on a topic about which little is written in English. Two weekly seminar meetings are devoted to discussion of the readings, which integrate the materials from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives. The course attempts to inculcate an understanding of the separate elements of Russian civilization. Emphasis is placed on discovering indigenous elements of Russian civilization and how they have reacted to the pressures and impact of other civilizations, particularly Byzantine, Mongol-Tataric, and Western. The course also considers problems of the social sciences, such as the way in which the state has dominated society, stratification, patterns of legitimization of the social order, symbols of collective social and cultural identity, the degrees of pluralism in society, and the autonomy an individual has vis-à-vis the social order. Also examined are such problems as the role of the center in directing the periphery and its cultural, political, and economic order; the mechanisms of control over the flow of resources and the social surplus; and processes of innovation and modernization. This course is offered in alternate years. Not offered 2010–11; will be offered 2011–12.

24001-24002-24003. Colonizations I, II, III. (=ANTH 18301-18302-18303, CRES 24001-24002-24003, HIST 18301-18302-18303) PQ: These courses must be taken in sequence. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This three-quarter sequence approaches the concept of civilization from an emphasis on cross-cultural/societal connection and exchange. We explore the dynamics of conquest, slavery, colonialism, and their reciprocal relationships with concepts such as resistance, freedom, and independence, with an eye toward understanding their interlocking role in the making of the modern world. Themes of slavery, colonization, and the making of the Atlantic world are covered in the first quarter. Modern European and Japanese colonialism in Asia and the Pacific is the theme of the second quarter. The third quarter considers the processes and consequences of decolonization, both in the newly independent nations and the former colonial powers. J. Saville, R. Gutiérrez, Autumn; F. Richard, K. Fikes, S. Palmié, J. Kelly, Winter; H. Agrama, Spring.

25100. Urban Structure and Process. (=CRES 20104, GEOG 22700/32700, SOCI 20104/30104) This course reviews competing theories of urban development, especially their ability to explain the changing nature of cities under the impact of advanced industrialism. Analysis includes a consideration of emerging metropolitan regions, the microstructure of local neighborhoods, and the limitations of the past U.S. experience as a way of developing worldwide urban policy. O. McRoberts. Spring.

25501-25502-22503. Foundations of Education. (=UTEP 35501-35502-35503) PQ: Consent of instructor and concurrent registration in SOC 25504. These courses must be taken in sequence during the same academic year. Credit for each quarter is granted if all three courses are completed successfully. This is a yearlong sequence on the foundations of education in urban contexts. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

25501. Schools and Communities. This course focuses on communities, families, and the organization of schools. It emphasizes historical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives as students explore questions about why we have public schools, why they are organized as they are (especially in urban contexts), and how these institutions might be reformed. The topics covered represent essential intellectual perspectives for any professional who seeks to work in an urban school context. This course has been designed to afford students with multiple analytic lenses to complement and integrate students’ field experiences, tutoring work, and “soul strand” reflections across the year. The course project requires students to use what they have learned to conduct an in-depth school study. Autumn.

25502. Human Development and Learning. The focus of this course is the child, and the course provides a variety of lenses through which to look
at children. Using the rich professional resources of the Center for Urban School Improvement and the University of Chicago Charter School, students are introduced to approaches to observing children for different purposes; the prominent, and sometimes contradictory, theories of learning and child development; what we know about motivation and engagement and implication for the classroom; and the sociocultural contexts that influence both student performance and the way we look at children. Each section of the course includes an observation assignment that builds towards the final assignment of producing a study of a schoolchild that the student has tutored. Winter.

25503. Teaching and Learning in Urban Schools. In this course, students not only survey philosophies of education but also participate in philosophy by engaging in the kind of questions to which philosophers seek answers. The guide is John Dewey, the philosopher who has left the deepest stamp on the University of Chicago in general and the Urban Teacher Preparation Program (UTEP) in particular. This course includes a look at the work of Dewey, his contemporary counterparts, and his critics. Students also explore the influence of philosophy on teaching and learning, especially as it pertains to curriculum. For the final assignment, students conduct a teacher study and revise their own philosophy in light of the course readings and discussions. Spring.

25504. Elements of Literacy Instruction I. (=UTEP 35504) PQ: Consent of instructor and concurrent registration in SOSC 25501-25502-25503. Open only to UTEP students. This course lasts for the entire first year of the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) and directly supports the clinical work of tutoring three elementary students. The objectives of this course are to help students gain an understanding of the ways in which children approach literacy-related tasks and to have an initial experience with some elements of the Balanced Literacy Framework. Through tutoring experiences and course work, students are introduced to a variety of instructional and assessment strategies related to literacy (e.g., STEP assessment, running records, guided reading) with an emphasis on using data to support instructional decisions. Students are required to document each tutoring lesson and communicate with both parents and teachers regarding student progress. Sessions are organized around a case study format as well as observations and video of exemplary practice. Student video is shared and analyzed. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

26100-26200-26300. Introduction to Latin American Civilization I, II, III. (=ANTH 23101-23102-23103, CRES 16101-16102-16103, HIST 16101-16102-16103/36101-36102-36103, LACS 16100-16200-16300/34600-34700-34800) Taking these courses in sequence is not required. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies. This course introduces the history and cultures of Latin America (e.g., Mexico, Central America, South America, Caribbean Islands). Autumn Quarter examines the origins of civilizations in Latin America with a focus on the political, social, and cultural features of the major pre-Columbian civilizations of the Maya, Inca, and Aztec. The quarter concludes with consideration of the Spanish and Portuguese conquest and the construction of colonial societies in Latin America. Winter Quarter addresses the evolution of colonial societies, the wars of independence, and the emergence of Latin American nation-states in the changing international context of the nineteenth century. Spring Quarter focuses on the twentieth century, with special emphasis on the challenges of economic, political, and social development in the region. This course is offered every year. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

26900. The Complex Problem of World Hunger. (=BIOS 02810, BPRO 24800, ENST 24800) PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing. This course does not meet requirements for the biological sciences major. Few of our policymakers are experts in economics, agronomy, food science, and molecular biology, yet all of these disciplines are essential for developing strategies to end world hunger. Choosing one country as a test case, we look at the history, politics, governmental structure, population demographics, and agricultural challenges. We then study the theory of world markets, global trade, and microeconomics of developing nations, as well as the promise and limitation of traditional breeding and biotechnology. J. Malamy. Spring.


28200-28300. Problems in Gender Studies. PQ: Second-year standing or higher. Completion of the general education requirement in social sciences or humanities, or the equivalent. May be taken in sequence or individually. This two-quarter interdisciplinary sequence is designed as an introduction to theories and critical practices in the study of feminism, gender, and sexuality. Both classic texts and recent conceptualizations of these contested fields are examined. Problems and cases from a variety of cultures and historical periods are considered, and the course pursues their differing implications in local, national, and global contexts. Both quarters also engage questions of aesthetics and representation, asking how stereotypes, generic conventions, and other modes of circulated fantasy have contributed to constraining and emancipating people through their gender or sexuality.

28200. Problems in the Study of Gender. (=ENGL 10200, GNDR 10100, HIST 29306) This course addresses the production of particularly gendered norms and practices. Using a variety of historical and theoretical materials, it addresses how sexual difference operates in various contexts (e.g., nation,
race, class formation; work, the family, migration, imperialism, postcolonial relations). K. Schilt, Winter; D. Nelson, Autumn.

28300. Problems in the Study of Sexuality. (=ENGL 10300, GNDR 10200) This course focuses on histories and theories of sexuality: gay, lesbian, heterosexual, and otherwise. This exploration involves looking at a range of materials from anthropology to the law and from practices of sex to practices of science. S. Michaels, Autumn; B. Cohler, Winter.

29500. Readings in Social Sciences in a Foreign Language. PQ: At least one year of language. Students are required to make arrangements with appropriate instructors and obtain consent of senior adviser. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

29700. Independent Study in the Social Sciences. PQ: Consent of instructor and senior adviser. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring.

29900. BA Paper in Russian Civilization. PQ: Consent of instructor and undergraduate program chair. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. This is a reading and research course for independent study related to BA research and BA paper preparation. Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring.

34500-34600. Anthropology of Museums I, II. (=ANTH 24511-24512/34501-34502, CHDV 38101-38102, MAPS 34500-34600) PQ: Advanced standing and consent of instructor. This sequence examines museums from a variety of perspectives. We consider the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the image and imagination of African American culture as presented in local museums, and museums as memorials as exemplified by Holocaust exhibitions. Several visits to area museums required. R. Fogelson, M. Fred. Winter, Spring.

39000. Anthropology of Disability. (=ANTH 20405/30405, CHDV 30405, HMRT 25210/35210, MAPS 36900) PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing. This seminar undertakes to explore “disability” from an anthropological perspective that recognizes it as a socially constructed concept with implications for our understanding of fundamental issues about culture, society, and individual differences. We explore a wide range of theoretical, legal, ethical, and policy issues as they relate to the experiences of persons with disabilities, their families, and advocates. The final project is a presentation on the fieldwork. M. Fred. Autumn.