Sociology

Department Website: http://sociology.uchicago.edu

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The discipline of sociology explores the nature, structure and dynamics of social life, as also its causes and consequences for the world. With this broad mandate, sociology encompasses a diversity of substantive interests, methodological approaches, and theoretical orientations. Sociologists study diverse social phenomena ranging from online conversations, friendship and families to neighborhoods, governments, and global markets. They study cities and communities, inequality, social mobility and social class, patterns of population change and migration, social identities such as race, class and gender, ethnic relations and social conflict, social media and digital interaction, and social dimensions of sex, health, business, education, law, politics, religion and science. Sociologists study the emergence, stabilization, disintegration and wide-ranging implications of these social institutions, behaviors and meanings. Methodologies of the field range from ethnography, interviews and historical research to surveys, computational modeling and big data analysis.

The University of Chicago’s sociology department was first in the United States, and it stewards the American Journal of Sociology, the discipline’s longest running sociology journal. Chicago sociology builds on these legacies by continuing to sponsor path-breaking research. Chicago training in sociology confers deep understanding of social organization and human relations, along with skill in drawing inferences from data, which have made it attractive for students considering careers in business, social media, data science, education, law, marketing, medicine, journalism, social work, politics, public administration, and urban planning. Chicago’s sociology education forms an excellent basis for specialized graduate work, and affords entry to careers in federal, state, and local agencies, as well as into business enterprises, private foundations, and research institutes. Chicago’s sociology program provides a preeminent foundation for students considering careers in advanced research and university teaching. The program is designed to meet the needs of diverse students, and students declare a student-designed specialty that reflects their coursework and BA thesis research, such as social policy or social analytics.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students pursuing a BA degree in sociology are expected to complete the following requirements.

A. Social Theory

Two required courses acquaint students with some of the fundamental problems and analytic perspectives of the field of sociology.

SOCI 20002 Social Structure and Change. The central objective of this course is to introduce students to the sociological study of individuals in society—how
individual actions are shaped by their position in society, while contributing to its structure and change. We focus on sociological approaches to American society, its position in the international system and principal dimensions including race and ethnicity, age, gender, and social class.

SOCI 20005 Sociological Theory. Drawing on the classics as well as on contemporary works in sociological theory, this course raises questions about the nature of sociological theory and its relation to both empirical research and sociological inquiry. Authors include Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Dewey, Parsons, and Merton.

B. Methodology

Students are required to take at least one of the following methodology courses.

SOCI 20001 Sociological Methods. This course introduces the philosophy and practice of social research. This course explores questions of causality in social research and the limits of knowledge. It then covers the basic practices that are a component of all methods of social research through an in-depth examination of interviews, ethnography, surveys, archival, online and computational research. Students spend the quarter working on a series of assignments that culminate in a research proposal for the BA thesis.

SOCI 20111 Survey Analysis I. This course teaches students how to analyze survey data and write up the results: basic logic of multivariate causal reasoning and its application to OLS regression, percentage tables, and log odds, with an emphasis on communicating insights.

SOCI 20140 Qualitative Field Methods. This course introduces techniques and approaches to ethnographic field research. Emphasis is placed on quality of attention and awareness of perspective as foundational aspects of the craft. Students conduct research at a site, compose and share field notes, and produce a final paper distilling sociological insight from fieldwork.

C. Statistics

Students are required to take the following statistics requirement.

SOCI 20004 Statistical Methods of Research. This required course provides a comprehensive introduction to widely used quantitative methods in sociology and related social sciences. Topics include analysis of variance and multiple regression, tools used often by practicing social scientists. Substitutes for this course are STAT 20000 Elementary Statistics or higher. Students with examination credit for Statistics may count it toward this requirement, although we encourage such students to take an additional social science statistics course.

D. Additional Courses

Students must take seven additional courses in sociology or related fields, and at least four of these must be in sociology. They may be drawn from any of the 20000-level courses in sociology and, after completing SOCI 20002 Social Structure and Change, from any 30000-level courses in sociology that have not been cross listed with undergraduate numbers. Students may also count graduate courses
(e.g., 40000-level or higher) in which they may enroll with permission of course instructors toward this requirement.

Courses outside of sociology must be approved by the undergraduate program director. Students must submit an online petition through the Sociology department website (http://sociology.uchicago.edu/undergraduate) for review. With a few exceptions, courses offered in the Division of the Social Sciences are accepted. Other courses with significant social science content or special relevance to a student's BA thesis may also be accepted.

**Area of Specialization.** At least three of the additional courses in sociology or related fields, outlined above, must comprise a self-defined area of specialization. Students will declare a specialization which reflects an emphasis of their coursework and BA thesis research. Students in the class of 2019 and beyond are required to develop a specialization; students in the classes of 2017 and 2018 may elect to do so.

Students are encouraged to consider their specialization from the time that they enter the program in order to guide their selection of courses and prepare them for the substantial research project of the BA thesis. Students formally propose their specialization at the start of their penultimate quarter of residence (ordinarily, this will be due in January of the student’s fourth year). The proposal should include a theme with three (or more) courses in sociology or related fields students have completed or are completing within that domain. These proposals are to be submitted in an online form on the department website (http://sociology.uchicago.edu/undergraduate) and must be approved by the undergraduate program director. Some examples of specializations might be:

- **Urban Studies** (e.g., SOCI 20215 Urban Health, SOCI 20219 Urban Ethnography, SOCI 20221 Crime and the City)
- **Social Policy** (e.g., SOCI 20106 Political Sociology, SOCI 20192 The Effects of Schooling, PBPL 22300 Policy Implementation)
- **Gender and Sexuality** (e.g., SOCI 20107 Sociology of Human Sexuality, SOCI 20175 The Sociology of Deviant Behavior, GNSE 10310 Theories of Gender and Sexuality)
- **Organizations** (e.g., SOCI 20101 Organizational Analysis, PLSC 27500 Organizational Decision Making, ECON 28000 Industrial Organization)
- **Social Analytics** (e.g., SOCI 20157 Mathematical Models, SOCI 20209 Culture and Social Networks, STAT 22600 Analysis of Categorical Data)
- **Demography** (e.g., SOCI 20123 The Family, SOCI 28062 American Families: Inequality and Change, SOCI 20103 Social Stratification)

E. BA Thesis

During their fourth year, students majoring in sociology are expected to complete an original project of sociological inquiry on a topic of their choice, culminating in a final paper from twenty to forty pages in length. The project is an independent
research project in which questions are formulated and data are collected and analyzed by the student. Recent projects have included studies of emerging forms of social interaction on the Internet, conflict and safety in urban Chicago neighborhoods, immigration and national identity in Germany and Guatemala, processes of gendering in the workplace, homosexuality and AIDS in South Africa, church leadership transition among Korean immigrants, the power of public rhetoric in public housing, role models among Mexican-American youth, gender roles in families of graduate students, peer pressure and teenage pregnancy, and attitudes toward immigration.

The senior project is written under the guidance of an assigned preceptor from the department, and a faculty member that students select during Spring quarter of the BA Thesis Seminar. After a faculty member agrees to advise a student’s thesis, the student will have them sign a hard-copy of the advisor consent form available for printing from the department website, which is to be turned into the Sociology department office. Students may register for additional reading courses (SOCI 29997 Readings in Sociology); however, only two sociology reading/research courses can be counted toward courses required for the sociology major.

BA Seminar. The senior project is researched, discussed, and written in the context of the B.A Thesis Seminar which is a required yearlong course. Students are required to attend the senior seminar in Spring Quarter of their third year and in the Autumn and Winter Quarters of their fourth year, but they must register for the seminar (SOCI 29998 Sociology BA Thesis Seminar), in only one of the three terms. Students who plan to study abroad during any of these quarters must still participate in the seminar by completing required assignments and submitting them online and on time. The completed thesis is submitted during Spring Quarter of their fourth year.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Units</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 20002</td>
<td>Social Structure and Change</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 20005</td>
<td>Sociological Theory</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>or approved substitute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCI 20001</td>
<td>Sociological Methods</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 20111</td>
<td>Survey Analysis I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCI 20140</td>
<td>Qualitative Field Methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCI 20004</td>
<td>Statistical Methods of Research</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three approved courses in an area of specialization</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four additional courses in sociology or related fields</td>
<td>400</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCI 29998</td>
<td>Sociology BA Thesis Seminar</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Units</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></td>
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No more than three courses from outside sociology and no more than two Reading & Research courses may be used toward the major. Students must submit an online petition (http://sociology.uchicago.edu/undergraduate) for approval of courses outside sociology. See "Additional Courses" section for details.

**GRADING**

All courses required for completion of the sociology program must be taken for quality grades (e.g., not P/F).

**HONORS**

If their cumulative GPA is at or above 3.25 and their GPA in the major is at or above 3.5, students may be nominated for graduation with honors on the basis of the excellence of their thesis. The thesis must be based on substantial individual research conducted under the guidance of a faculty member, and it must be evaluated both by the student's adviser and by the program chair at A- or A.

**ENTERING THE MAJOR**

No special application is required for admission to the sociology program, but students should discuss their plans with their College adviser prior to declaring the major. They must then declare their intention to major in the student portal and inform the Sociology department website, which includes a short entry survey. Students may enter the program at any time upon completion of any social sciences core sequence, and no later than the beginning of Spring quarter in their third year.

Students are encouraged to complete the required introductory sociology courses (SOCI 20002 Social Structure and Change and SOCI 20005 Sociological Theory) as early as possible, and to enroll in a required methodology course by Spring quarter of their third year, the quarter in which students begin the BA Thesis Seminar.

**ADVISING**

Students should address technical questions regarding the program (e.g., required courses, petitions) to the undergraduate program director. During Spring quarter of the third year, students will also select a faculty member to serve as adviser. Students may wish to contact their faculty adviser to address general questions regarding the discipline of sociology, and to receive guidance in designing an individualized program of study and selecting a specialization.

**Handbook**

Students interested in pursuing the BA degree in sociology are encouraged to read the brochure *Undergraduate Program in Sociology*, which is available in the Office of the Department of Sociology (SS 307).