SOCIOLOGY (SO)

SO 132 Issues and Investigations in Sociology  (3 credits)
This course introduces the student to the discipline of sociology as both a body of knowledge and as a perspective from which to view the world. This course examines the basic concepts, theories and methods of sociology inquiry in the context of a substantive area. The goal is to develop in students an appreciation of the social forces that shape, organize and constitute human behavior.

SO 198 Experimental course in SO  (3 credits)
Experimental courses explore curriculum development, with specific content intended for evolution into a permanent course. A topic may be offered twice before it becomes a permanent course. Students may repeat experimental courses with a different topic for credit.

SO 199 Experimental course in SO  (3 credits)
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SO 225 Drugs and Society  (3 credits)
This course explicates the basic principles of sociology in the context of an investigation of the socio-cultural milieu within which drug use occurs. The aim is to locate patterns of drug use and abuse within a historical, legal and sociological context, to familiarize students with methods of intervention and treatment, and to develop a more accurate appreciation of the effect of various drugs on the individual.

SO 241 Diversity, Minorities and Social Change  (3 credits)
This course examines the growing social diversity of contemporary societies. It considers the changing nature and significance of minorities in historical and cross-cultural perspective. Minority status, ethnicity and race, group formation, structural disadvantage, migration and multiculturalism are among the key ideas considered. Other dimensions of social diversity, such as gender, age, class, disability and sexual orientation, will also be studied. Social policy implications of current issues in diversity and minority status will be addressed.

SO 242 Social Problems  (3 credits)
This course examines the nature and significance of social problems in contemporary society. The specific problems addressed vary from year to year, but may include poverty, racism, youth alienation, illiteracy, gender-related issues, war and environmental crises. These concrete problems will be studied from a variety of sociological perspectives which address aspects of the social construction of problems; for example, processes through which problems are discovered, defined and publicized. Such processes and the problems they shape will be considered within the context of a sociological overview of historical and structural tendencies in modern societies.

SO 244 Deviance and Social Control  (3 credits)
This course examines the process of deviance in American society and other cultures, with a focus on sociological theories of deviant behavior and deviant groups. The origins, organization and societal reactions to forms of deviant behavior, such as juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, prostitution, pool hustling, mental disorders, violence and white-collar crime, will be examined and discussed. A further focus will be on the problems and possibilities of doing research on deviant groups.

SO 246 Criminal and Social Justice  (3 credits)
The issue of crime, punishment, and justice are fundamental topics of our daily lives. Discussions of crime pervade our news, entertainment, public policy, and civil discourse. Likewise, discussions of justice are linked to our perception of crime and its causes. This course will examine the topics of crime, punishment and justice from a critical perspective. We will question our assumptions about what causes crime, what constitute criminal behavior, and our contemporary approaches to dealing with it. This will include cross-country comparisons and discussions of radical approaches. Finally, we will look at uneven applications of justice based on social categories such as race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and sexual orientation. As a result, students will have a greater understanding and awareness of the complexities of criminal and social justice, and their relationship to both.

SO 248 Human Trafficking and Global Slavery  (3 credits)
It is estimated that there are more than 30 million slaves worldwide, and that this number is expected to continue increasing. SO 248 will investigate the phenomenon of human trafficking and global slavery from a number of frameworks including historical, cultural, economic, and political as well as through a variety of lenses, such as sex, race, religion and environmental. Students will explore the realities of exploitation, objectification, alienation, and violence associated with human trafficking through a mixed methods approach utilizing video, readings and research. The course will explore how businesses and consumers benefit from supply chains that are supported by the forced labors of individuals around the world, and the resulting human and environmental impact of forced labor practices.

SO 252 Health, Illness and Everyday Life  (3 credits)
This course explores how our understandings and experiences of health and illness are socially conditioned. It also examines the different levels at which we are oriented to the possibility of illness in everyday life. Hence, studying the social meanings of health and illness provides for a deeper understanding of ourselves and the situations that we inhabit. Through readings from the social sciences, literature and philosophy, as well as films, class discussions and written exercises, students will explore a variety of issues related to understanding the phenomena of health and illness. Course evaluation will be based on written exercises, a final paper and class participation.

SO 256 Contemporary Issues in Health Care  (3 credits)
This course will examine the social forces that shape contemporary health care systems and the impact these forces have on patients, providers, and the public. The course will cover a range of topics including the history and evolution of health care, the role of government and the market in health care, the financing of health care, the organization and delivery of health care services, and the ethical and moral issues that arise in health care.
SO 261 Consulting Sociology  (3 credits)
The course will introduce students to becoming a practicing sociologist and to understand how sociology can be applied in various spheres of society. Students will examine the theories, methods, and contexts of applied and clinical sociology, as well as engage applied sociology through class projects. In learning the skills, challenges, opportunities, costs, outcomes and deliverables related to these fields, students will gain an understanding of how sociology can be used as a powerful and impacting tool in a range of ways in society. By engaging in their own class projects, students will be able to better understand how they can apply what is learned in the real world.
Note: Offered every fall.

SO 263 Sociology of Work and Organizations  (3 credits)
This course emphasizes sociological principles as they relate to the industrial setting. It reviews traditional and contemporary theories of industrial societies and industrialization. The course analyzes general features of the social system, such as roles, statuses, values, strains and communication. The course stresses the relationship between industry and other institutions in society.

SO 264 Technology, Society and Work  (3 credits)
Technological changes have a major impact on the way our society looks and how people function within it. Many of these technological changes are initially felt in the workplace, as our workplace formation and relations have an indelible impact on social formation and relations. At the same time, the relationship can work in the reverse as well, with society dictating how technology is adopted and used both inside and outside of the workplace. In the end, technology, society and work form a triadic relationship, with each impacting and affecting the other in foreseeable and unforeseeable ways. This course will examine this relationship on a national and international level. Through selected readings, videos, current events and class discussions, students will engage in an exploration of these themes, and examine how our technology, society and work may look in the future based on clues from the present and past.
Focus: DIV

SO 265 Talk at Work  (3 credits)
The goal of this course is to learn how interaction in the workplace is conducted. Students will analyze different types of interactions in a variety of work settings, institutional and organizational contexts in order to learn how these interactions are conducted, what types of communication and workplace problems emerge through these interactions, and how these can best be prevented. In order to understand the sociological perspective on talk in institutional settings, we will first examine how ordinary conversations are organized, since these informal conversational patterns provide the basis for other types of interactions. Students will learn how to analyze interactions from a sociological perspective using the theoretical and methodological approaches of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis.

SO 271 Self and Society  (3 credits)
This course introduces students to the sociological study of the individual and their relations with society. The idea of “the self” and the nature of social identity will be examined with respect to socialization processes, interaction contexts and culture. Problems in knowing oneself and others will be considered. The relation of individual action and social structure will be studied in connection with a range of topics, such as gender, ethnicity, age and social class. The course emphasizes the role of communication in mediating relations between individuals and the society in which they live.
Focus: DIV
LSM: DSC

SO 272 Animals in Society  (3 credits)
The study of the relationship between animals and society is a relatively new and growing area of interest within sociology. Understanding our relationship to animals as pets, as food or other products, as laborers, as subjects in laboratory experiments and as wild animals is particularly important in today’s society, where environmental concerns, provision of food for the world’s human population, and ethical debates about the use of other beings are current and likely to be increasingly important. Students will use a sociological perspective to explore the relationship between animals and humans in contemporary society. The methodological approaches focused on include: qualitative sociological techniques such as ethnographic field work, interviewing, discourse analysis, auto-ethnography, or visual sociology. The theoretical perspectives used will fall under the general category of social psychology and may include symbolic interactionist, social constructionist, and ethnomethodological.
LSM: ESR

SO 285 Sociology of Sports  (3 credits)
Sports play a major role in society. They are a major industry, a major recreational outlet, and one of the main mechanisms Americans and others around the globe use for keeping fit and socializing with friends. This course examines the role sports play in a range of social settings, including professional sports, sports in educational institutions, and sports for personal recreation and leisure activities. The course will cover such topics as inequality, the social construction of race, gender and class through sports, socialization into the culture of sports, sports and identity, deviance and sports (including drug use and violence), the globalization of sports, and sports and the media.
Focus: DIV
LSM: AMP; HIND

SO 287 Media, Culture and Society  (3 credits)
This course examines how various forms of modern mass media represent the values and lifestyles of American culture, and how we experience the mass media in our everyday lives. The course will look at forms of media in terms of their socio-historical developments, and study how their histories have been shaped by, and helped to shape, the political-economic structure and cultural lifestyles of American society. The course centers largely on sociological analyses of specific audiovisual examples. These analyses will be conducted in class discussion and written exercises.
LSM: AMP; DSC; MAS

SO 289 Popular Culture in Consumer Societies  (3 credits)
The course explores cultural dimensions of social life associated with development of consumerism in contemporary societies. The emergence of a “consumer society” and corresponding cultural sphere will be outlined. General themes include the commodity basis of cultural practices, the social control of imagination and desire, and the nature of modernity. Specific topics include the rise of popular culture, advertising as a social institution, socialization and the consumer role, marketplace settings and rituals, consumer movements and critiques, and consumption-related environmental problems. Consumption contexts considered include shopping malls, the modern home, tourism and popular entertainment.
LSM: AMP; DSC
SO 292 Sociology of Native American Peoples  (3 credits)
The aim of this course introduces students to and immerses them in Native American culture and society. Topics to be covered include the history of Native Americans since Columbus; Native American beliefs and religions; contemporary Native American culture (with a focus on the Crow and Wampanoag tribes); contemporary social issues and problems; and what lies ahead. The required readings provide a historical and theoretical background; class discussion focuses on more contemporary issues and concerns.
Focus: DIV  
LSM: AMP; DSC

SO 295 Film and Society  (3 credits)
Film as a medium appears in many different formats and settings from television broadcasts to theaters and from DVDs to computers. Social issues and social relations are presented in virtually unexamined fashion and audiences are expected to draw on cultural presuppositions and understandings to achieve an understanding of the film's themes and contents. The course examines several different film styles in order to better understand the methodologies used by film makers to construct understandability. Film styles to be examined include ethnographic, documentary, social commentary and narrative-fiction. Within these different film styles a number of social issues and social relationships will be considered including, in part, the following: cultural pratices and social norms; gender and power relationships; cross dressing and gender transformation; commentary on political and social issues; and, witnessing, truth-telling, trust, honesty and morality in social relationships.
Focus: DIV  
LSM: AMP; DSC

SO 298 Experimental Course in Sociology  (3 credits)
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SO 299 Experimental Course in Sociology  (3 credits)
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SO 300 Community Involvement  (3 credits)
Students engage in approximately two hours of weekly public service within agencies or organizations in the Greater Boston area. In their journals and class discussions, students reflect on both the purposes of that work as well as on its limits as a response to specific needs within the community and more general problems of social justice. Students also conduct participant observation field explorations at their sites. The course explores issues of social responsibility and citizenship in the professions and business world in relation to the social problems that students become acquainted with through their community work.
Focus: DIV  
LSM: DSC; ESR

SO 320 Immigrant Entrepreneurship  (3 credits)
Immigrants go to other lands in search of the economic opportunity and financial security not available in their own homeland. Drawn by the lure of jobs, immigrants frequently set course for industrialized countries, where the demand for labor is high. However, once arriving in these countries, many immigrant groups reject the available jobs and strike their own path by entering into entrepreneurship and opening their own businesses. In the United States, this pattern has played out countless times, as new groups arrive and take the mantle of immigrant entrepreneurship previously held by past groups. This course will examine the phenomena of immigrant entrepreneurship, taking account of past examples as well as current trends. By studying immigrant entrepreneurship, students will achieve a better understanding of what drives certain immigrant groups to chance everything by opening up their own businesses, and how immigrants are able to use the resources available to them to become successful.
Focus: DIV  
LSM: AMP; DSC

SO 324 Sociology of Markets  (3 credits)  
Pre-Req: EC 111.
This is an economic sociology course that concerns markets – How do people and firms make decisions about market transactions? How do we assign value/prices to items? How do people use money? How are markets constructed, and what is the relationship between the economy and civil life/society? Moreover, why is it that dominant conceptions of market behavior are portrayed as asocial, acultural, and apolitical? Students will learn sociological approaches to economic behavior, which provide a rich understanding of how people and firms engage in market transactions. Students will also learn how sociological approaches contrast with economic approaches as well as how they are compatible. Note: Offered once per year.

SO 333 Sociology of the Edge  (3 credits)
This course employs a sociological perspective to examine edges of experience and, through that examination, to reflect on the production of social order and the social processes which shape our existence. In this course students will be asked to walk in another's shoes - someone who is walking on the edge. Students will be asked to consider, "what is it for them". Why do they do what they do? How do they do it? What is it to go 'in harm's way'? What are some of the particular knowings of those who work and play on the ocean? What is it to be ill or dying? How do we deal with loss and grief? What is it to be oppressed and/or imprisoned? What is it to live/work/play in the belly of the beast? And finally, students will be asked to reflect on what all of the above tells us about ourselves, and our world.
Focus: DIV  
LSM: DSC; ESR; HIND

SO 398 Experimental Course in Sociology  (3 credits)
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SO 401 Directed Study in Sociology  (1 to 3 credits)  
This course presents opportunity for superior students to engage in specialized study. (Allows repetition for credit.)

SO 402 Seminar in Sociology  (3 credits)  
This course permits the intensive study of selected topics in small groups of more advanced students. (Allows repetition for credit.)
Note: Not offered regularly. Check with department chair for availability.
SO 421 Internship in Sociology  (3 credits)
An internship provides students with an opportunity to gain on-the-job experience and apply principles and issues raised in the academic discipline to a work environment. Students are required to attend pre-internship workshops sponsored by the Center for Career Services, meet regularly with a faculty advisor, and develop a final paper or special project.