Sociology

Department Website: https://www.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.

Haverford’s Institutional Learning Goals are available on the President’s website, at http://hav.to/learninggoals.

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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCL H155A</td>
<td>Foundations in Social Theory and Foundations in Social Theory</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOCL H155B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCL H215</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods (or equivalent)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or ECON H203</td>
<td>Statistical Methods in Economics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCL H450A</td>
<td>Senior Departmental Studies</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; SOCL H450B</td>
<td>Senior Departmental Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select six additional courses in sociology</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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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.

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, SOCL H450A and SOCL H450B. 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.

**Minor Requirements**

A total of at least six courses including:

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Select at least three 200- and/or 300-level courses in the department.

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

**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 other initiatives. Our majors receive support from both the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship (https://www.haverford.edu/cpgc) and the John B. Hurford ’60 Center for the Arts and Humanities (https://www.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
Courses

**SOCL H130** INTRODUCTION TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES: FRIDGES, FMRIS AND ‘FINSTAS’ IN SOCIAL CONTEXT (1.0 Credit)
*Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
Science and Technology Studies (STS) is the multidisciplinary field that specifies the mutual constitution of science, knowledge, technology and society.  
*(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Only Once)*

**SOCL H155A** FOUNDATIONS IN SOCIAL THEORY (1.0 Credit)  
*Mark Gould, Matthew McKeever*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
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. Section 001 with Gould will highlight works by Durkheim and Freud (supplemented by a bit of Parsons, Mead, etc.). Section 002 with McKeever will highlight works by Durkheim, Mead, and Schutz.  
*(Offered: Spring 2022; typically offered: Every Spring)*

**SOCL H155B** FOUNDATIONS IN SOCIAL THEORY (1.0 Credit)  
*Mark Gould, Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
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. Section 001 with Gould will highlight works by Durkheim and Freud (supplemented by a bit of Parsons, Hegel, etc.). Section 002 with McKeever will highlight works by Marx, Weber, Polanyi, and Durkheim.  
*(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Every Fall)*

**SOCL H170** SEX UNDER CAPITALISM: INTIMATE RELATIONS BETWEEN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY (1.0 Credit)  
*Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
Introducing materialist and social reproduction feminism, and we’ll take on debates about families as economic units, women’s bodies as social factories, gay identity’s relationship to labor and consumption, the “pricing” of unpaid care, and sex work.  
*(Offered: Spring 2022; typically offered: Occasionally)*

**SOCL H209** SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITIES (1.0 Credit)  
*Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
To what extent are romantic desires, physical experiences, and sexual pleasures collective phenomena? This course proceeds from the insight that sexuality is deeply social. We will explore the diversity of sexual desires, practices, meanings, and politics across histories and cultures.  
*(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Occasionally)*

**SOCL H215** QUANTITATIVE METHODS (1.0 Credit)  
*Matthew McKeever*

**Division:** Quantitative; Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
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 2022; typically offered: Every Year)*

**SOCL H217** QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS (1.0 Credit)  
*Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science  
**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World  
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 interview questions, and data coding and analysis. Prerequisite(s): SOCL 155A or SOCL 155B, or instructor consent

(Typically offered: Only Once)

**SOCL H227 SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY: THEORIZING THE BODY ACROSS DUALISMS (1.0 Credit)**

*Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

We tend to think of our bodies as organic vessels - biological and chemical objects that house our rational selves. But our bodies also carry social meanings, and enable social life. This course explores the body through sociological theory.

Prerequisite(s): SOCL H155 or instructor permission

(Typically offered: Only Once)

**SOCL H233 TOPICS IN SOCIOLOGY: RESEARCH ON DISASTERS AND PANDEMICS (1.0 Credit)**

*Matthew McKeever*

**Division:** Social Science

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: Spring 2022; typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H235 CLASS, RACE, AND EDUCATION (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

An examination of the effects of class and race on educational and occupational outcomes, emphasizing the contemporary United States.

(Typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H270 MEASURING EDUCATION (1.0 Credit)**

*Matthew McKeever*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

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: Fall 2021; typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H277 POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

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 Toqueville) as well as more contemporary theories.

(Offered: Spring 2022; typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H297 ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

The sociological analysis of economic systems and the sociological reconstruction of microeconomic theory.

(Typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H298 LAW AND SOCIOLOGY (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science

**Domain(s):** B: Analysis of the Social World

An examination of the jurisprudential consequences derived from the sociological reconstruction of microeconomic and philosophical theories.

(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Occasionally)

**SOCL H450A SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL STUDIES (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould, Matthew McKeever, Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science

Thesis work, two semesters required of majors in their senior year.

(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Every Year)

**SOCL H450B SENIOR DEPARTMENTAL STUDIES (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould, Matthew McKeever, Shelly Ronen*

**Division:** Social Science

Thesis work, two semesters required of majors in their senior year.

(Offered: Spring 2022; typically offered: Every Year)

**SOCL H460 TEACHING ASSISTANT (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science
Students may act as assistants in certain courses that they themselves have already completed. Responsibilities may include the opportunity to lead discussions, informal teaching assistance, a short list of advanced reading and a paper on an agreed topic. *(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Occasionally)*

**SOCL H480 INDEPENDENT STUDY (1.0 Credit)**

*Mark Gould*

**Division:** Social Science

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

*(Offered: Fall 2021; typically offered: Every Year)*