

# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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The sociology department at VCU provides an engaged, learner-centered experience for our undergraduate and graduate students through active involvement in faculty research and community development. Through cutting-edge research, excellent undergraduate and graduate teaching focused on critical thinking, exciting applied opportunities, vital service and community outreach both nationally and internationally, and preparation of students for a wide range of jobs, sociology plays a central role in quality liberal arts education. Sociology is a “social science”; it is a discipline grounded in using sociological theory and the scientific method to create the knowledge necessary for understanding and improving social life. Using theory as a foundation for analysis, sociologists collect and analyze empirical data useful in making decisions related to public life, such as social and economic policy, and private life, such as family and interpersonal health. It is this relationship between sociological theory, as the foundation of critical thinking, and the scientific method, as the guiding principles of analysis, which makes sociology a rapidly expanding field with expertise increasingly sought after by those who craft policies and create programs.

The Department of Sociology offers a Bachelor of Science in Sociology at the undergraduate level, as well as a Master of Science at the graduate level.

- Sociology, Master of Science (M.S.) (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/sociology/sociology-ms/>)
- Sociology, Master of Science (M.S.) with a concentration in digital sociology (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/sociology/sociology-ms-digital/>)

## • **Applied Social Research, Certificate in (Post-baccalaureate graduate certificate) (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/college-humanities-sciences/sociology/applied-social-research-certificate/>)**

### **SOCY 500. Advanced Principles of Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A comprehensive analysis of the concepts and techniques useful for understanding society and culture as well as the social processes and structures operant within these spheres.

### **SOCY 501. The Foundations of Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The foundations of theoretical explanation of the social world is addressed from an historical and philosophical perspective. The emergence of contemporary sociological theory in the 19th and 20th centuries is reviewed.

### **SOCY 502. Contemporary Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A critical assessment is given of such contemporary theoretical orientations as functionalism, conflict theory, exchange theory, symbolic interactionism and phenomenology.

### **SOCY 508. Introduction to Social Statistics. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Introduction to statistical methods applicable in a variety of settings, with emphasis on nonexperimental data. Data description and analysis including chi-square and t-tests, using a statistical computing package. Not applicable toward M.S. in Mathematical Sciences or Computer Science. Crosslisted as: STAT 508.

### **SOCY 510. Domestic and Sexual Violence in Social Context. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Students will learn about the experiences of and responses to sexual and domestic violence in specific social contexts, with a focus on less visible contexts and underserved populations. Examines violence within various family structures and intimate relationships including racial/ethnic minority and immigrant groups and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender relationships, in various community settings including college campuses and the military, and among people with disabilities. Guest lectures provided by community experts in these areas.

### **SOCY 515. Globalization and Transformation: Concepts and Realities. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Examines how globalization significantly affects cultural processes at both local and national levels. Transformations of cultural understandings and practices under such circumstances will be explored. Virtual course components will bring causes, processes and consequences of the transformations of Western, Eastern and developing countries into focus.

### **SOCY 524. Aging and the Minority Community. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. An analysis of the relationship between the aging process and American minority communities. In addition to the sociological factors, the course will examine demographic, physiological and psychological aspects of minority aging. Attention will also focus on dominant social problems and federal policies toward the aged.

### **SOCY 525. Digital Social Problems. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The study of sociological concepts and methods in the analysis of current social problems in the digital environment, including topics such as privacy, obscurity, hacking, danger, crime and war; interpersonal conflicts and harassment; stress, information overload and FOMO, among others. This course explores how individual online behaviors have the effect of reproducing inequality.

### **SOCY 593. Internship in Sexual and Domestic Violence Practice and Research. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 12 hours per week. 3 credits. Provides students practical experiences working in settings that address sexual and domestic violence. Students will focus on various areas including but not limited to service provision, intervention, research and program evaluation. Students will work closely with organizations/agency staff and follow their instructions.

**SOCY 601. Sociological Research Methods. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Review of sociological research methodologies, including research design, ethical issues, measurement, data collection techniques, sampling and the basic logic of qualitative and quantitative analysis. The focus is on developing the student's abilities to critically evaluate uses of methodologies in the research literature and justify methodological choices.

**SOCY 602. Applications of Sociological Research Methods. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisites: SOCY/STAT 508 or equivalent and SOCY 601. Emphasis on applying methods for developing and executing a sociological research project, including the problem statement, theoretical framework, literature review, research design, ethics, sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation of results.

**SOCY 603. Seminar in Population Studies. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Analysis of fertility, mortality and migration from a sociodemographic perspective. Special attention will be paid to sociological determinants of demographic processes and their interrelationships.

**SOCY 604. Sociology of Work in Industry. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Analyses of work relations and the social structures and mechanisms that govern and arise out of them and examination of the social problems that are inherent in the characteristics that make a society an industrial society.

**SOCY 605. Survey Research Methods. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: SOCY 601, SOCY 602 and SOCY/STAT 608, or permission of instructor. Examines all major areas of survey research methodology including sampling, design, data collection methods, questionnaire design, data analysis and data processing. Addresses problems specific to survey research, such as telephone interviewing, constructing large representative samples and nonresponse rates. Crosslisted as: PADM 605.

**SOCY 607. Seminar in Racial and Ethnic Relations in America. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A study of intergroup relations in such areas as busing and school desegregation, racism, minority and athletics, the emergence of white ethnic groups in the political systems, and the position of minorities in legal, economic and medical institutions.

**SOCY 608. Statistics for Social Research. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Prerequisite: STAT/SOCY 508 or SOCY 214 or permission of instructor. Statistical methods applied in social research. Topics include analysis of variance, correlation and regression, including stepwise methods, and the analysis of discrete data. Study of a statistical package, emphasizing manipulation of survey data sets. Not applicable toward M.S. in Mathematical Sciences or Computer Science. Crosslisted as: STAT 608.

**SOCY 609. Seminar in the Family. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Analysis of contemporary family life with an emphasis on the influence of social change. Consideration of current family crises and problems.

**SOCY 610. Complex Organizations. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of complex organizations in society with emphasis on the determinants and effects of organizational structure and process.

**SOCY 611. Studies in the Community. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. The organization of the community with emphasis on major trends in urban development and growth. The interdependence of political, social and economic geographic units. The need for cooperative planning and control.

**SOCY 612. Seminar in the Sociology of Deviant Behavior. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. The nature and functions of deviance. Theories and problems of social control.

**SOCY 613. Social Stratification. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. An in-depth analysis of status differentials in society (e.g., social class, prestige and power).

**SOCY 614. Seminar in the Sociology of Education. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A sociological analysis of education as a social institution with an emphasis on methodological issues and policy implications.

**SOCY 615. Seminar in Mass Communications. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Some theoretical background in sociology is recommended. A sociological analysis of contemporary media and their interrelationships with social systems, media and national development. Special emphasis on media as instruments of social and cultural change.

**SOCY 616. Digital Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. This course covers the sociological underpinnings of apps, likes, shares, profiles and swipes. Many of the digital tools used in society have become critical points of access for education, health care, government and work. Not all groups have the same access to, experience of and returns to using these tools. Digital sociology is emerging from classic social theory and methods to consider these new technologies and how groups interact with them.

**SOCY 620. Seminar in Criminology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examination and analysis of social, psychological, and economic theories and correlates of criminal behavior. Typologies of offenders. Crosslisted as: CRJS 620.

**SOCY 622. Theory Construction. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A consideration of recent social theorists in which emphasis is placed on the logic of theory construction.

**SOCY 624. Community and Community Services for the Elderly. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A conceptual/theoretical overview of community focusing on the ecological, psychological and social dimensions of community and on communities of the aged. Crosslisted as: GRTY 624.

**SOCY 625. Urban Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: graduate standing. A detailed analysis and examination of the social and ecological structures and processes of the modern city with primary emphasis on the macro-level organization of urban life.

**SOCY 630. Social Psychology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Discussion and investigation of selected social psychological issues in sociology, as well as traditional and innovative methodology applied to these issues.

**SOCY 631. Battered Women in the Criminal Justice System. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Provides students with an understanding of (1) the major developments and trends in the law related to battered women in the criminal justice system; (2) the role of the various players in the criminal justice system; (3) how child abuse and sexual abuse are treated in the criminal justice system; and (4) battered women who kill and the defense of battered woman syndrome. Introduces the stages of the criminal justice system as it relates to battered women and their children.

**SOCY 632. Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence: Medical Practice and Policy. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Provides an overview of the sociological perspective on intimate partner and sexual violence as it relates to women's health. Also covers practical responses to violence such as screening, assessment, treatment and referral behaviors of medical providers, as well as policy in the health care setting.

**SOCY 633. Application of the Policy Process to Issues of Violence. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Offers an interdisciplinary approach to understanding different models of decision-making and the policy process found at all levels of American government. The focus is on the public sector with application to private and nonprofit settings. A six-stage model of policy initiation, selection, implementation, evaluation and termination is presented and explored through the use of case studies and examples of policy initiatives related to domestic violence, sexual assault and youth violence. Prepares students to recognize and understand the key stages of and influences on the policy process and apply them in their current and future work settings.

**SOCY 634. Social Contexts of Childhood and Violence. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Course will increase awareness and knowledge of children and adolescents as victims of violence, "absorbers" of violence and perpetrators of violence, as well as the victim-perpetrator dichotomy. Course is informed by an interdisciplinary framework to include neuroscience, trauma-informed practice, socioecological model, child development and resiliency. Topics include children and adolescents' experience with domestic violence, sexual violence, physical abuse, neglect, human trafficking, teen-dating violence, violence against LGBTQ youth, school violence, neighborhood/community violence and violence in the media. This highly interactive course will also consider innovative intervention and prevention strategies and discuss relevant policy issues.

**SOCY 635. Theorizing Gender Violence. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Teaches students to think sociologically and structurally about gender and violence. Familiarizes students with sociological and feminist scholarship and explanatory theories related to preventing and responding to gender violence. Students will learn about the experiences of and responses to sexual and domestic violence in specific social contexts, with a focus on less visible and underserved populations. Guest lectures provided by community experts in these areas. Also examines social policy and research implications of various approaches.

**SOCY 640. Seminar in Political Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Analysis of structures and processes of political organization. Examination of the creation and management of power, diffusion and regulation of conflict, and the politics of modernization and bureaucratization.

**SOCY 645. The Sociology of Health and Illness. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. An examination of sociocultural factors in health and illness and the influence of social factors on recovery and rehabilitation. Special attention will be paid to the methodology found in current studies.

**SOCY 646. Seminar in the Sociology of Mental Health and Disorder. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Seminar in social organizational causes of clinical depression, schizophrenia, neurosis and personality disorders. Focus is on prevention through social engineering and social policy. Impact of social change, sex roles and socialization processes on rates of mental disorder emphasized.

**SOCY 650. Theories of Social and Institutional Change. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. A study of social change with emphasis on institutional settings. Topics examined include alternative theoretical perspectives on change, structural sources of change, approaches to planned change, and the role and function of change agents.

**SOCY 652. Environmental Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Exploration of the social and political dimensions of human-environment relationships through the lens of environmental sociology and human geography. The course focuses on large-scale, planetary transformations often referred to as climate change, a diverse range of effects that are becoming increasingly salient parts of our everyday lives.

**SOCY 654. Political Economy. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. A rigorous introduction to historical and theoretical modes of inquiry that are foundational to a wide range of critical sociology. An exploration of the major sociological paradigms for analyzing relations among state, economy and society. Topical focus will vary each term, but will include a critical evaluation of liberal political economy, an investigation of 20th century capitalism and the rise of neoliberalism, and the intersections of race, gender and class in the modern world-system.

**SOCY 656. Social Network Analysis. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students or with permission of the instructor. Provides a solid introduction to the theoretical foundations, basic measures and common applications of Social Network Analysis. Begins with overview of what it means to practice SNA and discusses the implications and use of SNA as social science methodology. Using online discussions and standard SNA methodological tools, students will engage in peer discussions and complete a series of practica designed to introduce the SNA methodology. Course will also take a broad look at how SNA has been used in understanding social mobility, interpersonal violence and terrorism/gangs. By course end, students will have an understanding of the theories and basic measures and methods of SNA.

**SOCY 660. Seminar in the Sociology of Gender. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. An analysis of the social construction of gender, the social forces that create and maintain gender hierarchy, and how the gender hierarchy intersects with other systems of inequality such as race, class and sexuality.

**SOCY 673. Public Sociology. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Provides students an opportunity to reflect on public sociology and develop skills in disseminating their sociological insights to a broader public. Some of the major questions addressed include: What is public sociology? What/who is the sociological audience? What is the relationship between academia and public intellectual life? How does the internet influence the availability of publics? How does style of writing determine our relationship to different publics?.

**SOCY 676. Digital Research Methods and Design. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. To engage with both the possibilities and the critiques of digital data, this course speaks two languages – sociology and data science. The course introduces the tools needed for analyzing "native-born" data in order to explain how human behavior both shapes and is shaped by digital data. Methods taught in this course are digital ethnography, digital content analysis, data sampling from social media and Twitter hashtag sampling. Students should be prepared to learn basic Python programming language in order to evaluate the science behind the internet.

**SOCY 677. Digital Data Visualization and Analysis. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. This course is specifically designed for students using digital data to understand and explain social phenomena. The goal of the course is to introduce students to data visualization including both the principles and techniques. Students will learn how to present information in an understandable, effective and aesthetic manner for the purposes of explaining insights and messages found in the data. While the emphasis of this course is on the motivation for the visualization method chosen, students will also explore common visualization tools.

**SOCY 690. Practicum in the Teaching of College Sociology. 1 Hour.**

Semester course; 1 credit. Enables students to develop skills in the design and conduct of undergraduate courses in sociology through observation and supervised experiences. Credits not applicable toward the B.S. in Sociology.

**SOCY 691. Special Topics. 3 Hours.**

Semester course; 3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 3 credits. Seminars on current specialized areas of sociological and anthropological interest.

**SOCY 692. Independent Study. 1-6 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-3 credits. A maximum of 6 credits may be submitted toward the master's degree. Prerequisites: permission of instructor and graduate program committee.

**SOCY 693. Internship. 1-6 Hours.**

Semester course; variable hours (50 contact hours per credit). 1-6 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Permission of the internship coordinator and graduate director required for enrollment. A graduate-level internship that allows students to explore professional opportunities as related to the discipline of sociology. Students will be required to write a professional paper applying sociological concepts and methodologies to their experiences in the setting, as appropriate.

**SOCY 694. Practicum in Sociology. 1-6 Hours.**

Semester course; variable hours. 1-6 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Provides opportunities for training experiences in sociological applications under faculty supervision leading to progressively greater degrees of skill development. Specific experiences offered vary from semester to semester.

**SOCY 698. M.S. Thesis. 1-6 Hours.**

1-6 credits. May be repeated.

**SOCY 699. Seminar in Sociological Practice. 1-3 Hours.**

Semester course; 1-3 lecture hours (delivered online, face-to-face or hybrid). 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of six credits. Enrollment is restricted to graduate students in the M.S. in Sociology program who have completed 18 credit hours in graduate-level (500 and above) sociology courses. The purpose of this course is to professionalize students pursuing multiple forms of sociological practice through interactions with the course instructor and student peers who are undertaking thesis, practicum and internship projects. Students will meet regularly with the course instructor to discuss progress/issues/insights with regard to their projects and topics relevant to sociological practice. Students will make progress on their individual projects in a structured format and present their work at the end of each semester. Graded as S/U/F.