



MORTON HALL

# **SOCIOLOGY COURSES**

**SPRING 2020**

**Detailed descriptions of Sociology courses  
offered in the upcoming semester**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

Conference Training Center 203, Huntsville, AL 35899  
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The following 100-level courses have no prerequisites and count toward Charger Foundations.

**SOC 100 | Introduction to Sociology (3 hours)**  
***Various Instructors* | Online options**



Charger  
Foundations

This course is designed as an overall introduction to the field of sociology. The course generally begins with an introduction to the goals of sociological research, the methods used by sociologists, and some of the basic concepts of what “society” and “culture” are. This course will include study of the major social processes—socialization, deviation, stratification, power, and social change—and how they develop in the context of major social institutions—gender, race, the family, the economy, the educational system, the political system, and many more. A main goal of this course is to develop a “theoretical perspective” on these kinds of things; in other words, sociologists are not just interested in “the educational system” or “gender relations,” but in understanding why things are the way they are, and how they came to be that way.

**SOC 103 | Introduction to Criminology (3 hours)**  
***Dr. Robert Thomson***



Charger  
Foundations

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with the problem of crime in society. What is crime and who is a criminal? Who gets to decide? And how does society respond to crime? Students will learn to think about crime and deviance with the tools of social science. Students will learn how to define and measure crime, and we will explore criminological theories of crime and social control.

*The following sociology courses are open to students who have completed SOC 100.*

### **SOC 302 | Sociological Theory (3 hours)**

***Dr. Christina Steidl***

From, “How does society hold itself together?” to “What is the basis of our ‘self’? — These are the types of questions pondered by sociologists since the beginning of the discipline. This course explores sociologists’ basic questions and the theories they pose to address them. Beginning with the classic statements we trace ideas as they are expressed through theorists’ writings through contemporary presentations. Theoretical positions are further understood within the context of modernization and the times in which authors write. Students will be able to engage in the theoretical debates that form the basis of the sociological enterprise, and keep the discipline dynamic and lively. Through writing and discussion we decipher, critique, apply, and sometimes even develop social theories.

### **SOC 303 | Statistics for the Social Sciences (3 hours)**

***Dr. Kyle Knight***

This course is required for all sociology majors because familiarity with statistical methods is an integral part of understanding and participating in sociological research. This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and skills involved in performing statistical analyses of quantitative social data. In the first part of the course, we will concentrate on descriptive statistics. These include measures of central tendency, variation, and distribution that allow social scientists to describe social phenomena. We will then move on to inferential statistics, which allow social scientists to infer types of relationships between two or more variables. The concepts and skills learned in this part of the course include calculation of measures of association, calculation of confidence intervals, and hypothesis testing, including an introduction to basic regression methods. Assessment will consist of three exams, homework and lab assignments.

## **SOC 313 | Qualitative Research Methods (3 hours)**

***Dr. Jennifer Sims***

Qualitative Research Methods teaches the theory behind and technical skills to conduct qualitative social science research. The course covers focus group research, interviewing, content analysis, and ethnography (participant observation research) and includes multiple hands on learning activities plus a data analysis practicum. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to identify, collect, organize, and analyze qualitative data as well as effectively communicate results to academic and professional audiences.

## **SOC 314 | Data Analysis (3 hours)**

***Dr. Kyle Knight***

This course is designed to build your skills in analyzing quantitative social science data and improve your understanding of how to use the computer program SPSS to conduct statistical analyses. Students will gain hands-on, practical experience using SPSS to compute and interpret descriptive statistics, measures of association, regression models, and inferential statistics using real sociological data from the General Social Survey and other publicly available datasets. The focus will be on learning how to choose the appropriate data analysis technique for a research situation, carry out analyses, draw meaningful conclusions, and clearly communicate the results. By the end of the semester, you will have gained very useful, valuable, and in-demand skills that could open up professional opportunities for you in a variety of career fields.

**SOC 319 | Deviance and Social Control (3 hours)**

***Dr. Mitch Berbrier* | Online**

This course is designed as a general survey of the sociology of deviance and social control. More specifically, this course is about perspectives on deviance: methods of looking at deviance and deviant behavior, as well as approaches to controlling that behavior. We take a somewhat historical approach to the literature. Early in the course we look at the development of some non-sociological perspectives (the demonic, classical, and pathological perspectives), and also discuss some of the traditional sociological approaches (control theory, functionalism, opportunity theory). Then we engage some of the more contemporary cultural perspectives in more detail (especially constructionist and interactionist perspective) and conclude with conflict perspectives (including the Marxist and feminist views). While we will look at how some social scientists have conceptualized why “others” are so weird, sick, cruel, deviant etc., and exactly what they think (or thought) we have to do to fix them, we will spend much of our time looking at the process of deviance -- how people come to be understood as “deviant,” the consequences of being labeled “deviant,” and how “deviants” deal with the experience. In addition to the readings, course material will include several feature length motion pictures.

**SOC 340 | Special Topics: White Collar Crime (3 hours)**

***Dr. Robert Thomson***

Identity theft. Ponzi schemes. Money laundering. Lying on a tax return. Violating worker safety laws. Bribery. These are just a few examples of what criminologists and sociologists refer to as “white collar crime.” Every year, crimes committed by corporations and high-status working professionals cost society untold billions of dollars. Do we take it seriously enough? In this course, we will explore white collar crime in depth, considering topics including how it is defined, identifying the perpetrators and victims, and understanding its real cost to society.

### **SOC 375 | Social Psychology (3 hours)**

***Dr. Eric Seemann***

This course examines many “real life” issues from a perspective that provides an interface between psychology (causes due to characteristics of individuals) and sociology (causes due to societal structures). For example, homelessness may be explained in terms of addiction or lack of initiative (psychological analysis) or in terms of an inadequate educational system or poor economy. We will examine both levels of explanation in this course, using both culture (e.g., ethnicity, nation) and gender as lenses for examination. More specifically, we will compare and contrast individualism and collectivism as value systems and as motivators of behavior. Topics will include development and maintenance of attitudes as well as persuasion techniques. We will also study social perception (self concept and group concepts) as they impact stereotyping, prejudice, intergroup relations, and aggression. Students will engage in several web-based class projects. This course can be applied to either a Sociology or to a Psychology major or minor (depending on the prefix of the course in which the student enrolled) or as an elective in the Women’s and Gender Studies minor. Either SOC 100 or PY 101 is a pre-requisite.

### **SOC 495 | Senior Capstone Seminar (3 hours)**

***Dr. Christina Steidl***

The Senior Capstone Seminar provides students who are close to completing the sociology major with the opportunity to *either* (1) design and carry out an independent empirical research project *or* (2) complete an internship with a local social service provider, writing an organizational report on some aspect of this experience. The course itself supports both of these tracks, incorporating readings, discussion, and regular workshops where students share their progress and receive feedback from the instructor and peers. This course is intended for students in their senior year as it seeks to bring together the knowledge that they have acquired in their 300+ level sociology courses, in sociological theory, and in research methods. Students enrolling in the Senior Capstone Seminar should meet with the instructor during the fall semester to arrange their project/internship.



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## SOCIOLOGY FACULTY

**Mitch Berbrier**  
*[berbrim@uah.edu](mailto:berbrim@uah.edu)*

Professor  
Ph.D., Indiana University, 1996  
Intro to Sociology, Analysis of Social Problems, Deviance and Social Control

**Kyle Knight**  
*[kyle.knight@uah.edu](mailto:kyle.knight@uah.edu)*

Chair and Associate Professor  
Ph.D., Washington State University, 2012  
Intro to Sociology, Research Methods, Statistics for Social Sciences, Environmental Sociology, Sociology of Environmental Justice

**Jennifer Sims**  
*[jennifer.sims@uah.edu](mailto:jennifer.sims@uah.edu)*

Assistant Professor  
Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2014  
Intro to Sociology, Research Methods, Race and Ethnicity, Sociology of Sexuality, Qualitative Research Methods

**Christina Steidl**  
*[christina.steidl@uah.edu](mailto:christina.steidl@uah.edu)*

Associate Professor  
Ph.D., Emory University, 2012  
Intro to Sociology, Sociological Theory, Social Stratification, Sociology of Education, Sociology of Social Movements, Senior Capstone Seminar

**Robert Thomson**  
*[robert.thomson@uah.edu](mailto:robert.thomson@uah.edu)*

Assistant Professor  
Ph.D., Baylor University, 2017  
Intro to Criminology, Statistics, Sociology of Religion, Sociology of Gender, Crime and Religion, Crime and Mass Media, Juvenile Delinquency