

EUGENE LANG COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS

Structure of the Sociology Major and Requirements

The Sociology major has four elements, which roughly correspond to progress through the undergraduate career, increasing in analytical complexity over time and culminating in independent or collaborative investigation. In total, four core courses, one capstone, and eight electives are required. Five electives must be at the 3000 level or above; a maximum of two may be chosen from cross-listed courses in other departments. Students must earn a grade of C or higher in all courses taken in order to meet the requirements for the major.

A. Introduction

One required course: The Sociological Imagination (LSOC 2001).

This course, *The Sociological Imagination* (equivalent to an “Introduction to Sociology” course elsewhere) provides students with basic categories of sociological analysis (class, race, gender, social stratification, social conflict, social change, social interaction, social organization, e.g.). The course also introduces students to foundational texts of sociological theory and to the research methods used in sociological inquiry. This course helps students decide if they are interested in further studies in sociology and learn about the different areas they can explore.

This course will usually be taken in the first or second year.

B. Exploration and Specialization

Electives; no required courses. Eight electives; at least five at the 3000-level or higher. Two permitted from other departments.

In exploring the discipline, students choose electives, which consist of investigations into specific sociological questions and topic areas. Elective courses at the 2000-level introduce students to various subfields of sociology (e.g., urban sociology, sociology of religion, social inequality) and some more specialized topics in these areas (e.g., consumption, domestic labor, civil society, everyday life).

As they enter their junior and senior years, students will pursue 3000-level courses that develop their substantive areas of interest. These courses also emphasize theory and methods, complementing the core disciplinary courses (discussed below). Students are encouraged to pursue civic engagement courses, internships and study abroad opportunities, which (with approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies) can count for one elective requirement.

Students are also encouraged to take courses that are cross-listed in other departments, but they may not count more than two of these toward fulfillment of the elective requirement without permission from the Director of the program. Courses counted as fulfilling this requirement may not be counted for requirements in other programs.

C. Advanced Theory and Method

Concurrent with exploring 3000- and 4000-level electives, students take three advanced courses that provide them with the core disciplinary tools of sociology. These include two sociological theory requirements, in Classical and Contemporary Theory. Courses in classical theory will offer students a grounding in the foundational theories and theorists of the discipline (typically Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, as well as other major 19th and early-20th century thinkers). These theories pose questions about social organization, conflict, and change. Courses in contemporary theory will focus on 20th century theorists and issues in sociological theory. Topics might include symbolic interaction, poststructuralism, feminism, practice theory, structure and agency, or conceptions of publics, among others.

Sample courses that would count for the classical theory requirement include *Classics in Social Thought* (LSOC 3017), and *Modernity and the Invention of the Social Sciences* (LSOC 3019). Sample courses that would count for the advanced requirement include *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (LSOC 3069) and *Bourdieu and The Politics of Culture* (LCST 4024).

Students also complete a requirement in Sociological Methods. Possible offerings in this category include *Qualitative Methods*, *Discourse Analysis*, *Comparative-historical Methods*, and *The Logic of Inquiry*. These courses give students a solid grounding in the evidence and research strategies used in the discipline. Students also develop proficiency in understanding and critiquing claims about “facts” made in the public sphere which will serve them beyond the Sociology major. Finally, the courses prepare students to decide what type of senior work they wish to pursue.

Students are advised to complete these courses by the end of their junior year.

D. Creation: Senior Thesis or Senior Seminar

There are two broad possibilities for senior work in Sociology. First, students may do a two-semester thesis. This option entails designing an original research project, situating the investigation in a sociological literature, collecting and analyzing primary data, and writing an analytical thesis of approximately 50 pages. With approval from the Director of Undergraduate Studies, it is permissible for this project to involve participatory research, such as a collaboration with a local organization. Students pursuing this option take a Thesis Proseminar in the fall of the senior year, in which they develop the project, find a faculty advisor in Sociology, and begin to collect data. In the spring semester, the student completes the project under the supervision of a faculty advisor, with whom the student takes an independent study. (The independent study may count as an elective toward the completion of the major.) If a sufficient number of majors are writing theses, the department will organize a public presentation of their work. Students electing to write a thesis must meet minimum GPA requirements.

The other option is to participate in a one-semester senior seminar, offered in the spring, which guides students in their senior work. The faculty member teaching this course serves as advisor to all the students in the course, which is organized around a broad theme. Depending on the interests of the faculty member and the students, this work

may be organized collaboratively, and may include original research or analytical work by the students. Projects centered on campus or in the broader areas of NYC, and connected to other Lang initiatives, are encouraged. The final paper or project for this course fulfills the senior work requirement.

Summary Table of Sociology Major Requirements and Timeline

Requirement	Courses that fulfill requirement	When expected to be complete
Sociological Imagination	LSOC 2001 <i>The Soc. Imagination</i>	Freshman or sophomore year
Classical Sociological Theory course	LSOC 3017 <i>Classics in Social Thought</i> LSOC 3019 <i>Modernity and the Social Sciences</i> LSOC 3xxx <i>Classical Social Theory</i>	End of junior year
Contemporary Sociological Theory course	LSOC 3069 <i>Contemporary Social Theory</i> LCST 4024 <i>Bourdieu and the Politics of Culture</i>	End of junior year
Sociological Methods course	LSOC 3xxx <i>Discourse Analysis</i> LSOC 3xxx <i>Qualitative Methods</i> LSOC 3xxx <i>Historical Sociology</i> LSOC 45xx <i>Logic of Inquiry</i> Others TBA	End of junior year
Electives (8, of which 5 need to be 3000-level)	All LSOC 2000 and 3000-level electives; any freshman seminar taught by a Sociology professor; up to 2 cross-listed courses or those in other departments with approval of DUS	Courses should be taken all four years; complete by senior year
Senior Capstone	Senior seminar or Independent thesis	End of senior year