**Frequently Asked Questions (date last updated 9/23/2013)**

Over the years, students have similar questions about the best ways to successfully complete their requirements as a Sociology major or minor. In order to help students better understand departmental procedures and guidelines, we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions and their answers. Because the department occasionally changes its guidelines to improve the process, students should periodically check this website for any changes.

**Initial Steps**

**Q: What courses should I take before declaring a Sociology major or minor?**

A: In order to ensure that Sociology major or minor is the appropriate track for students, prospective majors or minors are strongly advised to have taken a 100-level course and a 200-level sociology course before declaring Sociology as their major or minor. We advise students to take a 100-level course in their first year and at least one 200-level sociology course before the spring semester of their second year.

**Q: What is the difference among Soc 101, Soc 102 and Soc 103?**

A: Sociology 101, 102 and 103 are all equivalent; students should only take one of these. Any one of these introductory courses serves as the pre-requisite for all other sociology courses.

**Q: Is there a minimum grade I need to earn in one of the Soc 100-level courses?**

A: Students need to earn a C or better in Soc 101, Soc 102, or Soc 103 in order for a student to become a major or minor. If a student earns lower than a C in Soc 101, Soc 102, or Soc 103, that student may continue on to take Soc 200-level courses, but that student will not be able to continue as a Sociology major or minor.

**Q: As a Sociology major or minor, what should I do if I did not earn a C or higher in one of the Soc 100-level courses?**

A: If that happens, a student has two options. A student can either retake the course to earn the required minimum grade or change his or her choice of a major or minor.

**As Sociology majors or minors...**

**Upper-level Sociology Courses:**

**Q: How many upper-level sociology courses are required for the major?**

A: The Sociology major has five required core upper level-courses (Soc 302; Soc 306; upper-level theory, upper-level methods; and Soc 400). Our policy is that these must be completed at Gettysburg College; exceptions to this policy are rare.

**Q: When should I start taking these upper-level sociology courses?**

A: Students who have a strong academic record and have the pre-requisites may opt to take either Soc 302 or Soc 306 in the Spring semester of their second year if space is available after rising seniors and juniors pre-pre-register.

**Q: Is there a minimum grade requirement in upper-level courses for a Sociology major?**

A: Sociology majors must earn at least a C or higher in Soc 302 and in Soc 306 in order to continue as a Sociology major because they are pre-requisites for the upper-level methods and theory courses required of Sociology majors.
Q: Can I retake Soc 302 or Soc 306 if I fail to get a C or higher in Soc 302 and Soc 306?
A: No. A student has only one chance to earn that grade. If a student fails to earn a C or higher in either of the two courses, then that student will have to change his or her major.

Course Sequencing:

Q: Where can I find the pre-requisites for upper-level sociology courses?
A: This information is available on our website. The pre-requisites for Soc 302 and Soc 306 are a 100-level sociology course with a minimum grade of a C and at least one 200-level sociology course. Soc 302 with a minimum grade of a C is the pre-requisite for an advanced methods course, either Soc 303 or Soc 323. Soc 306 with a minimum grade of a C is the pre-requisite for an advanced theory course. The pre-requisites for Soc 400 are Soc 302 and Soc 306, both with a minimum grade of a C.

Q: How often are Soc 302 and Soc 306 offered during an academic year?
A: At least one section each of Soc 302 and Soc 306 are offered every semester. Often, students will not have a choice which one is available for them to take in part because of enrollment demands. However, we will try our best to ensure that students in their junior year are able to complete at least one of these two courses.

Q: How often are upper-level methods courses offered during an academic year?
A: At least one of these courses is offered each semester. Currently, Soc 303 is offered in one semester and Soc 323 in the other. At times, students may not have a choice which one is available for them to take. Students must plan ahead if they have a strong preference for 303 or 323. Students should check with faculty to see how these two courses are scheduled in the desired academic year and to ensure that they have the needed pre-requisites. This usually requires students to plan one year in advance.

Q: How often are upper-level theory courses offered during an academic year?
A: At least one advanced theory course is offered each semester. The topic of each course may vary semester by semester. If students have the pre-requisite and their course load allows, they may choose the upper level theory course that most interests them.

Q: How often are senior seminars offered during an academic year?
A: The number of senior seminars offered will depend on the size of the graduating class. At minimum, one senior seminar will be offered in the spring semester. Students take this seminar in their senior year. If more than one section is offered in that academic year, then students should participate in preregistration to state their preferred semester or section for that course. While we cannot guarantee students will be placed in their preferred semester, we will try our best to accommodate students’ preferences.

Q: If I think I have a valid reason, can I request to take courses out of sequence?
A: The Sociology major is organized with a series of pre-requisites and sequencing of courses to help students progress from elementary sociological analysis to more complex and sophisticated analyses. This sequencing is not negotiable.

Q: What problems do students encounter with sequencing of sociology courses?
A: Even with planning, the department may not be able to offer courses at times that best fit the students’ course schedules. It is not uncommon for students to take two or three upper-level courses in the same semester in order to finish their major or minor. In the worse case scenario, students may face the tough decision of completing fewer majors and or minors.

Course taken outside of the Sociology Department at Gettysburg College
Q: I heard that the Anthropology courses could count toward a Sociology major requirement?
A: No more than one Anthropology course will be accepted as a 200-level sociology elective toward the major or minor, regardless of whether it is taken at Gettysburg College or elsewhere.

Q: If I have taken another methods course, can I use that to replace the methods course in Sociology?
A: Sociology majors are not allowed to substitute any class for Soc 302. Sociology minors may substitute Psychology or Political Science methods courses taken at Gettysburg College for Soc 302.

Q: How many courses can I take outside of Gettysburg College that will count toward my Sociology major or minor?
A: In total, Sociology accepts no more than two courses taken outside of Gettysburg College for credit towards the major or minor. Please keep this in mind when you are planning to transfer credits from summer schools and or when you are studying abroad.

Q: Will Sociology accept online courses?
A: No. Students should not take online sociology courses for Gettysburg College credit. These are generally not accepted for transfer credit by the College, and they are unlikely to be accepted by the department.

Q: If I plan to take courses at another institution, what should I do?
A: Students are responsible for verifying with the Registrar’s Office whether that course taken outside of Gettysburg College will be equivalent to a full credit at Gettysburg College. Many courses at other colleges do not count as a full course credit toward graduation at Gettysburg College. The Sociology department is only responsible for approving whether the course will count towards the major.

Miscellaneous Advice...
Q: What is pre-pre-registration?
A: Each spring, the Sociology Department conducts a pre-pre-registration for declared majors and minors to help them get into the sociology classes they want and need. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the departmental pre-pre registration; no special accommodations in sociology course selection will be made for those who do not participate.

Q: Which 200 electives should I take?
A: Students should choose courses that engage their interests. We recommend students take courses from several tenured and tenure-track members of the Department. This will help students to develop mentoring relationships with department faculty and may open doors to research and other learning opportunities. In the past, students have attended conferences and presented their research in major US cities, and in Thailand, Singapore, Sweden, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Q: Are there other activities I should engage in in the department besides taking courses?
A: The department offers many opportunities for students to develop as scholars and professionally. Research opportunities, professional conference presentations, field trips, department-sponsored speakers and discussions and more are available to students. To get more information on various opportunities, please consult the Sociological Experience, our student club.