Frequently Asked Questions (date last updated 9/9/2015)
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 alleviate students’ anxiety and better understand departmental procedures and guidelines, we have compiled a list of frequently asked questions and their answers. Department changes its guidelines periodically to improve the process. As such, students should check this website for changes.

Initial Steps
Q: When should I declare my major?
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 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 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 as introductory courses serves as the pre-requisite to all other sociology courses.

Q: Is there a minimum grade I need to earn in one of the Soc 100-level courses?
A: If a student earns lower than a C in Soc 101, Soc 102, or Soc 103, that student may continue 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 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: Sociology major has five required core upper level-courses which students usually complete at Gettysburg College.

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 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 major 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: A student has only one chance to earn that grade. If a student fails to earn a C or higher in any of the two courses, then that student will have to change his or her major.
Q: Can I take these upper-level sociology courses outside of Gettysburg College?
A: Our policy is that these must be completed at Gettysburg College, and exceptions to this policy are rarely allowed.

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

Q: How often are Soc 302 and Soc 306 offered during an academic year?
A: At least one section 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. However, we will try our best to ensure that students in their Junior year will complete at least one of these two courses.

Q: How often are upper-level methods courses offered during an academic year?
A: Currently, Soc 303 and Soc 323 are taught only once each academic year and at different semester. At times, students may not have a choice which one is available for them to take. Students interested in taking a specific upper-level course should check with faculty to see how these two courses are scheduled in the desired academic year and to ensure that they have the pre-requisite. This usually requires students to plan one year in advance if they have a strong preference.

Q: How often are upper-level theory courses offered during an academic year?
A: At least one advanced theory course is offered every semester. The topic of each course may vary semester by semester. Students will be able to choose the appropriate course depending on their interest, whether they have the pre-requisite, and their course load in that semester.

Q: How often are senior seminars offered during an academic year?
A: At least one senior seminar is offered every semester. Students take this seminar in their senior year. Students should participate in pre-preregistration to state their preferred semester 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: What should I consider if and when I try to plan ahead to fulfill my major or minor requirements?
A: Students should plan ahead to make sure that they will have the appropriate pre-requisites completed to progress to the next stage in the sequence at the appropriate time, particularly if they plan to study abroad or are combining Sociology with another major or several minors.

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 would be some of the less desirable outcomes?
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 at the same time. In the worse case scenario, students may face the tough decision of focusing on 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: Only 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: Students may use that course as a substitute for Soc 302 ONLY for Sociology minors and if that methods course was taken at Gettysburg College in the Psychology, Political Science or Organization and Management Studies Department. This substitution is not allowed for sociology majors.

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 aboard.

Q: Will Sociology accept online courses?
A: 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: Is there a difference which faculty member is teaching a course?
A: Students are strongly encouraged to take classes with full-time faculty. This will help students to develop mentoring relationships with department faculty and may open doors to research opportunities. In the past, students have attended conferences and presented their research in various 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 a scholar and professionally. Research opportunities, professional conference presentations, field trips and more are available to students. To get more information on various opportunities, please consult Sociological Experience, our student club, for more information.