Sociology

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Sociology is the systematic study of human social life, groups, and societies. Sociology can reveal how society works, what motivates individuals to behave in certain ways, how particular rules and norms get established, why people obey those rules and norms, how seemingly invisible social forces might govern our behavior, and how the outcome of our lives are frequently determined by forces largely outside of our control. It can even help us understand why we might sometimes act in ways that are contrary to our deeply held beliefs.

Sociologists study how societies form, change, and die out. They study how society affects you and vice versa. The department curriculum focuses on social institutions—the family, work, religion, and the economy; culture—the governing ideas and beliefs of a society; and social interactions—the way people behave as individuals and in groups. Taken together, they make up what sociologists call the social structure: enduring, patterned, orderly relationships among institutions, people, and other elements of a given society. Through a systematic study of society, sociology helps us understand social problems such as inequality, racism, environmental degradation, and poverty, to name a few, and aids in the development of creative solutions to solve them.

Faculty


Oluwakemi Balogun, associate professor (gender, race and migration, African Studies). See Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Michael Brown, instructor (sociology of poverty and inequality, social inequality, social movements). BA, 2007, University of Oregon; PhD, 2018, Michigan State. (2023)


Isabel García Valdívia, assistant professor (immigration, race & ethnicity, Latine/x Sociology, life course and aging). BA, 2014, Pomona College; MA, 2017, PhD, 2022, California, Berkeley. (2024)


Nathalia Hernández-Vidal, assistant professor (environmental sociology, racial and ethnic relations, science and technology). PhD, 2020, Loyola University Chicago. (2023)


Julius McGee, associate professor (race, class, and gender, environmental sociology). PhD, 20017, Oregon. (2021)


Byron Villacis, assistant professor (demography, sociology of statistics, economic sociology, sociology of expertise, and sociology of corruption). BA, 2001, U. San Francisco Quito-Ecuador; MSc, 2005, FLACSO Quito-Ecuador; MA, 2015 California, Berkeley; PhD, 2023, California, Berkeley. (2023)

Stephanie Wiley, instructor (criminology, juvenile delinquency, race and punishment, school discipline). BS, 2006, Western Oregon; MS, 2008, Portland State; PhD, 2014, University of Missouri - St. Louis. (2023)


### Emeriti

Vallon L. Burris, professor emeritus. BA, 1969, Rice; PhD, 1976, Princeton. (1977)


*The date in parentheses at the end of each entry is the first year on the University of Oregon faculty.*

### Undergraduate Programs

**Major - Bachelor’s Degree**

- Sociology (BA/BS) ([http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/ug-sociology/](http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/ug-sociology/))

**Minor**

- Criminology ([http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/nn-criminology/](http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/nn-criminology/))
- Sociology ([http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/min-sociology/](http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/min-sociology/))

### Graduate Programs

**Major - Doctoral Degree**

- Sociology (PhD) ([http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/phd-sociology/](http://catalog.uoregon.edu/arts-sciences/social-sciences/sociology/phd-sociology/))