

SOCIAL RELATIONS AND POLICY

The Social Relations and Policy major explores the domain of public issues that are especially affected by relations among groups. The major is explicitly historical and comparative, looking at Social Relations and Policy in the United States and internationally, over time. Courses focus on the sociology, history, and politics of intergroup relations, paying close attention to the interplay of such factors as class, race, ethnicity, sex/gender, religious belief and national identity. The program uses the study of Social Relations and Policy as a way to cultivate reasoning, methodological and analytical skills and the capacities for empathetic observation, normative judgment and effective problem solving.

The sophomore sequence provides the conceptual, methodological and substantive bases for upper division work by introducing students to classical and contemporary social theory and comparative social history, and to quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The junior level builds on these skills to assess, in depth, a set of social problems and policy solutions. A senior seminar provides an opportunity to synthesize course work and undertake original research. Students also select from a broad range of electives to develop their expertise and understanding including opportunities for more international and comparative work, greater political analysis, and deeper understanding of particular forms of Social Relations and Policy. A related area requirement is broadly constructed to shape the major in a way that is responsive to individual interests and academic purpose.

Substantively, courses in Social Relations and Policy take up issues such as social identity, inequality and mobility, wealth and poverty, assimilation and pluralism, prejudice and discrimination, intergroup conflict and cooperation, the problem of civil rights and the politics of equality. Students develop knowledge in such areas as immigration, race and ethnic relations, civil rights, family and children, housing and residential segregation, urban and metropolitan policy, schooling and educational policy, social security and social welfare policies. The graduates go into careers such as law, non-profit leadership, labor relations, human resources administration, teaching, educational administration, public lobbying, and much more.

Requirements for a major in Social Relations and Policy

All of the following (20/21 credits):

MC 280: Social Theory & Social Relations and Policy (4 cr.)

MC 281: Immigrants, Minorities, and American Pluralism (4 cr.)

MC 380: Social Policy (4 cr.)

MC 498: Senior Seminar in Social Relations and Policy (4 cr.)

SOC 281: Methods of Social Research (4 cr.) or MC 295: Research Design and Quantitative Analysis in Public Policy (4 cr.) or ANP 429:

Ethnographic Field Methods (3 cr.) or CJ 292: Methods of Criminal Justice Research (3 cr.) or COM 300: Methods of Communication

inquiry (4 cr.) or EC 420: Introduction to Econometric Methods or GEO 221: Introduction to Geographic Information (3 cr.) or PLS 201:

Introduction to Methods of Political Analysis (4 cr.) or PSY 295: Data Analysis in Psychological Research (3 cr.) or STT 200: Statistical

Methods (3 cr.) or STT 201: Statistical Methods (3 cr.) or STT 315: Introduction to Probability and Statistics (3 cr.) or STT 421: Statistics I

(3 cr.)

Three (3) of the following selected in consultation with an academic advisor (12 credits)

MC 319: Asian American History (3 cr.)

MC 320: Politics, Society and Economy in the Third World (4 cr.)

MC 325: State and Society in Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)

MC 333: Performance, Politics, and Nation (4 cr.)

MC 334: Rights, Advocacy, and Activism (4 cr.)

MC 335: Israeli Politics, Cultures and Society (4 cr.)

MC 337: Global Public Health (4 cr.)

MC 338: Environmental Justice & Global Change (4 cr.)

MC 340: Economic Growth (4 cr.)

MC 342: The Social Economics of the Workplace (4 cr.)

MC 347: Urban and Regional Development (4 cr.)

MC 348: Educational Policy (4 cr.)

MC 350: Evolution and Society (4 cr.)

MC 351: Science and Science Policy (4 cr.)

MC 364: Policy Evaluation (4 cr.)

MC 367: Global Cities and Urbanism (4 cr.)

MC 368: The Civil Rights Movement and its Legacies (4 cr.)

MC 369: Global Issues in Citizenship (4 cr.)

MC 372: Comparative Black Political Thought (4 cr.)

MC 375: Contemporary Developments in American Politics (4 cr.)

MC 377: Culture, Politics, and Post-Colonialism (4 cr.)

MC 378: Law and Social Groups (4 cr.)

MC 381: American Politics and Equality (4 cr.)

MC 382: Social Movements (4 cr.)

MC 383: African American Politics (4 cr.)

MC 384: Metropolitan Society (4 cr.)

MC 385: Comparative Race and Ethnic Relations (4 cr.)

MC 386: Women & Power in Comparative Perspective (4 cr.)

MC 387: Jews and Anti-Semitism (4 cr.)

MC 388: Sexual Politics: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives (4 cr.)

MC 389: Religious Politics in U.S. Society: Left, Right and Other (4 cr.)

MC 390: Advanced Special Topics (topic must have SRP content) (4 cr.)

MC 391: Selected Topics in Public Affairs (3 or 4 cr.)

MC 395: Cultural Dimensions of Public Affairs (must have SRP content) (4 cr.)

MC 445: Socio-Economics of Conservation Ecology (4 cr.)

MC 482: Gender and Violent Conflict (4 cr.)

Recommended Clusters:Local, Regional and State Politics

MC 347: Urban and Regional Development
 MC 348: Educational Policy
 MC 364: Policy Evaluation
 MC 381: American Politics and Equality
 MC 384: Metropolitan Society
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

American Society and American Politics

MC 342: The Social Economics of the Workplace
 MC 368: The Civil Rights Movement and its Legacies
 MC 375: Contemporary Developments in American Politics
 MC 378: Educational Policy
 MC 381: American Politics and Equality
 MC 382: Social Movements
 MC 383: African American Politics
 MC 384: Metropolitan Society
 MC 388: Sexual Politics [Prof. Burns section]
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Public Policy and Political Economy

MC 340: Economic Growth
 MC 342: The Social Economics of the Workplace
 MC 347: Urban and Regional Development
 MC 348: Educational Policy
 MC 364: Policy Evaluation
 MC 381: American Politics and Equality
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Institutions and Public Policy

MC 348: Educational Policy
 MC 375: Contemporary Developments in American Politics
 MC 378: Law and Social Groups
 MC 381: American Politics and Equality
 MC 382: Social Movements
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Comparative Study of Societies

MC 320: Politics, Society, and Economy in the Third World
 MC 325: State and Society in Comparative Perspective
 MC 377: Culture, Politics, and Postcolonialism
 MC 385: Comparative Race and Ethnic Relations
 MC 386: Women and Power in Comparative Perspective
 MC 387: Jews and Anti-Semitism
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]
 MC 395: Cultural Dimensions of Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism

MC 368: The Civil Rights Movement and its Legacies
 MC 372: Comparative Black Political Thought
 MC 377: Culture, Politics, and Postcolonialism
 MC 381: American Politics and Equality
 MC 382: Social Movements
 MC 383: African American Politics
 MC 385: Comparative Race and Ethnic Relations
 MC 387: Jews and Anti-Semitism
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Sex and Gender

MC 378: Law and Social Groups [Prof. Hunt's section]
 MC 382: Social Movements
 MC 386: Women and Power in Comparative Perspective
 MC 388: Sexual Politics

Religion and Politics

MC 378: Law and Social Groups [Prof. Hunt's section]
 MC 382: Social Movements
 MC 387: Jews and Anti-Semitism
 MC 389: Religious Politics in U.S. Society: Left, Right and Other
 MC 390: Advanced Topics in Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]
 MC 395: Cultural Dimensions of Public Affairs
 [when relevant in consultation with advisor]

Related Discipline or Area Requirement:

Students must complete two to three additional courses (6-9 cr.) in a related discipline (e.g. Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology) or approved related area (e.g. Ethnicity and Race, Gender and Women's Studies, Urban/Metropolitan Studies, or U.S. Politics). These courses must be at 300-400 level. Courses may be selected in other majors in James Madison College as well.

In addition to the requirements outlined above, students are responsible for the following requirements: Integrative Studies, Math Requirement, Language Requirement, Economics Requirement, Field Experience and Electives.

TOTAL CREDITS TO GRADUATE: 120

Examples of Social Relations & Policy Senior Seminars (MC 498)

Immigration Policy: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives - Immigration policy is central to the U.S. polity. It shapes who we are and how we think of ourselves as a nation. This course links key issues in the history of U.S. immigration policy with current debates about unauthorized immigration, national security, and American identity. We will study how U.S. immigration policies have developed since 1875 through interlocking discourses and laws concerning race, gender, sexuality, class, health, and citizenship. We will also consider new developments in U.S. immigration enforcement and contemporary debates about immigration in the context of culture, economics, and the environment. Our readings will include primary materials such as laws, popular articles and photographs, as well as secondary works by historians, sociologists, political scientists, economists, anthropologists and legal scholars.

This course addresses immigration policy as a process that operates not only from the top-down but also from the bottom-up; a process that is shaped not only by politicians, but also by immigration officials, Americans, and immigrants themselves. Throughout the course we will pay attention to both contemporary and historical immigration policies, tracing changes and continuities. We will spend approximately half our time focusing on contemporary debates and half on historical issues.

Sex, Religion, and Public Policy - It is somewhat striking how often public policy debates over sexuality also involve the politics of religion, including debates over the relationship between religion and state. When we argue about sex, and/or gender, very frequently we also argue about religion. While the intertwining of the politics of sex and religion seems to have accelerated in recent times, there is a considerable history of such linkage in public policy debates. For instance, family policy has repeatedly involved debates that elevate or outlaw different religious views of marriage, including who may enter into marriage, and under what circumstances. Same-sex marriage laws—while certainly not only about religion—are arguably a new chapter in a long-running debate.

Marriage is just one example; there are many public policy debates involving clashes over matters sex and religion. For instance, the clergy sexual abuse crisis has in some countries led public officials to assert greater legal authority over internal church matters; in a particularly striking example, the aftermath of the crisis fundamentally changed the relationship between the Catholic Church, on the one hand, and Irish society and government, on the other. Assumptions about sex, gender, and religion can intersect in ways that look strange to outsiders: for instance, why does restricting Muslim women's wearing of headscarves in public appear to so many French to be not a restriction on women's civil liberties, but as an advancement of those liberties? What assumptions about religion, sex, and the role of public policy inform such perspectives?

In the contemporary debate over the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), one of the provisions that has received the most attention has been the "contraceptive mandate." Some religious employers claim that participating in health insurance plans that include contraceptive coverage violates their First Amendment religious freedom rights. Relevant context here is that the Affordable Care Act was crafted in the first place in a way that avoided expanding insurance coverage of abortion services, as well. But we have seen some of these battles before: For instance, it has long been established that religion is not usually a valid excuse in the United States for employment discrimination on the basis of sex or race. Sometimes assumptions about the power of religion in shaping our political debates and policy choices are overblown. And so the seminar will also examine cases where religious influence on public policy is not as strong as many critics assume.

Middle Class Politics and Policy in the U.S. - This senior seminar examines the contributing factors to the social formation of the American middle class from the founding to the present, including the interaction of social agency, ideology, opportunity structures, conflict, domination, normative order, political economies, cultures, and social movements. In contemporary American society, middle class identities and life chances are in flux. This course charts the larger forces which are challenging and shaping traditional roles and identities of the middle class, creating new inequalities and entitlements, and forging new political agendas. We also explore the intersectionality of class, race, and gender. How does the Black Middle Class fare? How is class gendered? We look at U.S. policy and its role in shaping the Middle Class. As a five credit SRP capstone course, we spend 10 weeks reading about the historical formation of the US middle class. Meanwhile, students are engaged in completing an original research project using primary data on a topic of their choice that contributes to understanding about middle class formation for presentation at the end of the semester.

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