

## Sociology/Anthropology

Lori Middeldorp, Rolvaag 265D

507-786-3351

middeldo@stolaf.edu

wp.stolaf.edu/sociology (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/sociology>)

Sociology and anthropology share the belief that society and culture shape us in powerful ways and that we can only know ourselves when we understand our social and cultural context. Our personalities and choices reflect who we are, but so do the groups and social institutions to which we belong (peers, family, religion, politics, occupations).

Sociology grew out of efforts to understand the nature and problems of modern industrial societies, while anthropology grew out of European and American colonial encounters with diverse world cultures. Both seek to explain the relationships among individuals, groups, institutions, culture, and meaning; both seek insights into the pressing personal and social issues of our day.

Sociology and anthropology contribute to current debates in politics, philosophy, theology, and other areas about multiculturalism, environment, gender, inequality, "Third World" development, welfare reform, globalization, and immigration. All require clear understanding of life's social and cultural dimensions.

Occupations drawing on sociological and anthropological knowledge include policy research and planning, human resources and industrial relations, public and international relations, law, medicine, ministry, counseling, education, management, social work, and marketing. Both disciplines also help prepare students for social service and justice work.

### Overview of the Major

Humans are social and cultural beings. This means that they depend upon each other and cooperate, forming social relationships and social groups, which make up society. For societies to work, members must communicate with each other, primarily through language. They must also share beliefs, values, and meanings that are passed down from one generation to another. These learned meaning structures make up the culture of a group or society. Society and culture are interrelated in very complex ways, and both sociology and cultural anthropology are interested in this interrelationship.

Sociological research includes both micro-level community studies and macro-level national and transnational studies, using both ethnographic or qualitative methods and quantitative methods. Anthropological research is generally ethnographic, using qualitative methods at the micro- or local level. Both disciplines are very concerned with the dynamics of power, especially the ways in which social structures create inequalities among members of the society and how these inequalities are culturally justified. Both are also interested in processes of social and cultural change.

Sociology and cultural anthropology are closely related disciplines that share certain theories and methodologies. Both are critical disciplines because they are comparative, leading students to look at, understand, and question their own societies and cultures. Majors in sociology/anthropology explore sociological and anthropological theories in two core courses. They design and conduct independent research in quantitative and ethnographic methods core courses. In the senior seminar, majors consider and critique the ethics of

sociology and anthropology and their impact on their own personal ethics and morals in depth. They also select one course examining social institutions, one course concentrating on a geographical area of the world or a topical area of particular interest to them, as well as two elective courses. Sociology/anthropology majors are highly encouraged to apply and test their skills by studying abroad, doing an independent study or research project, and/or completing an internship for one or more of the elective courses.

### Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/curriculum-committee/sociology-anthropology-major-ilos>)

#### Distinction

See Academic Honors (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/academic-regulations-procedures/academic-honors/#distinction>)

### Special Programs

Faculty in the Sociology/Anthropology Department may be asked to provide academic supervision of internships that students arrange in community agencies (see SOAN 294 and SOAN 394). For details on off-campus programs, see the International and Off-Campus Studies (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/international-domestic-off-campus-studies>) section of this catalog. The Sociology/Anthropology Department is a core participant in the following interdisciplinary majors: American studies, race and ethnic studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies, social work, nursing, social studies education, and women's and gender studies. The Sociology/Anthropology Department also contributes to the Africa and the Americas, family studies, and the Middle Eastern studies concentrations.

### Requirements

SOAN 291	History of Sociological Theory	1.00
SOAN 292	Anthropological Theory	1.00
SOAN 371	Foundations of Social Science Research: Quantitative Methods	1.00
SOAN 373	Ethnographic Research Methods	1.00
SOAN 399	Senior Seminar	1.00
Four elective courses <sup>1</sup>		4.00
STAT 110	Principles of Statistics <sup>2</sup>	1.00
Total Credits		10

<sup>1</sup> At least one elective course must be from the area and topical groups (230s, 240s) and one from the social structures and processes groups (260s). Students are permitted to take one of the four elective courses, but not a core course, S/U. An introductory course is not required but may be used as an elective for the major.

<sup>2</sup> STAT 110 must be taken before SOAN 371

Students who study abroad on a St. Olaf program that includes a sociology or anthropology course may petition to have this course count as an elective toward their major. One independent study/

research course or an off-campus field internship supervised by department faculty may also count as an elective toward the major.

## Courses

Level I and level II courses count for one or more of HBS, MCD, MCG, or HWC. In addition, SOAN 292, SOAN 371, and SOAN 373 carry WRI, SOAN 232 and SOAN 371 carry ORC, and SOAN 399 carries EIN credit. SOAN 121 and SOAN 128 are open to first-year students only. There are no prerequisites for level II courses. SOAN 373 is open only to juniors and seniors.

## Level I Courses

### **SOAN 121: Introduction to Sociology**

This course helps students explore the connections between society and their own lives. Students answer challenging questions such as "Do we have a 'human nature'?", "Why does social inequality exist?", "What is race?", and "How do societies change?" In answering these questions students learn to develop a sociological imagination. In doing so they review the various research methods and theories that form the sociological tradition. This course is open to first-year students or students in certain accredited programs. Open to all students when taught during the summer. Offered each semester. Counts toward American studies major.

### **SOAN 128: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology**

How do anthropologists study other cultures? Peoples around the world create different realities through the ways they conceptualize experience (cultures) and how they organize themselves to do what they need to do (societies). Anthropologists describe and compare cultures and societies, focusing on different aspects such as family and kinship, inequality and power, religion and values, economy and technology, cultural and social change. This course is open to first-year students or students in certain accredited programs. Offered each semester. Counts toward race and ethnic studies and women's and gender studies majors; and women's and gender studies concentrations.

## Area Courses

### **SOAN 232: Thailand: Culture, Institutions, and Interactions (abroad)**

This course offers a sociological understanding of Thailand, focusing on Thai culture and the institutions of education, religion, and economy, drawing partly on guest lecturers and visits to Thai sites. It also provides beginning skills and experience in ethnography # social scientific observation and interpretation of interactions in "the field" # for example, among Thai students, monks, and vendors and customers in markets. Offered during Interim.

### **SOAN 234: Native North American Cultures and Religions**

As an overview of the variety of belief systems and ways of life, this course explores ethnographic case studies of Native American groups from the major culture areas of North America north of Mexico. Topics addressed in this course include language families, social organization systems, ecological and economic adaptations, material culture, religions, and revitalization movements. This course will also examine the impacts of colonial encounters upon Native American cultures. Offered alternate years in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward American studies major, race and ethnic studies major and concentration, and linguistic studies concentration.

### **SOAN 235: Introduction to Islamic Feminisms**

This course focuses on the theories, political goals, strategies, and activities of the emerging trends of Islamic feminisms. After mapping the landscape of this movement and identifying its different manifestations, students investigate Islamic feminists' readings and interpretations of the Quran, Hadith, and Islamic history. The course examines methods Islamic feminists use in interpreting and reinterpreting such sources, politics and strategies they employ, and the impact of their work on Muslim women's lives worldwide. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward women's and gender studies major and concentration.

### **SOAN 236: The Arab World**

Focusing on present day Arab and Middle Eastern countries, the course explores the role of the institutions of family and religion in maintaining continuity, while also identifying sources of change such as the colonial experience, regional and global interdependence, the social impact of oil, fundamentalist movements, and the co-existence of traditional and "modern" values. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

### **SOAN 237: Forging a Latin American Culture**

This course explores the forces that shape contemporary Latin American society, including material and cultural interactions with Europe, Africa, and the U.S. Emphasis is placed on understanding the formation of the region in terms of the responses of key groups of actors (indigenous peoples, women, peasants, workers, the poor, migrants, revolutionaries) to the actions of outside and/or more powerful forces and institutions (foreign invaders, the state, the military, missionaries, multinational corporations). Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward Latin American studies major and concentration and management studies concentration.

### **AS/SA 239: Modern Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia is a diverse region, stretching from the sleek high-rises of Singapore to hermetic Rangoon; from Islam to Buddhism; from computer chip manufacturing to swidden agriculture. Students read ethnographies, novels, and local histories to better understand Southeast Asian family life, religion, language, and education. Through focusing on the experience of modernity, students examine how Southeast Asians make sense of their group affiliations, their pasts and their futures. The course aims to challenge contemporary understandings of place, entitlement, and home both in Southeast Asia and beyond. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester or during Interim.

## Topical Courses

### **SOAN 242: Contemporary Native American Issues**

What do self-determination and cultural identity mean for Native American peoples today? Students examine the impact of colonization on Native American peoples, including federal policies, treaty rights, and sovereignty. Issues include economy and politics on reservations, family and gender roles, orality and literacy, persistence and revitalization of religious life and culture, urban life, and recent social movements and organizations. Offered every other year in the fall semester. Counts toward American studies major, race and ethnic studies major and concentration, and educational studies and linguistic studies concentrations.

**SOAN 246: LGBTQA Lives and Issues**

This course explores the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, and queer people and their allies (LGBTQA) in U.S. society, using social science monographs, memoirs, and fiction. Students explore social and religious attitudes towards LGBTQA people, their changing political and legal status, the emergence and changes in LGBTQA culture and political movements, same-sex marriage and families, Black and Latino LGBTQA experiences, the role of heterosexual allies, and other related topics. Counts toward American studies major and women's and gender studies major and concentration.

**SOAN 248: Sociology of Dying, Death, and Bereavement**

This class investigates death-related behavior from an American and cross-cultural perspective, seeking to understand patterns of social interaction surrounding and giving meaning to dying, death, and bereavement. Topics include: death meanings and anxiety, religion and death-related customs, the dying process, hospice as a social movement, biomedical issues, the funeral industry, death rituals, and the social understanding of the bereavement process. Offered periodically during Interim. Counts toward American studies major and family studies concentration.

## Social Structures and Processes Courses

**SOAN 260: Marriage and the Family**

This course provides a social science understanding of the "contemporary American family" and analysis of marriage and family issues from a cross-cultural perspective. Students discuss issues of dating and mate selection, marital and parent-child relationships over the family life cycle, gender issues, work and family roles, and problem-related issues affecting families (divorce, violence and death) caused by rapid changes in society. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward American studies and women's and gender studies majors and family studies, management studies, and women's and gender studies concentrations.

**SOAN 261: Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective**

This course compares gender patterns and issues in various cultures around the world, such as Latin America, the Middle East, India, the U.S., and East Asia. How do cultural expectations for women and men vary? Why do some societies have more gender equality than others? How do economic and political change, including globalization, impact gender roles? How do U.S. and Third World feminism compare? Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward race and ethnic studies and women's and gender studies majors; Africa and the Americas, management studies, race and ethnic studies, and women's and gender studies concentrations.

**SOAN 262: Global Interdependence**

Approaching the world as a "global village," the course will focus on the development of the world as an interdependent entity, the relationship between the "developed" and "developing" world, alternative explanations for planned social change, and new institutions for this international world. Global challenges such as the information revolution, population, the status of women, and migration are analyzed to illustrate this interdependence. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

**SOAN 264: Race and Class in American Culture**

Students explore the continuing significance of color, class, and immigration in the U.S., with a focus on the experiences and concerns of African-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and Asian-Americans. The course examines the nature and functions of prejudice; the relationship among race, class and gender; the persistence of racism and inequality; and social policies and social movements intended to create greater social justice. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward American studies, race and ethnic studies, and Latin American studies majors; and Africa and the Americas, educational studies, Latin American studies, management studies, and race and ethnic studies concentrations.

**SOAN 265: Religion, Culture, and Society**

This course examines and analyzes religious beliefs, meanings, rituals, and organizational patterns from empirical and theoretical perspectives. Students are introduced to the sociological study of religion through its foundational thinkers as well as current theoretical approaches and research in the field. Important contemporary issues and debates examined include secularization, conversion, new religions and religious movements, gender and sexuality, and fundamentalism. Offered periodically in the fall or spring semester. Counts toward American studies major.

**SOAN 266: Crime and Inequality**

This course introduces students to the study of crime and the criminal justice system from a sociological perspective. Topics include types of crime; theories of crime causation; the role of the criminal justice system in social control; the racial and social class implications of the criminal law and law enforcement strategies; and drug policy. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester or during Interim.

**SOAN 267: Medical Anthropology**

How do people understand illness and healing? How does social inequality shape health? These are among the questions explored by medical anthropology. In this course students examine the ways people in different societies experience their bodies, by looking at AIDS in Haiti, old age in India, and childbirth in the United States. Students investigate diverse understandings of health, different means of promoting healing, and the role of power in providing medical care. Offered annually in the fall or spring semester.

**SOAN 268: Class, Status, and Power**

How does social class stratification shape individuals' life chances in the U.S.? This course introduces students to classical and contemporary theories of social class; seminal empirical studies that investigate the power of social class in shaping both individuals and the nature of the society in which they live; the relationship between class, race, and gender; poverty and public policy; and class consciousness and class conflict. Counts toward Africa and the Americas concentration. Offered annually.

## Core Courses/Independent Study/ Internships

### **SOAN 291: *History of Sociological Theory***

This course provides an overview of the major thinkers who sought to create a science of human society, the ideas they found fundamental to a science of society and how human society changes through history. Classical thinkers such as Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, and Mead are studied along with the schools of theory which they inspired: positivism, interpretive and critical conflict theory. Offered annually in the spring semester.

**Prerequisite:** one sociology/anthropology course. Open to sociology/anthropology majors only.

### **SOAN 292: *Anthropological Theory***

This course introduces students to anthropological theory and the "culture" of the discipline itself. Students examine anthropology's formation during the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Empire, which called for new explanations of human differences and gave new significance to the nature and meaning of "culture." They explore the method of participant observation research, the question of whether anthropology is a science, the problem of representing one culture to another, and the changing nature of ethnographic writing. Offered annually in the fall semester. **Prerequisite:** open to sociology/anthropology majors only.

### **SOAN 294: *Academic Internship***

### **SOAN 298: *Independent Study***

### **SOAN 299: *Topics in Sociology/Anthropology***

The department periodically offers special topics courses. The specific title of the course is listed in the class and lab schedule when it is offered.

### **SOAN 371: *Foundations of Social Science Research: Quantitative Methods***

Students gain the skills necessary to conduct and critically evaluate quantitative research. Students learn the underlying theoretical assumptions and orientations of quantitative research, including research design, sampling techniques, strategies for data collection, and approaches to analysis. Students gain practice in data analysis by conducting a research project and using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a standard in sociology. Open to sociology/anthropology majors only. Offered annually in the fall semester. Counts toward environmental studies major (social science emphasis) and management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** STAT 110 or STAT 212.

### **SOAN 373: *Ethnographic Research Methods***

Students learn to design and conduct qualitative research in the tradition of sociological and anthropological ethnography. Students discuss theoretical approaches to ethnography and learn data collection methods through case studies and fieldwork assignments. Students use their own research to gain experience in interpreting field notes, doing analysis, and writing an ethnographic interpretation of their research findings. Offered annually in the spring semester. Counts toward management studies concentration.

**Prerequisite:** SOAN 291 or SOAN 292. Open to junior or senior sociology/anthropology majors only.

### **SOAN 394: *Academic Internship***

### **SOAN 396: *Directed Undergraduate Research***

This course provides a comprehensive research opportunity, including an introduction to relevant background material, technical instruction, identification of a meaningful project, and data collection. The topic is determined by the faculty member in charge of the course and may relate to his/her research interests. Offered based on department decision. May be offered as a 1.00 credit course or .50 credit course.

**Prerequisite:** determined by individual instructor.

### **SOAN 398: *Independent Research***

### **SOAN 399: *Senior Seminar***

This seminar offers in-depth reading, writing, and discussion on a selected topic from areas common to sociology and anthropology with an emphasis on contemporary analysis and ethics. Specific content will vary from year to year. Offered annually in the spring semester.

**Prerequisite:** open to senior sociology/anthropology majors only.

## Faculty

### **Chair, 2016-2017**

#### **Thomas A. Williamson**

Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
Southeast Asia; theory; globalization; medical anthropology

#### **Ibtisam âl-Atiyat**

Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
Arab society; gender; social movements; Islamic movements

#### **Christopher L. Chiappari**

Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
Guatemala; religion; immigration

#### **Vivian Choi**

Assistant Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
South Asia; science and technology; disasters

#### **Marc David**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
race and class; history and memory; public policy and the politics of knowledge; North America

#### **David C. Schalliol**

Assistant Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
social stratification; urban sociology; visual sociology; criminology; education

#### **Ryan R. Sheppard**

Assistant Professor of Sociology/Anthropology  
family; gender; race/ethnicity; social movements; quantitative research