

**REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
(MSocSc)**

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

These regulations apply to candidates admitted to the Master of Social Sciences in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter.

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

The degree of Master of Social Sciences (MSocSc) is a postgraduate degree awarded for the satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study in one of the following fields: Behavioral Health; Clinical Psychology; Counselling; Criminology; Educational Psychology; Gerontology; Media, Culture and Creative Cities; Mental Health; Nonprofit Management; Psychology; Social Data Analytics; Social Service Management; Sociology; and Sustainability Leadership and Governance. These fields of study will not necessarily be offered every year.

Admission requirements

MSS 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
- (b) shall hold
 - (i) a Bachelor's degree of this University; or
 - (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose;
- (c) for a candidate who is seeking admission on the basis of a qualification from a university or comparable institution outside Hong Kong of which the language of teaching and/or examination is not English, shall satisfy the University English language requirement applicable to higher degrees as prescribed under General Regulation G2(b);
- (d) shall satisfy any other admission requirements which may be specified for individual fields of study in the regulations below; and
- (e) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MSS 1.1 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the fields of Behavioral Health, Counselling, Gerontology, Mental Health, and Social Service Management, candidates shall preferably have had a minimum of two years of post-qualification experience in the relevant fields, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.2 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Clinical Psychology, candidates

- (a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree with a major in Psychology, or a recognized equivalent qualification;
- (b) shall have demonstrated empirical research experience in the form of a dissertation

- completed in the Bachelor's degree programme or another equivalent programme in psychology, or first-authorship in published journal article;
- (c) shall be eligible for the Graduate Membership of the Hong Kong Psychological Society; and
 - (d) shall preferably have relevant working experience, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.3 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Criminology, candidates

- (a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree preferably with a major in the social sciences or humanities discipline; or
 - (b) shall preferably have working experience in the criminal justice system, social welfare agencies, or in other work with offenders,
- in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.4 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Educational Psychology, candidates

- (a) shall hold a Bachelor's degree with a major in Psychology, or a recognized equivalent qualification;
 - (b) shall be eligible for the Graduate Membership of the Hong Kong Psychological Society; and
 - (c) shall preferably have relevant working experience in educational or related settings,
- in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.5 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Nonprofit Management, candidates shall preferably have three years of relevant working experience, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.6 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Psychology, candidates

- (a) shall preferably have more than one year of work experience; and
 - (b) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination and interview if shortlisted,
- in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.7 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Social Data Analytics, candidates

- (a) shall preferably have a Bachelor's degree in one of the fields of social sciences: Anthropology, Cognitive Science, Communication, Economics, Education Studies, Ethnic Studies, Linguistics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Urban Studies and Planning, or a closely related field; or a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics, Computer Science, or a related field with an additional major/minor or substantial advanced coursework in one or more social sciences domains; and
 - (b) shall preferably have pre-existing training in statistics and/or formal logic or prior experience with one or more technical domains, including programming, statistics, formal logic, calculus, linear algebra, etc.
- in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 1.8 To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology, candidates shall hold a Bachelor's degree preferably with a major in the social sciences or humanities discipline, in addition to the requirements set out in Regulation MSS 1.

MSS 2. An application for exemption from the above requirements shall be considered on a case by case basis.

Qualifying examination

MSS 3.

(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.

(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

Award of degree

MSS 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Social Sciences, candidates

(a) shall comply with the General Regulations and the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and

(b) shall complete the programme as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations set out below.

Period of study

MSS 5. The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study; or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise specified for individual fields of study in the regulations below.

MSS 5.1 In the field of Clinical Psychology, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of full-time study, with a maximum period of registration of four academic years of full-time study.

MSS 5.2 In the field of Counselling, the programme shall normally extend over two or three academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of three academic years for the two-year part-time study or four academic years for the three-year part-time study.

MSS 5.3 In the field of Criminology, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.4 In the field of Educational Psychology, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of four academic years for both full-time and part-time study.

MSS 5.5 In the field of Media, Culture and Creative Cities, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.6 In the field of Nonprofit Management, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year (three semesters) of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.7 In the fields of Mental Health and Social Service Management, the programme shall normally extend over two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 5.8 In the field of Sociology, the programme shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.

MSS 6. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration specified in the above regulations, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

Advanced Standing

MSS 7. Advanced Standing may be granted to candidates in recognition of studies completed successfully before admission to the curriculum. Candidates who are awarded Advanced Standing will not be granted any further credit transfer for those studies for which Advanced Standing has been granted. The amount of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing shall be determined by the Board of the Faculty, in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) a candidate may be granted a total of not more than 20% of the total credits normally required under a curriculum for Advanced Standing unless otherwise approved by the Senate; and
 - (b) credits granted for Advanced Standing shall not normally be included in the calculation of the GPA unless permitted by the Board of the Faculty but will be recorded on the transcript of the candidate.
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Exemption

MSS 8. Candidates may be exempted, with or without special conditions attached, from the requirement prescribed in the regulations and syllabuses governing the curriculum with the approval of the Board of the Faculty, except in the case of a capstone experience. Approval for exemption of a capstone experience may be granted only by the Senate with good reasons. Candidates who are so exempted must replace the number of exempted credits with courses of the same credit value.

Progression in curriculum

MSS 9. Candidates may, with the approval of the Board of the Faculty, transfer credits for courses completed at other institutions during their candidature. The number of transferred credits may be recorded in the transcript of the candidate, but the results of courses completed at other institutions shall not be included in the calculation of the GPA. The combined total number of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing and credit transfer shall not exceed half

of the total credits normally required under the curricula of the candidates during their candidature at the University.

Completion of curriculum

MSS 10. To complete the curriculum, candidates

- (a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
 - (b) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work and field work;
 - (c) shall complete and present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project as prescribed in the syllabuses; and
 - (d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.
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Dissertation and Capstone project

MSS 11. Subject to the provisions of Regulation MSS 10(c), the title of the dissertation or capstone project shall be submitted for approval by not later than March 31 of the final academic year in which the teaching programme ends and the dissertation or capstone project shall be presented by a date as prescribed in the syllabuses for each field of study; candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation or capstone project represents their own work (or in the case of conjoint work, a statement countersigned by their coworker(s), which show their share of the work) undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment

MSS 12. Candidates shall be assessed for each of the courses for which they have registered, and assessment may be conducted in any combination of continuous assessment of coursework, written examinations and/or any other assessable activities. Only passed courses will earn credits.

MSS 13.

- (a) Where so prescribed in the syllabuses, coursework or a dissertation or a capstone project shall constitute part or whole of the examination for one or more courses.
- (b) An assessment of the candidates' coursework during their studies, including completion of written assignments and participation in field work or laboratory work, as the case may be, may be taken into account in determining the candidates' result in each written examination paper; or, where so prescribed in the syllabuses, may constitute the examination of one or more courses.

MSS 14. Candidates shall not be permitted to repeat a course for which they have received a passing grade for the purpose of upgrading.

MSS 15. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt in not more than half of the number of courses to be examined, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, during any of the academic years of study, may be permitted to make up for the failed course(s) in the following manner:

- (a) undergoing re-assessment/re-examination in the failed course; or
- (b) re-submitting failed coursework, without having to repeat the same course of instruction; or
- (c) repeating the failed course by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessments; or
- (d) for elective courses, taking another course in lieu and satisfying the assessment requirements.

MSS 16. Subject to the provision of Regulation MSS 10(c), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation or capstone project may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project within a specified period.

MSS 17. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in any prescribed field work/practical work/internship may be permitted to present themselves for reexamination in field work/practical work/internship within a specified period.

MSS 18. Candidates who are unable because of their illness to be present at the written examination of any course may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination of the same course to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on the form prescribed within seven calendar days of the first day of the candidate's absence from any examination. Any supplementary examination shall be part of that academic year's examinations, and the provision made in the regulations for failure at the first attempt shall apply accordingly.

MSS 19. There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MSS 20. Candidates who

- (a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-assessment/reexamination in any failed course(s) or to repeat the failed course(s) or take another course in lieu under Regulation MSS 15; or
 - (b) have failed to satisfy the examiners in any course(s) at a second attempt; or
 - (c) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MSS 16; or
 - (d) have failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation or capstone project under Regulation MSS 16; or
 - (e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration.
- may be required to discontinue their studies.

MSS 20.1 In the field of Clinical Psychology, candidates who have failed two external placements or the second attempt of either the external placement or internal practicum may be required to discontinue their studies.

MSS 20.2 In the field of Educational Psychology, candidates who have failed any two practicum courses may be required to discontinue their studies.

Grading systems

MSS 21. Individual courses shall be graded according to the one of the following grading systems:

(a) Letter grades, their standards and the grade points for assessment as follows:

Grade	Standard	Grade Point
A+	} Excellent	4.3
A		4.0
A-		3.7
B+	} Good	3.3
B		3.0
B-		2.7
C+	} Satisfactory	2.3
C		2.0
C-		1.7
D+	} Pass	1.3
D		1.0
F	Fail	0

or

(b) 'Pass' or 'Fail'.

Courses graded according to (b) above shall not be included in the calculation of the GPA.

Classification of awards

MSS 22. On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diploma.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

SOCIOLOGY

The Department of Sociology offers a postgraduate programme leading to the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology. The programme shall extend over not less than one and not more than two academic years of full-time study or not less than two and not more than three academic years of part-time study. All courses are offered on both full-time and part-time basis. Classes are conducted during daytimes, evenings and occasional weekends.

ASSESSMENTS

Candidates are assessed the courses by way of (1) a 2-hour written examination that accounts

for 40-60% of total marks and 40-60% by coursework assignments or (2) by 100% coursework and may include written tests.

CURRICULUM

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology requires students whose previous degree is not in the discipline of sociology to complete a mandatory non-credit-bearing pre-sessional course prior to the commencement of the programme. Students whose first degree is in the discipline of Sociology may also elect to take this course on an optional basis. The pre-sessional, self-paced course takes around 18 hours, and will be delivered via the HKU Online Learning platform. It will equip students with basic knowledge in key areas of the discipline, including sociological theories and concepts, social stratification, culture and society, globalization and social change.

To receive the award of the degree of Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology, candidates have to complete 8 courses (6 credits each) and a capstone project (12 credits), with a total of 60 credits. The compulsory courses provide candidates with a broad, integrated understanding of the social sciences approach to the study of sociology. The elective courses, building upon that foundation, introduce the candidates to a variety of developments in sociology and related sociological issues. There are no prerequisites of all compulsory or elective courses.

I. Compulsory courses (18 credits)

Candidates shall complete three compulsory courses of the following list:

- SOCI70XX. Problem solving sociology: social theory for society (6 credits)
- SOCI70XX. Sociological research design and fundamental methods (6 credits)

And either:

- SOCI70XX. Qualitative research methods (6 credits); or
- SOCI70XX. Quantitative research methods (6 credits)

Students may optionally choose to take both ‘SOCI70XX. Qualitative research methods’ and ‘SOCI70XX. Quantitative research methods’, with the additional course counting towards an elective course.

II. Elective courses (30 credits)

Candidates shall complete five elective courses. To facilitate students making their choices, courses are grouped under four indicative themes. Students may enrol in courses from different themes, if so desired.

Students are allowed to take a maximum of two undergraduate (SOCI3xxx) sociology courses during their programme of study. Course registration on SOCI3xxx courses is subject to the approval of Programme Director and the relevant course teacher. Students will not be permitted to re-enrol in the same undergraduate elective if they previously enrolled in it whilst studying

for any undergraduate degree at HKU.

(i) Perspectives on society

- SOCI3002. Social stratification and social class: finding and knowing your place (6 credits)
- SOCI3010. Education and society (6 credits)
- SOCI3012. Gender and society (6 credits)
- SOCI3021. Marriage and the family (6 credits)
- SOCI3027. Politics and society (6 credits)
- SOCI3044. Economic sociology (6 credits)
- SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology I (6 credits)
- SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology II (6 credits)
- SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology III (6 credits)

(ii) Criminology

- SOCI8002. Economic and organized crime (6 credits)
- SOCI8003. Law and society (6 credits)
- SOCI8004. Punishment and society (6 credits)
- SOCI8006. Youth and delinquency (6 credits)
- SOCI8008. Special topics in criminology (6 credits)
- SOCI8011. Media and crime (6 credits)
- SOCI8013. Gender, crime and social control (6 credits)
- SOCI8015. Crime and deviance in PR China (6 credits)
- SOCI8017. Cultural criminology (6 credits)
- SOCI8018. Policing in comparative perspective (6 credits)
- SOCI8019. Issues in police reform (6 credits)
- SOCI8020. White collar and corporate crime (6 credits)
- SOCI8032. Drugs and society (6 credits)
- SOCI8034. Special topics in criminology II (6 credits)

(iii) Media and culture

- SOCI8023. Media and popular culture in East Asian cities (6 credits)
- SOCI8024. Digital media, moralities and cultures (6 credits)
- SOCI8025. Consumer cultures and everyday life (6 credits)
- SOCI8026. Culture and Identity - reflexivity and narratives in late-modern society (6 credits)
- SOCI8027. Body, intimacy and sexuality: media narratives and lived experience in modern society (6 credits)
- SOCI8028. Cultural policies and global cities (6 credits)
- SOCI8029. Creative industries and creative cities (6 credits)
- SOCI8031. Special topics in media, culture and creative cities (6 credits)
- SOCI8033. Co-presence: human-animal relationships in modern cities (6 credits)
- SOCI8035. Special topics in media, culture and creative cities II (6 credits)

(iv) Spatial population analysis

- MPOP7101. Fertility and family structures (6 credits)
- MPOP7102. Mortality, ageing and health (6 credits)
- MPOP7103. Migration and urbanization (6 credits)
- MPOP7105. Global demography and development (6 credits)
- MPOP7106. Demography of Greater China (6 credits)

Note: Not all the courses listed will necessarily be offered every year. While we try to ensure as broad a course offering to students as possible, courses offered each year do vary based on availability of teaching staff, departmental resources and student demand. In exceptional instances, it may be necessary to cancel a course at short notice because of insufficient student enrolment or other resource issues.

III. Capstone project course (12 credits)

Candidates shall complete the following compulsory capstone experience course:

SOCI8xxx. Capstone project in Sociology (12 credits)

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Compulsory Courses

SOCI70XX. Problem solving sociology: social theory for society (6 credits)

Sociology is a tricky subject because it is so diverse – and indeed what Sociologists can (and do!) study is absolutely ubiquitous, from what we eat or wear to the predictors of revolution. Given this diversity, the goal of our course is to get you acquainted with a sociological way of thinking, and in particular to help you apply this way of thinking to the social issues that interest you. Together, we will learn and develop social theory for problem solving the world's grand challenges.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOCI70XX Sociological research design and fundamental methods (6 credits)

This course looks at different ways of conducting research in the sociological discipline. It examines the whole research process, starting from research methodology to research design, sampling and methods used, to data collection, data analysis and report writing. Various research methods will be introduced, including archival research, content analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography and participant observation, individual and focus group interviews, oral history, questionnaire survey, semiotic analysis, and digital methods and media analysis. Key debates in research methodology such as generalization, representation, and reflexivity will be discussed. As such, this course will provide a basic familiarity with research methods that students will be able to build upon throughout their Master's programme. This course is offered to students from across Masters programmes offered by the Department of Sociology. As such, parts of the course will be tailored to students' respective fields of study. You will have the opportunity to interact with and learn from students designing a diverse range of research projects. The course helps students put theory 'to work' and to become independent researchers who are well-informed at both the theoretical and methodological levels. A theme running throughout this course will be to consider how research can be designed to address a wide range of real-life problems, both empirical and theoretical. The knowledge and skills learnt will

crucially contribute to the work on the Capstone Project/Dissertation of their Master's degree programme.

Assessment: 100% coursework

SOCI70XX. Qualitative research methods (6 credits)

This is a Master's level course on qualitative methods in the sociological discipline. The goal of qualitative methods is to understand people's practices, experiences, and meaning-making in everyday life, and the goal of this course is to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and practical experience necessary to conduct this research effectively. That is, rather than simply teaching students about the various qualitative methods available for sociological fieldwork, this course will help students conduct qualitative research that is rigorous, generative, follows best practices, and meets contemporary social scientific standards. A broad range of case studies from completed and ongoing sociological research projects will be drawn upon to discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in applying and selecting qualitative research methods to real-life problems, both empirical and theoretical. Beyond instruction, the focus of this course is to collect, analyze, write-up, and present qualitative evidence. By participating in the course and completing the assignments, you will develop the first and second-hand knowledge necessary to independently conduct high-quality qualitative research. Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI70XX. Quantitative research methods (6 credits)

This is a Master's level course on quantitative methods in the sociological discipline. It covers both fundamental theories and analytical skills, ranging from research design and hypothesis formulation to data collection (e.g., survey; experiments), data analysis (e.g., descriptive statistics; comparison of means; regressions, causal inference), and research writing. A broad range of case studies from completed and ongoing sociological research projects will be drawn upon to discuss the challenges and opportunities involved in applying and selecting quantitative research methods to real-life problems, both empirical and theoretical. This course will be highly interactive and collaborative. In each class, students will be required to contribute to discussions on various topics. The course also offers hands-on training to conduct an original research project including questionnaire surveys and statistical analysis. Assessment: 100% coursework.

Elective Courses

Perspectives on society

SOCI3002. Social stratification and social class: finding and knowing your place (6 credits)

This course deals with the phenomenon of social inequality. It will cover topics such as theoretical explanations of this phenomenon; the methodological problems involved; how inequality in social position and resources arise, and how they are patterned; how class

inequalities relate to broader processes of social division and cultural differentiation; how class is experienced in ordinary, everyday activities, and its psycho-social landscape; how class is gendered and intersects racial and ethnic divisions; the consequences of stratification and social mobility.

Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination.

SOCI3010. Education and society (6 credits)

Formal educational institutions in society will be examined, using the major concepts and theories of sociology. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between education and other important social institutions such as the family, the polity, and the economy. The questions of equality of educational opportunity and the potential role of education in fostering social change will also be analysed.

Assessment: 60% coursework, 40% examination.

SOCI3012. Gender and society (6 credits)

This course will focus on the social construction of gender and the patterns of inequality that result from this process. Themes to be examined are: biology and destiny; social definitions of masculinity and femininity; sex role socialization; consequences of gender differentiation; theoretical perspectives. In addition, the contribution that social theory has to make to the question of the origins of sex inequalities will also be examined.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI3021. Marriage and the family (6 credits)

Marriage and the family are viewed comparatively, using historical and cross-cultural data. Included are the impact of industrialization and urbanization on family life, different forms of family organization and the societal conditions under which they occur, theories of mate selection, recent changes in dating and premarital sexual involvement, parenthood, and marital adjustment.

Assessment: 50% coursework, 50% examination.

SOCI3027. Politics and society (6 credits)

This course offers a sociological discussion of political power, political institutions, political processes, and political behaviour. It examines the role of the state in constituting various activities in the society. Different theoretical perspectives will be introduced and empirical cases will be used to illustrate various concepts and ideas.

Assessment: 40% coursework, 60% examination.

SOCI3044. Economic sociology (6 credits)

Economic Sociology is concerned with the relations between the economic and non-economic

aspects of social life. It challenges the basic assumptions that economic action is universally rational on which neo-classical economics is based. This course begins with an introduction of the key ideas of “new economic sociology.” It followed by some selected topics that apply the new economic sociology perspective to understand a wide range of economic activities, including culture and market, social network and economic transactions, the role of the state, money and consumption, investment and firm, corporation, labor management, organizational culture, and the cultural impacts of economic globalization.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology I (6 credits)

A ‘special topics’ course is offered to provide areas of study in addition to what is covered in courses regularly offered by the Department of Sociology. Special topics may involve cutting edge theory or practice, trialling innovative teaching pedagogies, or may be suggested by a faculty member. More details on the topics to be covered by this course in a specific semester can be found at <https://sociology.hku.hk/courses>

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology II (6 credits)

A ‘special topics’ course is offered to provide areas of study in addition to what is covered in courses regularly offered by the Department of Sociology. Special topics may involve cutting edge theory or practice, trialling innovative teaching pedagogies, or may be suggested by a faculty member. More details on the topics to be covered by this course in a specific semester can be found at <https://sociology.hku.hk/courses>

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI80XX. Special topics in sociology III (6 credits)

A ‘special topics’ course is offered to provide areas of study in addition to what is covered in courses regularly offered by the Department of Sociology. Special topics may involve cutting edge theory or practice, trialling innovative teaching pedagogies, or may be suggested by a faculty member. More details on the topics to be covered by this course in a specific semester can be found at <https://sociology.hku.hk/courses>

Assessment: 100% coursework.

Criminology

SOCI8002. Economic and organized crime (6 credits)

The course focuses on a range of criminal activities that occur within an organizational setting or are in accordance with established organizational goals, and which harms individuals or society at large. More specifically, the course will devote attention to such topics as economic and organized crime and discuss the ways in which they are interrelated and frequently overlap with political crime. Special consideration will be given to the ways in which the state may

organize crime.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8003. Law and society (6 credits)

This course will examine the relationship between law and society. It looks at the history and development of law in different cultures, examining the form and content of 'law' found in pre-industrial society, capitalist society and socialist society. Particular legal concepts such as the law of contract and the public/private distinction are placed in their socio-historic setting. Specific topics (e.g. law and domestic relations, rape in marriage, child abuse, homosexuality, artificial reproduction, and restrictions on pornography) are examined insofar as they are related to the application of these concepts.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8004. Punishment and society (6 credits)

The course aims to explain punishment and society in a comparative and historical context. Popular conceptions and professional evidence about punishment will be compared. The social institution of punishment is in many ways a mirror of society and its norms. The course will look at the different functions of punishment, like retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation, and restoration. We will trace those functions historically and culturally, mapping vast cultural and social differences in the way in which punishment is practiced in America, Europe, the Islamic world, and in China.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8006. Youth and delinquency (6 credits)

The problem of juvenile delinquency has influenced the formation of law and social policy in many societies. This course will use a wide variety of historical and comparative materials to analyze the response of social service agencies and the criminal justice system to juvenile delinquency. It will also examine various theoretical approaches that have been used in studying juvenile delinquency.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8008. Special topics in criminology (6 credits)

A lecture and seminar programme designed to provide students with a course of study in current or newly emerging topics in criminology and criminal justice. The course enables, for example, new subject or sub-specialist areas to be offered. This may inter alia, include:

- cyber crime and e-commerce crime
- crime prevention
- criminal intelligence analysis
- criminal justice system administration and management
- computer forensics
- security and terrorism studies
- criminal profiling

victimology (including trafficking, stalking and “hate” crimes)

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8011. Media and crime (6 credits)

The media plays an extremely influential role in the public’s conceptions of crime and order. This course aims to provide students with a better understanding of theories about the media’s impact on crime, the news making process in relation to crime, and how the media shapes our ideas and responses to crime. The course also focuses on the representation of crime in popular culture, particularly in films and novels.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8013. Gender, crime and social control (6 credits)

Understanding women’s experiences with crime and the criminal justice system requires an analysis of the normative ideas about gender that are constructed and utilized by the criminal justice system. Criminological research on women in crime and the criminal justice system have argued that interventions for women’s criminal offending are about regulating gender norms (or producing ‘good women’) as much as they are about responding to crime. This course examines these blurred boundaries between managing crime and managing gender. We will also explore the construction and treatment of gendered bodies as well as gendered forms of work, institutions and social processes. The gendered dimensions of central criminological processes such as criminalization, victimization, policing and the criminal justice system will also be examined, with a particular focus on the blurred boundaries between victimization and criminalization.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8015. Crime and deviance in PR China (6 credits)

The course offers an overview and introduction to the developments of crime and deviance in China. The emphasis will be historical, comparative and contemporary. We look at Chinese definitions of deviance and crime from the past, the Communist period, and with a particular emphasis on the recent period of rapid modernization. The course will also review issues and problems in the control of crime and public order in the People’s Republic of China. The content covers theories and practices of deviance, crime, discipline, policing, and punishment.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8017. Cultural criminology (6 credits)

Cultural criminology comes as a reaction and interpretive alternative to normative analyses of social problems. Rather than ask questions about root causes of crime, cultural criminologists seek to explore the processes through which ascriptions of crime and criminality, and reactions to these ascriptions are promulgated within particular social and cultural contexts. The course will offer a comparative perspective contrasting North American ‘cultures of control’, with other ‘welfare’ and ‘disciplinary welfare’ contexts, including Hong Kong.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8018. Policing in comparative perspective (6 credits)

This course examines policing in a broad social and cultural perspective. Our focus is the concept of the “police function”: under what sorts of historical and socio-cultural conditions does the idea of the police function make sense? With this question as our guide, we will examine the maintenance of order in stateless societies, look at various historical moments in the emergence of police as an element of modern government, and finally take a survey of the novel policing formations emerging from the processes of decolonization, globalization and neo-liberalism.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8019. Issues in police reform (6 credits)

When, why and how do police forces change? This course takes up these questions through case studies of exemplary events of police reform, such as: Robert Peel’s formation of the London Metropolitan Police in 1829; William Parker’s reform of the Los Angeles Police Department in the 1950s; William Bratton’s reform of the New York Police Department in the 1990s; post-apartheid policing in South Africa; and post-Maoist policing in the People’s Republic of China. Through comparative study and in-depth analysis, students will draw lessons about the general dynamics underlying police reform.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8020. White collar and corporate crime (6 credits)

This course examines the topic of white-collar and corporate crime. Classic theoretical works will be considered as well as more contemporary writings. To illustrate these points we will explore important international case studies that shed light on how and why these offenses occur. We will begin with a general introduction to the field, including definitions, conceptual, and theoretical issues from the social sciences, law, and criminology regarding what has become known as white-collar, occupational, organizational, and corporate crime. Following this, we will discuss various forms of white-collar crime including: consumer crime, environmental crime, governmental crime, official corruption, computer crime, health care fraud, and financial fraud. The course will guide students in studying important questions, to critically think about issues, to research the topics discussed, and to become familiar with the literature on white-collar and corporate crime, through assigned readings, presentations, class discussion, a writing assignment and an in-class exam.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8032. Drugs and society (6 credits)

Drug use is a significant feature of contemporary society and is a cause of concern in view of its impact on individuals and society, and its connectedness with crime. The overall objective of this course is to provide students with a better understanding of the ways in which drugs and society are interconnected. The aim of the course is to provide students with an integrative arena for the social understanding of drug use, why people use drugs, and the key epistemological (criminological, sociological and psychological) debates relating to the subject.

It also focuses on the social, political and health factors that shape the control and treatment of drugs.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8034. Special topics in criminology II (6 credits)

A lecture and seminar programme designed to provide students with a course of study in current or newly emerging topics in criminology and criminal justice. The course enables, for example, new subject or sub-specialist areas to be offered. This may inter alia, include:

cyber crime and e-commerce crime
crime prevention
criminal intelligence analysis
criminal justice system administration and management
computer forensics
security and terrorism studies
criminal profiling
victimology (including trafficking, stalking and “hate” crimes)

Assessment: 100% coursework.

Media and Culture

SOCI8023. Media and popular culture in East Asian cities (6 credits)

This course addresses the social, political, cultural, and creative dynamics of the modern communication media – TV, film, music, radio, the press, and other new media technologies – and their impacts on popular culture in Hong Kong and other Asian cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Tokyo, and Singapore. It enables you to critically examine how media and popular culture construct our identities, shape everyday life, and generate public debates. Topics include the media; sex and violence; consumption and youth cultures, romance and gender identity; regimes of body management; desire and social identities; lifestyle distinctions and social hierarchy; on-line communication and cyber personas; media events and imagined communities; new media and technologies; and the commercialization of arts.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8024. Digital media, moralities and cultures (6 credits)

The growth of digital media is fundamentally reshaping our culture. But how can we start to analyse and understand these changes sociologically? This course will attempt to address these issues through an examination of the moral and ethical issues underpinning a wide array of digital communications technologies. Morality provides a powerful tool for understanding technology, as it is able to encompass both the mundane (e.g., whether a ‘selfie’ is judged to be tasteful or crude) and the exceptional (i.e., the laws and regulations governing specific aspects of internet use). We examine how morality, social norms and behaviours are shaping technology use and how technology is, in turn, redefining the moral frameworks that exist in society. A broad range of existing theoretical standpoints for understanding the ethics of digital media will be introduced. These perspectives will be critiqued and challenged through

reference to existing case studies and on-going innovative research projects from different academics and practitioners. This course adopts a truly global outlook, examining case studies from around the world to consider the moral dimensions of technology comparatively.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8025. Consumer cultures and everyday life (6 credits)

Consumption is an important part of modern life. This course examines the role of consumer culture in the modern commodity economy. It offers you a chance to revisit classical theorists in the context of consumption (e.g., Marx, Weber, Campbell, Veblen, Simmel), as well as some more contemporary thinkers (e.g., Marcuse, Bourdieu, Baudrillard). It will look at the changing roles of street culture, department stores and shopping malls, theme parks, and urban and suburban ways of life in the context of recent discussions regarding the interactive media and global consumption politics. In particular, the course will show how consumption in everyday life generates a fascinating mix of homogeneity, difference, hybridity, commerce, and democratization for modern people in major creative cities. Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8026. Culture and identity - reflexivity and narratives in late-modern society (6 credits)

This course traces the rise of the notion of self-identity in the modern era and follows it through to contemporary times. Various notions of identity and their relationships will be discussed: personal identity, social identity, cultural identity, collective identity, national identity, etc. We will explore the changing experiences and meanings of collective and personal identities in late modern culture in domains such as work, family, religion, society, and the nation. We pay particular attention to the emergence of various contemporary identities in relation to the formation of creative class and creative culture. This will enable us to rethink the distinction between the public and the private, explore the social construction of the life course, the notion of cultural identity, the relationship between identity and creativity, and the dynamics of identity politics and new social movements in terms of age, body, class, religion, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and more. The focus is on contemporary Hong Kong and Chinese experiences as well as other cities in the Asia/Pacific region, such as Singapore, Seoul, and Tokyo.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8027. Body, intimacy and sexuality: media narratives and lived experience in modern society (6 credits)

This course aims to investigate the significant changes happening in the private sphere of intimacy in late-modern times, paying particular attention to Chinese cities such as Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, and other Asian cities such as Seoul, Taipei, Tokyo, Bangkok, and Singapore. Drawn from various disciplines such as feminism, gay and lesbian studies, queer theory, and contemporary theory of body, this course critically reviews a number of key issues: the debate of biological drive/social force in shaping sexual identity, gender difference and intimate behavior; the dynamics of agency/structure in understanding sexual performances and body practices; the development of sexual politics and movements; mainstreaming of sexuality and media representation; and commercialization of desires. This course also pays more attention to the newly emerging scripts that seem to shape femininity/masculinity,

romantic love, intimate relationship, and family patterns.
Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8028. Cultural policies and global cities (6 credits)

This course covers three different scopes of cultural policy, beginning with government supports for the arts, then the invention of creative industry policies and finally cultural citizenship. There has been an international trend of introducing entrepreneurialism into cultural policies in recent decades. Policies, involving both the government and civic organizations thus are formulated in order to enhance the competitiveness of nations and cities through various cultural projects. Global cities such as London, New York, Paris, Brussels, and Tokyo are seen to be capable of assuming a leading role in the cultural development and promotion of urban entrepreneurialism. This course examines comparatively how different policies evolve under different social and historical conditions, and how global cities redevelop their urban and cultural resources in order to sharpen their competitiveness in the context of the inter-city competition of a global economy, and explores how such experiences could be applied to Hong Kong. Topics to be covered in this course include entrepreneurialism, strategies of urban redevelopment, urban culture, and urban competitiveness. Students will also reflect on the problems associated with cultural, urban and creative development.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8029. Creative industries and creative cities (6 credits)

This course explores the structures, processes, and cultural artifacts of the creative industries (performing arts, film and television, publishing, art and antique markets, music, architecture, digital entertainment, computer software development, animation production, fashion, and product design) and how they figure in the strategic repositioning of the city. It offers students a chance to critically examine the political economy and spatial organization of these industries of culture in different creative cities of the world. It also opens up debates generated by the intersection between culture, economy, and the city, such as high and low culture, innovation and standardization, capitalist dominance and democratic pluralism, authenticity and mechanical reproduction, power and resistance, the role of the creative class in city growth and regeneration, engineering and imagineering creative cities, cultural planning, and the city as a marketplace, sustaining the livable city.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8031. Special topics in media, culture and creative cities (6 credits)

This course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of current or newly emerging topics in media, culture and creative city. The course enables new subject or sub-specialist areas to be offered. It also facilitates innovative modes of teaching and learning. Subjects may inter alia, include:

Visual sociology and anthropology
Sensory cultures
Emotion and affect
Posthumanities and ethics
Biomedicine and biotechnology

New media, subjectivity and performativity
New thinkers in cultural studies
Risk, reflexivity and sustainable development
Critical pedagogy in media and culture
Body, place and flow – new directions in cultural studies
Private self and public sphere
Workshops in presenting and representing culture

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8033. Co-presence: human-animal relationships in modern cities (6 credits)

In a globalised world amidst environmental crisis, consumption ethics and justice, the entanglement and future of human-animal relationships have become an increasingly urgent topic of inquiry. This course covers the manifold of human-relationships from our food choices, pet-keeping practices, animals in media to violence and protection of animals.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

SOCI8035. Special topics in media, culture and creative cities II (6 credits)

This course provides students with a comprehensive understanding of current or newly emerging topics in media, culture and creative city. The course enables new subject or sub-specialist areas to be offered. It also facilitates innovative modes of teaching and learning. Subjects may inter alia, include:

Visual sociology and anthropology
Sensory cultures
Emotion and affect
Posthumanities and ethics
Biomedicine and biotechnology
New media, subjectivity and performativity
New thinkers in cultural studies
Risk, reflexivity and sustainable development
Critical pedagogy in media and culture
Body, place and flow – new directions in cultural studies
Private self and public sphere
Workshops in presenting and representing culture

Assessment: 100% coursework.

Spatial population analysis

MPOP7101. Fertility and family structures (6 credits)

In recent years, the number of children in the world began to decline for the first time in centuries. Combined with increasing life expectancies, the size and structures of families are undergoing unprecedented changes. This course delves into the intricate dynamics of fertility

and family structures, introducing fundamental concepts and measures essential for a comprehensive demographic study. We explore key theories and empirical observations to illuminate fertility changes and family formation patterns by key demographic variables such as gender, age and education. Topics covered include reproductive health, family planning, changing family patterns, intergenerational relationships, and the impact of demographic and socio-economic factors on fertility decisions. We will pay particular attention to the cause and impact of fertility changes in the East Asian context, where levels are among the lowest in the world. Through a blend of theoretical discussions, empirical research, and case studies, students will gain a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between fertility choices, family dynamics, and broader societal trends. The course also equips students with the ability to analyse fertility and family differences across countries and regions, considering various stages of the demographic transition.

Assessment: 50% examination; 50% coursework.

MPOP7102. Mortality, ageing and health (6 credits)

As our global society ages, understanding how mortality is declining is becoming ever more important in developing policies to better address the needs of older populations. This course provides a comprehensive exploration of mortality patterns, health dynamics, and ageing, focusing on their interdependence across time and space. Students will delve into the micro-level drivers and macro-level consequences of the mortality transition, understanding its linkage to global health and population ageing. The curriculum considers the intricate interaction of demographic and socio-economic processes shaping mortality trends. Participants will explore various measures for health and ageing and analyse relevant data sources to gain practical insights. We will study past and emerging trends in public health, such as chronic diseases, obesity, environmental health and infectious diseases, from a demographic perspective. The course will conclude with critical reflections on strategies to overcome challenges in public health and demographic ageing, addressing issues in both low- and high-income countries, including in the East Asian context, home to some of the eldest populations in the world.

Assessment: 50% examination; 50% coursework.

MPOP7103. Migration and urbanization (6 credits)

Migration is becoming the prominent driver of population change in many regions and countries, as fertility and mortality rates decline to low levels. This course provides an in-depth exploration of migration and urbanization, offering a holistic perspective on these dynamic phenomena. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of migration concepts, migration and urbanization theories, and the main past and current migration trends globally and in Asia. The course demonstrates how and where migration is becoming a pivotal force in demographic change, impacting population size, distribution, and characteristics, as well as the socio-economic characteristics of both origin and destination. Moreover, we will delve into the complexities of measuring and defining migration and urban areas, highlighting how these factors can make cross-country comparisons more challenging than other demographic processes such as fertility and mortality. Finally, we will discuss the evolution of migration policies, their effectiveness, and their impact on development in both the sending and receiving areas. The course will facilitate learning about key migration measures and data sources, fostering the ability to comprehend common myths on the scale of migration and its impact.

Assessment: 50% examination; 50% coursework.

MPOP7105. Global demography and development (6 credits)

Demographics can be a potent driver of the pace and process of economic development. This course provides a comprehensive exploration of the intricate relationship between demography transitions and development. Participants will delve into the demographic dynamics shaping countries and their regions and their profound implications for socioeconomic progress. The course begins by examining key demographic indicators and trends on a global scale, including fertility, mortality, and migration patterns. It then analyses how these demographic factors intersect with development processes, addressing topics such as education, healthcare, labour force and economic advancement whilst reflecting on how these align with objectives set out in the Sustainable Development Goals. Towards the end of the course, we will reflect on how population change impacts our environment, where and how climate change may interact with demographic processes and potential policy solutions to help address issues related to the interaction of our natural environment, population and development. Through case studies, discussions, and practical applications, participants will gain a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted connections between global demography and development, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on global challenges and opportunities.

Assessment: 50% examination; 50% coursework.

MPOP7106. Demography of Greater China (6 credits)

This module provides a focused exploration of the demographic landscape in Greater China, encompassing mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Participants will delve into the unique demographic patterns, trends, and challenges shaping this dynamic region. The course begins with an exploration of past and current key demographic indicators, including fertility rates, mortality trends, and migration patterns, providing a comprehensive overview of population dynamics. Participants will examine the impact of historical political and cultural factors on demographic changes and explore the implications for social and economic development in Greater China. We will also reflect on expected future challenges for society and policymakers, including low fertility rates, changing household structures, ageing populations and population decline. Through case studies, discussions, and practical applications, participants will gain a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between current demographic shifts and the emerging challenges in Greater China.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

Capstone Experience Course (Compulsory)

SOCI8xxx. Capstone project in Sociology (12 credits)

The Capstone Project in Sociology is a masters-level course that provides students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout their program. In this course, students will work in small groups to undertake a significant research project that explores relevant sociological topics and address today's social problems.

Throughout the course, students will build upon their research skills as they design, implement, present, and write up their research projects. This course emphasizes the importance of

conducting innovative research that is relevant to the pressing social issues of our time. Students will be encouraged to think critically and creatively, pushing the boundaries of traditional sociological research to offer fresh perspectives and potential solutions to complex social problems.

By working in small groups, students will have the opportunity to collaborate and learn from their peers, fostering a supportive and intellectually stimulating environment. The course will also provide guidance and support from experienced faculty members who will serve as mentors throughout the research process.

Upon completion of the Capstone Project in Sociology, students will have gained valuable experience in conducting independent research and addressing real-world social problems. This course will not only enhance their research skills but also equip them with the ability to think analytically and critically about contemporary social issues. By undertaking innovative research, students will be well-prepared to make a meaningful impact in their future careers and contribute to the field of sociology.

Assessment: 100% coursework.