

Course Code / Course Title)	Introduction to Sociology
(Theme / Subtitle)	Sociological thinking about life courses
(Instructor)	Henk Vinken / Isabelle Diepstraten
(Semester / Credit)	(Spring Semester / 2 credits)
(Notes)	

(Course Objective)

The goal of this course is to introduce basic sociological thinking by looking at the sociological determinants of life courses and by using the life stories of the students themselves. Students will be able to demonstrate that they recognize social determinants of (their) life course and what makes their life course different from youths and generations from other social backgrounds, historical times and cultures.

(Course Content)

Students engage with the lectures by preparing and presenting their life story in a structured way. Being able to tell your life story is a basic attribute in advanced societies. Being able to discern and reflect on the basic (sociological) determinants of one's life is important in this process. There are two classes a week. A lecture class is followed by a student presentation class in which students present a short paper about their life course based on the theme of the previous lecture class, thus actively processing the theoretical perspective about life courses. In a final paper they will integrate the partial papers, explicitly draw in assigned literature, and present these papers in the final class.

(Course Schedule)

1. Class orientation, course guidance, and introducing key concepts
2. First discussion on students' life stories on the key concepts of last class
3. Sociological determinants of life courses; an emerging choice biography?
4. Discussing students' life stories based on concepts of last class' theme
5. How did you grow up? Life courses and family cultures
6. Discussing students' life stories based on concepts of last class' theme
7. What is your lifestyle? Life courses and your social networks
8. Discussing students' life stories based on concepts of last class' theme
9. Are you part of a youth and generational culture? Life courses in different generations
10. Discussing students' life stories based on concepts of last class' theme
11. Is your life course Japanese? The impact of 'national' culture on life courses
12. Discussing students' life stories based on concepts of last class' theme
13. Student presentations, peer and teachers' feedback
14. Student presentations, peer and teachers' feedback

(Study Required Outside of Class)

Students are required to read a limited number of key journal articles which will be provided by the teachers for each following class. Students are required to write about their life in a structured way (see Course Content). In the final sessions they will reflect on all concepts they acquired during the course, make a final presentation, and hand in a paper about their biography linked to theories they learned. The paper is the outcome of reflections on themes processed during the course. It is written for the whole duration of the course. The final assessment is based on this paper.

(Evaluation)

Attendance and participation (20%)/English oral presentation (30%)/Final assessment (50%)

(Textbooks)

Reading list will be provided in the class

(Readings)

To be announced in each class