Sociology A Level

HEAD OF SUBJECT

Andrew Knifton

EXAM BOARD

AQA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sociology is a fascinating subject that gives a unique insight into what drives human behaviour and how culture, government and the economy operate. Sociology asks big questions and examines connections within society. We live in a world where massive changes happen on a daily basis and by studying Sociology we can start to explore why some of these changes take place and what the implications are for the rest of our world. We study all levels of society from the common characteristics of small groups to complex private and public bureaucracies. We study the political and social bases of public policies and their different impacts on individuals, groups and societies. Our emphasis is on analysis and evaluation enabling our students to look critically at the world. The skills they learn prepare our students for careers in the media, social services, criminal justice, law, business, government and education.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Learning to use statistics and data to build a case;
- Research methodology;
- Ability to write fluently and persuasively;
- Critical thinking and close reading of written information;
- Ability to see things from different points of view;
- Analysis of the causes of major events and the changes brought about by them;
- Evaluation of studies, theoretical perspectives and research;
- Participation in discussions and debates, and delivering of presentations;
- Ability to identify important evidence, see the bigger picture and make connections.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Sociology Department has continued to deliver excellent academic outcomes, with the 2026 A-level results demonstrating sustained achievement above national averages. Particularly impressive was the 95% of students achieving A*–C grades, compared with 77% nationally, while 27% achieved A*–A grades, exceeding the national figure of 18%.

Students went on to study at the following universities: Bristol, London School of Economics and Politics, Durham, Reading, Leeds, Leicester, King's College, London, SOAS, Warwick, Westminster, UCL, BIMM, Bournemouth, Sussex, Essex, Loughborough, Greenwich, City, University of London, Queen Mary, University of London, Warwick,Royal Holloway, University of London, Kingston and Southampton.

Greycoat Place
Westminster
London SW1P 2DY
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PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Education
with Theory and Methods

Exam paper (80 marks)
2 hours

1/3 of total A Level

Topics in Sociology
(Family and Beliefs)

Exam paper (80 marks)
2 hours

1/3 of total A Level

Crime and Deviance
with theory and Methods

Exam paper (80 marks)
2 hours

1/3 of total A Level

COURSE CONTENT

Education: During the course, we look at the following areas: The role and functions of the education system, including its relationship to the economy and to class structure. Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society. Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil identities and subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the Organisation of teaching and learning. The significance of educational policies, including policies of selection, marketisation and privatisation, and policies to achieve greater equality of opportunity or outcome, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of and access to education; the impact of globalisation on educational policy.

Families and Households: During the course, we look at the following areas: The relationship of the family to the social structure and social change, with particular reference to the economy and to state policies. Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, childbearing and the life course, including the sociology of personal life, and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures. Gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships within the family in contemporary society. The nature of childhood, and changes in the status of children in the family and society. Demographic trends in the United Kingdom since 1900: birth rates, death rates, family size, life expectancy, ageing population, and migration and globalisation.

Beliefs in Society: During the course, we look at the following areas: Ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions. The relationship between social change and social stability, and religious beliefs, practices and organisations. Religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice. The relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices. The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context, and globalisation and the spread of religions.

Crime and Deviance: During the course, we look at the following areas: Crime, deviance, social order and social control. The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime. Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes. Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

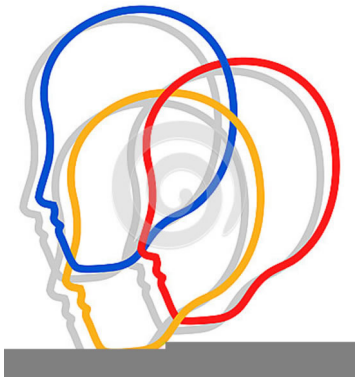
Theory and Methods focusing on education:
During the course, we look at the following areas: Theoretical perspectives. Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design. Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics. The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data. The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'. The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research. Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories. The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory. The nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific. The relationship between theory and methods. Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom. The relationship between Sociology and social policy.

FUTURE CAREERS

Business: Sociologists research consumer trends to reveal evolving customer needs and opportunities. Sociologists also help product designers understand the overall trends shaping consumer culture in order to inspire tomorrow's new products.

Health and Welfare Services: Most health and welfare professionals study sociology in order to better understand some of the larger trends they see among patients and clients. By using the kinds of pattern analysis techniques that sociologists are known for, they can focus their practices on critical needs in their communities.

Education: Teachers with a sociological perspective are aware of the factors that make up a child's background and understand why they act the way they do. This gives them the tools and confidence to help overcome many challenges in schools.



Journalism: Newspapers and media outlets employ sociologists to help understand the kinds of stories that engage readers, viewers and listeners in a particular region. Sociologists work with editors to identify the right balance between news that audiences expect and the stories that need to be reported.

Public Relations: By reviewing market research data and understanding historic trends, sociologists who truly understand the motivations of customers can effectively defuse problems in the media by responding to the public's concerns with carefully composed solutions.

Police: Many local authorities hire sociologists to understand the impact of tougher laws. Sociologists also help prison and probation officers determine the effects of new programmes and regulations on the prison population.

Research: A variety of government agencies, nonprofit institutions and outreach organisations seek out sociologists for specialist research. Many sociologists go on to carve out careers as independent research consultants, examining trends in human behaviour for a variety of clients.

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