

Is this subject right for me?

Do you like debates—listening to them, taking part in them or writing about them?
Do you like working with other students, in small groups?
Are you able to learn evidence to back up opinions?

What is invisible, extremely complicated, affects every human's life and is claimed not to exist by ex-prime minister Margaret Thatcher? The answer is society and Maggie was wrong because the social influences on our behaviour are obvious to all except the most short-sighted. Families, schools, friends and the media, to name just some, play a huge part in creating the person we become. Any of you who've felt you've **got** to do that science homework, **got** to visit an unpopular relation or **got** to get those Nike trainers, have felt the force of society.

You're considering starting a course that will give you a better understanding of the force that is society. Studying sociology means peeling away its outer layers and trying to see through its many disguises. Don't think this will be easy. Some deeply felt opinions may be challenged, you may be confronted with controversial ideas and there may be some heated discussions. But the reward is worth it: a better understanding of the social world and your own place within it.

Sociology is also a really useful qualification that is accepted by all the universities and major employers. They place a high value on the skills sociology students develop - skills like the ability to show initiative, think independently, solve problems and work effectively both with others and alone.

What does the course involve?

First of all we'll help bridge the gap between GCSE and AS level and give you an idea of what sociology is all about. A range of introductory activities based around the theme of the Individual and Society should interest those of you who have studied sociology before as well as those of you for whom the subject is completely new. We'll let you know about the skills you need for success in sociology AS and A level and the ways you'll be working through the year.

Unit 1 You will look at the themes of culture and identity. You will look at the influence of factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and social class in shaping our

sense of who we are. We will explore some of the key social changes over the last 40 years or so in these areas.

Students will also examine the methods that Sociologists use in order to understand society. How do Sociologists carry out their research? What sorts of evidence do they produce? What problems do they face?

Once the basics are over it's time to understand a key aspect of society- probably the most influential on most people - the family. How different are your expectations about family life from your parents' and grandparents'? Does the family still mean anything today?

Unit 2 How is childhood changing? How do we explain the changing patterns of marriage and divorce?

You will have the opportunity to build on the material that you studied in the first unit by exploring topics in the 'sociology of youth', such as the role of youth culture in society and the different experiences of young people in education.

Second year (A2)

In the second year you will study two units in depth.

1. In the Sociology of Crime and Deviance, you will look at patterns of crime in society, explore the different theories to explain it and examine possible solutions.

2. In the final unit you will explore the different explanations for inequality and difference in modern Britain and explore in depth some of the big theories in Sociology!

How is the course assessed?

As with most A Level subjects in the Humanities and Social Science, from 2008, the subject will be assessed through 4 exams. These exams all have different formats, but broadly there is a mixture of structured and extended essay questions. There is also one paper with pre-released stimulus materials so that you can be really well prepared.

Through the course, you will want to know how you are getting on and - more importantly, how you can get better. We will regularly check your progress; give you targets to aim for and practical advice on how to go about reaching them.

Sociology

AS and A Level

What are the entry requirements?

The general entry requirements for studying at Advanced level apply, and a minimum of grade C in English GCSE is preferred.

Other information

We try to use a wide variety of different learning activities in Sociology and our classes are a real mixture of people - males and females, the quiet and the confident, students with strong opinions about society and students who are very unsure.

Whatever your personality, we will treat you as an individual and work with you to help you gain maximum benefit from the course.

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