

SOCIOLOGY

“My students often ask me, 'What is sociology?' And I tell them, 'It's the study of the way in which human beings are shaped by things that they don't see.'” Sam Richards

Current Teaching Staff:

Mrs M Wills - Head of Department

Miss L Needham

Miss N Foulkes

Examination board and syllabus: AQA

Entrance requirement: Grade 5 or above in English Language or Literature. You will not need to have studied Sociology at GCSE level, but you will need to enjoy reading and have an interest in human behaviour and society.

Sociology is the Study of People in Society

While everyday life may appear to be chaotic and random, behind this buzz of activity, it is possible to make out shapes and patterns of behaviour. Studying Sociology allows you to discover these patterns of behaviour and enables you to look at what is going on around you in a totally new way.

Studying sociology will make you more aware of the society you live in and will enable you to gain a valuable insight into human social behaviour.

If you enjoy discussions, have an interest in current issues and like to look at things from different perspectives, this course is for you.

Sociology A level Course Content

Education

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics.
- 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. Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom.
- The relationship between Sociology and social policy.

All classes are taught by two teachers across the entire two years. An eclectic variety of teaching methods are employed according to the demands of each topic.

A variety of learning strategies are employed including both teacher and student led presentations, designing, conducting and writing up class and individual investigations, class discussions and essay writing.

We give students comprehensive, tailored revision materials, sessions devoted to examination styles and regular examination practice question

Examination Unit	% of A2	Coursework / Examination	Length of Time	What is assessed?
Paper 1: Education with Theory and Methods	33.3%	Written examination. Short answer and extended writing essay questions	2 hours	Education Methods in context Theory and Methods
Paper 2: Topics in Sociology	33.3%	Written examination. Short answer and extended writing essay questions	2 hours	Families and Households The Media
Paper 3: Crime with Theory and Methods	33.3%	Written examination. Short answer and extended writing essay questions	2 hours	Crime and Deviance Theory and Methods

What skills will I develop through studying Sociology?

You will develop skills of critical analysis and evaluation which are crucial for university study. You will also develop your essay writing skills and your ability to construct an argument.

Students are required to conduct sociological research and to analyse this, drawing conclusions.

You will discuss, debate and present, strengthening your verbal reasoning skills, and developing confidence; all part of preparation for the worlds of university and work. During the course, you will discuss issues such as:

- Why does London have the highest knife crime rate in England?
- Why are girls more successful than boys in the education system?
- Why is the divorce rate in Britain the highest in Europe?
- Is religion in decline in modern Britain?

CAREERS

Sociology can lead you to many and varied careers. Many students go on to study a wide range of courses at university before making careers including:

- Law
- Police
- Teaching
- The medical professions
- Journalism
- Business
- Advertising
- Social work
- Research