

Undergraduate study

BA (Hons) Sociology

BA (Hons) Anthropology and Sociology

BA (Hons) Media and Sociology

BA (Hons) Sociology and Politics

Sociology



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This booklet outlines the Undergraduate Sociology degrees at Goldsmiths, University of London. Please read this booklet in conjunction with our Undergraduate Prospectus; further information is available from Admissions at the contact details on page 28.

We can supply information in alternative formats for people with a visual impairment or dyslexia. Please contact Admissions on **+44 (0)20 7078 5300**, or e-mail **course-info@gold.ac.uk**

Sociology at Goldsmiths

The Department of Sociology is nationally and internationally recognised as one of the UK's leading university departments in the discipline. We are a highly successful department. We have an excellent reputation for teaching and achieved the highest rankings for research in the latest Research Assessment Exercise 2008, coming joint top in the UK.

Study Sociology at Goldsmiths and you'll join one of the largest and most innovative sociology departments in the country. The Department is committed to developing the discipline of sociology by involving all members of the Department in teaching, research and scholarship in a national and international context; to furthering knowledge and theory; and to the understanding and improvement of contemporary social conditions. We play a key role in the development of contemporary social and cultural understandings and innovative social science research methodologies.

The Department has 28 full-time academic staff as well as a number of visiting tutors. Our research interests are wide and include: inequalities; sociological theory; art and literature; education; culture and communication; science, technology and health; globalisation, cities and economic life; racism, religion and nationalism; social and political movements; citizenship; design; class; the body and society; new media and the Internet; psychoanalysis; human rights, law and citizenship; and visual sociology. Our research interests are reflected in our teaching, especially in the second and third years of our undergraduate degrees. We publish widely in the form of books, contributions to journals, and press articles.

Why study Sociology at Goldsmiths?

- A lively interdisciplinary Department, covering a wide range of interests and having a dynamic, diverse and motivated student body.
- A large Department: there are currently 28 full-time academic staff, including nine Professors, nine professional staff and a number of part-time and research staff supporting our students. All our staff teach in these specialist research areas so you have access to the latest ideas in sociology.
- Undergraduate degrees: Sociology; Anthropology and Sociology; Media and Sociology; Sociology and Politics.
- Postgraduate degrees: MPhil and PhD research degrees in Sociology and Visual Sociology, MAs in Critical and Creative Analysis; Gender and Culture; Photography and Urban Cultures; Social Research; World Cities and Urban Life; Global Networks and Society; Digital Sociology (taught with Computing).
- Research strengths: home to the Centre for Urban and Community Research, the Centre for the Study of Invention and Social Process, the Unit for Global Justice, and the research groupings of INCITE and Xenos, as well as a joint Centre for the Study of Global Media and Democracy run with the Departments of Politics, and Media and Communications.
- Extensive computing facilities, direct access to the campus network. Wide range of packages, including SPSS, Microsoft Office, e-mail, Internet, and other software according to individual needs.
- Research links with other private and public institutions; the Department is home to a number of visiting scholars each year who present papers and offer seminars in their specialist areas.
- Programme of talks by visiting lecturers from other universities, covering specific areas of interest, to supplement those already offered.



Introducing the degrees

We offer undergraduate degree programmes in:

- BA (Hons) in Sociology
- BA (Hons) in Anthropology & Sociology
- BA (Hons) in Media & Sociology
- BA (Hons) in Sociology & Politics

Structure

All our full-time undergraduate degree programmes last for three years and are organised on a credit system. This means that you must take and pass a certain number of credits each year, in order to be allowed to proceed to the next year of study.

Full-time students take a total of 360 credits over three years (120 credits each year). A credit is normally examined at the end of the academic session in which it is taken.

For joint degree students (Anthropology and Sociology, Media and Sociology and Sociology and Politics), the credits are generally divided equally between the two disciplines.

Entrance requirements

A-level requirements

Please refer to the Undergraduate Prospectus, available from the contact details on page 28.

Please note: we also admit applicants without GCE A-levels, provided they have some other evidence of ability, for example, successful completion of an Access course or Foundation Certificate. We also accept applications from those holding alternative qualifications including Vocational A levels, BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas and equivalent European qualifications, provided you satisfy the General Entrance Requirements of Goldsmiths, University of London.

English language requirement

If English is not your first language, you need to obtain evidence of your English Language competence. Tests considered appropriate include:

- International English Language Testing System [IELTS] – pass with at least 6.5 overall and a minimum of 6.0 in the written element
- TOEFL score of at least 580 including 4.5 in the Test of Written English [TWE], or 237 in the Computerised test [CT] including 4.5 in the essay component, or 92 in the Internet-based test [IBT] including 23 in the written element
- International GCSE (IGCSE) English as a second language at Grade C
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency of English [CPE] at Grade C or above
- Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English [CAE] at Grade B or above

For further information, please see the Undergraduate Prospectus. Alternatively, you may wish to attend one of our Pre-sessional English Language courses.

Application and admission

For full-time study, you need to register on-line at the UCAS website where you complete a secure web-based application. There is information on-screen to guide you through your application. For more information, please visit the website at wwwucas.com/apply.

You can pay by credit/debit card when you submit your on-line application (£11.00 for a single entry, £21.00 to apply to two or more universities).

Please note: full-time applications can only be made on-line at wwwucas.com.

Mature students

We welcome applications from mature students, many of whom are admitted on the basis of alternative qualifications including access or certificate courses. Please see the Undergraduate Prospectus for further details about the range of alternative qualifications we accept for entry.

International students

We also welcome applications from International students. We accept many students with international qualifications which are equivalent to GCE A-levels. The mix of students of different ages and backgrounds results in a lively and interesting exchange of views and ideas.

Interview policy

We normally interview applicants who have alternative qualifications and may also ask them to submit samples of written work.

For further information on application procedures and entrance requirements, please see the Undergraduate Prospectus, available from the contact details on page 28.

Fees

For up-to-date information on fees, please see the Undergraduate Prospectus, or visit www.goldsmiths.ac.uk. **Please note:** fees are quoted per year.

Teaching

Teaching is by lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials. You are assigned a personal tutor, who also acts as an academic tutor. Tutors oversee your academic work and progress over the year. In the third year, most students undertake a Dissertation on a subject of their choice, for which they receive supervision.

Assessment

Assessment is through a combination of examinations, pre-released examinations, assessed course work and projects.

Open Days

Applicants with a conventional A-level background are not normally interviewed but are invited to an Open Day, at which there are opportunities to see Goldsmiths and the Department, to meet staff and students, and to ask questions about the degree programmes. Mature applicants called for interview are also invited to attend an Open Day. Individual visits to the Department can also be arranged (please contact the relevant Admissions Tutor).

College-wide Open Days for all programmes across the university are usually held three times a year in Spring, Summer and Autumn. For further information on these, please visit www.goldsmiths.ac.uk or call Nick Holmes, Recruitment Events Manager, on 020 7717 2997, e-mail n.holmes@gold.ac.uk.

Careers and employability

Our degrees enable graduates to go on to a wide range of careers. Depending on the programme you choose, these include areas such as media, marketing and corporate communications; market research; business and management; the public sector, the health services and government; the voluntary and charitable sector; arts administration; museums; teaching, research and postgraduate study in Sociology, Media, Cultural Studies and related fields. Throughout your degree you will be encouraged to reflect on how the skills you are gaining can be useful to your future career.

We work closely with the Goldsmiths Careers Service, part of the University of London Careers Service - the biggest in the UK. Through the Careers Service you will have access to a wide range of facilities to help you plan your future effectively.

Regardless of your age or career background when you come to Goldsmiths, you are encouraged to use the Service from the start of your time here, right through to graduation. They have resources to help you identify the transferable skills you've developed and match them to the needs of prospective employers. You will have the opportunity to meet our Department's graduates and find out how their sociology degree gave them skills intrinsic to careers development. The careers service can also advise on postgraduate study and training.

We also work closely with the College's Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship's Synapse programme, which provides workshops that will help you to develop both your employability and personal skills in critical and creative ways. In the context of a rapidly changing social and economic climate, these workshops provide you with valuable thinking time in which you can develop practical skills and also explore your ideas for your future.



BA (Hons) in Sociology

3 years full-time

This single honours degree does not assume you have previous knowledge of Sociology. You are introduced to the questions that gave rise to sociological thinking, how this thought developed and how sociological ideas can be used today. In the second and third years a wide range of Options cater for both breadth and depth of sociological interests.

What do you study?

Year 1

You take four Core Courses:

Researching Society and Culture
Critical Readings
Modern Knowledge, Modern Power
Culture and Society (all detailed on page 17)

Year 2

You take Core Courses in:

Central Issues in Sociological Analysis
The Making of the Modern World
Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences
Sociology of Culture and Communication
Researching Society and Culture 2 (all detailed on page 17)

And

Two Sociology Options (listed on page 20).

Year 3

You take the Core Course Contemporary Social Theory and Society (see page 18) and write a Sociology Dissertation – independent research, supported by classes and subject specialists, resulting in an 8,000-word Dissertation in a topic of your own choice.

Plus

Four Sociology Options (listed on page 20)

Find out more

If you have specific programme queries, once you've read this booklet and the Undergraduate Prospectus, please contact Dr Nirmal Puwar, Admissions Tutor, on 020 7919 7716 or e-mail n.puwar@gold.ac.uk.



BA (Hons) in Anthropology and Sociology

3 years full-time

Introduction

Anthropology and Sociology study the variety of human social life but in many ways they diverge on the topics they study and in the concepts they use. This joint honours degree allows you to study the two disciplines and the convergence and divergence between them.

What do you study?

Year 1

You take two Sociology Core Courses:

Critical Readings: The Emergence of Sociological Rationality
Modern Knowledge, Modern Power (detailed on page 17)

And

Three Anthropology Core Courses

Introduction to Social Anthropology (30 credits)

This course introduces basic anthropological concepts of kinship, politics, economics, and religion and the history and theoretical schools of anthropology. **Assessed by:** one three-hour unseen written paper.

Anthropological Methods (15 credits)

This course explores aspects of anthropological methods. You study the following areas: data collection techniques and implications of type and quality of data; participant observation: techniques involved, its evolution and change; analytical approaches to primary data, re-analyses of secondary sources; the philosophy of science; value free social science, interaction between observer and observed, perception and 'fact'. **Assessed by:** one 2,500-word report.

Ethnography of a Selected Region I (15 credits)

This studies linguistic and cultural groupings of a particular region. The region studied may vary from year to year, but is taken from one of the following: Africa, the Caribbean, the Andes, Lowland South America, Europe, and South Asia. **Assessed by:** one two-hour unseen written paper.

Year 2

In Year 2 you take two Sociology Core Courses:

Central Issues in Sociological Analysis
The Making of the Modern World
(for details see page 17)

And

You also choose one Sociology Option
(listed on page 20).

And

Methodological and Philosophical Issues in Sociology and Anthropology

This is a 'link' course, taught jointly by the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology. It introduces the basic issues of analytical method within anthropology and sociology with reference to philosophies of both the natural sciences and humanities. **Assessed by:** one two-hour unseen written paper.

Plus

Three Anthropology courses:

Anthropology of Religion (15 credits)

The course focuses on 'classic' theories and key anthropological texts on religion, magic, myth, ritual, morality, symbolism and belief. Using ethnographic examples from various parts of the world, it looks at how religious identity is inscribed in the body, spatial and temporal orders, and at the relationship between religion and secularism, mass media and the internet, transnationalism, power and resistance. **Assessed by:** one 4,000-word report.

Anthropology and the Visual (15 credits)

This course provides a critical introduction to the many ways anthropologists engage with the visual from their use of visual methodologies and analysis of representations to their ethnographic study of everyday visual forms. Focusing on a wide range of visual media from photography, museum exhibitions and popular representations on TV to dress, body art, architecture and other everyday visual and material forms, the course raises issues about the significance of visibility, the politics of representation, the social life of visual and material forms and the relationship between seeing and other senses.

Assessed by: one 4,000-word report.

Politics, Economics and Social Change (30 credits)

This course outlines the scope and approaches of economic and political anthropology and development studies. Issues of aid, populism, marginality, nationalism, fundamentalism, globalisation and other phenomena which do not fit easily into definitions of the 'economic' or 'political', are critically evaluated. **Assessed by:** one three-hour unseen written paper.

Year 3

You select two Anthropology Options from the following list: Psychological Perspectives in Anthropology, Health, Medicine and Social Power, Urban Anthropology, Anthropology of Art, Anthropology and the Environment, The Anthropology of Development, Anthropology and Gender Theory, Gender Theory in Practice, Anthropology of Europe, Anthropology of Human-Animal Relations, Anthropology of Rights, Anthropology and the Visual: Production Course.

And

Theorising Contemporary Society (Sociology Core Course details on page 18) and two Sociology Options (see list on page 20).

The balance of Year 3 is made up of Options chosen from Departments (see page 20 for Sociology Options). You may also choose to do a Dissertation in Sociology or Anthropology. College regulations determine the exact balance of courses between the departments and these are explained carefully when you make your third-year choices.

For more information about the Anthropology courses and options available, please see Undergraduate Anthropology booklet, available from contact details on page 28.

Find out more

If you have specific programme queries, once you've read this booklet and the Undergraduate Prospectus, please contact Dr Nirmal Puwar, Admissions Tutor, on 020 7919 7716 or e-mail n.puwar@gold.ac.uk or the Department of Anthropology on 020 7919 7800, e-mail anthropology@gold.ac.uk.



BA (Hons) in Media and Sociology

3 years full-time

Introduction

This interdisciplinary degree, taught jointly with the Department of Media and Communications, gives you the opportunity to explore sociological and communications theories, and to develop a critical analysis of media, communications and culture from historical and contemporary viewpoints. The credit system gives you some flexibility in your choice of courses, allowing you to tailor your studies to your interests in the second half of the programme. Core courses help you develop a solid foundation for your studies, and you then have the opportunity to specialise and undertake a small research project in Sociology. Two term-long media production courses in the final two years of the programme provide links between theoretical studies and media practice.

What do you study?

Over the period of the degree you take courses to the value of 360 credits, 120 credits in each year.

Year 1

You take two Core Courses in Sociology:

Critical Readings: the Emergence of Sociological Rationality;
Modern Knowledge/Modern Power (both detailed on page 17)

And

The following Media and Communications courses (all valued at 15 credits unless otherwise specified):

Media History and Politics

Historical development of the British media, and their role in the development of modern Britain focusing on the way in which power is concentrated and organised around media ownership and production.

Assessed by: one two-hour seen written paper.

Culture and Cultural Studies

Introduction to debates around the term 'culture', including questions of 'high' and 'mass' culture, and the development of British cultural studies.

Assessed by: one two-hour unseen written paper.

Key Debates in Media Studies

This course focuses on important debates concerning media power and mediated identity.

Assessed by: 2,000-word essay.

Media Texts: Interpretation and Sensation

This course focuses on the formal address of media texts as a means of examining the way in which they make meaning. **Assessed by:** 2,000-word project.

Please note: there are no Media Practice Courses in Year 1.

Year 2

In Year 2 you take three Core Courses:

Central Issues in Sociological Analysis;
The Philosophy and Methodology of the Social
Sciences (detailed on page 17);
Sociology of Culture and Communication

And

One Sociology Option (listed on page 20)

Media and Communications

You choose any two from Culture Society and the
Individual, Communications Psychology and
Experience, and Media Economy and Society.

Plus

Media Practice

Media Production Option 1 (30 credits)

An introduction to media production in one of the
practice options offered each year by the
Department. Production skills are applied in the
creation of small-scale projects.

Year 3

You write an 8,000-word Dissertation in Sociology
on a topic of your own choice, supervised by a
personal tutor (**30 credits**). This enables you to
develop an area of interest through personal study.

And

You choose two Sociology Options from the list on
page 20 (worth **15 credits** each).

And

You are required to take two option courses (each
worth 15 credits) from the range offered by the
Department of Media and Communications.
These vary from year to year and the following
have recently been offered for third year study:
Political Economy of the Mass Media, Structure of
Contemporary Political Communications, Media
Audiences and Media Geographies, Media Ethnicity
and Nation, Music as Communication and Creative
Practice, Contemporary Cultural Practice,
Explorations in World Cinema.

Plus

Media Practice

Media Production Option 2 (30 credits)

An introduction to media production in a different
area to the one you studied in the second year.
You apply production skills in the creation of
small-scale projects, and develop critical skills
through the analysis of examples and of work
produced in each area.

For more information about the Media courses and
options available, please see the Undergraduate
Media and Communications booklet, available from
contact details on page 28.

Find out more

If you have specific programme queries, once you've
read this booklet and the Undergraduate Prospectus,
please contact the Department of Media and
Communications, 020 7919 7600 or email
media-comms@gold.ac.uk.

BA (Hons) in Sociology and Politics

3 years full-time

This degree provides you with the opportunity to study for an interdisciplinary social science degree based on the expertise of staff in sociology and politics. The degree is concerned with both issues in contemporary social and political theory, and with methods of researching political, social and cultural processes. A particular feature is its concern with contemporary political issues and its commitment to interdisciplinary approaches to social and political research. In your final year you are able to carry out independent social research into contemporary political processes.

What do you study?

Year 1

You take two Sociology Core Courses:

Researching Society and Culture
Modern Knowledge, Modern Power (both detailed on page 17).

Please note: all courses are worth **15 credits** unless otherwise specified.

And

The following Politics courses:

Ideas, Ideologies and Conflicts

This is an introduction to political theory and an exploration of why central political ideas and concepts influence our understanding of the world around us. **Assessed by:** one essay and a two-hour unseen examination.

And

One of the following:

World Politics

This course takes a critical look at the study of world politics, emphasising that there are different and competing perspectives on how to approach the subject, drawing on perspectives from both international relations and international studies.

Assessed by: one essay and a two-hour unseen examination.

UK and European Comparative Governance and Politics

An introduction to the comparative approach to politics and government, in addition to building a foundation understanding of the politics and governance of four key members of the European Union: the UK, Germany, Italy and France.

Assessed by: one essay and a two-hour unseen examination.

Political Economy and Public Policy

This course provides an introduction to the main theories and concepts in economics, and to debates about major issues in public policy that are informed by economic analysis. **Assessed by:** one essay and a two-hour unseen examination.

Year 2

You take three Sociology Core Courses from Sociology:

Central Issues in Sociological Analysis
The Making of the Modern World
(both detailed on page 17).

Social Change and Political Action

What is politics? For many people, the answer is simple: politics, as the management and organisation of the public good, is the province of government and parties. Its occurrences and machinations are played out, more or less openly, in parliaments, bureaucracies, elections, as well as in our newspapers and on our television and computer screens. Sociologists and social theorists have tended to adopt broader definitions of politics. While the first part of the course is primarily concerned with establishing a firm grasp of the

fundamental approaches to the political sociology of democratic societies, the second introduces debates – over planning, ethnic cleansing, neoliberal ‘de-democratization’ – that will allow us to think through the relevance of the classical categories of political sociology to the study of contemporary societies. **Assessment:** one 3,500-word essay.

Modern Political Theory

In this course we examine the modern tradition of political thought. Students will be introduced to the major figures in this tradition – English thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke and Mill – and continental thinkers such as Rousseau and Marx. Through these thinkers, we will explore key themes and concepts such as sovereignty, justice, human nature, rights, liberty, democracy and equality. The course aims to give students a more in-depth introduction to a series of thinkers who have all had an enormous impact on the way we think about politics today, as well as to allow them to situate key ideas and concepts within contemporary political theory debates.

Assessed by: two essays and a two-hour unseen examination.

Plus

One Politics Option from the following list:

Africa in the Global Political Economy
An(other) Japan: Politics and Popular Culture
Comparative European Politics
Chinese Politics
Contemporary International Relations Theory and Practice
Political Economy
Themes and Issues in British Politics

And

One Sociology Option (listed on page 20).

Year 3

You take the following Sociology Core Courses:

Theorising Contemporary Society
(details on page 18).

Dissertation – supervised research and study on a topic agreed between you and your tutor.

Plus

You also take one Sociology Option (15 credits) (for examples see page 20) and Politics Options to the value of 30 credits from the following list, spread evenly throughout the year, which currently includes:

New Radical Political Economy (60 credits)
Political Economy of the European Union (30 credits)

15 credits:

Anarchism
An(other) China: Streetscenes of Politics
Beyond all Reason
Discourse, Power and Politics
Nationalist Conflict and International Intervention
Party Systems and Electoral Systems
Politics and Economics of Immigration
Public Policy Analysis
Rhetoric and Politics
Risk and Politics: Theory and Practice
The Politics of the African City (subject to approval)

For more information about the Politics courses and options available, please see the Undergraduate Politics booklet, available from contact details on page 28.

Find out more

If you have specific programme queries, once you've read this booklet and the Undergraduate Prospectus, please contact Dr Nirmal Puwar, Admissions Tutor, on 020 7919 7716 or e-mail n.puwar@gold.ac.uk or the Department of Politics on 020 7919 7740, email politics@gold.ac.uk.



The courses

Sociology Core Courses

All courses are **15 credits** unless otherwise stated.

Year 1

Researching Society and Culture (2 x 15 credits)

These courses introduce you to the methods that sociologists have developed to analyse societies and to produce sociological knowledge. Through lectures and workshops you learn about methods in relation to sociological topics and research traditions.

You develop your practical skills in using these methods and read reports of studies in Sociology.

Each 15 credit course is assessed by: one research essay of 2,500 words.

Critical Readings: The Emergence of Sociological Rationality (30 credits)

This focuses on key texts in sociology, reading them closely and critically. You are introduced to Sociology's key thinkers through focusing on extracts from their writing and learning how to read in a critical way. You look at what they say, but also how they say it. The course aims to give you confidence in reading and thinking about texts.

Assessed by: one three-hour seen written examination.

Modern Knowledge, Modern Power (30 credits)

This aims to introduce you to the 'sociological imagination'. What is distinctive about Sociology? With a focus on knowledge and power, the course looks at how Sociology has developed, with an emphasis on the study of relations between individuals and groups in modern industrial societies.

Assessed by: one three-hour seen written examination.

Culture and Society (30 credits)

On the whole, Sociology deals with social life as meaningful relations between social actors. This course is about how to understand the production of meaning and how meaning operates in cultural processes. You consider things like language, culture, identity, communication, media and the circulation of meaning in social spaces such as cities.

Assessed by: one three-hour seen written examination.

Year 2

All courses are valued at **15 credits** unless otherwise specified.

Central Issues in Sociological Analysis

This looks at central questions in Sociology about how to study of society. It focuses in particular on issues of agency and structure; holism and individualism; continuity and change; public and private; structure and self; laws, observation and interpretation. **Assessed by:** one two-hour written examination.

The Making of the Modern World

This focuses on the formation of the modern state out of earlier forms of political organisation, and examines the development of nationalism, the nature of colonialism and imperialism and the rise of fascism. It also considers the development and problematisation of the welfare state, and the contemporary 'crisis of the nation-state'.

Assessed by: one two-hour written examination.

Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences

All sociologists have had to deal with some conflict between the idea of sociological knowledge as scientific, guided by reason, and human subjectivity, which gives us differing conceptions of what is real or true. This course looks at some problems in finding out about the social world, dealing with values, and interpreting social reality or realities.

Assessed by: one two-hour written examination.

Sociology of Culture and Communication

This begins by focusing on how culture has been conceived in the major traditions of sociological thought and moves on to consider the significance of the development of mass communications research and cultural studies for a sociology of culture.

Assessed by: one two-hour written examination.

Researching Society and Culture 2 (2 x 15 credits)

These second level methods courses look in detail at the various stages in the research process: including the construction of research questions, collecting and analysing data and the political and ethical questions involved in thinking about writing for an audience. You are encouraged to work through these issues by reading particular research monographs and by developing your own research proposal. **Each 15 credit course assessed by:** one 2,500-word essay.

Year 3

Theorising Contemporary Society

This examines how the world has changed since classical sociological theory was produced and the need for a framework for understanding the changes. Topics include (1) recent and contemporary capitalism; developments in the economy; (2) technology and the future; and (3) politics and social movements. **Assessed by:** one two-hour seen paper.

Issues in Contemporary Sociology

This debates the cultural implications of the issues raised in Theorising Contemporary Society, considering the movements and arguments that surround the term 'postmodernity' in terms of identity, the body, feminism and sexuality.

Assessed by: one 4,500-word essay.

Please note: this Core Course is an Option for all joint honours students.

Contemporary Social Theory and Society (30 credits)

Combining the two courses above, this course forms the compulsory taught core for third year BA single honours Sociology students.

Assessed by: one three-hour seen paper.

Dissertation (30 credits)

This course enables you to develop an area of interest through personal study. You write a short 8,000-word Dissertation on a topic of your own choice. A personal tutor supervises the Dissertation.

Please note: this Dissertation is an Option for BA Anthropology and Sociology students and compulsory for all others.



Sociology options

These courses are based on staff research interests and may vary from year to year. In Year 2, Options are assessed either by two 1,750-word essays or one 3,500-word essay; in Year 3, they are assessed by one 4,500-word essay. To give an example of the sort of courses you can expect, we have included a list of typical courses offered in the past. All Options are worth 15 credits.

Year 2 Options

Sexuality

Through this course you will be able to develop a historical perspective and critical analysis of how sexuality has come to function as a mode of normalisation and regulation, a promise of liberation, an acclaimed site of pleasure and/or desire as well as a centre piece in debates on censorship and representation. The course will introduce you to the theoretical contributions of Michel Foucault, queer and some feminist theories. During the course you will be encouraged and assisted to develop your own analysis of how cultural notions of pleasure and desire as well as 'normal' and 'not normal' may affect understandings of ourselves and others.

Emotions and Social Life

What does sociology have to say about the subject of emotions? How does social life shape not only emotional experience, but also how we think about emotions and set about studying them? This course introduces the complexities involved in the study of 'emotions' and the relevance of emotions to the study of social life, by focusing on a selected number of themes each year. While looking at the emerging field of the sociology of emotions, the course places sociological theories in the broader context of inter- and trans-disciplinary debates by drawing on historical, philosophical, psychological and biological work.

Nationalism, Fundamentalism, Cosmopolitanism

This course explores sociological theories of nationalism, fundamentalism and cosmopolitanism by looking at case studies drawn from conflicts that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and the Israel/Palestine conflict. The course aims for a balance of theory and case study. In this way it anchors discussions of social theory to the actualities of particular social and historical situations.

Leisure, Culture and Society

'Leisure is free time'. But is it? We need only think about the annual subscription to gymnasiums to recognise that leisure-time really isn't 'free-time'. 'Leisure is a marker for time away from work'. But we need only think of the time of the harried vacation to know that the clock-time of work never ceases to operate. In critical theory, leisure-time is defined as functionally dependent on the labour market system. Indeed leisure is revealed as big business, as leisure-time becomes ever more central to consumer culture. This course examines the interconnections between leisure, culture and society.

The Body: Social Theory and Social Practice

This course explores a selection of approaches to the sociological study of the body, as well as substantive problem-areas where the body has become an important focus of research. You address the contrast between traditions that approach the body as an object (the body we have), those that approach the body as a subject (the body we are), and those that address the body in terms of performativity (the body we become).

Social Change and Political Action

What is politics? For many people, the answer is simple: politics, as the management and organisation of the public good, is the province of government and parties. Its occurrences and machinations are played out, more or less openly, in parliaments, bureaucracies, elections, as well as in our newspapers and on our television and computer screens. Sociologists and social theorists have tended to adopt broader definitions of politics. While the first part of the course is primarily concerned with establishing a firm grasp of the fundamental approaches to the political sociology of democratic societies, the second introduces debates – over planning, ethnic cleansing, neoliberal 'de-democratization' – that will allow us to think through the relevance of the classical categories of political sociology to the study of contemporary societies.

Assessment: one 3,500-word essay.

Migration, Globalisation and Citizenship

This course synthesises some of the most important concepts in relation to the movement of people. You will examine the key debates in migration theory and their relevance to the movement of refugees and economic migrants. The impact of historic, social, economic and political factors on the migratory process will be considered. Globalisation and its relation to the movement of peoples will be explored. The course will draw on case studies from Europe. The impact of racism, citizenship rights, transnational communities, social networks and the migration experience will be considered in relation to theories of integration and migrant settlement. The course covers historical, theoretical and empirical concerns relating to migration, globalisation and citizenship and their interaction with integration and settlement.

Culture in Context

The course provides an understanding of the relations between state, society and culture in the context of a cultural studies tradition. It also seeks to apply, develop and question this tradition in relation to an increasingly networked society.

Year 3 Options

Animals and Society

This option is concerned with the role of animals in modern western societies. The course begins with an overview of the key western philosophical debates about the nature of the animal, and the contrast between the animal and the human. Historical changes in the ways in which animals have been represented, in animals' symbolic role, and in the relations between humans and animals will then be presented. Here, the changing role of animals in representing particular virtues and vices, animals' changing economic function, and the shifting interpersonal relations between humans and animals will be explored over the course of classical and medieval periods, the enlightenment and modernity, and into late modernity.

Visual Explorations of the Social World

This course is designed as an introduction - at an appropriate conceptual level - to the exploration of sociological issues and themes with the camera lens. It combines a basic level training in photography with an intellectual training in spatial analysis and its

application in interpreting specific aspects of the urban landscape in areas with which you are familiar. You will be expected to spend time practicing combining the analytic and photographic skills you learn through photographic assignments on which you report back. This will be supported by laboratory workshop sessions.

Knowledge, Science and Nature

This course explores how scientific knowledge has been tied up with the control and domination of nature and the ways in which feminism and ecology have served to validate different forms of knowledge.

Race, Racism and Social Theory

This examines some of the conceptual and political problems that have clustered around sociological analysis of 'race' and racism. It is comparative in focus and encompasses both historical and theoretical material. It introduces some of the major sociological paradigms of 'race relations' analysis and relates them to a variety of examples.

Cultural Politics and Globalisation

This discusses ways of theorising the relationship between culture, identity and globalisation. In particular it attempts to evaluate recent debates around cultural syncretism and hybridity. The course demonstrates the advantage of viewing culture within a global matrix. Musical cultures and commercial advertising are used to exemplify these processes including a discussion of the development of Hispanic R&B in Los Angeles, Jazz in the culture of Nazi Germany, Afro-Asian fusions in the English Midlands and soul music in Britain and the United States.

Global Development and Underdevelopment

Globalisations is both a dominant discourse of powerful actors on the world scene, as well as the main target for one of the most vibrant new social movements. This course aims to develop a critical and historical understanding of the issues which inform contemporary debates on globalisation.

A Sociology of Objects

Tracing the movement of objects, Arjun Appadurai claims, helps identify the processual aspects of social life, illuminating not simply small-scale shifts in each object's meaning but also broader transformations in social organisation itself. This course aims to explore what a sociology of objects reveals about the social world. It considers how consideration of objects can lead to sociological understanding of imperialism, modernity and globalisation, as well as the study of everyday life.

Vision, Truth and Knowledge

This Option addresses the relations between vision, visibility and the production of 'truth' and knowledge in Western societies. It also explores the relation between visual technologies and power, examining different ways that vision and visibility contribute to the production and reproduction of both group and personal identities across a range of domains.

Childhood Matters: Society, Theory and Culture

This approaches childhood as a socio-historically constructed concept, with material, technological and political dimensions and consequences.

Through a mixture of theoretical readings and issue-based discussions, you explore the regulated constitution of childhood and its changing parameters. Some of the substantive areas explored include: changing household patterns from the child's perspective, child sexual abuse, infancy and foetal life, children's literature.

Law, Identity and Ethics

This course explores key theories of the relationship between identity and the law. It considers accounts of identity and law by examining key debates in legal and social theory from Kant to critical race theory. It critically analyses classical and contemporary questions concerning subjects, law and justice.

Citizenship and Human Rights

This course is concerned with the historical development of citizenship and human rights, especially in relation to the nation-state and the international states system. It is also concerned with the value of human rights, explored through consideration of any or all of the following topics: Are human rights cosmopolitan? Is there a human rights movement? Does the enforcement of human rights increase democracy? Are human rights structured so that they necessarily privilege certain groups as 'human'?



Staff and their research interests

Dr Brian Alleyne

Research interests in the areas of activism and social movements, globalisation, information technologies, ethnicity, the use of biography and other forms of narrative in social research.

Professor Les Back

Research interests in issues of racism and multiculturalism in urban contexts.

Professor Vikki Bell

Cultural theory, feminist thought and 'continental' philosophy, ethics, aesthetics, notions of performativity and belonging.

Dr Kirsten Campbell

Feminist and post-structuralist social theory, psychoanalytic theory and socio-legal studies.

Dr Mariam Fraser

Facts and value; ethics; process; ontology.

Dr Monica Greco

Concepts of health, illness, therapeutics and/or healing in the context of different forms of medical rationality; concepts of life and vitalism; the body and the organism; social theory in relation to the 'psy' disciplines, emotions, subjectivity/selfhood and mental health; historical theory.

Dr Yasmin Gunaratnam

Corporeal vulnerability, care, and social research methodologies.

Paul Halliday

Photographer and film-maker with an interest in theoretical and practice-led visual ethnography. Urban theory, 'self' and portraiture, cultural archaeologies of landscape, digital media, visual epistemologies, ethics and aesthetics.

Dr David Hirsch

Nationalism; cosmopolitanism; international law; socio-legal studies; crimes against humanity; genocide; holocaust; 'war on terror'; fundamentalism; Israel/Palestine; human rights.

Aidan Kelly

The application of quantitative methodologies in sociological and public policy research.

Professor Caroline Knowles

Race and ethnicity; migrational space and urban life; madness; visual studies and biographical methods.

Professor Celia Lury

Cultural and feminist theory.

Professor Mike Michael

Public understanding of science; sociology of mundane technologies; sociology of biomedical innovation; sociology of everyday life; animals and society; materiality and sociality.

Dr Kate Nash

Sociology of human rights; cultural politics; political sociology; citizenship; social movements; equality and diversity.

Dr Pam Odih

Gender, time and social theory; marketing and advertising discourse.

Dr David Oswell

Cultural studies; sociology of science and technology; sociology of childhood and social theory.

Dr Nirmal Puwar

Dynamics of space and bodies in relation to 'universal' speaking positions and the weight of the somatic norm within national as well as international mainstream and alter arenas.

Dr Alison Rooke

Issues of class, gender and sexualities in urban contexts.

Dr Marsha Rosengarten

Sociological studies of biomedicine and biotechnology, sexuality and theories of the body, HIV.

Dr Monica Sassatelli

Cultural identity, European cultural policies (and cultural politics), the city (in Europe and globally), leisure, landscape and place, experience, aesthetics, art worlds, festivals, culture industries, museums and other 'memory institutions.'

Professor Victor Jeleniewski Seidler

Social theory and philosophy; Marxism and critical theory; moral theory; masculinity and sexual politics; the body and emotional life; ecology and social theory; holocaust and modernity; psychoanalysis and psychotherapy; identity and ethnicity; men and feminism; the sociology of knowledge; morality and social theory; equality and liberal theory.

Professor AbdouMaliq Simone

Various territories, powers, cultural expressions, potentialities, governance and planning discourses, spaces and times in cities across the world.

Professor Bev Skeggs, Head of Department

Class; cultural formations; feminist and poststructuralist theory; Pierre Bourdieu and Karl Marx; sexuality, space and violence.

Dr Brett St Louis

Conceptual and practical status of race, especially in relation to politics and ethics; black/postcolonial radical intellectualism; sociology of sport; sport, culture and aesthetics.

Dr Alberto Toscano

Contemporary social theory and philosophy; Marx and Marxism; recent French thought, in particular the writings of Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, and issues around political ontology; biopolitics; anti-capitalism; theories of political subjectivity; collective and technological individuation (Gilbert Simondon); vitalism and neo-monadology (Tarde, Whitehead); Italian Marxism and operaismo (Panzieri, Tronti, Negri); debates on post-Fordism, immaterial labour and cognitive capitalism; the historical materialist geography of David Harvey; the link between religion and politics (fanaticism, messianism, and political theology).

Dr Emma Uprichard

Complexity theory, methodology, causality, realism, space, time, cities, childhood, food.

Dr Nina Wakeford

Sociology of technology, Feminist and Queer theory, methodology for studying new media and technologies.

Dr Peter Webb

Sociology of Popular Music; popular culture; globalisation; milieu/subcultures, internet and computer-mediated communication, politics and culture, media, social and cultural theory, identity, Pierre Bourdieu, Alfred Schutz.

Support Staff

Lauren Sibley, Acting Department Manager
Trevor Blair, Interim Department Coordinator
Violet Fearon, Undergraduate Programmes Coordinator
Sheila Robinson, Postgraduate Programmes Officer
Elisa Lloyd, Postgraduate Programmes Officer
Bridget Ward, Postgraduate Research Officer
Jane Offerman, Research Administrator
Carole Keegan, CUCR Administrator
Anh Tu, CUCR Assistant

Postgraduate study

The Department offers seven taught MA programmes:

MA in Critical and Creative Analysis

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

This programme emphasises the critical analysis of cultural processes – social, affective, political, economic and creative – from both an advanced theoretical perspective and a rigorous, empirical one.

MA in Digital Sociology (with Computing) [NEW]

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

The MA in Digital Sociology is a collaborative programme across the Departments of Sociology and Computing at Goldsmiths, and is based in the newly launched centre for Creative and Social Technology (CAST). As part of this exciting new research centre, students will have access to state of the art facilities and emergent creative and social technologies.

MA in Gender, Media and Culture

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

The MA in Gender, Media and Culture introduces you to recent debates on gender in the disciplines of sociology and media and communications studies, and to the interdisciplinary domains of feminist social and cultural theory.

MA in Global Networks and Society

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Building on our reputation as the joint top RAE-rated research department in the country, the Department of Sociology is proud to offer this cutting-edge MA programme to cast a distinctive, critical eye over one the principal threads of contemporary society.

MA in Photography and Urban Cultures

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

This unique MA is taught through the Centre for Urban and Community Research and has been developed in response to the increasing interest in urban theory and the visual representation of urban cultures and places. It is designed to encourage a creative interplay between practice and theory. You combine written discussions with practical critiques of photography whilst embracing the challenge of using photography as a means of representing and evoking urban life. You are encouraged to produce a visual research document, or portfolio of photography, that form the basis of a final exhibition.

MA in Social Research

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

This MA aims to provide research training to those proposing to conduct or evaluate sociological research. This course is recognised by the ESRC under its 1+3 postgraduate research awards scheme.

MA in World Cities and Urban Life

1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Cities continuously provide new challenges to understanding the constraints and potentials of both human and non-human life. The key educational challenge concerns what it is possible for the cities and urban life to do and how. The programme is linked with the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR) and forms part of the Department of Sociology's portfolio of Master's programmes.

Our research culture

The Department has been consistently rated as one of the best Sociology research departments in the country, one renowned for its world class and internationally excellent research, its graduate student environment and the esteem with which it is regarded internationally. In the RAE 2008 the Department came equal top in the UK for its research excellence.

The Department sees research as a crucial part of its activities; research and training cover a wide range of substantive areas of Sociology. We have ESRC and AHRC recognition and we offer research training leading to MPhil or PhD in the areas listed in the staff interests section.

Find out more

If you are interested to find out more about these, please request a Postgraduate Prospectus from the contact details on page 28 or visit the web at www.goldsmiths.ac.uk.



Contact us

If you have specific questions about the content of our programmes, please contact the Department of Sociology on +44 (0)20 7919 7709, e-mail sociology@gold.ac.uk.

If you have questions about entry qualifications, admissions, or arranging interviews, please contact us as follows:

Enquiry Unit
telephone +44 (0)20 7078 5300
e-mail admissions@gold.ac.uk

We can supply information in alternative formats for people with a visual impairment or dyslexia. Please contact Admissions on +44 (0)20 7078 5300, e-mail admissions@gold.ac.uk for further details.

Did you find this booklet helpful?

We would welcome any comments you have about the content or design of this booklet. Please e-mail ext-comms@gold.ac.uk, or write to Communications and Publicity, Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London SE14 6NW, stating the name of the booklet. All information is treated in the strictest confidence and will in no way affect any application you make to Goldsmiths; no personal data is kept on file.

