

The sociology curriculum

The study of Sociology focuses on contemporary society and fosters the development of critical and reflective thinking with a respect for social diversity. It provides an awareness of the importance of social structure and social action in explaining social issues. Students are encouraged to develop their own sociological awareness through active engagement with the contemporary social world.

In A Level sociology, students learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop skills valued by higher education and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. The core themes of the course are socialisation, culture and identity, and social differentiation, power and stratification. These themes are threads running through many areas of social life. Students come to understand the significance of conflict and consensus, social structure and social action, and the role of values. The key focus is on UK society today, with consideration given to comparative dimensions, and including the siting of UK society within its globalised context.

The sixth form

Sociology is a popular subject at A Level with three classes in both year 12 and 13, each class is taught by two teachers. Sociology links very well with other social science and humanities A Levels and is a popular choice for further study at HE either on its own or combined in a joint honours degree.

The A Level sociology course is designed so that students develop detailed knowledge and skills of evaluation and application. Student's assumptions about the world are challenged and they develop a deep understanding of contemporary issues and debates. For example, students study topics covering Families and Households, Education and Research methods in year 1 and Belief in society, Crime and Deviance and Theory and Methods in year 2. The course is designed to be directly relevant to students and their lives, covering issues and debates relevant to them growing up in a globalised world.

Throughout the course students study a range of theories through which they investigate, understand and evaluate a range of social phenomena, for example, Marxist, feminist, functionalist, interactionist and postmodern perspectives.

In year 1 students cover issues including; the changing nature of family structures and the impact of societal changes on individual's experiences and expectations of family life, the role of education for society and individuals and how attainment is impacted by gender, class and ethnicity. Students study research methods where they learn about qualitative and quantitative methods and their strengths and weaknesses.

In year 2, students look at the changing nature of religious belief in a globalised world, whether secularisation is taking place and how to measure it, the growth of New Religious Movements and the rise of 'personalised' religion. They study crime and deviance including; who commits crime and why people commit crime, covering street crime, white collar crime, state crime, green crime... as well as considering the effectiveness of different crime prevention strategies.

Students are encouraged to think and make links to contemporary issues and debates within the news media. Teachers provide their classes with opportunities for wider reading and discovery. For example, Sociology Review is available in the Library and there are a wide range of books and study guides which students can borrow. Teachers frequently email out links to news stories which connect to and further reinforce learning that has taken place in the classroom.

Enrichment

Students are supported through additional weekly study support sessions to which they can be referred or drop in to receive extra support, engage in quiet study or catch up on missed work.

The department run after school revision sessions once a week from February half term through to May half term to offer students extra help preparing for their exams.

In previous years students have been offered the opportunity to visit Bournemouth University and Bath Spa university for HE subject taster days. It is hoped we will be able to return to this later this year.