BSc Sociology   UCAS code: L310

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):   Sociology
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences   Programme length: 3 years
For students entering Part 1 in 2002   Date of specification: March 2003
Programme Director: Dr David Bartram
Programme Adviser: Dr David Bartram
Board of Studies: Sociology
Accreditation: Not appropriate

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide a distinctive degree-level education in sociology with special emphasis on research methods. The curriculum is designed to provide students with four main components: 1. training in theory, methods, substance, and analysis; 2. key skills (verbal, analytical, quantitative, research); 3. progression in learning and pedagogical experiences; 4. exposure to active research from the very first year. The BSc augments the BA by adding more coursework and rigor in methodological training.

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology.

Programme content

The centrepiece to the BSc is its stress on research methods. The programme begins in Part 1 with an introduction to basic sociological foundations (terms and categories, logic of sociological reasoning and debate, basic methodological approaches) and sensitises students to the empirical data and debates of main sociological issues (e.g. inequality, political organization and change, race and gender, etc.). The second and third years build upon this foundation, as the curriculum centres on the four core areas of interest in the department: culture, economics, politics, and stratification. Methodological proficiency is an underlying component of the programme, and students' methodological training is stressed in each year, in particular in Part 3. Students encounter a variety of concepts, approaches and methods for the study of sociology and are provided with a critical understanding of the nature and structures of human social life, across time and space. They have a wide range of options that increase during the degree course. Students progress from introductory and survey modules to more specialist options involving greater independent study. They also acquire a number of generic intellectual and transferable skills that prepare them for the world of work. In Part 3 students increase their focus on methods by taking three modules in research methods.

The Sociology BSc programme involves a combination of compulsory modules (determined by the Department) and a number of optional modules (selected by the students, in conjunction with their programme advisor).

The programme is divided into three parts that form an intellectual progression through the discipline. Part 1 students who wish to continue in Sociology must successfully complete the compulsory modules (a total of 40 credits), and have the option of obtaining an additional twenty credits from two optional modules (carrying 10 credits each).

In Part 2, students take compulsory modules totalling 120 credits. These cover theory, statistics, and methods as well as two of the four principal branches of the discipline offered in our program. In Part 3, students must take four modules (10 credits each) open only to BSc students (focusing mainly on research methods), write a dissertation (40 credits), and take 40 credits of courses in one cluster (see below): two 10-credit options and one 20-credit advanced topics seminar.

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Not all optional modules will necessarily be available in any year. Admission to optional modules will be at the discretion of the Programme Director.

Part 1 (three terms)   *Credits*   *Level*
Compulsory modules

SO1INT	Introduction to Sociology	20	C
SO1MET	Methods 1: Main Methodological Approaches in Sociology	20	C

Optional modules (both of which must be taken together):

SO1CES	Contemporary European Society	10	C
SO1CSI	Contemporary Social Issues	10	C

Part II (two terms)   *Credits*   *Level*
Compulsory modules

SO2ME2	Methods 2 (Autumn)	20	I
SO2SS1	Statistics 1 (Autumn)	20	I
SO2SS2	Statistics 2* (Spring)	20	I
SO2THE	Theory: The Classical Tradition (Autumn)	20	I

And two of the four below:

SO2CUL	Sociology of Culture (Spring)	20	I
SO2POL	Political Sociology (Spring)	20	I
SO2ECO	Economic Sociology (Spring)	20	I
SO2STR	Social Stratification (Spring)	20	I

*Of the 20 credits in Statistics 2, 5 are allocated to Career Management Skills

Part 3 (three terms)   *Credits*   *Level*

Compulsory modules

SO3SSM	Social Survey Methods	10	H
SO3ETM	Ethnographic Methods	10	H
SO3SOA	Sociological Analysis (Autumn)	10	H
SO3DIS	Dissertation (full-year)	40	H

And one of the following, as available:

SO3INT	* Internet Studies	10	H
SO3NAR	Narrative Analysis	10	H
SO3FWN	Quantitative Approaches to Narrative	10	H
SO3CON	Content Analysis	10	H
SO3NET	Network Models	10	H
SO3IDI	In-Depth Interviews	10	H
SO3MUL	Advanced Topic in Multivariate Analysis	10	H
SO3HIS	Advanced Topic in Comparative-Historical Methods	10	H

Optional modules totalling 40 credits (all must be chosen from one of the clusters for which the student took a core course in year 2; in addition to two of the 10-credit options, students must take one Advanced Topics Seminar worth 20 credits in one cluster, as listed at the bottom):
Note: the following list is indicative of the modules offered in the recent past. Only a selection will be available in any given year, and new ones will be developed as well. A definitive list for a given term will be available from the department.

SO3ORG	Sociology of Organizations	10	H
SO3POE	Political Economy	10	H
SO3GEN	Sociology of Gender	10	H
SO3POP	Popular Culture	10	H
SO3PCH	Political Change	10	H
SO3ANT	Social Anthropology	10	H
SO3FEM	Feminisms	10	H
SO3SEX	Human Sexualities	10	H
SO3MPM	Moral Panics, the Media, and Moral Crusades	10	H
SO3REL	Understanding Religion and Belief	10	H
SO3DEA	Sociology of Death	10	H
SO3ART	Social Dynamics of Art	10	H
SO3DDS	Death in the State	10	H
SO3NAT	The Nation State and Modernity	10	H
SO3MED	The Sociology of Media	10	H
SO3EI	Evil Influences	10	H
SO3SMT	Sociology of Market Transitions	10	H
SO3IND	Industrial Sociology	10	H
SO3SOB	Social Boundaries	10	H
SO3CIT	Citizenship, Economy, and Society	10	H
SO3IDE	Identities: Ethnic, National, Cultural and Racial	10	H
SO3GLO	Nationalism and Globalism	10	H
SO3BEL	Religion and Belief in Contemporary Society	10	H
SO3SOM	Social Movements	10	H
SO3INT	Internet Studies	10	H
SO3PSC	Power and Social Control	10	H
SO3POW	Power and Inequality in Pre-Industrial Societies	10	H
SO3CLA	Class and Inequality in Contemporary Society	10	H
SO3LIF	Sociology of the Life Course	10	H
SO3CRS	Crime and Society	10	H
SO3ENT	Entrepreneurship: The Social Science Perspective	10	H
SO3MIG	Sociology of Migration	10	H
SO3CRI	Criminology	10	H
SO3EDU	Sociology of Education	10	H
SO3CHI	Contemporary Chinese Society	10	H
SO3AME	Contemporary American Society	10	H
SO3PCO	Culture and Power	10	H
SO3LIM	Liminality	10	H

SO3IDO	Ideology	10	H
SO3RHE	Rhetoric of Science	10	H
SO3EVL	Everyday Life	10	H
SO3LES	Leisure	10	H
SO3POL	Advanced Topics in Political Sociology	20	H
SO3ECO	Advanced Topics in Economic Sociology	20	H
SO3CUL	Advanced Topics in Sociology of Culture	20	H
SO3SOR	Advanced Topics in Social Organization	20	H

Note: the Advanced Topics classes listed at the bottom will, in substance, be selected from the optional courses listed above. In other words, several of those courses will be offered as an advanced seminar, with a weight of 20 credits instead of 10.

Modules by Cluster

Political Sociology Cluster
1. **Political Sociology** (core)
2. * Political Economy
3. * The Nation State and Culture
4. National Identity and Modernity
5. Political Change
6. Nationalism and Globalism
7. Ethnic Groups in Conflict: From Citizenship to Genocide
8. * Citizenship, Economy, and Society
9. Social Movements
10. * Power and Social Control
11. * Power and Inequality in Pre-Industrial Societies
12. * Moral Controversies in Modern Societies
13. * The Sociology of Media
14. Advanced Topics in Political Sociology

Economic Sociology Cluster
1. **Economic Sociology** (core)
2. Entrepreneurship: The Social Science Perspective
3. Sociology of Market Transitions
4. Sociology of Migration
5. Sociology of Organisations
6. Industrial Sociology
7. * Political Economy
8. * Citizenship, Economy, and Society
9. * Gender, Family, and the Work Place
10. * Ideology
11. * Culture and Power
12. Advanced Topics in Economic Sociology

Sociology of Culture Cluster
1. **Sociology of Culture** (core)
2. * Sociology of Gender
3. * Human Sexualities
4. Popular Culture
5. * Social Boundaries
6. Social Dynamics of Art
7. Sociology of Humour
8. * Internet Studies

9. Understanding Religion and Belief
10. * The Nation State and Culture
11. * The Sociology of Media
12. * Culture and Power
13. * Ideology
14. * Sociology of Education
15. *Sociology of the Life Course
16. Sociology of Death
17. Advanced Topics in the Sociology of Culture

Social Organization and Inequality Cluster
1. **Social Stratification** (core)
2. Class and Inequality in Contemporary Society
3. Social Anthropology
4. *Sociology of the Life Course
5. Contemporary Chinese Society
6. Crime and Society
7. Criminology
8. * Sociology of Gender
9. * Human Sexualities
10. * Power and Inequality in Pre-Industrial Societies
11. Moral Panics, the Media, and Moral Crusades
12. Feminisms
13. * Gender, Family, and the Work Place
14. * Social Boundaries
15. * Moral Controversies in Modern Societies
16. * Sociology of Education
17. * Power and Social Control
18. Advanced Topics in Social Organization

Note: Modules marked by an asterisk belong to more than one cluster. The same module, however, cannot be claimed twice by students for completion of a cluster.

Progression requirements
For progression from Part 1 to Part 2 and Part 2 to Part 3, students must:

1. Obtain at least 40% in Part 1 Sociology for progression from Part 1 to Part 2, and at least 40% in Methods 2 and Theory 1, as well as an average of 40% for the group Political Sociology, Economic Sociology, Sociology of Culture, and Social Stratification for progression from Part 2 to Part 3.

2. Achieve an overall average of 40% in 120 credits taken in the examination

Achieve not less than 30% in any module except that marks of less than 30% in a total of 20 credits may be condoned, provided that the candidate has pursued the course for the module(s) with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

To be eligible for Honours, students must obtain at least 40% in all Part 3 modules and an overall average of at least 40%.

Summary of teaching and assessment
In Sociology, teaching styles change from large lectures (Part 1) to lectures and/or seminars (Part 2), to predominantly seminars in Part 3. Modules are assessed by a mixture of coursework and formal examination. The ratio of coursework (including seminar performance) to examination increases as the degree progresses. There is a 50:50 weight for coursework and examinations in the overall degree programme (Parts 2 and 3). The weight of examinations diminishes from the first to the third year. The conventions for classification are included in the Progamme Handbook, but you should note that weighting between Part 2 and Part 3 for classification purposes is 33% and 67%.

Admission requirements
Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:
Grade C or better in English in GCSE; and achieved
UCAS Tariff: 280 points from 3 A Levels or 300 points from 3 A Levels and 1 AS Level
International Baccalaureat: 30 points; or
Irish Leaving Certificate: Four Bs and a C in four other subjects
Two AS grades are accepted in place of one A-Level

Admissions Tutors: Dr Athena Leoussi

Support for students and their learning
University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers, and the University Library, which, across its three sites, holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information, and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union. Support for students in their studies is provided through the University's Personal Academic Record (PAR) Scheme, in which students meet their personal tutors regularly to review their progress.

Additionally, Sociology provides supports within the Department. During the second term of Statistics, students are introduced to Career Management Skills to help them with the practical side of careers and employment. In Part 1 students are introduced to Information Technology skills directly related to sociological study and research. Students have individual tutors who help with academic progression.

Career prospects
Students graduating in sociology have pursued a wide range of career paths. The in-depth training in research methods offered by the BSc in Sociology endows students with highly-marketable skills. Apart from those undertaking postgraduate study for careers in higher education, many other students undertake further study related to their chosen career. The rigorous nature of the programme, along with its development of transferable skills, makes Reading Sociology graduates highly suitable for careers in private sector management, the civil service, journalism, or local government; a sizeable minority follow careers in accountancy, banking or commerce; others have pursued interests in law. The degree also prepares graduates for work in social science research units such as the Institute for Public-Policy Research, Policy Studies Institute or Chatham House.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements
Students are encouraged to spend part of their second year studying at a European University, via the Socrates programme, or in the United States, via the American Studies exchange programme. While such exchanges may involve some additional financial expenditures and some adjustments to coursework at Reading, the department believes that these exchanges offer an excellent opportunity to broaden educational and life experience. In the first instance interested students should see their personal tutor.
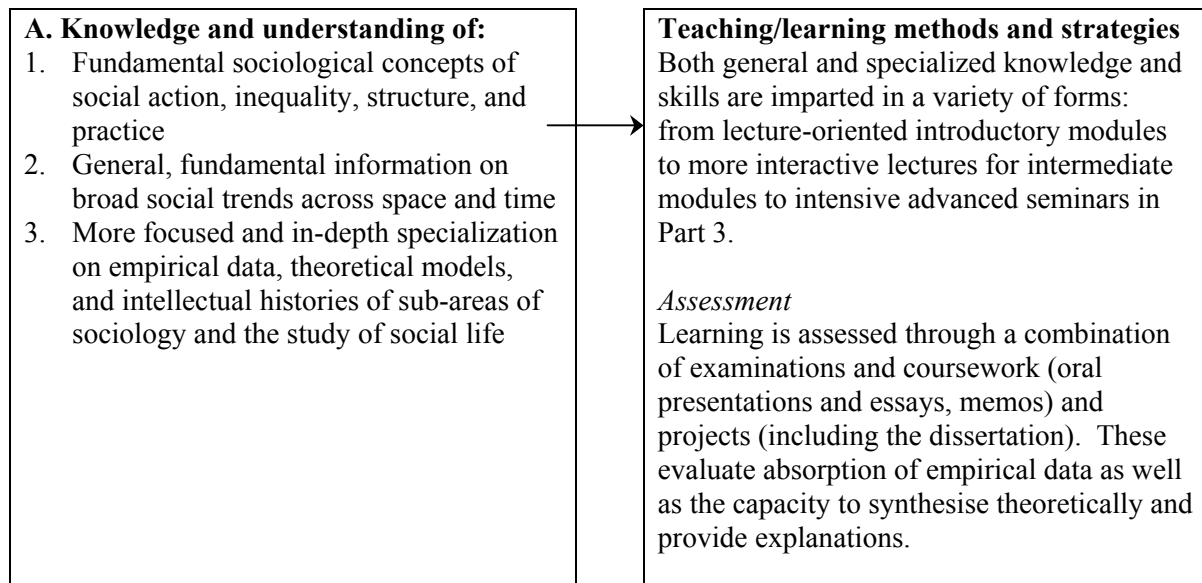
Educational aims of the programme
The aims of this programme are intellectual and practical. Intellectually, members of staff aim to widen students' capacities for critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving, asking questions and deconstructing others' arguments. Students also learn a variety of explanatory schemata and their application in understanding them in social life. Practically, the programme imparts technical skills: a wide range of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative, and computer-related analytic skills (e.g. use of SPSS); use of Information Technology; enhanced writing capacity through continuous assessment and the dissertation.

Programme Outcomes
The Sociology programme aims to provide a broad range of practical, analytic, and theoretical knowledge and skills. More specifically, the programme offers techniques and methods for research, in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
1. Fundamental sociological concepts of social action, inequality, structure, and practice 2. General, fundamental information on broad social trends across space and time 3. More focused and in-depth specialization on empirical data, theoretical models, and intellectual histories of sub-areas of sociology and the study of social life	Both general and specialized knowledge and skills are imparted in a variety of forms: from lecture-oriented introductory modules to more interactive lectures for intermediate modules to intensive advanced seminars in Part 3. *Assessment* Learning is assessed through a combination of examinations and coursework (oral presentations and essays, memos) and projects (including the dissertation). These evaluate absorption of empirical data as well as the capacity to synthesise theoretically and provide explanations.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. Critically analyse and deconstruct claims and arguments 2. Think in terms of cause-effect relations, variables, and theories 3. Organize arguments through the use of logic and empirical data 4. Apply concepts and procedures of rigorous data collection and analysis	Theory and methods are at the heart of the discipline. Consequently, all sociology modules involve deconstruction and application of a wide range of theoretical frameworks, training students to analyse and apply different types of data relevant to sociological issues. *Assessment* Examinations and written work assess students' capacities to present an argument that is a careful, critical, coherent and synthetic combination of theory and data. Hence, all intellectual skills are addressed in each module, although some modules, such as Theory and Methods, focus more narrowly on theoretical construction or the logic and technique of data collection.

C. Practical skills – able to:	**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
1. Design a research project, from setting a research question, to implementing it with data collection and analysis techniques 2. Write coherent arguments 3. Work in teams (in group projects) as well as individually (dissertation or seminar papers) 4. Evaluate policies, social trends, and other social data	While research techniques arise in each module, these are specifically addressed in Methods modules. Students must take at least one Methods module per year (including Part 1). Career skills are also addressed in the mandatory Methods module in Part 2. *Assessment* Students are formally assessed in research and analysis techniques by means of the coursework required by the Methods modules. Some modules include group projects to encourage teamwork and memoranda to encourage precise analysis and critical commentary of readings or issues at hand.

D. Transferable skills – focusing on:
3. Writing
4. Presentation
5. Team Work
6. Analysis
7. Numeracy
8. Use and application of IT

Use and Application of IT – In a world increasingly reliant on information technology, we feel it is in students' best interests to gain competence with IT and general information retrieval skills for electronically-based data. We require students to attend IT classes in their second year (and offer a special seminar on Internet Studies); further, most of our staff will be using the web-based Blackboard in their teaching. The mandatory IT classes not only familiarise students with Blackboard but also familiarise
them with information search and retrieval skills (e.g. information search on the internet and use of data-bases) and communication skills (e.g. use of
e-mail, chat sites and discussion rooms, electronic bulletin boards). Please note that these IT classes
do not constitute a module but underpin all Part 2 studies in a distributed manner.

Assessment
Most of these skills are tested through coursework and formal examination.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies
Most modules engage students in a wide range of coursework activities, which include writing short and long essays, making seminar presentations, working collaboratively on group projects, analysing data (both qualitative and quantitative) and arguments. The Department further requires all students to take specialist modules in IT skills, including interactive technology, while modules in statistics and quantitative research methods develop students' numeracy skills.

Writing – In order to bring together methodological, theoretical and substantive knowledge, the Department has made the
writing of a dissertation mandatory in the final year. Furthermore, the Department requires a number of Advanced seminars of its third-year students; these Advanced seminars are based
on intensive writing. This addresses part of the need for skills and experience in information handling.

Presentation – One important transferable skill is oral exposition: the ability to present clearly and precisely while being able to field questions and "think on one's feet." We
address this both through the presentation and interactive components of Advanced Seminars (which require students to make presentations), and also in many standard courses within the curriculum.

Team Work – Many of our methodological courses require students to work in teams. This is the typical way of working in today's working environments (students having to learn how to deal with free riders).

Analysis – One important aspect of information handling is the retrieval and use of data for answering complex questions (about social life, business, etc.). To address this need, we aim at imparting strong analytical skills to our
students. Students must learn the art of taking arguments apart as well as putting them together. This is an integral part of most options and seminars.

Numeracy – The BSc offers a wide range of statistical options, aimed at preparing students for work requiring data analysis.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the undergraduate programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve by studying sociology in this department. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.