

Sociology

Examination Board: AQA

Qualification: A level

Teacher Contact: Miss Sancto

Entry Requirements: A grade 5 or above in either English Literature or a humanities subject. Students must have met the entrance requirements for the Sixth Form.

What will I study?

Sociology examines social structures, practices and relationships to make sense of the world. Key themes in sociology include inequality, power, social action, community, social divisions, culture and identity. The first-year course is comprised of four units:

Unit 1: Families and Households

This unit examines changing family patterns as well as trends in partnerships and family roles. Also, we will look at the changing experience of childhood and social policy aimed at the family.

Unit 2: Education

This unit considers the role of education in our society from different sociological perspectives. It examines rates of achievement across gender, ethnicity and social class and investigates the impact of educational policy aimed at improving opportunities.

Unit 3: Sociological Research Methods

This unit looks at the following research methods: experiments, questionnaires, observations, interviews and secondary sources. It weighs up the strengths and weaknesses of each method according to practical, ethical and theoretical factors.

Unit 4: Methods in Context

In addition to the unit 3 content, students are expected to complete a section of the exam on applying a particular method to an education context.

The second-year course is comprised of three additional units:

Beliefs in Society

This unit examines the role of religion within society, past and present. It assesses the value of religion in modern society and attempts to explain growth of new religious movements. We debate the idea that religion acts as a barrier to social change.

Crime and Deviance

This unit theorises about the causes of crime, looking at solutions to dealing with crime and forms of punishment, as well as what groups commit the most crime and in what areas.

Additionally, we will be examining how the media play a role in perceptions of crime as well as considering the reliability and validity of crime statistics.

Sociological Theory

This unit provides essential theoretical knowledge. It gives a broad understanding of the different perspectives in sociology including Functionalism, Marxism, Postmodernism and Feminism.

How will I be assessed?

At the end of Year 13, there will be three 2 hours external exam papers. These will largely be made up of essay questions, with shorter answer questions as well.

Am I suited to this course?

You would be well suited to studying Sociology at A level if you:

- have an interest in people and the way we are shaped by the world around us
- have an interest in how societies change and develop over time
- are willing to take on board new ideas and ways of thinking
- want to develop the way you organise and present information, ideas and arguments
- want to find out how society works
- enjoy testing theories to find out if they are true.

What other subjects does it complement?

Sociology complements a number of other subjects, but particularly History, Psychology, Film Studies, Geography, the Natural Sciences and English Literature and English Language.

Where can it lead?

An A level in Sociology can enable you to progress to many degree qualifications and the analytical and theoretical nature of sociology matches up with skills needed for university. In terms of employment, studying Sociology is a great starting point for any career. Sociology students can enter into careers in social work, victim support, policing, researching, teaching, policy planning, media, criminology and nursing amongst many other professions.