



Stockport Academy

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AS / A LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

About the Subject:

Sociology is the study of society. In particular it is the study of the social groups that make up the society we live in – social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age. Sociology is then an examination of why certain social groups are *advantaged* and others *disadvantaged* in their lives. Sociology focuses the family, the education system, the media, religion, the state and the law, health, and the workplace. It is a *critical enquiry* into these institutions, and how they affect different people, in different ways. Sociology is always seeking to answer the following questions:

- *Who is in control? Why?*
- *Who has the power?*
- *How fair or unfair is it?*
- *How could it be improved/changed?*
- *How should it be?*

Sociologists carry out *research* looking for *evidence* support their theories. Current research, usually carried out at universities, is extremely diverse and wide-ranging, focusing on issues such as youth crime, poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, health differences, the effects of divorce, the rise of the religious cult, male unemployment, immigration, environmental destruction, the ageing population, welfare, and many many more!

Entry Qualifications:

As per entry requirements for the 6th form, using the grade and points calculations tables on the website. In addition, a pass in GCSE English Language is essential, as you will be required to be able to express ideas in a clear and coherent way, making use of subject specific terminology. Other GCSEs, which include writing skills, such as history and English Literature, are useful too.

Suitable Subject Combinations:

Sociology combines well with many other subjects including Psychology, Media Studies, History, Government and Politics, English Language, Geography, Citizenship, Law – as all are concerned with people and the human condition. However, many students also combine Sociology with the sciences, and with the arts.

Course Content:

AS - Year 12

SCLY1 The Sociology of the Family – an examination of the role of the family in 21st century life, how it has changed, and how it will change in the future. There is an important focus on what family members' roles are - who does what at home? As with all topics, there is a range of views and debates to be explored, about what is the "best" type of family, and how the different family types affect its members.

SCLY2 The Sociology of Education – an exploration of what education is for. You will go on to consider a range of competing interpretations and theories of the education system. How does it affect people differently depending on which class, gender and ethnicity they are? Who achieves the most? The Least? Why? Is it fair? What impact do teachers and the way school is organised have on your educational achievements? You will also look at key educational policies/laws and how the education system has changed and continues to change, and of course how this affects students. This topic includes an additional focus on Sociological Research Methods in the context of education, and more generally – looking at how we can find out about the way people behave.

A2 – Year 13

SCLY3 – The Sociology of Beliefs – an opportunity to look in detail at religious belief, ideologies, and science – all different systems of beliefs. What is the role of religion? Which social groups, if any, are more likely to be religious than others? Is religion still important and influential? What is the effect of new technologies, such as the internet, on belief? Has the rise of science led to the decline of religion? Does religion cause or prevent social change?

SCLY4 The Sociology of Crime, Deviance and Social Control – this considers what is normal, who makes the norms and laws up, and what happens when people behave beyond society's expectations or laws. Again a range of theories is used to try to tackle the important questions of who is criminal and how can we reduce crime. This topic, like SCLY2 is also linked to Sociological Research, so that contemporary research in to crime and deviant behaviour are looked at as attempts to understand the issues better.

Assessment:

The AS course is assessed in TWO exam papers. Unit 1 is worth 40% of the AS (20% of the whole A level) and is taken in the summer and is a 1-hour exam. Unit 2 is worth 60% (30% of the whole A level) of the AS is also taken in the summer and is a 2-hour exam paper. These two papers amount to 50% of the total A level. A2 is also assessed by TWO exams. Unit 3 is a 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ hour exam, is worth 20% of the A level, and will be taken either in January or the summer. Unit 4 is a 2-hour paper, is worth 30% of the A level, and will be taken in the summer. These 2 A2 units make up 50% of the A level, to combine with the AS units.

Progression:

People who study sociology go on to study a wide variety of courses in Higher Education and go into a wide variety of careers. Sociology A level will equip you with a range of transferable, useful skills. Many students go on to study Sociology or Sociology related degrees but other students follow a broad range of higher education courses such as Criminology, Law, History, Politics, International Relations, Psychology, to name but a few. There are also many different careers which draw upon a good sociological understanding of society and social groups, such as in the probation service, law, the police, personnel, Human Resources, teaching, social work, welfare rights, human rights, social and/or market research, again to name but a small sample.