Programme Specification

Course record information

Name and level of final award:	BA/BA (Hons) Sociology
Name and level of intermediate awards:	Diploma of HE in Sociology; Certificate of HE in Sociology
Awarding body/institution:	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution:	Recognised Body
Location of delivery:	Regent Street
Language of delivery and assessment:	English
Course/programme leader:	Dr Francis Ray White
Course URL:	westminster.ac.uk/sociology
Mode and length of study:	Three Years Full-Time Five Years Part-time
University of Westminster course code:	W50
JACS code:	-
UCAS code:	L300
QAA subject benchmarking group:	Sociology
Professional body accreditation:	None
Date of course validation/review:	October 2013
Date of programme specification:	October 2013

Admissions requirements

Normally students should:

- Be aged 18 or over on 1st September in the year of entry;
- Have the following qualifications, either:
    - Three BBC grades at A2 L:evel, plus GCSE English Language grade C or above, or;
    - BTEC DMM, plus at least one academic A level grade C or above, or;
    - International BAC 28 points.

Non-native speakers will be required to provide test evidence of English proficiency (IELTS 6.0 points or equivalent).

Non-traditional mature applicants are considered on the basis of their qualifications and experience. Details of the current entry requirements are available from the Programme Leader or the Admissions Office. All applicants are invited to an Open Day where they can meet staff, current students and find out more about the course.

Aims of the course

The main aim of the BA Sociology degree at Westminster is to produce graduates who have the knowledge, dispositions and attributes to make a difference personally, socially and professionally in the following ways by:

- Encouraging interest in and excitement about sociological knowledge in order to understand and investigate how societies operate and their impact on people's everyday lives and interactions (e.g. how class structures educational outcomes or life expectancy, how racism, sexism, heterosexism and ableism are normalised, how power is exercised);
- Expanding your horizons of critical thinking and the integrity of your intellectual enquiry to be become open-minded and able to approach things sensitively from different viewpoints;
- Engaging practically and learning more about the sociological research strategies that are employed to undertake, evaluate and use sociological research competently;
- Developing a questioning disposition, meaning that things are not taken at face value but investigated, evaluated, considered and alternative solutions proposed;
- Facilitating self/structural awareness so that you can deconstruct your everyday life and make sense of your social location in terms of identity, culture, beliefs and values.
- Using the knowledge and skills acquired through the course to develop a critical and imaginative edge over your peers in securing and succeeding in future work.
- Inspiring active and informed citizens, interested and engaged with social issues and problems in their communities and beyond.

The programme is led by sociologists who are specialists in their fields and whose interests include theory, methodology, culture and identities, race and ethnicity, gender and sexualities, families, education, the body, work, human rights and the media.

Employment and further study opportunities

We have produced a curriculum that is driven by the acquisition of core competencies and practice-based learning, which will be useful for your CV. The distinctive focus on practice-based learning is evidenced in the range and types of assessments we set, which are integral to our employability strategy. Thus, embedded in the content of our Sociology degree are the opportunities to acquire the competencies much sought after by employers, which will set you apart from other graduates. Contemporary employers are looking for the following graduate attributes, namely:

- Thinking creatively or 'outside the box' in solving problems;
- The ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a team with minimal supervision;
- Show initiative by the willingness to have a go at tackling a problem or issue;
- Numeracy and ICT skills including information and data management;
- Evaluative and analytical skills;
- Evidence-based, problem-solving skills;
- Assimilative skills;

- Research skills;
- Communication skills;
- The ability to present yourself and present an argument;
- Time management.

A degree in Sociology prepares students for a diverse range of professional careers because it develops high level critical analytical and evaluative competencies, self and social awareness, in addition to the core competencies most graduates develop. From the first module that you take, you are encouraged to develop personal strategies of independent learning and career management skills, identifying any skills gaps and remedying them through further training provided by the university e.g. in ICT, modern languages and academic literacy or through work – voluntary or paid.

In the second year, if you take the Work Experience module, you will be required to research and negotiate a suitable placement and gain valuable experience in applying your sociological knowledge and skills. As with all aspects of social life, you will learn to think about work sociologically and to apply that understanding to the context in which you work. This self-awareness is part of the sociological training which enables you to make far more informed choices in relation to future employment.

Some students who have taken the Work Experience module have since been offered jobs in the organisation where they did their placement because they made such a good impression. For example, a recent graduate found a placement in the business development and media department of a large law firm and they were so impressed with her that they offered her a job.

Our new level 6 module, Sociological Research Practice, is designed so that we can conduct research for organisations in the public, private or voluntary sectors, thereby utilising specialist research skills and understanding the importance of doing Sociology in the service of others, as well as making you, the research practitioners, highly employable.

Other students have used the University's Teacher Associate Scheme to get training and placements in schools to get a taste of teaching as a potential career or have got voluntary placements in local schools alongside their studies as, without experience, it is no longer possible to go directly into teacher training. One student used her placement in a school to conduct research for her dissertation on Turkish fathers' involvement in their children's education. Here is a typical example of how relevant sociological theory is, and how readily it can be applied and practiced in your local communities.

Many of you full-time students will be doing some form of paid work to support yourselves financially during your studies, and you are encouraged to look for work which can extend your experience beyond any previous jobs that you may have had in the retail or service sectors. The university careers service provides lists of job vacancies and voluntary work opportunities, within the university (such as student ambassadors or working in the library) and individual careers' counselling, which you will find invaluable. The Economic and Social Research Council also offers a summer placement scheme for students to gain relevant work experience. These opportunities are especially important if you have little experience of paid work. You can continue to use the Careers' service for up to three years after you graduate to assist you in finding graduate employment. However, our message to you is to start preparing for future employment from the first year onwards – our learning strategy will equip you with a wide range of knowledge, understanding and training so that you can make a difference in whatever field of work you enter.

Specifically, many Sociology students enter what we might describe as people-related professions such as human resources, marketing, teaching, social work etc. or join private companies, national or local government or voluntary organisations. Their interest may have been sparked by specific modules in areas such as social policy, health and education. A significant number of students are inspired to continue to further study for Masters' degrees and PhDs and subsequently make the transition to academic jobs in teaching and/or research at this or other universities. Some of our former graduates have even gone on to teach in our department.

Our external examiners, who monitor our course, recognise its value in developing graduate attributes. In his annual report for 2011-12, Dr Simon Speck commented that across the levels of achievement, students' work, showed real strengths such as an ability to design and undertake independent empirical research projects, engage with highly complex social and philosophical theories, relate sociological topics to personal experience and think analytically and critically about contemporary social, political and cultural questions.

These comments concur with the findings of a government-funded Pedagogic Quality project led by Professor Monica McLean, which compared Social Science undergraduate degrees at four different universities, including ours. The study found that our students were the most sophisticated in terms of their conceptual expression and sociological understanding, were more engaged with social issues and were self-aware - they knew what they had learnt, which makes them so attractive to employers. To quote Professor McLean, "this programme leads to important outcomes for the students taking it, for London and for wider society."

Our Alumni constantly reiterate how important their degree was for them in all areas of employment, and state that it consistently sets them apart from their colleagues. For example, they attribute their superior 'soft skills' in terms of managing the social relations within which they work, to seminar activities and group work, where they had to interact effectively with a culturally diverse student cohort, all of whom bring different perspectives to bear on the assigned activities and which need to be heard, evaluated and synthesised in order to undertake the assignment. Through the Alumni Society, we are developing much closer ongoing relationships with past students to keep them in contact and for them to also support current students. You can expect to meet with our alumni at Sociology careers events and other academic and social activities.

In Sociology we want to shift the assumption that career management begins at graduation. These are some of the ways in which you can expect career development to take place during your course:

- Granting careers consultants access to designated core modules on Blackboard at each level to pass on information about events so that the careers service is more connected with the subject area;

- Hosting a mini volunteering fair, which will work together with the other employment fairs, where a number of targeted organisations will be invited to set up stalls and meet students. The aim is to introduce you to potential new fields of work and encourage you to demonstrate and apply your graduate capabilities and start networking;

- Ensuring our assessment strategies in all modules are explicit about how graduate attributes are embedded within the curriculum. These include subject knowledge, cognitive and practical academic skills which needs to be applied to a specific issue (such as a campaign in the module Youth, Culture and Identity), interpreting primary sources, managing information or independent and group research in the core methods modules or developing your own research in the dissertation module;

- Raising your awareness of core capabilities acquired through the Sociology curriculum through more explicit identification, articulation and assessment of them across the curriculum thus enabling you to articulate your knowledge and skills and their relevance for work to future employers.

- Building on the previous successful alumni networking evenings so that current students hear testimonials from graduates in a wide range of employment destinations.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what a successful student has achieved as the result of learning. These threshold statements of achievement are linked to the knowledge, understanding and competencies that the Quality Assurance Agency has produced as subject benchmarks for the UK academic community. These provide a means for universities to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications. The subject benchmark statements for Sociology have been instrumental in guiding the design of learning outcomes on this programme. Listed below are the QAA learning outcomes for Sociology, with which we comply at the typical rather than threshold standard.

Subject knowledge and understanding
On graduating with an honours degree in Sociology, students should be able to:
- Describe and examine a range of key concepts and theoretical approaches within Sociology and evaluate their application;
- Provide an analytical account of social diversity and inequality and their effects;
- Understand and evaluate the issues and problems involved in the use of comparison in Sociology;
- Analyse the nature of social relationships between individuals, groups and social institutions;
- Examine the processes that underpin social change and social stability;
- Examine a range of research strategies and methods and assess the appropriateness of their use;
- Evaluate the relationship between sociological arguments and evidence in a range of contexts;
- Analyse ways in which Sociology can be distinguished from other forms of understanding.

Cognitive abilities and skills
On graduating with an honours degree in Sociology, students should be able to:
- Assess the merits of competing explanations of human behaviour, social situations and events;
- Draw on evidence from a range of sources and demonstrate an ability to synthesise them;
- Draw on evidence to evaluate competing explanations;
- Evaluate competing explanations and to draw reasoned conclusions.

Discipline-specific skills
On graduating with an honours degree in Sociology, students should be able to:
- Construct appropriate sociologically informed questions;
- Summarise and explain the findings of empirical sociological research, including a critical assessment of the methodological frameworks used;
- Select and use appropriate research tools;
- Investigate sociologically informed explanations;
- Analyse the ethical implications of social research in a variety of applied research settings;
- Discuss sociological topics with appreciation of theory, evidence and relevance to current debates and to present the conclusions in a variety of appropriate sociological formats;
- Identify and comment on the value of sociological work with regard to social, public and civic policy issues. (QAA (2007) Benchmarks, Sociology).

The degree is broadly structured at three levels with core modules loaded in levels 4 and 5 and an upward drift towards more specialised options and independent study skills at level 6.

Level 4 is equivalent to first year and you are not expected to have studied Sociology before (although some of you will have studied it at A-Level but you won't be bored if you have!). You are expected to think sociologically about yourself and society and learn key concepts. Even at this introductory level, the learning curve is graduated to increase the level of difficulty of modules as you grow in confidence in your learning capacity.

Level 5 consists of half core and half option modules and is equivalent to second year. Second year students can take up to two Level 6 options in Semester 2.

Level 6 is equivalent to third year and has only the dissertation as core, so that you can take more specialist options.

All our modules meet or surpass the typical rather than the minimum threshold standards established by the Sociology benchmarks for the discipline. Together, the threshold knowledge required of a Sociology graduate, demonstrates a disciplinary commitment to equipping you for graduate employment.

Teaching, learning and assessment methods

Learning: desire and belonging
At the heart of the degree is its pedagogy – the learning and teaching strategy – and we expect you to take almost as much interest in how you learn as in the sociological content. The most important ways in which you will learn is through engaging your interest and motivation and invoking a sense of belonging. Our learning strategy derives from the University's learning and teaching strategy 2011-15 in accommodating your diverse learning needs and experience and expanding your critical knowledge and skills to achieve your potential. We are interested in your learning needs and expectations regarding the curriculum, achievement, satisfaction and employability opportunities and see learning and teaching as in dialogue with each other, which is why it is so important for you to engage at this level too.

We know that learning improves with belonging, which is why we have introduced Friends of Newly Arrived Students (FANS) to help new students settle in and this has reduced the number of students feeling isolated and alone. In starting from your experience and desires, we build on a sense of belonging, which begins through keeping in touch from when you apply, through to induction, the three years of your degree and beyond.

Together we can work towards a more collaborative and reflexive engagement in learning and teaching as an academic and social community, where mutual respect and peer support are core values. To support this we have introduced a respect policy whereby mutual responsibilities for engagement in class are clearly set out for staff and students alike.

Strategies to foster your sociological Identities
To get the most out of your studies (and your love of Sociology) there are lots of ways to become more involved in the subject outside of your formal learning:

- Sociology in the City, our Facebook page, is an excellent and easy way to stay connected to Sociology. We use it to highlight happenings in the department, staff and student news, as well as external academic and cultural events around London.
- Sociology noticeboards (located on the 5th floor of the Regent Street building) are also used to publicise events and field trips.
- Sociology Open Research Series events take place two or three times a semester and are a chance for you to hear researchers talk about their work in different areas of Sociology. Events are very informal and a great opportunity to discuss ideas outside the classroom!
- The Students' Union Sociology Society is run by and for students, usually second or third years, and does the things that Sociology students want to do – trips, film screenings, debates, campaigns, parties – it's up to you. There are also many other Sociology-related SU societies you could join, for example the Feminist Society or the International Development Society. Look out for them at the Freshers' Fair in Orientation Week.

Becoming Self-directed Learners
You are supported and encouraged to develop into autonomous, self-directed learners through experiential, reflective and research-based learning. This progresses incrementally through the three-year degree programme.

In the first year, you are encouraged to become more aware of your learning strategies, in order to develop your capacity for independent learning. As you progress through your second and third years, you are expected to make more use of your own initiative in the coursework you undertake, for example in selecting your own topics for analysis. Independent learning is most developed in the final-year dissertation, where you have the opportunity to research in depth a topic that most interests you with limited supervision.

Student independent learning is supported through:

- Access to advice and support from research-active teaching staff;
- The provision of clear information about content, expectations, assessment and appropriate reading for all modules;
- Access to a range of paper and electronic resources (texts, monographs and journals, other external sources);
- Access to computing resources including hardware, software and the necessary technical support.

A variety and combination of teaching methods are used on the programme including:

Lectures: These are used to provide a core of knowledge as a basis for further guided independent study. In addition to providing a common foundation of learning they also develop the skills of listening, note-taking and reflection. We encourage deep learning through interactive engagements such as brainstorming, Q/A, defining concepts on post-it notes etc. A variety of audio-visual and presentational methods are used.

Seminars and workshops: These provide opportunities for student-centred and active learning and are used to aid understanding of the material covered in lectures, examine and discuss issues raised in the lectures and weekly readings in more depth, and provide support and guidance on the preparation of coursework. To meet these aims, seminars and workshops encompass a varied range of activities. Individual or group presentations are a key element, providing an opportunity for you to practice new ways of thinking, rehearse ideas and revise them in interaction with others, and to develop skills in oral presentation and communication. Seminars also provide opportunities for early formative assessment and feedback. Feedback is a vital component of the learning experience and you need to value it as a means of developing your sociological skills and analysis and recognize how much you can benefit from the diversity of each others' experience.

Project work: Individual or group projects are a key element of a number of modules, encouraging students to engage with current debates or practice research. They provide you with an opportunity to source information, learn to discriminate between different sources in the public domain, to apply and interrogate theoretical concepts in a real-life context, use problem-solving skills, practise time management and work organisation and work collaboratively with other students. Group work is recognized as an essential skill by the QAA and reflects more closely what you will experience in the workplace where most people work as part of a team.

Blackboard: This on-line learning system is used as a central communication point between staff and yourselves and is used for the following purposes:
- To supply readings, lecture notes, module documents, assessment guidance and seminar materials, thus increasing students' access to key resources;
- To link to/embed audio, visual and web content;
- To provide reading lists with hyperlinks and downloadable module handbooks;.
- To allow online submission of assessments via Turnitin, and online provision of feedback and mark;
- Discussion boards, Wikis and blogs as a way for students to work together in preparation for classes and assessments.
- To provide links to other sources of study skill and learning support within the university.
- To keep students up to date with module events or changes via announcements.

Laboratory-based computing sessions: Some research analysis will be taught in computer laboratories where specialist methods software packages are available, to provide the opportunity for practical, hands-on learning.

Work experience placements: At level 5, you can work for a period in any area of work to enhance your employment prospects. This provides an opportunity to extract the competencies and understanding embedded in the Sociology curriculum and integral to sociological learning. The Sociological Research Practice module, which runs for the first time this year, builds on work experience in combining research skills with providing a problem-solving service to local organisations.

Visits to external sites: London is a wonderful resource for you to investigate sociologically and various walking tours or visits have been organised and linked into Sociology assessments such as a visit to the Museum of London for the level 4 London Explored module or walking tours of Black London in Understanding Race and LGBT history in Soho in Sexualities. At levels 5 and 6, students are expected to visit and conduct research in relation to specific exhibitions or cultural sites, such as an analysis of exhibitions which relate to representations of 'race' in the Consuming Race module or using resources on the body from the Wellcome Library for Life and Death.

Individual supervision: As you progress through your second and third years, you are expected to use your initiative more in the coursework you undertake such as small scale research in core research methods modules, selecting your own topics/ texts/ images for analysis. Independent learning is most developed in the final year honours dissertation, where you have the opportunity and freedom to research in depth (and write about) a sociological topic that most interests them (as long as it is linked to your academic programme) with limited supervision.

Guides to Study
In 2010/11 we introduced the Guide to Writing and Referencing in Sociology, also known as the 'red book'. It provides you with a clear guide to academic referencing and bibliography formatting, as well as guidance on structuring essays, interpreting assessment guidelines and how to avoid common usage and grammatical errors.

The 'red book' has been identified as an example of good practice by the Head of Department and the faculty learning advisor, and it has been adapted for use in a number of other UK HE institutions. It works as a single reference for you to read in order to correct and improve your writing and referencing. You will be given a copy in your first year and will be expected to follow the correct referencing in every module

Dissertation Guides - In your final year, you will receive a Dissertation Proposal Guide and Handbook which give you guidance in preparation for your research, planning and writing of a 10,000 word dissertation, when you reach the peak of independent learning.

Blended learning
Much of the teaching in the subject area has risen to the creative challenge of new technologies, and the use of images, film and video is now a routine part of much of our teaching and learning practice. You will be shown how to use new technologies (such as your mobile phones) as part of the process of social investigation and research. Selected modules could include audio/video recording of lectures to assist with subsequent revision and reflection, or videoed overview sessions to help you reflect on assessments. In such developments, the use of audio-visual material has benefitted all students as well as having the added benefit of providing different learning methods for students with autism, dyslexia and other learning difficulties.

The second major development in the use of blended learning techniques will be the adoption of webinars and virtual classrooms. This will also be integrated into specific modules such as the SSOC504 Work experience module, as these remote forums will provide students with opportunities to discuss issues during their internships. In conjunction with this, students will be required to record their experiences in multi-media formats as part of the move to multi-media based assessments.

Assessment

Assessment offers a way of measuring whether the learning outcomes of a module have been achieved and to what standard and is crucial to student motivation. At each level and within each module, assessments have been designed which are fit for purpose and our external examiners applaud the original and diverse range of assessments that we offer. For example, in 2009-10, Dr Cronin wrote:

> The assessment methods are in all cases designed to stimulate the sociological imagination of the students and staff are to be commended for their commitment and enthusiasm to provide the best possible teaching experience for their students. I do not know about the assessment methods used in other departments at Westminster but the Sociology Department in this respect is clearly working at a very high level. If this is a case of 'best practice' it should be disseminated throughout the university.

The range of assessment methods used on the programme includes:

- Essays;
- Autobiographical analysis;
- Critical reviews and commentaries;
- Policy reports;
- Manifestos and campaigns;
- Case studies;
- Oral presentations (group and individual);
- Analytical exercises including deconstruction of images and discourses;
- Literature reviews;
- Reports on project work;
- Practical research tasks (designing materials, collecting data and analysis);
- Computer-based assessments;
- Portfolios;
- Learning plans;
- Reflection;
- In-class tests and exams (both unseen and open-book);
- Dissertation.

Methods of assessment reflect progression across the three years of the programme. Some of the modules rehearse skills required at a more advanced level in subsequent modules to allow for the development of core skills, e.g. a literature review in London Explored, theory and research methods tasks in level 5 (2nd year) modules, which will be subsequently used for the dissertation at level 6 (3rd year). Detailed guidance is provided in module handbooks and support is given via additional resources and examples on Blackboard and in seminars to assist students.

Formative assessments are an important part of the assessment strategy, so you will be asked to write a proposal or an essay plan or a short essay and the feedback from that initial assessment will help you to develop and improve on it in the final assessment. These strategies facilitate independent learning, by providing you with feedback to enable you to measure your own progress, to reflect upon the effectiveness of your own learning and to make appropriate improvements. This is crucial to your motivation. In first-year modules, there are formative assessments at an early stage, which carry few marks but help to give you an idea of what is required for degree-level learning.

Feeding Back and Forward

Assessment is not just a means of judging current levels of achievement. It is a crucial part of your learning process and of achieving module and programme learning outcomes. You should always refer to marking criteria and to written comments provided by your tutors. These are intended as important indicators to improve future assignments, not simply as judgements on completed work. If you submit your essays by the deadlines set in each semester, you should receive feedback in three weeks. We consistently receive glowing comments about the quality of our feedback. In 2011-12, Dr Speck, summarised our feedback thus:

> Feedback is, in most instances, of an excellent quality: focused, detailed, constructive, forward-looking and formative in character, demonstrating a serious attention to individual students' performance and development.

Therefore effective use of feedback is about how you use it and integrate it in the next assessments.

Course structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Undergraduate students study 120 credits and part time Undergraduate students study up to 90 credits per year.

Credit Level 4 (Year One)				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
Students must take the following Cores				
SSOC406	Thinking Sociologically	Core	15	7.5
SSOC407	Classical Sociological Theory	Core	15	7.5
SSOC403	Researching Society	Core	15	7.5
SSOC405	London Explored	Core	15	7.5
Plus at least 45 credits Sociology options				
SSOC408	Self and Society	Option	15	7.5
SSOC409	Introducing Gender	Option	15	7.5
SSOC400	Understanding Race	Option	15	7.5
SSOC401	Media in the Global Context	Option	15	7.5
SSOC402	Culture and Everyday Life	Option	15	7.5
	One 15 credit module can be taken from other SHS disciplines or Polylang	Option	15	7.5
Students must take 120 credits at level 4.				
Award of Certificate of Higher Education available (120 credits)				

Credit Level 5 (Year Two)				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
Students must take the following cores				
SSOC503	Research in Action: Qualitative Methods	Core	15	7.5
SSOC505	Research in Action: Quantitative Methods	Core	15	7.5
SSOC507	Modern Social Theory	Core	15	7.5
SSOC506	Contemporary Social Theory	Core	15	7.5
Plus at least 45 credits from Sociology options. *Up to 30 credits of options at level 6 can be chosen in semester 2.*				
SSOC500	Youth, Culture and Identity	Option	15	7.5
SSOC504	Work Experience: Practice and Reflection	Option	15	7.5
SSOC508	Education Now	Option	15	7.5
SSOC509	Emotional Life: Psycho-Social Dimensions	Option	15	7.5
SSOC510	The Sociology of Religion	Option	15	7.5
	One 15 credit module can be taken from other SHS disciplines or Polylang	Option	15	7.5
*Students **must** take 120 credits at level 5/6.*				
Award of Diploma of Higher Education available (240 credits)				

Credit Level 6 (Year Three)				
Module code	**Module title**	**Status**	**UK credit**	**ECTS**
BA honours students must take the Sociology core *It is optional for BA degree students.*				
SSOC699	Dissertation	Core	30	15
Plus at least 75 credits Sociology options for the BA (Hons) degree.				
SSOC600	Sexualities	Option	15	7.5
SSOC602	Making the News	Option	15	7.5
SSOC603	Crossing Borders and Boundaries: Migration, Identity and Culture	Option	15	7.5
SSOC604	Gender, Education and Identity Work	Option	15	7.5
SSOC605	Contemporary Gender Studies: Feminist Theory and Beyond	Option	15	7.5
SSOC607	Life and Death: The Medicalisation of the Body	Option	15	7.5
SSOC609	Consuming Race	Option	15	7.5
SSOC610	Perils and Pleasures: A London Sociology of Leisure	Option	15	7.5
SSOC611	Families, Intimacies and Personal Life	Option	15	7.5
SSOC6XX	Politics, Protest and the Public Sphere	Option	15	7.5
	One 15 credit module can be taken from other SHS disciplines or Polylang	Option	15	7.5
BA Hons students must take 120 credits at level 6. *BA students must take 60 credits at level 6.*				
Award of BA available (300 credits) **Award of BA (Honours) available (360 credits)**				

Please note: not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year

Academic regulations

The University has regulations that govern the progression through the course. The BA (Hons) Sociology and its intermediate awards operate in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

All students should make sure that they access a copy of the current edition of the general University handbook called *Essential Westminster 2014/15* which is available at westminster.ac.uk/essential-westminster. The regulations in Appendix 2 should be read in conjunction with the Modular Fr*amework for Undergraduate Courses* and relevant sections of the current *Handbook of Academic Regulations* available at:
http://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/current-students/resources/academic-regulations

Progression Requirements

The University has regulations that govern the progression through the course.

- A *pass* in a module is achieved when the overall mark is at least 40% and the marks for each individual element (e.g., coursework and exam) are at least 30%.
- In order to progress from Level 4 to Level 5, a full-time student must obtain a 40% overall average at level 4.
- In order to progress from Level 5 to Level 6, a full-time student must obtain a minimum of
- 165 credits at level 4 or above, including a minimum of 75 credits at level 5 or above.

Award of an Honours Degree

To qualify for the award of BA Honours Sociology and Social Policy, a student must have:
- Obtained at least 360 credits including:
- Passed 75 credits at credit Level 4 or higher and achieved at least a condoned credit in each of the remaining modules worth 45 credits at Level 4; and
- Passed a minimum of 120 Credits at credit Level 5 or higher; and
- Passed a minimum of 120 credits at credit Level 6 or higher.
- Attempted modules with a maximum value of 330 credits at credit Levels 5 and 6; and
- Satisfied the requirements contained within any course specific regulations for the relevant course scheme.

The class of the Honours degree awarded is decided by two criteria, the average of the best 105 credits passed at credit Level 6 being in the range of the class to be awarded, and the average of the next best 105 credits passed at credit Levels 5 and 6 provided the next best 105 credits passed are no more than one classification below this.

For full details of intermediate awards, maximum time limits for student registration and information on the classification of degrees please see Part 2, Section 7 of this Course Handbook (pp59-60).

Support for students

Academic tutoring

The new tutoring system operates in conjunction with core modules at level four and is provided by your seminar leaders in those modules.. This is to be replicated at level 5 through the core research methods modules and at level 6 through the dissertation module. The content of the tutoring will be:

- Helping you to understand and make the most of feedback loops and forward feeding;
- Learning plans, which will set up learning aims linked to forward feeding from previous assessments;
- Integrating a new curriculum in information literacy (ancil) to formalise the acquisition of digital literacies;
- Use of peer assessments to improve your oral and written communication and the articulation of core competencies and skills for employability and increased awareness and confidence.

Personal tutoring

Personal support is also crucial to the quality of your experience. Personal tutoring includes formal elements such as helping you choose modules, signing off forms, writing references etc. and also informal advice or support if you experience difficulties. We can direct you to the university advice services (counselling, financial) when needed and students repeatedly express how much they value it.

University Services to Support Learning and ANCIL

The ANCIL project is consistent with our student-centred, joined up pedagogy where all the support networks of the university are integrated with the disciplines to produce a holistic approach to your learning. Some key points from ANCIL include:

- Ability to access, evaluate and use information is a key skill in our digital age;
- Learning these skills at HE level needs to be embedded in subject teaching and developed and assessed as you progress;
- Learning needs to be supported by partnerships across the university e.g. academic staff, library staff, study skills advisors, it trainers, careers counsellors.

Learning Adviser

Academic support in the university is available from the Academic Learning Development Advisors Shahzeena Ahmad and Laura Niada. This is a vital service offering one-to-one sessions, workshops, worksheets and online resources to meet your individual learning needs and is additional to the dedicated support the Sociology team offers you in modules.

Disability Support

The Disability Service plays a crucial role in the experience of students across a spectrum of learning needs. Central to our disability policy is an inclusive curriculum and delivery, which meets the needs of all students without discriminating against students with disabilities. In Sociology, we have adjusted our pedagogic delivery and materials for the benefit of all students, knowing that learning support required for students with disabilities will help everyone. For example, the provision of teaching materials and reading lists electronically on Blackboard and organising the sites for every module in more or less the same way has been a significant improvement for all students but especially for those with disabilities in providing consistency in the learning experience

We have also integrated our support of the wider variety of learning needs to our student engagement initiatives and this has seen some of our students with disabilities providing peer support to others as mentors or simply encouraging them in their work.

It is important within the social justice pedagogic framework in which we operate in Sociology, that every one of you feels entitled to achieve your potential.

Advice Services for Students
At University level, Services for Students provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. The International Office provides particular support for international students. The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support all students during their time at the University.

Library and IT support
Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at their Faculty. You can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books).

You can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. The first floor of Regent library is a very popular study space and contains most of the Sociology books as well as attractive seating areas and bookable cubicles for group work. You can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports Sociology. You can also securely connect your own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Careers guidance and employability
The University provides an extensive service for students, which includes various workshops ranging from raising student awareness of the job market, its structures and the dominance of the hidden job market to offering group workshops, one to one sessions on skills such as networking, mentoring and interviewing techniques. It also regularly advertises internships and other forms of employment opportunities. The website regularly up-dates employment and training opportunities and develops links with employers to extent these employment openings.

Reference points for the course

Internally
The structure and operation of the Sociology degree is set by the University framework for undergraduate courses, the University *Handbook of Academic Regulations* and the *University Quality Assurance Handbook*. The course actively engages with University of Westminster and SSH policies including those relating to teaching, learning and assessment, on-line learning etc. The course also reflects staff expertise and research interests.

Externally
We keep up to date with new developments and criteria for Sociology through the British Sociological Association so that our course continues to provide an up to date and critical 'window on the world'. In designing the course, we have drawn on the excellent QAA Qualifications Framework and the Sociology (2007) benchmarks to inform the content and skills sets of the degree. These are categorised in terms of 'knowledge and understanding, specific skills and key transferable skills', providing typical and threshold criteria at each level. Our course meets the typical rather than the minimum threshold criteria. In determining module content at each level, we have used the South-East England Consortium descriptors of levels of achievement at undergraduate level. We discuss the programme with our external examiners and benefit from their guidance too.

Quality management and enhancement

Course management
The BA (Hons) Sociology degree and all the Sociology modules that make up the degree are the responsibility of the Sociology subject area, managed by the teaching team and co-ordinated by the Course Leader. Sociology meetings are attended by full-time, fractional and part-time Visiting Lecturer staff and by student representatives, who discuss progress on the course and make the academic decisions around course content, learning and teaching, academic and social activities and deal with any concerns. However, all financial decisions and the BA Combined Honours programme are the responsibility of the Head of the Department of Social and Historical Studies and policy decisions are guided by policies at Faculty level or are university-wide. Course committees are held once a term on a departmental basis, with representatives from the undergraduate office, Computing, library and subject area leaders present to update information about any changes or new initiatives, and to provide students with an opportunity to raise issues or provide feedback on specific academic services, policies or areas of concern.

Sociology Student Forum
The Sociology Student Forum meets twice a year (just before the Course Committee) and is open to everyone on the course. You are encouraged to raise any issues about the course and how things might be improved or new ideas and these are discussed, actions proposed and then fed back to everyone via email. Some of the issues we have addressed include co-ordinating coursework deadlines, a common format for presenting modules on Blackboard and the 'Respect' policy. 'Respect' is a set of ground rules we have agreed about ways of ensuring the best possible learning environment, including expectations for full attendance, preparation and participation in class.

Course approval, monitoring and review
The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel in 2001 for the 2002 start and has been revalidated at five-year intervals since and was last revalidated in October 2013. The Panel included internal peers from the University and external subject specialists from other Universities to ensure the comparability of the course to those offered in other universities and the relevance to employers. Periodic Course Review in teaching team meetings helps to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers.

In addition, the course is monitored each year by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities to ensure that it is running effectively and that issues that might affect your experience have been appropriately addressed. We also consider the outcomes from each Course Committee, evidence of progression and achievement and the reports from External Examiners to evaluate the effectiveness of the course. The Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee considers the Faculty action plans resulting from this process and the outcomes are reported to the Academic Council, which has overall responsibility for the maintenance of quality and standards in the University.

Student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement

Student feedback is important to the University and your views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways. The most formal mechanism for feedback on the course is the Course Committee. Student representatives will be elected to sit on the Committee to represent the views of their peer group in various discussions. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the Course Committee.

All students are invited to complete a Module Feedback Questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the Module Leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced. The University also has an annual Student Experience Survey which elicits feedback from students about their course and University experience.

Students meet with Review Panels when the periodic review of the course is conducted to provide oral feedback on their experience on the course. Student feedback from Course Committees is part of the Faculty's quality assurance evidence base.

For more information about this course or if you would like to discuss any issues relating to the course, please do contact your Course Leader,

Dr Francis Ray White on f.r.white@westminster.ac.uk

Please note – This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification should be read in conjunction with the Course Handbook provided to students and Module Handbooks which provide more detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content, teaching, learning and assessment methods for each module.