

Programme Specification

1	Awarding body	University of London				
2	Teaching Institution	Birkbeck College				
3	Programme Title(s)	MA Sociology				
4	Programme Code(s)	TMASOCLG_C TMASOCLJ_C (January start)				
5	UCAS code	N/A				
6	Home Department	Psychosocial Studies				
7	Exit Award(s)	PG Dip; PG Cert				
8	Duration of Study (number of years)	1 year full-time, 2 years part-time				
9	Mode of Study	FT	x	PT	x	DL
10	Level of Award (FHEQ)	7				
11	Other teaching depts or institution	Option modules will be available from a range of other departments as appropriate.				
12	Professional, Statutory Regulatory Body(PSRB) details	N/A				
13	<u>QAA Benchmark Statement</u>	N/A				

14	Programme Rationale & Aims
	<p>MA Sociology will offer a critical, politically engaged sociology that is global and historical in its perspectives, emphasizing the role of colonial structures and processes in the making of the contemporary world. Situated in the Department of Psychosocial Studies, the programme will give students the unique opportunity to enhance their engagement with sociology through the mutually enriching insights of psychosocial studies.</p> <p>While the MA Sociology is new, the department has long-standing contributions to the discipline of sociology that are rich and varied. Research strands include violence and trauma; human rights and migration; social (in)justice and (in)equalities; race, racialization, racism and hate – including antisemitism and Islamophobia; mental health; psychotherapy and psychoanalysis; and transformations in education. The department also has expertise in critical social research methods that put it in an excellent position to support student research: including ethnographies and autoethnographies of place, culture and community; experience as a site of knowing and knowledge production; creative, visual and practice-based methods; archival methods; and mixed methods.</p> <p>The MA Sociology is designed for students from a wide range of backgrounds, including those who have not studied sociology previously. The aims of the programme are to enable students to develop a deeper understanding of the social and political complexities of the contemporary social world; to enable them to contribute to our knowledge of the social world; and to facilitate them in understanding how the world can be changed and how they might contribute to this. To meet these aims the programme will provide an advanced introduction to a range of critical sociological theory and empirical research on contemporary and historical social relations and forms of power; it will introduce students to key concepts and debates in sociological methodologies; and it will equip students to</p>

	design and carry out theoretically informed, empirically rigorous and ethically sound sociological dissertation projects.
15	<p>Entry Criteria</p> <p>Applicants are normally required to have achieved a first degree at second class honours level as a minimum requirement. The Admissions Tutor will consider applicants who have substantial professional or community-based experience (e.g. teaching, social work, youth work, etc) without a first degree, and who can demonstrate through interview and a written assignment that they have the required academic abilities to complete a Masters level course.</p>
16	<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>On successful completion of this programme a student will be expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of key concepts and areas of debate in contemporary critical sociology • Demonstrate the capacity to apply sociological understanding to a range of contexts and phenomena • Demonstrate a firm grasp of a range of theoretical approaches to sociological knowledge production • Demonstrate a conceptual grasp and practical understanding of sociological methodologies for empirical research • Carry out a piece of independent research on a topic of their choice • Communicate complex sociological ideas to a range of audiences • Work effectively in a small-group to discuss ideas and concepts and apply them to a range of materials • Manage their own independent reading and learning outside staff contact-time so as to produce assignments of the required standard.
17	<p>Learning, teaching and assessment methods</p> <p>The programme is designed to develop sociological knowledge and skills – including analytical and communication skills- that students can apply in range of future employment situations (e.g. health and social care; education; social research; social policy; civil service; international development and human rights; youth and community work; the cultural industries; as well as further study at MPhil/PhD levels).</p> <p>To this end the course utilizes a range of learning and teaching methods. Teaching and learning methods include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal teaching and lecturing by specialist staff in the Department of Psychosocial Studies • Seminars, tutorials, group and individual supervision provided by staff in the Department of Psychosocial Studies • Workshops run by external or associate staff on specialist topics. This will include 3 invited talks from non-academics working in sociologically relevant capacities in the community each year. • A research training programme comprising taught sessions and workshops on method and methodology, research design and constructing a dissertation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Summer Programme comprising a range of teaching and learning modes, including masterclasses, film screenings, specialist workshops, and dissertation support sessions. • A range of writing, documenting and recording projects fully integrated in the teaching and learning strategy for specific courses (compulsory courses and option courses) that may include the production of reflections on weekly readings, field notes/observations, and visual and electronic media hybrid objects (in the option course on Visual Culture), using Moodle and other e-learning technologies. • The Department of Psychosocial Studies has a formal link with the University of São Paulo, Brazil. This link enables students on this programme to undertake an optional module at the University of São Paulo as part of their programme of study at Birkbeck. Further information about these opportunities for studying abroad can be obtained from the Head of Department. <p>The compulsory modules of the programme will be assessed through a range of written assessments designed to hone different analytical skills and abilities. These will include traditional academic essays, a theoretically informed piece written for a non-academic audience, and a methodological review.</p> <p>Students will also complete a dissertation of 10,000-12,000 words. Those who choose to do so can also submit a practice-based dissertation, comprised of a piece of practice work (a film; a series of photographs; a curated exhibit, for example) accompanied by a 4,000 word written component.</p>
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18	<p>Programme Description</p> <p>The MA Sociology combines compulsory modules that offer a grounding in sociological theory, debates and methodology, with a wide array of optional modules. Students will also carry out independent research supervised by academic staff and advanced doctoral students.</p> <p>Compulsory modules:</p> <p>Sociology for New Worlds: The module will encourage students to examine contemporary social, political and ecological crises in historical depth and in a global context. This module will introduce students to canonical and more recent sociological texts. It will provide a sociological base for key areas of inquiry (capitalism and climate change; disability and health; human rights; citizenship and belonging; social movements) that students can pursue in further depth and from different perspectives in their option modules.</p> <p>Investigating the Social World: This module will enable students to understand the relationship between sociological theory and practice. It will provide an advanced introduction to essential theories, concepts, and debates in sociological approaches to knowledge production. It will also encourage students to think about the history and politics of sociological research and thus prepare them for navigating the ethical challenges of their own projects.</p> <p>Independent Research Module: This module gives students the opportunity to undertake a piece of supervised independent research. It allows students to test and develop their knowledge and understanding of the field gained in the prior compulsory and optional modules and represents the culmination</p>
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<p>of students' learning. The module includes individual supervision as well as a taught element in which students are introduced to a range of research methods (including interviews, ethnography, and archival research) and supported in research practice (including developing a research question; reviewing the literature; and ethics).</p> <p>Optional modules: Students can take option modules from within the Department as well as available courses from other departments in the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy. Indicative options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDRE012S7 Culture, community, identity • FDLL003S7 Education, power and resistances • SSPA095S6 Violence, conflict and genocide • FDGD012S7 Queer histories/Queer cultures • FDDV024S7 Development, aid and power • SSGE105S7 Understanding the city <p>Exit Awards: PG Dip Sociology – The PG Dip Sociology is available as an exit award only for students on successful completion of the two compulsory modules and two 30-credit optional modules. PG Cert Sociology – The PG Cert Sociology is available as an exit award only for students who have successfully completed two 30-credit modules, at least one of which must be a compulsory module.</p>
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19	Programme Structure			
Full-Time programme – 1 year				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	SSPA152S7	Sociology for New Worlds	30	Compulsory
7	SSPO263S7	Investigating the Social World	30	Compulsory
7	SSPA085D7	Independent Research Module	60	Compulsory
7		Option 1	30	Option
7		Option 2	30	Option
Part-Time programme – 2 years				
Year 1				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	SSPA152S7	Sociology for New Worlds	30	Compulsory
7	SSPO263S7	Investigating the Social World	30	Compulsory
Year 2				
Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status*
7	SSPA085D7	Independent Research Module	60	Compulsory
7		Option 1	30	Option
7		Option 2	30	Option

Note: students on the January start take the same modules as above but in a different order, and submit their dissertations in early January instead of October

Status*

CORE – Module must be taken and passed by student; COMPULSORY – Module must be taken, mark can be reviewed at sub-exam board; OPTIONAL – Student can choose to take this module

Year of entry: 2022/23



20	Programme Director	Margarita Aragon
21	Start Date (<i>term/year</i>)	Autumn 2022
22	Date approved by Education Committee	Autumn 2021
23	Date approved by Academic Board	Spring 2022
24	Date(s) updated/amended	1 Oct 2022