

Sociology – A-Level

Exam board: AQA

More information on: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/sociology/as-and-a-level/sociology-7191-7192>

Assessment: 100% exam. (Three 2 hour written exams)

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of the society in which we live and it examines how we are influenced and shaped through being members of groups and organisations. Sociology at Mayfield is now linear and consists of six units which are taught over the duration of two years and are assessed at the end of the second year.

First year units consist of the following:

Culture and Identity.

Students will examine the following areas:

- Different conceptions of culture, including subculture, mass culture, folk culture, high and low culture, popular culture and global culture.
- The socialisation process and the role of the agencies of socialisation.
- The self, identity and difference as both socially caused and socially constructed.
- The relationship of identity to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality and social class in contemporary society.
- The relationship of identity to production, consumption and globalisation.

Education.

Students will examine the following areas:

- The role and functions of the education system, including its relationship to the economy and to class structure.
- Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society.
- Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil identities and subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning.
- The significance of educational policies, including policies of selection, marketisation and privatisation, and policies to achieve greater equality of opportunity or outcome, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of and access to education; the impact of globalisation on educational policy.

2.1: Methods in Context

Students must be able to apply sociological research methods to the study of education.

Theory and Methods

Students will examine the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.
- Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories.
- The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory.
- The nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific.
- The relationship between theory and methods.
- Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom.
- The relationship between Sociology and social policy.

Second year units:

Beliefs in Society.

Students will examine the following areas:

- Ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions.
- The relationship between social change and social stability, and religious beliefs, practices and organisations.
- Religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice
- The relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices.
- The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context, and globalisation and the spread of religions.

Crime and Deviance.

Students will examine the following areas:

- Crime, deviance, social order and social control.
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime.
- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes.

- Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

Theory and Methods

Students must examine the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents and official statistics.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'.
- The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.
- Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories.
- The concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relation to sociological theory.
- The nature of science and the extent to which Sociology can be regarded as scientific.
- The relationship between theory and methods.
- Debates about subjectivity, objectivity and value freedom.
- The relationship between Sociology and social policy

Students will be examined on meeting the following assessment objectives:

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Sociological theories, concepts and evidence.
- Sociological research methods.

AO2: Apply sociological theories, concepts, and evidence and research methods to a range of issues.

AO3: Analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:

- Present arguments.
- Make judgements.
- Draw conclusions.