

AS and A2 Level Course Outlines

Sociology

The structure of the Easter Revision course is as follows:

AS Topics Unit 1: Culture and Identity and Families and Households (2 sessions)

Topic 1: Culture and identity. Different conceptions of culture. The socialisation process. Sources and different conceptions of the self, identity and difference. Relationship of identity to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality and social class in contemporary society. Leisure, consumption and identity.

Topic 2: Families and Households. Different conceptions of the relationships of the family to the social structure and social change, with particular reference to the economy and state policies. Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce and child bearing and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures. The nature and extent of changes within the family, with reference to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships and changes in the status of children and childhood in the family and society. Demographic trends in the UK since 1900.

AS Topic Unit 2: Education and Sociological Methods (3 sessions)

Education. Role and purpose of the education, including vocational education and training in contemporary society. 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 subcultures, the hidden curriculum and the organisation of teaching and learning. The significance of state policies. The application of sociological research methods to the study of education.

Sociological Methods. Quantitative and qualitative Methods: strengths and limitations. Research design. Sources of data and their strengths and limitations. The distinctions 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.

A2 Unit 3: Beliefs in Society (2 sessions)

Different theories of ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions. Relationship between religious beliefs and social change and stability. Religious organisations, cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements and their relationships to religious and spiritual beliefs 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.

A2 Unit 4: Synoptic Paper Crime & Deviance and Theory & Methods (3 sessions):

Theory & Methods. Different quantitative and qualitative methods and sources of data, including questionnaires, interview, observation techniques and experiments, documents and official statistics: research design. Distinctions between primary/secondary and quantitative/qualitative data. Sources of data and their strengths and limitations. The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods. The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing the choice of topic, method(s) and conduct of the research. The nature of social facts and the strengths and limitations of different sources of data and methods of research. Consensus, conflict, structural and social action theories. Concepts of modernity and post-modernity in relationship to sociological theory. The relationship between theory and methods. The nature of science, and to what extent is sociology scientific. The relationship between theory and methods. Objectivity, subjectivity and value freedom. The relationship between sociology and social policy.

Crime & Deviance. Different explanations of crime, deviance social order and social control. The relationship between deviance, power and social control. Different explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance by age, social class, ethnicity, gender and locality, including recent patterns and trends in crime. Globalisation and crime in contemporary society: mass media and crime, green crime, human rights and state crimes. Crime control, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies. The sociological study of suicide and its theoretical and methodological implications. The connections between sociological theory and methods and the study of crime and deviance.

Please note that if you are preparing for topics in Wealth, Poverty and Welfare and Power and Politics, your needs may also be accommodated. Please telephone the Course Director.