

MIP|W

Birmingham

AS and A2 Level Course Outlines

Sociology

The structure of the Easter Revision course is as follows:

Topic 1 (AS) - Families and Households: Different conceptions of the relationships of the family to the social structure and social change. Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce and child bearing and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures.

Topic 2 (AS) - Families and Households The nature and extent of changes within the family, with reference to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships. Changes in the status of children and childhood in the family and society. Demographic trends in the UK since 1900. Families and social policy.

Topic 3 (AS) - Education: 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.

Topic 4 (AS) - Education and Sociological Research Methods: Role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training in contemporary society. The significance of state policies in education. 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.

Topic 5 (AS) - Sociological Research Methods: 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. **Sociological Research Methods in the context of Education** The application of sociological research methods to the study of education.

The AS course, as outlined above, spends more time on Families and Households, as this Unit is substantially bigger: sessions 1 and 2 cover Families and Households, and Sessions 3 – 5 cover Education and Sociological Research Methods. Wherever possible the needs of the individual student will be taken into account, where there are specific areas of concern, so it may possible to change the emphasis. There will be examination practice, and in doing examination papers, more than one topic will often be covered.

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Topic 6 (A2) – Beliefs in Society: Different theories of 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.

Topic 7 (A2) – Beliefs in Society and Sociological Research Methods: The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context. Ideology, science and religion. 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.

Topic 8 (A2) – Sociological Research Methods and Crime and Deviance: 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. Different theoretical explanations of crime, deviance social order and social control. The relationship between deviance, power and social control.

Topic 9 (A2) – Crime & Deviance: 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. Examples of research methodology in Crime and deviance

Topic 10 (A2) – Sociological Theory: 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.

The A2 course, as outlined above, spends more time on Crime & Deviance and Sociological Theory & Sociological Research Methods than on Beliefs in Society, as this Unit is substantially bigger: sessions 1 and part of session 2 cover Beliefs in Society, and the remaining sessions cover Crime & Deviance and Sociological Theory & Sociological Research Methods. Wherever possible the needs of the individual student will be taken into account, where there are specific areas of concern. There will be examination practice, and in doing examination papers, more than one topic will often be covered.