

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

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Sociology illuminates the world!
Challenge what you know.

BA Sociology (Single and Joint Honours)

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Choose Sociology at Birmingham – consistently ranked among the top programmes in *The Guardian* teaching subject league tables. Sociology seeks to understand how social relations and structures influence all aspects of our lives. Join us and explore the dynamic, unprecedented social changes reshaping the world today.

Among the questions sociology asks are:

- what are the effects of globalisation on cultural, economic and political life? who wins? who loses?
- are new types of inequality and social division appearing?
- do the forces of consumerism and individualism threaten social cohesion? are we living in a 'broken society'?
- what new forms of cultural identity and belonging are emerging? how shall we live together?
- what are the best theories and methods for researching these issues?

Answering questions such as these is the challenge of our era. Studying sociology will provide you with the toolkit to form your own critical judgements.

What's distinctive about Sociology at Birmingham?

We pride ourselves on the quality of our teaching. Our staff are active researchers who want to share their enthusiasm for sociology with you. We believe teaching and learning should be both rigorous and enjoyable, and seek to involve students in continually developing our activities. The Sociology programme at Birmingham presents a balanced view of the subject. You will be given a broad grounding in the major approaches to the discipline, with emphasis on the cultivation of research skills. Your degree will culminate in a dissertation on a topic of your choice. This reflects our view that you should be doing sociology, not just reading about it, from the very start of your degree.

As a Birmingham Sociology graduate you will be well equipped for your chosen career or further study. In particular you will have gained:

- **Critical ability** – to read, absorb and assess complex ideas and arguments about the contemporary world

- **Research skills** – practical experience of designing and conducting research, including interviews, questionnaires and using data analysis software
- **Presentational skills** – to present your ideas and research in appropriate formats
- **The capacity to work alone or in groups** – you will have gained experience of independent study and research as well as working, solving problems and debating ideas with others

Sociology degree structure

The following degree programmes are available:

- Single Honours Sociology
- Joint Honours Sociology
 - Sociology and Political Science
 - Sociology and Social Policy
 - Sociology and Philosophy
- Single or Joint Honours Sociology with an International Study Year

Single Honours Sociology

The programme has been carefully designed to advance your skills and knowledge each year: from broad, introductory level modules in the first year to specialist options and a substantial piece of independent research in the final year. Each year there is a balance between compulsory modules in the 'core' parts of the discipline (eg, theory and methods) and the chance for you to develop your own pathway with a range of specialist choices in and outside of Sociology.

Each year students take 120 credits, typically six modules. (Note that as with all degree programmes, not all optional modules will be available every year).

Year one

Compulsory modules (60 credits)

□ **Social Worlds and the Sociological Imagination**

Introduces you to what it means to develop a sociological view of the world

'To understand how any society functions you must understand the relationship between the men and the women.'

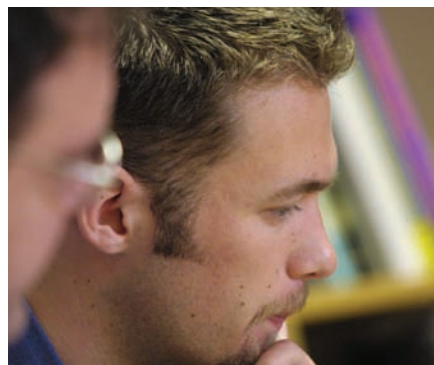
Angela Davis





'Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both.'

*C. Wright Mills,
The Sociological Imagination*



□ **Research Skills and Literacy: Philosophy and Methods**

The fundamentals of designing and conducting social research

□ **Social Divisions: Class, Gender, Ethnicity**

What are the major fault lines in our society – and the relations between them?

Optional modules (60 credits)

□ A wide choice from modules in related disciplines including Politics, Social Policy, Social History, Economics, African Studies, Russian and East European Studies, American and Canadian Studies. A modern language course is also an option

Year two

Compulsory modules (80 credits)

□ **Modern Sociological Theory**

How did the 'classic' social theorists understand rapidly modernising industrial societies? What is their relevance today?

□ **Data Analysis and Research Design**

A more advanced investigation of specific techniques and forms of analysis, looking ahead to the final year dissertation

□ **Global Societies**

What are the dynamics of a globalising world? Can we talk of a global culture or global citizenship?

□ **Either Gender and Sexuality or Ethnic Relations in Britain**

An opportunity to specialise in and develop one of the 'Social Divisions' studied in the first year

Optional modules (40 credits)

□ A wide choice from modules in Sociology and/or related disciplines including Politics, Social Policy, Social History, Economics, African Studies, Russian and East European

'There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.'

Margaret Thatcher

Studies, American and Canadian Studies. A modern language course is also an option

Year three

Compulsory modules (60 credits)

□ **Dissertation of 10,000 words on a topic of your choice (40 credits)**

Individually supervised independent research project in any area of Sociology

□ **Contemporary Social Theory (20 credits)**

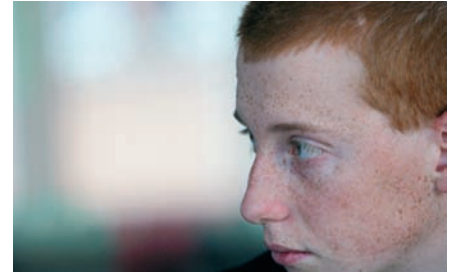
Leading edge contemporary debates over eg, postmodernity, social transformations, the philosophy of social science

Optional modules (60 credits)

□ **Modules include:** The Family; Political Sociology; The Sociology of Success and Fame; Film, Culture and Society; Issues in Cross-Cultural Studies; The Public Domain; Environment, Politics and Society; Media and Politics; Health: Policy and Practice. Also a wide choice from modules in related disciplines including Politics, Social Policy, Social History, Economics, African Studies, Russian and East European Studies, American and Canadian Studies

Joint Honours Sociology

Joint Honours students take compulsory Sociology modules in each year together with the compulsory modules from their other subject. Overall, half the degree is taken in Sociology and half in the other discipline. In the final year, joint honours students write an integrated dissertation drawing on both disciplines. Each of the combinations on our joint honours programmes have a distinctive appeal. So, for example, studying Sociology with Political Science puts political activity in its wider social context; with Social Policy it examines the challenges a changing society present for policy-makers; and with Philosophy you gain additional conceptual tools to examine the logic and rigour of social scientific arguments.



'The speed of light does not merely transform the world. It becomes the world. Globalisation is the speed of light.'

Paul Virilio

Single or Joint Honours Sociology with an International Study Year

Students on this four-year programme spend their third year at a host international institution, organised in conjunction with the Birmingham International Office. If the teaching language in the host institution is not English, students are required to have at least a B at AS-level plus 20 credits from each of years one and two in the relevant language.

Teaching and assessment

Each year you will be studying five or six modules, each typically involving two hours of contact time. This is usually in the form of a one hour lecture which introduces a topic area, and then a one hour seminar in which a smaller group discusses reading and key issues. This can involve whole group discussion, small group work and presentations. Some specialist modules later in the degree may run a two hour workshop or seminar in place of a standard lecture, to enable more in depth discussion and activities. Final year dissertations are supported by one-to-one supervisions over the year. Each module also has its own interactive IT facility

enabling you to check module details, access key readings and web resources and share ideas with other students.

Student Involvement, Development and Support

We hope that going to university will be one of the most exciting and interesting things you do. But we also understand that it can be a big and at times daunting step. We have in place a range of provisions designed to involve students, help to develop skills on and beyond the degree, and provide guidance and support when needed:

□ An active staff-student committee (SSC):

This enables an ongoing conversation about how we can keep improving the student experience. Through the SSC, and use of regular student feedback, we seek to involve students in shaping our degree programmes and other activities

□ **Careers guidance:** Our graduates enter a variety of occupations including management training, social and market research, policy

and campaigns, the media, law and teaching. The Careers team offer drop in one-to-one advice sessions, web resources and workshops on developing a CV and getting the most out of a social science degree. They invite speakers from different organisations, and Birmingham Sociology graduates, to discuss their career experiences and offer advice on navigating the jobs market

□ Personal Skills Awards and volunteering:

The University offers courses and funding opportunities to develop key transferable skills as part of or alongside your degree. This can also involve work in the community

□ Student support:

A member of staff will act as your academic advisor throughout your degree to discuss academic progress, options and development. A trained welfare officer can offer direct support if you are having difficulties, or refer you to the University's professional support services eg, housing or counselling

Birmingham – the best of all worlds

Come to study at Birmingham and enjoy living in one of Europe's most exciting cities.

The University

Birmingham welcomes students who are keen to be challenged and encouraged to think for themselves. We stimulate natural curiosity and enable original ideas to flourish through dialogue between different disciplines.

Research and teaching

Teaching excellence at Birmingham is recognised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Birmingham is also a research-led university and member of the elite 'Russell Group' of research institutions.

Our ground-breaking research into the treatment of cancer, developments in space science and nanotechnology are examples of research that has transformed knowledge and had an impact on lives and society.

Sport and the arts

Sport is central to life at Birmingham. University Sport Birmingham combines some of the best sports facilities in the country, professional coaching and imaginative programmes to offer a range of sporting opportunities to suit everyone. Music is also a distinctive part of Birmingham life. The University has two symphony orchestras, a Big Band, a number of choirs, a symphonic wind band and a brass ensemble. A regular programme of public performances is staged in the concert hall at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts.

Student living

Several student villages and developments provide a range of accommodation, from standard packages including room and meals, to self-catering flats with en suite facilities. We also provide student mentors to help you settle in, all the amenities that you will need and unlimited internet access in over 90% of rooms.

The Guild – for students, by students

The hub of undergraduate student life is the Guild of Students, Birmingham's students' union. There are over 150 clubs and societies hosted by the Guild and you can also get involved in our student radio station, BURN FM, or the student newspaper Redbrick.

The City

The City of Birmingham offers outstanding entertainment and culture; some of the best shopping in Europe and enjoys a location at the heart of some of the UK's most beautiful countryside.

Entertainment, arts and culture

There is always something going on in Birmingham. In addition to an excellent choice of cafés and restaurants, there are theatres, museums, cinemas, nightclubs and wine bars in abundance. If you like live entertainment, then take your pick from comedy clubs, local music gigs and top shows at Birmingham's



principal theatres, while all the star names appear at the National Exhibition Centre and National Indoor Arena. You can also enjoy Premier League football, international cricket at Edgbaston and regular international athletics.

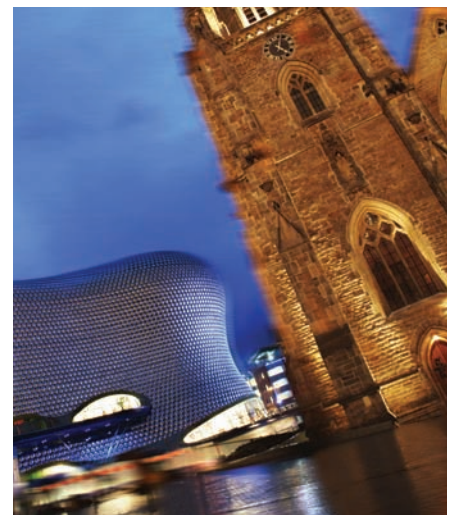
Shopping

The Bullring shopping centre is Europe's largest city retail development and includes the award-winning Selfridges building. Birmingham hosts four major markets, as well as all the principal chain stores and a wealth of smaller shops and retail centres.

The Heart of England

Located in the heart of the country, Birmingham has so much to offer visitors. With Warwickshire, the Malvern Hills and the Ironbridge Gorge all nearby, you are never far from some of the UK's most scenic countryside.

Birmingham is at the centre of the motorway and rail network, with its own international airport – you can get almost anywhere in the world by starting from here.



Admissions and entry requirements

We encourage applications from a wide variety of backgrounds. Our standard offer is three A levels at grades ABB or above. We are willing to consider applicants with equivalent qualifications ie, Access Courses, BTEC National Diplomas or equivalent international qualifications.

We cannot cover every qualification in this leaflet, but can offer the following guidelines:

- we do not require you to have studied Sociology previously and we welcome a spread of A-level subjects
- having a fourth AS level in year 12 is not a requirement, although we welcome the additional breadth that might bring. Studying an extra language or Mathematics might be helpful, but is not essential and we will not make our decisions based on whether applicants have extra AS levels
- as well as achieved and projected A-level grades, we place great emphasis on the reference and the personal statement on your UCAS form. The knowledge, skills and experiences you have gained in any aspect of life thus far, your appreciation of what a degree in Sociology involves and the interest and enthusiasm you would bring are important factors in our admissions decisions

Equivalent qualifications

We are happy to consider applicants with equivalent qualifications. We require DDM from a BTEC National Diploma, and a social science subject is preferred. We are also happy to consider CACHE Diplomas and the new Advanced Diploma. Advanced Scottish Highers and International Baccalaureates are also considered.

Mature and Access students

We are keen to encourage applicants who are returning to full-time education. We have a good record in admitting mature students and are happy to take into account the wider experience and perspective they can bring to their studies. Mature students who do not have standard GCSE or A-level qualifications will need to hold an equivalent qualification (ie, an Access course) in order to be given consideration. See www.accesstohe.ac.uk for more information about the Access Diploma.

General entry requirements

All applicants need to have satisfied the university entry requirement of a GCSE in English at Grade C or above and also a GCSE in Mathematics at Grade C or above. Equivalent qualifications gained on Access courses are also acceptable.

How to apply

All applications must be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). See www.ucas.com. Students are advised to apply before the January UCAS deadline, to be guaranteed consideration.

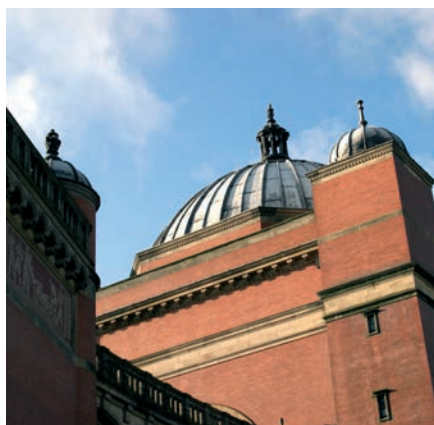
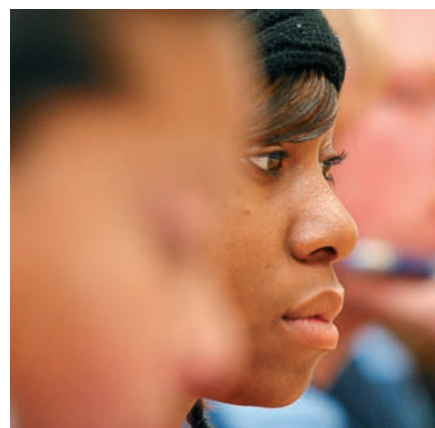
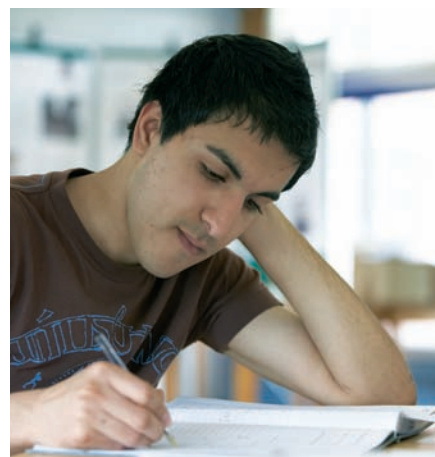
Learn more

Who to contact

For entry requirements or the application process:
Kate Ward (Tel: 0121 414 6467;
Email: k.a.ward@bham.ac.uk).

For Open Days or Applicant Visit Days:
Chereece Ebanks (Tel: 0121 414 7268;
Email: c.a.ebanks@bham.ac.uk).

For the academic content of our degree programmes:
Dr. Will Leggett, Sociology Admissions Director, School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 415 8628
Email: w.p.leggett@bham.ac.uk



www.birmingham.ac.uk

This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the College. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be replaced by new ones from time to time.