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Laura Greaves

BA Sociology (2010)

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Who are you currently working for and what is your job title?

I am currently a full time student at the University of Warwick, studying a MA in Social Work

Why did you originally apply to Birmingham?

It was Birmingham's prestigious reputation which first attracted me to Birmingham. This attraction was intensified with the wealth of resources the University offers, including a fabulous library and a number of computer clusters around campus which made accessing computers as easy as it should be as a student.

What are the main benefits of studying Sociology at Birmingham?

Birmingham has a fantastic wealth of resources which made studying a lot easier. There are fantastic library staff, who are always at hand to help you find books/journals. There are more than enough computer clusters based around campus that made computer access at any time of the day easy and stress free.

Did you find the Sociology programme at Birmingham challenging or easy?

The sociology programme was challenging especially when tackling the theoretical aspects of the course. However the broad choice in interesting and relevant topics such as, Gender and Sexuality, and Family, kept the theoretical side of study contemporary and most importantly interesting.

What was the importance of your year abroad?

After graduating from the University of Birmingham, I took a year out to gain social care work experience. I participated in both voluntary work in a secondary school, completed training courses in child mentoring, and took a paid position as a care worker for vulnerable adults.

How does the study of sociology continue to impact on your life / experiences?

I am now studying MA Social Work. I am in the 9th week of my course now, and sociology has played a leading role in approximately 80% of my lectures. Sociology taught me the skill of critical thinking, a skill I continue to utilise on a daily basis. Not only directly in current studies in relation to critical reflexivity in social work practice, but also in my day to day life. I am able to think critically about my surroundings, my peers and more importantly myself to make balanced decisions about the world I live in and interact with.

What advice would you give to current students studying sociology.

Make the most of the staff, academic and library. They're what you pay for, make the most of the advice and knowledge your can absorb from them.

Did you find the University or your degree helpful to you in getting your first job?

Currently my degree hasn't impacted upon my job choice, as I have opted to go for further study. It was very helpful in getting me onto my next steps in my academic career. It is highly relevant in the study of social work, and has given me a substantial head start at MA level.

What are your fondest memories of the University?

What were the best bits about your time here as a student? I really enjoyed my three years at Birmingham, I made brilliant friends, and whilst being able to study a degree I was very interested in. My fondest memory would be graduation day, the impact of the Aston Webb building is something else! I've never felt so proud of myself and what I achieved in my three years of study at Birmingham.

How did you grow as a person by coming to University?

I am able to think critically about my surroundings, my peers and more importantly myself to make balanced decisions about the world I live in and interact with. It opened my eyes to the world of academia which I hadn't previously been aware of. It filled me with aspirations for my future beyond Birmingham and instilled me with the confidence to follow act upon them.

What did you think of the learning experience within the University?

Overall, despite the demanding nature, the modules covering theory Classical, modern and postmodern were most useful. They really do provide you with the tools to think critically about the world we live in. These are also the topics that are constantly cropping up in my current studies and therefore have prepared me considerably well.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

I am now enjoying the practical side of my studies, putting theory (sociological) into practice in social work. It makes my studies seem so worthwhile. I am now witnessing the impact of social research upon the practice of social work – and therefore its impact on people's day to day lives.

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