## BA Sociology and Politics
**UCAS code: LL32**
**For students entering Part 1 in 2005**

Awarding Institution: The University of Reading
Teaching Institution: The University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s): Sociology and Politics & IR
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences Programme length: 3 years
Date of specification: Mar 07
Programme Director:
Programme Adviser:
Board of Studies: Sociology and Politics & IR

### Summary of programme aims
The Sociology element aims to familiarize students wit basic Sociological theories for understanding human social organization; the methods for asking questions and conducting research to answer those questions; and critical thinking to address competing explanations for social phenomena. Central topics include (but are not restricted to) political organization and power; political and socio-economic change; inequality in past and contemporary societies; cross-national comparisons of political development; political economy; social control and resistance. In Politics the programme aims to give students an appreciation of the normative, methodological and institutional issues involved in the study of politics in relation to one of the three main subfields of the discipline: political philosophy, comparative government and international relations. Students focus on comparative government and/or political theory compulsory modules, and associated optional modules.

The programme provides a supportive learning environment with full access to welfare, pastoral and careers support.

### Transferable skills
The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem-solving, team working and use of information technology.

Sociology and Politics are disciplines that lend themselves to critical judgement and problem-solving, both through personal engagement with issues and through dialogue and group discussion. Students are encouraged to defend and to challenge established positions through the collection, collation and analysis of substantial quantities of material, the rigour of argument, and effective communication and presentation. The disciplines also prompt an awareness of numeracy through chronology, periodisation, and basic quantification. The programme develops students' familiarity with information technology in the production and presentation of their work and develops their skills in using computers for the location and retrieval of bibliographic and source material, accessing sophisticated databases and exploiting the internet.

**Programme content**
Each Part comprises 120 credits.  In Part One the remaining credits can be made up from any optional modules and/or from modules elsewhere in the University.  In Part Two students must normally take 60 credits in both subjects, and in Part Three students take 40 credits in each subject plus a dissertation, in one subject or the other, of 40 credits.

**Part 1 (three terms)**
*Joint honours Sociology and Politics students must acquire a minimum of 40 credits in Sociology and 40 credits in Politics.  Other credits to be acquired from modules listed in the Faculty Part 1 Handbook.*

| **Part 1 (two terms)** | | | *Credits* | *Level* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Compulsory modules* | | | | |
| SO1INT | Introduction to Sociology (Autumn) | | 20 | C |
| SO1BRI | British Society (Spring) | | 20 | C |
| | | | | |
| *Optional module:* | | | | |
| SO1CSI | Contemporary Social Issues | | 20 | C |

**Compulsory modules in Politics**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| PO1 IRS | Politics I, International Relations and Strategic Studies | 20 | C | |
| PO1 MOP | Politics II, Modern Politics | | 20 | C |

**Part 2 (three terms)**

**In Sociology (60 credits)**
*Compulsory modules*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SO2THE | Theory 1:  The Classical Tradition | 20 | I |
| SO2STS | Study of Sociology | 10 | I |
| SO2POL | Political Sociology | 10 | I |
| | *And two of the following three modules:* | | |
| SO2CUL | Sociology of Culture | 10 | I |
| SO2ECO | Economic Sociology | 10 | I |
| SO2STR | Social Stratification | 10 | I |

**In Politics (60 credits)**
*Compulsory modules:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 SOP | Study of Politics | 20 | I |

*Either*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 CGP | Comparative Government and Politics | 20 | I |

*Or*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 PHC | Political Classics | 20 | I |

*Options (one of):*
Government

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 AMG | American Government and Politics | 20 | I |
| PO2 BGP | British Government and Politics | 20 | I |
| PO2 EPI | European Political Integration | 20 | I |
| PO2 RGP | Russian Government and Politics | 20 | I |

<u>Theory</u>

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 THI | Political Thinking | 20 | I |

<u>International Relations</u>

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO2 COS | Contemporary Strategy | 20 | I |
| PO2 SNA | Strategy in the Nuclear Age | 20 | I |

*The following module is compulsory. Its credits are distributed throughout the 120 credits of Part 2*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Career Management Skills | 5 | I |

## Part 3 (three terms)

A dissertation of 40 credits is compulsory and may be taken in either Sociology or Politics. In addition students must choose modules totalling 40 credits in both Sociology and Politics.

*Compulsory*
*Either*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SO3 DIS | Dissertation in Sociology | 40 | H |

*Or*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO3 DIS | Dissertation in Politics | 40 | H |

## In Sociology (40 credits)

Modules to a total of 40 credits must be taken. Two of these modules will consist of regular 10 credit options from a list to be provided by the department; the third will be a 20 credit advanced seminar. The topic of the advanced seminar will be selected from same list but taught as a seminar it will be worth 20 credits instead of 10.

## In Politics (40 credits)

*Students choose two 20 credit modules from the following lists.*
*If PO2PHC is taken in Part Two at least one must be from List A unless a government option has been taken in Part Two.*
*If PO2CGP is taken in Part Two at least one must be from List B unless a theory option has been taken in Part Two.*

<u>List A</u>

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO3AFG | African Government and Politics | 20 | H |
| PO3MEA | Politics & International Relations of the Middle East | 20 | H |
| PO3UKP | United Kingdom Politics since 1960 | 20 | H |
| PO3USF | U.S. Foreign Policy since 1950 | 20 | H |

<u>List B</u>

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| PO3FPT | Feminism and Political Theory | 20 | H |
| PO3MID | Modern Ideologies | 20 | H |
| PO3WPE | War, Peace and International Ethics | 20 | H |

## Progression requirements

a) To proceed from Part One to Part Two students should achieve an overall average of 40% in 120 credits taken in the examination, and at least 40% in 20 credits of Sociology and in 40 credits of Politics.

b) To proceed from Part Two to Part Three students should obtain at least 35% in any Politics and International Relations modules, at least 40% in compulsory Sociology Modules, and achieve an overall average of at least 40% in 120 credits taken in the examination.

c) In both cases they should achieve not less than 30% in any module except that marks of less than 30% in a total of 20 credits may be condoned, provided that the candidate has pursued the course for the module(s) with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

**Summary of teaching and assessment**

In Sociology, at Part One, teaching is by lectures and seminars. At Parts Two and Three it is principally by lectures. The Part Three Dissertation is supervised in a series of tutorials with an individual supervisor. Modules in all three years are assessed by a combination of examinations and coursework, with the contribution of coursework to the final mark increasing from Part 1 to Part 3. In Politics, Part One modules and the compulsory Part Two modules involve both lectures and seminars. Part Two and Part Three optional modules typically place greater emphasis on seminars. All modules other than the Study of Politics and Dissertation are assessed by a mixture of coursework (25%) and examination (75%).

The conventions for classification are included in the Programme Handbook but you should note that weighting between Part Two and Part Three for classification purposes is 33% and 67%.

**Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:
UCAS Tariff: 260 points from three subjects at A2, and 280 from 3 x A2 and 1 x AS level.
International Baccalaureat: 30
Irish Leaving Certificate: BBBCC in 5 Higher Level subjects.
Two AS grades are accepted in place of one A-Level

All applicants are considered on their individual merits and the Department may vary these requirements if it sees fit.

*Mature applicants:* Applications from mature candidates are welcomed. A mature applicant is more likely to receive an offer of a place if he or she has undertaken recent study, for example two or more A levels or an Access course, but each case is assessed on its individual merits. We recommend that you contact an admissions tutor as soon as possible to discuss your individual circumstances.

*International applicants:* Applications from international candidates are welcomed. If you are not offering A levels we advise you to contact either the EU or the international admissions tutor before applying in order to discuss the acceptability of your qualifications. IELTS Band 7 (or equivalent) will be required for those whose education has not been undertaken in English.

**Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University

Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union. Support for students in their studies is provided through the University's Personal Academic Record (PAR) scheme, in which students meet their personal tutors regularly to review their progress.

In the Department of sociology, students are provided with handbooks that outline the programme, provide guidance on study skills and contain information on staff, facilities and sources of specialised help within the University. (They are also available on the internet.) Additional support is given through orientation sessions on module choices and the Dissertation. Advice is also given by the Degree Course Tutor. There is full written feedback on essay work.

In Politics, students are provided with Departmental Handbooks which outline the programme, provide guidance on study skills and contain information on staff, facilities and specialised sources of help within the University. Additional support is given in the Study of Politics module in Part Two. There is also written feedback on essay work. The department has a students' library and a photocopier.

Liaison officers for both Sociology and Politics coordinate the programme.

**Career prospects**
Over the years students who have followed this programme have gone into jobs in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector, jobs include academic and academic related jobs (e.g. lectureships, administrative posts on research boards), the civil service, local government, public corporations, hospital management, and in the social services such as child care, youth employment, probation and so on. In the private sector recent jobs include working for advertising, journalism, radio and television, computer firms and large finance and insurance companies.

**Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**
Students have the opportunity to spend a period of study abroad (normally in Part Two) as part of the Socrates scheme, or in conjunction with the American Studies programme's exchange.

**Educational aims of the programme**
In Sociology, at Part One teaching is by lectures and seminars. At Parts Two and Three it is principally by lectures. The Part Three Dissertation is supervised in a series of tutorials with an individual supervisor. Modules in all three years are assessed by a combination of examinations and coursework, with the contribution of coursework to the final mark increasing from Part 1 to Part 3. The Politics component aims to provide a thorough degree level education in Politics and International Relations. It aims to produce graduates who have experience of the main sub-fields of the discipline and have acquired appropriate study skills.

**Programme Outcomes**

*Knowledge and Understanding*

**A. Knowledge and understanding of:**
1. Fundamental sociological concepts of social action, inequality, structure and practice;
2. A range of cultures within a degree structure flexible enough to allow breadth of specialisation;
3. The contextualisation of forces, events and individual experiences in political processes;
4. General, fundamental information on broad social trends across space and time;
5. More focused and in-depth specialization on empirical data, theoretical models and intellectual histories of sub-areas of sociology and the study of social life;
6. The fundamental concepts of Political Theory and major texts from the Greeks to the present time;
7. The comparative analysis of government institutions, political movement and the social bases of politics;
8. The various approaches and the study of Modern International Relations;
9. A range of selected specialised subjects within the fields of Political Theory, Comparative Government and International Relations.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
Knowledge and understanding are gained through formal teaching (lectures, seminar discussions and individual essay feedback), prescribed and recommended reading and the writing of essays and a dissertation. For Sociology, students attend lectures and seminars in Part 1 and lectures in Parts 2 and 3. For Politics, in Parts 1 and 2 students attend both lectures and seminars and in Part 3 most teaching is through seminars. Part 1 modules introduce 1-8, which Part 2 modules deepen and develop. The optional modules in Part 3 both build upon and sharpen the focus of study.

*Assessment*
Most knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework and formal examination. Dissertations and oral contributions also contribute.

*Skills and other attributes*

<table>
<tr>
<td>

**B. Intellectual skills** – able to:
1. Critically analyse and deconstruct claims and arguments, read, comprehend and evaluate a large range of sociological data and political texts;
2. Negotiate various forms of sociological methods, apply concepts and procedures of rigorous data collection and analysis;
3. Think in terms of cause-effect relations, variables and theories and organise arguments through the use of logic and empirical data;
4. Analyse the logical construction of arguments;
5. Produce and defend positions in response to critical pressure;
6. Develop creative intelligence in independent research and interpretation;
7. Think logically on political matters;
8. Analyse issues in political life;
9. Understand the evolving state of knowledge in the rapidly developing discipline of Politics;
10. Transfer appropriate knowledge from an area within the disciplines to another.

</td>
<td>

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
As above, plus: self-directed learning facilitated through the use of research-based teaching materials and methods and logical exercises. Through essay, portfolio and dissertation preparation, the research and analytical skills are reinforced which are necessary to for and to validate arguments and judgements.

The ability to think logically is essential to the understanding and analysis of the discipline. Analysis requires an appreciation of the issues and results in organisation of written work and oral presentations. Students are encouraged to link core and optional modules and also to use experience from modules in the dissertation.

*Assessment*
Coursework, written unseen examinations, seminar presentations. Plus discussion in supervisor-led small groups and seminars.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>

**C. Practical skills** – able to:
1. Develop and carry out individual research programmes and straegies;
2. Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources;
3. Locate and synthesise large quantities of material;
4. Present a coherent talk delivered from notes;
5. Produce concise and accurate written reports;
6. Critically discuss particular issues and arguments and to engage in discussion of each other's responses as well as articulate their ow;
7. Utilise problem-solving skills;
8. Manage their own learning self-critically, reflect upon it and seek and make use of feedback.

</td>
<td>

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
These are developed through lectures, supervised small group discussions, seminar groups with a facilitator, oral presentations and, especially in Part 3, independent learning. In Sociology modules, especially the Methods module, use various appropriate exercises aimed to promote, amongst other things, research, IT and referencing skills. Feedback on an individual basis combined with the University's personal tutor system encourages constructive self-criticism.

*Assessment*
Coursework, written unseen examinations, seminar presentations.

</td>
</tr>
</table>

**D. Transferable skills** – able to:
1. Manage time effectively and prioritise workloads;
2. Communicate effectively with a wide range of individuals using a wide range of means;
3. Evaluate his/her own performance and recognise the steps required for improvement;
4. Utilise problem-solving skills in a variety of theoretical and more practical situations;
5. IT skills, eg word processing, email and the internet for the retrieval of information, including statistical and numerical data;
6. Work independently, demonstrating initiative, self-organisation and time management;
7. Develop a vocational awareness with a view to planning their career.

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**
Most of these skills are embedded in all modules. The development of IT skills occurs throughout the programme and is especially apparent in modules where there is a research component. Independent learning is also developed throughout but becomes particularly important in Part 3 of the programme. Vocational awareness is promoted, especially by the CMS module.

*Assessment*
Coursework, written unseen examinations, seminar presentations, portfolios of work, a dissertation.

**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**