A-Level Sociology

Introduction

Welcome to the Sociology A-level course (AQA)

Minimum requirements are 6 GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including Maths, and Grade 5 in English Language.

To enjoy an A-level in sociology you must be willing to question the world around you. To succeed in the subject, you must be critical of various concepts such as class, gender and ethnicity. The course will explore four broad themes: families and households, education, beliefs in society and crime and deviance. You are to engage in current and historical elements of society to demonstrate a broad understanding of the social world.

The course offers a superb grounding for university courses such as sociology, psychology, criminology and philosophy. Although current and past students have combined sociology with a variety of other A-levels the majority of students will also take psychology, philosophy and ethics, history and politics as there is considerable overlap.

We will examine topics such as:

- the relationship between class, gender, ethnicity and educational achievement
- reasons and consequences of crime and deviance
- changing family structures
- the changing nature of religiosity within society

This is an essay-based subject and will require students to develop coherent arguments within their writing; these skills will be developed throughout the course.

What is Sociology?

Sociology is the study of society. It covers a range of concepts such as how people interact and communicate with one another. Sociology is a growing subject, which studies the ways in which aspects of society such as education, family and the law impose themselves onto the individual. Sociology includes a variety of viewpoints and considers the ways in which people identify, deploy and conform to social norms and values. Sociology is relevant to the society you live in so you are bound to enjoy learning about topics that are relevant to everyday life plus it opens the door to a fantastic range of interesting careers such as:

- Teaching
- Public services
- Journalism
- Charity sector
- Advertising
- Marketing
- Government

What skills will I learn?

- Assessing the usefulness of sociological insight to understand human behaviour.
- Evaluating your own and other opinions on topics such as religion, families, crime, class and ethnicity.
- Exploring these topics through a critical lens.

How will I be assessed?

The subject is a written based subject which will require students to be able consider multiple perspectives on the above topics. The subject is an exam based course ranging from 4-30 mark questions. You will take three exams at the end of the two years:

1) Education and Methods in Context - 2 hours
2) Families and Households & Beliefs in Society - 2 hours
3) Crime and Deviance and Theory and Methods - 2 hours

What do I need to master?

AO1 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
- sociological theories, concepts and evidence
- sociological research methods

AO2 apply sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods to a range of issues.

AO3 analyse and evaluate sociological theories, concepts, evidence and research methods in order to:
- present arguments
- make judgements
- draw conclusions

Subject expectations

The following year will provide you with the opportunity to explore contemporary issues in societies and so you will be expected to engage with those issues. That engagement will include reading (please see suggested reading list), students will be expected to maintain a weekly log of their engagement with contemporary issues. We have high expectations of students and expect you to:

- attend all lessons
- complete all homework/assessments set for the appropriate deadlines
- discuss any concerns/questions you have with your teachers
- take part in lessons, written work, discussions and presentations
- take responsibility for your own learning
- keep a folder, keep it organised, and keep a record of all assessment results

What should you do if you miss a lesson?

If you know you will be absent for a lesson then out of courtesy we expect you to inform the relevant member of staff, either the lesson before or by email. You **will** be expected to catch up on any work missed and are responsible for asking for notes or collecting notes from other students.

Staff

Teacher: Ms Green: r_green@taverhamhigh.org

For now, please direct any queries or questions to Mr Malins: a.malins@taverhamhigh.org

Reading material

There is a wide range of textbooks appropriate for the teaching of this specification. Students are expected to read widely. It is recommended that students are aware of societal events which they can engage through newspapers, television, social media to name a few.

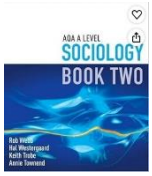
If eligible for the post 16 bursary, materials for the course can be ordered by the school on your behalf via bursary funding. Please ask in the sixth form office for details.

There is information about the course here:

AQA A-level sociology

Below are the links to the books we will be referring to:

Webb, R., Westergaard, H., Trobe, K., Townend, A., (2015) AQA A Level Sociology Book One Including AS Level. Napier Press.



Webb, R., Westergaard, H., Trobe, K., Townend, A., (2016) AQA A Level Sociology Book Two. Napier Press

Further suggested reading

Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class - Owen Jones

Dead White Men and Other Important People – Angus Bancroft and Ralph Fevre

No Label - Naomi Klein

The Tipping Point - Malcolm Gladwell

The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone - Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson

Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital - Sarah Thornton

Watching the English - Kate Fox

Freakanomics - Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner

Revolution - Russell Brand

The Beauty Myth - Naomi Woolf

Subculture: The Meaning of Style - Hebdige

Goth Identity, Style and Subculture - Hodkinson

Potential Careers

Administration in local government

Advertising

Higher Education teaching & research

Human resources officer

Information management

IT consultant

Journalist

Member of Parliament

Personnel manager

Researcher

Social worker

Solicitor

Teacher

Universities offer courses such as:

BA Sociology

BA Sociology and Criminology

BA Sociology with Education Studies

BA Sociology with Psychology

BA Sociology with Religion

BA Sociology and Anthropology

BA Sociology and Politics

BA Sociology and Business Studies

BA Public Services

BA Sociology with Health and Social Care

Preparation for September

Compulsory – hand in at your first class in September

This research-based project is designed to give you an ideal grounding for A-level study.

Research and complete **at least two** of the tasks (or as many as you like) to give you a good idea of what to expect on the sociology course. If you then choose to study sociology this will give you a good head start for your course.

Present the tasks in any format you like – this could be a PowerPoint, a poster, a leaflet or on A4 lined.

Use resources such as the internet, library or a bookshop to help you.

1. Years ago, the Conservatives announced they would be expanding the number of grammar schools in the UK.

   There has been an extremely fierce debate over the fairness of grammar schools (selecting by ability) since their conception in 1944, with some arguing that grammar schools unfairly benefit the middle-classes, whilst others argue that it gives working-class children a chance that they otherwise wouldn't have had.

   - Research the debate on grammar schools, as you will see from the article (link below), there are individuals/groups/political parties that are supportive and others who are critical.
   - Research the different political perspectives on the grammar school debate.
   - What do *you* think? Explain your reasoning.

   https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37305841

2. In 2011 riots occurred in the UK. They started in London and then spread to other cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

   Five people were killed and many homes and businesses were looted or burnt down.

   - Research the London riots and produce a summary of the events, including how long they lasted and how the disorder spread.
   - Research the reasons for these riots – watch YouTube videos and read accounts in news articles at the time. Give reasons for the riots from different perspectives – for example, what did the rioters say? Is there any reason to disbelieve their account? What did people from local communities (where the rioting happened) say were the causes? What did the government say were the reasons? State the problems/strengths of these reasons as you discuss them.
   - In your own personal opinion, what was the main reason why people were rioting? Give reasons for your answer.

3. In 2013 same sex couples were legally allowed to be married. The Act enables same sex couples to marry in accordance with civil marriage laws and therefore giving the same rights as heterosexual couples. It allows same sex couples to be legally married at register offices and on approved premises (such as hotels).

    - Research different political, religious and non-religious views on same sex couples and its impact on family structure.
    - Research why the piece of legislation was significant and how it challenges traditional gender roles.
    - What do you think about this?

4. One of the key debates within Beliefs in Society is regarding secularisation. Read the following article and answer the questions.

    https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/11/uk-secularism-on-rise-as-more-than-half-say-they-have-no-religion

    - Is society getting 'less' religious? What are the causes and consequences of the decoupling of religion and the state?
    - Do you have to go to a place of worship to be religious? As we see a decline of mass attendance does this mean less people are religious? Can you believe without belonging?
    - Has society changed as a result of the declining influence of religion? Can we link the decline of religion to the increase of crime?
    - What are the Marxist, Functionalist and Feminist perspectives on religion?