

# Sociology at Bristol

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# Welcome to SPAIS

(School of Sociology, Politics  
and International Studies)

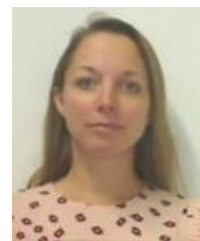
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# Why study Sociology at Bristol?

- You'll join a vibrant academic community – SPAIS is home to 25 sociology staff members and 250 students.
- You'll have the chance to study sociology in different international contexts – we offer study abroad opportunities ranging from a semester to a full year.
- We encourage you to experience sociology outside of your degree – all our research seminars are open to all students and we hold a number of events through our SPAIS student societies.
- You'll be taught by dedicated and expert staff – come and learn from those at the cutting edge of the discipline.
- We care about your wellbeing - you'll be supported by a personal tutor, mentor and study skills tutors.

Join a  
community  
of scholars

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# Course structure

\*please note that course units vary between degrees and may change

# The logic of the programme

- The first year is designed to develop your own sociological awareness – we want you to do sociology, not just learn sociology.
- More structure in the first year, gradually increasing independence in the second and third year, culminating in the final year dissertation.

# First year units

- Four core units:
  - Thinking Sociologically
  - Social Identities and Divisions
  - Doing Social Research
  - Key Social Thinkers
- Single Honours students take all four units, plus two further sociology units (or can choose units from other subjects).
- Joint Honours students take three of the four core units, plus three units in their joint subject.

# Second year units

- Second year: students take a further 'core' units in first semester, before progressing to 'specialist' units that reflect the research specialisms of Bristol staff.



## Second year units (cont.)

### **Second year core units 20 credit points each**

- Investigating the Social
- Conceptualising the Social

### **Second year specialist units 20 credit points each – choose four units for Single Honours)**

- Ethnicity & Racism
- Sociology of Crime and Justice
- Digital Society
- Sociology of Childhood and Rights
- The Sociology of Gender
- East Asian Societies
- Class and Social Divisions
- Sexuality & Society
- Sociology of Health & Illness
- Environment & Society
- Art and Society

# Third year

- Third year: students take a number of specialist units and a dissertation (optional for JH students).

## **Third year specialist units (20 credits each):**

- Modern Slavery: Issues and Debates
- Gender and Migration
- Perspectives on Power
- Feminist Sociology of Food
- Consumption, Consumer Culture and Sustainability
- Risk, Danger and Disaster
- The Sociology of Popular Music
- Nations and Nationalism
- Religion and Politics in the West
- Theory and Politics of Multiculturalism

# Final year dissertation

- Independent research project, supported by individual supervision and group workshops
- Can be on any sociological topic you want
- Dissertation conference in final term

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# Graduate prospects

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# Sociological careers

**Public sector:** teaching, health, youth, social work, prisons, charities, government

**Media:** publishing, journalism, BBC, creative industries, events management.

**Business:** accounting/management, public relations, retail, insurance, IT, hospitality, property, market research.

**Further study:** higher degrees, conversion courses, professional qualifications

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# Graduate prospects

## **Six months after graduating:**

- Over **60%** of our graduates are in **paid work**.
- Around **20%** are **undertaking further study** (based on careers service data for sociology students graduating in the last five years).
- **4<sup>th</sup> most targeted university by Times Top 100 Employers**  
(Graduate Market 2019-20, High Fliers 2020)

# Professional Liaison Network

- Engages School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies students with companies and organisations that are **relevant** to your academic subject
- Develops a range of **specialist** activities to support you:
  - **Mentoring Scheme** - Be matched to a professional working in a relevant field to provide you with insight into an organisation linked to your studies
  - **Q-Step Internship Scheme** - Gain quantitative skills via experience of using data in real work contexts through paid internships in areas that are relevant to – and complement – your degree
- Benefits:
  - reflection on, and enrichment of, your academic study
  - really engage with different possible paths to support your plans after graduation

# Student feedback

“Enthusiastic and intelligent and caring tutors. If you ask for the help they will give it to you. There is a broad array of choices within my discipline making it varied and personal.”

“Broad range of option choices. Specialist teachers are invaluable!”

“It's interesting and I feel has shaped my opinions and values as an adult. I feel that I have matured during the course and realised what is important to society and me in general. It provided me with a critical understanding of the world we live in.”

“Interesting and enthusiastic lecturers with genuine passion and knowledge of the subject.”

“I feel immensely pleased and grateful overall. I have loved nearly every minute of learning, and will genuinely treasure the new perspective it has given me.”



# Student Life and Student Support

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# Student support at Bristol

- Academic schools, esp Personal Tutor
  - Residential Life Team
  - Student Services
  - Wellbeing Service
  - Students' Union - Advice, support, representation, events and social opportunities
- } Different forms of professional support for student self-referral or by staff

# Personal Tutor

- Personal tutor:
  - Advice on all academic and personal matters.
  - Six scheduled meetings in first year, plus ad-hoc meetings as you need them.  
Drop-in office hours
- Senior Tutor: oversees PT, separate support
- Academic Writing Advisors: Advice on how to prepare, research, write and present essays. Weekly drop-ins

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# Transition to university

- Welcome week Personal Tutor induction
- Start of First Year – one-hour sessions with Personal Tutors
  - Academic and social support
  - Focus on university teaching & learning practices, also opportunity to meet other students doing same degree
  - Study Skills: critical reading & writing skills; presentations; referencing, etc.



# Staff Student Liaison Committee

- Reps for each year group plus mature and international student reps.
- Four meetings each year
- Share information and gather student views/suggestions.
- Opportunity for students to gain insight into the running of the School.
- Key mechanism for student feedback
  - (+ Unit Evaluation Forms, comments box, informal staff-student communication)

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# You said, we did

We care about your student experience – below are examples of how we've responded to undergraduate feedback so that we can provide the best environment for SPAIS students.

<b>YOU SAID</b> "We want more interaction with staff."	<b>YOU SAID</b> "We want to develop a better sense of SPAIS community."
<b>WE DID</b> We introduced staff coffee mornings and bite-sized lectures to enable more frequent opportunities for interaction between staff and students.  We also expanded on the provisions of staff-student events (e.g. quizzes, discussion forums, question times, film screenings).	<b>WE DID</b> We provided a common room for SPAIS undergraduates in 11 Priory Road.  We also introduced extra first year units so that students spend more time with their peers.

<b>YOU SAID</b> "We want more information when making our options choices."	<b>YOU SAID</b> "The e-reserves system makes access to core reading complicated and can cost a lot to print."
<b>WE DID</b> We have introduced introductory videos and information sheets for students to use when choosing their options.	<b>WE DID</b> We have introduced free course-packs to provide easy and printed access to essential readings – while still maintaining e-reserves for those who want them.

<b>YOU SAID</b> "We need more careers advice and guidance."
<b>WE DID</b> We have introduced more structured provisions for careers advice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A bespoke Careers Service session on 'Constructing Job Applications'</li><li>• Dedicated personal tutor sessions on careers</li><li>• A range of careers events, including a SPAIS Alumni Careers Afternoon</li><li>• The appointment of an undergraduate careers and employment adviser for SPAIS running weekly drop-in sessions open to all SPAIS students</li></ul>

# Thank you

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