



# **Teddington Sixth Form**

## **A Level Sociology**

**Course Details & Transition Tasks**  
**2020-2022**

## A level Sociology Exam Board – AQA

This GCE Sociology specification has been designed so that candidates will acquire the essential knowledge and understanding of central aspects of sociological thought and methods, together with the application of a range of skills. It has also been designed to allow the integration of sociological themes, such as socialisation, culture and identity, and social differentiation, power and stratification.

### Year 1 - Sociology (Year 12)

#### Assessments Unit 1 – SCLY1

- Culture and Identity; Families and Households
- Wealth, Poverty and Welfare 40% of AS
- 20% of A Level Written paper
- 1 hour 60 marks

Candidates choose one topic from three and answer five questions.

#### Unit 2 – SCLY2

- Education with Research Methods
- Health with Research Methods 60% of AS
- 30% of A Level Written paper
- 2 hours 90 marks

Candidates choose one topic (Education or Health) and answer four questions on the chosen topic, one question on sociological research methods in context, and four questions on research methods.

### Year 2 - A Level Sociology (Year 13)

#### A2 Examinations Unit 3 – SCLY3

- Beliefs in Society
- Global Development
- Mass Media; Power and Politics 20% of A Level Written paper
- 1 hour 30 minutes 60 marks

Candidates choose one topic from four and answer two compulsory questions and one question from a choice of two.

#### Unit 4 – SCLY4

- Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods
- Stratification and Differentiation with Theory and Methods
- 30% of A Level Written paper
- 2 hours 90 marks

Candidates choose one topic from two and answer two questions on the chosen topic, one question on sociological research methods in context, and one question on theory and methods.

## Integral Elements

All the following should be an integral part of the study of each topic area:

- Sociological theories, perspectives and methods
- The design of the research used to obtain the data under consideration, including its strengths and weaknesses.

## Core Themes

Candidates must study the following two core themes:

- Socialisation, culture and identity
- Social differentiation, power and stratification. The themes should be understood and applied to particular substantive areas of sociology.

However, these themes are to be interpreted broadly as threads running through many areas of social life and should not therefore be regarded as discrete topics.

## 3.1 Unit 1 SCLY1 Culture and Identity; Families and Households; Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine:

- Topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification);
- Both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the three topic areas below.

Attention should also be given to drawing out links with other topic areas studied.

### Culture and Identity

Different conceptions of culture, including subculture, mass culture, high and low culture, popular culture, global culture.

- The socialisation process and the role of the agencies of socialisation.
- Sources and different conceptions of the self, identity and difference.
- The relationship of identity to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality and social class in contemporary society.
- Leisure, consumption, and identity.

### Families and Households

- The relationship of the family to the social structure and social change, with particular reference to the economy and to state policies.
- Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation, separation, divorce, child-bearing and the life course, and the diversity of contemporary family and household structures.
- The nature and extent of changes within the family, with reference to gender roles, domestic labour and power relationships.
- The nature of childhood, and changes in the status of children in the family and society.
- Demographic trends in the UK since 1900; reasons for changes in birth rates, death rates and family size.

## Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

- Different definitions and ways of measuring poverty, wealth and income.
- The distribution of poverty, wealth and income between different social groups.
- The existence and persistence of poverty in contemporary society.
- Different responses to poverty, with particular reference to the role of social policy since the 1940s.
- The nature and role of public, private, voluntary and informal welfare provision in contemporary society

## 3.2 Unit 2 SCLY2 Education with Research Methods; Health with Research Methods

In their study of this unit, candidates should examine:

- Topic areas in relation to the two core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification);
- Both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the three topic areas below.

Attention should be given to drawing out links with other topic areas studied. Throughout this unit, candidates should be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small-scale social research.]

### Education

- The role and purpose of education, including vocational education and training, in contemporary society. Differential educational achievement of social groups by social class, gender and ethnicity in contemporary society.
- Relationships and processes within schools, with particular reference to teacher/pupil relationships, pupil subcultures, the hidden curriculum, and the organisation of teaching and learning.
- The significance of educational policies, including selection, comprehensivisation and marketisation, for an understanding of the structure, role, impact and experience of education.
- The application of sociological research methods to the study of education.

### Health

- Health, illness, disability and the body as social and as biological constructs.
- The unequal social distribution of health and illness in the United Kingdom by social class, age, gender, ethnicity and region, and internationally.
- Inequalities in the provision of, and access to, health care in contemporary society.
- The sociological study of the nature and social distribution of mental illness.
- The role of medicine and the health professions.
- The application of sociological research methods to the study of health.

### Sociological Methods

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; their strengths and limitations; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, participant and non-participant observation, experiments, documents, and official statistics; the strengths and limitations of these sources.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.
- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'. The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.

### **3.3 Unit 3 SCLY3 Beliefs in Society; Global Development; Mass Media; Power and Politics**

The study of this unit should engage candidates in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process. The study of this unit should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course.

The examination will explicitly assess candidates' understanding of the connections between the topic(s) studied in this unit and the nature of sociological thought, methods of sociological enquiry, and the core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification). In their study of this unit, candidates should examine both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the four topic areas below.

#### **Beliefs in Society**

- Different theories of ideology, science and religion, including both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions.
- The relationship between religious beliefs and social change and stability.
- Religious organisations, including cults, sects, denominations, churches and New Age movements, and their relationship to religious and spiritual belief and practice.
- The relationship between different social groups and religious/spiritual organisations and movements, beliefs and practices.
- The significance of religion and religiosity in the contemporary world, including the nature and extent of secularisation in a global context.

#### **Global Development**

- Different theories of development, underdevelopment and global inequality.
- Globalisation, aid and trade, and their influence on the cultural, political and economic relationships between societies.
- The role of transnational corporations, nongovernmental organisations and international agencies in local and global strategies for development.
- Development in relation to industrialisation, urbanisation, the environment, war and conflict.
- Employment, education, health, demographic change and gender as aspects of development.

#### **Mass Media**

- The relationship between ownership and control of the mass media.
- The mass media, globalisation and popular culture.
- The processes of selection and presentation of the content of the news.
- Media representations of age, social class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and disability.
- The relationship between the mass media, media content and presentation, and audiences.
- The new media and their significance for an understanding of the role of the media in contemporary society.

#### **Power and Politics**

- Different theories of the nature and distribution of power.
- The role of the contemporary state.
- The nature of, and changes in, different forms of political participation, including voting behaviour, political action and protest, and membership of political organisations and movements.
- The role of political parties, pressure/interest groups, new social movements and the mass media in the political process.

- The significance of globalisation for an understanding of power and politics in the contemporary world.

### **3.4 Unit 4 SCLY4**

#### **Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods; Stratification and Differentiation with Theory and Methods**

The study of this unit should engage candidates in theoretical debate while encouraging an active involvement with the research process. Throughout this unit, candidates should be encouraged to use examples drawn from their own experience of small scale social research.

The study of this unit should foster a critical awareness of contemporary social processes and change, and draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in different aspects of the course. The examination will explicitly assess candidates' understanding of the connections between the topic(s) studied in this unit and the nature of sociological thought, methods of sociological enquiry, and the core themes (socialisation, culture and identity; and social differentiation, power and stratification). In their study of this unit, candidates should examine both the evidence of and the sociological explanations for the content listed in the two topic areas below.

#### **Crime and Deviance**

- Different theories of crime, deviance, social order and social control.
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by age, ethnicity, gender, locality and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime.
- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the mass media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes.
- Crime control, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.
- The sociological study of suicide and its theoretical and methodological implications.
- The connections between sociological theory and methods and the study of crime and deviance.

#### **Stratification and Differentiation**

- Different theories of stratification, including stratification by social class, gender, ethnicity and age.
- Dimensions of inequality: class, status and power; differences in life-chances by social class, gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
- The problems of defining and measuring social class; occupation, gender, and social class.
- Changes in structures of inequality, and the implications of these changes.
- The nature, extent and significance of patterns of social mobility.
- The connections between sociological theory and methods and the study of stratification and differentiation.

#### **Theory and Methods**

Candidates should examine the following areas, which are also studied at AS Level:

- Quantitative and qualitative methods of research; their strengths and limitations; research design.
- Sources of data, including questionnaires, interviews, observation (participant and nonparticipant), experiments, documents, and official statistics; the strengths and limitations of these sources.
- The distinction between primary and secondary data, and between quantitative and qualitative data.

- The relationship between positivism, interpretivism and sociological methods; the nature of 'social facts'. The theoretical, practical and ethical considerations influencing choice of topic, choice of method(s) and the conduct of research.

#### 4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

Assessment Objectives		Weightings
AO1	Knowledge and understanding of the theories, methods, concepts and various forms of evidence outlined in paragraphs 4.2.1 (a), (b) and (c) below, and of the links between them; Communication of knowledge and understanding in a clear and effective manner.	45-55%
AO2	Demonstration of the skills of application, analysis, interpretation and evaluation as indicated in paragraphs 4.2.2 (a), (b) and (c) below.	45-55%

#### Transition Tasks

##### Task 1: Deviance in society

1. Why does the issue of crime interest you?
2. Name five criminals you admire, and a couple you do not.
3. Which of the following activities are deviant and which are criminal?

Living as a hermit	Racist football chanting	Deliberate rudeness
Alcoholism	Sex at 15 years old	Cross-dressing at age 17
Forcing your wife to have sex against her will	Downloading pornography	Not appointing a BAME job candidate because you are racist
Stealing	Prostitution	Buying cigarettes at 14
Smoking marijuana	Suicide	Lesbianism

4. How can deviance be positive?

##### Task 2:

Research the benefits of home schooling. In addition research the disadvantages. Produce a summary of both benefits and disadvantages, but ensuring you distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements. Produce these findings in the form of a table.

##### Task 3:

1. Research and make notes on functionalist explanations of the role of the family.
2. Functionalists believe the family has its own important role to play in helping society to function effectively. In each type of society, one particular type of family will be the norm. This family type will fit the needs both of its individual members and of society as a whole. Other sociologists believe that functionalists fail to consider ways in which families are dysfunctional.

Answer the following questions:

What are the family 'norms' in different cultures around the world? And how might these benefit people in these countries? What might be the criticisms of these different 'norms'?

#### 4: Marxism

(a) Marxism is one of the most famous methods of socioeconomic analysis. Research and identify 5-10 basic Marxist principles.

(b) Look at the following. Are they strengths or weaknesses of Marxism?

1. The Marxist solution is simple yet monumental: if capitalism creates crime, if capitalism is the problem, then the solution is clear, get rid of capitalism.

2. Marxists tend to view the behaviour of individuals as largely governed by external forces. Thus their accounts are somewhat deterministic. Some theorists argue that individuals retain free will, which enables them to decide whether they want to commit crime.

3. Marxists tend to represent working class crime as a creative response to oppression when reality is that much working class crime is directed at working class people. Moreover, they do not fully explain why all working class people do not commit crime.

4. It seems to ignore the individual motivation. The stress is primarily on the nature of capitalism and how economic factors 'force' people to act in certain ways.

5. It seems implausible to explain all laws in terms of the interests of the ruling elite; many laws appear to rest on general agreement.

6. Socialist states also have high crime rates at least as great as our own.

#### Task 5: Experiments: testing theory

In a study, Durkheim (1897) found that suicide rates were higher:

- (i) among men than women
- (ii) among single and divorced people than married people
- (iii) in some societies than others.

1. Use the following sources to test whether Durkheim's claims hold good nowadays:

A. First, go to <http://www.ons.gov.uk> Then for (i) and (ii) above, search for 'Health Statistics Quarterly - Trends in suicide by marital status in England and Wales, 1982-2005 - Spring 2008' and use the graphs.

B. Japan is usually considered a more integrated society than the UK - so for (iii) above, go to [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/) to compare suicide rates for the UK and Japan.

2. Based on your findings from the above sources, does the evidence from the official statistics support each of Durkheim's three findings?

3. Having used the comparative method to study suicide, what do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of this method for studying sociological topics?

#### Task 6: Getting a Grasp

Complete the introductory tasks for sociology students on

<https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology/reference/learning-activities>. These will give you an excellent starting point for understanding some of the key topics we will explore in a lot more detail on the course.

#### Task 7: BritSoc

Visit the British Sociological Association website [www.britsoc.co.uk](http://www.britsoc.co.uk), and its sister site, [www.discover sociology.co.uk](http://www.discover sociology.co.uk). Research what sociology is, what sociologists do and career opportunities for sociology graduates. Explain to someone in your household the value and purpose of sociology and what areas you would like to explore further on the A Level course.