Studying Sociology in HSPS

Sociology has been taught at Cambridge for over 40 years. It is located within the multi-departmental Faculty of Human, Social, and Political Science (HSPS). In the first year students typically take papers from Sociology, Politics and Social Anthropology. In the second and third years, students can opt for a deeper focus within Sociology, or take a joint track with Politics or Social Anthropology. The Department of Sociology welcomes applications from students who want a broad introduction to the social sciences as well as the opportunity to study Sociology in depth.

The Department of Sociology is a friendly and vibrant Department with a forward-thinking approach to Sociology. The combination of our outstanding academic staff, our excellent students, and the exceptional educational resources make Cambridge an ideal place to study Sociology as an undergraduate.

The diversity of the backgrounds and nationalities of students makes for lively debates in class, and Sociology students have an excellent reputation for contributing to the political and journalistic life of the University.

Contact

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Details of the HSPS course can be found at hsp.cam.ac.uk
The Cambridge course in Sociology is generally considered one of the best in the world. It is consistently ranked first among all Sociology departments in the UK by the Guardian, the Times and the Independent, and it was ranked in the top ten in the world in the QS World University Rankings for 2016.

The course is taught by some of the world’s leading figures in Sociology. It is flexible and innovative, enabling you to study Sociology on its own or to combine it with other subjects. We aim to attract excellent students with a genuine curiosity to delve into some of the big issues facing today’s societies, such as inequality, globalisation, racism and social justice.

After Cambridge

As well as developing a deep understanding of modern societies and sociological thinking, students also develop transferable skills such as writing about complex issues and analysing qualitative and quantitative data. As a result, the course has an excellent reputation with employers, and our graduates go on to work in fields as varied as journalism, law, the City, international organisations, politics, management, research, university teaching and the Civil Service.

Admissions

If you wish to study Sociology at Cambridge starting in or after October 2016, you should apply for admission to the Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS) Tripos through an undergraduate College of your choice; alternatively you can make an open application.

The HSPS Tripos is the general framework within which Sociology is taught at Cambridge. Any combination of A Levels or IB subjects that are acceptable at Cambridge will be accepted for Sociology (Sociology A Level is not essential), and we welcome applications from non-standard applicants.

Details of the course

Year 1: Four courses
- Introduction to Sociology
- 2 courses chosen from Politics, International Relations, or Social Anthropology
- 1 course chosen from: Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, or Psychology

Year 2: Four courses
- Social Theory
- Global Social Problems
- Concepts & Arguments or Methods & Statistics
- 1 course chosen from: Sociology, Social or Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, or Psychology

Year 3: Four courses
- 3 courses chosen from a wide range of sociology topics: advanced social theory, media, war & militarism, political economy of capitalism, gender, race & ethnicity, modern Britain, health & medicine, education, criminology
- 1 course chosen from: Sociology, Social or Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, or Psychology
- or a dissertation on a topic of particular interest to you

You also have the option of combining Sociology with Politics, or Sociology with Social Anthropology in your second and third years.

Andrew Apampa, third-year Sociology student

Studying Sociology at Cambridge has given me the opportunity to delve behind the news headlines, grappling with the fundamental questions about social life that have long challenged social theorists, and engaging in critical debates with leading scholars within my supervisions, seminars, and lectures. You will probably have a hard time choosing amongst the sheer variety of papers available for study; I have been able to explore topics as diverse as the rise of nationalism in modern societies, and market competition between Chinese energy firms. Beyond satisfying my intellectual curiosity about the social world, studying Sociology has honed my ability to analyse arguments, judge their persuasiveness, and express my thoughts on them lucidly, both verbally and on paper. It is these skills, after all, that will stand me in good stead for any career that I choose to pursue.”

Andrew Apampa, third-year Sociology student