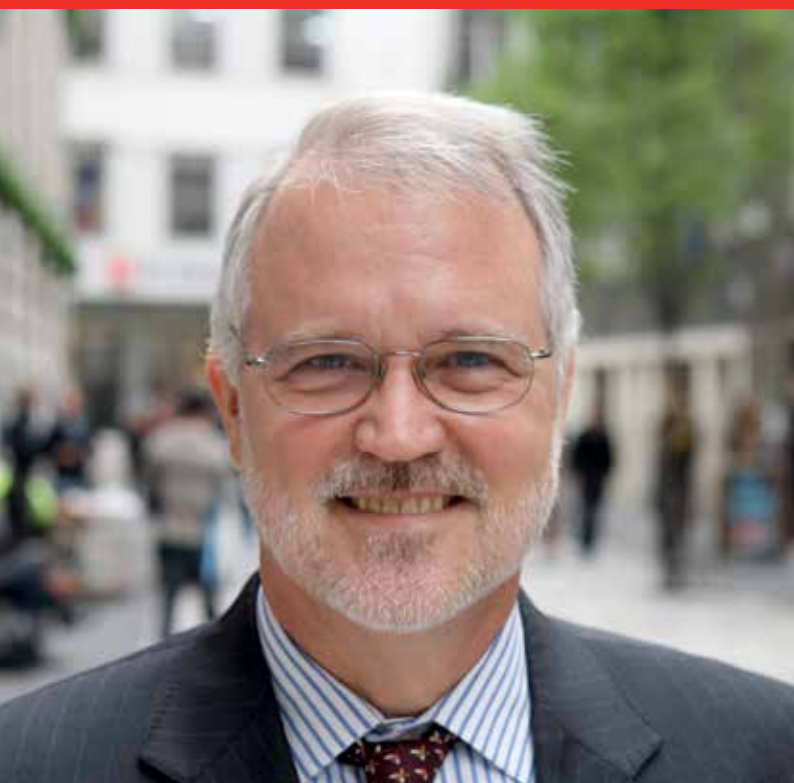




The LSE Course

A distinctive course for a distinctive institution



“ LSE100 discusses big issues, but its most basic point is to cultivate the capacity to judge the quality of different kinds of arguments, the evidence on which they are based and the claims they make to grasp the causes of things. ”

Craig Calhoun
Director of LSE

From the Director, Craig Calhoun

LSE is a remarkable institution. It is highly ranked and full of brilliant people, which is good but not the point. What is crucial is that since its founding, LSE has been devoted to knowledge that matters for practical action, for understanding the major social issues of our era, and for grasping the course of social change. LSE pioneered a set of new disciplines that brought the rigour of science to understanding human action, social institutions, and the challenges faced by governments and non-governmental organisations, businesses and social movements.

Every discipline taught at LSE brings its own perspective to bear on major public issues. And every one is continually breaking new ground, bringing forward new empirical evidence, new insight, and new theory. Yet neither the big questions we face nor the methods of social science are neatly divided into disciplines. LSE has played a pioneering role in advancing social statistics and quantitative analysis and equally pioneering roles in advancing ethnography and in bringing philosophical analysis to social science. Each matters across a range of different disciplines. And those who study different disciplines need to know how to bring their specific kinds of knowledge into relation with others. This is the only way to tackle issues like economic growth and development, inequality, migration, the shifting financial relations between East and West, the globalisation of cultural production and circulation, war, human rights, or the strengths and weaknesses of democratic governments.

LSE100 discusses big issues like these, but its most basic point is to cultivate the capacity to judge the quality of different kinds of arguments, the evidence on which they are based and the claims they make to grasp the causes of things. This is why it is required, and it is why some of the most famous teachers at LSE are eager to take part.

From its beginning to its amazing range of public events today, LSE has connected academic research to public debates. But we don't just express opinions; we ground arguments in research and careful causal analysis. This is a key reason why LSE graduates are in such demand for a range of different jobs. And it is equally a key reason why it is so exciting to be a part of LSE.

Thinking like a social scientist

From the Director of LSE100, George Gaskell

LSE100 introduces you to the fundamental elements of thinking like a social scientist. Thinking like a social scientist means thinking like an economist, lawyer, political theorist, historian. At the heart of all of these fields are questions of evidence, explanation and theory. On LSE100, we use important issues and debates to explore these questions from the perspective of different disciplines.

LSE has a long tradition of engaging with the important issues of the time – and of encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to these issues. LSE100 brings you squarely into this rich tradition. No important issue can be fully understood through a single lens and LSE100 aims to complement the intellectual grounding you will get in your chosen discipline with an understanding of different ways of thinking. In the current syllabus, for example, students examine de-classified Kremlin and CIA documents from 1989 in assessing the complex factors that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Engaging fully with important issues also requires working with people from different backgrounds. Here, too, LSE100 builds on the strengths of LSE. You learn not only from a range of lecturers, topics, resources and disciplines, but also from your fellow students. LSE100 classes are interdisciplinary in the mix of students, as well as the mix of approaches, enabling you to learn from collaborating and debating with fellow students

from other disciplines and cultural backgrounds. By engaging with big questions through research-led teaching, you strengthen your critical research and communication skills – for example, in evaluating and interpreting different types of evidence and in finding and assessing information. You learn to construct persuasive arguments orally and in writing on questions such as: 'Which was more important in causing the financial crisis: Excessive risk-taking in the run-up to the crisis or the long-term increase in the size and power of the global financial sector?'.

LSE100 has developed an innovative approach to teaching and learning. We have small, interactive classes complemented by one-to-one feedback sessions and specialised one-to-one resources such as the LSE100 Writing Lab. We use new learning technologies to make lectures interactive and to support self-paced learning. In all of these ways, LSE100 is designed to help you get the best of LSE: lectures from leading researchers across a broad range of disciplines; an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to important questions; a chance to work with and learn from LSE's globally diverse students and an overriding emphasis on critical thinking, evidence-based argument and public debate. LSE100 brings real world issues into the core undergraduate programme to give you the intellectual breadth and strong critical skills you need for success at LSE and afterwards.



“No important issue can be fully understood through a single lens.”

Broadening the intellectual experience

How should we manage climate change?

Do nations matter in a global world?

Why are great events so difficult to predict?

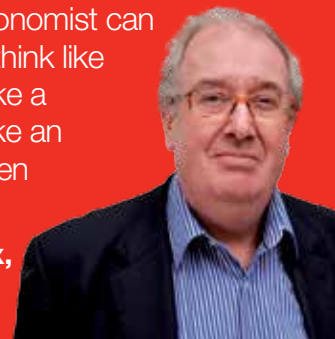
Focusing on “big questions”, you explore the different types of evidence, alternative forms of explanation and different strategies for abstraction and modelling that are used in the different social sciences. In this way, the course not only broadens your intellectual experience as an undergraduate at the School, but also deepens your understanding of your own discipline. LSE100 is an integrated programme of 20 lectures and 20 classes, taught in the second term of your first year, and the first term of your second year. Over these 20 weeks, six big questions are explored in three week modules.



LSE100 lecturers:
Professor Julia Black and Dr. Laura Valentini

“ I think one of the great dangers that we – and all universities – now face is over-specialisation. I think a course like this can at least provide a much broader view on how to think about the social sciences, so an economist can think like a social scientist, an historian can think like a social scientist, an accountant can think like a social scientist ... I think this will actually make an enormous difference to the way students then perceive their next three years at LSE. ”

Professor Michael Cox,
Department of International Relations, LSE



Leading lecturers

LSE100 lectures explore how social scientists address important questions facing society, examining different forms of evidence and assessing competing explanations. You hear from leading experts: among the lecturers for the current LSE100 syllabus are Professors Craig Calhoun, Michael Cox, Clare Hemmings, Nicola Lacey, Danny Quah and Nicholas Stern. The topics of the modules are broad-ranging and change over time. The lectures and classes are challenging but, at the same time, accessible to students from all backgrounds and disciplines.

Challenging classes

LSE100 lectures are complemented by small-group classes that are designed to develop an understanding of the core methodological concepts of evidence, explanation and theory and to build and reinforce critical research and communication skills. In these 20 weekly classes, you will analyse different types of evidence and critically assess particular explanations and draw your own conclusions, developing your arguments in writing and debating the positions taken. Learning how to evaluate evidence, how to assess positions and to think critically, how to structure arguments in writing and how to argue persuasively are fundamental parts of the course. LSE100 classes are mixed across departments, providing an opportunity for you to learn from fellow students in other disciplines.

LSE100 lecturer:
Professor Danny Quah



What caused the global financial crisis?
Why does gender inequality persist?
Is punishment the answer to crime?

Ensuring quality and balance

The LSE100 Steering Committee, composed of senior members of the School from a range of departments, has strategic responsibility for ensuring that the course achieves its objectives. It reviews the structure and content of the course to ensure that the topics covered are timely and relevant, that the syllabus as a whole provides an appropriate range of disciplinary perspectives and that the strategy for delivering the course is effective. The syllabus for LSE100 evolves continuously, as individual modules are updated and revised and new modules are brought in. All departments at LSE are encouraged to be involved in future modules.

Innovative technologies

LSE100 uses learning technologies to support active learning in lectures and to provide you with self-paced learning resources in the course virtual learning environment. The course pioneered the use of personal response systems (PRS) at LSE allowing anonymous polling using 'clickers' or through an app on students' smartphone devices. PRS encourages you to reflect on the material presented and introduces an element of discussion into lectures, while also enabling lecturers to adjust their pace and emphasis in response to real-time feedback. LSE100 also uses a texting/SMS service to elicit real-time feedback on "muddy points" – points you find unclear in the lecture. To tailor the course for the heterogeneous interests and backgrounds of students on the course, the LSE100 virtual learning environment offers diagnostic and self-paced resources to provide additional support and to provide extension materials if you want to go beyond the material presented in lectures and classes.



“The LSE100 course puts lawyers, economists, sociologists and historians in the same room and challenges them to view critical world issues through several new pairs of eyes. It's thought-provoking and inspiring and – above all – deeply exciting. I have loved the lectures with a brilliant new speaker and a whole list of new ideas every week. I have looked forward to classes which help you to think, discuss, dissect, engage, debate and write, making the transition into everyday life at the LSE a lot easier. The amount of academic support available for the course is incredible and the amount of interest it has garnered in internship interviews is unbelievable.”

LSE100 student

Developing critical skills

Developing critical skills

LSE100 helps you to develop the critical skills that underpin the study and application of the social sciences. The course is based on a set of nine key research skills, or learning outcomes. These skills fall in three categories – methodological skills, information skills and communication skills – that together provide the foundation for social scientific thinking and research:

Methodological skills

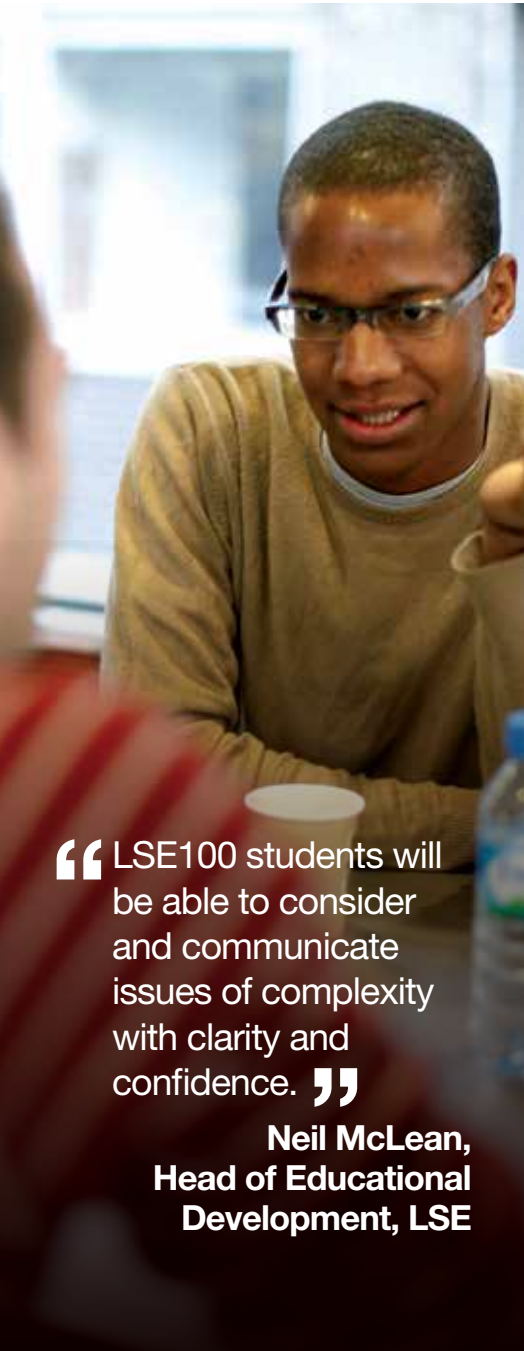
1. **Evaluate** and **interpret** evidence of different types, including documentary and other qualitative sources as well as statistical data.
2. **Explain** the respective roles of, and interaction between, questions, theories, evidence and explanations in the social sciences.
3. **Identify** and critically assess causal claims in social science explanations.
4. **Analyse** contemporary social problems using theoretical perspectives from more than one social science discipline.

Information skills

5. **Find** and **access** information relevant to social science problems, making use of good searching principles and techniques.
6. **Evaluate** information sources, distinguishing scholarly sources from other content and critically assessing information from internet and other sources.
7. **Manage** information – and reduce information overload – using online and other resources as well as appropriate citing and referencing techniques.

Communication skills

8. **Construct** coherent and persuasive arguments – both orally and in writing – on current issues in the social sciences, structuring the arguments logically and supporting them with relevant evidence.
9. **Plan** and **deliver** engaging and well-argued presentations that coherently address both question and audience.



“LSE100 students will be able to consider and communicate issues of complexity with clarity and confidence.”

Neil McLean,
Head of Educational
Development, LSE

“I do think that the ability to work closely, analyse, describe, communicate, recommend – those skills are absolutely fundamental and in addition you’re going to need the skills to communicate and work with people with different backgrounds from your own... I believe that there is no place better than LSE to acquire those skills and no set of skills that you are going to need more in terms of what you do in the future.”

Professor Lord Nicholas Stern, LSE100 Lecturer

Opportunities and achievements

Developing skills

Strengthening your higher order academic skills while broadening and deepening your understanding of the social sciences is important not only for getting the most out of LSE, but also for helping you to prepare for whatever you go on to do after you graduate. Most employers, from the financial sector to NGOs, are looking for graduates who have well-developed skills and a degree of breadth to complement the specialist knowledge in their subject area. They want mathematicians who can also write a report, historians who can also understand a graph, and, most of all, employees who can talk to clients and partners all over the world with confidence. LSE100 is designed to help produce a distinctive LSE graduate with skills that cut across specialist subject areas. Employers are looking for graduates who can think, analyse, present and interact, and want to see examples of how you demonstrate these skills. LSE100 lecturers challenge you to think rigorously about important issues drawing on different social science perspectives, while the small-group classes require you to investigate the relevant evidence, assess alternative explanations and present their arguments coherently both orally and in writing – sometimes working individually, sometimes in groups.

Demonstrating achievement

The innovative approach to teaching and learning in LSE100 is also reflected in how the course is assessed. The course uses non-numeric marks and the final mark is based on five assessments over the course: an essay due at the end of Lent term, three in-class assessments including a group presentation project and a two-hour final examination. Your overall mark for LSE100 of Credit, Merit, Distinction or Fail will be shown on your transcript.

At a recent graduate recruitment event for key LSE employers, 83 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement:

“LSE100 makes LSE graduates more attractive as potential employees.”

“LSE100 enhances graduates’ academic offering by broadening their outlook and enabling them to develop and enhance the ‘soft’ skills which are so critical to successful organisations. The interdisciplinary nature of the experience alongside the utilisation of new technologies provides participants with a distinctive edge in today’s competitive labour market.”

Jenny Blakesley, Director LSE Careers

“Standard Chartered place a high emphasis on the ability to communicate effectively and with confidence and are pleased to support LSE100 which enables students to further improve their skills.”

**Karen Goodacre,
Graduate Recruitment,
Standard Chartered Bank**

“LSE100 is producing the sort of graduates that employers want.”

**Liz Ellis,
Employer Liaison
Manager, LSE Careers**





LSE100 was runner-up in the Teaching Excellence category in the 2013 Guardian University awards



LSE100 was winner of the Courses category, commended for the “exciting and bold whole institution” strategy and the interdisciplinary approach to environmental and social issues.

Investors in People (Bronze)

LSE100 team recognised March 2010

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The information in this publication can be made available in alternative formats, on request. Please contact the LSE100 Course office.

The School seeks to ensure that people are treated equitably, regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or personal circumstances.

Freedom of thought and expression is essential to the pursuit, advancement and dissemination of knowledge. LSE seeks to ensure that intellectual freedom and freedom of expression within the law is secured for all our members and those we invite to the School.