



Course information 2025-26

SC1179 Contemporary Sociology in a Global Age

General information

MODULE LEVEL: 4

CREDIT: 30

NOTIONAL STUDY TIME: 300 hours

Summary

The course provides an introduction to different substantive areas of work in contemporary sociology. Students will gain an understanding of leading-edge research within the discipline worldwide. They will be encouraged to apply this understanding critically to their own social context and their place within it.

Conditions

None

Aims and objectives

1. The aims of this course are to:
2. -offer an overview of key issues in contemporary sociology
3. -apply core substantive and theoretical debates in sociology to a diverse range of empirical societies, including your own

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course, and having completed the essential reading and activities, students should be able to:

Describe the nature of the sociological perspective and the major theories of contemporary society

Offer a critical and creative reading of the set texts and be able to select relevant material cited by the authors selectively in your examination answers

Evaluate the sociological debates surrounding the processes of globalization and be able to compare and criticise them

Employability skills

Below are the three most relevant skill outcomes for students undertaking this course which can be conveyed to future prospective employers:

Complex problem solving
 Creativity and innovation
 Persuasion and negotiation

Essential reading

For full details, please refer to the reading list, there is no single text for the course.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a 3 hour examination.

Syllabus

Unit 1: Social space; concentration, boundaries and movement	This section investigates the key forms of social spatiality which sociologists have focused on. It offers conceptual history of these research fields and focuses on selected sites of research. The major demarcations of social space are cities (chapter 2), nation states and the international system (chapter 3), migration and mobility (chapter 4) and conflict and warfare (chapter 5).
Unit 2: Social time; crises, revolutions and growth	This unit explores several of the most recent and widest reaching changes in global society. It situates in the areas of research, while also offering some historical context for grounding. The most significant areas of contemporary change involve social life within the environment, the digital age and health and medicine. The chapters are, accordingly, on climate change (chapter 6), the digital age (chapter 7) and health and medicine (chapter 8).
Unit 3: Social identities	identity. This unit includes topics such as the family, religion and ages and stages of life. It contains four chapters: the family (Chapter 9), education (Chapter 10), religion (chapter 11) and the life course (Chapter 12). The topics look at how the sociological studies of these areas have been reinvigorated in response to global changes.
Unit 4: Exchange in global social life	The sociology of economic life is the focus of this unit and includes three chapters: money, markets and debt (Chapter 13), consumption, work and property (Chapter 14). These chapters look at sociological studies on the changing forms of money, markets and the growing and deepening field of debt. It also surveys the changing nature of work, consumerism and forms of ownership.
Unit 5: Deviance and social control	This section explores the deviance, crime and social control in a global context. Chapter 15 explores deviance and crime and Chapter 16 focuses on social control . This vibrant area of sociology is discussed through the emerging paradigm of biopolitics and looks at cases studies of both intra- and international deviance, and crime. Case studies range from piracy and cybercrime to the state crimes of torture and genocide.
Unit 6: Social inequalities	This section investigates key theories of inequality in a global context. It offers the conceptual background of these research fields and presents specific cases as illustration. The major areas of inequality that are examined are social class (Chapter 17), race (Chapter 18), ethnicity (Chapter 19), and gender (Chapter 20).

