



Module Specification

Social Issues and Social Problems

Version: 2024-25, v3.0, 20 Jun 2024

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Part 1: Information

Module title: Social Issues and Social Problems

Module code: UZSSLG-30-1

Level: Level 4

For implementation from: 2024-25

UWE credit rating: 30

ECTS credit rating: 15

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Social Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Sociology and Criminology

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module aims to locate and analyse social “issues” and “problems” in the contemporary world that impact our everyday lived experiences and are of pertinent concern to both sociologists, criminologists, social psychologists and policy makers. The module serves as an introduction to the discipline of sociology, provides a useful theoretical grounding for criminology students, and compliments other modules that you will take in the First Year. The module aims to provide students with an overview and familiarity of some of the key cutting edge debates related to

social problems/issues and social policy responses from contemporary, historical and global perspectives. It will connect with very real social problem/issues, showing the practical nature of Sociology in making a difference. At the same time the module will also raise pertinent questions as to how some social processes come to be designated as an “issue” or “problem” in the first place and how related policy is subject to political and ideological interests, and finally how social problems connect with social inequalities and diversity. We ask you to develop your critical thinking skills, to read between the lines of news articles, policy documents, Government press releases etc. Think about what narratives are being constructed, what framing is being used, how are we being led to think about particular questions and, indeed, why are these questions on the agenda at all.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: Students on this Module will explore how and why social issues currently identified in policy, politics and the media as problems, come to be constructed as problems in the first place. Students will learn to use their sociological imagination to read between the lines of contemporary political discourse and analyse the policy process of agenda setting, the role of the wicked problems, pathologisation and media framing for example. The assignments involve two written assignments, one in a standard essay format on the topics covered on the course, the second in more of a case study format, using the theory learned on the course to apply to a current political issue of personal interest to the student.

Outline syllabus:

The definition and nature of social issues and social problems

Understanding the historical nature and contemporary form of Social Issues and Social Problems (indicative):

Poverty and Inequality

Health and Illness

Employment/Unemployment/Low Pay

Crime and Deviance

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Aging and the Life Course

Transport/Mobility

Disability

Housing/Homelessness

Racism

Media and Culture

Social Problems and Public Policy: Government Intervention and Policy Making in historical and comparative perspective.

The Practice and Ideology of Social Welfare: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: Scheduled learning includes one hour lectures and two-hour workshop. The module is based on a problem/enquiry based learning approach which engages students with social problems and issues while fostering both independent study and team work. Workshops therefore aim to help students learn and practice the range of skills indicated in above sections, while lectures offer orientation and knowledge acquisition. Students will be expected to conduct independent study related to the presentations. Independent study is required in relation to set reading for lectures and workshops, as well as assessed work.

Lectures are essential for providing an overview of syllabus topics;

Workshops are designed to be central to learning, teaching and assessment in this module through facilitating groups work and, group presentations and tutorial time to further encourage and engagement with broader lecture themes;

Directed Tasks will include those based on reading in preparation for seminars;

E-learning resources as appropriate, including the use of UWEonline.

Scheduled learning includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, project supervision,

demonstration, practical classes and workshops; fieldwork; external visits; work based learning; supervised time in studio/workshop.

Independent learning includes hours engaged with essential reading, case study preparation, assignment preparation and completion. Scheduled sessions may vary slightly depending on the module choices you make.

There will be 3 formal contact hours per week, in addition to an expectation that individual students spend time in independent reading/research. There will be one lecture, one two-hour workshop per week (72 contact hours in total over two semesters).

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Understand the nature of social problems and the ways in which sociology as a discipline can articulate the connections between private troubles and public issues

MO2 Demonstrate a familiarity with and an understanding of a range of substantive social problems and the ways in which sociology has attempted to understand and analyse these problems

MO3 Have gained an understanding of the governmental policy-making process and the factors that impinge on it

MO4 Understand some of the key concepts used in social policy such as need, equity, inequality, poverty, exclusion, identity, difference and diversity

MO5 Understand key concepts in social policy and their relationship with the historical development of the welfare state and analyse the changing shape and priorities of social policy, and of different welfare states and policy priorities of other countries

MO6 Demonstrate how and why some social issues are incorporated onto the public agenda and/or government agenda and to differentiate between ideological perspectives which influence definitions of a social problem and policy responses to it

Hours to be allocated: 300

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Total = 0

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsslg-30-1.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsslg-30-1.html>

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: In semester one, students will prepare an essay (1500 words maximum) on a social problem or issue that will demonstrate an attempt to connect personal experience and public issues and contrast 'common sense' and sociological explanations of social issues and social problems.

In semester two students will complete a campaign brief which enable them to engage with the relationship between social problems, government policy and competing and/or comparative understandings of social welfare.

Assessment tasks:

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: 1500 word CAMPAIGN BRIEF

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: 1500 word ESSAY

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 1500 word ESSAY

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: 1500 word CAMPAIGN BRIEF

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO3, MO4, MO5, MO6

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Criminology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2024-25

Criminology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2024-25

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2024-25

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Criminology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Criminology {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2023-24

Criminology [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Criminology {Foundation} [Frenchay] BA (Hons) 2023-24

Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22