



## **Module Specification**

### **Contemporary Critiques of Modern Society**

Version: 2023-24, v4.0, 11 Jul 2023

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## Part 1: Information

**Module title:** Contemporary Critiques of Modern Society

**Module code:** UZSNPA-30-3

**Level:** Level 6

**For implementation from:** 2023-24

**UWE credit rating:** 30

**ECTS credit rating:** 15

**Faculty:** Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

**Department:** HAS Dept 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:** Not applicable

**Features:** Not applicable

**Educational aims:** See Learning Outcomes.

Generic Graduate Skill: Communication

Specific Strand: Seminar discussions/Group work

Practiced, evidenced

Generic Graduate Skill: Professionalism

Specific Strand: Following collegiate norms/working to deadlines

Practiced, evidenced

Generic Graduate Skill: Critical Thinking

Specific Strand: Assessment aims and outcomes

Practiced, evidenced

Generic Graduate Skill: Digital Fluency

Specific Strand: n/a

Generic Graduate Skill: Innovative and Enterprising

Specific Strand: Students exercise judgement in selecting texts to review

Practiced, evidenced

Generic Graduate Skill: Forward Looking

Specific Strand: n/a

Generic Graduate Skill: Emotional Intelligence

Specific Strand: n/a

Evidenced

Generic Graduate Skill: Globally Engaged

Specific Strand: Module content and assessments focussed on local-global interlinkages

Practiced, evidenced

**Outline syllabus:** The following are examples of selected areas of contemporary sociological critique and research which might be included in any one year in which the course is taught.

Disciplinary Society

Theorist: Michel Foucault

Issues: The growth of detailed, rationalised, regulation and normalisation of the whole social body; the creation of the modern subject.

Research: e.g. the nature and history of prisons, of the asylum, of schools and hospitals - and other disciplinary institutions; the nature of micro-power in such settings; and associated methodological issues.

Ethnic hatred and mass violence in the modern era

Theorists: Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Slavoj Zizek, Zygmunt Bauman

Issues: Scientific rationality, mass violence and domination; the persistence of ethnic identity and nationalisms; the role of collective affect in social relations, etc.

Research: e.g. total war, racism and genocidal killing; and associated methodological issues.

Mass society, the culture industry, mass consumption, and mass media.

Theorists: Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer, Jean Baudrillard.

Issues: mass consumption, mass media and the dangers of mindlessness; domination and control in a world of lost of subjectivity and self-reflection, etc.

Research: e.g. consumption, lifestyle and identity; mass politics and the mass media; fame and notoriety, etc; and associated methodological issues.

Jurgen Habermas's defence of Modernity and Enlightenment reason

Issues: Universal human interests; the rescue of substantive rationalisation; communicative action; system and lifeworld, etc.

Research: e.g. work on new forms of participatory democracy; and associated methodological issues

Globalisation and late capitalism

Theorists: Mike Featherstone, David Harvey, Anthony Giddens, Scott Lash, Manuel Castells, Roland Robertson, Martin Albrow

Issues: Trans-national capitalism; mass consumption; the development and influence of communications technologies; the globalisation of culture; the globalization of everyday life; the mobility of capital and labour; the globalization of political practices; the global city, etc.

Research: e.g. (nation) state; everyday life of global cities; local-global businesses; and associated methodological issues.

### Postmodernity and Postmodernism

Theorists Jean Francois Lyotard, Frederic Jameson, Jean Baudrillard, David Harvey, Zygmunt Bauman.

Issues: The totalitarian threats of Modernity, Enlightenment, and grand theory; social and political difference and diversity; critique of late capitalism, etc.

Research: Work on social diversity, etc; and associated methodological issues.

### Risk society

Theorists: Ulrich Beck, John Bellamy Foster, Anthony Giddens, Alberto Melucci, Scott Lash.

Issues: Environmental destruction; unsteerable political/social/economic processes; risk aspects of scientific research and development, Reflexive Modernity, New Social Movements, etc.

Research: e.g. networks of renewal, institutional and individual reflexivity; ecological crisis; and associated methodological issues.

## Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

**Teaching and learning methods:** See Educational Aims and Assessment.

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

**MO1** Demonstrate an advanced reflective understanding of key concepts and theoretical approaches developed within selected contemporary sociological critiques of modern society

**MO2** Demonstrate an awareness of social context, of social diversity and inequality, and their impact on the lives of individuals and groups

**MO3** Demonstrate an understanding of comparative empirical research findings in selected areas of contemporary sociological research

**MO4** Demonstrate some understanding of social processes underpinning social change

**MO5** Appreciate the complexity of human behaviour and social phenomena, through the evaluation, synthesising and application of evidence and the production of reasoned sociological argument

**MO6** Appreciate the contextual relationships between specific texts of sociological critique and broader sociological perspectives on contemporary social problems (e.g. genocide, economic instability, ecological degradation, etc.)

**Hours to be allocated:** 300

**Contact hours:**

Independent study/self-guided study = 228 hours

Face-to-face learning = 72 hours

Total = 300

**Reading list:** The reading list for this module can be accessed at [readinglists.uwe.ac.uk](https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsnpa-30-3.html) via the following link <https://uwe.rl.talis.com/modules/uzsnpa-30-3.html>

## **Part 4: Assessment**

**Assessment strategy:** Assessment on this module consists of 100% Coursework:

Assessment part A: Book Review (2,000 words)

Assessment part B: Essay (2,000 words)

The assessment strategy has been designed to enable students to meet the learning outcomes of the module, which include both subject-specific knowledge and skills and also transferable skills directly aligned to UWE strategy on producing Ready and Able Graduates. This is because both assignments are designed specifically to link

cutting-edge social theory to substantive real-world issues and problems (e.g. economic and ecological sustainability).

The module's learning outcomes and assessment strategy support the Sociology programme's fulfilment of the relevant QAA benchmarks and have been designed to take account of the level descriptors pertinent to a third year optional module.

All assignments on the module are summative.

Coursework (Book Review and Essay) assessments are utilised on this module because coursework is a suitable medium for testing a range of aptitudes required of the learner – referencing and bibliographical skills, preparatory reading and research skills, working to deadlines, synthesising summarisation and evaluation skills, selfreflection, organising academic work, ICT competencies, etc.

Study Skills deficits (including plagiarism) are addressed at the preparatory stages of the assignments. Students are advance-prepared for the demands of the assignments, including by receiving detailed guidance on how to avoid inadvertent plagiarism.

Opportunities for formative assessment will be given during the module, such as in class discussion and feedback.

**Assessment tasks:**

**Set Exercise** (First Sit)

Description: Book Review (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3, MO5, MO6

**Written Assignment** (First Sit)

Description: Essay (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

**Set Exercise (Resit)**

Description: Book Review (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO3, MO5, MO6

**Written Assignment (Resit)**

Description: Essay (2000 words)

Weighting: 50 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

**Part 5: Contributes towards**

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Sociology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology with Sociology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Criminology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology and Sociology [Sep][FT][Frenchay][3yrs] BA (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21



Sociology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Criminology with Sociology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Criminology with Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology with Criminology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Criminology and Sociology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Criminology and Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BA (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Criminology and Sociology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Criminology with Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Sociology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Criminology and Sociology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BA (Hons) 2019-20

Criminology with Sociology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2018-19

Psychology with Sociology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] - Withdrawn BSc (Hons) 2018-19

Sociology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BA (Hons) 2018-19