

# AS Level Sociology (9699)

## Unit One: The Study of Sociology

### Recommended Prior Knowledge

This unit provides a general introduction to the study of Sociology and so no specific prior knowledge is required. However, familiarity with scientific methodology and awareness of the possible differences between science and subjects within the humanities would be helpful. Appreciation of cultural diversity and the many different forms of society, both past and present, would also enhance the learning experience.

### Context

The unit provides an introduction to many of the key concepts and theories on which contemporary sociological investigation is based. The content of the unit is therefore closely linked to other parts of the syllabus. For example, the main sociological perspectives, which are discussed in unit one, appear again as a major underlying theme in units three, four, five and seven.

### Outline

The unit examines the origins of Sociology as an academic subject and the different views about the value of studying society in a rigorous and systematic way. The relationship between Sociology and scientific forms of investigation is reviewed and consideration is given to the differences between sociological problems and social problems. The relationship between the individual and society is investigated from different sociological perspectives and the key concepts of socialisation and social identity are introduced.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
1.1	<p>The Study of Sociology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the development of Sociology as a reasoned and systematic study.</li> <li>• Understand the issues in the debate about the scientific status of Sociology.</li> <li>• Assess the role of values in Sociology.</li> </ul>	<p>Outline the development of Sociology as an academic subject in the nineteenth century. Emphasise the links to industrialisation and urbanisation and discuss the aims of the major thinkers: Comte, Durkheim, Marx, and Weber.</p> <p>Consider different views about the scientific status of sociological investigation and the role of values in Sociology. Provide examples of the ways in which sociological knowledge has been used and consider links with different areas of social policy.</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp1-13 for overall coverage of this part of the unit. The contribution of Durkheim, Marx and Weber to the development of Sociology is included as part of the discussion of sociological perspectives, pp13-29.</p> <p><a href="http://www.mcmaster.ca/socscideas/w3virtsoclib/theories.htm">www.mcmaster.ca/socscideas/w3virtsoclib/theories.htm</a> provides a useful summary of the main sociological theories.</p> <p>For a map of sociological theories and other study notes on the subject, see: <a href="http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/curric/soc/theory.htm">www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/curric/soc/theory.htm</a></p> <p>For articles on a range of sociological theories, see <a href="http://www.theory.org.uk">www.theory.org.uk</a></p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse the relationship between Sociology and social policy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Class activity</b></p> <p>Invite the class to reflect on the nature of science: its aims and methods of investigation, and the ethical and social responsibilities that scientists face. Through discussion with the class, compile a checklist of the differences and similarities between the scientific study of nature and the study of society in the form of sociological investigation. Encourage the class to reflect on the differences between physical nature (inanimate objects in particular) and human behaviour.</p>	
1.2	<p>The Individual and Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe structuralist and interactionist views of the relationship between the individual and society.</li> <li>Assess the arguments used to support the claim that human behaviour is determined largely by social factors.</li> <li>Discuss the nature of social order, social control and social change.</li> </ul>	<p>Use basic examples to distinguish between structuralist and interactionist views of the relationship between the individual and society. Point out the emphasis on social constraint and the determining power of social forces in the structuralist perspective. Note the emphasis on meaning and the creative role of the individual in the interactionist view of social construction.</p> <p>Review the arguments and evidence used by sociologists to support the claim that human behaviour is determined largely by social factors. Consider counter-arguments, including the contribution of biological and psychological studies of human behaviour.</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp13-14 provides a summary of the structuralist and interactionist perspectives.</p> <p>The Classic Collection video, Making Sense of Sociological Theory, provides an accessible introduction to the different sociological perspectives.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp36-37 summarises the evidence for the importance of socialisation. This theme is developed between pp37-42.</p>
		<p><b>Class activity</b></p> <p>For this activity, provide the class with examples of contrasting behaviour patterns in different cultural groups. Invite discussion of the possible reasons for such cultural diversity and consider similar examples</p>	<p><a href="http://www.socioweb.com">www.socioweb.com</a> for various materials on sociological theory and socialisation.</p> <p><a href="http://www.sociology.org.uk">www.sociology.org.uk</a> for helpful revision guides and summary notes on sociological theory and the socialisation process. Search the site using</p>

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
		from your own part of the world.	these and other relevant concepts from the unit. See, in particular, the material on Culture and Identity in the Pathways section of the site.
1.3	<p>Socialisation, Culture and Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the processes of learning and socialisation.</li> <li>• Discuss culture, norms, values, beliefs, ideology and power as elements in the social construction of reality.</li> <li>• Consider the main theories of sub-culture and youth culture.</li> <li>• Discuss the construction of social identities, with reference to gender, class and age.</li> </ul>	<p>Use the work of G.H. Mead to illustrate how the processes of learning and socialisation are crucial in the development of a social self among young children. Widen this into a discussion of the agencies of socialisation and the various mechanisms involved in the social construction of reality – norms, values, beliefs, ideology, power, etc.</p> <p>Consider how the identities of different groups in society are socially constructed. Use the examples of childhood, adolescence and older-age groups in particular. The study of childhood by Philip Aries is particularly useful for discussing the construction of social identities.</p> <p>Ensure that the class is aware of the contribution of post-modernist thinkers to sociological debates about culture and identity in contemporary societies.</p> <p><b>Class activity</b></p> <p>Invite the class to prepare a presentation on gender differences in their own society. Different members of the class might focus on the roles that society assigns to males and females at different points in the life cycle i.e. infancy, adolescence, young adults, older-age groups, etc. Compare the class's findings with evidence about gender differences in other societies. Use the activity to reinforce the class's understanding of the concept of the social construction of reality.</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, p23 and pp32-37 discusses the process of socialisation in general and also includes material on childhood and the ideas of G.H. Mead.</p> <p>Haralambos, pp895-907, provides a readable account of different theories of culture, sub-culture and youth culture.</p> <p>Barnard, A... et al, pp 36-42 examines the construction of social identities, with reference to gender, children and other social groups.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp25-30 provides an account of the post-modernist analysis of culture and identity.</p> <p>For a helpful introduction to post-modernist theory reference the Classic Collection video, From Modernity to Post Modernity.</p>