**Sociology  
Programme Handbook  
2023-24  
YEAR 1 and YEAR 2 (Pre-Honours)**

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**Sociology Student Adviser (pre-honours):** Karen Dargo

**(honours):** Fiona Kelly

Student Advisers from other subject areas will be able to help you too:

**SPS Student Advisers:** <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/support/team>

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**If you require this document (or any of the internal University of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in this document) in an alternative format e.g. large print, on coloured paper etc, please contact** [**student.sps@ed.ac.uk**](mailto:student.sps@ed.ac.uk) **or call +44 (0)131 651 3060 and we will be happy to help.**

**SOCIOLOGY YEARS 1 AND 2 HANDBOOK**

**2023-24**

**This handbook should be read in addition to The School of Social and Political Science 2023-24 General Undergraduate Student Handbook which contains general information about programmes in SPS, see**

[**https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/your-studies/student-handbooks**](https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/your-studies/student-handbooks)

This Handbook is intended to help you organise your work during your pre-honours years and to give you information on processes and procedures in the sociology subject area. Although a lot of it focuses, of necessity, on rules and regulations, we hope that these are a minor feature of your experience of sociology, and that you enjoy the next two or three years.

Remember that if anything is unclear or goes wrong, there are a lot of people who can help: your course teachers, your Student Advisers (**Fiona Kelly** or **Karen Dargo**) the Undergraduate Programme Director (**Michael Rosie**), and the Head of Sociology (**Hugo Gorringe**). Academic staff keep guidance and feedback hours in which we see students individually (see the times on our doors and on staff web pages), and our room and telephone numbers and electronic mail addresses can be found on the Sociology website (see below).

You will also find it helpful to use the University website to access the Sociology pages. You can go directly to the Sociology home page at [www.sociology.ed.ac.uk](http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk), or reach it by following the Schools and Departments link on the University home page. Sociology is located within the School of Social and Political Science situated predominantly in the Chrystal Macmillan Building.

Finally, although we make every effort to ensure that the information in the Handbook is accurate and up to date, we can’t always foresee changes and new developments. We will make sure you are kept informed of any changes that affect you, via your University (i.e. sms) email account.

All dates in this Handbook are given with respect to semesters. Dates of semesters are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2023-24** |  |
| **Semester 1** | 18 September 2023 - 01 December 2023 (end of teaching)  11 - 21 December 2023: Examination period |  |
| **Semester 2** | 15 January 2024 - 05 April 2024 (end of teaching)  29 April – 24 May: Examination period  Resit Examinations take place in August |  |

**INTRODUCTION - A BIT OF PAST AND PRESENT**

The Department of Sociology began in 1964 when Tom Burns (1913-2001) was appointed the first Professor. Sociological research and some teaching had taken place here for several years before that - perhaps represented most notably by two famous monographs, Burns's own *The Management of Innovation* (written with G. Stalker) published in 1961 and Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* which was originally published in Edinburgh in 1956. Burns published his acclaimed *Erving Goffman* in 1992.

In the summer of 2001, the Department became a subject area of the School of Social and Political Science, which also includes Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS), Politics and International Relations, Social Policy, Social Anthropology and Social Work.

In 2018 the Subject Area (including Sustainable Development) underwent a Teaching Programme Review as part of the University’s quality assurance procedures. This was conducted by a team comprising both internal reviewers from other Schools in the University and external reviewers from other universities. The review team commended several aspects of teaching in Sociology. In summary, they concluded:

"The Review Team found that Sociology and Sustainable Development have effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice."

The Sociology subject area at Edinburgh is consistently ranked in the top 20 sociology departments in the world according to the gold-standard QS ratings.

Central, in our view, to the project of sociology is the idea that individual lives and public issues can be understood fully only by placing them in their social context. So we seek:

* to promote learning and scholarship of the highest quality, with research and teaching mutually supportive, encompassing a wide variety of topics and perspectives, relevant both to Scotland and to the wider international world;
* to contribute to critical public debate about social institutions, and to equip our students with the necessary skills to engage in and evaluate contributions to that debate;
* to foster a culture of participation, collegiality and free and rigorous inquiry.

We seek to make access as equitable as possible, for example, for those of different genders, ages, cultures, nationalities, and social classes. Chrystal Macmillan Building has full disabled access.

**Where we are** Sociology staff are housed in various places, including Chrystal Macmillan Building (15A George Square), 21 and 22 George Square, 18 and 21 Buccleuch Place. Staff post notice of their guidance and feedback hours on their doors and web pages. These are times during which they will be available to see students individually. If you cannot come during guidance and feedback hours, please make an appointment to see the member of staff concerned, by contacting them directly. Leave a message, telephone, use MyEd or send an email.

**Contact details for all Sociology staff can be found here:**

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/subject-area/sociology/people-intro>

**DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND COURSES**

**Programme Specification for the MA in Sociology and its associated joint degrees, University of Edinburgh**

In 2000, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education published a benchmark statement for sociology to "provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes". Amongst other things, this statement provides "general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes" for programmes such as the Edinburgh honours degree in sociology and its joint degrees. The Programme Specification has been written with this in mind and can be downloaded at: <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/dps/utscygy.htm>

**HONOURS DEGREE CURRICULA**

If you are taking honours, you will be registered either for Single Honours Sociology, or for a Joint Honours, or ‘With’ degree. The structures of our ‘With’ degrees differ from programme to programme so you should check on DRPS for the specific requirements of your programme (see also page 9 of this handbook). The following shows the **normal** curriculum for the **Single Honours** degree. Any deviation from this curriculum **must** be approved by the Head of Sociology.

**JOINT HONOURS AND 'WITH' SOCIOLOGY DEGREES**

As well as via Single Honours, Sociology can be studied through **Joint Honours** with the following subjects (and Schools):

**Law** (Law)

**Economics** (Economics)

**Geography** (Geosciences)

**Politics** (Social and Political Science)

**Psychology** (Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences)

**Social Anthropology** (Social and Political Science)

**Social Policy** (Social and Political Science)

Or through: Sociology **with Quantitative Methods**

In addition, the **MA in Religious Studies** offers students the option of “Combined Studies” with Sociology and the **MA Sustainable Development** offers Sociology as one of the options for the main subject pathway.

**IMPORTANT: Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study for joint and with degrees**

The required course requirements differ according to each degree curricula; students should check their specific degree programme requirements. Please see the Degree Regulations and Programme of Study (DRPS) for your programme and ensure your course choices comply here: [DPTs for SPS Programmes](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/23-24/dpt/drps_sps.htm)

You should consult the DRPS to ensure that you are following the correct curriculum for your degree programme. If you have any doubts then you should speak to your Student Advisor.

**You must become familiar with the particular requirements of your degree and ensure that you do the correct number of options, and so on.**

**PROGRESSING TO YEAR 2**

To be eligible to progress to Year 2 of the Sociology programme students must:

* Have achieved a course mark of 40 or higher for Sociology 1A and Sociology 1B

If you are on a joint or a ‘with’ degree programme there will be additional requirements for progression. Please ensure that you check the requirements for your programme at:

<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/23-24/dpt/drps_sps.htm>

Students should also have achieved 120 credits by the end of the academic year. It is possible to progress into Year 2 if you have achieved at least 80 credits, but will only be considered if a pass has been obtained in the compulsory courses.

**Choosing Courses for Year 2** Course pre-selection will open at the end of the semester 2 exam period. At this time, returning students will receive an email inviting them to pre-select their courses to allow for allocations over the summer period. The link below will take you to the pre-selection section of our website, where you will find the relevant information closer to the time. We strongly advise you submit your pre-selection choices by the deadline stated to ensure you have the best chance of receiving your preferred choice of course.

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/your-studies/choosing-your-courses>

It is important that you follow the instructions you are given to pre-register for courses during the spring and summer.

**PROGRESSING TO HONOURS**

To automatically progress to Year 3 (honours) of the Sociology programme students must:

* Have achieved an overall mark of 50 or above in both Sociology 2A and Sociology 2B.
* Have passed 240 credits in the first two years of study

If you are on a joint or a ‘with’ degree programme there will be additional requirements for progression. Please ensure that you check the requirements for your programme at:

<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/23-24/dpt/drps_sps.htm> OR

<https://path.is.ed.ac.uk/degrees/SPS>

Students who do not meet these criteria will be required to make an appeal for entry into Sociology honours. Students whose appeals are unsuccessful will not be permitted to enter into Sociology honours, but may be eligible to transfer either to another honours degree (if they have the appropriate prerequisites and the subject area grants permission) or to the BA degree.

**Choosing Courses for Year 3** Course pre-selection will open at the end of the semester 2 exam period. At this time, returning students will receive an email inviting them to pre-select their courses to allow for allocations over the summer period. The link below will take you to the pre-selection section of our website, where you will find the relevant information closer to the time. We strongly advise you submit your pre-selection choices by the deadline stated to ensure you have the best chance of receiving your preferred choice of course.

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/your-studies/choosing-your-courses>

**Course evaluations**

At the end of each Semester, you will be asked to complete a course evaluation questionnaire covering all aspects of the course and your studies.

For more details on how we gather and use your feedback to enhance courses and the quality of our degree programmes, the University Student Partnership Agreement and student representation, please see our Student Voice Policy at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice>

**STUDYING ABROAD IN JUNIOR HONOURS**

The university has academic links that enable students to broaden their experience by studying abroad during Junior Honours. If you have chosen this route you will have a productive and exciting year and that you will return to Edinburgh invigorated by your experiences. A few **important** points need to be noted:

1. In order to proceed to Senior Honours, you are required to pass a full credit-load of courses that you study whilst abroad.

2. You are required to take courses whilst abroad that are broadly comparable to the **compulsory** courses that you would have taken in Junior Honours in Edinburgh. For Single Honours this entails **Social Theory**, **Designing and Doing Social Research**, and **Doing Survey Research** (all of which are 20 credit courses). The regulations for Joint degrees vary so you must consult the relevant Handbooks. Sometimes, however, it is not possible to study comparable courses whilst away. For example, students sometimes find that courses that provide training in quantitative methods are not available, in which case it is normal for the student to be required to take Doing Survey Research as one of their year 4 courses. Or there may be no courses devoted to social theory, in which case the student would be required to take Social Theory as one of their year 4 courses. **YOU MUST KEEP YOUR EXCHANGE COORDINATOR (Nick Prior) INFORMED ABOUT YOUR COURSE CHOICES WHILST ABROAD AND REPORT ANY DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING EQUIVALENT COURSES *IMMEDIATELY* SO THAT YOU CAN BE PROPERLY ADVISED ABOUT THE APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION.**  And do remember that if you need to make up the compulsory courses in year 4, this reduces the number of option courses that you will be able to take in Senior Honours.

3. The marks that you obtain whilst abroad will NOT go towards the final degree class that you are awarded in Edinburgh. Your degree class will be awarded on the basis of the grades received for your Honours Project/dissertation and the other courses that you take in Senior Honours.

4. Being abroad during Junior Honours is liable to impact on your Project. A number of project preparation meetings are held during Junior Honours, students must register their project title and supervisor by the end of Semester 1 in Junior Honours and submit their research proposal and ethical audit during Semester 2. Students normally conduct data collection for their projects after the exam diet in May and/or during the summer vacation. If your project involves data collection it is expected that you complete this before the start of Semester 1 in Senior Honours. Whilst you clearly are not expected to attend the project preparation meetings, **YOU ARE EXPECTED TO KEEP TO THE REST OF THE PROJECT TIMETABLE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE.** If you do not, you will seriously disadvantage yourself. You should email potential supervisors in October-November. The sociology staff webpages provide details of staff research interests and will also help you to select a suitable supervisor. If you have difficulty in selecting a supervisor, contact the Projects Convenor (Michael Rosie) **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** for advice.

Finally – and at risk of sounding like killjoys – remember that you are Edinburgh’s ambassadors abroad. Please avoid behaviour that would damage the reputation of the University of Edinburgh or jeopardise the exchange programme for other students in the future.

**FEEDBACK**

Sociologyhas had extensive discussions within the subject group, as well as within the School of Social and Political Science, about how we can meet our aspirations to deliver the highest quality feedback, assessment and learning environment to our students.

One important step is to ensure that all of our staff and students are fully informed of our procedures. We thus provide below a summary of measures in place.

Feedback takes many forms including:

• detailed feedback sheets for coursework

• written or verbal feedback on tutorial presentations and performance

• general and individualised feedback on exams, including opportunities to view and discuss exam performance

• Ongoing opportunities for informal feedback and discussion with teaching staff during Guidance and Feedback hours

Our online information on feedback and assessment has been vastly expanded and centralized. It contains guidance on ‘writing essays’, ‘making the most of feedback’ ‘study involvement and representation’, special circumstances, etc. The same web-page provides information on the latest developments in assessment and feedback. You can view these pages at: <https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/undergraduate/your-studies/assessment-regulations/coursework>

**SOCIOLOGY PRIZES**

There are three prizes awarded in Year 1:

The Adam Ferguson prize (£100) is awarded to the top performing student on Sociology 1A

The Patrick Geddes prize (£100) is awarded to the top performing student on Sociology 1B

The Tom McGlew prize (£100) is awarded to the student with the best combined performance in Sociology 1A and 1B

There are three prizes awarded in Year 2:

The Dorothy Smith prize (£100) is awarded to the top performing student on Sociology 2a

The Gita Sen prize (£100) is awarded to the top performing student on Sociology 2b.

The Most Creative and Innovative Methods for Research Proposal

**PEER SUPPORT**

Peer Support in the context of the University means a student with more experience sharing their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise with a new or less experienced student. Peer Support may focus around advancing your academic work, providing opportunities to socialise with other students within your School or offering additional support to ensure your wellbeing while at University. Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) and the University have been widely developing the Peer Support Project across the University since 2012.

See Pals groups here: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/list>

**SocPals – Sociology Peer Support** SocPals sessions are open to anyone who is taking Sociology 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b regardless of your year and degree. SocPals runs study sessions led by 2nd to 4th-year Sociology students. The sessions give you a chance to discuss the topics of the sociology lectures in more depth, as well as study skills such as how to read and prepare for lectures and tutorials, how to take good notes, write essays and do the end-of-semester exam.

It's also a great way to get to know other students from your course and from other years. It's all very informal and biscuits are guaranteed, so come along!

Information about this years sessions will be announced at the end of Sociology lectures and new session dates will be emailed to you when available.

Join SocPals at: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/list> or become a Pals leader: <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/peerlearningsupport/becomevolunteer>

**Sociology Society (SocSoc)**

The Edinburgh Sociology Society is a dynamic group that aims to encourage a lively exchange between those studying or interested in Sociology. We welcome undergraduates, postgraduates, staff and non-students alike, and encourage all members to participate in the events and direction of the society. See Appendix 1 for contact details.

**British Sociological Association (BSA)**

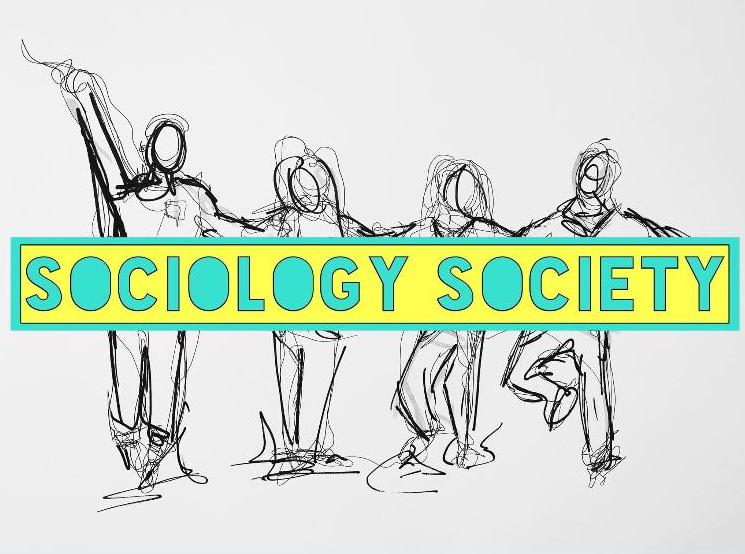
The BSA is the professional association for sociologists in Britain. You are eligible to join and encouraged to do so. Student membership is available at a discount rate and includes six issues of the journal *Sociology*. Its web site can be found at <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/>

Here are a couple of other sociological associations you might find interesting:

The European Sociological Association: <http://www.europeansociology.org>

The American Sociological Association: <http://www.asanet.org/>

**APPENDIX 1 - SOCIOLOGY SOCIETY**



**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/edunisocsoc>

**Email:** [edisociologysociety@gmail.com](mailto:edisociologysociety@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/view/sociologysoc>

**Instagram:** [**https://www.instagram.com/uofesociologysociety/**](https://www.instagram.com/uofesociologysociety/)

**Welcome to SocSoc, a welcoming space that brings sociology students together**

We know that this year feels different than most, but the team at SocSoc is here to ensure that this community continues to flourish! Traditionally, we meet weekly during the semester for drinks, theatre visits, pub quizzes, ceilidhs, movie nights, ghost tours, garden parties, culinary events. This year, our events will be taking on a variety of creative forms forms to ensure that everyone can get involved and feel comfortable in this space.

**You name it, we make it happen**

Those who are new to the discipline can use the society to build relationships and ask questions in a relaxed and friendly environment. The more weather-worn sociologists can use the time to exchange ideas or find respite from their research! As well as regular gatherings, we hope (Covid permitted!) to provide the much-loved large group outings, seminars, and collaborative spaces for all things Sociology.

**Edinburgh’s first student sociology journal**

We’ve also got The Panopticon, Edinburgh’s first student-lead sociological journal. The Panopticon provides a platform for budding sociologists to share their work, and we publish new themed issues each year! Check out The Panopticon on Facebook if you are interested in writing and want to get involved.

**The Edinburgh Sociology Society has something for everyone.**

All are welcome, and we hope to meet you soon! Keep an eye on our Facebook and EUSA pages for upcoming events in 2023-24.