

## Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

### Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	Social Sciences / City
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	BA (Hons) Sociology Full-time
4.	Normal Duration:	3 years
5.	UCAS Code:	L300

### 6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

- \* How is society organised?
- \* How might globalisation change people's experiences of work?
- \* How are young people perceived in the educational system?
- \* How can eating disorders be understood?
- \* How does religion shape identities?

The BA (Hons) Sociology course at Nottingham Trent University is specifically designed to explore and provide answers to such sociological questions. The course embodies not only the pursuit of understanding, critique and argument essential to sociology, but also a call to action. Through a course design that emphasises the continuous interplay between theory and practice, students will develop both in-depth knowledge and practical skills in being a Public Sociologist. Our 3 year, full-time course offers rigorous academic study in a real-world context. Each year, you'll study key sociological concepts, debates, theories, and methods, and be prepared for the world of work through our new BA Sociology Graduate Employability Development Package (which includes a service learning work placement). After a core Level 4, which promotes group cohesion and identity - you'll be able to choose from an exciting range of sociological optional modules at Levels 5 and 6 to personalise your degree. Study skills training, blended learning opportunities, real-world and academic assessments, an opportunity to study abroad at Level 5 on the Erasmus scheme, all prepare you for graduate employment and lifelong learning. All opportunities are informed by our members of staff that are all committed teachers and active researchers within the field of Sociology. Our BA (Hons) Sociology has received excellent feedback from external examiners and employers regard Nottingham Trent University graduates very highly.

The educational aims of BA (Hons) Sociology are:

1. To produce graduates who demonstrate extensive knowledge and understanding of the discipline of sociology, including sociological concepts, debates, theories, and methods, and including issues of sustainability;
2. To produce intellectually agile professional sociologists who have experience of 'doing' sociology, through critical reflection, theorising and independent research, which is underpinned by values and ethics in the discipline;
3. To produce creative, enthusiastic, confident and ambitious graduates, who possess a range of skills and experience relevant to professional employment and higher degree studies, including autonomy, accountability, judgement, team-working and leadership, and who understand and can thrive in the changing landscape of work and study;
4. To produce graduates who are open to thoughtful participation in local, national and global communities, who appreciate diversity, and respect human rights and dignity;
5. To produce graduates with the information, communication and organisational skills to work effectively face-to-face and online, and who show the capacity to judge self-efficacy and to give and receive feedback.

7. **Course outcomes**

Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.

**Knowledge and understanding**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate extensive knowledge of classical and contemporary empirical sociological perspectives and theories in making critical sense of the social world and lived experience (B)
2. Critically evaluate how a wide range of social and cultural forces, contexts and processes impact upon individuals, groups and social institutions, locally, nationally and internationally (B)

3. Critically apply sociological concepts to the analysis of social diversity and inequality (B)
4. Critically review, consolidate and extend coherent bodies of knowledge relating to a range of complex social issues (B)
5. Engage knowledgeably in debates relevant to chosen areas of academic specialisation (B)
6. Design, implement, analyse and disseminate sociological research, which is underpinned by an awareness of values and ethics in the discipline and which shows a demonstration of personal autonomy and judgement (B)
7. Critically evaluate the changing landscape of graduate employment and one's own place within it

**Skills, qualities and attributes**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

1. Evaluate critically and synthesise information and evidence from diverse sources (B)
2. Apply diagnostic, analytical and creative skills and judgement, in order to make and present reasoned arguments (B)
3. Communicate effectively (B)
4. Use IT tools to identify, organise, process and present information, and to work with others (B)
5. Plan and manage self-directed learning, accept responsibility in determining and achieving appropriate outcomes (B)
6. Manage competing demands and meet deadlines (B)
7. Engage productively with University and the world beyond NTU

*(B) implies that the aim relates to the Sociology Benchmark Statement. Subject benchmarks are 'a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated' (QAA, 2007: iii).*

**8. Learning and teaching methods**

Members of staff are committed teachers and the Sociology Team has a close relationship with the Higher Education Academy, which promotes learning and teaching. We offer a variety of teaching and learning methods across the course. In the course of the three years, you will encounter methods such as:

- \* Large-group formal lectures.
- \* Seminars. These are smaller, more informal groups, where you check your knowledge and understanding of lecture material/extra reading material completed for the seminar.
- \* You'll have regular meetings with your personal tutor to help with your academic development.
- \* Workshops of varying sizes. This learning and teaching method is a mixture of lecture and seminar. It can involve, for instance, short lecture inputs, small group discussions, large-group feedback, listening to invited speakers, engaging in group tasks, and watching video/audio clips.
- \* Computer room sessions.
- \* Online learning. This involves having online lectures to read, and participating in online discussion groups in our Virtual Learning Environment - Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW). You will also have opportunities to do collaborative work via technology.
- \* Placement learning. You'll be taking a core Sociology and Service Learning (Work Placement) module at Level 5, offering opportunities for skills development in the area of planning and managing learning beyond the University.

\* Field trips. These are offered on an optional basis in some modules, to apply sociological knowledge to real-life situations.

\* Independent project work.

\* Individual, student-led meetings. These are available to talk through essay plans and to have feedback upon work that has been completed.

\* Supervision meetings. At Level 6, you complete an independent project – a dissertation or report on a topic of your own choice. You meet regularly with an individual member of staff to plan your project, and to share drafts of your chapters for feedback.

\* Independent reading. You will be required to access and read particular articles/books for particular seminars/workshops. We ask you to be aware that the teaching and learning methods mentioned here are a starting point for your work, not the end point. University students 'read for' a degree. Independent reading is expected and makes a significant difference to grades.

Our expectations of you in these teaching and learning environments develop over the three years, as we seek to help you move from having relatively high levels of support at Level 4 to being increasingly independent learners at Level 6. We do not require you to have studied Sociology prior to joining us but even if you have, the first year moves beyond what you have already studied. Therefore, learning and teaching at Level 4 reflects this - we provide a safe environment in which you can start or develop your engagement with Sociology. From Level 5, expectations in learning and teaching environments start to move more towards student-led contributions. Small research projects offer opportunities to increase your independent learning skills. At Level 6, independent learning increases - a key feature of the final year is the 40 credit dissertation or report.

#### 9. **Assessment methods**

The assessment methods you're likely to encounter on this course include:

- Essays;
- Seen exams (1 each year);
- Projects;

- Portfolios;
- Literature Reviews;
- Group and Individual Presentations;
- Book Proposals;
- Blog Entries;
- Policy briefings and exercises;
- Multi-Media projects;
- Reflections on Artefacts.

The first term of Level 4 offers you the opportunity to settle into university life: all modules are core, and apart from in one module where you write an essay in term 1, with support from tutors, to help you gauge your progress at university, the work you do for and in classes is not graded - instead it assists you in moving towards graded work at the end of the year.

At Level 5, you'll want to gauge your progress as you move through the year, so most modules involve two pieces of graded assessment. There are also many opportunities to complete ungraded activities in class to support your graded work.

At Level 6, you'll again want to gauge your progress in both terms, so most modules involve a piece of graded assessment in both terms. There are also many opportunities to complete ungraded activities in class to support your graded work.

Our assessment methods have been chosen so that by the end of year three, you'll be prepared for graduate employment and for higher degree studies.

The University uses Grade-Based Assessment, making clear what you need to do to achieve particular marks. We apply this to our modules in module specifications and handbooks, and assessment is thoroughly discussed in classes so you'll know what is expected of you.

You need to acquire 120 credits each year by passing your assessments.

All placement learning is assessed by coursework, not upon how you perform in the work placement itself.

The assessment for the dissertation/report and other first-hand research modules requires that you seek and gain ethical approval for your work.

10. **Course structure and curriculum**

You can join the BA (Hons) Sociology course whether or not you have studied Sociology before. The carefully-designed first year – where all modules are core to promote group cohesion and identity - introduces you to key concepts, theories, methods, debates and how sociology can be applied, if you are new to the subject. But, if you have previous experience of Sociology, you'll find that our first year takes you well beyond what you already know.

We've also embedded study skills for success at university into the Level 4 course, so you can expect high levels of support in year one. You'll learn how to make notes in lectures, make informed sociological contributions to seminars and workshops - face-to-face and online – how to conduct research, how to give presentations, how to develop portfolios, how to work with your peers at NTU and overseas, how to start to engage with the world beyond University, how to approach revision, examinations and coursework assignments and how to reference your work correctly.

In addition to the range of transferable skills developed in all our modules, a special feature of our course is the BA Sociology Graduate Employability Development Package – 20 credits of learning each year readying you for the world of work. At Level 4, you'll hear from a range of visiting speakers and engage in a short group project connecting sociology to the real world. At Level 5, you'll undertake a group service-learning placement, working with a local organisation on a meaningful and sociological project; and at Level 6, you'll explore your career options as a professional sociologist, via a personal project in which you'll interview people in fields you might like to enter once you graduate.

Separately from your course, Nottingham Trent University offers all students opportunities each year - free of charge - to study languages ranging from Russian to Mandarin Chinese. We encourage you to take advantage of this excellent way of enhancing your employability.

Level 5 develops directly from what you studied during your first year. You deepen your knowledge of sociological concepts, theories and debates and

start to apply your research methods training to small projects on topics that interest you. As indicated above, you will undertake a short service learning work placement. In addition to core modules, you choose two optional modules. You can also choose to study abroad in the second term as part of the Erasmus scheme. At Level 5 then, you are clearly journeying towards the goal of being an independent learner.

At Level 6, all of your research training is deployed to good effect - you complete an independent project (a dissertation or report) with guidance from an academic supervisor. This can be theoretical or draw upon interviews/observations/questionnaires, and can involve local community issues. This independent project is often the basis upon which students apply for MA/PhD courses (we offer MAs, and PhD supervision at NTU). Your theoretical knowledge is also expanded at Level 6, and you again choose two optional modules. As described above, you also undertake a module exploring career options. At Level 6, the research-informed teaching interests of staff are clearly reflected in the options made available.

#### **Level 4 (Year 1)**

##### **All modules are core**

Social Structure and Social Life (40 credits)  
Sociological Research Methods in Action (20 credits)  
Thinking Sociologically (20 credits)  
Sociology and the Real World (20 credits)  
Contemporary Social Lives (20 credits)

#### **Level 5 (Year 2)**

##### **Core (80 credits from 3 modules)**

Social Sustainability: From the Local to the Global (20 credits)  
Constructing Modern Societies (20 credits)  
Social Methodologies (20 credits)  
Sociology and Service Learning (Work Placement) (20 credits)

##### **Options (40 credits)**

**Options are divided into 2 lists. You are required to choose 1 module from each list. Current options are;**

Set A – choose 1 option from this set ·

Gender, Violence and Society

The Body in Society

The Sociology of Consumption

Set B – choose 1 option from this set .

Religion and Society .

Sociology of Education .

Political Sociology

**Level 6 (Year 3)**

**Core (80 credits from 2 modules)**

Theorising Contemporary Society (20 credits)

Sociology of Work and Career (20 credits)

Dissertation or Report for Local Organisation (40 credits)

**Options (40 credits)**

**Options are divided into 2 lists. You are required to choose 1 module from each list. Current options are;**

Set A (20 credits) – choose 1 option from this list .

Identities and Intimacies .

Sociology of Interpersonal Abuse .

Race, Culture and Society

Set B (20 credits) – choose 1 option from this list .

Youth, Culture and Society .

Technology and Society .

Gender, Sex and Sexuality

You should note that not all options will be able to be made available each year.

The curriculum supports the attainment of the course learning outcomes outlined earlier.

If you acquire 120 credits at Level 4 and do not progress to Level 5, you will be eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education in Sociology. If you acquire 120 credits at Levels 4 and 5 respectively, but do not progress to Level 6, you will be eligible for the award of Diploma of Higher Education in Sociology. If you have 120 credits from Level 4, 120 credits from Level 5, and 60 rather than 120 credits from Level 6, you will be eligible for the award of an Ordinary Degree in Sociology.

We have also organised the course to encourage you to develop 'intellectual curiosity and an enthusiasm for lifelong learning' (NTU Strategic Plan), and

we will support you to make applications for postgraduate courses at the completion of your undergraduate degree.

**11. Admission to the course**

**Entry requirements.**

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

**12. Support for learning**

We take support for learning, both academic and pastoral, very seriously.

However successful you have been at school/college, university is a new environment with new expectations. Study skills for success in Sociology at university are, therefore, embedded into our first year course, and developed in years two and three. But you are strongly encouraged to contact relevant module leaders if you need extra academic support in getting to grips with the material covered in their module. Members of staff are happy to meet up with you individually. There is also a Study Skills Advisor in the School of Social Sciences, who can offer you advice on request.

We ask you to ensure that you attend your classes and that you complete all the weekly readings/tasks required of you, so that we're all working together to ensure your academic success. A code of conduct detailing our expectations of you will be provided at induction. You will be taught at an early stage in your course, by our dedicated subject librarian, how to make use of the Library and Learning Resources, so that you can access and use a range of materials to support your own learning.

You will be inducted into using NOW at the beginning of your course - in NOW you will be able to locate module/course noticeboards, online discussions and module content, such as PowerPoint slides, as appropriate. You'll also submit all your essays (except your final independent project) via a drop box in NOW. Computer facilities are available for all students. The course offers you opportunities to prepare for life after university, with career planning talks/individual meetings with careers advisors and placement learning available to you in core modules and beyond.

We recognise very clearly that personal issues can affect your learning and

strongly encourage you not to struggle in silence if you need help. You will be allocated a personal tutor at the beginning of your first year, who you can approach for individual pastoral care as well as to discuss academic concerns. Personal tutors also meet regularly with their tutor groups. Each year has its own dedicated year tutor and there is also a Course Leader, all of whom are also available to approach for assistance. Registers are taken at classes and if your attendance gives cause for concern, your year tutor will write and ask you to come in for a meeting. External to the course, we have strong links with Student Support Services, and a clear referral system to services such as counselling. You are also strongly encouraged to make contact with Student Support Services yourself if you need assistance from them. You will be provided with details of how you can do this at induction.

All course information is also included in course handbooks which are distributed to you at induction and made available electronically via NOW. University-level information is also provided in a handbook and via the University's student website.

### 13. **Graduate destinations/employability**

The latest data for BA (Hons) Sociology graduates from NTU (DLHE 2015/16) are that: 90% progress to work or further study within 6 months of graduation.

Our graduates have entered employment in a variety of roles, such as: HR Graduate Trainee, Assisting Occupational Therapist, Events Manager, Sales Support Administrator, Police Officer, Residential Care Officer, Housing Support Officer, Caseworker, Junior Account Planner, Recruitment Consultant, Business Administrator and Mortgage Assessor. Popular areas for further study include: MA Sociology, MA Education, PGCE Primary Education/Life Long Learning, MA Human Resource Management and Postgraduate Entry Nursing.

BA (Hons) Sociology prepares students for graduate roles in business, and for further study particularly in education and management - all routes for which clear communication skills, developed in our course, are important. Some of these career/further study intentions have been developed via placement/volunteering opportunities at University.

**14. Course standards and quality**

The principal mechanisms by which the standards and quality of the provision are maintained and enhanced are:

- \* Course Committees and Staff-Student Consultation Forums, for which student representatives (elected by you) work with their designated year tutor to write reports for consideration; course committee minutes inform the development of the yearly Interim Course Review (ICR) - a report on the course for the previous academic year, which is reviewed at School and University level.
- \* Sociology Course Teaching Team meetings/Department of Sociology meetings;
- \* Assessment Boards, at which External Examiner Reports are received.
- \* University-level reviews.

We strongly encourage informal and constructive student feedback, either individually or via your student representatives, throughout the academic year, not just at Course Committees. We expect students with issues about a particular module to approach the relevant module leader in the first instance and as early as they can, so that issues can be resolved speedily and as close to their point of origin as possible. Module leaders also provide opportunities for student feedback at significant points in modules. You are also invited to offer end of year feedback.

External Examiners' Reports (2016-17) offer the following comments, which underline the quality of the BA (Hons) Sociology provision:

- 'A feature of the course is the way in which students are supported to develop sociological skills and imagination and apply these to real world issues.'
- 'There are some very stimulating assessment tasks which generate interesting and varied work.'
- 'Assessments that foster the creative application of sociology to real world issues.'
- 'There are many examples on the course of best practice relating to the development of students' academic skills and their application of knowledge in real life settings, so that they can make a difference in their lives after university.'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The quality and extent of written guidance for each assessment appears to be very helpful to students in communicating assessment expectations.'</li> </ul>
15.	<p><b>Assessment regulations</b> This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>
	The course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations.
16.	<p><b>Additional information</b> Collaborative partner(s): Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements: QAA Benchmark Statements for Sociology Course recognised by: Date this course specification approved: March 2018</p>
	<p>Any additional information: QAA Benchmark Statements: The QAA Benchmark Statements for Sociology have been referenced in the design of this course.</p>