



Maynooth University Department of Sociology



**First Year Handbook
2020-2021**

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A message from the Head of Department, Prof. Seán Ó Riain

Dear students,

Welcome to the Department of Sociology and the Centre for the Study of Politics at Maynooth. This will certainly be the most unusual start to the academic year that we have experienced and we know that you have many questions and concerns.

It is our goal to make the year enlightening and interesting for you (and therefore for us), but we also want that experience to be as safe and comfortable as possible. You can find out more about our exciting [undergraduate](#), [Masters](#) and [PhD](#) programmes through the relevant pages on our website - and about [what you can do with a degree in Politics or Sociology](#). Find out about the fascinating [research](#) of our staff and students, as well as the work of our [Centre for the Study of Politics](#).

You will also find details of our teaching approaches this year - in general and each module - on the page for our [Blended Learning Hub](#). This will be the main location for further information about the general departmental approach to teaching and learning this year and I would ask you to visit it regularly for updated information.

Please read the materials available on the Blended Learning Hub along with your outline Timetables, available on the undergraduate page, for a comprehensive view of the overall programme that you will follow (as far as we can predict it in these uncertain times).

Most of what you need to know is contained in this student handbook. But if you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

Beir bua

Seán

Professor Seán Ó Riain

Our Learning Community Key Principles

Our department is a community of teachers and learners who endeavour to learn from each other through relationships that are open, respectful and engaging.

We are a diverse group of people who respect each others' varying experiences and perspectives.

We engage in active discussion and debate in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect, in-person and online, inside and outside the classroom.

We respect others by avoiding disrupting their teaching and learning – we try to avoid talking during lectures, arriving late and/or leaving early from lectures, and other disruptive actions.

We respect the policies of each lecturer and tutor regarding classroom and module policies and practices, including the use of technology in the classroom.

We understand that the staff of the department are concerned for the welfare of students, for fairness and inclusiveness in our work and, overall, to promote learning in the ways that are judged to be most effective.

We understand that we can bring concerns that we might have to academic and administrative staff, and in particular to the Head of Department.

Introduction

This handbook is intended to provide you with the information you need about our programme for the year and our policies. You will find additional information about the Sociology Department on our website <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>, on the department noticeboards in Auxilia, and by following us on twitter @MU_Sociology

We are delighted to welcome you to the campus of the Maynooth University to begin your studies in Sociology. The First year Co-ordinator for 2020-2021 is Dr Mary Benson, Room 33 Auxilia Building. Phone: (01) 474 7149 email: mary.benson@mu.ie

Dr Mary Benson is also your lecturer for your first semester module SO152 and the tutor co-ordinator.

The Department of Sociology is situated in the Auxilia Building on the North Campus, behind the John Hume Building. The Departmental office is located at Room 1.5 (first floor). It is accessible by stairs and by lift. There is a Departmental post-box in the ground floor foyer where you will be required to submit administrative forms and essays.

Note for 2020: Due to current restrictions we may require online submission of essays and all information on this will be provided in your Modules.



We have prepared this handbook as a guide to our first year programme. Please retain it for reference throughout the academic year. If you have any query that is not answered in this handbook, if you require clarification about any issue relating to the academic programme or if you have any academic concerns during the year please contact Dr. Mary Benson in the first instance.

Apart from the standard programme organised for each undergraduate year, you may be interested in other initiatives that are run by the Department of Sociology. Guest seminars and symposia take place from time to time during the teaching semester. These seminars are open to all staff and students, and will be of particular interest to Sociology students. Please check on the Sociology notice boards in the Auxilia building for details of forthcoming events. You may also access information on the Department of sociology on our website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>. Follow us on twitter @MU_Sociology for regular updates.

The Department of Sociology prides itself on the excellent service which we provide to students. In return, we request that you treat your lecturers, tutors and fellow students with the respect and civility they deserve.

About Sociology

'Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, as its subject matter is our own behaviour as social beings', (A. Giddens, *Sociology*, Polity Press, 1997: 2).

For Tovey, Share and Corcoran Sociology is '....a system of thought and a form of imagination that aims to make sense of our everyday life experiences and to place them in the context of their social surroundings.' (2007: 16).



Crowd at U2 concert, Croke Park © Aphra Kerr

Over the course of the coming academic year you will be introduced to the craft of sociology. You will learn the value of a sociological perspective which is critical, creative and constructive. Sociology develops **critical** skills by teaching how to read, analyse and evaluate arguments, how to take a position and defend it, how to build theoretically sound understandings of the world based on appropriate empirical evidence, how to gather and deploy such evidence. The sociological imagination enables us to think outside of the box of individuality, to make links between our own lived experiences and the lives of others around us. It enables us to think **creatively** about the social world, to ask difficult questions, to uncover new areas of study, to develop new methods of investigation.

Sociology has a role not just in analyzing the social world but also in changing the world. Sociological evidence can be used to develop new laws, to generate

new policies, to reform political processes, to create new systems of governance. Sociology can be **constructive** in the promotion of equality and social justice. Sociological thinking and sociological studies tell us lots about the nature of power in society, about gender, social class, race and ethnicity. Sociology not only provides an insight into social reality, but can also provide a vision about how that social reality can be transformed.

About Sociology at Maynooth University

The Sociology Department at Maynooth University is committed to the pursuit of excellence in our teaching and our research. Over the years we have guided many students who have grown to love the discipline of Sociology, and to value the sociological perspective. We hope that you too will share this positive experience during your years at Maynooth University. The Department of Sociology at Maynooth University currently has 18 full-time teaching staff, a team of tutors, and 2 Executive Assistants.

We cater for approximately up to a thousand students across our undergraduate programme, and approximately twenty students who are engaged in postgraduate studies in the Department. We offer three different Taught M.A. degrees, two of which are taught on an inter-disciplinary basis. We also supervise students completing M.Litt and Ph.D degrees. For more details on these programmes check out our website: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/academic/sociology.

The subject matter of sociology is diverse, and our programme at Maynooth University reflects the varied interests of the members of the Department which are listed below:

Dr. Mary Benson

My research interests all come under the broad heading of urban sociology. I am particularly interested in changing cityscapes; gentrification; place/public space; urban exploration; qualitative methods and visual representations. These fields of interest intersect with other topics of interest such as consumption, identity, social class and inequality.

Dr. Delma Byrne

Research interests include social stratification in education and the labour market spanning the primary, second-level and higher education sectors as well as post-secondary education and training; transitions between education and the labour market and the evaluation of educational interventions.

Dr. Barry Cannon

Research interests are on Latin American politics, with particular expertise on Peru, Venezuela and Central America, especially on issues of democratization, power relations, Left and Right politics, civil society, and development. Current research focuses on opposition politics in Venezuela; right wing politics in Latin America; and, comparisons between collective reactions to crisis in Latin America and in Ireland and Europe.

Dr. Brian Conway

Research interests include sociology of religion; collective memory; history of Irish sociology. Current research focuses on examining Catholic public discourses and institutional arrangements, trends and patterns in the Catholic workforce, and religious institutional responses to scandal, all in comparative perspective.

Professor Mary P. Corcoran

Research interests include the Irish migratory experience, urban transformation and change, public culture. She is particularly interested in the fate of the public realm in the face of privatization and monetization trends. Professor Corcoran is currently working at the interface of sociology and art and has collaborated with artist Mary Burke on a number of community engaged projects

Professor Colin Coulter

Research interests include development studies, global politics, Marxism, ethnicity and nationalism, popular culture and in particular popular music and Northern Irish politics and society.

Dr. Laurence Cox

Research interests include social movement research (movement waves, alterglobalization and anti-austerity movements, European social movements, movement theorising, protest policing, knowledge and learning production in social movements, activist sustainability); Buddhist Studies (Buddhism and Ireland, early western Buddhists in Asia); new religious movements; sociology of knowledge and culture (history of ideas, sociology of intellectuals, counter culture); working-class studies (community organising, oral history); social theory (western Marxism, socialist feminism); and methodology (participatory action research, community research).

Dr. Pauline Cullen

Research interests include political sociology; gender inequality, social movements; civil society and state relations; nongovernmental organisations; social policy and European Integration; coalitions between diverse constituencies; activism on social rights beyond national settings.

Dr. Eoin Flaherty

I am interested in how patterns of inequality are formed and maintained, and how they change over time. I study these processes with a particular focus on income inequality during the late 20th/early 21st century, and instances of famine during the 19th century (mainly Ireland). I am also interested in how human societies have formed systems of cooperation and managed resources collectively, and whether such systems were resilient to environmental stress. I am also interested in: Top incomes and the 'super-rich', labour's share of national income, time series and pooled time series cross-section analysis. Financialisation, rentiers, and power resources. Famine, common-

pool resource systems, primitive communism, and nineteenth-century Ireland. Complexity theory, human ecology, and environmental sociology.

Professor G. Honor Fagan

Research interests include Human Security, Gender and Development Governance, and Social Sustainability.

Professor Jane Gray

Research and teaching interests include families and households, comparative-historical sociology, life history analysis. Her current research focuses on: life histories and social change in twentieth century Ireland; family and community, gender, household economies and social change.

Professor Aphra Kerr

Research interests focus on technology, media and emergent digital research methods. Current research explores: gender and diversity in digital media; inequality and algorithmic decision making on online platforms; digital citizenship and internet cultures; new forms of virtual work and production. Recent projects have explored digital games production and policy, online community management work, broadcasting and diversity.

Dr. Rebecca King Ó Riain

Research and teaching interests include: globalization, emotions and technology; racial/ethnic beauty pageants; critical race theory; qualitative methods; interracial marriage and multiracial people. Her current research explores globalized interpersonal and interactive forms of bodily culture through skin altering practices in Asia and Europe, beauty pageants, and Asian popular culture (Korean and Japanese dramas)

Professor Mary Murphy

Research interests include the impact of globalisation on welfare states, the political mediation of social policy reform, local governance and institutional mechanisms to support social innovation, social inclusion and citizenship, gender and social welfare, commodification, conditionality and welfare to work policies.

Professor John O'Brennan

Research interests include the process and politics of European Union enlargement; the EU's relationship with the western Balkans and prospective enlargement to South Eastern Europe; the dynamics of EU external relations; EU-Russian relations; constructivist theories of International Politics; and the identity dimension to European integration. I am also very interested in Ireland's experience of European integration, its relationship with the European Union and the Lisbon Treaty debate in Ireland.

Professor Seán Ó Riain

Research interests are in the sociology of work, economic sociology, comparative and global political economy and social inequality. Specific areas

of interest include work organisation and workplace regimes; developmental states; the global knowledge economy; economic liberalism; changing European societies.

Dr. Paul Ryan

Research interests revolve around the sociology of personal life specifically the study of the family, sexual citizenship, sex work, gay and lesbian studies, social movements and qualitative research methods.

Dr. Eamonn Slater

Research interests include the structure of modernity, the heritage industry (including tourism), the social construction of landscape and the environment, visual sociology and historical sociology. All of these sociological areas are investigated with a special emphasis on Irish society.

Teaching and Learning Formats 2020

There are still a lot of uncertainties about the year ahead. We have done our best here to provide a guide to how we see the teaching in the department operating in the first semester, under current health guidelines.

Please keep a close eye on our 'Blended Learning Hub' on the department website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/blendedlearninghub> This will be updated during the year with information regarding various aspects of teaching and learning in the department.

Please follow the information from your lecturers through Moodle and other media particularly closely.

Our overall approach is to provide as much 'content' (lectures, readings etc) as clearly and interestingly as possible and to provide you with plenty of opportunities to discuss the ideas, knowledge and information in each module. In some cases, that will be in-person and in some cases it will be through a variety of online formats.

We have three main formats – Live, Flipped and Remote – and you can find explanations of these different approaches [here](#). The exact form these take will vary by module across each year. The format for your First Year, First Semester module SO152 is 'Flipped' and this is detailed on Page 12.

Given the ongoing health crisis, it is very possible that the mix of courses may change during the semester and affect the format of each module. You will understand that the specifics of some of these factors are confidential and it may not be possible to fully explain changes in format. It is possible that overall we may be able to move to more in-person teaching as the year goes

on, but it is also possible that we will shift towards more remote, online teaching and learning, as circumstances change.

While we provide a mix of in-person and online teaching, we also understand that student circumstances vary. In general, please prepare as much as possible for both. However, our approach is also to provide as much back-up as possible for the in-person teaching so that students who miss out on some of that teaching will have an online backup to turn to.

This includes:

- recording of live lectures (except in the case of discussion oriented or tutorial style sessions);
- provision of other online materials;
- avoiding assessments in class;
- avoiding attendance marks (although there may be participation marks, which can be completed online)

If you miss in person sessions, we can't guarantee that everything will be replaced or replicated online. However, the bulk of the material will be available in some recorded or other online format. There may be technological or other issues that interfere with that from time to time but please bear with us while we do our best to mesh together in person and online learning.

We will also make clear before the start of the semester how sub-groups within classes will be allocated (probably on an alphabetical basis) and how your tutorials will be organised.

Please don't hesitate to contact the relevant university offices if you think that you could benefit from various supports that the university offers. Every year, many students avail of these supports and they make a huge difference in their university experience.

Teaching Format for Semester 1: SO152

Title	In-Person Elements	Online Elements	Student Engagement with the Course Material	Most likely adjustment in case of fully remote teaching
'Flipped'	<p>Meetings in person with groups of less than 50.</p> <p>For modules with over 50, sub-groups of the class will attend different meetings.</p> <p>Focus on discussion and questions around lecture materials which are primarily online.</p> <p>Unlikely to be recorded, may be supplemented with online Q&A</p>	<p>Lectures and other course material will primarily be provided online</p> <p>The usual materials (slides, readings etc) would be on Moodle</p> <p>Discussion fora, questions for lecturers etc available on Moodle but also at in person meetings</p>	<p>Follow the primary course material (eg lectures) online</p> <p>Attend the in person meetings for discussion, clarification etc</p> <p>Use of Moodle to access materials, Q&A etc</p>	<p>Move of discussion to online formats (lectures etc will already be provided remotely)</p>

Individual meetings with lecturers will vary depending on the circumstances with some meetings online (eg via Teams) and some in person. While we can't guarantee that you won't miss anything if you can't make an in-person meeting, the great bulk of the material will be accessible in online formats.

Tutorials will be provided, we expect, in person but with online provision available where needed, based on individual, university and societal circumstances.

The Sociology Degree at Maynooth University

Each year of the Sociology degree emphasizes a crucial aspect of learning and doing Sociology:

- ***First Year: Critical Thinking and the Sociological Imagination***
- ***Second Year: Fundamentals of Sociology***
- ***Third Year: Doing Contemporary Sociology***

The Sociology degree is also organised around three major strands, or different kinds of courses:

- *Concepts and Theories*: Courses introduce you to the most important

concepts used by sociologists and to the main sociological theories

- *The Substance of Society:* Courses examine major areas of sociological analysis and use sociology to explore the key features of historical and contemporary societies.
- *Research Methods and Design:* Courses introduce you to the logics of social research and the different methods used by sociologists to analyse the social worlds around them.

Each year develops each of these strands within the overall theme of the year.

First Year Programme: overview



In the first year programme we introduce the conceptual tools that form the basis of sociological analysis. Our aim is to develop your sociological imagination i.e. to illustrate the crucial linkages between the life experience of any given individual, and his or her social circumstances. Social circumstances change over time so we can think of them as history in-the-making. Social circumstances--such as where you live, what work you do, and the groups to which you belong—all shape life experiences. In turn, how we experience our social world may lead us, over time, to seek changes in how that social world is organised. Thus, our collective experiences help to configure and re-configure social reality. Choosing Sociology means choosing to embark on a new and exciting educational adventure. We are here to guide you in your quest for knowledge, insight and a deeper understanding of social

reality.

Goal for the year:

- To develop critical thinking by introducing you to key concepts and contributions in Sociology both in Ireland and internationally.

First Semester Module

SO152 Sociological Imagination introduces you to the basic concepts in sociology and explains what is distinctive about the sociological perspective on the world with a particular focus on the formation of identity and social location. This module examines contemporary society and the terrains in which we live our everyday lives from a sociological perspective.

Second Semester Module

SO151 Contemporary Irish Society is designed to develop a basic understanding of how sociologists approach their subject matter- focusing in particular, on the development of theoretical frameworks that can help us to understand and explain contemporary Irish society.

Research methods and design:

No single module in first year is devoted to the principles of sociological research but all modules introduce you to examples of a variety of approaches to gathering and analysing sociological data. You will take research modules in second year.

Tutorials:

All modules are linked to an innovative tutorial programme that emphasises the skills required for critical thinking in sociology- the ability to read critically, analyse and evaluate arguments, compare and contrast perspectives and develop your own independent sociological imagination. The tutorials, facilitated by experienced tutors, provide practical instruction in the art of reading and writing sociology and also provide the skills needed for writing your essays.

First semester Tutorials will commence in Week Three of the semester, Week beginning October 12th, 2020 and will run for eight consecutive weeks (with the exception of the reading week). Second semester Tutorials will commence in Week Three of the semester, Week beginning February 15th, 2021 and will run for eight consecutive weeks (with the exception of the reading week). Students **must** attend their weekly Tutorials. Further details on Tutorials and on a writing support initiative will be given at the beginning of lectures.

Tutorials are designed in small groups and you need to sign into a tutorial group through the module MOODLE site. There will be a list of times and signing into a particular time is organised on a first-come, first-served basis. Once you have logged onto the MOODLE site you will be invited to choose a tutorial time from a menu of optional hours. Please ensure that you choose a tutorial time that does not clash with times for your modules in your other subjects in both semesters.

You can sign into your First Semester Module Tutorials [SO152] on the Moodle homepage for this module. Tutorial sign-ups will open on the SO152 MOODLE page on Thursday 1st October, 2020 at 9am and will run until 2pm on Wednesday 7th October 2020. You will remain in this tutorial group for your Second Semester Module [SO151]

All registered SO152 students should have access to this MOODLE site; **if you haven't finalised your registration by the close of sign up please contact the Sociology department office.** Once the signups process concludes, you cannot change out of your selected group.

Note on tutorials in 2020:

Tutorials will be provided in person but with online provision available where needed, based on individual, university and societal circumstances. This may be subject to change and you will be informed of any changes in advance.

Further information on tutorials will be provided at the beginning of term in your first semester module and available on Moodle.

Please take note of the following schedule of important dates:

Monday Sept 28 th , 2020	First semester lectures commence.
Thursday, 1 st October at 9am until 2pm on Wednesday 7 th October 2020	Use MOODLE site of SO152 to sign up for a tutorial for the first <i>and</i> second semester [your sign up group for SO152 remains the same for the second semester SO151]
Monday Oct 12 th , 2020	Third week of semester. Tutorials begin and run for eight consecutive weeks.
Monday Oct 26 th – Friday Oct 30 th 2020	Study week- NO CLASSES
Thursday November 19 th , 2020 [This date may be subject to change]	First semester essay due for SO152
Friday 11 th December 2020	Semester One tutorial programme ends
Friday December 18 th , 2020 A special essay clinic will be scheduled this week affording students the opportunity for feedback on their essays.	End of first semester classes
Jan 2021	Examinations commence
Monday February 1 st , 2021	Second semester lectures commence
Monday 15 th February, 2021	Third week of semester. Tutorials for SO151 begin and run for eight consecutive weeks
Monday March 15 th – Friday March 19 th , 2021	Study week NO CLASSES
Monday April 5 th – Friday April 9 th , 2021	EASTER VACATION
Friday 23 rd April 2021	Semester Two tutorial programme ends
Dates to be confirmed in second semester	Second semester essay due for SO151
Friday May 7 th , 2021	Conclusion of second semester

A special essay clinic will be scheduled this week affording students the opportunity for feedback on their essays.	
May 2021	Examinations commence
31st July, 2021	Deadline for repeat candidates to submit continuous assessment work

Please ensure prior to the examination periods that you are correctly registered in the modules for which you wish to obtain credits.

ACADEMIC SCHEDULE

Semester 1

28th September 2020 – 18th December 2020

COMPULSORY MODULE:	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Day / Time</i>	<i>Venue</i>
SO152 Sociological Imagination: The Sociology of Everyday Life (plus tutorials) <i>Dr Mary Benson</i>	7.5	Mon 4pm Tues 3pm Thurs 12pm	JHL1 TH1 TH1

Semester 2

1st February 2021 – 7th May 2021

COMPULSORY MODULE:	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Day / Time (three of the following times; to be confirmed)</i>	<i>Venue</i>
SO151 Contemporary Irish Society (plus tutorials) <i>Dr. Eamonn Slater Prof. Seán Ó Riain</i>	7.5	Mon 4pm (L1) Tues 2pm (L2) Tues 3pm (L2) Thurs 12pm (L3) Thurs 1pm (L3)	JHL1 JHL3 JHL1 JHL1

For your information we provide brief summaries of each of the First Year modules below. More detailed information for each module will be made available by individual lecturers.

Semester 1

SO152, Sociological Imagination: The Sociology of Everyday Life

Credits: 7.5 ECTS

Module Objective: To introduce students to the basic features and trends of social change in contemporary society and the implications of these changes.

Overview:

This introductory module offers students a sociological analysis of contemporary society. The module will explore how contemporary society is organised, experienced and represented. The principal institutions and structures that shape social life and the main processes through which society as a whole is changing are reviewed. Examples will be used from Ireland and internationally. This module also introduces students to a sociological analysis of everyday life and the wide range of processes associated with living in contemporary society. Section One explores a range of topics on contemporary life including: living in a consumer society; identity; inequality; social class; gender and ethnicity. Section Two examines a range of terrains in which we live our daily lives including the home, fashion, tourism and social media.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the module students should be able to:

- Detail and evaluate theories and concepts used by social scientists to analyse the nature of contemporary society
- Critically assess the contribution of sociological analysis to an understanding of the organisation, experience and representation of contemporary society.
- Evaluate different kinds of interpretative schemata for interpreting cultural processes and practices.
- Understand how to analyse, evaluate and interpret information.
- Develop and defend reasoned opinions in oral and written form
- Search, obtain and present information
- Participate in group discussion.

Assessment type: continuous assessment and examination:

Continuous assessment: 60% [Essay 40%; Tutorial Attendance and Participation 20%]

Written examination: 40%

Semester 2

SO151, Contemporary Irish Society

Credits: 7.5 ECTS

Module Objective: To introduce students to the basic features and trends of social change in contemporary Irish society.

Overview:

This introductory module offers students a sociological analysis of contemporary Irish society. The module will explore how Irish society is organised, experienced and represented. The principal institutions and structures that shape social life in Ireland and the main processes through which Ireland as a whole is changing are reviewed. The current configuration of Irish society is interrogated through a rich sociological framework of analysis.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the module students should be able to:

- Detail and evaluate theories and concepts used by social scientists to analyse the nature of contemporary Irish society
- Critically assess the contribution of sociological analysis to an understanding of the organisation, experience and representation of contemporary Irish society.
- Evaluate different kinds of interpretative schemata for “reading” Irish society.
- Understand how to analyse, evaluate and interpret information.
- Develop and defend reasoned opinions in oral and written form
- Search, obtain and present information
- Participate in group discussion.

Assessment type: continuous assessment and examination:

Continuous assessment: 60% [Essay 40%; Tutorial Attendance and Participation 20%]

Written examination: 40%

Conduct

Attendance at lectures (in person or online) is essential. Lectures provide the intellectual scaffolding which enables student-led independent learning. Outside of the lecture hall you are expected to read and critically reflect on the material which is recommended on the reading lists and which is available through the Library and also on the MOODLE websites which support each module.

It is imperative that when you attend lectures you behave in a way that is respectful toward the lecturer and toward your fellow students. This means that you must refrain from engaging in any activities (talking, texting, face booking, etc.) which are a distraction to others who are motivated to learn. To this end, we recommend that you do not use audio/visual recording or technological devices in the lecture hall while the lecture/discussion is going on. Phones must be turned off (or in case of emergencies, on silent). Please maintain the same standards and respect for others in online teaching formats.

The use of laptop computers in the lecture halls has in recent years become a major distraction to other students, especially when the laptops are used for inappropriate purposes. At the request of student representatives who raised this issue with the Department we are requiring that students who wish to use a laptop computer in the lecture hall sit in a designated section of the lecture hall for the duration of the module. We expect that you- the student body- will ensure that this policy is effective. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter. Students who do not co-operate with this policy will be asked to leave the lecture hall.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you that attendance at lectures and seminars is not optional. These are the places where people with real expertise in Sociology will introduce you to various aspects of what can often be a complex discipline. If you do not come to class, you will miss an important opportunity to learn and you will be poorly prepared for the various forms of assessment that appear along the way. So please bear in mind that the Department requires your attendance at all lectures and seminars.

Note for 2020 – While you will not be attending your lectures in person you are required to keep up with the lectures and readings provided online.

Consultation

It is vital that we are made aware, as soon as possible of any difficulties you may have in relation to your work or with any aspect of the first year programme. If you have a problem or question which relates generally to the

first year programme, or to your participation in it, please contact Dr. Mary Benson, the first year co-ordinator in the first instance (see contact details p.3).

If you have a query in relation to a particular lecture course, please contact the lecturer who is giving that course. Staff members are available for consultation at various hours during each week of term. It is difficult to hold regular in person office hours during these times but staff will post contact times on the module Moodle sites. Alternatively, you may make an appointment by email or by contacting Áine Edmonds or Trish Connerty, Sociology Department, Room 1.5, The Auxilia Building, Tel: 708-3659.

In addition to consulting with individual lecturers or the second year administrator, students may communicate with the Sociology Department through the Staff Student Consultative Committee. The purpose of this body is to provide a forum where the concerns and interests of students can be raised. The committee consists of the staff year co-ordinators and student representatives of the various years who will be elected by students after the beginning of term.

Should you wish to raise a matter at the Staff-Student Consultative Committee you can do so in the following ways:

1. Talk to the staff member who has administrative responsibility for second year (Dr. Mary Benson)
2. Talk to your first year student representatives after they are elected.

For more information on contacting staff in the department and university, please go to:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/blendedlearninghub>

And click on the *Who Should I Contact?* tab

Communications

It is assumed that you will 'attend' your module in some form on a consistent basis, whether that is in person or online (and this will vary from module to module). It is also assumed that you will check the relevant departmental webpages once every two or three days.

You are responsible for familiarising yourself with announcements or notices provided during periods of time that are absent from class or from campus. It is assumed that you check your MUMAIL email account every two to three days (even if you primarily use another email account) and that you check module Moodle sites regularly.

All Lecturer and Department announcements go to your Maynooth University email account only. Please make sure that you check your Maynooth University email account every two to three days (even if you primarily use

another email account). Please also enable your Moodle account to receive messages from the sociology department and check your module Moodle sites regularly.

You are responsible for keeping up to date with announcements or notices provided during periods of time that you are absent from class or from campus.

In the next section of this handbook we provide some guidelines on essay submission and some notes on plagiarism. It is vital that you acquaint yourself with this information in advance of preparing and submitting work to the Department of Sociology. Additional support for essay writing will be made available through the Tutorial programme and through initiatives developed by the Teaching and Learning Centre at Maynooth University and the Library. Many students check their work for plagiarism through the Turnitin computer programme. The Department of Sociology reserves the right to request that students submit their essays through the Turnitin programme.

Preparing and submitting an essay

- Essays should be a maximum of 2,000 words in length and should be typed, single-sided and double-spaced (about 8-10 pages).
- Essays must be put in the Sociology Post Box (Ground Floor, the Auxilia Building) with a **pink cover sheet** attached on or before the deadline date. Supplies of cover sheets are available in the Sociology Department. [If any changes are made in relation to the essay submission you will be informed by your lecturer].
- In your essay, you must refer to reading material assigned for the module. Reading beyond the assigned material will be interpreted favourably only if you show clearly how it relates to themes and issues covered in the lectures.
- Essays must be carefully referenced, showing the sources for any information or argument to which you refer. A list of references should be appended, detailing all sources referred to in the essay, including internet sources. **See guidelines below for how these should be presented.**
- Please read and take note of the statement on plagiarism in this handbook. You should also familiarize yourself with the new University policy on plagiarism.

- You must keep an exact copy of each written assignment you submit to the department. Should your assignment be mislaid, you will be asked to provide a replacement copy.

The main criteria in assessing an essay are:

- level of understanding of the issue
- range and extent of readings and the use made of those readings
- logical development of the discussion
- awareness and discussion of alternative arguments or viewpoints
- clarity of the writing style

In general, a first class essay or paper will

- show an excellent understanding of the issue under discussion
- demonstrate an ability to use analytical reasoning
- draw on a good range of readings in developing the argument
- will be written in a clear and concise style.

An essay will fail if it does not address the question; reveals a fundamental lack of understanding of the issue; or is based on far too limited a range of readings.

Statement on plagiarism

Plagiarism involves an attempt to use an element of another person's work, without appropriate acknowledgement in order to gain academic credit. It may include the unacknowledged verbatim reproduction of material, unsanctioned collusion, but is not limited to these matters; it may also include the unacknowledged adoption of an argumentative structure, or the unacknowledged use of a source or of research materials.

For example, when you directly copy another person's text without placing it in quotation marks and without acknowledging the source, you are plagiarising. The same is true when you present someone else's original idea, research or argument as though it were your own.

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. It reveals an unwillingness to think for oneself and is both unethical and illegal under copyright laws. Please do not make the mistake of assuming that we will not recognise plagiarised material. It is almost always possible to identify text that has been professionally copy-edited, or is different in style from your own. The direct copying of passages (including illustrations) from a book, an article or the Internet without adequate references is a serious breach of academic trust and practice. Submitting essays or projects written by anyone other than yourself will also result in heavy penalties. As your final assessment is partly based on written assignments, plagiarism is equivalent to cheating at examinations.

Maynooth University considers plagiarism to be a serious academic misconduct, deserving of academic penalties. This document sets out the procedures for dealing with cases of plagiarism or suspected plagiarism in taught programmes of the University.

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/node/414657>

The Department of Sociology operates an “early warning” system. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, the student is required to meet with the appropriate lecturer to discuss the problem. If this is a first instance, the student will receive a warning but will be allowed to resubmit their work.

Second and subsequent instances of this kind will be dealt with strictly in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Maynooth University Policy on Plagiarism.

The Maynooth University guidelines on plagiarism are available at:

https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Plagiarism%20Sept%202015_0.pdf

Guidelines for citation

Books and articles read by you and referred to in your essay must be cited both in the essay itself and in the list of references at the end. **Only include in your list of references material you have read yourself and have referred to in your essay.** The usual procedure in sociology is to integrate references into the text itself.

The Department has prepared specific guidelines for citation please see here https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/ASA%20Referencing%20Guide%20for%20MU%20Studentsfinal_0.pdf

Penalties for Late Work

We understand that students will face multiple challenges this year and we will do whatever we can to facilitate your completion of all your work and your programme as a whole. However, our approach is to work to the programme deadlines, more or less as usual, and then provide accommodations and supports as needed. Otherwise it will become very difficult to manage all the competing demands on your studies. We encourage you to manage your schedule of assessment, as well as of teaching and learning, very carefully. We will provide resources at the Blended Learning Hub to help you do this.

Our overall policy is as follows.

Where applicable, the following penalties apply. If coursework is submitted late, 10 marks will be deducted. No coursework will be accepted 14 calendar days after the deadline. Please provide a medical certificate covering the relevant period or explain the other extenuating circumstances. These should generally be communicated to, and accepted by, the lecturer/tutor prior to, or immediately after, the relevant deadline. Please note that work submitted after the deadline may not receive individual feedback from the lecturer concerned.

Requirements for Autumn Supplemental Examination

Details of Autumn resit assessment will be provided during the year, depending on the changing circumstances. However, the basic principles will remain that assessment completed during the year can be carried forward towards the resits.

Programme Advisory Office:

The Programme Advisory Office, within the Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning, is available to advise you on any choices you might have to make related to your programme including subject choice. The Programme Advisory Office acts as a guide to students as you navigate your own way through your programme options. The Programme Advisory Office consists of the Programme Advisor, Caitriona McGrattan, who is supported by a team of PG students during peak times.

Incoming first year students are briefed by the Programme Advisor during Welcome Week about the programme choices you will be asked to make during your academic journey at Maynooth University. The Programme Advisory Team are available in person to answer any follow up questions students may have: details of times and location are available on the PAO website. Continuing second year students may also avail of the service if you are unsure about your programme options for example if you have any questions about the difference in major/minor pathways or whether or not to choose to take an Elective.

The Programme Advisory Office can be contacted via

Email: programme.choices@mu.ie

Telephone: 01 474 7428

In person: please see their website for information about meeting a member of the Programme Advisory Team: www.maynoothuniversity.ie/programme-advisory-office

The library offers guides and tutorials which will be beneficial to you as a student and you should check these out on the library website.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Writing Centre also offer workshops and tutorials <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/centre-teaching-and-learning>

The Experiential Learning Office contact details:

Email: Aisling.Flynn@mu.ie

Tel: 01 474 7760

Website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/experiential-learning-office>

Location: Room 1.18, ground floor Rowan House

Why not experience more from your degree programme by opting to take an experiential learning module*, such as Professional Development and Employability (involving employer-led sessions) or MU SPUR (paid six week summer research placement) where you will be learning by doing and reflecting, and have the opportunity to connect classroom content with real-world experience.

*The availability of experiential learning modules is limited, timetable dependent and may require an application process.

Professional Development and Employability

Experiential learning professional development and employability modules are available to eligible second year students. The key purpose of these modules, involving a number of employers, is to facilitate students in their academic, personal and professional career development, so that they will be well equipped to secure internships and to successfully enter the graduate labour market.

See Skills for Success EX201 and EX202 for more details

MU SPUR (Summer Programme for Undergraduate Research)

An active research based and paid experiential learning programme for successful undergraduate pre-final year student applicants who wish to learn more about the postgraduate experience, by working closely with faculty mentors on research projects across a range of disciplines.

Community Based Service Learning

Community Based Service Learning presents a credit-bearing academic experience that empowers students to engage with their surrounding communities, which often results in enhancing student's academic, civic, social and personal development, whilst they contribute to the common good.

The experiential learning office facilitates academic staff in offering community based service learning experiences with their students.

You may also find the library helpful in finding, using and citing sociological resources. They also have printers, laptops and other helpful resources on avoiding plagiarism.

USEFUL LINKS:

Library homepage: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/library>

Sociology library guide: <http://nuim.libguides.com/sociology>

LIST online: <http://nuim.libguides.com/list-online>

Undergraduate library contact: Áine Carey, aine.carey@mu.ie & Niall O'Brien