



## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

# Postgraduate Taught Master's Student Handbook

**2017-2018**

Head of Department: Professor Mary Corcoran

M.A. Co-Ordinator: Professor Jane Gray

Department Website: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>

Twitter: @MU\_Sociology

This handbook is accurate at the time of publication. Minor amendments will be made during the year. Any substantive change will be communicated to students in writing.

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## WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT

The staff in the Sociology Department would like to welcome you to the 2017-2018 Academic Year at Maynooth University. We hope you will make excellent intellectual progress and meet all the challenges involved in moving from undergraduate to graduate education. A strong taught postgraduate cohort is crucial to any department and we hope to both challenge and support you to continue developing your sociological interests, imagination, critical and practical research skills. The year ahead will no doubt be one of intensive study and personal career development, but it will take place in the supportive atmosphere provided by the department.

Please read this handbook to familiarise yourself with the Department and University guidelines for taught postgraduate work. This handbook is intended to provide you with the information you need about this year's programme - Societies in Transition (MAST) - and our policies. You should read it carefully at the outset and keep it for ongoing reference during the year. You will find additional information about the Sociology Department on our website <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology>. An electronic copy of this handbook is also posted on the website.

Professor Jane Gray,  
M.A. Coordinator,  
Room 3.3 Auxilia,  
Department of Sociology  
Phone: 01-7083596  
Email: jane.gray@mu.ie

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Department you are about to join is an exemplar of public sociology and engagement. A quick overview of our staff's research and publishing profiles (<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/our-research>) should assure you that you will find our Department a distinctive and stimulating place within which to learn and practice sociological and political analysis. Staff engage directly with the transformations in contemporary Irish, European and Global society and politics. They carry out research that combines theoretical concerns and critique with sustained empirical research on: critical political thought, activism and alternative futures; globalisation, identities and cultural practices; historical and comparative sociology; political economy, work and working lives; and urban/suburban studies.

### Student Involvement in the Department

An ethos of co-operation and exchange of ideas and knowledge amongst students is encouraged. Professional behaviour, including regular attendance at all timetabled sessions and punctual presentation of all assignments, is required. As a postgraduate student you will be invited to specialist modules led by subject experts, regular departmental seminars and symposia featuring the work of advanced students, staff and invited speakers, and faculty seminars and workshops. You are encouraged to take advantage of all of these opportunities to advance your knowledge.

In addition to evaluating the programme at the end of the academic year, the Department normally carries out a short evaluation exercise during the first semester. This helps us to get a feel for how the class is managing and provides an opportunity to address any concerns. The Department generally organizes an evaluation of the M.A. programme at the end of the year. In addition, we have a staff-student consultative committee in the Department on which postgraduate students are represented.

The Department strives to maintain good communications between staff and postgraduate students. In addition to open informal relationships, communications are also maintained through

(a) The Postgraduate Liaison Committee: This committee consists of representative postgraduate students (two research postgraduate and one M.A. student) and staff (the M.A. Coordinator, the Research Postgraduate Coordinator and the Head of Department) and meets regularly to review issues relating to the postgraduate programmes.

(b) Email List and Twitter: An email list will be maintained to pass on regular announcements and other material of interest. Most announcements will also be posted on the Department notice board. It is assumed that you will check your email and/or the Departmental notice board every two to three days and provide the department with an up to date address and contact phone number. Twitter is @MU\_Sociology

## Responsibilities in Taught Modules and Submission Procedures for Students

- Students' responsibilities include the following:
- Attend the full range of modules provided during the academic year.
- Read assigned texts in advance of classroom meetings
- Be prepared to participate in classroom discussion
- Be prepared to work together on certain tasks and projects
- Submit all written work by the due dates.

If you are having difficulty keeping up with your assigned work please speak with the relevant lecturer and make an appointment with the Coordinator (jane.gray@mu.ie) immediately.

## Submission Procedures

All written work must be submitted with a green colour-coded cover sheet to the Departmental Office by the due date. Some lecturers may also require submission through Moodle. Check the requirements for each module with your lecturer.

- ✓ There is a late work policy in operation and two marks will be deducted per week for late course work.
- ✓ Students must retain a copy of all work submitted to the Department.
- ✓ Students will be given feedback on their projects/assessment work. Generally, we do not use standard evaluation forms at this level, but provide the students with commentary on their work.

Staff will be available to work with students on thesis supervision until Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018, but the Department cannot guarantee supervisor's availability after this date. For this reason, you are required to meet with your supervisor before 29<sup>th</sup> June, and have them "sign off on" your plans for work over the summer.

## University Policy on Submission of Work after Conclusion of the Programme

Maynooth University has introduced a new policy regarding taught MA students who require extra time to complete their work, after the conclusion of the programme. The MA on Societies in Transition (2017-18) concludes on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Please read the information below carefully, as the Department cannot override University regulations and you may incur additional fees if the guidelines are not followed.

If you anticipate that you will be unable to complete your work by 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018, it is very important that you notify the MA Coordinator (Jane Gray, jane.gray@mu.ie) and the relevant module facilitators and/or your thesis supervisor as early as possible, to seek permission for an extension. The following rules apply:

<b>Late submission date (NOTE: ALL extensions must be approved in advance by the Department)</b>	<b>Implications for registration and results</b>	<b>Implications for fees.</b>
After 27 <sup>th</sup> deadline, but allowing sufficient time for assessment before the University deadline for uploading marks, in time for the Autumn examinations board. THIS SUBMISSION	Late submission can be accepted by the university.	No additional fee.

DATE MUST BE AGREED IN ADVANCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT		
Before the Autumn examination board (date to be confirmed), but not in sufficient time to be assessed before the University deadline for uploading marks.	<p>You will be registered for an additional period (normally R1/ 8 month)</p> <p>Results and graduation will be delayed until the next year.</p> <p>Supervision, library access, moodle and other services will be discontinued.</p>	No additional fee.
After the Autumn examination board (date to be confirmed)	<p>You must formally apply for an extension using 'Registry form R4'</p> <p>You will be registered for an additional academic year as a continuing student.</p> <p>Results delayed until the next year.</p> <p>Supervision, library access, moodle and other services will be continued.</p>	You will be charged a continuation fee, of approximately 60% of modules fee. This can be charged for one semester or a full year.

In the event that you do not pass one or more of your modules, you will be required to repeat the module, register as a repeat student and pay the repeat fee.

## 2017-18 KEY SEMESTER DATES

The course will run from September 2017 to August 2018, with the thesis due at the end of July 2017 (**Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2018**).

### Semester 1

Tuesday September 12th Maynooth Postgraduate Induction (Taught Masters)

Thursday 21st September: Commencement of classes (includes Department Induction)

Monday 30th October - Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November: Study week

Thursday 9th November: Resumption of classes

Friday 15th December: Last day of Semester 1

Friday 5th January: Commencement of Semester 1 exams

### Semester 2

Thursday 1st February: Resumption of classes

Monday 19th – Friday 23rd March: Study week

Monday 26<sup>th</sup>-30th March: Easter vacation

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April: Bank Holiday

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April: Resumption of classes

Friday 4th May: Last day of Semester 2

Friday 11th May: Commencement of Semester 2 exams

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June: Staff no longer available to supervise thesis.

**Friday 27th July: Submission of theses by 12pm** – End of programme

## ACADEMIC STAFF- CONTACT AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

**Dr. Mary Benson - [mary.benson@mu.ie](mailto:mary.benson@mu.ie)**

Cityscapes; gentrification; place; community; and visual representations. Current research focuses on urban agriculture.

**Dr. Delma Byrne- [Delma.Byrne@mu.ie](mailto:Delma.Byrne@mu.ie)**

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- [Barry.Cannon@mu.ie](mailto:Barry.Cannon@mu.ie)**

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- [Brian.Conway@mu.ie](mailto:Brian.Conway@mu.ie)**

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- [Mary.Corcoran@mu.ie](mailto:Mary.Corcoran@mu.ie)**

Research interests include the Irish migratory experience, urban transformation and change, and public cultures. 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.

**Dr. Colin Coulter- [Colin.coulter@mu.ie](mailto:Colin.coulter@mu.ie)**

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 - [Laurence.Cox@mu.ie](mailto:Laurence.Cox@mu.ie)**

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- [Pauline.Cullen@mu.ie](mailto:Pauline.Cullen@mu.ie)**

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.

**Professor G. Honor Fagan- [honor.fagan@mu.ie](mailto:honor.fagan@mu.ie)**

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

**Professor Jane Gray- Jane.gray@mu.ie**

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

**Dr. Aphra Kerr- Aphra.Kerr@mu.ie**

Teaching and Research interests focus on technology and media in society and digital sociology. Current research explores the implications of data driven digital media design, online community management work, production in the global digital games industry, and the rise of the 'indie'. Recent projects have explored broadcasting and diversity, innovation in animation companies, the design of future telecommunications network services and applications and gendered practices and representations in digital games culture.

**Dr. Rebecca King Ó Riain- Rebecca.King-ORiain@mu.ie**

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 the 'Globalization of Love' through qualitative research with transnational, mixed couples and their children looking at uses of digital technology to create and maintain global emotional networks.

**Dr. Mary Murphy (on research leave Semester 1) - Mary.P.Murphy@mu.ie**

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.

**Dr. Peter Murray- Peter.murray@mu.ie**

Research and teaching interests include political mobilisation and the growth of the modern state, industry, work and technological change, health, illness and healing.

**Dr. John O'Brennan- John.OBrennan@mu.ie**

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- Sean.ORiain@mu.ie**

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- Paul.ryan@mu.ie**

Research interests include masculinities, gay and lesbian studies, social movements and qualitative research methods specifically the use of life history

**Dr. Eamonn Slater- Eamonn.slater@mu.ie**

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.

For more information please see the individual staff pages at:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sociology/our-people>

## MASTERS IN SOCIOLOGY (SOCIETIES IN TRANSITION)

The Department of Sociology offers this one-year taught Master of Arts course in Sociology on the theme of 'Societies in Transition'. The programme is set against the backdrop of the recent global turbulence in financial markets and the related economic downturn. Societies such as Ireland are adjusting very rapidly to change in the external and internal environments. This requires us to re-think prevailing assumptions about the nature and direction of socio-economic development both in Ireland and elsewhere. The key idea underlying the M.A. Societies in Transition is to interrogate the political economy, power dynamics and socio-cultural dimensions of social change in transitional societies, using Ireland as a key point of reference. The intellectual approach will embrace both comparative and historical dimensions of societies in transition.

It stimulates students to think about the role that sociological analysis can play in helping to advance solutions to the current social and economic challenges. Consequently, it is attractive for those seeking to go into policy-making, journalism, market research, development work, and community action. It also provides an excellent platform for those interested in progressing to Ph.D. studies.

### Aims

MA students will:

- Develop their ability to apply theories of social change to empirical investigation
- Enhance their ability to communicate effectively through regular class presentations and discussions.
- Receive a grounding in sociological methods and will be supported in using these methods in their dissertation work.
- Gain an enhanced understanding of the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions of Irish society in comparative perspective.
- Be provided with a comprehensive overview of the processes giving rise to social change and the challenges faced by societies in transition.

### Calendar Year

Classes run from Thursday, 21st September, 2017 to Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> May 2018, inclusive. The thesis must be submitted by July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 12 am. Students are expected to work full-time on their thesis from the end of the teaching period until the submission date although you will have carried out significant work on the thesis before then.

Continuous assessment work deadlines have been staggered to enable you to work at a steady pace throughout the academic year. Work on the thesis during the year is supported through the teaching year in a special seminar designed to help you develop your research topic and methodology. You will write a thesis on a topic of your choosing, agreed with your supervisor. Please note that you must pass both the coursework/module component and the thesis component of the programme in order to successfully complete the M.A.

During the reading weeks and the inter-semester break period postgraduate students are expected to read widely in the subject area, prepare their assignments and work on the minor dissertation. Some extra classes/seminars may be scheduled in those weeks so it is expected that you will be on campus.

### Course Structure

All modules are compulsory on this programme.

## Timetable

Code	Title	Course Facilitator	Credits	Time	Venue
<b>Semester 1</b>					
SO620A	Qualitative Methods	Honor Fagan	10	Thursday 9-11am	MUSSI Conference Room, IONTAS
SO614	Social Science Analysis	Jane Gray	10	Thursday 11am-1pm	Sociology Resource Room, Auxilia
SO635	International Development	Honor Fagan	10	Thursday 2-4 pm	MUSSI Conference Room, IONTAS
SO690	Thesis Workshops	Mary Corcoran	Contd. Sem. 2	Friday (X 3 days) 10 am-12 pm  <b>Dates:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> October, 10 <sup>th</sup> November and 15 <sup>th</sup> December	Sociology Resource Room, Auxilia
<b>Semester 2</b>					
SO629A	Nature and Society	Eamonn Slater	10	Thursday 10 am – 12 pm	MUSSI Conference Room, IONTAS
SO617	Quantitative Methods	Delma Byrne	10	Thursday 2-4 pm	Physical Geography Lab, Rhetoric House, Ground Floor
SO602A	Political Economy	Séan Ó Riain	10	Friday (X 6 days) 9 am- 1 pm  <b>Dates:</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> February, 16 <sup>th</sup> March, 13 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Sociology Resource Room, Auxilia
SO690	Thesis Workshops	Mary Corcoran	30	Friday (X 3 days) 2-4 pm  <b>Dates:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> February, 16 <sup>th</sup> March and 27 <sup>th</sup> April	Sociology Resource Room, Auxilia

## Assessment

Each course is assessed on the basis of the completion of one or more assignments. Requirements for each course are determined by the lecturer.

The following summarizes the grade-related criteria that lecturers and instructors will use to guide the marking of coursework (essays, reports, presentations and exams). These broad guidelines should be read in conjunction with any specific advice on assessment that may be provided by the module leader(s).

Written assignments:

The overall criteria used to arrive at the mark reflect the ability of students to:

- ✓ Respond to a specific question
- ✓ Think independently
- ✓ Structure an argument
- ✓ Support an argument with reference to different literature and examples
- ✓ Evaluate different kinds of evidence
- ✓ Undertake independent study of the topic in question
- ✓ Communicate effectively in writing
- ✓ Produce a well-presented, well-written piece of work

Oral presentations:

The overall criteria used to arrive at the mark reflect the ability of students to:

- ✓ Structure an oral presentation
- ✓ Compile suitable material
- ✓ Communicate effectively
- ✓ Deliver a balanced and complete presentation within a time limit
- ✓ Design and use visual aids
- ✓ Undertake independent study of the topic in question
- ✓ Respond to questions (when appropriate)

Class	Mark range	Grade-related criteria for written work
First class honours	80+	<p>Outstanding answer based on extensive reading that demonstrates an impressive ability to understand theoretical literature and to make connections between that literature and appropriate examples</p> <p>Exceptional insights and originality in the use of evidence</p> <p>Very well written with no grammatical or other errors</p> <p>Contains material of publishable quality, as a whole or in part, as a journal paper, and is worthy of retaining for reference</p>
	70-79	<p>Excellent answer based on extensive reading and a clear understanding of theoretical debates</p> <p>Original or insightful answer drawing on own observations and critical treatment of literature</p> <p>Very well written with no grammatical or other errors</p> <p>Contains material that is potentially of publishable quality, in part, as a journal paper, and/or is worthy of retaining for reference</p>
Second class honours - Grade I	60-69	<p>Very good answer that shows a thorough understanding of arguments, contributions and context, with pertinent use of relevant reading and examples</p> <p>Well-organized, clearly expressed, direct response to the question/topic</p> <p>Evidence of good analytical skills and reflection of wider reading</p> <p>Does not display the outstanding ability, critical insight and/or originality characterizing the award of first class honours</p>
Second class honours - Grade II	50-59	<p>Competent treatment of ideas and concepts from classes and set reading</p> <p>Little evidence of independent critical assessment</p> <p>Evidence of good effort and reasonably solid argument, but little spark or critical insight</p>
Pass	40-49	<p>Shows a basic understanding of the question/topic and of the broader subject area</p> <p>Little evidence of detailed knowledge or reading is partial and selective</p> <p>Contains mistakes, misunderstanding and/or irrelevant material</p> <p>Poor organization, poor expression and an uncritical approach</p>
Fail	0-39	<p>At worst, nothing of relevance in answer to the questions/topic</p> <p>At best, not a direct response to the question/topic, but shows some basic understanding of the general field</p> <p>Likely to be muddled, incomplete, and/or poorly expressed</p> <p>Little evidence of reading or reading sources are trivial</p>

Fail	0	<p>Copied or plagiarized answer with no intellectual input from student</p> <p>Work penalized for late submission without the granting of an extension (as per the course policy regarding deadlines and extensions)</p> <p>Plagiarized material may be reported to the University Authorities</p>
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## Modules (2017-2018)

### First Semester

#### *SO620A: Qualitative Methods (Prof. Honor Fagan)*

This module course offers students a theoretical and practical guide to qualitative research methods. It locates these methods within an interpretivist tradition which explores the meanings with which people attach to human behaviour. It facilitates a greater understanding of the subject's perspective. The course explores human behaviour through methods such as participant observation, interviewing and focus groups and also how social action is represented through visual methods. The course offers practical experience to students in these methods but also focuses on the analysis and writing of qualitative research.

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

- Understand the epistemological foundations behind qualitative research
- Assess which qualitative methods are the most appropriate to answer particular research questions
- Demonstrate a knowledge of various qualitative research methods
- Understand how qualitative data is analysed and written up

#### *SO614: Social Science Analysis (Prof. Jane Gray)*

This module focuses on the logic of enquiry in the social sciences, addressing the question of how social scientists 'get to work.' We examine whether or not there are different logics underpinning quantitative, qualitative and interpretive approaches in social science. On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Understand the process of theory development in social science
- Evaluate an effective research design
- Distinguish between descriptive and causal arguments
- Demonstrate familiarity with the potential for secondary and mixed-method analysis
- Critically discuss ethical issues in social science research

#### *SO690 Thesis Seminar Workshops (Semester 1 and 2 - Prof. Mary Corcoran)*

The purpose of this module is to prepare you to write your Master's thesis proposal and to acquaint you with the process involved in writing your master's thesis, the "capstone" of your MA degree. Our workshops are designed to meet to work on the research trajectory: identifying a topic, choosing a research question, identifying appropriate evidence, connecting to theories, collecting data, making sense of the data, and writing up the thesis. The first semester is mainly devoted to preparing the thesis proposal and the second semester to refining the proposal through feedback.

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

- Identify and develop sociologically and empirically significant and interesting research questions
- Develop, assess and apply a research design appropriate to a research question
- Review and assess the relevant research literature in specific sub-fields
- Carry out primary research to a high standard, even if on a small scale
- Analyse evidence within a sociological framework
- Integrate theory, methods and data to analyse a problem, process or phenomenon sociologically

*SO635 International Development. Theories, Concepts and Debates in their Social and Historical Context (Prof. G. Honor Fagan)*

The current global crisis of extreme inequities – coming at the end of a long period of dominant market-centred development policies, which have produced considerable global instability especially in the global south and in poorer countries – cries out for a more critical approach to understanding societies in transition. This module aims to introduce students to the main theories of uneven development, and to concepts and debates in international development theory. Students will critically discuss concepts of 'development' and the historical evolution of paradigms of development thinking. They will apply a critical development approach to reflect on the shift from Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). They will explore contemporary development policy documents in specific areas of global challenge, extracting theories and approaches to social change as currently advanced. This module will support students to critically assess ideas from globalisation, international development and human security paradigms as they explain societal transitions with specific reference to the growing social and spatial divisions characterising our world.

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

- Evaluate definitions, theories and a range of differing approaches to international development.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the relation between cultural, economic and political globalisation and social consequences in different parts of the world.
- Critically analyse the concept of 'development' and 'human security' from different theoretical and thematic angles.
- Develop a reflexive critical approach, with its emphasis on context and power, to the construction and practice of international development.

Second Semester

*SO602A Political Economy (Prof. Seán Ó Riain)*

The starting point of this module is that economic action is embedded within social structures and, therefore, that economic development may take different forms depending on the social context and political forces that shape it. The module explores the Irish experience of economic development, through comparisons with other advanced capitalist and newly industrializing countries. In analysing these comparative cases, we examine topics such as: historical patterns of economic development; explanations of growth and inequality across countries; recent changes in the economy, including globalisation, financialisation and the growth of an information economy; the role of the state, labour and households in shaping economic development; how markets work and the sources of the contemporary financial and economic crisis.

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

- Detail and evaluate the major theories and key concepts used by sociologists to analyse the social and political factors shaping economic development
- Critically assess the contribution of sociological analyses to an understanding of issues including: how economic action is embedded within social structures and how the social context and political forces shape economic development in advanced capitalist and newly industrializing countries
- Evaluate the empirical trends and patterns identified by sociologists exploring issues such as: the Irish experience of economic development in comparative context; historical patterns of economic development; explanations of growth and inequality; globalisation, financialisation, information economy; their role of the state, labour and households in shaping economic development; how markets work and the sources of the contemporary financial and economic crisis.

- Develop an independent and critical perspective on the sociological analysis of economic development and social change

*SOC629A Nature and Society (Dr. Eamonn Slater)*

From the Great Irish Famine to the Celtic Tiger, humans depend on nature to sustain themselves and their actions impact on nature. This course examines this metabolic relationship between human society and nature in Ireland. Using the Marxist framework of the socio-ecological metabolism and the metabolic rift we examine in detail how this relationship between nature and society has changed over time in the Irish context. We will be concentrating on two periods, the nineteenth century and Marx's analysis of it and the Celtic Tiger where we will apply Marx's concepts which we will have explicated from his analysis of the earlier period.

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

- Detail the major theories and key concepts used by sociologists to analyse nature and society.
- Critically assess sociological evidence and argument in the analysis of the relationships between nature and society.
- Evaluate the empirical trends and patterns identified by sociologists exploring issues such as: the relationships between nature and society in rural Ireland, the relationships between socio-economic structures and ecological regimes and how they changed over time.
- Develop an independent and critical perspective on the sociological analyses of nature and society.

*SO617 Quantitative Research Methods (Dr. Delma Byrne)*

Quantitative research methods have a long and important history in the social sciences. Sociologists, criminologists, geographers, educationalists and political scientists amongst a range of others in the Social Sciences need to collect or make use of existing numeric data, make sense of it and use it to answer questions relevant to social and public debate. This course is aimed at postgraduate students in Sociology and cognate disciplines, and will use examples from a range of disciplines. The aims of this module are to: enhance the quantitative capacity of postgraduate students by learning how to develop and apply basic, intermediate and advanced quantitative research skills that are responsive to the needs of social science subject areas and disciplines; raise awareness of the secondary data sources (cross-sectional and longitudinal) that are available to postgraduate students as well as new data collection; boost the skills training social science students receive to enhance their employment and research prospects.

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

- Evaluate the need for new data collection. That is, students will be able to evaluate the need for new data collection in light of the range of existing secondary data sources available to postgraduate students to answer specific research questions
- Design a basic survey questionnaire with an understanding of concepts that underpin the construction of variables. / Interpret and understand numerical data that are presented in tabular or graphical form
- Understand the principles of different types of quantitative research designs (e.g. cross-sectional, longitudinal)
- Formulate research questions and hypotheses which are amenable to empirical investigation
- Demonstrate an understanding of the basics of sampling, statistical inference and modelling, and the ability to differentiate the broad range of quantitative research methods and types of analyses that can be used to include univariate, bivariate and multivariate methods
- Apply quantitative analytical methods to a question of interest to the social sciences to professional standards. That is, students will be able to effectively use a range of descriptive and inferential

statistics for parametric and non-parametric data and independently perform a range of data analyses including cross-tabulations, t-tests and ordinary least squares regressions to answer specific research questions

- Apply data reduction and grouping methods, such as factor and cluster analysis
- Read and critique quantitative articles effectively

## Guidelines for the Thesis Component of the Master's Degree

Eight thesis preparation classes are scheduled across the first and second semesters, and will be led by the Thesis Coordinator (Professor Mary Corcoran, mary.corcoran@mu.ie). At the end of the first semester you will submit a Research Proposal upon which you will receive feedback. You will then be matched with an appropriate supervisor who will work with you toward completion of the thesis component of the M.A programme.

The following format is recommended for the completed thesis. Please note that these are general guidelines only. Depending on the nature of the project, some students may need to adapt these guidelines. This should be done in consultation with your supervisor and the Thesis Coordinator.

### Submission

The completed thesis must be submitted by Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.

### Presentation

In general the thesis is expected to be between 15,000 and 20,000 words in length which is between 60-80 double-spaced, typed pages. Please use font size of 12 points, double-spacing format, and include page numbers. Students should submit an electronic copy of the thesis through MOODLE on or before the submission date. In addition, a hard copy of the thesis should be submitted to the Department office, with a green cover sheet. The completed manuscript should be ring-bound but avoid the use of plastic covers if possible. Please ensure that you retain a secure copy of your thesis.

### Typical Format

Title page: Title of thesis, your full name and student ID, your Taught M.A. programme, and the name of your supervisor.

A signed declaration that the thesis constitutes your own original work.

Table of Contents: list each section and the page on which it begins.

Abstract

Introduction

Review of Literature

Research question(s) and methodology

Discussion of findings

Conclusion

Relevant bibliography

Appendices (if appropriate)

Content under each heading

### *Abstract*

The abstract provides a one or two paragraph synopsis of the research project and should state clearly the nature and scope of the research undertaken. You should identify the key contribution your study makes to our knowledge of the subject. Identify, in particular, key findings.

### *Introduction*

The purpose of the introduction is to set the research project in context, to define the relationship of this work to other work in the same field and to explain your own motivation in undertaking the research. You should clearly set out the aims and objectives of the study.

### *Literature Review*

The purpose of the literature review is to identify the state of current knowledge in the area on which you have decided to carry out your research, and to form a foundation for the research you will carry out. It should:

- Establish the socio-historical context of the topic or question or problem
- Critically assess the significance of work already done in the field
- Illustrate the key ideas or theoretical concepts in the field that relate to your topic
- Justify the study that you are proposing

Carrying out a literature review calls for scholarship and time spent reading and reviewing relevant materials. Use the library facilities to research your chosen topic. The subject librarian ([Rachel.hynes@mu.ie](mailto:Rachel.hynes@mu.ie)) can help you in this task. Your discussion should be organised thematically addressing the points outlined above. It is not acceptable to simply summarise the content of a given number of books and articles.

### *Statement of research problem and methodological approach*

Include a clear, concise statement of your research question(s) or objective(s). This should be followed by an outline of the research methodology you chose in order to address your research question(s). You need to explain the process by which you got from posing a question to finding out some answers. You should, therefore, address:

- How you identified the kind of data you would need to answer your question(s)
- How you selected your research technique(s) and why you consider this the most appropriate technique
- Identify the main sources of your data. You need to explain clearly here, if relevant, the type of sample which is being used, the size of the sample and the population from which the sample is being selected. If observation methods or interviews are being employed, outline clearly from whom, in what context, and for what purpose you are collecting the information. Likewise, if you are using secondary or documentary analysis you need to demonstrate what types of documents are required, where they are located, how they are accessed, and how you utilise them to answer your research question(s).

Any special difficulties encountered in the course of the research, or any refinement of your original proposal should be briefly dealt with here.

### *Ethical issues*

There are important ethical issues that must be taken into account in the conduct of research. These issues will be covered in class during the academic year. Among the key points of which you should be aware:

- Inform yourself of the University's research ethics policy and of the ethical guidelines of the Sociological Association of Ireland. Be aware of how these ethical standards are to be maintained in the course of your research.
- Make explicit reference to the ethical issues specific to your research topic when writing up.

- Students must adhere to the principle of informed consent at all times.
- As a general principle, students are advised not to carry out research directly with people under 18 years old. Any such contact requires garda vetting.
- Students wishing to carry out research with vulnerable groups must consult with their supervisor in advance on the feasibility or advisability of same.

#### *Data requirements*

Students should expect to spend up to 20 hours carrying out the empirical research for their research thesis. As a general guide this would translate into approximately:

- Up to 20 hours of participant observation (for which field notes must be recorded)
- Up to 20 semi-structured interviews (depending on the extent of transcription)
- 50-60 survey interviews

Empirical investigation can also be conducted through 20 hours of desk research such as:

- Content analysis of a discrete number of websites, or newspapers or magazines or some combination of those. Specific databases and tools are available locally for conducting this work. For example, Lexus Nexus provides a database of national and international newspapers.
- Analysis of visual materials (photographs, audio visual resources, etc)
- Secondary analysis of existing open source data sets such as Central Statistics Office data, Growing Up in Ireland Longitudinal study, TILDA (Irish Longitudinal study of Ageing), etc.
- Public policy, historical or contemporary documents
- Irish social science data archive (ISSDA)
- Irish Qualitative Data Archive (IQDA) based at Maynooth University
- Administrative data for example materials on the HEA website, and Department of Education & Skills website, any government agency
- Eurostat, OECD, European Value Survey, Eurobarometer, UN
- Irish social and political values survey (IKSSDA)

#### *Findings, Analysis and Interpretation*

Apply the concepts and/or theoretical framework that you outlined in the literature review section to analyse and interpret your findings. Outline your key finding(s) and present some commentary and discussion that helps the reader to make sense of the finding(s). Always refer back to the relevant sociological literature. This is your opportunity to demonstrate how the sociological perspective can help to deepen and broaden our understanding of the particular phenomenon which is being researched. This is also your opportunity to identify where existing theory does not appear to fit your particular empirical case; if so, you should reflect on why this is and suggest either ways in which the theory can be refined or a more appropriate theoretical perspective than the one from which you started. This section will work well if it is organised under thematic (analytical) headings.

#### *Conclusion*

This is your opportunity to reflect on the research process from the conceptualisation of your research question(s) through collecting the data to analysing your key findings. You can discuss the implications of your research findings making recommendations as appropriate. You may comment on your own learning and point to avenues for further research in this field.

### *Bibliography*

List the books, articles, reports, websites, etc that you have consulted and which were relevant to the research. This should be presented using an approved format. See the Maynooth University Guide to the Harvard Referencing System, Second edition (2014). Please take careful note of the Maynooth University's policy on plagiarism when completing your thesis and take steps to reference your work appropriately.

### *Statement on plagiarism*

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 won't 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 being made will be heavily penalised. Submitting essays or projects written by anyone other than you will also result in heavy penalties. As your final assessment is partly based on written assignments, plagiarism is equivalent to cheating at examinations.

The Maynooth University policy guidelines on plagiarism are available at:

[https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/MU%20Policy%20on%20Plagiarism%20May%202014\\_0.pdf](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/MU%20Policy%20on%20Plagiarism%20May%202014_0.pdf)

Please familiarise yourself with this policy.

### *System of referencing*

Here we have excerpted from recognized style guides information which will be of assistance to you in preparing your written work.

#### **Text Citations**

Citations in the text include the last names of the authors and year of publication. Include page numbers when you quote directly from a work or refer to specific passages. Identify subsequent citations of the same source in the same way as the first. Examples follow:

If author's name is in the text, follow it with the publication year in parentheses: ...in another study by Duncan (1959).

If author's name is not in the text, enclose the last name and publication year in parentheses: ...whenever it occurred (Gouldner 1963).

Pagination follows year of publication after a colon: ...Kuhn (1970: 71)

Give both last names for Joint Authors: ...(Martin and Bailey 1988).

Quotations in the text begin and end with quotation marks; the author, date, and/or page numbers follow the end-quote and precede the period:

Wright and Jacobs (1994: 531) found that 'the variation in men's earnings relative to their peers in the labour force was not a reliable predictor of men's flight from feminising occupations.'

OR

One study found that 'the variation in men's earnings relative to their peers in the labour force was not a reliable predictor of men's flight from feminising occupations' (Wright and Jacobs 1994:531).

Block Quotations are presented in smaller type and are set off in a separate, indented paragraph. Block quotations should not be enclosed in quotation marks:

As stated by Wright and Jacobs (1994: 531):

The variation in men's earnings relative to their peers in the labour force was not a reliable predictor of men's attrition. This finding is inconsistent with the prediction that declines in earnings are responsible for male flight from feminising occupations.

### Reference List Formats: Some Examples

#### *Books*

Garner, Steve. 2004. *Racism in the Irish Experience*. London: Pluto Press.

Berlin, Gordon and Andrew Sum. 1988. *Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families and Our Economic Future*. New York: Ford Foundation.

#### *Editions of Books*

McCullagh, Peter and John A Nelder. 1989. *Generalized Linear Models*. 2nd ed. London: Chapman and Hall.

#### *Articles From Collected Works*

Clausen, John A. 1972. 'The Life Course of Individuals.' Pp. 457-514 in *Aging and Society*, vol. 3, *A Sociology of Age Stratification*, edited by M. W. Riley, M. Johnson and A. Foner. New York: Russell Sage.

#### *Articles From Journals*

Goodman, Leo A. 1947a. 'The Analysis of Systems of Qualitative Variables When Some of the Variables are Unobservable.' *American Journal of Sociology*. 79: 179-209.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1947b. 'Exploratory Latent Structure Analysis Using Both Identifiable and Unidentifiable Models.' *Biometrika*. 61:215-231.

Conger, Rand D. Forthcoming. 'The Effects of Positive Feedback on Direction and Amount of Verbalization in a Social Setting.' *Sociological Perspectives*.

(If the article is available in an 'online first' format, give the Digital Object Identifier. Journals usually provide guidance about how to cite online first articles).

*Articles From Newspapers and Magazines*

Guiles, Melinda and Krystal Miller. 1990. "Mazda and Mitsubishi-Chrysler Venture Cut Output, Following Big Three's Lead." Wall Street Journal, January 12, pp. A2, A12.

Electronic Sources

*On-line journal article*

Jacobson, John W., Jane A. Mulick, and Anne A. Schwartz. 1995. "A History of Facilitated Communication: Science, Pseudoscience and Anti-science." American Psychologist 50: 750-65. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.50.9.750. Retrieved January 25, 1996.

*Newspaper article*

Goldstein, Amy 1997. "Dying Patients' Care Varies Widely by Place, Study Says." Washington Post, October 15, P. A1. Retrieved October 15, 1997 (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/Wplate/1997-10/15/0661-101597-idx.html>).

*An Action Alert Posted on a Web Page*

American Sociological Association. 1997. "Call for Help" (ASA Action Alert, October 15). Washington DC: American Sociological Association. Retrieved October 15, 1997 (<http://www.asanet.org/racecall.htm>).

Should you need more detailed information about citations, please consult The American Sociological Association Style Guide:

<http://asa.enoah.com/Bookstore/Reference-Materials/BKctl/ViewDetails/SKU/ASAOE701S14>.

You can find many summary versions freely available from university libraries on the web.

*Ethical guidelines*

You should familiarise yourself as soon as possible with the university guidelines on research ethics. This information is available from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies or on the web at: [http://research.mu.ie/research/research\\_ethics/](http://research.mu.ie/research/research_ethics/) The SAI has published a booklet titled Ethical Guidelines, which you may wish to consult. You will find this a most useful handbook of general principles and statements of ethical practice concerning the professional activities of sociologists in Ireland, practices that now are of direct concern to you as a research student of Sociology. These guidelines are available on line at the SAI website at [www.sociology.ie](http://www.sociology.ie).

*Sociological Association of Ireland*

For information on professional activities of sociologists in Ireland we would like to guide you to our professional organisation the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI):

<http://www.sociology.ie/>

## Department and Faculty Resources for Taught Postgraduates

The Department of Sociology undertakes a variety of activities that are aimed at promoting intellectual community within the department and more widely. While some of these are aimed specifically at postgraduate students, others promote sociological discussion more broadly within the department and the university. It is recommended that you participate in as many of these activities as possible, as they form a crucial part of your development as a sociologist. While many of these activities are targeted primarily at research postgraduates, M.A. students are very welcome and are encouraged to attend.

### Seminars

The Department of Sociology and the Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute (MUSSI) host seminars throughout the year, with guest speakers from across Ireland as well as international scholars. Information on these seminars will be posted on institutional websites and will be circulated via email as well. Postgraduate students are expected to make every effort to attend seminars on a regular basis, as these represent great opportunities to expand knowledge, extend networks and to get involved in the life of the departments and the University at the same time.

Students should be aware of the variety of seminars occurring in related departments. The Sociology department will from time to time undertake joint seminars with other departments - including in the past with Anthropology, Geography and History.

### MUSSI

Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute is a crucial resource for social science at Maynooth University, located on the third floor of IONTAS, the Humanities and Social Sciences building. MUSSI is a valuable source of interdisciplinary intellectual engagement at Maynooth University and Sociology students are encouraged to participate in its activities as much as possible. Check out the MUSSI website and notice boards for details of upcoming events.

### Facilities

There is a *Postgraduate Room* in Auxilia, containing nine networked PCs, with printing facilities and quantitative and qualitative data analysis software available. Seven of these PCs operate through a computing system controlled by the Computer Centre. Two of them operate through a 'local administrator' password, allowing students to install software directly when it is appropriate. The password is available to students from the department for suitable academic purposes. It is intended to make public survey data available on each of these PCs, through a current research project being developed in the department.

There is a *designated kitchen* for postgraduate students in the Small Tower, Auxilia. In deference to all users, students are asked to keep this room clean and tidy at all times.

**Interlibrary Loans:** the department typically pays interlibrary loans costs. However, in order to manage these often heavy costs, students are required to contact the departmental office for the necessary permissions.

All these facilities are subject to restriction in line with the Department's financial situation and pressures on work-space.

In addition to the resources available in the Sociology Department, all postgraduate students have access to the many Student Services offered on campus. These services assist students during their time at Maynooth University and ensure that any difficulties that arise do not affect the students' success in University. See the University Website for further details.

## References and testimonials

Staff-members regard it as a pleasure as well as a duty to act as referees when requested to do so by students with whose work they are familiar. Please bear the following in mind when requesting references:

- Requests should be made in writing, full details being given of the nature of the course or appointment for which an application is being made.
- Full documentation relating to the course or appointment should be supplied, including all forms (duly completed) and envelopes that are required for the furnishing of references.
- Referees should have details of the applicants' address and telephone number to facilitate communication.
- As much notice as possible should be given to referees, the final date for the submission of the reference or testimonial being clearly specified.
- It is desirable for the referee to have an updated copy of the applicant's curriculum vitae to provide background to the writing of a reference.
- Staff-members always appreciate a brief note informing them of the outcome of applications for courses or appointments.

## University Offices and Support for postgraduates

All students have access to the many Student Services offered on campus. These services assist students during their time at Maynooth University and ensure that any difficulties that arise do not affect the students' success in University.

Here are some of the services that you may find helpful:

Access Programme <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/access-office>>

Encourages under-represented groups to enter third level and provides these groups with support through their time at Maynooth.

Crèche Facilities <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/campus-life/campus-facilities/creche-facilities>>

Available to staff and students of the university

Examinations and timetabling <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams>>

Responsible for the central administration of the University written examinations.

Graduate Studies Office <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/graduate-studies>>

Provides advice and support for students in all aspects of postgraduate study.

IT Services <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/it-services>>

Provides a wide range of general and specialist IT services to students and staff of the university in support of the university's objectives in areas including teaching, learning and research.

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

Dedicated to helping you with your research and studies during your time in University.

Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/dean-teaching-learning>>

The Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning supports teaching and learning across the university, coordinating the work of:

- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Career Development Centre
- Work Placement
- Experiential Learning
- Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies

Student Fees and Grants <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/student-fees-grants>>

Primary function is the setting and collection of all student fees due to the University.

Student Records and Registration <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/records>>

Responsible for the Registration of the entire Student Population and the subsequent maintenance and update of the Student Records Database system

Student Services <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/student-services>>

There are many resources and people in **Student Services** who can help you on your journey. Services include counselling, health centre, pastoral care, home-finder information and budgeting advice.