

AM SYLLABUS 2026

SOCIOLOGY

AM 30

SYLLABUS

Sociology AM 30

(Available in September)

Syllabus

Paper I (2 hrs) + Paper II (2 hrs) + Paper III (2 hrs)

Preamble

The syllabus aims to provide students with a solid grounding in sociology, based on a range of thematic areas that represent some of the key contemporary fields of inquiry in the discipline. The syllabus content is intended to function both as a stand-alone post-secondary area of study, and as a foundation for students interested in taking up sociology/social studies at University level.

The syllabus seeks to achieve a synergy between theory and practice. It does this not by sectioning the two into different areas; rather, the emphasis is on as seamless as possible an application of theory throughout.

The syllabus is closely based on two recent, authoritative, and widely-used textbooks. Exam candidates will be able to answer any question in the exam paper based on their understanding and application of the relevant sections in the textbooks.

Exam questions will be topic-specific and limited to the topics included in the syllabus. Students are encouraged to do their private reading and develop their ideas beyond the materials included in the textbooks.

Assessment Objectives

The student at Advanced level will be subject to an assessment as outlined in the scheme of assessment. The assessment will target knowledge and understanding, application, analysis and evaluation. The objectives of this assessment are to assess:

- comprehensive knowledge of sociological theory and concepts;
- logical and coherent arguments based on sociological theory and knowledge;
- ability to apply knowledge of sociology to a range of issues and real-life contexts;
- ability of make connections between several different topics outlined in the thematic areas;
- ability to present arguments, evaluate, and draw conclusions based on sound sociological knowledge;
- analytical skills applied to sociological contexts.

Scheme of Assessment

There will be three two-hour papers and papers will carry equal marks.

Paper 1 will be based on the Core Thematic Area and structured into 3 to 6 questions; the marks allocated to each component will be indicated in brackets. There will be no choice, and candidates must answer all the questions.

Paper 2 will be based on Thematic Areas 1 to 4 and will have 4 questions from which candidates will choose 2. Each question will carry equal marks.

Paper 3 will be based on Thematic Areas 5 to 8 and will have 4 questions from which candidates will choose 2. Each question will carry equal marks.

Thematic Areas and Themes

There is one core thematic area and eight thematic areas.

Core Thematic Area: Culture and Identity

Conceptions of culture and identity: The meaning and importance of culture; meanings of and changing distinctions between high and mass, popular and low cultures; the globalization of culture; the concept of identity; the social causes and construction of identity; different types of identity.

Socialisation: Resocialisation; nature vs nurture; the social construction of self and identity; primary and secondary socialization; theoretical approaches to the role of socialization in the formation of culture and identity.

Identities in practice: Social class and its contemporary forms and relevance; gender and identity; sexuality and identity; ethnicity and identity; diaspora and globalization; new ethnicities and hybrid ethnic identities; nationality and identity; disability and identity; age and identity.

Leisure and consumption: Consumption and identity – postmodernist approaches; tourism and the ‘tourist gaze’; the creation of identity in a media-saturated society; identities, lifestyle, and choice; globalization and identity.

Thematic Area 1: Family

Theoretical perspectives: Functionalism; New Right; Marxism; feminism; postmodern theories.
Diversity and change in families and households: Divorce and separation; diversity in family patterns; new partnerships.
Gender roles and domesticity: Balancing work and care; intimate violence.

Thematic Area 2: Religion

Key concepts: What is religion? Religion in classical sociology; the secularisation thesis; beyond secularisation.
Religion in context I: Religious organizations.
Religion in context II: Christianity, gender, and sexuality; fundamentalism.

Thematic Area 3: Gender and Sexuality

General: Biology and sexual orientation.
Social constructions: Sexuality, religion, and morality; forms of sexuality; gender socialization; the gender order; sexuality and civil rights.
Theoretical perspectives: Functionalism, feminism, queer theory.

Thematic Area 4: Welfare and Social Policy

Definitions and concepts: Absolute poverty; relative poverty.
Social exclusion.
Theories of welfare: Marxism; feminism; social democratic theories; New Right; Esping-Anderson’s ‘three worlds of welfare’.
The persistence of poverty.

Thematic Area 5: Media and Communication

Theoretical perspectives: Functionalism; conflict theories; symbolic interactionism; postmodern theories.
Audiences and media representations: Audience studies; representing class, gender, ethnicity, and disability.
The global media: Media imperialism; ownership of media ‘supercompanies’; resistance and alternatives to the global media.

Thematic Area 6: Crime and Deviance

Victims and perpetrators of crime: Gender, sexuality, and crime; youth and crime; white-collar crime.
Prison and punishment: The logic of imprisonment; restorative justice.
Theoretical perspectives: Functionalism; interactionism; conflict theories and the 'new criminology'; control theories.

Thematic Area 7: Environment

Nature, environment, society: Nature and environment; sociology and environment.
Sociological theory and sustainability: Consumerism and its environmental consequences; limits to growth and sustainable development; the 'risk society'; ecological modernization; environmental justice and ecological citizenship.

Thematic Area 8: Race, Ethnicity, and Migration

Key concepts: Race, ethnicity, minority ethnic groups, racism.
Models of ethnic integration: Models of integration; ethnic diversity; ethnic conflict.
Migration in context: Migration and the decline of empire; Britain since the 1960s; migration and the EU; diasporas.

Text books

Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton, 2013, *Sociology*, 7th edition, Polity Press.
ISBN 9780745652931

Ken Browne, 2015, *Sociology for AQA Volume 1*, 5th edition, Wiley-Blackwell.
ISBN 9780745691305