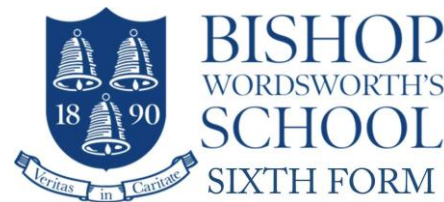


SOCIOLOGY

AQA Specification



General information:

This Sociology course aims to develop students' knowledge and understanding of society and the social processes that shape individual and group experiences. Students examine sociological theories, concepts and research methods and apply them to contemporary social issues.

The course develops students' ability to analyse evidence, evaluate different explanations and construct sustained, reasoned arguments. Students are expected to engage critically with sociological research and to recognise the strengths and limitations of different theoretical and methodological approaches.

Sociology provides a rigorous academic foundation for students considering further study in Sociology, Criminology, Social Policy, Politics, Law, Education, Psychology, Journalism and a wide range of other subjects and careers involving research, analysis and communication.

Course content:

In Year 12, the course covers Education, including the role and purpose of education, differential educational achievement, the significance of social class, gender and ethnicity, and the relationship between education and wider society. Students also study Methods in Context and develop their understanding of Research Methods, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, experiments, official statistics and other forms of sociological research.

The Year 12 course also includes Families and Households, examining changing patterns of family and household structures, relationships within families, childhood and demographic changes. Beliefs in Society examines religious organisations, beliefs and practices, secularisation, religious participation and the relationship between religion and social change.

In Year 13, students study Crime and Deviance, including explanations of criminal behaviour, patterns of crime, social control, globalisation and crime, and the relationship between crime and the media. Students also study Theory and Methods, developing a deeper understanding of functionalism, Marxism, interactionism, feminism and postmodernism alongside debates concerning sociological research.

The course also includes a further Topics in Sociology option, as specified by the department. Across Year 13, students are expected to apply knowledge from different areas of the course and develop increasingly sophisticated synoptic arguments.

How is the course taught and assessed?

Sociology is taught by specialist teachers in dedicated classrooms. Students are expected to undertake regular independent study and wider reading alongside classroom learning. Lessons include explicit teaching, discussion, analysis of sociological research, application of contemporary examples and examination-style questions.

Assessment takes place through regular knowledge checks, topic assessments, extended written responses and formal examinations. Students are taught to demonstrate accurate knowledge, apply sociological concepts and research to specific questions, analyse evidence and evaluate competing explanations.

The AQA A-level Sociology qualification is assessed through three written examination papers, each lasting two hours. Paper 1 assesses Education with Methods in Context and Research Methods. Paper 2 assesses Topics in Sociology and Methods in Context. Paper 3 assesses Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods. Each paper contributes 33⅓% of the final A-level grade.

Entry requirements:

In addition to the general entry requirements for BWS, students are expected to achieve a grade 6 in GCSE English Language. As the course requires students to construct detailed analytical and evaluative written responses.

Results information:

This is a new subject starting in 2027

Top destinations for students:

Students studying Sociology can progress to a wide range of degree courses and careers. Previous and potential progression routes include Sociology, Criminology, Law, Politics, Social Policy, Education, Psychology, Journalism, Social Work and other humanities and social science disciplines.

Beyond the curriculum:

Sociology Enrichment Programme

Sociology students are encouraged to extend their learning beyond the A-level specification through wider reading, independent research, academic lectures, documentaries and engagement with contemporary social issues. Opportunities are provided for students to explore sociological debates in greater depth and to make connections between different areas of the course.

Debating and Public Speaking

Students studying Sociology are encouraged to participate in wider school debating and public-speaking opportunities. These activities support the development of skills in constructing arguments, evaluating evidence, responding to alternative perspectives and communicating ideas clearly.

University and Academic Enrichment

Students are encouraged to engage with university outreach activities, lectures, taster sessions and other opportunities in the social sciences. Where available, students can access university events relating to Sociology, Criminology, Law, Politics and related disciplines.

Essay and Academic Competitions

Students are encouraged to participate in relevant essay competitions and academic challenges. These provide opportunities for students to explore sociological questions beyond the A-level specification and develop independent academic writing.

Guest Speakers and Lectures

Where opportunities are available, students are able to attend talks delivered by academics and professionals working in areas related to sociology and the social sciences. Such events provide opportunities to encounter perspectives and research beyond the classroom.

Independent Research

Students are encouraged to undertake independent research into contemporary sociological issues. Current affairs, academic articles, documentaries, books and reputable research organisations provide opportunities for students to develop their understanding beyond the examination specification.

Student Leadership Opportunities

Students in Year 12 and Year 13 are encouraged to contribute to wider academic life within the school. Opportunities can include supporting enrichment activities, contributing to discussion groups and acting as role models for younger students.