

# SO301-30 Dissertation

**20/21**

**Department**

Sociology

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 3

**Module leader**

Nisha Kapoor

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

25 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

Dissertations are the result of independent research on a sociological topic of your choice, with some guidance from your supervisor. Instead of writing an essay on a pre-determined topic or doing an exam, you get the opportunity to: choose the topic, work out how to study it, collect and assess relevant information, analyse and criticise the information and write an account of how it was all done in 10,000 words.

### Module aims

A dissertation should have a sustained argument. This means that it should draw upon the results of student's reading, thinking, information-gathering and data generation and analysis in such a way that it persuades readers to accept the student's understanding of the topic. The main aim is for students to use a selection of concepts, theoretical ideas, observations, statistical findings and their faculties of criticism and imagination in order to reach defensible conclusions about research questions that they find interesting, challenging or puzzling.

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Autumn term workshops

Week 2: Tackling your Literature Review

Week 4: Qualitative Research Design/ Quantitative Research Design

Week 8: Research Ethics

Week 10: Thinking about an MA/MSc

Spring term workshops

Week 2: Maximizing Your Employability

Week 4: Qualitative Data Analysis / Quantitative Data Analysis

Week 8: CV writing

Week 10: Completing and Submitting

## **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate intellectual independence and originality by choosing their own subject of study and defining its nature and scope
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant existing research literature in a relevant area and evaluate this literature critically
- Formulate a testable hypothesis or research question and set it in the context of the existing research literature
- Show an understanding and awareness of the ethical context of a relevant research area
- Recognise the theoretical, practical, and methodological implications and limitations of their research
- Demonstrate an advanced level of knowledge and understanding that will equip them to proceed to study at a higher level.
- Demonstrate capacity to independently locate, access and analyse data
- Demonstrate an ability to independently conduct secondary research
- Demonstrate an ability to independently write about and report findings within the context of wider substantive debates within the discipline

## **Indicative reading list**

Adamson, A. (1990) A Student's Guide for Assignments, Projects and Research, Oxford, Thamesman

Becker, H. S. (2010) Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish your Thesis, Book, or Article, Richmond, BC: ReadHowYouWant, Second edition

Bell, J. (2014) Doing Your Research Project: a Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science, Buckingham: Open University Press, Sixth edition

Berry, R. (2004) The Research Project: How to Write It, London: Routledge, Fifth edition

Blair, L. (2016) Writing a Graduate Thesis or Dissertation, Rotterdam: Sense

Blaxter, L., C. Hughes, et al. (2010) How to Research, Buckingham: Open University Press, Fourth edition

Burnett, J. (2009) Doing your Social Science Dissertation, London: Sage

Gibaldi, J. (1995) MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, New York: Modern Language Association of America, Fourth edition.

MHRA (2013) MHRA Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors, Editors and Writers of Theses, London: Modern Humanities Research Association, Third edition.

Preece, R. A. (1994) Starting Research: An Introduction to Academic Research and Dissertation Writing, London: Pinter

Smith, K. et al (2009) Doing Your Undergraduate Social Science Dissertation, London & New York: Routledge

Turabian, K. L., revised by W.C. Booth et al (2013) A Manual for Writers of Research papers, Theses and Dissertations, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Eight edition  
University of Chicago Press (2010) Chicago Manual of Style Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 16th edition  
Watson, G (1987) Writing a Thesis: A guide to Long Essays and Dissertations, London, Longman  
Walliman, N. (2005) Your Research Project: A Step-by-step Guide for the First-time Researcher, London: Sage, Second edition

## **Research element**

The dissertation is an independent piece of research carried out by the student with support from a supervisor. This independent research can take various forms, e. g, interviews, focus groups, ethnography, content/discourse analysis, archival or library research.

## **Subject specific skills**

### **Cognitive skills**

1. Able to independently appreciate the applications of a given theory
2. To engage independently with data and related empirical research
3. To be able to independently retrieve, evaluate critically and select relevant information to support coherent arguments
4. Able to independently demonstrate independence of thought and a degree of originality

### **Professional skills**

1. Demonstrate familiarity with ethical and practical considerations in the collection of relevant data
2. Independently undertake an extensive programme of reading and research

3. Engage in sustained analysis, interpretation and comparison of a substantial body of data in an independent manner
4. Independently critically evaluate and comment on sociological research and recognises its implications and draw justifiable conclusions
5. Independently demonstrate the ability to design, plan, and carry out a piece of empirical research within a defined period
6. Independently demonstrate a capacity to work with data and to situate that research within wider disciplinary debates.

## **Transferable skills**

### **Key skills**

1. Present the results of their own independent research in a clearly written, academically and cogently argued, logically structured and properly referenced form
  2. Consolidate communication, information-seeking and intellectual skills
  3. Have the ability to reflect independently on and evaluate their own research project management and performance
  4. To conduct research and present the findings in a coherent argument.
  5. To critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem.
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1. To exercise initiative and demonstrate decision-making skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.
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## **Study**

### **Study time**

Type	Required
Lectures	8 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Total	300 hours

Type	Required
Project supervision	10 sessions of 30 minutes (2%)
Private study	287 hours (96%)
Total	300 hours

## Private study description

Preparation, conducting and writing up research.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Dissertation	100%	
A 10,000-word dissertation.		

## Feedback on assessment

Dissertations are first and second marked through Tabula, which is used to provide the mark and written feedback to students.

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## Availability

### Pre-requisites

To take this module, you must have passed:

- All of
  - [SO120-15 Researching Society and Culture](#)
  - [SO242-15 Designing and Conducting Social Research](#)

## Courses

This module is Core for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 3 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 3 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 3 of L301 Sociology
  - Year 3 of L305 Sociology with Specialism in Cultural Studies
  - Year 3 of L303 Sociology with Specialism in Gender Studies
  - Year 3 of L304 Sociology with Specialism in Research Methods
  - Year 3 of L302 Sociology with Specialism in Social Policy
- Year 4 of USOA-L306 BA in Sociology (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of USOA-L314 Undergraduate Sociology and Criminology

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 3 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology
- Year 3 of UCEA-Y205 Undergraduate Social Studies (Full-time)
- USX2-Y202 Undergraduate Social Studies [2 + 2]
  - Year 4 of Y202 Social Studies [2 + 2]
  - Year 4 of Y202 Social Studies [2 + 2]

This module is Core option list B for:

- USX2-Y202 Undergraduate Social Studies [2 + 2]
  - Year 4 of Y202 Social Studies [2 + 2]
  - Year 4 of Y202 Social Studies [2 + 2]

This module is Core option list C for:

- UPDA-Y201 Undergraduate Social Studies (Part-time)
  - Year 1 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 2 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 3 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 4 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 5 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 6 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 7 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 8 of Y201 Social Studies
  - Year 9 of Y201 Social Studies

This module is Option list A for:

- ULAA-ML34 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 3 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
  - Year 4 of ML34 Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree)
- Year 5 of ULAA-ML35 BA in Law and Sociology (Qualifying Degree) (with Intercalated year)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)
- Year 4 of ULAA-ML33 Undergraduate Law and Sociology

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 4 of UPOA-ML14 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology (with Intercalated year)

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 4 of UHIA-VL14 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with Year Abroad)