



SOCX329

The Sociology of the Public Sphere

S2 OUA 2017

Dept of Sociology

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Sandey Fitzgerald

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Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Today we are struck by an apparent loss of the will and the capacity to build solidarities between strangers in a world that is deeply divided by differences. The effort needed to build common ground, to arrive at shared interpretations of interests and to agree on the general significance of problems is dangerously lacking. In place of the effort required to build solidarities across differences we often resort to easy bonds forged defensively around our differences. We might suppose that an on-going Global Financial Crisis testifies to deep and widespread traumas that are set in train when we fail to plan around shared futures. So too real threats to the sustainability of our planet highlight the urgency of a planned response to risks that confront us all. So where does this leave us? Do we have to sacrifice our private interests as we try and build common ground with others? Perhaps instead we can turn to a democratic mode of integration that gives private concerns a vital role in negotiating the character of common interests. This is the ideal of a modern democratic public sphere. This unit will explore the modern public sphere as an embattled but vital cultural potential of liberal democratic histories. All enrolment queries should be directed to Open Universities Australia (OUA): see www.open.edu.au

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.open.edu.au/student-admin-and-support/key-dates/>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Have familiarity with fundamental concepts and issues informing current debates within the sociology discipline

Be able to move between general theoretical and focused empirical materials relating to the public sphere.

The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and

independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate

Be able to evaluate the different perspectives discussed in the unit and to develop a sustained argument explaining and defending their point of view

Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make connections between individual experience and wider social processes

Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.

Comprehension skills: in doing the reading for discussion and assignments students will learn to understand the ideas and arguments presented in texts and discussions

Problem-solving skills: be able to apply theories and knowledge to the real world

Creative-thinking skills: students will be encouraged to develop new ideas and theories and to construct arguments for themselves

General Assessment Information

Prerequisites: You must complete Level 1 and 2 studies in Sociology before starting this unit.

Please note that this unit was previously coded SGY320. If you have completed SGY320, you should not enrol in SOCX329.

Successful Completion of the Course

All assessment tasks must be attempted and an overall minimum pass mark of 50% must be achieved in order to successfully complete this course.

Assignment submission

This unit uses a combination of submission methods. Please check the individual assignment in the Assessments and Guides section of the course to find out which method that particular assignment uses.

Turnitin Submission Procedure

iLearn Assignment Upload Procedure

Required and Recommended Weekly Readings

These are listed in the unit. All required and most recommended readings can be found under the unit code in Unit Readings in the Macquarie Library or are available via weblinks in the unit.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Assessable Discussion + Report</u>	15%	No	Weekly; Report: Week 10
<u>Online Journal</u>	35%	No	Weekly
<u>Tutorial Essay</u>	15%	No	Wednesday Week 8
<u>Major Essay</u>	35%	No	Wednesday Week 13

Assessable Discussion + Report

Due: **Weekly; Report: Week 10**

Weighting: **15%**

1. Discussion

Weekly participation in an online discussion with peers regarding the themes and issues raised in the lecture and readings. A minimum of 9 out of 12 weeks discussion is required to pass this assessment.

- **There will be a pre-census review of your progress in this task conducted on Monday of Week 4.**

2. Report (due Week 10)

Submission of a **200 word Report** on the discussion from **one** of the weeks to Week 10. The report should **analyse the discussion** (not the reading material). Submission is via **Assignments**.

See Assessments and Guides section in the course for further information regarding this assessment task.

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- Be able to evaluate the different perspectives discussed in the unit and to develop a

sustained argument explaining and defending their point of view

- Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make connections between individual experience and wider social processes
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Online Journal

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **35%**

A weekly report reflecting on *each* of the set readings for that week submitted via an individual online blog. Reports should be at least 200 words and include a consideration of the arguments presented in the reading in the light of the concerns of the course, and other readings in the course. Journal entries will receive a pre-census review on Monday of Week 4 and feedback will be provided. All entries must be completed by **5pm Friday of Week 13**.

Note: if you expect to have significant difficulty in meeting the requirements of this assessment task because of limited access to the internet or other major disruptions or because of disability, please contact the tutor at the **beginning** of the course or as soon as you become aware of the problem so that alternative arrangements for this task can be considered.

See Assessments and Guides section in the course for further information regarding this assessment task.

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Tutorial Essay

Due: **Wednesday Week 8**

Weighting: **15%**

A **1,000 word critical review of a reading** based on your journal entry for that reading and presented in essay form. In this exercise you should explain why you have chosen this piece as the basis for thinking about issues in the unit. This assignment should help you to begin preparation for the major essay. (Note that you are **not** being asked for a summary of the reading. You are being asked for a reflection on the *value* of the reading to your understanding of the themes and concerns of the course). Submission is via **Turnitin**.

- **Note:** Your essay must be fully referenced according to Department of Sociology guidelines (see Assessments and Guides for details).

See Assessments and Guides section in the course for further information regarding this assessment task.

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Major Essay

Due: **Wednesday Week 13**

Weighting: **35%**

An analytical essay on the central themes of the unit **or** on a topic of relevance to the unit, which draws on the theory presented in the unit and which demonstrates research skills.

Option 1: 'In the news!' Topical Essay. Find some event in the news that particularly interests you and reflect upon its significance *with respect to themes in the unit*. This will require you to propose a question which you will address in the course of the essay. Your response should be in essay form.

- **ALL Students doing this option must email the tutor by Friday of Week 9 with their topic, a proposed question to be answered, a proposed reading list and some ideas for an approach.**

Option 2: General Thematic Essay. Devise a topic that explores one or other of the **general**

themes in the unit, giving an account of the public sphere today. This will require you to propose a question which you will address in the course of the essay. Your response must be in essay form.

- **ALL students taking this option must email the tutor by Friday of Week 9 with their proposed question and proposed reading list.**

Regardless of the option chosen, your essay **MUST** reflect on the public sphere in some way, and the connections between those reflections and the public sphere must be clearly explained.

The essay must be referenced according to the Department of Sociology Referencing Guide. See Assessments and Guides for link.

Submission is via **Turnitin**.

See Assessments and Guides section in the course for further information regarding this assessment task.

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Delivery and Resources

Unit webpage and technology used and required:

Online units can be accessed at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>

PC and Internet access are required. Basic computer skills (e.g., internet browsing) and skills in word processing are also a requirement.

Please contact teaching staff for any further, more specific requirements.

Unit Schedule

Weekly schedule

Part 1: What is the Public Sphere and what has happened to it?	
Week 1	Introduction: When Barack Obama called for the building of a 'More Perfect Union' in the modern world, he was appealing to an ideal that was already laid down in the American Constitution. What does he mean? Seemingly not a solidarity that would try and suppress difference but one that is constructed around the effort that is required to understand other points of view and interests. Obama and others point to the need to redeem the embattled expectation that we can build democratic solidarities. This is a 'digging where we stand' that tries to recover the unrealized potentials of the great ideals of liberal democratic histories. We turn first to a great attempt to systematically diagnose the possibilities and the frailties of modern democracy as it took shape 19 th America. Our journey begins with Alexis de Tocqueville.
Week 2	Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1858): Democratic Solidarity - Democracy as a Sociological Issue Written in the first part of the 19th century, de Tocqueville's great work on the future of a democratic way of life is very relevant to our attempt to understand and appreciate modern democratic solidarities. Coming from French aristocratic lineage, he regarded the democratic culture and institutions taking shape in early 19th century America as an exciting historical potential. Unlike the recent theorists of social capital, Tocqueville is interested in the value of a quite particular type of solidarity; in the capacity of rights-bearing private individuals to build understandings across their differences about the reasonableness of different points of view and to forge shared projects in a world of strangers.
Week 3	Alexis De Tocqueville: the Threat of the Authoritarian State While he was a great enthusiast for the achievements and the potentials of modern democratic processes, Tocqueville also considered that these were very vulnerable to dynamics within democratic societies that threatened to undermine a spirit of active participation. Tocqueville considered that, unless vigorously checked, the tendencies of democratic societies to civil privatism would see the collapse of democratic potentials and would permit the rise of a new kind of tyranny. Have his fears been borne out or was Tocqueville looking in the wrong quarters for the threats to democratic solidarities?
Week 4	Market Society and the Public Sphere Tocqueville thought that if the vibrancy of a democratic culture wavered, mighty authoritarian states would rush into the power vacuum. Determined to govern all aspects of modern life, a modern totalitarian state would further sap participatory energies necessary to a democratic culture. Contemporary commentators on the decline of a public sphere have seen the major threats somewhat differently. Today the biggest challenge to the modern public sphere appears to come from aggressive attempts to universalise the norms, expectations and purposes of the market. A market that tries to impose its norms across all aspects of life, would see individuals encountering each other as competitively structured buyers and sellers in every domain of their activities. It would mean the colonisation of all those processes and interactions whereby private individuals seek to build solidarities around shared interpretations of their problems, needs and interests. Zygmunt Bauman is amongst the most vigorous critics of the assault of market ideologies on a modern public sphere.

Week 5	<p>The Public Sphere in a Multicultural Society</p> <p>As already noted, Barack Obama has compellingly spoken about the need to combat fatalism and revive a hopeful attitude about building our futures. The idea of a 'more perfect union' sounds inviting but what can it mean and how can it be reconciled with a hard-won respect for cultural differences? In this session we critically review different accounts of what the project of reconstructing public sphere might entail (how do we try and balance the task of building solidarities across differences with a sensitivity to our differences). We explore the challenges that face the task of building a public sphere in terms that support rather than contests the multicultural commitments of liberal democratic societies through the work of Jeffrey Alexander. Are the pessimists right in supposing that liberal democratic ideals and institutions are so contaminated by their repressive histories that they are not worth saving? It seems that we need a sophisticated understanding of the potentials of the modern public sphere.</p>
Part 2: Jürgen Habermas – Theorist of the Public Sphere	
Week 6	<p>Habermas: The Rise and Restructure of the Public Sphere</p> <p>First published in 1962, Habermas' <i>The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere</i> offers an historical/sociological account of the emergence, transformation and partial degeneration of the modern public sphere. Habermas looks to 18th century European bourgeois culture to identify the social and cultural conditions that allowed reasoned discourse about public issues conducted by private persons willing to let arguments, not status and not the authority of tradition, be decisive. He encourages us to revisit the now neglected achievements of a bourgeois public sphere, to consider its unrealised potentials and to understand the processes that threaten to overwhelm it.</p>
Week 7	<p>Habermas: Philosophical Underpinnings of Habermas's Theory of the Public Sphere</p> <p>Habermas becomes increasingly persuaded that the way in which the 18th century had described the modern public sphere is too clogged with the prejudices of a bourgeois elite to provide an adequate way of thinking about the potentials of a modern democratic culture. We need another way of reflecting on the kinds of claims that a democratic mode of interaction exerts upon us. Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, he develops his theory of communicative interaction. In this theory, Habermas outlines his critique of the one-sided character of our appreciation of processes of cultural modernisation. We need to grasp modernisation not simply as a process that extends our ability to achieve instrumental control over our environment but also as a process whereby our ability to reflect upon and to deliberatively build shared interpretations of our purposes is expanded. The over-development of this former description of modernisation (instrumental reason) and its colonisation of the latter (communicative reason) informs the terms of Habermas' s critique of late modern societies. The theory of communicative action insists that all human beings, simply by their use of language to communicate, betray an implicit commitment to the expectation that we can build shared understandings with differently placed others. To Habermas, this suggests that we need to protect and defend the communicative rationality upheld by the public sphere not as a value that underpins only a particular type of society but as an expectation that all of humanity has, implicitly, embraced.</p> <p>MID-SEMESTER BREAK</p>
Week 8	<p>Democratic Potentials: Reviving the Public Sphere</p> <p>In the 1990s Habermas moves back to a defense of the modern public sphere as a specific cultural potential of liberal democratic societies. In <i>Between Facts and Norms</i>, he describes the modern public sphere as a structural potential of these societies that is systematically frustrated and blocked by the hegemonic ambitions of other competing imperatives. At this stage, he thinks that the task of rescuing the modern public sphere requires that the channels between the processes in an active civil society (through which problems and needs seek recognition for their generalized, society-wide significance) and the decision-making centres of democratic political institutions need to be unblocked. Habermas considers that a democratisation of the welfare project could result from a systematic commitment to release the communicative flows between democratic government and civil society as the two ends of a modern public sphere. Over the last decade, Habermas has offered a significant contribution to debates over the future of modern democracy in a post-national, globalised constellation. We will briefly talk about his distinctive views. In the last few years there has been an interesting attempt to theorise the relevance of modern religions to the task of rebuilding a modern public sphere.</p>
Part 3: Contemporary Contexts (Problems and Opportunities)	

Week 9	<p>An Australian Public Sphere?</p> <p>In this part of the unit we will consider the public sphere in some of its contemporary configurations. We begin by looking at the question: is there a distinctive Australian public sphere? We also look at some changes in contemporary political and social life that might seem to threaten conditions that are necessary to the future of a democratic public sphere. What of a populist politics that has turned its back on the task of building solidarities with strangers and sees democracy as a matter of giving voice to each minority interest? And what of the internet? Is this an ally or threat to the democratic public sphere? Finally we take up the topic of the mass media and the public sphere. We begin with a discussion of Eva Cox's account of the state of the public sphere in contemporary Australia to introduce the question: what is distinctive about an Australian public sphere? What distinguishes Australian public culture and how resilient is it? We will particularly focus on the importance of the Australian welfare state in underpinning and shaping the public sphere. The welfare state has played a vital role in addressing the inequalities that deprive individuals from effective participation. However, has a road been taken in re-functioning the Australian welfare state that slides away from its erstwhile contribution to the public sphere?</p>
Week 10	<p>Politics for the Ranter and Individuality for the Shopper?</p> <p>Are we losing basic conditions that are required for a modern public sphere? We are witness to a resurgence of a democratic politics that has little to do with the commitment to public reason that underpins a modern public sphere. The 'tea party' movements are just the tip of an iceberg of a politics of self –assertion by groups that describe themselves as victims of democratic institutions. We will discuss the rise of populism here and abroad and its relationship to the public sphere. There are changes too in the way in which individuality is being seen that also appear to undermine conditions that are vital to the modern public sphere. Thinking back to de Tocqueville, we see that for him democracy depended on a strong individuality in which each was bent on freely determining his/her own futures. But today, we are told, individuality has been reconstructed by a consumer/therapy culture. Have we lost the ideal of an individual bent on freely shaping a shared future? Instead the individual is seen to be seeking the protection and support of the crowd and its pleasures. Is this critique too strongly negative about the futures of the public sphere?</p>
Week 11	<p>Democracy and the Internet</p> <p>Debates over the contributions of the internet to democratic politics go way back. On the negative side we see arguments that the internet has been hostile to public reason. It has typically made itself available to a populist politics that is impatient with the slow uncertainties of democratic interchanges. More recently, critics have argued that social networks of the internet age cement the grip of a consumer/therapy culture. They serve to produce a personality that is happy to 'twitter' away and sacrifice that individuality that Tocqueville told us was the great potential of modern democracies. Are the critics too strong? There are strong arguments on the positive side too. After all, the internet is a technology which gets under the radar of the broadcast media to confer the power of expressing and shaping opinions to us all (aka Wiki Leaks!). Again, the point could be made that far from the obliteration of individuality, the social network sites are driven by the longing to build communicative bridges between individuals. In this session we explore the range of issues thrown up.</p>
Week 12	<p>Democracy, the Mass Media and the Public Sphere</p> <p>In this lecture we sum up the main themes of the unit by comparing the way in which various models of the public sphere construct different accounts of the role of the mass media in fostering democratic potentials. The mass media has been seen to occupy an important function in sustaining a modern public sphere. It has been attributed with the crucial task of acting as a 'transformer' between opinion-forming processes within civil society and the decision-making bodies of the political public sphere. The growing trend towards monopolisation and the undermining of public broadcasting are seen as a major challenge to this role. Yet perhaps we can still find symptoms of not yet defeated hopes that the media can contribute to a renovation of an Australian public sphere?</p>
Week 13	<p>Review</p>

Policies and Procedures

Late Submission - applies unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the unit guide

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for

assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Extension Request

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure **(<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>)**

The University recognises that students may experience events or conditions that adversely affect their academic performance. If you experience serious and unavoidable difficulties at exam time or when assessment tasks are due, you can consider applying for Special Consideration.

You need to show that the circumstances:

1. were serious, unexpected and unavoidable
2. were beyond your control
3. caused substantial disruption to your academic work
4. substantially interfered with your otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the unit requirements
5. lasted at least three consecutive days or a total of 5 days within the teaching period and prevented completion of an assessment task scheduled for a specific date.

If you feel that your studies have been impacted submit an application as follows:

1. Visit [Ask MQ](#) and use your OneID to log in
2. Fill in your relevant details
3. Attach supporting documents by clicking 'Add a reply', click 'Browse' and navigating to the files you want to attach, then click 'Submit Form' to send your notification and supporting documents
4. Please keep copies of your original documents, as they may be requested in the future as part of the assessment process

Outcome

Once your submission is assessed, an appropriate outcome will be organised.

OUA Specific Policies and Procedures

Withdrawal from a unit after the census date

You can withdraw from your subjects prior to [the census date](#) (last day to withdraw). If you successfully withdraw before the census date, you won't need to apply for Special Circumstances. If you find yourself unable to withdraw from your subjects before the census date - you might be able to [apply for Special Circumstances](#). If you're eligible, we can refund your fees and overturn your fail grade.

If you're studying Single Subjects using FEE-HELP or paying up front, you can [apply online](#).

If you're studying a degree using HECS-HELP, you'll need to [apply directly to Macquarie University](#).

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy (in effect until Dec 4th, 2017): http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy (in effect from Dec 4th, 2017): <https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policies/special-consideration>

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate
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- Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between

different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make connections between individual experience and wider social processes

- Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.
- Creative-thinking skills: students will be encouraged to develop new ideas and theories and to construct arguments for themselves

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

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- Problem-solving skills: be able to apply theories and knowledge to the real world

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Online Journal
- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Online Journal
- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them

competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

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- Comprehension skills: in doing the reading for discussion and assignments students will learn to understand the ideas and arguments presented in texts and discussions
- Creative-thinking skills: students will be encouraged to develop new ideas and theories and to construct arguments for themselves

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Online Journal
- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to

critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Be able to move between general theoretical and focused empirical materials relating to the public sphere.
- The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate
- Be able to evaluate the different perspectives discussed in the unit and to develop a sustained argument explaining and defending their point of view
- Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make connections between individual experience and wider social processes
- Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.
- Comprehension skills: in doing the reading for discussion and assignments students will learn to understand the ideas and arguments presented in texts and discussions
- Creative-thinking skills: students will be encouraged to develop new ideas and theories and to construct arguments for themselves

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Online Journal
- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Be able to move between general theoretical and focused empirical materials relating to the public sphere.
- The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate
- Be able to evaluate the different perspectives discussed in the unit and to develop a sustained argument explaining and defending their point of view
- Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.
- Problem-solving skills: be able to apply theories and knowledge to the real world

Assessment tasks

- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate
- Be able to evaluate the different perspectives discussed in the unit and to develop a sustained argument explaining and defending their point of view

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Online Journal
- Tutorial Essay
- Major Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Be able to move between general theoretical and focused empirical materials relating to the public sphere.
- The development of major generic skills such as the capacity for creative and independent thinking and skills of writing, argumentation and debate
- Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make connections between individual experience and wider social processes
- Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.
- Problem-solving skills: be able to apply theories and knowledge to the real world

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Major Essay

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Be able to make connections between different kinds of social contexts, and between different kinds of texts and evidence. In particular, students will be encouraged to make

connections between individual experience and wider social processes

- Data collection and analysis skills: a fundamental task in Sociology is the collection of data to use as evidence in addressing problems and issues. In this case, material which can shed light on the public sphere may be gleaned from newspapers, statistics etc. and can be used to support your arguments. Assignments are required to show some evidence of such research.
- Problem-solving skills: be able to apply theories and knowledge to the real world

Assessment tasks

- Assessable Discussion + Report
- Major Essay