

## Inequality, Crisis and Change: Sociological Perspectives

7.1 Module Overview									
Module Number		Module Title	Inequality, Crisis and Change: Sociological Perspectives						
Stage of Principal Programme			1	Semester	1	Duration. (Weeks F/T)	12	ECTS	5
Mandatory / Elective (M/E)	E	Hours of Learner Effort / Week	2.3						
Analysis of required hours of learning effort									
Teaching and Learning Modalities					✓if relevant to this module	Approx. proportion of total (hours)			
Contact Hours									
In person face-to-face					✓	28			
Synchronous									
Indirect/Non-Contact Hours									
Asynchronous									
Work Based									
Other:									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent, self-directed reading</li> </ul>					✓	42			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, preparation and completion of assessments</li> </ul>					✓	55			
Total						125			

Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A	
Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title	N/A	
Maximum number of learners per instance of the module	120	
Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.		
Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.	Qualifications & experience required	Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics, Sociology or closely cognate area	1:120
Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in Politics, Sociology or closely cognate area	1:20

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution					
Continuous Assessment	100%	Proctored Exam – in person		Practical Skills Based	
Project		Proctored Exam - online		Work Based	
Capstone (Y/N)?	N	If Yes, describe			

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
MIMLO	Related MIPLO #
On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	
1. Discuss the basic theories of social stratification, social divisions and inequality with reference to contemporary case studies	1

2. Explain the theories that correlate inequality, crisis and social change with reference to empirical case studies	<b>1, 8</b>
3. Critically discuss and evaluate the evidence for theories of the causes of social inequality	<b>5, 8</b>
4. Analyse the relationship between inequality and collective action with reference to contemporary case studies	<b>5, 8</b>

### 7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

#### **Module Overview:**

Contemporary society is marked by a series of unparalleled societal shifts. The far-reaching impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, climate fluctuations, conflicts in regions such as Ukraine and Gaza/Palestine, and other global events have magnified numerous social issues. These include the deepening chasms of race, class, and gender disparities, economic turmoil, widespread environmental degradation, digital inequities, the rise of populism, among others. Simultaneously, we observe the emergence of various resistance movements, exemplified by initiatives like Black Lives Matter, MeToo, and Fridays for Climate. Considering these developments, this module enables learners to think, and write, critically about social inequality using the tools of sociological analysis at an introductory level.

This module utilises classical and contemporary sociological theory and empirical research to critically examine the way unequal categorisations and divisions between peoples are created, reproduced, and changed in society. The course will also require learners to apply their sociological knowledge to case studies to understand and scrutinize the current societal landscape while envisioning a more equitable future.

#### **Aims & Objectives:**

The aim of this module is to deepen learners' understanding of inequality and social stratification and but also of the academic research that aims to measure, interpret and understand it. This module will support learners as they develop their sociological imagination, learning to think critically about the world. It encourages learners to critically assess the material that they encounter and consider what can be done: what sorts of policy or institutional changes might help reduce inequality. This supports learners to develop an appreciation for diversity, difference, and the beliefs of others as well as the values of civic engagement and social justice.

#### **Indicative Module Content**

The module serves as an introduction into the foundational concepts, methods, and perspectives in sociology through the lens of 'inequality', and its correlation with issues of crisis and change. These include the idea of society and the individual, social stratification and inequality, class and gender, migration patterns, risk, social change, and power relations. This module is broken into three key themes: Inequality, Crisis and Social Change.

#### *Indicative Module Content*

##### *1. Inequality*

- Introducing the field of Sociology: Origins and historical development.
- Inequality and the Sociological Imagination
- Key theories in the discipline of sociology - Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber. Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Feminism.
- Sociological Perspectives: Education, the Media, Class and Poverty, Gender and Sexuality, Intersectionality, Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism
- Inequality and Social Stratification
- Measuring Inequality: Opportunities, Conditions, Outcomes

##### *2. Crisis*

- Crisis and Society
- Sociology of Risk

- The Environment, Conflict
  - Crime, Security, Deviance and Policing
  - Conspiracy Theories, Moral Panics, Misinformation and 'Fake News'
3. *Social Change*
- Power and Powerlessness, Structure versus Agency – the Debate
  - Social Movements in Context
  - Inequality and Populism: Voter Attitudes, Behaviour and Political Participation

Contemporary Case Studies:

Housing, Healthcare, the Environment, Migration, Policing, Black Lives Matter, Fake News and Media Literacy, COVID-19, Economic Recession, Corporations and Taxation, Austerity, Far-right Populism, Brexit Referendum, American Presidential Election.

#### 7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement (if applicable)

N/A

#### 7.5 Specific module resources required (if applicable)

N/A

#### 7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

The module teaching and learning strategy is based on the core objectives of enabling learners to develop knowledge of power, inequality and political processes while strengthening oral, written and debating skills and competencies news media literacy. The approach to teaching is dialogical with a strong emphasis on learner participation, discussion, and engagement. The module is also focused on the development of learner capacity to engage in critical evaluation and analysis in a political context.

In keeping with the principles of UDL, material will be made available in a variety of modes on the VLE; text, video, podcast, with lecturer's slides posted the day before so that learners may download in advance, should they wish.

##### Written Essay

The essay assessment will offer learners a variety of essay titles. The essay allows learners to demonstrate an understanding of the key concepts and theories that have been engaged with in class and illustrate the scope and depth of their learning. It will also offer an opportunity for learners to build critical skills in research and academic writing, meeting (MIMLOs 1, 2).

##### Continuous Assessment

The continuous assessment asks learners to design a poster presentation with the option of choosing a contemporary case study. Learners must demonstrate their capacity to communicate in both visual and written forms using digital means (meeting MIMLO 4) as well as demonstrate an understanding of the distinct thematic and aesthetic properties of graphically presenting data and communicating research (meeting MIMLO 3). This assessment will also have a formative aspect as learners must workshop their poster presentation in a tutorial where they will receive feedback from their peers and the tutor.

#### 7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module

MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 2	Written Essay	60%
3, 4	Poster Presentation	30%
	Attendance	10%

## 7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

### Essay (1,250- 1,500 words)

#### Sample Questions:

1. How does the Sociological Imagination help us to examine social problems? In your answer, refer to the main elements of the Sociological Imagination with reference to a contemporary case study you have covered from one of the following themes:
  - I. Education
  - II. The Media
  - III. Class and Poverty
  - IV. Gender and Sexuality
  - V. Race, Ethnicity
  - VI. Nationalism
  - VII. The Environment
  - VIII. Crime, Deviance and Policing
  - IX. Social Change
  - X. Populism
  
2. Apply Sylvia Walby's theory of crisis to *one* of the following topics:
  - I. The Media
  - II. Class and Poverty
  - III. Gender and Sexuality
  - IV. Race, Ethnicity
  - V. Crime, Deviance and Policing
  - VI. Social Change
  - VII. Populism
  
3. How is gender or ethnicity socially constructed in Irish society? In your answer, please refer to a contemporary case study you have covered with reference to the following themes:
  - I. Education
  - II. The Media
  - III. The Family
  
4. Define the concept of the 'hidden curriculum' in the sociology of education and refer to a contemporary case study that you have studied.
5. Outline and critically evaluate the Functionalist perspective of social change with reference to a contemporary case study that you have covered.
6. Does responsibility matter in relation to poverty and inequality? Discuss in relation to the structure versus agency debate.

#### Poster Presentation

Learners will be asked to design and present an individual poster presentation based on the essay topic with reference to the key concepts, empirical and theoretical debates.

#### Attendance 10%

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's [Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards](#) unless otherwise indicated.

## 7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

### Indicative Core Reading:

Allen, K, and O' Boyle, B. (2013) *Austerity Ireland: The Failure of Irish Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.  
Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. & Walsh, J. (2004) *Equality: From Theory to Action*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Bartels, L. (2016) *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age*, (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Breen, M.J., Haynes, A. and Devereux, E. (2006) Fear, Framing and Foreigners: The Othering of Immigrants in the Irish Print Media. *International Journal of Critical Psychology*. 16. 100-121.
- Crompton, R. (2008), *Class and Stratification*, (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Cambridge: Polity.
- Hearne, R. (2020) *Housing Shock: The Irish Housing Crisis and How to Solve it*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Giddens, A., Duneier, M., Appelbaum, R., and Carr, D. (2020) *Introduction to Sociology*. (12<sup>th</sup> edition) W. W. Norton & Company.
- Delanty, G. (2022) *Pandemics, Politics, and Society Critical Perspectives on the Covid-19 Crisis*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Ging, D. (2009) All-consuming images: new gender formations in post-Celtic-Tiger Ireland. in Ging, D., Cronin, M. & Kirby, P. (eds.) *Transforming Ireland: challenges, critiques, resources*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jay, S. et al. (2019) Economic inequality and the rise of far-right populism: A social psychological analysis. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*. 1–11.
- Mills, C. (1951) *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scott, L. (2020) *The Cost of Sexism. Why the Economy is Built for Men and Why we Must Reshape it*. Faber.
- Walby, S. (1990) *Theorising Patriarchy*. London: Pluto Press.
- Walby, S. (2022) Crisis and society: developing the theory of crisis in the context of COVID-19. *Global Discourse*. 12(3-4): 498–516.
- Woodward, K. (1997) ed., *Identity and Difference*. Sage.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011), Beyond the Recognition and Re-distribution Dichotomy: Intersectionality and Stratification, in Helma Lutz, MariaTeresa. Herera & Linda Supik, (ed.), *Framing Intersectionality: Debates on a Multi-Faceted Concept in Gender Studies*, Farnham: Ashgate.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2012) Dialogical Epistemology- An Intersectional Resistance to the Oppression Olympics, *Gender and Society* 26(1) 46-54.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2014) Situated Intersectionality, Inequality and Bordering Processes. *Raisons Politiques*, no. 58: 91-100

#### **Other Reading:**

- Casara, B. G. S., Filippi, S., Suitner, C., Dollani, E., & Maass, A. (2023) Tax the élites! The role of economic inequality and conspiracy beliefs on attitudes towards taxes and redistribution intentions. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 62(1), 104–118.
- Chancel, L., Piketty, T., & Saez, Z. (2022). *World inequality report 2022*. Harvard University Press.
- Cox, L. (2018) *Why Social Movements Matter: An Introduction*. US Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: a black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*; (1): 139–167.
- Gill, R. et al. (2005) *Body projects and the regulation of normative masculinity*. London: LSE Research Articles Online. Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000371/>
- Jetten, J., Peters, K., Álvarez, B., Casara, B. G. S., Dare, M., Kirkland, K., Sánchez-Rodríguez, Á., Selvanathan, H. P., Sprong, S., Tanjitpiyanond, P., Wang, Z., & Mols, F. (2021). Consequences of economic inequality for the social and political vitality of society: A social identity analysis. *Political Psychology*, 42(S1), 241–266.
- Kiely, E. & Swirack, K. (2023) *The Criminalisation of Social Policy*. Bristol University Press.
- Kirby, P. & Murphy, M. (2011) *Towards a Second Republic – Irish Politics after the Celtic Tiger*. London: Pluto Press.
- Kuhling, C. & Keohane, K. (2007) Liquid Modernity: Collective Representations of Irishness in the Guinness and Jameson Drink Ads, ‘Liquidity’ and Irish Identity’. Paper for the ‘Consuming Identities’ Workshop.
- Lambert, P. (2023) Sociological measures of inequality. *IFS Deaton Review of Inequalities*. [online] Available at: <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/sociological-measures-of-inequality>
- Lynch, K., & Baker, J. (2005). Equality in education: An equality of condition perspective. *Theory and Research in Education*, 3(2), 131-164.
- Macionis, J. & Plummer, K. (2008), Chapter 16: ‘Power, Governance and Social Movements’, *Sociology* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Essex: Pearson Education Limited, pp. 502-539.
- Mudde, C. (2019) *The Far Right Today*. Cambridge: John Wiley & Sons.

Müller, S. and O'Regan, A. (2021) 'Are Irish voters moving to the left?' *Irish Political Studies*. 36(4).  
Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: From 4Chan to Donald Trump and the Alt-Right*. London: Zero books.  
O'Boyle, B. and Allen, K. (2021) *Tax Haven Ireland*. London: Pluto Press.  
Pleyers, G. (2020) The Pandemic is a battlefield. Social movements in the COVID-19 lockdown, *Journal of Civil Society*, 16:4, 295-312  
Roberts, M. (2016) *The Long Depression*. Chicago: Haymarket Books.  
Stiglitz, J. (2012) *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*. Manhattan: W. W. Norton and Company.

#### **Peer-Reviewed Political Journals**

*British Journal of Political Science*, Cambridge University Press.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science>  
*Contemporary Politics*, Taylor and Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/ccpo20>  
*Critical Social Policy*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/csp>  
*European Journal of Political Research*, Wiley and Blackwell.  
<https://ejpr.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14756765>  
*European Sociological Review*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/esr>  
*Irish Political Studies*, Routledge. <https://www.psai.ie/journal/>  
*International Political Science Review*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/IPS>  
*British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Sage. <https://journals.sagepub.com/description/BPI>  
*The Journal of Economic Inequality*, Springer. <https://www.springer.com/journal/10888>  
*Journal of European Public Policy*, Taylor and Francis. <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjpp20>  
*Journal of Social Policy*, Cambridge Core. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-social-policy>  
*Policy and Society*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/policyandsociety>  
*Political Science and Research Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/political-science-research-and-methods>  
*Political Psychology*, Wiley. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14679221>  
*Social Politics*, Oxford. <https://academic.oup.com/sp>

#### **Indicative Other Resources:**

Learners will be asked to engage with newsfeed and commentary on current affairs from a variety of resources, as well as content written by high-quality journalists and/or academics. Current affairs will be circulated via email and uploaded to the VLE.

#### **Sample List:**

- Newsfeed and Political Commentary
- Print-Newspaper Websites
- TV/News Channels

#### **Websites:**

Geary Institute for Public Policy: <https://www.ucd.ie/geary/>  
ESRI – Economic Social Research Institute - <https://www.esri.ie/>  
Living Wage Ireland: <https://www.livingwage.ie/>  
Oxfam: <https://www.oxfam.org/en>  
TASC – Think Tank for Action on Social Change: <https://www.tasc.ie/>  
World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/>  
Why Poverty Documentary Series: <https://www.thewhy.dk/docuseries/why-poverty#:~:text=takes%20an%20in%20depth%20look,when%20it%20launched%20in%202012.>