



**MPhil in Sociology and
Demography**
Student Handbook: 2022-23



About this student handbook

This handbook applies to students starting the MPhil in Sociology and Demography in Michaelmas term 2022 and the information within may be different for students starting the course in other years.

Please note that your degree is formally governed by the Examination Decrees and Regulations. This is published in September each year and can be found online. The MPhil in Sociology and Demography handbook contains informal descriptions and interpretations of some of the most relevant rules, but any formal question must be settled primarily by reference to the Examination Decrees and Regulations.

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available [here](#). If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations, then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns, please contact the Graduate Studies Officer at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of October 1st 2022. However, it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained [here](#) on the University's Graduate website. If such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

This is **version 1.0** and no changes have currently been made.

Other key sources of information for students on the 2022-23 MPhil in Sociology and Demography include:

- The 'Department of Sociology Student Information 2022-23' Canvas page – [available here](#). (Canvas is Oxford's Virtual Learning Environment, where the Department and many courses have pages with further information, course assignments, etc.);
- the Exam Conventions, which will be made available on the above Canvas site;
- the course timetable, distributed by email and available on Canvas in advance of the start of each term;
- the [Inspera submissions website](#) for the submission of all summative work, along with the university Inspera [guidance pages for coursework submissions and examinations](#);
- the [University's website for students](#);
- the [University Student Handbook 2022/23](#);
- the handbooks provided by Oxford colleges, normally available on their websites.

Finally...

We welcome any feedback, concerns or suggestions received in connection to the handbook content. These should be sent to the Graduate Studies Officer, at graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk

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Overview of the MPhil

The course aims to introduce students to contemporary approaches to research to the study of population change and its consequences. These approaches explicitly join the *macro* approach of traditional demography with the *multilevel*, actor-oriented life course approach. The *macro* approach of traditional demography is epitomised by the decomposition of population dynamics into fertility, mortality, and migration trends and by the measurement of such dynamics and trends. The *multilevel*, actor-oriented life course approach sees individual trajectories and key life course events (including births, deaths and migrations) as embedded in a multilevel factorial model which emphasises the role of the historical and geographical context; the role of kinship and network ties; and the role of human development, therefore generalising the traditional demographic emphasis on period, cohort and age. This idea of bridging the gap between the macro-oriented and actor-oriented approaches in the study of demography is consistent with the direction that Oxford's Department of Sociology has followed in general since its inception. Therefore, the curriculum emphasises:

- population-level analysis and demographic measures;
- the life course approach;
- sociological analysis as the key approach to explanation;
- advanced quantitative methods.

Assessment Components

Teaching will be delivered in-person and the course consists of the following components:

- Three compulsory core courses: Sociological Analysis; Demographic Analysis; and Life Course Research. Sociological Analysis is assessed by an open-book examination at the end of Trinity Term; Life Course Research and Demographic Analysis are assessed by take-home exams and essays. These papers are described below from page 8.
- A compulsory Methods of Social Research course, for which students are examined on a mixture of a formal examination and take-home assignments. The detailed requirements for the Methods course are described on page 9.
- Two optional papers, for which students either sit an examination at the end of Trinity Term, or complete appropriate coursework if there is a practical component. Descriptions of optional papers begin on page 14.
- **Students should note that the options available may vary each year and there may be timetable restraints on the choice of options that may be combined.**
- A Replication Project in which students will be assessed by a paper detailing their attempt to replicate published research findings.
- An MPhil thesis comprising original sociological research. The thesis must be the student's own work; and analyse a sociological problem specified jointly by Supervisor and student.

The components of the course are weighted as follows:

Sociological Analysis	11%
Research Methods ¹	11%
Demographic Analysis	11%
Life Course Research	11%
Optional Paper (1)	11%
Optional Paper (2)	11%
Replication Project	6%
Thesis	28%

Schedule of Teaching for Years 1 and 2

Year 1	Michaelmas Term	Hilary Term	Trinity Term
	Sociological Analysis	Research Design	Public Examinations
	Statistical Methods	Life Course Research	Departmental Seminar
	Demographic Analysis	One Optional Paper	
	Departmental Seminar	Departmental Seminar	

Year 2	Michaelmas Term	Hilary Term	Trinity Term
	Replication Project	One Optional Paper	Public Examinations (Depending on Option)
	MPhil Thesis Workshop	MPhil Thesis Write-up	MPhil Thesis Write-up
	MPhil Thesis Write-up	Departmental Seminar	Departmental Seminar
	Departmental Seminar		

Term Dates 2022/23

Oxford term dates for the 2022-23 academic year:

Michaelmas Term 2022: Sunday 9th October to Saturday 3rd December

Hilary Term 2023: Sunday 15th January to Saturday 11th March

Trinity Term 2023: Sunday 23rd April to Saturday 17th June

The dates of term for future academic years can be found [here](#).

¹ Research Methods consists of two equally weighted components: Statistical Methods (assignment plus unseen examination) and Research Design (take home essay).

Required Course Work and Attendance

Class essays, seminar presentations and other assignments form the basis for much of the student's learning and progress throughout the course, as well as being the main way in which we can offer flexibility in meeting individual students' special interests. This work is compulsory; and termly Supervisor reports on individual progress are required by the student's college. Student progress and attendance will also be discussed at the meetings of the departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

Negative reports or non-attendance at tutorials or classes are taken seriously by colleges and the Graduate Studies Committee, but do not form part of the formal assessment for the degree.

All assessed coursework is retained in an anonymised form by the department for one year. Retained work is kept for inspection by course providers and external teaching quality inspectors. Samples of non-assessed coursework will also be retained.

Assessment Submission and Examinations

Summative submissions are assessment components that contribute to the final grade and classification of the MSc Sociology. All summative work must be submitted online via [Inspira](#) and will be run through 'Turnitin' plagiarism detection software. All students should ensure that they are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline. Full information is provided on the relevant page of the [Oxford students website](#).

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments or if you experience technical difficulties with an online exam or submission. Full information is available on the relevant page of the [Oxford students website](#).

In-person Examinations

Practical information and support for sitting in-person exams is provided on the [Oxford students website](#).

Online Examinations

Online exams are taken in Inspira and students should familiarise themselves with the system and guidance prior to taking an online examination. There are a wide range of resources to help you on the [Oxford Students website](#).

Online exams require you to adhere to the [University's Honour Code](#) and students should read this in advance of any online examinations.

Departmental Seminars

Departmental Seminars are held during term throughout the year at 12.45 on Mondays. See the ['Events' page on the departmental website](#) for further details.

Attendance is compulsory for all students enrolled on taught courses,

including the MSc Sociology and the MPhil Sociology and Demography.

Students are also highly encouraged to attend the Nuffield College Sociology Seminars. Details are available on the [Nuffield College website](#).

Core Papers

Sociological Analysis

Course provider: Dr Lindsay Richards

Aims:

This course develops intellectual skills in explaining social phenomena: identifying puzzles, developing theoretical explanations, and evaluating empirical evidence.

Topic and structure:

Each week a lecture introduces one type of explanation, while a seminar that discusses empirical research on a related topic. The topic illustrates this type of explanation in practice, revealing its strengths and weaknesses. The lectures and seminars are complementary but distinct.

Lecture Topics:

- Week 1 - Instrumental rationality
- Week 2 - Signalling
- Week 3 - Values and norms
- Week 4 - Social networks
- Week 5 - Contextual effects and social integration
- Week 6 - Diffusion
- Week 7 - Social change
- Week 8 - Review

Seminar Topics:

- Week 1 - Educational inequalities
- Week 2 - Interpersonal violence
- Week 3 - Political preferences
- Week 4 - Getting ahead in the labour market
- Week 5 - Recidivism and neighbourhoods
- Week 6 - Protest movements
- Week 7 - Attitudes to homosexuality
- Week 8 - Explanations in practice

Learning Outcomes:

On completing the course, students will understand some of the main theoretical tools used to explain social phenomena. They will also be familiar with current debates in various substantive areas of sociology.

Teaching arrangement:

One lecture (90 minutes) and one seminar (one hour) per week in Michaelmas Term.

Requirements:

- Eight short essays (1000 -1200 words each) on the seminar readings.
- One long essay (2500 - 3000 words) on a more general question, at the end of term.

Course Assessment:

One 3-hour examination in Trinity Term.

Key references:

These are general texts that provide an introduction and complementary perspectives. The readings for each week will be provided throughout term-time.

- Van Tubergen, F. (2020) *Introduction to Sociology*, Routledge
- Elster, J. (2015) *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press.
- Collins, R. (1994) *Four Sociological Traditions*, Oxford University Press.

Methods of Social Research

‘Methods of Social Research’ consists of two equally weighted components, each of which is listed below.

Statistical Methods

Course Provider: Professor Colin Mills

Aims:

The course aims to develop the foundations of statistical thinking and to introduce the most important basic statistical models used in social science research. The problem classes will give feedback on the weekly problem sets.

Content and Structure:

This course is taught through a series of lectures and classes. The course is vertically structured: later lectures assume knowledge of the foundational material covered earlier in the course. Topics covered include ideas of sampling and probability models, basic methods for inference about a population from a sample, and the use and interpretation of some common types of statistical models, including linear regression.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing this course, students should:

- understand the basic principles of statistical thinking;
- be familiar with the most commonly used elementary statistical models;
- be able to implement simple statistical procedures using R.

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight two-hour lectures plus eight problem classes in Michaelmas Term.

Course Assessment:

Students will be given weekly problem sets. These will involve a mixture of pen and paper problems and small pieces of data analysis to be carried out using R. The weekly problem sets are formative and ungraded but to benefit from the course you

will need to complete them. The answers will be discussed in the problem classes so that you get a weekly picture of your progress.

Summative assessment: A take home practical data analysis problem at the end of Michaelmas Term and a formal two-hour exam in Week 0 of Hilary Term that will each be worth 50%. The data analysis problem assignment will be made available on Monday of Week 9 of Michaelmas Term and due no later than noon on Monday of Week 10 of Michaelmas Term.

Candidates are permitted to take the specified textbook for the course into the formal examination. Any candidate that is unable to purchase the course textbook for reasons relating to hardship should contact the Graduate Studies Officer.

Key Text:

Agresti, A. (2017) *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*, Pearson (5th edition).

Research Design

Course Provider: Professor David Kirk

Aims:

The course is concerned with the nature of empirical investigation in the social sciences. It deals with the question of how we establish systematic knowledge about the social world. The course will consider in turn the various stages of the research process, the different types of research strategies that are in use, and some general methodological problems about the conduct of inquiry.

Topics covered by this course include:

The research process; aims of enquiry; research ethics; principles of open science and reproducibility; measurement; sampling; causality and experiments; survey design; field research.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should:

- appreciate the strength and limits of different research strategies,
- understand how research design considerations should be linked to substantive sociological concerns

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight lectures in Hilary Term led by Professor David Kirk.

Course Assessment:

One “critical essay” of up to 2,500 words evaluating a piece of published research.

Key Texts:

- King, G., R. Keohane, and S. Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.
- Straits, B.C. and R. A. Singleton, Jr. 2017. *Social Research: Approaches and Fundamentals*. Oxford University Press.

Demographic Analysis

Course Providers: Professor Ridhi Kashyap and Dr Charles Rahal

Aims:

1. To introduce students to current scientific debates on different components of population dynamics, including mortality, family change and fertility, migration, and population policies.
2. To provide technical skills for computing demographic measures and models.

Topics covered by this course include:

1. Population dynamics and the demographic transition. Fundamental measures of population dynamics (growth

rates, crude rates, discrete and continuous time). The demographic transition as a model of demographic development. Demographic transition, age structure, and demographic dividends.

2. Periods and cohorts, demographic rates, and micro- and macro-approaches to demography. The meaning of the three key temporal dimensions in demography: age, period, cohort. Lexis diagrams. Discovery and explanation, micro-foundations of demographic change. Sources of population data.

3. Mortality and the life table. The life table and its functions. Cohort and period life tables. Stages of the epidemiological transition. Causes of death. Socioeconomic differentials in mortality. Current debates on human longevity.

4. Fertility and its measurement. Measuring the quantum and tempo of fertility. Period and cohort analysis. Unmet need for family planning. Fertility change in poor countries. Low fertility in industrialised societies.

5. Family dynamics and the Second Demographic Transition. Demographic measures for household, family formation and dissolution. The dynamics of divorce, cohabitation, and non-marital fertility. The notion of a Second Demographic Transition and related critiques. The Gender Revolution.

6. Migration. Measuring migration and its effect on population change. Theories of migration. Replacement migration and homeostasis.

7. Population policies. Debates on population policies at the international and national level. Two contrasting fears: the “population bomb” and “demographic decline”. China’s one child policy. ‘Missing girls’ in Asia.

8. Population projections. Methods for Population Projections. Uncertainty in population projections and other measures.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- have the skills that allow to access and discuss contemporary research in the multidisciplinary area of demography and be familiar with key contributions;
- be familiar with the most important demographic methods and techniques;
- be familiar with the most important demographic developments and challenges concerning demographic change;
- be prepared to do doctoral work in the areas of demography and life course research;
- have familiarity with applied demographic analysis using R.

Teaching Arrangement:

The organisation of the course is foreseen as follows: weekly lecture, and three computer labs.

Course Assessment:

Exam is composed of two assignments:

Assignment 1. Essay on a demographic topic, with an abstract agreed with the course provider (max 3,000 words). To be delivered by 12 noon, Friday 0th week, HT

Assignment 2. Applied demographic analysis assignment (using R and population-level data). To be delivered by 12 noon, Friday 8th week, HT

Key Texts:

- Livi Bacci, M. (2012) *A Concise History of World Population*, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Wachter, K.W. (2014) *Essential Demographic Methods*, Harvard University Press.
- Preston, S.H, Heuveline, P., and Guillot, M., (2001) *Demography: Measuring and Modelling Population Processes*, Blackwell Publishers
- A series of articles detailed in the syllabus.

Life Course Research

Course Provider: Dr Charles Rahal

Aims:

The course will introduce students to the theory and methodological approaches of life course research.

Topics covered by this course include:

An Introduction to the Life Course (1); Health across the Life Course (2); Aging and Well Being (3); Family and the Life Course (4); Predictive Methods (5); Survival Analysis (6); Sequence Analysis (7); Latent Class Growth Models (8).

Content and structure:

The course will first introduce the field of life course research and substantive topics within it before going more deeply into specific methodological approaches to modelling life course processes.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- Understand important concepts and theoretical perspectives in life course research;
- Be familiar with recent empirical research in the field;
- Be able to critically assess the research design, theoretical approach, and methodology of empirical research in the field;
- Be aware of the most recent methodological advances in the area (and how to utilise them in R)
- Be prepared to undertake doctoral research in the area of life course research.

Teaching arrangement:

The course consists of eight lectures, four discussion sessions, and four computer labs (in R). In the lectures the key topics are outlined. In the discussion sessions, students will take turns to critically appraise recent and high-profile papers in the areas relevant to the module. In the computer lab sessions we will learn more about the application of empirical methods to Life Course Research related questions.

Course Assessment:

One essay (50%) and one quantitative/computational project (50%). The essay will be due by noon on Monday of Week 1 of Trinity Term and the project will be due by noon on Friday of Week 4 of Trinity Term.

Key references:

- Giele, J and Elder, G.(1998), 'Methods of Life Course Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches', SAGE Publications.
- Elder, G. and Giele, J., (2009), 'The Craft of Life Course Research', Guilford Press, 1st edition.
- Hunt, S., (2017), 'The Life Course: A Sociological Introduction', Palgrave; 2nd ed.
- Mayer, K. (2009). New directions in life course research. *Annual Reviews in Sociology*. 35: 413-433.
- Elder, G. (1974), 'Children Of The Great Depression', Routledge
- Price, S., McKenry, P, and Murphey, M., (2000), 'Families Across Time: A Life Course Perspective', Oxford University Press.

Replication Project

Course provider: Dr Dirk Witteveen

Aims:

While scepticism remains regarding whether we are truly deep within the realms of a 'Replication Crisis', there exists considerable evidence that several

important research findings cannot be replicated, casting a shadow of doubt on the credence and value of social science as a body of scientific study. This module aims to introduce students to the realities of empirical research through the mediums of replication and open science, with the objective being the replication and a modest extension of a piece of recently published academic work.

Content and Structure:

Each week we will meet both as a group and, additionally, two or three times individually between Weeks 2 and 6. The first meeting of the module will be a more conventional lecture which will introduce open source platforms, data access, coding practices, and examples of published replications/corrections. Weeks 2 through 6 inclusive will be discussion sessions which discuss three things each week: 1) Parts of the core text (Christensen et al. 2019, detailed below), 2) Key readings related to sections of the core text (indicative readings detailed below), and 3) Papers which might be replicated as part of the student's projects (relative to the appropriate part of the core text). In Weeks 7 and 8 students will be presenting their progress on their individual project. The individual sessions each week will be reserved for discussing issues related to students' progress on their own individual replication projects (sign-up sheet from Week 1 onwards).

Learning outcomes:

Students will appreciate the emerging cynicism surrounding much social science research through a critical approach which examines issues such as publication bias and specification searching. They will learn best practice in terms of open science and reproducibility for their own ensuing research at both the postgraduate level and beyond by going through the replication of the descriptive statistics and main findings of an existing research article. Students will also learn to expand evidence on an existing research question through (a) the replication of the research article, as well as through a modest expansion: (b) adding a

new data source/country/wave, or (c) improving causal inference strategies, or (d) revealing complexities (e.g., interactions/heterogeneous effects).

Teaching arrangement:

Eight group meetings (1hr, Weeks 1 through 8) in MT. Two to three individual project meetings (~0.5 hours, Weeks 2 through 6) in MT. One individual meeting before submission of a final draft in HT.

Course Assessment:

Assessment is through a replication project (100%) which any paper of the candidates choosing (preferably relevant to their MPhil or DPhil thesis). The project should be 6,000-9,000 words length in the form of an article which is suitable for submission to an academic journal either independently or as part of a longer part of analysis. The assessment must be submitted no later than noon of Monday of Week 5 of Hilary Term of the second year of study.

Key Texts:

- Garret Christensen, Jeremy Freese, Edward Miguel (2019), *Transparent and Reproducible Social Science Research*, 1ST Edition, University of California Press, ISBN: 9780520296954.

Other Indicative Reading:

- Gerber and Malhotra (2008), *Publication Bias in Empirical Sociological Research: Do Arbitrary Significance Levels Distort Published Results?* *Sociological Methods and Research*, 37, 1, 3-30.
- John Ionnidis (2005), *Why Most Published Research Findings are False*, *Plos Medicine*, 2, 8.
- Gary King (2006), *Publication, Publication*, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39, 1, 119-125
- Edward Leamer (1983), *Let's Take the Con Out of Econometrics*, *The American Economic Review*, 73, 1, 31-43.

- Freese and Peterson (2017), *Replication in Social Science*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43, 1, 147-165
- Stojmenovska, D., Bol, T., & Leopold, T. (2017). Does diversity pay? A replication of Herring (2009). *American Sociological Review*, 82(4), 857-867.

Option Papers

Option papers will be presented by the relevant course provider during Induction Week at the start of Michaelmas Term. Course Providers will describe the papers they teach in detail and be available to answer any questions students may have. MPhil students will then have until the end of Week 6 of Michaelmas Term to select their option in each of the two years of study. Instructions on how to submit option paper choices will be provided by the Graduate Studies Officer via email. Three students must choose to take a course for credit for the course to run and individual course providers may place a cap on the number of students.

Advanced Quantitative Methods

Course Provider:
Professor Christiaan Monden

Aims:

The application of advanced statistical models to social science data and their interpretation.

Topics covered by this course include:

The precise topics covered will vary from year to year depending on the expertise and interests of the staff giving the lectures. In 2022/2023, topics will include but are not limited to: regression for categorical dependent variables, fixed and random effects for panel data, hierarchical/multilevel models, and instrumental variable estimation.

Content and structure:

This course follows on from Statistical Methods in Michaelmas Term with the aim of developing a number of more advanced

techniques that are particularly relevant to sociologists. It is primarily an “applied” course and emphasizes the application of advanced statistical models to typical social science data. Most emphasis is placed on the correct and useful interpretation of parameter estimates rather than on the derivation of the models themselves. The statistical software used in the practical classes is R.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing this course, students should have an appreciation of the advantages and pitfalls of different methods and experience of the practical use of the methods taught. To gain any benefit from this course, it is necessary to have demonstrated mastery of the material taught in the Statistical Methods course in Michaelmas Term. A poor or even average performance in that course should suggest to you that you are unprepared for this course.

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight two-hour lectures (weeks 1–8) and three practical classes (weeks 3–8) in which students are introduced to and gain hands-on experience with software for estimating and testing the statistical models outlined in the lectures.

Course Assessment:

The course is assessed by a take home exam consisting of three research questions/problems. The candidates will analyze data using some of the methods covered and write a short report on two of the three questions. The exam will be made available at noon Monday 1st week of Trinity Term and the deadline for submission will be noon Monday 2nd week of Trinity Term.

Key Texts:

The following texts are indicative, students will receive a reading list and suggestions for readings in the lectures.

- Firebaugh, G. (2008) *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton University Press.
- Allison, P. (2009) *Fixed Effect Regression Models*. Sage [e-book, available from Bodleian through SOLO].
- Snijders, T. & R. Bosker (2011) *Multilevel analysis: an introduction to basic and advanced multilevel modeling*. 2nd edition. Sage.

Other useful reading:

- Allison, P. (2004). Using panel data to estimate the effects of events. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 23(2):174-199.
- Breen R, A. Holm & K. Karlson (2014). Correlations and Nonlinear Probability Models. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 43: 571-605.
- Bryan, M. & S. Jenkins (2016). Multilevel Modelling of Country Effects: A Cautionary Tale. *European Sociological Review*, 32(1): 3-22
- Felton, C & B. Stewart (2022) Handle with Care: A Sociologist's Guide to Causal Inference with Instrumental Variables. Pre-print September 2002. <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/3ua7q/>

Causality: Methods of Causal Inference in the Social Sciences

Course Provider:
Professor Richard Breen

Aims:

The course introduces students to the “potential outcomes” or “counterfactual” model of causality and covers contemporary approaches to identifying and estimating causal relationships using observational data from the social sciences.

Topics covered by this course include:

Topics covered in the class include the potential outcomes model of causality, randomized control trials, matching, propensity score analysis, inverse probability treatment weighting, robustness and sensitivity tests, natural experiments and instrumental variables, control functions, regression discontinuity designs, fixed effects, and difference in difference models.

Content and Structure:

The course focuses on the identification of causal effects, the assumptions on which causal claims rest, and the estimation of causal relationship using statistical models. Basic knowledge of probability and of statistical methods such as OLS regression and logit and probit models is a pre-requisite. There are no practical classes in this course, but students will be required to estimate models (in Stata or, preferably, R) and interpret the results.

Week 1: Review of Probability

Week 2: Review of Least Squares regression and properties of estimators

Week 3: The counterfactual model of causality, the fundamental problem of causality.

Week 4: Directed Acyclic Graphs: Matching

Week 5: Matching, Marginal Structural Models, g-estimation, robustness analysis

Week 6: Instrumental variables; natural experiments

Week 7: Control functions

Week 8: Regression discontinuity; fixed effects; difference in difference models

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing this course, students should have an understanding of the central role of causality in the social sciences and they should be able to cast a critical eye on the causal claims that social scientists make. Students should also have acquired a thorough knowledge of the potential outcomes approach to causality, the central role of assumptions in identifying causal effects, and they should

be able to estimate a wide range of models for causal inference.

Teaching Arrangements:

Weekly two-hour lectures.

Course Assessment:

Weekly problem sets. These include both theoretical and applied problems.

Key texts:

- Morgan, Stephen L. and Christopher Winship. 2014. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research* (2nd edition), Cambridge University Press.
- Angrist, Joshua and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics*. Princeton University Press.
- Pearl, Judea, Madelyn Glymour and Nicholas P. Jewell. 2016. *Causal Inference in Statistics*. Wiley.

Political and Civil Conflict

Course Provider:

Professor Heather Hamill

Aims: To introduce students to current social science debates on the causes and consequences of political and civil conflict

Topics covered by this course include:

This course is designed for students interested in aspects of political and civil conflict. The course introduces students to changes in the type and nature of conflict; the motivations of actors; the strategic use of violence and the end of violence and its consequences.

Content and Structure:

This course will begin by examining changes in violent political and civil conflict over time. It will then focus on civil wars and the role of ethnicity in violent conflict;

recruitment into violent political organisations; how rebel groups are organised and the impact this has on their behaviour; the strategic use of violence against civilians including the use of suicide attacks; and the end of violence and its legacy.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing this course, students should:

- Have acquired knowledge of the key theoretical debates on the causes and consequences of political and civil conflict and the motivations of actors
- Become familiar with a range of different case studies and issues arising from the comparative method of investigating this topic
- To be prepared for advanced doctoral research on violent political conflict

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight seminars in Hilary Term. Each student is expected to write three essays (1500-2000 words) and participate actively in seminars.

Course Assessment:

The course will be assessed by an examination in Trinity term.

Key Texts:

- Kalyvas, Stathis (2006) *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press
- Kapuściński, Ryszard *Another Day of Life* London: Penguin Classics; New edition (2001)
- Petersen, Roger D. (2002) *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Tilly, Charles (2003) *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Weinstein Jeremy (2006). *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Political Sociology

Course Provider:
Professor Stephen Fisher

Aims:

To introduce students to advanced research in political sociology and to prepare students for doctoral research in this area. The course encourages students to become familiar with and capable of engaging with the current research issues and debates in the field. Therefore the reading list is designed to include a selection of the most important texts and a more comprehensive list of the most recent research from the top journals and publishers. The reading list is available from the course provider on request.

Content and Structure:

The paper covers research on the social bases of politics, such as the roles of class, religion, gender and ethnicity; the factors affecting political behaviour such as protest participation, electoral turnout and vote choice; how citizens relate to the political process; how social and political identities and attitudes are formed and how they change.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should:

- be familiar with empirical research in political sociology, the technical tools used, and the empirical results obtained;

- be skilled in critiquing research in the area on both theoretical and empirical grounds;
- be prepared to undertake doctoral research in this area.

Teaching Arrangement:

There will be eight classes in Hilary term. Students are expected to write either an essay or a short memo in advance of each class in response to questions set by the course provider. Essays and memos are shared between students and the course provider for collective consideration and discussion in class. Classes thus provide opportunities to receive feedback from the course provider and other students. Over the course of the term students are expected to write three essays and five short memos. Students have a free choice over which topics to write their three essays on. Students are expected to engage constructively in the discussions on all the topics covered in classes. The course is only open to those doing the formal exam.

Course Assessment:

The formal assessment is by an open-book examination for which candidates have to answer three previously unseen questions.

Class Topics:

The classes will cover the following eight topics.

1. Social Class
2. Ethnicity
3. Anti-immigrant sentiment and populist-right parties
4. Religion
5. Gender
6. Nationalism
7. Political participation and turnout
8. Social attitudes and value change

Background Reading:

There are no core texts for the course. Readings overlap very little between topics. However, the following provide some helpful background reading.

- Crouch, Colin (1999) *Social Change in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, Russell (2018). *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (7th edition). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Orum, Anthony, and John G. Dale (2009) *Political sociology: Power and participation in the modern world*. 5th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart (2019) *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge University Press.

Social Determinants of Health

Course Provider:
Professor Jennifer Dowd

Aims:

This course will introduce students to the study of social determinants of health and health inequalities.

Topics covered by this course include:

This course will provide an overview of how population health and mortality are patterned by social factors, including by income, education, geography, sex and race/ethnicity. We will discuss possible mechanisms underlying these inequalities, including social and biological pathways such as health behaviours, social support, immune function, stress, and genetics. We will also examine how social factors impact health across the life course, including the importance of early social environments for later-life health.

Content and Structure:

A major theme underlying the course is the multiple scales of investigation associated with the social determinants of health. Social determinants of health themselves

operate at multiple levels: there are individual-level influences, neighbourhood-level influences, and society-level influences. The pathways through which social factors influence health also operate at different scales within the individual, from behaviours (e.g., eating habits), to organ systems (e.g., blood pressure), to cells (e.g., immune cells), to genes.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- Understand the importance of social factors in health exposures and outcomes, and know how to examine social factors as determinants of health outcomes.
- Understand the purpose and place of social determinants of health within the broader disciplines of sociology, demography and public health.
- Understand the central questions of social determinants of health and the current theory and methods employed to both understand and address them.

Teaching Arrangements:

Eight classes in Hilary Term.

Course Assessment:

Formative Assessment: Students will write a short reaction/discussion commentary for each week of teaching in Hilary Term, along with questions for clarification and discussion. The reaction paper should synthesize and critically evaluate key theoretical, methodological and/or substantive contributions of the readings. Students will also deliver a short presentation on one paper once during the course.

Summative Assessment: An analytical essay of one of the core topics outlined in the course of no more than 5,000 words in length. The essay could be an analytical

review, critique of existing work or overview of debates on certain topics. The essay will be due no later than noon on Friday of Week 1 of Trinity Term.

Key Texts (Indicative):

- Rose G. Sick Individuals and Sick Populations. *International Journal of Epidemiology*. 2001; 30:427- 432.
- Szreter, S. 2003. The Population Health Perspective in Historical Context. *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (3): 421-431.
- Link BG, Phelan JC. Social conditions as the fundamental causes of disease. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 1995; (extra issue):80-94.
- Krieger, N. Theories for social epidemiology in the 21st century: An ecosocial perspective *International Journal of Epidemiology* 2001;30:668-677.
- Pearlin, L. I., Schieman, S., Fazio, E. M., & Meersman, S. C. (2005). Stress, health, and the life course: Some conceptual perspectives. *Journal of health and Social Behavior*, 46(2), 205-219.
- Sapolsky RM. The Influence of Social Hierarchy on Primate Health. *Science*. 2005 April 29, 2005;308(5722):648-52. *Neuroscience*, 6(2), pp.226-233. Miller G and E Chen, The Biological Residue of Childhood Poverty, 2013. *Child Dev Perspect*. 7(2): 67-73.
- McDade, T. W., & Harris, K. M. (2022). From society to cells and back again: new opportunities for discovery at the biosocial interface. *Discover Social Science and Health*, 2(1), 1-9.
- House, J. S., Landis, K. R., & Umberson, D. (1998). Social relationships and health. *Science*, 241(July), 540-545.
- Berkman, L. F., Glass, T., Brissette, I., & Seeman, T. E. (2000). From social integration to health: Durkheim in the new millennium. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51, 843-857.
- Springer, Kristen W., Olena Hankivsky, and Lisa M. Bates. 2012. "Gender and Health: Relational, Intersectional, and Biosocial Approaches." *Social Science and Medicine* 74 (11):1661-66.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.03.001>

- Courtenay, WH. 2000. Constructions of Masculinity and Their Influence on Men's Well-being: A Theory of Gender & Health. *Social Science and Medicine* 50:1385-1401.
- Homan P, Brown TH, King B. Structural Intersectionality as a New Direction for Health Disparities Research. *J Health Soc Behav*. 2021;62(3):350-370. doi:10.1177/00221465211032947
- Jeremy Freese. 2008. "Genetics and the Social Science Explanation of Individual Outcomes." *American Journal of Sociology* 114: S1-S35

Social Stratification

Course Provider: Professor Colin Mills

Aims:

The paper introduces students to contemporary research on social stratification, so that they are able to apply advanced concepts and techniques to their own research problems.

Topics covered by this course include:

The major forms of social stratification; their relation to economic and political institutions. The course will concentrate mainly on industrial societies; the structure of social inequality; prestige hierarchies and status structures; class formation; social mobility; processes of 'social selection' and status attainment; social stratification and sub-cultural variations. Social stratification in relation to social integration, conflict and change, with special reference to industry and politics.

Content and Structure:

This course examines the central debates about stratification and social mobility in contemporary societies. For example, what explains the sharp rise in income inequality in recent decades? Why has the gender gap in educational attainment disappeared? How much inequality is there between

countries, and is global income inequality growing or shrinking? Are social classes becoming less relevant in modern societies? How do class advantages and disadvantages get passed from parents to children? In what sense can Britain be said to be a meritocracy? How does cultural inequality map onto social inequality? Students are introduced to the central concepts and theories, the key methodological issues in stratification research, and the main empirical results.

Learning Outcomes:

On completing this course satisfactorily, students should:

- have a thorough understanding of the empirical results in contemporary stratification research;
- understand how methodological issues in stratification research are related to theoretical concepts and substantive questions;

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight classes in Hilary Term. Students are expected to write three formative essays.

Course Assessment:

A formal examination in Trinity Term.

Key Texts:

- Arrow, K., S. Bowles, and S. Darlauf, eds. (2000) *Meritocracy and Economic Inequality*, Princeton University Press.
- Bowles, S., H. Ginitis and M. Osborne Groves, eds. (2005) *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success*, Princeton University Press.
- Wright, E.O. ed. (2005) *Approaches to Class Analysis*, Cambridge University Press.
- Devlin, B. et al. eds. (1997) *Intelligence, Genes and Success*, Copernicus.
- Grusky, D.B. ed. (2008) *Social Stratification*, 3rd ed, Westview Press.
- Goldthorpe, J.H. (1987) *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*, 2nd ed, Clarendon Press.

- Marshall, G., A. Swift and S. Roberts (1997) *Against the Odds?* Oxford University Press.
- Firebaugh, G. (2003) *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality*, Harvard University Press.

Sociology of China

Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA)

Course Provider:

Professor Rachel Murphy

Content and Structure:

China's transition to a market society has produced dramatic changes in the lives of its citizens. In this course we will consider pressing social concerns that confront China as it continues its ongoing reforms and integration into the global community. Throughout the course we use comparisons from within China across historical periods, regions, and social groups, and from other developing societies to enrich our analysis of key dimensions of social change. In the first week we look at China's socialist legacy and the ways in which socialist institutions intertwine with other formal and informal institutional arrangements to affect associational life and the relationship between society and individuals in late/post-socialist China. In successive weeks we use selected problems to explore wider issues of social change and stratification across gradients of education, class, gender, and ethnicity. Example questions with which we engage include:

- What is unique and what is universal about social relationships in mainland China?
- In China, which determines life chances more: residency, human capital or political background?
- Has women's status in society improved or declined since the Maoist era?
- What are some of the possible or likely causes of protests and tensions in ethnic minority areas of China?

- In what ways have market reforms impacted the provision of healthcare in China?
- How do changes in the educational system and educational inequality mirror broader social and economic trends in China?
- What factors affect individuals' possibilities to participate in civil society?

We also evaluate Chinese civil society actors' and policy-makers' evolving approaches for conceptualising and dealing with the nation's most urgent social concerns. This includes examining how state and societal actors interact with each other to affect policy interventions. We further explore the ways in which state actors continually revise their strategies for ensuring the strength and stability of the nation overall and the wellbeing and/or political acquiescence of different sub-groups.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- See how China – as a developing society, a late socialist society, and a rapidly industrialising society – can be studied through a sociological lens.
- Become familiar with academic research on social change in contemporary China.
- Be prepared for advanced research in the sociology of China

Teaching Arrangement:

The teaching comprises eight sessions in the Hilary Term – a 60-minute lecture followed by 60-minute discussion class.

Each week, one/two students will make a ten-minute class presentation to address key questions for consideration, whilst students not presenting are expected to write and share with the group before the class a short commentary (around 300 words) discussing one or two of the week's

readings. Students will also write and receive feedback on two unassessed essays of 1,200-1,500 words each.

Students must come to class having done the assigned readings. Each student is expected to actively contribute to the class discussions and the interventions in the class should be based on careful consideration of the readings.

Course Assessment:

Assessment is by a three-hour open-book examination in Trinity Term.

Key Preparation Texts:

- Friedman, E. (2022) *The Urbanization of People: The Politics of Development, Labor Markets, and Schooling in the Chinese City*, University of Chicago Press.
- Fincher, L.H. (2021) *Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China*, Verso
- Rozelle, S and N. Hell (2021) *Invisible China*, University of Chicago Press.
- Goodman, D (2014) *Class in Contemporary China*, Polity Press.
- Jacka, T, A. Kipnis and S. Sargeson (2013) *Contemporary China: Society and Social Change*, Cambridge University Press.

Sociology of Cybersecurity

Course Provider: Dr Jonathan Lusthaus

Aims:

This option paper introduces students to key concepts in cybersecurity, from a sociological rather than technical perspective.

Topics covered by this course include:

Cybersecurity is often seen as a technical discipline, but it also contains a vital human component. People carry out cyber-attacks; people are victims of these attacks; people

seek to defend against these attacks. The focus of this course is the social analysis of cybersecurity. While some broad technical terms will be covered, the emphasis will be on the nature, behaviour and organisation of attackers, defenders, and victims.

Content and Structure:

This course will cover cybercrime, hacking and hacktivism, insiders, proxies, and nation state threats, along with cyber policing and the cybersecurity industry, and the users and organisations who fall victim to cyber-attacks.

Learning Outcomes:

On completing the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the core concepts of cybersecurity.
- Understand the range of common attackers (cybercriminals, hackers, insiders, nation states), along with their behaviour and organisation.
- Understand the behaviour and organisation of victims, along with the cybersecurity industry and police.
- Be able to apply sociological approaches and theory to key aspects of cybersecurity.

Teaching Arrangement:

There will be eight classes in Hilary Term. Students will choose one topic within weeks 1-4, and another in weeks 5-8. They will submit one 1500-word essay at the end of week 4, and the other at the end of week 8. Feedback will be provided one week later in each case.

Course Assessment:

One three-hour examination in Trinity Term. Candidates will answer 3 essay questions from a list.

Key Texts:

There is no one textbook suited to this course. A range of readings will be assigned for each topic, including:

- Kello, L. (2017) *The Virtual Weapon New Haven*, Yale University Press.
- Levi, M., and Williams, M., (2013) 'Multi-agency partnerships in cybercrime reduction: Mapping the UK information assurance network cooperation space,' *Information Management & Computer Security*, 21 (5) pp. 420-443.
- Levy, S. (2010) *Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, Sebastopol, CA, O'Reilly Media.
- Lusthaus, J. (2018) *Industry of Anonymity: Inside the Business of Cybercrime*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.
- Steinmetz, K. (2015) 'Craft(y)ness: An ethnographic study of hacking,' *British Journal of Criminology*, 55 (1) pp. 125-145.

Sociology of the Family

Course Provider:

Professor Christiaan Monden

Aims:

The course will introduce students to theories and research on the family – with a strong emphasis on marriage, partnership formation, and divorce in industrialised and post-industrialised societies in particular.

Topics covered by this course include:

Recent and long-term trends in marriage, partnership, and divorce; Partner selection; Causes and consequences of divorce; Intergenerational solidarity and exchange; Same-sex marriage; Family forms and children's well-being; Diversity in family forms.

Content and Structure:

We begin by considering the trends in marriage, fertility, and divorce, and the decline of the traditional male breadwinner model families in many industrialised societies. We discuss the main drivers shaping trends in marriage and divorce, including women's labour market participation and the domestic division of labour. We start with the long-term view and big changes over the last 200 years. We then take a closer look at more recent developments. We discuss a number of important topics in family sociology: partner selection support and exchange between family members, diversity in family forms, and implications of family forms for social inequality and child well-being.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- have acquired knowledge of important theoretical ideas in the field;
- understand the major trends in marriage and the family;
- be familiar with recent empirical research in family studies;
- be prepared to undertake doctoral research in a number of specific areas of family sociology.

Teaching Arrangements:

Eight seminars in Hilary Term where active participation is key, these are not lectures. Students prepare short presentations and discussion points, and write two essays.

Course Assessment:

Three-hour examination in Trinity Term.

Key Texts:

Indicative examples. An updated reading list will be provided at the start of term.

- Thomson, E. (2014) Family complexity in Europe. *The Annals of the American*

Academy of Political and Social Science 654:245-58.

- McLanahan, S. (2004). Diverging destinies: How children are faring under the second demographic transition. *Demography* 41: 607–27.
- Kalmijn, M. (1998). Inter-marriage and Homogamy: Causes, Patterns, Trends. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 395–421.
- Stanfors, M., & Goldscheider, F. (2017). The forest and the trees: Industrialization, demographic change, and the ongoing gender revolution in Sweden and the United States, 1870–2010. *Demographic Research*, 36(6), 173–226.
- Kolk, M., & Andersson, G. (2020). Two Decades of Same-Sex Marriage in Sweden: A Demographic Account of Developments in Marriage, Childbearing, and Divorce. *Demography*, 57, 147–169.
- Cohen, P. N. (2019). The Coming Divorce Decline. *Socius* 5:1–6.

Sociology of Japan

Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA)

Course Provider:

Professor Takehiko Kariya

Aims:

The main goal of this course is to develop an understanding of the features of contemporary Japanese society as a non-western and highly advanced society from a sociological perspective and to discuss how Japanese society has changed since WWII.

Topics covered by this course include:

What is Japanese society? What contribution can sociology of Japanese society make to sociology in general?; Education; School to work transition and youth problem; Workplace and employment; Family and demography; Social welfare and social policy; Social mobility and social stratification; 'The lost decades' and the post 3.11 disaster; modernity and modernization in Japan.

Contents and Structure:

The class content and teaching style will be adjusted to a certain degree based on the interests of individual students and the dynamics of the group as a whole. Both lectures and discussion formats will be utilized. We are keen to foster a lively discussion environment with/among students. In each week, two or three students are assigned to make short presentations of the readings with comments and questions. The class schedules will be divided into eight sections whose key topics are shown above.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should:

- 1) understand features of contemporary Japanese society and its changes
- 2) acquire a “sociological imagination” (a way of thinking “sociologically” both with sociological theories and methods) to understand contemporary (post-)industrial societies including Japan and UK.

Teaching Arrangement:

Eight classes in Hilary Term. Each student is expected to write a minimum of two essays and to make short presentations.

Course Assessment:

One open-book examination in Trinity Term

Key Texts*:

- Sugimoto, Y. *An introduction to Japanese society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Kariya, T. *Education Reform and Social Class in Japan*, Routledge, 2013.
- Kariya, T. and Rappleye, J. *Education, Equality, and Meritocracy in a Global Age*, TCP, 2020.
- Yonezawa A. et al. eds. *Japanese Education in a Global Age*, Springer, 2018

- Brinton, C. M., *Lost in Transition*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Mouer, R. and Kawanishi, H. *A Sociology of Work in Japan*, 2005.
- Chiavacci, D. and Hommerich C. eds. *Social Inequality in Post-growth Japan*, Routledge, 2017
- Schoppa, L. J. *Race for the exits: the unraveling of Japan's system of social protection*, Ithaca, N.Y. ; London, Cornell University Press, 2006.
- Ishida H. and Slater D eds. *Social Class in Contemporary Japan*, Routledge, 2010.
- Yoichi F. and Kushner B. eds. *Examining Japan's lost decades*, Routledge, 2015.
- Shirahase, S. *Social Inequality in Japan*, Routledge, 2014.

*A more detailed reading list will be provided in class.

Note: This course is provided with collaboration with MSc and MPhil programmes in Modern Japanese Studies in the Oxford School for Global and Area Studies (OSGA).

Sociology of Latin America

Oxford School of Global and Area Studies (OSGA)

Course Provider:

Professor Leigh A. Payne

Course Description:

This course reviews the major sociological concepts and theories as applied to Latin America and the contribution of scholarship on Latin America to the field of sociology. The course covers issues including: sociology of the Latin American state; development; class, poverty and inequality; gender and sexuality; migration; social movements and counter-movements; religion; race and ethnicity; and crime and violence.

Course Objectives:

This course introduces students to advanced research on sociology in Latin America and prepares students for doctoral research in this area.

Content and Structure:

This course consists of eight lectures and eight seminars and tutorials.

Course Assessment:

Unmarked assessments: The following will form part of the overall assessment of the student's progress in the programme, but will not constitute part of the final mark for the course.

- Weekly attendance and participation in lectures and seminars
- Two essays of approximately 2500 words (excluding footnotes and bibliographies), one submitted during term and one before week 10. The essay questions should be selected based on past exam paper questions or in consultation with the course provider
- Short presentation of one essay in tutorial
- One critical written and orally delivered review of another student's essay in tutorial
- Revisions sessions including a mock exam
- Critical review of another student's mock exam question

Marked assessment: The following constitutes one component of the final mark for the MSc and MPhil: a take-home examination on Sociology of Latin America in Trinity Term.

Sociology of Mafias

Course Provider:

Professor Federico Varese

Aims:

The course analyses five criminal organizations that have emerged in different times and contexts: the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, the American Mafia, the Russian Mafia, the Hong Kong Triads, and the Japanese Yakuza. We explore the extent to which these cases, notwithstanding their differences, share crucial characteristics and features. We examine the origins, structure, organizational norms, activities, relations with terrorism, transplantation and decline of mafia groups. We explore and test propositions from the theory of protection.

Topics covered by this course include:

Definitions of Mafia and organized crime. Property rights theory and protection theory. Origins of Mafias. Resources Mafias use. Organization, role of women and norms. Mafias in legal and illegal markets. Mafias and politics. Mafias and popular culture. Organized Crime in non-traditional Mafia territories. Mafias and terrorism. The transplantation of Mafias. The decline of Mafias.

Content and Structure:

The course focuses on the extent to which these organizations share particular features, and the extent to which they do not. It covers rituals and norms (week 1); what Mafias do in both legal and illegal markets (week 2); the organization (week 3); the way they invest their money (week 4); the role of women (week 5) and popular culture (week 5). The course examines parallels between state behaviour in early modern Europe and Mafia behaviour in depth (week 6&7), how mafias have emerged historically and how to fight them (week 8). The course is multidisciplinary and draws upon concepts from political theory, industrial economics, and political economy, as well as on the history and sociology of different countries, such as Hong Kong, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Learning Outcomes:

On successfully completing the course, students should be familiar with:

- Key issues related to the origins, organization, activities, migration and decline of mafia groups;
- Key theories discussed in the course;
- The comparative method in Sociology and key concepts in Political Theory, Industrial Economics, and Political Economy.

In addition, students should be able to apply key insights to cases not covered in the course.

Teaching Arrangement:

Teaching will be through 8 weekly seminars. Students are expected to study the required readings and engage in class discussion each week.

Course Assessment:

Production of two “Reading Responses” (RRs) during the course of the Term, to be submitted by noon on Friday of Weeks 3 and 6 by email to the course provider. The RRs should not exceed two A4 pages (font 12). The course provider will supply the title of the RRs the week before, during class time. The work will be graded on a pass/fail basis. In case of fail, the candidate is allowed to re-submit once. If the candidate fails twice, or fails to submit none or only one of the RRs, they will have failed the course. Late submission will lead to penalization in the final grade. The course provider’s comments on successful RRs will be minimal.

Production of one assessed essay written unsupervised and unaided. The course provider will publish three Exam Questions on Friday of Week 8 at noon. Candidates will answer ONE of these questions and submit their essay to Inspira by noon on Friday of Week 11.

This assignment must be no less than 3,500 words and no more than 5,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but excluding

bibliography and appendices). An accurate word count must be declared on the first page of the essay. Students may not approach the course provider for clarification on essay questions or help with or feedback on the essay. Students are expected to draw on course readings; whilst they may be rewarded for drawing upon additional works, Examiners may reduce the mark of those who fail to cite course readings. Candidates should take seriously the word limits imposed (both upper and lower). If the word limit is exceeded, then the examiners may decide not to mark the work; and if they do proceed then the mark may be reduced. Similarly, those who write less than the minimum word limit may be penalized.

Key Texts:

Pre-course Reading (pick at least one):

- Pistone, J.D. and R. Woodley. *Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia*, 1988.
- Arlacchi, P. *Men of Dishonor*. 1992.
- Maas, P. *Underboss. Sammy the Bull Gravano’s Story of Life in the Mafia*, 1997.
- Escobar, R. *Escobar*. 2009.
- Leeson, *The Invisible Hook*. 2009.
- Poulsen, K. *Kingpin*. 2011.
- Glenny, M. *Nemesis*. 2015.

Pre-course Viewings:

Mean Streets; The Godfather: Parts One and Two; Goodfellas; Casino; Donnie Brasco; Narcos TV Series; Cartel Land (documentary).

Course Key Texts:

- Gambetta, D. 1993. *The Sicilian Mafia*. Harvard University Press.
- Varese, F. 2017. *Mafia Life*. Profile and OUP.
- Some key papers are collected in Varese, F. (ed.) 2010. *Organized Crime. Critical Concepts in Criminology*, Routledge, 2010.

Options Outside Sociology

MPhil Sociology and Demography students may take one of their two option papers outside of the department. Permission must be sought from the Director of Taught Courses, the supervisor, and the department offering the alternative option. The student must complete an application form to be obtained from and submitted to the Graduate Studies Officer by the end of Week 6 of Michaelmas Term of the relevant academic year. The application must be approved by the Graduate Studies Committee and classes for the external option paper must not conflict with timetabled departmental teaching.

MPhil Thesis

The MPhil Thesis is expected to represent a substantial piece of research. The thesis topic should be within the subject of the course, to be specified jointly by Supervisor and student, but it does not need to be related specifically to any of the taught papers.

There is a Thesis Workshop for MPhil students in early Michaelmas Term of the second year where students are required to make a brief presentation on their research topic, specifying the research question they plan to address, the relevant theoretical ideas and the method they propose to use to answer their chosen question. Students may be required to complete Gantt Charts for the Workshop and also fill in feedback forms which comment on their fellow students' presentations.

Students working with data that is not publicly available must ensure that examiners will be able to access data if required. The thesis should contain details of how such access can be obtained. Students who make use of materials in languages other than English must, on request of the examiners, make available English translations (e.g. of transcriptions, code books, etc.) within a time period specified by the examiners, not usually expected to be more than one month. All students must complete a Research Ethics Checklist.

Formatting

All taught degree theses must:

- Use 12-point font, and preferably a serif font such as Times New Roman;
- Give the length of the text in number of words;
- Present the main text in double spacing with quotations and footnotes in single

spacing. Place footnotes, where present, at the bottom of each page;

- Have numbered pages;
- Use referencing that corresponds to one of the established bibliographic conventions: preferably APA style and not Vancouver;
- Be submitted in English; unless for exceptional reasons otherwise determined by a relevant Board, in the term in which the candidate is first admitted.
- Text must be presented on a white background with a margin of 3 to 3.5 centimetres on the left and right sides of the page.
- Have no mention of Supervisor, acknowledgements, or any other identifying remarks;
- Be identified by candidate number and not by the candidate's name.

The thesis should be of **no more than 30,000 words**, with **footnotes and tables included** in this figure; **references and appendices are not included**. (As a guideline, Appendices should make up no more than 30% of the thesis.)

Delivery and Examination

The thesis must be submitted to the Inspira submission site. It must be accompanied by a statement that the thesis is the candidate's own work except where otherwise indicated and this statement will be provided on the Inspira site.

Please also submit the following electronically to the Graduate Studies Officer:

- The full manuscript of the thesis in PDF format;
- If applicable, syntax files that were used for quantitative data analysis (for instance the relevant .do-files if Stata was used);

- If applicable, syntax files that were used for quantitative data analysis (for instance the relevant .do-files if Stata was used);
- In case of own data collection, a file (or files in a zip-archive) containing the raw data anonymised in accordance with the terms of the informed consent given by participants (transcripts of interviews, raw data from experiments, other collected material).

The data and syntax files remain the intellectual property of the student. The department will not use the submitted materials for any other purpose and will destroy both syntax and own data collection files after the final exam results for the student have been released.

Please see the relevant Examination Conventions for the course for information about examination of the MPhil Thesis.

Deadlines/Workshops for MPhil

The main workshops and deadlines for core papers of the MPhil in Sociology and Demography are listed below by year of study. Course providers may request additional coursework with deadlines not included in this list. Further information about assessments and deadlines for optional papers may be found within the paper descriptions. Students should also take note of the information provided on the submission of coursework both within this student handbook and on the [university website](#).

Year 1

Assessment Item, Task or Workshop	Submission Location	Deadline
Complete the ' Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial and Quiz ' and email the certificate of completion to the Graduate Studies Officer	Graduate Studies Officer	12 noon, Friday, Week 2, MT
Submit Optional Paper Choice	Graduate Studies Officer	12 noon, Friday, Week 6, MT
Examination Entry	Student Self-Service	Usually before 12 noon, Friday, Week 8, MT
Sociological Analysis Term Essay	Specified by Convenor	12 noon, Friday, Week 9, MT
Statistical Methods Examination	Exam Schools	Week 0, HT
Demographic Analysis Essay	Inspira	12 noon, Friday, Week 0, HT
Complete the Core Researcher Integrity Training	Upload completion certificate to Canvas	Friday, Week 0, HT
Submission of the DREC Ethics Form for the MPhil Thesis	Departmental Research Facilitator	12 noon, Wednesday, Week 8, HT
MPhil Thesis Title Submission	Graduate Studies Officer	Friday, Week 8, HT
Demographic Analysis Applied Assignment	Inspira	12 noon, Friday, Week 8, HT
Life Course Research Essay	Inspira	12 noon, Monday, Week 1, TT
Research Design Critical Essay	Inspira	12 noon, Monday, Week 1, TT
Life Course Research Assignment	Inspira	12 noon, Friday, Week 4, TT
Public Examinations (Sociological Analysis & Optional Paper if applicable)	Inspira	The exams <i>normally</i> take place during Week 8 and/or 9, TT
Submission of the CUREC Form for the MPhil Thesis (if applicable)	Departmental Research Facilitator	Minimum of 4 weeks before the planned research start date

Year 2

Assessment Item, Task or Workshop	Submission Location	Deadline
MPhil Thesis Workshop		Early MT
Submit Optional Paper Choice	Graduate Studies Officer	12 noon, Friday, Week 6, MT
Examination Entry	Student Self-Service	Usually before 12 noon, Friday, Week 8, MT
Replication Project	Inspira	12 noon, Monday, Week 5, HT
MPhil Thesis	Inspira	12 noon, Friday, Week 6, TT

Examination Criteria and Marking Scale

MPhil Sociology and Demography candidates are examined on the work they produce. This includes examination scripts, coursework and a thesis. The main criteria applied by the examiners in judging this material are analytical quality, ability to apply the theoretical and methodological approaches that have been taught, critical awareness of alternative approaches and sources of data, and knowledge of the substantive literature.

A mark of zero shall be awarded for any part or parts of questions that have not been answered by a candidate, but which should have been answered. Where a candidate has failed to answer a compulsory question, or failed to answer the required number of questions in different sections, the complete script will

be marked, and the issue flagged. The board of Examiners will consider all such cases so that consistent penalties are applied.

Where a candidate presents a thesis (or other exercise) which exceeds the word limit prescribed by the relevant statute, decree or regulation, the examiners, if they agree to proceed with the examination of the work, may reduce the mark by up to ten marks. This also applies to late submissions.

Candidates should refer to the Examination Conventions and where applicable, the Examination Regulations, for further information regarding the requirements, examination and penalisation of marks for the course.

The scale of marks used by examiners and assessors for all subjects is shown below.

a. Coursework and Thesis

Distinction level

80-100	Distinction	Superb work: Work is of exceptional quality based on a comprehensive knowledge of the chosen topic, a sustained high level of critical analysis combined with a genuine originality of approach. The work is tightly argued, meticulously organised, extremely well documented and will be, in principle, of publishable standard (essay/dissertation).
75-79	Distinction	Excellent work: Work displays many of the qualities for work in the 80+ range but falls short on one of the criteria listed above.
70-74	Distinction	Fine work: Work shows evidence of extensive relevant reading, a significant grasp of current major issues in the field and offers an original approach to the chosen topic. This knowledge is reviewed critically and with sufficient insight to challenge received ideas. The arguments are clearly and persuasively put.

Pass level

65-69	<i>Merit</i>	Strong pass: Work shows consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories from a wide range of sources. Work demonstrates the ability to relate this reading to their chosen topic and will clearly have understood and assimilated the relevant literature. The arguments are clear and well structured. The examples are pertinent and go well beyond standard or predictable cases.
55-64	<i>Pass</i>	Good pass: Work shows clear evidence of knowledge and understanding but ideas, critical comments or methodology are underdeveloped or oversimplified. Work shows significant room for improvement in the clarity and structure of the argument and although there is appropriate reference to relevant reading, it is not sufficiently extensive. Some irrelevancy may be present.
50-54	<i>Pass</i>	Pass: Work exhibits some knowledge of the chosen topic, but displays weaknesses of understanding and thoroughness. Arguments are weakly structured and important information and references are lacking. A considerable proportion of this work is irrelevant, or otherwise fails to directly address the question.

Fail

45-49	<i>Fail</i>	Marginal fail: Work is seriously flawed, displaying a lack of awareness of essential texts and incoherent arguments. The research involved is poorly organised and inadequately discussed, offering a fundamentally inadequate response to the chosen topic. Large parts of the work may be irrelevant.
0-44	<i>Fail</i>	Outright fail: Inadequate coverage and/or analysis, or work not submitted.

b. Final Exams*Distinction level*

80-100	<i>Distinction</i>	Superb work: Answer to exam question is of exceptional quality based on a comprehensive knowledge of the chosen topic, a sustained high level of critical analysis combined with a genuine originality of approach. The work is tightly argued and meticulously organized.
75-79	<i>Distinction</i>	Excellent work: Answer to exam question displays many of the qualities for work in the 80+ range but falls short on one of the criteria listed above.
70-74	<i>Distinction</i>	Fine work: Answer to exam question shows evidence of extensive relevant reading, a significant grasp of current major issues in the field and offers an original approach to the chosen question. This knowledge is reviewed critically and with sufficient insight to challenge received ideas. The arguments are clearly and persuasively put.

Pass level

65-69	Merit	Strong pass: Answer to exam question shows consistency and fluency in discussing and evaluating evidence and theories from various sources. Answer demonstrates the ability to relate this reading to their chosen topic. The arguments are clear and well structured. The examples are pertinent and go beyond standard or predictable cases.
55-64	Pass	Good pass: Answer to exam question shows clear evidence of knowledge and understanding but ideas and critical assessment is underdeveloped or oversimplified. Answer shows significant room for improvement in the clarity and structure of the argument and although there is some reference to relevant reading, it is not sufficiently extensive. Some irrelevancy may be present.
50-54	Pass	Pass: Answer to exam question exhibits some knowledge of the chosen topic, but displays weaknesses of understanding and thoroughness. Arguments are weakly structured and important information and references are lacking. A considerable proportion of the answer is irrelevant, or otherwise fails to directly address the question.

Fail

45-49	Fail	Marginal fail: Answer to exam question is seriously flawed, displaying a lack of awareness of essential texts and incoherent arguments. The discussion involved is poorly organized and offers a fundamentally inadequate response to the chosen question. Large parts of answer may be irrelevant.
0-44	Fail	Outright fail: Inadequate coverage and/or analysis, or no answer(s) at all.

Marks of 70 and above represent distinction grades, marks from 50 to 69 are pass grades, and marks below 50 represent a fail.

Components are double marked (blind), and the examiners normally agree an overall mark prior to the examiners' meeting. In the event that this is not possible then the external examiner reads the script to adjudicate the mark.

Routine scaling of marks is not undertaken. However, where the marks of an individual assessor, examiner, paper, or question are outside the normal range of variation, a process of moderation, decided by the Chair of Examiners, may be undertaken.

If a student requires a deadline extension for any work that counts towards their final mark, they will need to **apply to the Senior Tutor in their college** who will then write to the Proctors. **Deadline extensions need to be applied for in advance and have to be accompanied by a medical note.** The Proctors then decide if the reason is valid and inform the examiners. **The department cannot grant extensions** and penalties may be incurred for late submissions.

If a student does not submit their thesis, or fails to turn up for any of their exams, the student will be allowed to resubmit the piece or work or re-sit the exam one time; the mark of this second submission/sitting will be capped. (In most cases, it is better to hand in a bad thesis/complete an exam and fail, than to hand nothing in at all. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact your College as soon as possible to discuss the situation with them, as all extensions or applications for Mitigating Circumstances must go through the College in the first instance.)

PASS: To pass the course, candidates must achieve 50 or more in all components. If a candidate fails just one component of the MSc, and it is a marginal fail (i.e. not less than 48) they can still be awarded a degree without merit or distinction if they achieve a mark of 64 or above in another component.

MERIT: The Board of Examiners may award a merit for strong work in the whole examination. To obtain a merit, candidates should obtain an overall average mark of 65 or above. Candidates who have initially

failed any component of the examination will not normally be eligible for the award of Merit.

DISTINCTION: The examiners may award a distinction for excellence in the whole examination. To obtain a distinction, candidates should obtain EITHER an overall average mark of 70 or above OR an overall average mark of 68 and above, with two assessed components at 70 or above. Candidates who have initially failed any component of the examination will not normally be eligible for the award of Distinction.

FAIL: A candidate who fails a taught degree may enter for **one** subsequent examination only, provided this is still within six terms of his or her initial registration. A revised version of the same thesis may be resubmitted and will be examined afresh by the examiners on the second occasion. No component can be retaken if passed first time round

The Proctors' rules concerning arrangements in cases of illness, disability, etc., are detailed in the Examination Regulations. Subject to the provisions given in these notes, a candidate who fails to appear at the time and place appointed for any part of their examination shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the examination.

Course Evaluation and Student Feedback

The Department of Sociology is concerned that students have the opportunity to comment on the structure, teaching and content of each of the courses. Student feedback will thus be sought through the use of student evaluation forms.

Feedback on Formative and Summative Assessments for PGT Programmes

Feedback on both formative and summative assessment is an important element of all programmes at Oxford and may be provided informally and/or formally. Formative assessment does not contribute to the overall outcome of your degree and has a developmental purpose designed to help you learn more effectively. Summative assessment contributes to your degree result and is used to evaluate formally the extent to which you have succeeded in meeting the published assessment criteria.

Feedback on formative assessment e.g. course essays or assignments, should provide guidance to those for whom extended pieces of writing are unfamiliar forms of assessment; will indicate areas of strength and weakness in relation to an assessment task; and will provide an indication of the expectations and standards towards which students should be working.

Feedback on summative assessment such as the MPhil Thesis should provide a critical review of the work and provide suggestions

for improvements and future development of the topic of research, to enable students to develop their work for doctoral study if appropriate. Students can expect to receive informal feedback on their progress and their formatively assessed work.

For Sociological Analysis, students will receive written comments weekly from a teaching assistant. For Optional Papers, course providers will give students written comments on essays submitted in Hilary Term. Students will also receive written comments on their assignments for the Statistical Methods component of their Methods of Social Research paper in Michaelmas Term of the first year of study.

All students on taught master's programmes can expect to receive formal written feedback on at least one designated piece of formative assessment that is normally submitted during the first term (or very early in the second term) of the course.

Students studying for the MPhil Qualifying Test will receive formal written feedback on their Sociological Analysis Term Essay which is submitted on a date specified by the course provider.

Students will receive formal written feedback on their MPhil Thesis submitted in the final term of the second year of their course. The feedback will be sent via email in due course after the final Exam Board convening.

MPhil Supervision

All graduate students have a University Supervisor that guides them through their course of study.

The Supervisor reports on the student's progress to the Taught Course Director and will also provide feedback to the student. The advice of the Supervisor will always be sought by the GSC before recommending any change in status, transfer between courses, and so on. It is of great importance for the student to keep in regular contact with their Supervisor and to keep the Supervisor fully informed as to the progress of their studies.

Students and Supervisors are required to electronically submit a termly progress report by completing Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR).

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR)

Graduate Supervision Reporting (GSR) is used by Supervisors each term to review, monitor and comment on their student's academic progress and performance and to assess skills and training needs. Students are given the opportunity to contribute to their termly supervision reports by reviewing and commenting on their own academic progress. ***All students are required to submit a GSR report each term.***

Students will receive a report of their termly supervision from their Supervisor. Divisions, Departments and Colleges use the completion of supervision reports as an essential means of monitoring student progress.

The supervision reporting process is controlled by a structured timetable with automatic notifications and reminders. Once reports are submitted, they are immediately available to the student,

Supervisor and DGS for review. Additionally, Subject Administrators, College Advisors, College Administrators and Scholarship and Funding Administrators are able to view reports.

Graduate students will also all have a College Adviser. The role of the College Adviser is to provide pastoral and general academic advice. They can be particularly helpful if the student has any academic or other difficulties that they do not feel able to discuss with their University Supervisor.

Students on full-time and part-time matriculated courses are also surveyed once per year on all aspects of their course (learning, living, pastoral support, college) through the Student Barometer. [Previous results](#) can be viewed by students, staff, and the general public.

Change of Supervisor

It may be appropriate in some cases to change Supervisor if, for example, the direction of the student's work changes. The Graduate Studies Committee and all university Supervisors also recognise that occasionally there can arise incompatibilities of temperament or approach between Supervisor and student. Because of the central importance Oxford attaches to the relationship between Supervisor and student, students are urged to discuss any problems of this kind freely and in full confidence with the Taught Course Director. Alternatively, a student may wish to approach their College Advisor or College Tutor for Graduates for advice and support.

A change of Supervisor requires the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Code of Practice for Supervisors of Taught Course Students

Supervisors responsible for oversight of progress of master's students on taught courses are expected to:

- Meet with students (in general twice or more per term)
- Discuss progress, feed-back comments to course providers, course directors and DGS
- Assist in choice of options papers
- Help in the development of thesis topic
- Write termly reports on the student on GSR

In addition to the above, Supervisors are expected to provide the following with respect to master's theses:

- Frequent meetings with students to discuss progress of thesis (informal guidelines: for MSc students in general

three or more meetings during summer vacation)

- Timely responses to materials submitted for comment
- In particular, comment on final drafts in good time for students to respond before final submission
- Ask to see transcripts of interviews, or syntax files in data analysis to check that the thesis is indeed the student's own work

This last depends on Supervisors' availability in Oxford during the summer vacation months, and on students' timely submission of drafts. Supervisors should provide a reasonable level of availability during the summer; it is the student's responsibility to arrange dates for submission of work to Supervisors—but it would be helpful if Supervisors could warn students of any extended period of unavailability during the month before the thesis submission date.

Ethical and Practical Considerations for MPhil Research

Research Ethics Deadlines and Workshops for the MPhil

What?	Deadline/Date
Departmental Introduction to Ethics Session	Week 5, MT
Complete the Core Researcher Integrity Training and upload completion certificate to Canvas	Friday, Week 0, HT of the first year
DREC Checklist submission deadline	Noon, Wednesday, Week 8, HT of the first year
CUREC Writing Workshop 1	Week 1, HT
CUREC Writing Workshop 2	Week 5, HT
CUREC application deadline (if applicable)	Minimum of 4 weeks before the planned research start date

The Introductory Ethics Session and CUREC Workshops will be hosted by the departmental Research Facilitator, Agnieszka Swiejkowska. The Introductory Session is compulsory and all MPhil Sociology and Demography and they must attend at least one of the CUREC Workshops during their first year of study. All students must submit their DREC Checklist to DREC@sociology.ox.ac.uk by the date specified above.

Researcher Integrity Training

All MPhil Sociology and Demography students must successfully complete the [University's introductory research](#)

[integrity training course](#) by Friday of Week 0 of Hilary Term of the first year.

Successful completion of the course requires a mark of 80% in a test and a certificate of completion will be sent via email upon successful completion. This email should be retained as evidence of successful completion of the course and uploaded to relevant Canvas page.

Ethical Review Procedures for Research

Research Ethics Review and Approval

The University's policy and guidance on the ethical review of research undertaken by staff and students which involves human participants is [available on the University website](#).

Why is ethics scrutiny and approval important?

- It is part of the responsible conduct of research.
- It demonstrates that your research has been conducted according to the highest ethical standards. It is important to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of all those involved in the research (whether they are participants, researchers or third parties)
- It is a University requirement.
- It is now the expectation - and in some cases formal requirement - of funding bodies.

What to do:

- **Check if and how you need to apply for approval:** Visit the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) site and identify if you need a CUREC form filled in using the [decision](#)

[flowchart](#). You can also check where and how to apply for ethical approval with the flowcharts [here](#).

- **Decide whether your project needs CUREC 1A or CUREC 2:** This depends on the sort of research you are doing and the information it involves. To check which you will need, complete Section A of the CUREC 1A form. The form will advise you whether to continue with the CUREC 1A application or start a CUREC 2. Both application forms for ethical approval [can be found here](#).
- **Apply well in advance:** You will not be able to undertake any research until your application has been approved. Please start the process of completing the form and gather then required material as soon as possible. When writing any CUREC application, assume that you are the expert in your topic area and explain your project methods clearly and simply. This includes giving a clear idea of potential ethical issues and how you propose to address them. Remember that the ethics committee partially relies on your expertise as a researcher in your field, in order to be clear about the ethics of a project.

It is likely your application will need documents to support it and help to explain what you are doing. These documents can be broadly classified as for external (participant) or internal (researcher) use. Documents for external use include invitation letters/emails, information sheets, written consent forms, oral consent scripts, project recruitment advertisements, participant-completion surveys or questionnaires (paper or online). Please see the main CUREC page on [informed consent for more details](#). Documents for internal use include sample research instruments (researcher-completion surveys or questionnaires, semi-structured interview guides), detailed study protocols, and record of oral consent forms.

In most cases, the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) will want to see

final versions of external use documents in order to check compliance with the relevant University policy. As far as possible the DREC will also want to see examples of interview schedules and draft questionnaires. (We are aware that survey questions and other research instruments evolve as part of project methodology.)

- Complete the form electronically and send it in Word format from your Oxford email account to drec@sociology.ox.ac.uk. **You must sign your form and also obtain your supervisor's signature:** applications are not valid until signatures and relevant supporting documents have been provided. There is more information about signatures in the checklist itself.
- Please note that the anticipated turn around on Ethics applications is between 5 and 30 days for CUREC 1A applications and may be up to 60 days for the more complex CUREC 2 process. Once your research has received ethical approval, you will receive a letter to confirm this.

Approval of research using publicly available data is routine. **Ideally, you should have completed the process of receiving ethical approval by the time you submit your thesis topic to the Graduate Studies Officer.** Please ensure that you leave enough time to complete the forms, collect the requisite signatures, and for the approval process to take place. For projects requiring only CUREC 1A approval, applications submitted early in Hilary Term should have sufficient time for approval. If you believe that you may need CUREC 2 approval, please contact Agnieszka Swiejkowska, the Research Facilitator, as soon as possible in Michaelmas Term for advice.

Other Resources

- The Research Support Service offers several different [training courses](#) for preparing for ethical review.

Risk Assessment, Insurance and Safety Considerations for Any Travel or Fieldwork

Many students will, as part of their course, be required to undertake fieldwork. Fieldwork is considered as any research activity contributing to your academic studies, and approved by your department, which is carried out away from the University premises. This can be overseas or within the UK. The safety and welfare of its students is of paramount importance to the University. This includes fieldwork and there are a number of procedures that you must follow when preparing for and carrying out fieldwork.

Preparation

Safe fieldwork is successful fieldwork. Thorough preparation can pre-empt many potential problems. When discussing your research with your supervisor please think about the safety implications of where you are going and what you are doing. Following this discussion and before your travel will be approved, you will be required to complete a travel risk assessment form. This requires you to set out the significant safety risks associated with your research, the arrangements in place to mitigate those risks and the contingency plans for if something goes wrong. There is an expectation that you will take out [University travel insurance](#). Your department also needs accurate information on where you are, and when and how to contact you while you are away. The travel assessment process should help to plan your fieldwork by thinking through arrangements and practicalities. The website for the Social Sciences Division provides [videos detailing fieldwork experiences](#) that may be useful for reference.

It is vital that risk assessments and travel insurance applications are submitted at least one month before

planned travel. Forms for high-risk travel should be submitted even further in advance, to allow the forms to be approved by the Divisional Safety Officer, and possibly by the University Safety Office.

You are advised to talk to your Supervisor at the earliest opportunity. In addition, you should contact the Head of Administration and Finance **at least one month before the start of your trip** to obtain the appropriate forms and assist with the risk assessment process.

The need to complete a risk assessment should not be seen as an obstacle, but as an integral and fundamental part of travel and fieldwork preparation. Those conducting interviews in **areas of high risk** (e.g. areas of serious political unrest) or in **an environment which poses a higher risk than the normal place of work** (e.g. interviewing prisoners in a prison) must be able to demonstrate that they have thought properly about where risk may be present and describe clearly their proposed actions to mitigate such risk as far as is reasonably possible.

As a separate but related matter, you should always provide the department with an itinerary and contact details for your next of kin, in order to meet university regulations.

Training

Training is highly recommended as part of your preparation. Even if you are familiar with where you are going there may be risks associated with what you are doing.

Social Sciences Division Research and Skills Training (termly)

Full details and dates [on the Social Sciences Division website](#).

- Preparation for Safe Fieldwork. A half day course for those carrying out social science research in rural and urban contexts

- An Insider's Guide to fieldwork. A student led course on negotiating the practical aspects of fieldwork.
- Vicarious trauma workshops. For research on traumatic or distressing topic areas or contexts.

Health and Safety

[The Safety Office](#) offers training and guidance including 'Emergency First Aid for Fieldworkers' and 'Fieldwork Safety Overseas: A full day course geared to expedition-based fieldwork'.

Travel Insurance

A separate form is needed to apply for the University's travel insurance. Please note that the University's insurance will not be valid if you do not have a valid risk assessment and do not complete this process in good time. There is no cost to students associated with taking out University travel insurance, and the policy offers a good quality of coverage.

More information on the university's scheme is available [online](#).

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office gives up-to-date advice on travel to anywhere in the world, country by country.

You are strongly advised to refer to this in any case; and particularly where advisory information applies. All travel plans to FCO advisory areas must be the subject of a risk assessment and will be referred to the Safety Office by the Head of Administration and Finance. To check if your travel plans might be affected by an FCO advisory please [check the website](#).

Some key points:

- Allow plenty of time (at least one month) before the start of your trip to do the planning and get any approvals
- The University has a duty of care to you wherever you are - when you are there on what may be perceived as legitimate university business. Research would count as such. Even if your trip is taking you home to your own country (e.g. you are a Turkish national going to do fieldwork in Turkey), you will still need to demonstrate that you have considered the risks and completed a risk assessment.

If your fieldwork involves human participants or use of personal data, you will also need to consider the ethical implications of such activity. Please refer to the [university's policy for research ethics](#).

Regulations Governing Graduate Degree Courses

The most relevant rules are summarised below. In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to seek dispensation from these rules. Students should consult the [Examination Regulations](#) for the full text and seek further advice from their supervisor.

Plagiarism

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition.

Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.

All students should carefully read the [Oxford Students website guidance](#).

You may be found guilty of plagiarism if:

- You are presenting or passing off another person's work as your own
- You import into your own work 'more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and identification of the source'
- You make 'extensive use of another person's work, either by summarising or paraphrasing it merely by changing a few words or altering the order of the presentation, without acknowledgement'
- You use 'the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the

source' or submit or present work as your own' which is substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another'

- You make 'a deliberate attempt at passing off the ideas or writings of another person as your own'
- You take 'the words, ideas and labour of other people and give the impression that they are your own.'

[From *Beat the Witch-hunt! Peter Levin's Guide to Avoiding and Rebutting Accusations of Plagiarism for Conscientious Students*]

Plagiarism and University Policy

Cases of apparently deliberate plagiarism, while happily infrequent in the University, are taken extremely seriously, and where examiners suspect that this has occurred, they bring the matter to the attention of the Proctors.

Your attention is drawn to '[Section 10: Disciplinary Procedures and Rights](#)' of the 2022/23 Student Handbook, as well as to [Statute XI](#) that details the powers and procedures of the Proctors.

The procedural levels for dealing with cases of poor academic practice and plagiarism in taught degree examinations are outlined below:

Level 1: Procedures for Examination Boards

If a marker, or a Turnitin report generated in the course of examination procedures, raises concerns about the proper attribution of a passage or piece of submitted work, the matter will be reported to the Chair of Examiners. The Chair will compile and retain any evidence and decide whether or not the case is one which may be dealt with by the Board (poor academic practice) or whether it is one that requires reference to the Proctors for investigation

and possible disciplinary action. The Chair may consult the Proctors in cases of doubt.

Level 2: Procedures for the Academic Conduct Panel

Examination Boards will refer cases to the Proctors' Office if the Chair has made a decision that a case exceeds the criteria for dealing with Level 1.

The student will be able to appeal a decision of the Academic Conduct Panel by sending a written appeal within fourteen days of receiving the Panel's written decision. Two members of the Academic Conduct Panel with no previous connection to the case will consider the appeal, and this will normally be a paper-based exercise.

The student will not be able to appeal a referral to the Student Disciplinary Panel; in such cases they will have the right to apply for permission to appeal to the Student Appeal Panel following the outcome of the Student Disciplinary Panel.

Level 3: Student Disciplinary Panel

The Student Disciplinary Panel will deal with the most serious cases of plagiarism, and those referred to it by the Proctors or the Academic Conduct Panel because the likely outcome would be failure of the whole degree.

Outcomes

The Panel will have a range of outcomes available to it including:

- Submission awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-submit i.e. failure of programme
- Award classification reduced
- Failed award
- Expelled from institution and failed award
- Removal of a degree (in cases of former students)
- Additionally, any of the outcomes available at Level 2.

Online Plagiarism Quiz and Resources

All students are required to take the [Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial](#) and to email a copy of the certificate of completion to the Graduate Studies Officer by the end of Week 2 of Michaelmas Term.

The [Oxford Students skills webpage](#) has guidance on [plagiarism](#), [time management](#), [referencing](#), [research skills](#), and more.

In addition, the resources below (available in various libraries across Oxford) will help you identify and avoid plagiarism in your work:

Neville, Colin (2007) *The complete guide to referencing and avoiding plagiarism* Maidenhead; New York: Open University Press [[SOLO link](#)]

Pears, Richard and Graham Shields (2016) *Cite them right : the essential referencing guide [electronic resource]* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan [[SOLO link](#)]

Third Party Proof-Readers

Students have authorial responsibility for the written work they produce. Proof-reading represents the final stage of producing a piece of academic writing. Students are strongly encouraged to proof-read their own work, as this is an essential skill in the academic writing process. However, for longer pieces of work it is considered acceptable for students to seek the help of a third party for proof-reading. Such third parties can be professional proof-readers, fellow students, friends, or family members. This policy does not apply to the supervisory relationship, nor in the case where proof-reading assistance is approved as a reasonable adjustment for disability.

The use of third-party proof-readers is not permitted for work where the word limit is fewer than 10,000 words. The guidance below applies to all assessed written work where the *word limit is 10,000 words or greater*.

What a proof-reader may and may not do

Within the context of students' written work, to proof-read is to check for, identify and suggest corrections for errors in text. In no cases should a proof-reader make material changes to a student's writing (that is, check or amend ideas, arguments or structure), since to do so is to compromise the authorship of the work.

A proof-reader may

- Identify typographical, spelling and punctuation errors;
- Identify formatting and layout errors and inconsistencies (e.g. page numbers, font size, line spacing, headers and footers);
- Identify grammatical and syntactical errors and anomalies or ambiguities in phrasing;
- Identify minor formatting errors in referencing (for consistency and order);
- Identify errors in the labelling of diagrams, charts or figures;
- Identify lexical repetition or omissions.

A proof-reader may not

- Add to content in any way;
- Check or correct facts, data calculations, formulae or equations;
- Rewrite content where meaning is ambiguous;
- Alter argument or logic where faulty;
- Re-arrange or re-order paragraphs to enhance structure or argument;
- Implement or significantly alter a referencing system;
- Re-label diagrams, charts or figures;
- Reduce content so as to comply with a specified word limit;
- Translate any part of the work into English.

Authorial responsibility

Students have overall authorial responsibility for their work and should choose whether they wish to accept the proof-reader's advice. A third-party proof-reader should mark up the student's work with suggested changes which the student may then choose to accept or reject.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines could constitute a breach of academic integrity and contravene the Regulations for Examinations. It is therefore the student's responsibility to provide the proof-reader with a copy of this [policy statement](#).

Entering for Examinations

In order to complete your examination entry successfully, you must have completed your University registration within the student registration window. You can check whether your registration is complete by logging in to Student Self Service and clicking on My Student Record: if your registration is not complete you will see the Register screen and you should contact your college immediately; if your registration is complete you will see the Check my Details screen.

A full guide to the examination process is available [here](#) and students are strongly encouraged to read it carefully.

Mitigating Circumstances Notices to Examiners (MCEs)

If you experience problems before or during your exams, or in relation to your submitted work, which you think may have seriously impacted your performance you should contact your college office as soon as possible, and they will help you submit a mitigating circumstances notice. Further guidance is available [here](#).

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University

Examinations, that unforeseen factors may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. When reaching this decision, examiners will take into consideration the severity and relevance of the circumstances, and the strength of the evidence. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final Board of Examiners meeting to adjudicate on the merits of candidates.

Failing the MPhil

Candidates should refer to the Examination Conventions for the course for information on re-sits, resubmissions and implications of the failure of one or more components of the MPhil Qualifying Test and/or the MPhil Final.

Candidates who have previously failed the MPhil without extenuating circumstances cannot achieve more than a pass degree on retaking.

In the event of failure of the MPhil or MPhil Qualifying Test overall, a candidate is allowed to retake/resubmit certain elements (meaning discrete pieces of written work, theses, tests, or examination papers). Any retakes/resubmissions for the MPhil Qualifying Test must take place before the first week of the next academic year. Any retakes/resubmissions for the MPhil would normally take place the following year with the next cohort of students. A candidate may only retake/resubmit elements of those components that received a fail mark overall. If a candidate failed a component

for which assessment is comprised of one or more elements, only those elements that received a fail mark may be resubmitted/retaken. Any elements for which the candidate achieved a pass mark cannot be resubmitted/retaken. Any elements that constitute part of a component that received a pass mark overall cannot be retaken/resubmitted, even if there are particular elements of the component that received a fail mark. Marks for any elements that are not retaken or resubmitted will not change.

If a candidate fails just one component of the MPhil that is not the thesis, and it is a marginal fail (i.e. not less than 48), they can still be awarded a degree *without* merit or distinction if they achieve a mark of 64 or above in another component.

Any resubmitted written work (including the thesis) will be examined afresh. While there is no requirement to make substantial changes to written work before resubmission, candidates should note that fail marks are never awarded without careful consideration *and minor editing is unlikely to be sufficient to transform even a marginal fail mark into a pass mark.*

Candidates must re-register if they wish to re-take any exam or resubmit their thesis and doing so will require payment of fees for resubmission and re-entry. A student must be both registered and their re-entry fee received for their exam or thesis to be marked. The onus is on the student to arrange their re-entry and any resubmissions.

If a student does not submit their thesis, or fails to turn up for any of their exams, the student will be allowed to resubmit the piece or work or re-sit the exam one time; the mark of this second submission/sitting will be capped. In most cases, it is better to hand in a bad thesis/complete an exam and fail, than to hand nothing in at all. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact your College as soon as possible to discuss the situation with them, as all extensions or applications for mitigating circumstances

must go through the college in the first instance.

For students whose thesis fails to attain a pass mark, the Department may provide two Supervisory sessions before resubmission: one at the beginning of the academic year and one when the student has a complete draft of the (revised) thesis. If a student is retaking a component of the MPhil that is assessed by unseen examination, the Department may provide a single Supervisory session to review the student's knowledge and understanding of the subject and advise on appropriate further study and revision. If a student is retaking a piece of coursework, arrangements may be made for the student to discuss with the relevant course provider an appropriate course of action to enable the coursework to be completed. Additional provision of assistance may be available to those who failed or could not complete the MPhil due to illness or circumstances outside their control.

Release of Examination Marks

On advice from the University authorities, no marks are released until after the final meeting of the Examination Board for each course (July for both the MPhil Qualifying Test and the MPhil Final). There will be no exceptions to this.

Details of Examiners and Rules on Communicating with Examiners

The External Examiner for the MPhil in Sociology and Demography for the 2022-23 academic year is TBC. The internal examiners are stated within the Examination Conventions for the course. Students may access the Examiners' reports.

Students are strictly prohibited from contacting the external examiner directly. If you are unhappy with an aspect of your

assessment, you may make a complaint or appeal (see the section titled '*Complaints and Academic Appeals within the Department of Sociology*').

Fees

[Course fees](#) are published on the university website and payable to the student's college at the start of the course. MPhil students pay six terms of fees in total.

Fees are charged whether or not the student is working in Oxford. Fees are not charged if the student status is formally suspended by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Residence Requirements

The [University's residency requirements](#) apply to all full-time students and the residence requirement for the MPhil in Sociology and Demography is shown below. Students must be in Oxford for this period. Residence as a Recognised Student does not count towards residence required for Oxford degrees. Additional residence requirements may apply to scholarships or other forms of funding.

For the MPhil	six terms
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It is vital that every overseas student familiarises themselves with UK Visa Rules and Regulations. Please refer to the UK Border Agency Website and the relevant section of the University Website. It is your responsibility to inform your Department and College of any change in circumstances, including address.

Suspension of Status as a Graduate Student

With the support of their supervisor and college, students may apply to the Graduate Studies Committee for suspension of status for a specified period. If the application is approved, the candidate will not be liable to pay fees during the period of suspension and will automatically resume his or her former status at the end of the period.

The Graduate Studies Committee may consider applications for suspension on the following grounds:

- Where the student is prevented from pursuing their course of study in circumstances which are outside their control though there are good grounds for believing that they will be able to resume work within a reasonable period (e.g., physical or mental incapacity, maternity leave and unexpected domestic crises).
- To take up temporary work which is likely to be relevant to their subsequent career and the opportunity for which is unlikely to recur.
- Any such application should have the support of the student's supervisor and College and should normally be for a specified period.

Candidates are expected to endeavour to complete their studies within the normal time limits for the course in question and the Graduate Studies Committee is not prepared to consider applications for suspension merely on the ground that a candidate wishes to engage, for personal reasons, in some other activity and then return to their postgraduate work at some later date. **If an application for the suspension of status is granted, MPhil Sociology and Demography students are typically permitted to suspend for the duration of 3 terms on the basis that the MPhil is a structured taught course.**

Illness

The University records should show correctly for how many terms a student has been actively working on a thesis. Students

whose work is unavoidably interrupted by illness are encouraged to apply for suspension of status immediately. ESRC-funded students must additionally comply with all of the ESRC's regulations for suspension of the course. Failure to comply with these regulations may have serious consequences for the Department's ability to award ESRC studentships in the future.

A candidate for the MPhil whose illness is not serious enough or of too short duration to justify suspension of status may nevertheless feel that it is likely to have an adverse effect on his or her performance in the examination. In this case, they must ask their Senior Tutor, Supervisor and doctor to take up their with the Proctors, who have the option, at their discretion, of writing to the examiners and asking that the candidate's illness be taken into account. Candidates should not write directly to the examiners, who cannot take account of pleas which do not arrive through the official channels.

Paid Work

Your first commitment must be to your Oxford degree work, which is demanding and intensive. If you need, or wish, to undertake paid employment of any kind (whether inside or outside the University), you must first obtain the approval of your college and your supervisor. Both the College and the Department are likely to have a number of small jobs available, some of which can be combined with study. The norm for the number of hours of paid employment that graduate students may undertake for the Department are as follows: a maximum of six hours per week for taught course students and no more than ten hours per week for doctoral research students. Students may be permitted to work beyond these norms during vacations, subject to the explicit approval of their supervisor. Departmental teaching assistantships and research assistantships are advertised as and when they become available.

There are several opportunities to teach in the department and the university in general. A limited number of Teaching Assistants are recruited for Lab Sessions and Tutorials in the Department. Please contact the Course Provider of the course you would like to teach. The Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR) has a register of Tutors for Undergraduate teaching.

Please be aware that if you are a Tier 4 student visa holder you will have restrictions, which are set by the Home Office, on the number of hours you are permitted to work each week during term time. Paid and unpaid work within the University, for colleges, and for external organisations counts towards your permitted weekly hours. You will be asked to complete a declaration to ensure that you are not working in breach of these conditions

Please also consult the [Education Committee's paid work guidelines for Oxford graduate students](#).

Students with external funding will need approval from their funding body before accepting employment as college lecturers, Junior Research Fellows or in other similar posts. In all such cases both student and supervisor must act in accordance with the rules of the funding body. Any ESRC-funded students must consult the ESRC Studentship Officer at the Social Sciences Division in the

first instance (tel. 01865 6-14866). They will check whether the proposed employment contradicts the terms of their ESRC studentship.

Transferring Between Courses

Students that wish to apply to transfer between the MSc Sociology and the MPhil Sociology and Demography upon starting their course must apply for this transfer of programme **no later than the end of Week 3 of Michaelmas Term of their first year of study**. Applications should be made to the Graduate Studies Officer for the consideration of the Graduate Studies Committee. Students that wish to transfer must be able to complete the course in accordance with the structure outlined in the relevant student handbook. No applications for dispensation for papers to be taken out of the usual order will be made unless the circumstances are exceptional.

Students applying to transfer between programmes should also consider the costs and practical constraints of applying for a new visa (if applicable) for a course of a different duration, particularly if visa re-application requires a return to their home country and resultant inability to fulfil the university residency requirements.

Committees and Representation

Sociology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

The members of the Sociology Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) are:

- Professor Christiaan Monden, Director of Graduate Studies
- Professor Colin Mills, Taught Course Director
- Professor Heather Hamill
- Student representative or representatives (the student reps attend only the unreserved business)

For 2022/23, Professor Christiaan Monden will act as Chair of the GSC and the committee will:

- Consider applications for admission,
- Appoint a University Supervisor for each student,
- Consider applications from students during the course of study (e.g. change of course; Transfer of Status; Confirmation of Status; Extensions of time etc.)
- Appoint examiners for MLitt and DPhil candidates
- Review the programme of teaching and consider changes in regulations etc.

The Committee meets twice a term (normally Tuesdays in weeks 2 and 7). It is important that students submit any applications (and all accompanying material) to the Committee (via the Graduate Studies Administrator by Friday of week 1 and Friday of week 6) in good time for its meetings. While some matters may be dealt with under Chair's action during the vacations, this is not the norm and will not always be appropriate. Enquiries about the work of the Graduate Studies Committee should be made to the Graduate Studies Officer.

Academic records of all students are maintained centrally on the University student database. Each new record is opened on the issue of a formal notice of admission. Further information is added to students' records during their first term from matriculation forms and all records are continually updated as students progress on their course.

Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC)

The GJCC exists to provide a forum for graduate students to put forward suggestions, comments and grievances about the courses and facilities provided by the department. It will usually meet once per term. Membership includes student representatives from each degree programme, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Taught Course Director and the Graduate Studies Officer. The Head of the Department and the Head of Administration and Finance may also attend, along with other departmental administrative staff.

All students are welcome to attend and are encouraged to submit items for discussion via their student representatives. Students are encouraged to put themselves forward for this committee and if there are more volunteers than places, an election will be held.

Divisional and University Representation

Student representatives sitting on the Divisional Board are selected through a process organised by the Oxford University Student Union (Oxford SU). Details can be found on the Oxford SU website along with information about student representation at the University level.

Supporting You

Problems and Advice

Students experiencing academic, administrative, or personal problems have several possible courses of action open to them.

Every college has their own system of support for students. Please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college. Details of the wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University are available from the [Oxford Students website](#), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability. Furthermore, students may:

- Consult their Supervisor or the Graduate Studies Officer in the first instance. The Taught Courses Director, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Head of Department will, if necessary, consult the appropriate authorities on your behalf. For issues about a particular course, please first talk to the course provider in the first instance.
- At your college, consult the Senior Tutor, the Tutor for Graduates or your own College Advisor, who will give similar help.
- Consult the elected graduate representatives in the Department who will give what help and advice they can.
- Consult the Graduate Studies Office in the University Offices or the Graduate Studies section of the University website, which will advise on the obtaining of necessary forms, submission of applications, dates and deadlines, deposit of theses, etc.
- Students who are not satisfied that the

Department has addressed their concerns should consider making a formal complaint to the Head of Department, Professor Federico Varese. There are also some issues which the Department cannot address, e.g. complaints relating to exams, and a formal complaint to the Proctors must be made in these circumstances. See below for more information.

- On a more personal level, the University Counselling Service at 11 Wellington Square (which acts in a strictly confidential way) is experienced not only in general psychological problems but also in the special problems and blocks associated with academic work. Nightline is a confidential listening and information service run for students by students and is open from 8pm until 8am from 0th to 9th week each term. Students can phone (2)70270 or visit Nightline at 16 Wellington Square.
- The Disability Coordinator for the Department is the Graduate Studies Officer.

Student Conduct

Students at Oxford are subject to two separate (but complementary) sets of disciplinary regulations: the rules and by-laws of your college provided in your college handbook, or equivalent document, and the University's conduct regulations.

The University regulations covering student conduct come from three main sources:

- University statutes;
- regulations, issued by: Council; the Proctors, as the University's disciplinary officers, including emergency regulations for student conduct, published in the University Gazette, notified to you by your college

and remaining in force for a set period; the Rules Committee; the Curators of the University Libraries; the IT Committee;

- rules on access and use, made and published by people or bodies responsible for managing University land and buildings, or operating University services and facilities.

The Examination Regulations cover a wide variety of important topics, you should read them carefully. Students who intentionally or recklessly breach regulations, or incite or conspire with others to do so, are liable to disciplinary action.

For more information please see the [Student Conduct page of the University website](#).

Freedom of Speech

The Department is committed to ensuring freedom of speech within the law. The full statement, endorsed by the conference of colleges, can be found on [the university website](#).

Complaints and Academic Appeals within the Department of Sociology

The University, the Social Sciences Division and the Department of Sociology all hope that provision made for students at all stages of their course of study will result in no need for complaints (about that provision) or appeals (against the outcomes of any form of assessment).

Where such a need arises, an informal discussion with the person immediately responsible for the issue that you wish to complain about (and who may not be one of the individuals identified below) is often the

simplest way to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

Many sources of advice are available from colleges, faculties/departments and bodies like the Counselling Service or the Oxford SU Student Advice Service, which have extensive experience in advising students. You may wish to take advice from one of those sources before pursuing your complaint.

General areas of concern about provision affecting students as a whole should be raised through the Graduate Joint Consultative Committee (GJCC) or via student representation on the department's committees.

Complaints

If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by the department, then you should raise it with the Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Christiaan Monden.

Complaints about departmental facilities should be made to the Graduate Studies Officer, Hannah Brawn. If you feel unable to approach one of those individuals, you may contact the Head of Department, Professor Federico Varese. The officer concerned will attempt to resolve your concern/complaint informally.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may take your concern further by making a formal complaint to the Proctors under the [University Student Complaints Procedure](#). If your concern or complaint relates to teaching or other provision made by your college, you should raise it either with your tutor or with one of the college officers, Senior Tutor, Tutor for Graduates (as appropriate). Your college will also be able to explain how to take your complaint further if you are dissatisfied with the outcome of its consideration.

Academic appeals

An academic appeal is an appeal against the decision of an academic body (e.g. boards of

examiners, transfer and confirmation decisions etc.), on grounds such as procedural error or evidence of bias. There is no right of appeal against academic judgement.

If you have any concerns about your assessment process or outcome it is advisable to discuss these first informally with your subject or college tutor, Senior Tutor, course director, director of studies, supervisor or college or departmental administrator as appropriate. They will be able to explain the assessment process that was undertaken and may be able to address your concerns. **Queries must not be raised directly with the examiners.**

If you still have concerns, you can make a formal appeal to the Proctors who will consider appeals under the [University Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

Harassment

The Department is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all students are respected. Harassment or victimisation is regarded as unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated in any form. All members of the University are expected to treat each other fairly and with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

Help and advice can be found in the Department by contacting your Supervisor, the DGS, or the Departmental Harassment Advisor (Agnieszka Swiejkowska).

You can also contact your college for support and advice.

For more information about where to go for help and advice, please see the [Harassment webpage on the University site](#). You can also read the University's [Harassment Policy here](#).

Policies and Regulations

The University has a wide range of policies and regulations that apply to students. These are easily accessible through the A-Z of University regulations, codes of conduct and policies available on the [Oxford Students website](#).

Students' attention is also drawn to the [Policy on recording lectures by students](#).

Equality and Diversity at Oxford

Oxford is a diverse community with staff and students from over 140 countries, all with different cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds. As a member of the University you contribute towards making it an inclusive environment and we ask that you treat other members of the University community with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

The Equality and Diversity Unit works with all parts of the collegiate University to develop and promote an understanding of equality and diversity and ensure that this is reflected in all its processes. The Unit also supports the University in meeting the legal requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people with and without the 'protected characteristics' of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and/or belief, sex and sexual orientation. [Visit our website](#) for further details or contact us directly for advice: equality@admin.ox.ac.uk.

The Equality and Diversity Unit also supports a broad network of harassment advisors in departments/faculties and colleges and a central Harassment Advisory Service. For more information on the University's Harassment and Bullying policy

and the support available for students [visit the dedicated webpage](#).

There are a range of faith societies, belief groups, and religious centres within Oxford University that are open to students. More information can be found [here](#).

Student Welfare and Support Services

The [Disability Advisory Service \(DAS\)](#) can provide information, advice and guidance on the way in which a particular disability may impact on your student experience at the University and assist with organising disability-related study support.

The [Counselling Service](#) is here to help you address personal or emotional problems that get in the way of having a good experience at Oxford and realising your full academic and personal potential. They offer a free and confidential service. For more information visit:

A range of services led by students are available to help provide support to other students, including the peer supporter network, the Oxford SU's Student Advice Service and Nightline. For more information, [visit the webpage here](#).

Oxford SU also [runs a series of campaigns](#) to raise awareness and promote causes that matter to students.

There is also a [wide range of student clubs and societies](#) to get involved in.

Who to Contact for Help

Academic Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • Graduate Studies Officer Hannah Brawn, graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk • Taught Course Director Professor Colin Mills, colin.mills@sociology.ox.ac.uk • Director of Graduate Studies Professor Christiaan Monden, christiaan.monden@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Business of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Studies Officer Hannah Brawn, graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
DREC/CUREC Ethics Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Facilitator Agnieszka Swiejkowska, DREC@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Departmental Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate Studies Officer Hannah Brawn, graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Computing and IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Manor Road IT</u> itsupport@manor-road.ox.ac.uk
Change of Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • Graduate Studies Officer Hannah Brawn graduate-studies@sociology.ox.ac.uk • Taught Course Director Professor Colin Mills, colin.mills@sociology.ox.ac.uk
Confidential Advice Relating to Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University's confidential harassment number 01865 2 70760

Every college has their own systems of support for students, please refer to your College handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available through your college.

Details of the wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University are available from the [Oxford Students website](#), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability.

List of Abbreviations

CUREC and **DREC** – University and Department Research Ethics Committees respectively, these terms also used to refer to the Ethics assessment forms

DGS – Director of Graduate Studies

DPhil – Doctor of Philosophy

DTP – Doctoral Training Partnership. Oxford is part of the Grand Union DTP with Brunel and the Open University. It is funded by the ESRC and it is the means by which several of our doctoral students receive financial support. It is also facilities various training activities open to all Oxford students.

EPC – Education Policy Committee

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council

GJCC – Graduate Joint Consultative Committee

Grey Book – The Exam Regulations (now not produced in hard copy, can only be found online).

GSC – Graduate Studies Committee

GSR – Graduate Supervision Reporting

NCRM – National Centre for Research Methods. Maintains a UK research training courses database and offers bursaries.

Proctors – The two Proctors (Senior and Junior) have responsibilities under the statutes and regulations for aspects of student discipline, for ensuring the proper conduct of examinations and for dealing with complaints.

PRS – Probationer Research Student

SSD – Social Sciences Division

TCD – Taught Courses Director

TNA – Training Needs Analysis

For any further puzzling Oxford abbreviations and acronyms, visit the [Online Glossary](#).

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