

Focus on Sociology



"THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SOCIETY" – whoever it was that uttered this infamous claim back in the 1980s obviously needed a proper sociological education. It is absolutely clear today that the pressing problems and complex challenges that confront us in the early 21st century are not going to be solved by individuals acting alone but only through concerted collective analysis and action.

HOW can we overcome local and global inequalities?

HOW can we respond to climate change, to the depletion of natural resources and environmental destruction?

HOW can we resolve endemic political, economic and cultural conflicts?

WHAT is the right balance of security and civil liberty?

HOW can we take advantage of rapid technological change, proliferating information systems and new biotechnical possibilities?

HOW can we ensure individual and collective respect, tolerance and justice in diverse multicultural societies?

HOW should we regulate and hold accountable powerful public institutions and private, transnational corporations?

– all these questions and more ensure that the study of modern human societies, sociology, has never been more vital.

In this context, it is not surprising that the discipline of sociology is thriving, especially here at Lancaster where the longstanding Department of Sociology continues to be one of the leading centres for cutting-edge sociological research and teaching in the UK. Ranked in the top five nationally in the latest Research Assessment Exercise, Sociology at Lancaster is home to an international and distinguished team of scholars researching and publishing in a wide variety of specialist areas including social and cultural theory; material culture and everyday life; consumption and advertising; media, communication and information; urban experience and security; political economy; research methods; sport, leisure and popular culture. The Department plays host to a number of dynamic specialist interdisciplinary centres, pioneering work in areas such as: biotechnologies, genomics and science (Centre for Science Studies and the ESRC funded Centre for Social Aspects of Genomics); mobilities and migrations, transport and mobile communications (Centre

for Mobilities Research); gender and gender inequalities, the body and sexuality (Centre for Gender and Women's Studies); and the environment and sustainability (Centre for the Study of Environmental Change).

The Department has seen an expansion in undergraduate numbers over the last few years and these students undertake an increasingly wide-ranging portfolio of core and specialist optional modules drawing directly on the research expertise of staff. Outreach work with schools and colleges in the region is recognised as an important part of the Department's wider mission. We act as the hub for and host a popular annual workshop for teachers of sociology in the North West of England (many of them Lancaster alumni); we run special 'taster days' for current sociology 'A' level students; and, we put on a number of very successful Departmental Open Days showcasing our work providing prospective students with an opportunity to meet and take part in a seminar with current undergraduates. We know that our own students are the best

possible advertisement for the Department's programmes.

One of the outstanding features of Sociology at Lancaster is our large and international postgraduate community. Hosting some 90 taught masters and doctoral research students drawn from around the world, the Department is a leading centre, not only for innovative sociological research, but also for fostering future generations of sociological teachers, researchers and scholars. One of the highlights of the year for the Department is our postgraduate international Summer Conference, a student organised event bringing together research students from many different countries to share ideas, experiences and expertise. And to have fun too!

If the societies of today are going to flourish tomorrow, we are going to need more, not less, sociological insight, exchange and understanding.

At undergraduate level, the Department of Sociology invites applicants not only for its BA (Hons) Sociology programme, but also for joint degrees with Criminology, Film Studies, Geography, History, Organisational Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies.

At postgraduate level, we run five main taught programmes: MA Sociology; MA Social Research; MA Science, Technology and Nature; MA Gender and Women's Studies; and, MA Feminist Cultural Thought and Practice.

The Department always welcomes expressions of interest from prospective doctoral research students.

Teachers of sociology interested in our outreach activities should contact Cath Gorton on c.gorton@lancaster.ac.uk

Postgraduate students interested in our Summer Conference should contact Professor Elizabeth Shove on e.shove@lancaster.ac.uk

For further information on all our courses, please see our website:

www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology



Two of our Student reps



Imogen Tyler talking to prospective UG students



Tim Dant (who will be our new Head of Department)