

BSC in Criminology and Sociology

COURSE SPECIFICATION FORM

for new course proposals and course amendments

DEPARTMENT OF: School of Law				Academic Session: Valid from 2009/10	
Course Code:	CR2014	Course Value:	1 Unit	Status:	Core
Course Title:	Sociology of Contemporary Society			Availability:	Autumn/Spring
Prerequisites:	Year 1 core programme			Recommended:	
Co-ordinator:	Dr Richard Smith				
Course Staff	Dr Richard Smith				
Aims:	<p>This is an advanced level course in the sociological analysis of contemporary society:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To help students understand major social and economic changes in the contemporary world through key sociological debates concerning, amongst others: the changing nature of the organisation of production and changing nature of class. 2. To examine the transformation of cultural forms in contemporary society. 				
Learning Outcomes:	<p>On successful completion of this course, students will have developed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An understanding of the relationship between economic and social structures. 2. Knowledge of the changing forms of economic organisation in advanced societies. 3. An understanding of the dominant cultural forms in capitalist societies. 4. An appreciation of the cultural changes in contemporary societies. 				
Course Content:	<p>This second year core course is concerned with the major sociological developments in the analysis of contemporary society. The course is principally divided into two main areas of debate: the first is the analysis of the changing economic structure of western society which can be summarised in the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society; the second is the debates over the cultural transformation in contemporary society, from modernism to post-modernism.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Crisis or restructuring: the transformation of the economy in advanced capitalism. 2. Theories of the transition: early theories of post-industrial society: Bell and Touraine. 3. Habermas and theories of crisis. 4. Harvey and flexible accumulation. 5. Lash and Urry – from the end of organized capitalism to emergence of the economy of signs. 6. Castells and the networked society. 7. Beck and the coming of the risk society. 8. Whatever happened to class? Changing patterns of employment and the changing class structure. 9. Fragmentation? New patterns of inequality – ethnicity and gender. 10. The emergence of post-class society? 11. Modernity and post-modernity – debates on cultural change in contemporary society. 12. Explosion of the popular – the emergence of mass society and its critics. 13. The ‘great disruption’ – cultural change in the 1960s (a) the assault on respectability. 14. The ‘great disruption’ – cultural change in the 1960s (b) feminism and the transformation of gender. 15. Society of the spectacle – making sense of the new culture. 16. Postmodernism as the cultural logic of capital - Harvey, Jameson and the Marxist critics. 17. The domination of the ‘popular’ (a) the visual society. 18. The domination of the ‘popular’ (b) the virtual society. 19. Identity in the post-modern society. 				

	20. Course review
Teaching & Learning Methods:	Lecture (1 hour per week) Seminar (1 hour per week)
Key Bibliography:	<p>Best, S. and Kellner, D. (1991) <i>Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations</i>. Basingstoke: Macmillan.</p> <p>*Kumar, K (2005) <i>From Post-industrial to Postmodern Society</i>. Second Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>*Harvey, D (1989) <i>The Condition of Postmodernity</i>. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>*Lash, S & Urry, J (1994) <i>Economies of Signs and Space</i>. London: Sage.</p> <p>Marsh, I. (ed.) (1998) <i>Classic and Contemporary Readings in Sociology</i>. London: Longman.</p> <p>Martin, B (1981) <i>A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change</i>. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.</p> <p>* Recommended for purchase</p>
Formative Assessment & Feedback:	<p>Feedback on seminar presentations.</p> <p>Course evaluated by anonymous self-completion questionnaire.</p>
Summative Assessment:	<p>Exam 50% (2 Hours) (2 questions to be answered out of 8).</p> <p>Coursework 50 % - the best 2 essays out of 3 - each being 2,500-3,000 words long.</p> <p>Deadlines: TBA</p>

The information contained in this course outline is correct at the time of publication, but may be subject to change as part of the Department's policy of continuous improvement and development. Every effort will be made to notify you of any such changes.