



Course information 2011–12

SC1158 Reading social science (half course)

Students are expected to undertake a great deal of independent reading during their studies and this half course prepares them for this work.

Prerequisite

None apply.

Aims and objectives

This course has two specific and related aims:

- To develop transferable skills for the close reading and comprehension of complex original material. This will give students confidence to recognise and understand important arguments and ideas.
- To give students a sound introduction to some of the key arguments that have shaped social scientific thought from its inception in the Enlightenment up to the present day.

Through its detailed focus on primary texts, the course will make complex material accessible and enable students to gain the confidence to read original material.

Assessment

This half course is assessed by a two hour unseen written examination.

Learning outcomes

At the end of this half course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- ✓ discuss texts using a critical approach
- ✓ recognise, understand and explain an argument or idea
- ✓ identify and discuss arguments and ideas across a range of thinkers and writers, and be able to identify the broader context of these arguments
- ✓ read and analyse texts with the aim of formulating sustained arguments of their own
- ✓ develop sustained arguments of their own.

Essential reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

The essential reading for this half course is the subject guide and reading pack provided. The extracts are from:

Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan*
Descartes *Discourse on Method*
Adam Smith *The Wealth of Nations*
Freud *Civilisation and Its Discontents*
Foucault *Discipline and Punish*

Students should consult the *Programme Regulations for degrees and diplomas in Economics, Management, Finance and the Social Sciences* that are reviewed annually. The Prerequisites, Exclusions, and Syllabus are subject to confirmation in the *Regulations*. Notice is also given in the *Regulations* of any courses which are being phased out and students are advised to check course availability.

Syllabus

This is a description of the material to be examined, as published in the *Regulations*. On registration, students will receive a detailed subject guide which provides a framework for covering the topics in the syllabus and directions to the essential reading.

The course is structured round a series of short extracts from texts that are important within, or have shaped, the social scientific tradition. Key themes that the course addresses through these texts are: subjectivity, selfhood and society, the 'problem' of order and social cohesion, social stratification and division, social change.

Students will be expected to familiarise themselves in depth with the extracts indicated and discussed in the subject guide. They will be encouraged to read, analyse, compare and make links between the

readings indicated. They will be required to identify the arguments, problems and formulate their own ideas and arguments about what they read. Students will also be expected to familiarise themselves with some related secondary literature (indicated in the guide) in order to locate the arguments and ideas that they encounter in their historical and intellectual context.

Students will have a selection of at least five short texts which will be chosen for their importance in the development of social scientific thought.