

Start of Term Notice – 30/09/2021

Dear Students at the Department of Sociology,

As the Head of Department, I'd like to welcome you, and wish you a very successful beginning to the start of term.

In particular, I'd like to update you on the teaching you can expect from Sociology this term. We are continuing to place the safety of our students and staff first, followed closely by our ability to create a nurturing and effective teaching and learning context and to support our pedagogical community. The choices our Department has made and will make, prioritise these considerations, while following University and UK guidance where possible.

The department is pursuing a 'blended learning' model that will consist of combinations of online and in-person teaching. Taking into account individual staff circumstances and risk assessments, the particular blend will vary on a paper-by-paper basis, depending on the availability of suitable space, the requirements of our teaching staff as well as the general public health situation. All students can find the particular teaching information for their papers in the corresponding course page on Moodle.

We would like to remind all students that some members of our community are at additional risk from COVID-19. We therefore expect masks to be worn unless there is a medical exemption, and where possible keeping social distance when in indoor locations. Mutual consideration of health and safety will ensure that we can continue our learning without disruption.

In general, teaching sessions at the Department will follow a 1+1 format, with the first hour being a lecture, and the second hour being interactive. Lectures, whether online or in-person, will be recorded to ensure all students have access to core course content. For the second, interactive hour, it may not always be possible to record depending on the format of the session. Breakout rooms in Zoom, for example cannot be recorded, neither could one-to-one discussions between partners in a classroom. In these cases, lecturers will arrange for student volunteers to take notes during the session to share on Moodle afterwards, for those students who are unable to attend. We hope that an environment of mutual support and sharing will help all our members to excel in their academics despite the particular difficulties presented by the ongoing pandemic.

We will continuously review these policies throughout the academic year and remain focused on delivering a rich programme of teaching and learning that matches a 'normal' academic year in terms of quality, and being open to creativity, develops new ways of enhancing that quality. We are also prioritising ways of supporting and strengthening our community and therefore, as part of this, wanted to remind all students that they are welcome to join in our [Sociology Seminar Series Online](#) and to consult our website's [Support and Wellbeing](#) page.

With best wishes for this academic year,



Dr Manali Desai
Head of Department