

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Name, title and level of final qualification(s)	BA Social and Political Sciences (Level 6)
Name and title of any exit qualification(s)	Dip HE Social and Political Sciences Cert HE Social and Political Sciences
Is the programme offered with a Foundation Year?	Yes
Awarding Body	University of London
Teaching Institution(s)	Birkbeck, University of London
Home School/other teaching departments	School of Social Sciences
Location of delivery	Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
Mode of study, length of study and normal start month	Full-time (3 years) Part-time (4 years) Full-time with Foundation Year (4 years) Part-time with Foundation Year (6 years) September
Professional, statutory or regulatory body	Not applicable
QAA subject benchmark group(s) Higher Education Credit Framework for England	Politics and International Relations Sociology
UCAS code	M113; M114 (with FY)
Birkbeck Course Code	UUBASOPL_C – Full-time, 3 years UBASOPOL_C – Part-time, 4 years UUBFSOPL_C – Full-time with FY, 4 years UBFSOPOL_C – Part-time with FY, 6 years
HECoS Code	100471
Start date of programme	2024-25
Date of programme approval	Spring 2024
Date of last programme amendment approval	N/A
Valid for academic entry year	2024-25
Programme Director	TBC
Date of last revision to document	30/05/2023

Admissions requirements

The UCAS tariff score is applicable to you if you have recently studied a qualification that has a UCAS tariff equivalence. UCAS provides [a tariff calculator](#) for you to work out what your qualification is worth within the UCAS tariff.

BA Social and Political Sciences: Students who have recently taken A-level qualifications will require CCC-ABB at A-Level (or UCAS tariff points 96 - 128). Students who fail to achieve these grades may still be considered for entry if they demonstrate the required level of intellectual commitment and potential. Birkbeck welcomes applicants without traditional entry qualifications as we base decisions on our own assessment of qualifications, knowledge and previous work experience. We may waive formal entry requirements or consider alternative qualifications based on judgement of academic potential.

BA Social and Political Sciences with Foundation Year: This programme is designed for people who can demonstrate the ability and motivation to complete the BA Social and Political Sciences but who do not currently meet the entry criteria for direct entrance onto the degree. Applicants will often be invited for interview to discuss their interests and future plans, and to assess their needs and aptitudes. For those students who already have Level 3 qualifications the expectation is that they will have qualifications equivalent to 48 UCAS tariff points. Given that students on the foundation year will be enrolled on degree programmes, applicants will be offered a place only if there is significant evidence to suggest they have the ability to complete the full degree.

Course aims

The BA in Social and Political Sciences aims to provide students with a strong grounding in the key skills and methods employed in the modern social and political sciences and the means to understand, analyse and propose solutions to some of the central social and political problems of the present. It draws on the interdisciplinary strengths of Birkbeck's School of Social Sciences, ranging across the subjects of politics and international relations, sociology, human geography, political economy, criminology, and psychosocial studies. Students develop core skills across the course of the programme, and apply these to problems concerning the character of the state and politics in the present, conflict and cooperation in the international political and economic system, and social and public policy in relation to issues such as economic development, social inequality, climate change, crime, and the impact of digital technology on politics and society. Birkbeck's location at the centre of important policy and research communities in London provides students with the opportunity to engage directly with real-world political and social issues. A feature of the programme is its connection to Birkbeck research institutes, such as the Centre for British Political Life, the Birkbeck Institute of Social Research, and the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, that host regular events with external speakers including politicians, policy makers such as civil servants, political and community activists, and public intellectuals.

The programme is designed for students who want to develop the skills necessary to understand and be involved in resolving important political and social problems in the present. It provides a strong foundation for those interested in working in politics and policy broadly conceived (political parties, governmental administration, research and data analysis of social and political issues, NGOs and international organisations, journalism, the third sector, community organisation, and political education and activism) as well as those wanting to go on to postgraduate study in the area of social and political science. These jobs/ roles aside, the skills developed by the programme are of great value to a variety of employers in both the public and private sectors in the UK and across the world. Your teaching will be informed by the

latest research - the programme is taught by researchers whose work is at the cutting-edge of their disciplines, demonstrating significant impact on matters of social and public policy and politics more generally. The subject areas that make up Birkbeck's School of Social Sciences have a long history of engagement with politics and public life in the UK and globally, with many of our alumni going on to play leading roles in government and society.

At the heart of the programme are the three core skills modules taught across the three years of the full-time programme (part-time students take the programme over four years, but take the skills modules in their first three years). These modules allow you to develop key skills such as the gathering and analysis of data in social and political science, the critical analysis of key concepts and theories, the use of reasoning and evidence in constructing and scrutinising social scientific knowledge, and designing an independent research project. In years 1 and 2, students take two compulsory modules in the area of political and international relations and sociology. These modules are led by a concern for real-world social and political issues and allow students to apply their developing skills to understand and engage with central problems of the present. Students can further apply their skills in the option modules that they take, particularly in year 3 (years 3 and 4 part-time) when they will also write a dissertation or other independent research project. You can select your options in a way that allows you to develop a specialism in one or more of the School of Social Sciences key subject areas – such as politics and international relations, sociology or criminology.

BA Social and Political Science with Foundation Year: The purpose of the Foundation Year is to prepare students for successful completion of their undergraduate degree. The Foundation Year (one-year full-time or two years part-time) provides students the opportunity to explore their interests and build on their study skills. On successful completion of the Foundation Year, students can progress onto year one of the part-time or full-time degree programmes. The curriculum after successful completion of the Foundation Year is the same as the full-time or part-time programme. Foundation Year students are awarded the same final degree title as students on the full-time or part-time degree routes.

Course structure

Level	Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Comp Core/ Option	Likely teaching term(s)
Full-time – 3 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPO017S4	Foundations of Social and Political Science	30	Comp	1
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics: Democracy, Conflict and Globalisation	30	Comp	2
4		Option level 4	30	Option	1, 2 or 3
4		Option level 4	30	Option	2 or 3
Year 2					
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers	30	Comp	1
5	SSPA163S5	The Self, Society and the State	30	Comp	1
5		Option level 5	30	Option	2 or 3
5		Option level 5	30	Option	2 or 3

Year 3					
6	SSPO220S6	Doing Research in the Social and Political Sciences	30	Comp	1
6		Option	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
6		Option	30	Option	1, 2, or 3
6	SSPO274S6	Dissertation/ Independent Research Project	30	Comp	1-3
Part-time – 4 years					
Year 1					
4	SSPO017S4	Foundations of Social and Political Science	30	Comp	1
4	SSPO265S4	Transformations in Modern Politics: Democracy, Conflict and Globalisation	30	Comp	2
4		Option	30	Option	3
Year 2					
5	SSPA163S5	The Self, Society and the State	30	Comp	1
5		Option	30	Option	2 or 3
4		Option	30	Option	2 or 3
Year 3					
5	SSPO151S5	Governing by Numbers	30	Comp	1
5		Option	30	Option	2 or 3
6		Option	30	Option	2 or 3
Year 4					
6	SSPO220S6	Doing Research in the Social and Political Sciences	30	Comp	1
6		Option	30	Option	2 or 3
6	SSPO274S6	Dissertation/ Independent Research Project	30	Comp	1-3
Full-time with Foundation Year – 4 years					
Foundation Year (Y0)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	2-3
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	1
3	SSSS002S3	Contemporary Global Issues: Approaches in Social Science, History and Philosophy or Level 4 language option	30	Option	2-3
Then years 1-3 as for the Full-Time track as above					
Part-time with Foundation Year – 6 years					
Foundation Year (Y0a)					
3	CASE002S3	Fundamentals of Study	30	Core	1
3	CASE001S3	Breaking Boundaries of Knowledge	30	Core	2-3

Foundation Year (Y0b)					
3	SSSS001S3	Crossing Borders	30	Core	1
3	SSSS002S3	Contemporary Global Issues: Approaches in Social Science, History and Philosophy or level 4 language option	30	option	2-3
Then years 1-4 for the Part-Time track as above					

Core: Module must be taken and passed by student

Compulsory: Module must be taken but can be considered for compensated credit (see CAS regulations paragraph 24)

Option: Student can choose to take this module

List of indicative option modules:

Level 4:

GGPH072S4 Humans and the Environment

FFPO956S4 Comparative Government

SSPO118S4 Introduction to Global Politics

SSPA073S4 Power

SSPA161S4 Key Concepts: Global Foundations in Sociology

SSPA162S4 Global Societies

LALA146S4 Understanding Crime

LALA180S4 Sociology of Crime

Level 5:

SSGE089S5 Culture and Development

SSGE124S5 Borders, Migration and Development

SSPO270S5 International Relations and Foreign Policy

SSPA159S5 Social Theory

SSPA164S5 The Politics of Knowledge: Sociology and the World

LACN030S5 Crime, Inequality and Social Change

Level 6

LACN033S6 Criminology and Social Theory

POSO013S6 Social and Political Theory

POSO004S6 War and Modern Society

SSPA165S6 Human Rights and Politics

How you will learn

Your learning and teaching is organised to help you meet the learning outcomes (below) of the course. As a student, we expect you to be an active learner and to take responsibility for your learning, engaging with all of the material and sessions arranged for you.

Each course is divided into modules. You will find information on the virtual learning site (Moodle, see Academic Support below) about each of your modules, what to expect, the work you need to prepare, links to reading lists, information about how and when you will be assessed.

Your learning for this course will be organised around the activities outlined below.

Teaching on this course is a combination of lectures (pre-recorded or delivered live and recorded) and seminars. Lectures are designed to provide you with an outline or overview of the topic, to engage you with the material and direct you to other resources. They are a springboard for your own learning. Seminars are group sessions where you will be asked to contribute to discussion or group work around the topic, with material set in advance for which you need to prepare.

How we will assess you

The course will use a variety of assessment methods. Assessment is used to enhance your learning rather than simply to test it. For most of the modules associated with this course, your assessment will be through the following types of assessment:

Short written exercises, essays which will develop in length and expected complexity as you progress through your studies, take-home or online exams, quizzes and multiple-choice questionnaires, case studies, problems to solve.

Learning outcomes (what you can expect to achieve)

'Learning outcomes' indicate what you should be able to know or do at the end of your course. Providing them helps you to understand what your teachers will expect and also the learning requirements upon which you will be assessed.

By the end of the foundation year, you will be able to:

1. Articulate at a foundational level key concepts in some of the disciplines offered by the School of Social Science, History and Philosophy.
2. Undertake academic reading, writing, research and assessment skills appropriate to the study of those disciplines
3. Understand other key learning skills required for university-level study and know of how to access support at Birkbeck to develop these.

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of and be able to apply the key skills and methods employed in the modern social and political sciences;
- Recognise and evaluate the interdisciplinary nature of the modern social and political sciences and demonstrate knowledge of subject areas such as politics and international relations, human geography, political economy, sociology, criminology, and psychosocial studies.
- Discuss and criticise the central concepts and theories utilised in the modern social and political sciences;
- Identify and differentiate various methods of gathering and analysing data in the social and political sciences, demonstrating an understanding of the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods;
- Design an independent research project employing the skills and methods learnt over the course of the programme;
- Identify and evaluate the significance of real-world social and political problems and discuss, explain and propose solutions to these problems.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the contested nature of knowledge in the social and political sciences and the interconnection between bodies of knowledge and social and political events, practices, and institutions;

- Develop research and present it in multiple forms such as short reports, oral presentations, blog and vlog posts, essays, and extended research projects.
- Engage with social and political actors outside of academia, such as politicians, policy-makers, community organisers, political activists, political journalists, and others.

Careers and further study

You will find BA Social and Political Sciences graduates in the following kinds of roles:

- Political leadership
- Public administration and policy-making
- Research and leadership roles in non-governmental organisations including international organisations
- The third sector – charities, social enterprises, and other voluntary associations
- Journalism
- Teaching
- Further research in Higher Education
- Community organisation
- Political campaigning and activism

Birkbeck offers a range of careers support to its students. You can find out more on [the careers pages of our website](#).

Academic regulations and course management

Birkbeck's academic regulations are contained in its [Common Award Scheme Regulations](#) and Policies published by year of application on the Birkbeck website.

Support for your study

Your learning at Birkbeck is supported by your teaching team and other resources and people in the College there to help you with your study. Birkbeck uses a virtual learning environment called Moodle and each course has a dedicated Moodle page and there are further Moodle sites for each of your modules. This will include your course handbook.

Birkbeck will introduce you to the Library and IT support, how to access materials online, including using Moodle, and provide you with an orientation which includes an online Moodle module to guide you through all of the support available. You will also be allocated a personal tutor and provided with information about learning support offered within your School and by the College.

[Please check our website for more information about student support services](#). This covers the whole of your time as a student with us including learning support and support for your wellbeing.

Quality and standards at Birkbeck

Birkbeck's courses are subject to our quality assurance procedures. This means that new courses must follow our design principles and meet the requirements of our academic regulations. Each new course or module is subject to a course approval process where the proposal is scrutinised by subject specialists, quality professionals and external representatives to ensure that it will offer an excellent student experience and meet the expectation of regulatory and other professional bodies.

You will be invited to participate in an online survey for each module you take. We take these surveys seriously and they are considered by the course team to develop both modules and the overall courses. Please take the time to complete any surveys you are sent as a student.

We conduct an annual process of reviewing our portfolio of courses which analyses student achievement, equality data and includes an action plan for each department to identify ongoing enhancements to our education, including changes made as a result of student feedback.

Our periodic review process is a regular check (usually every four years) on the courses by department with a specialist team including students.

Each course will have an external examiner associated with it who produces an annual report and any recommendations. Students can read the most recent external examiner reports on the course Moodle pages. Our courses are all subject to Birkbeck Baseline Standards for our Moodle module information. This supports the accessibility of our education including expectations of what information is provided online for students.

The information in this programme specification has been approved by the College's Academic Board and every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information it contains.

Programme specifications are reviewed periodically. If any changes are made to courses, including core and/or compulsory modules, the relevant department is required to provide a revised programme specification. Students will be notified of any changes via Moodle.

Further information about specifications and an archive of programme specifications for the College's courses is available [online](#).

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