

Open University of Mauritius
Foundation Course
Foundation Level Sociology-OUfc006

1. Introduction

In line with its philosophy to democratise access to university education, the Open University of Mauritius offers Foundation Courses. These courses aim at better preparing learners for higher education while allowing them to meet the minimum requirements to undertake undergraduate studies. They have been carefully developed by a team of experts to ensure smooth transition to university. They also motivate learners and give them a greater chance of succeeding. They play a pivotal role in helping learners to revisit lost skills, while giving them the necessary confidence and preparatory experience they need for success at university. However, they are not intended to replace secondary school courses. On successfully completing four foundation courses (8 modules) including English through Open Distance Learning (ODL), they can join degree programmes.

The ODL mode of delivery enables convenient self-study within a flexible framework. This mode of delivery allows learners to learn at their own pace, in their own place and time without disrupting their social, professional and domestic commitments hence, allowing them to earn while learning.

2. Aim

This two module course is designed to introduce the subject Sociology as a foundation course to those who want to continue further studies in Sociology, but who do not have any prior knowledge or have a little exposure to the subject. It will make the learners familiar with the various terms and issues concerned therein.

In this course, you will be able to learn about Sociology, the different theories and perspectives underlying the study of societies and various components of the society and its roles. You will be able to explore facets such as family, education, gender, crime and deviance and social stratification.

At the end of this course you will develop the skills required to interpret and critically analyze the society in which you live and understand other societies as well.

3. Course Requirements

- SC/GCE O-level with 3 credits + 1 A-level
(Applicants should be less than 25 years of age)
- Mature candidates will be considered on their own merit.

4. Course Duration

Minimum	1	year
Maximum	2	years

5. Minimum Credits required for the Awards

Total credits: 8

Each module carries 4 credits, meaning that you have to dedicate 80 hours of study time to it. This includes all learning activities (i.e. reading and comprehending the print material, watching video, attending tutorials/counseling sessions, writing assignment responses and preparing for the examinations).

6. Assessment

- Assignments 30%
- Examinations 70%
- Overall pass 40%

Assessments will be based on written examination of 2-hour duration and continuous assessment carrying a maximum of 30% of total marks. Continuous assessment will be based on assignment(s). For a learner to pass a module, an overall total of 40% for combined continuous assessment and written examination components would be required without minimum thresholds within the individual continuous assessment and written examination. Learners may re-sit up to a maximum of two failed modules for the semester of the programme.

7. Course Structure

OUfc006111 : Sociology I	OUfc006121 : Sociology II
Unit 1 The Society	Unit 5 Crime and Deviance
Unit 2 Gender and Socialization	Unit 6 Social Stratification, race and ethnicity
Unit 3 Families and Households	Unit 7 Culture and Identity
Unit 4 Education	Unit 8 Wealth, poverty and welfare

OUfc006111 : Sociology I

Unit 1: The Society

The first unit provides you with a broad perspective of the society, the way it operates and how it has evolved over years. The essence of sociology lies in understanding the complexity and diversity of societies, the different aspects shaping and defining these societies and the ability to analyze them based on facts, theories and perspectives. Famous sociologists have contributed towards scientific approaches in understanding and analyzing societies. Each perspective has a set of assumptions on how the society functions. These perspectives have been derived from the work of sociologists such as Durkheim, Marx, Weber and Mead. In this unit the evolution of the society will be studied, together with providing an insight of the three major sociological perspectives.

Unit 2 : Gender and Socialization

In almost all societies there is the feature of stratification by sex where a particular sex dominates that society. Our sex defines our roles, responsibilities, how we think and how others view us and furthermost, the opportunities that are granted to us. Now, is this a question of the biological composition of our body or are we merely adhering to the trend of the society in which we live? In this unit we will look at the aspects defining gender and the roles and responsibilities associated with it. We shall also examine other societies to understand the society in which we live.

Unit 3 : Families and Households

This unit examines the sociological perspectives on the family and explores its roles in society. It highlights the importance of the family in human society and its benefits. With time the family has evolved and has taken different forms in various societies, and we are going to explore the different forms and structures of family and marriage. While the family has been traditionally regarded as a positive institution, as from the second half of the twentieth century sociologists, such as the Marxists and feminists, have emphasised the negative sides of the social institution. Social changes have further undermined the family as a safe haven and underlined the increasing instability of the family as a social organization.

Unit 4 : Education

Education is an important activity for two reasons: it takes up a significant part of our life and it consumes a large slice of the national budget of any government. This unit on education examines the main changes in primary and secondary education in Mauritius in the years following independence in 1968 and the achievements. As education has a major impact on the children coming from different social classes, the purposes of education are examined from the functionalist and Marxist perspectives. Emphasis is laid on the differences on educational attainment with regard to social class, ethnic groups and gender, and attempts at creating a fairer society. The issues of social class and elite education are also highlighted.

OUfc006121 : Sociology II

Unit 5 : Crime and Deviance

Socialization, social norms, values and culture are seen as the factors contributing to social order. They help to build, shape up and maintain stability in a society. However, they do not necessarily mean that social control will definitely prevail.

In this unit, we will see that crime and deviance are disturbing features of a society, how they occur, their impacts on the society and how we can deal with crime and deviant behaviour to maintain social control.

Unit 6 : Social stratification, ethnicity and race

Social stratification is a key concept in sociology. It explains that society is arranged in layers. The society is not only divided, but also arranged in a hierarchy. This explains social inequality and leads to the unequal distribution of power, property and prestige. Division also occurs in terms of race and ethnicity and in this unit we shall look at these aspects.

Unit 7 : Culture and Identity

The unit explores the different types of culture and identity, and how culture is learnt and identity is formed through the socialization process; that is, the sociological perspectives on the role of socialisation in the formation of culture and identity. While culture is closely linked with social class, identity is socially constructed through various characteristics including gender, ethnic groups, and age. In the postmodern society, identities and lifestyle are determined by the choice of leisure and consumption of the particular social class.

Unit 8 : Wealth, Poverty and Welfare

A basic aim of the welfare state is to redress social inequality through fighting poverty and social exclusion which are considered major social problems. This unit will describe the main features of the welfare state and its policies to fight poverty. However, there are various types of poverty including social exclusion. The sociological perspectives explore the various facets of poverty and its social class prevalence, and try to provide explanations and solutions to these enduring social ills.

8. Learning Outcomes

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

- Describe the other major changes in the family
- Examine the differences in educational achievement with respect to social class, ethnic groups and gender in industrialized countries

- Examine the sociological perspectives on the role of socialization in the formation of culture and identity
- Describe the different types of poverty, and social exclusion.

9. How to study?

- Plan your study time carefully
- Read the Unit thoroughly. Prepare a list of questions that you may ask your tutor. Note that the questions should be relevant to the Unit studied.
- Be a critical thinker
- Work your activities. It is important for you to attempt all activities as this will give you an idea of concepts that you have not understood.
- Re-work your corrected activities later.
- You are expected to study regularly as there is no ‘easy’ way to pass the examination.

10. Supporting Materials

Manual	Open University of Mauritius
Video	
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giddens,A., Sociology, 6th Edition, Polity Press Publication • Haralambos and Holborn, Themes and Perspectives, 6th edition, Collins Educational Publisher, 2008 • Macionis John J., society – The basics, Prentice Hall Publication