



# Political Science and Sociology

The School of Political Science and Sociology at NUI Galway is unique in Ireland for offering two academic disciplines in a fully integrated way in the Joint Honours subject of Sociological and Political Studies. Political Science is the systematic study of political life, political activity or behaviour, as well as important political concepts, such as freedom, democracy and equality. It combines elements of history, economics and philosophy but has its own unique approach, style and theoretical literature.

Sociology is the study of society, social issues, and social interactions. It aims to understand connection between social structures, history, individual and power through critique of social facts and trends. Sociology helps us to make sense of the world we live in by using critical and theoretical literature that reflects on the general running of society, social order, and social problems.

Both disciplines investigate the social and political life through informed rational argument, criticism, and existing knowledge, and they generate deeper arguments and analysis about why our societies are the way they are, and if they could be improved.

## Key Facts

Subject Name: Sociological and Political Studies

Course Name: Bachelor of Arts (Joint-Honours)

CAO Code: GY101

Duration: 3-4 years

Entry Requirements: Minimum Grade HC3 in two subjects and passes in four other subjects at H or O Level in the Leaving Certificate, including: Irish, English, another language, and three other subjects recognised for entry purposes.

## Bachelor of Arts (Joint-Honours)

In first year of the Bachelor of Arts degree, students choose THREE subjects from a wide pool of options. The Joint Honours subject Sociological and Political Studies is combined with two other subjects.

Subjects are organised in seven groups and not more than one subject may be taken from any one group. In second year and final year, you will study two subjects, one of which is Political Science and Sociology.

## Study Abroad

After second year there are options to study abroad under the Erasmus scheme in other European universities, but also to a number of universities in North America and China. If you take Sociological and Political Studies with a modern European language you will be obliged to spend a year abroad in a country in which your language is spoken.

## Career Opportunities

Graduates of Sociological and Political Studies have an excellent foundation for a career in public administration, health and social services, policy research and analysis, journalism and in various voluntary, public, and private sector areas, including social work and community-based groups.

"Exciting, interesting course. The small group interaction is a really good experience. You can get your views and opinions across"



## Course Outline

### Year One

The First Year programme in Sociological and Political Studies provides an understanding of major political and social developments taking place in Ireland and the wider world. It is a foundation for the study of Sociological and Political Studies in subsequent years while also providing students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge of core ideas in Sociology and Politics

### Year Two

The Second Year programme in Sociological and Political Studies builds on the work of political and social processes and ideas introduced in First Year. It establishes a core understanding of traditions of social and political ideas; examines current political developments in Europe and internationally; and lays the foundations of research methods for social and political scientists. This year also broadens its scope by introducing choices for students.

### Third Year

In final year, you are encouraged to critically evaluate the themes, topics and questions built into each course. Lectures in Third Year provide in-depth understanding of society and politics in Ireland and internationally. You can also choose from a wide range of specialist electives on topics such as divided societies, conflict and peace, human rights and equality, sustainable development, bioeconomy, culture and politics, social work and welfare, child and youth studies, religion, and gender and sexuality.

## Find Out More

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# Careers in Political Science and Sociology

## Political Science and Sociology Graduates and the Employment Market

Sociology is a social science discipline that focuses on human behaviour and social interaction. Sociology graduates can find exciting career opportunities in many diverse areas and there is great scope for initiative and creativity to really make a difference in peoples' lives. Graduates have developed transferable skills in understanding, critically analysing, and explaining human relationships and social change. They are thus ideally placed to take up positions in public, private and not-for-profit organisations that involve analysing and communicating the origins, dynamics and significance of social practices to diverse audiences. A degree in Sociology also provides an ideal grounding for people who provide care, protection and support in society.

The study of Politics enables graduates to enter careers that require investigative, research and problem-solving skills, highly developed communications competencies, the ability to critically evaluate complex issues in current affairs and to appraise information from a variety of sources, and the capacity to work and communicate with diverse groups and communities. A degree in Politics equips graduates with the skills, knowledge base and capacities to be successful in many areas of employment including local, national, and international government settings, journalism and broadcasting, research, teaching and consultancy.

## Typical jobs for Political Science and Sociology graduates

Social Work | Youth and Community Work | Human Resource Management | Public Relations | Politics | Social Researcher | Social Planning | Information Officer | Diplomat / Foreign Affairs  
Trade Unions | Advice Work | Counselling | Education | Welfare Officer Trainee Management | Teaching / Lecturing | Civil Service | Journalism | Political Science  
Banking/Finance | Advocacy | Health Promotion | Probation Service | Prison Service  
Occupational Therapy | Development Work | Local Government Administration | Mediation Note:  
Further qualifications may be needed for certain positions. This list is a sample of positions available.

## Career Destinations of our Political Science and Sociology Graduates

It is useful to know what fellow graduates have done after obtaining their degree at NUI Galway. The following are some of the roles our Political Science and Sociology graduates took up after graduation:

- Events Organiser and Fundraiser, Amnesty International Dublin Community Development Worker
- Galway Traveller Movement
- Journalist, The Irish Times
- Garda Síochána Templemore
- Stagiaire (Intern), European Commission-Brussels
- Legal Intern
- Arab Thought Forum (Peace Process) - Jerusalem, Israel
- Education Officer
- Galway People's Resource Centre
- Outreach work
- Domestic Violence Response Connemara
- Secretary, Refugee Centre
- Children's TV Presenter and researcher, RTÉ
- Youth Project Worker, SCP School Programme

## Sample job adverts for Political Science and Sociology graduates

Some jobs advertised recently that may suit students / graduates (these jobs are not currently available and are shown here for illustration purposes only).

- Internship in Conflict Resolution Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs. 11 months. A first or second class honours degree in Politics or another relevant discipline is required. Strong interest in conflict resolution is desirable. High level of oral / written communication skills essential. Good interpersonal, administrative and organisational skills. Flexibility and capability to work independently and in a team.
- Internship UNICEF. Knowledge Community on Children in India. Suit postgrad in Sociology (among other subjects).
- Volunteer Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC), for survey on social awareness and perceptions of Civil Legal Aid.





## What Postgraduate Courses do Political Science and Sociology Graduates do?

For certain career choices, employers may look for candidates with further qualifications and training. Relevant postgraduate degrees at NUI Galway include:

- MA (Politics and Sociology)
- MA (Social Work)
- MA (Public Advocacy and Activism)
- MA (Environment, Society and Development) MA (Culture and Colonialism)
- MA (Irish Studies)
- MA ( Journalism)
- HDip in Business Studies LLB (Bachelor of Laws) PhD by research

## Other postgraduate programmes undertaken by previous graduates of Political Science and Sociology include:

- PGDip Health Promotion, NUI Galway
- MA (Gender, Globalisation and Rights), NUI Galway
- LLM, NUI Galway
- MSc (Corporate Strategy and People Management), NUI Galway MA (Enterprise Systems), NUI Galway
- MA (European Union Studies), Leiden University
- MA (Public Relations), SPCD
- MA (Development and Globalisation), UCC
- MSc (Marketing), NUI Galway
- MA (Irish Politics), Queens University Belfast
- MA (European Integration), UL
- MA (International Studies), UL
- PhD Sociology, University of Manchester



For information on studying in Ireland and studying abroad with useful links for many countries worldwide visit: [www.nuigalway.ie/careers](http://www.nuigalway.ie/careers)

[www.postgradireland.com](http://www.postgradireland.com) also has useful information on postgraduate courses in Ireland,

[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) is an excellent site for researching opportunities in the UK and <http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/> covers the EU.



## What Our Students Say

I am currently working for the Green European Foundation in Brussels, an organisation which encourages European-level political engagement and debate. When I completed my Arts Degree and LLB at NUI Galway I moved straight to Brussels for an internship with the European Commission, and when based in Brussels, got in touch with my current employers for an internship. That internship turned into a job, and two years later I'm still here! Doing a few internships seems to be required these days, but thankfully they were both paid and were more than just coffee-making and photocopying! Getting a career that you really enjoy requires a lot of effort. You have to use your time in University to make contacts, build your skills and get experience where you can. But at the heart of it, you need a good degree. For me, a degree in Political Science and Sociology from NUI Galway was a fantastic foundation for my career, and the skills and knowledge that I learned are useful on an almost daily basis. Looking back, what I think was really crucial was that the degree combined both theoretical and more practical aspects. I did two modules on European policy and politics, which of course are incredibly useful for a job based in Brussels, but which are increasingly useful in many different fields of work. There were also the more theoretical courses, which helped develop my analytical and writing skills. The smaller seminars were also incredibly valuable and are an essential part of the course. My current role is as a Project Assistant for projects based in Brussels and across Europe. This requires good knowledge of Europe's political history, the ability to work with different political environments and an ability to think on your feet. All skills picked up from my time in NUI Galway!

Andrew Murphy



## Where can I find out more?

The following websites contain relevant, interesting information on career opportunities with a degree in Political Science and Sociology.

[www.nuigalway.ie/soc/](http://www.nuigalway.ie/soc/)

Sociological Association of Ireland [www.sociology.ie/](http://www.sociology.ie/)

Economic & Social Research Institute [www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)

Irish Social Policy Association [www.ispa.ie/](http://www.ispa.ie/)

Political Studies Association of Ireland [www.psai.ie](http://www.psai.ie)

Politics Forum [www.politics.ie/](http://www.politics.ie/)

## EUROPE

British Sociological Association [www.britisoc.co.uk](http://www.britisoc.co.uk)

Social Science Information Gateway [www.intute.ac.uk/socialsciences/](http://www.intute.ac.uk/socialsciences/)

European Sociological Association [www.europeansociology.org](http://www.europeansociology.org)

## ABROAD

International Sociological Assoc. [www.isa-sociology.org/](http://www.isa-sociology.org/)

Sociology links <http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/w3virtsoclib/>

American Political Science Association [www.apsanet.org/section\\_516.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/section_516.cfm)

## GENERAL STUDENT/GRADUATE WEBSITES

Career Development Centre, degree opportunities:

[www.nuigalway.ie/careers/students/degreeopp.html](http://www.nuigalway.ie/careers/students/degreeopp.html)

Gradireland [www.gradireland.com](http://www.gradireland.com)

Prospects UK profiles [www.prospects.ac.uk/options\\_politics\\_international\\_relations\\_your\\_skills.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_politics_international_relations_your_skills.htm) and [www.prospects.ac.uk/options\\_sociology\\_your\\_skills.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/options_sociology_your_skills.htm)

[www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk) [for academic jobs, fellowships etc in the UK, Europe and worldwide]