



# MASTER IN SOCIOLOGY

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# STUDY PROGRAMME

## MASTER PROGRAMME OF SCIENCE IN SOCIOLOGY (60 CREDIT POINTS)

COURSES	CREDITS	SEM
<b>GENERAL COURSES (30 CREDITS)</b>		
Social Dynamics of Policy and Organisation	6	2
Migration and Integration	6	1
Sociology of Health and Illness	6	1
Contemporary Challenges of Higher Education	6	1
Advanced Quantitative Techniques	6	1

### MAJOR (10 CREDITS)

Choose a major and courses up to 10 credits (a combination just over 10 credits, will be accepted)

### MAJOR INTERNSHIP

Internship	10	YEAR
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### MAJOR POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Human Resource Management in Public Organisations	5	1
Comparative Public Administration and Management	4	2
Change Management	5	2
Operational Human Resource Management	5	2
Globalisation and Global Governance	5	1
The European Union's International Development Policy	5	2
Human Rights in Developing Countries	5	2

### MAJOR SKILLS LAB

Advanced Academic English	3	1 or 2
Dare to Venture	4	2
Business Skills	4	2
Human Resource Management in Public Organisations	5	1
Comparative Public Administration and Management	4	2
Change Management	5	2
Globalisation and Global Governance	5	1
The European Union's International Development Policy	5	2

### MAJOR CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL WORLD

Sustainable Development	5	2
Rural Sociology	5	2
Politics of Islam	5	2

### MASTER'S DISSERTATION (20 CREDITS)

Master's Dissertation	20	YEAR
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(it is possible to submit the Master's Dissertation in the first semester if you need to spread the Master programme, but only if you finished all the other master courses or only need to finish courses in the first semester = please contact learning track counsellor for more information [tb.psw@ugent.be](mailto:tb.psw@ugent.be))

## PREPARATORY PROGRAMME TO THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOCIOLOGY

If direct enrolment in the Master of Sociology is not possible, you might be admitted to the Preparatory programme to the Master of Science in Sociology.

COURSES	CREDITS	SEM
Statistics for the Social Sciences *	6	1
Introduction to SPC Methodology *	6	2
Quantitative Research Methods	6	1
Multivariate Data Analysis	6	2
Qualitative Research Methods	6	2
Introduction to Sociology *	6	1
Sociological Standpoints	6	2
Sociology of Organisation	6	2
Political Ethnography	6	1
Preparation to Masters' dissertation	6	1/2

\* these courses are taught at VUB (= partner university in Brussels)

More details on the content of these courses can be found at [studyguide.ugent.be](http://studyguide.ugent.be). Go via the faculty to your study programme and click on the course you want to read about.

The Master of Science in Sociology has **three main parts**:

1. A solid, general formation in advanced sociological topics (= **general courses**)
2. An applied **major** in which practical skills are developed
3. A research based **master dissertation**.

### WHY SOCIOLOGY AT GHENT UNIVERSITY?

Do you want to understand how society works, and are you motivated to strengthen your research skills, gain international experience and develop intercultural skills? If you have answered yes to these questions, this programme is exactly what you are looking for!

The Master of Science in Sociology is an innovative English-taught programme at Ghent University since 2019-2020, centered around three pillars: applied research, internationalisation and an advanced scientific approach to contemporary societal problems.

What are the social conditions that constitute the fundamental causes of health and illness? How can higher education institutions become more accessible? Why have so many young Muslims joined Islamic State the past couple of years? How are power and responsibilities formally and informally distributed within organisations? This programme addresses these and other contemporary social problems. Students gain a strong scientific approach that allows them to critically address such topics.

This one-year master programme is highly research based. Students gain a thorough understanding of advanced research methods, and are challenged to apply these skills to answer sociological questions. Students write a master thesis and opt for an (international) internship or follow advanced sociological courses.

## 1. GENERAL COURSES

The programme departs from a core set of mandatory advanced sociological courses on health sociology, migration, education, policy and organisation, and quantitative analysis (e.g. multilevel analysis).

### SOCIOLOGY OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS

This course imparts insight into the social conditions that influence health and illness. You will acquire knowledge of the main explanations of the relation between social organisation and health or illness and on some aspects of the formal and informal institutionalized health care services. You will be introduced to a number of important concepts, theories and findings from the sociology of health and illness, such as the population health perspective and the Fundamental Cause Theory. Light is shed on the specificity of the sociological perspective, which studies social processes as fundamental causes of health and illness. We pay special attention to the sociology of mental health and subjective well-being. Themes that are discussed include: the sociology of health and illness and medical sociology, the pan-historical and cross-cultural spread of health and illness, social class, social inequality and health, gender and health and illness, end-of-life, the sociology of mental health, the social stress model, stigma and discrimination, medicalization and healthism, alternative and complementary medicine, migration and mental health.

### MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

The first part of the course adopts an academic approach on migration and integration. The starting point is an introductory overview of the history, determinants and types of migration, from an international perspective. In the next section, we discuss 'grand' theories of ethnic stratification and integration

(e.g. dual labour market theory, ethnic enclave theory, ethnic boundaries theory, coloniality of power approach). Next we turn to a more thematic approach (e.g. lectures on themes such as discrimination and split labour market theory, based on a student-centered learning approach). In the second part of the course we introduce you to applied sociology in the field of migration and integration. You will be taught to design a concrete intervention plan, based on an extensive discussion of non-academic sociological roles, the policy cycle of applied sociology, change management, organisational management and stakeholder analysis. Organisations in the field (NGO's and governmental agencies) are invited to give guest lectures to introduce students to their interventions.

### CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This course introduces you to key themes and challenges in contemporary higher education and higher education research. Higher education continues to play a key role in society, given its functions regarding the education of the next generation of knowledge workers and critical citizens and regarding the creation and dissemination of new knowledge through research and innovation. Despite its legitimate role in society, there are many controversies. Who should have access to higher education? Should higher education institutions be public? Who should judge the quality of higher education? How much autonomy should be granted to higher education institutions and academics? The course will address these questions from different disciplinary perspectives, primarily sociology, but also public administration and political sciences. The following themes will be addressed: the history of higher education, differences between higher education systems, higher education policy, higher education institutions as organisations, inequalities and stratification, access and selection, international mobility, quality assurance, funding and institutional governance. This course prepares you to develop evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

### ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The core of this course consists of a thorough introduction to multilevel modelling. Starting from sociologically relevant research questions, the basic random intercept model is introduced and subsequently extended to fully random models and (cross-level) interactions, both for linear and logistic regression models. As software we use MLwiN and R. Knowledge of multilevel analysis is of key importance to social scientists in general and sociologists in particular, as it allows to take elements at micro, meso and macro levels simultaneously into account. In the first weeks of the semester, we rehearse general quantitative skills concerning univariate, bivariate, multivariate analyses, factor analysis and data management, using SPSS and R as software. In the last weeks, we introduce other advanced analysis techniques, such as Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) and non-parametric techniques.

### SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF POLICY AND ORGANISATION

The general aim of this course is to familiarise you with the functioning of organisations. Organisations have a structure, a culture, means, processes, individual members and/or employees. Organisations communicate and function on the basis of formal and informal processes and consist of formal and informal groups, with formally and informally assigned power and responsibilities. Conflict and power are essential drivers of organisations. These basic sociological concepts should be actively approached in policy development and implementation. Sociology and social sciences have developed multiple theoretical frameworks and techniques to analyse society and organisations, to reduce their complexity and develop insights. For organisations to have a future, they should pay close attention to present-day complexity and myriad challenges and models. In this course, bridges are built between sociological approaches, policy preparation and policy implementation in and for organisations. Using examples, we show the connection between abstract concepts and the day-to-day reality of policy and leadership in organisations. A dynamic approach is put forward with attention to practice and policy themes in the master dissertation. This course consists of a combination of lectures and active seminars.

## 2. MAJORS

Students can choose between four majors: (1) Internship, (2) Policy and Management, (3) Skills Lab or (4) Conflict and Development in a Global World. Students design their own trajectory based on their personal interest, future career prospects and ambitions.

### OPTION 1: INTERNSHIP

Sociological imagination is the ability to connect the things that happen to people (such as their success in education, their relationship with their parents and their well-being) to social characteristics (the way schools are organised, the divorce rate, the degree of social inequality). To have this sociological imagination, a person must pull away from the situation and think from an alternative point of view. No better way to sharpen your sociological imagination than by taking up an internship! Within the major Internship, students are challenged to use their sociological imagination in real life contexts and take their expertise to the next level. National or international internships within our programme take place in a broad range of academic and non-academic settings. Internships in academic settings provide opportunities to students that are interested in pursuing an academic career in universities or colleges of applied sciences. Non-academic settings include civil society organisations (i.e., grassroot organisations and non-governmental organisations), other non-profit organisations, governmental organisations or businesses. During this experience, students combine theoretical thinking with hands-on experience, characterized by social engagement. By partaking in daily operations, students gain invaluable practical experience while critical thinking and problem-solving abilities are stimulated and personal, professional skills are developed. The internship takes about 6 to 8 weeks.

If you are interested in an international internship, one option is the global volunteer programme of AIESEC, which provides students with the opportunity to develop and experience a shared responsibility for the world and equip them with the tools to shape a better future. Projects generally deal with sustainable development goals. Examples of projects are: volunteer with elders for reduced inequality in Portugal, promote children's empowerment through education in Brazil, conserve biodiversity in Sri Lanka or teach orphans in Nigeria. More information <https://aiesec.org>.

In addition to the internship opportunities provided by us, we encourage students to pitch their own ideas regarding potential internship opportunities in academic or non-academic settings, in Belgium or abroad.

### OPTION 2: POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Students who choose the major Policy and Management immerse themselves in courses on human resources management, public administration, governance, change management and international development. This major allows an individually tailored study programme based on personal interests and possible future career paths. Examples of course clusters are: human resource management, EU international development policy or human rights in developing countries. Full list on the [Ghent University Study Guide](#).

#### • Operational Human Resource Management

This course aims to provide students with competencies in applying people management skills. This course is offered in the second semester and builds further on the competencies in the course 'Human Resource Management in Public Organisations'.

#### • Change Management

In this course, students develop insights in the broader processes of public sector reform, and the implications for public policy and management, as well as into theoretical paradigms in relation to change management, with a focus on public management.

#### • Comparative public administration and management

This course looks at the public administration, the organisation of government, and the management of public organisations, in an internationally (European) comparative perspective. The focus is on the understanding and comparing of administrative structures and systems, and of reform processes in government at different levels (central and local government).

### OPTION 3: SKILLS LAB

In the major Skills Lab, students explore and develop applied skills to prepare for future careers through courses such as Dare to Venture, Business Skills and Advanced Academic English.

Full list on the [Ghent University Study Guide](#).

#### • Dare to Venture

The student learns to collect feedback on a business idea and to structure this feedback into a first draft of a business model. The student team starts from a business idea that will be confronted with the environment, e.g. distributors, potential customer groups and users, suppliers, designers, producers or regulators.

#### • Business Skills

This course emphasizes critical management skills that yield sound organisational results. Based on theory and empirical evidence, the course treats leadership competencies that are essential for employee engagement, effective communication, and sustainable organisational success. This is a crucial demand in the turbulent environments of organisations nowadays, but it requires leaders to leave their comfort zones and to expand their mental models of effectiveness.

#### • Globalisation and Global Governance

This course examines 'global governance' or the political management of global problems. Ample attention will be paid to the historical context, the relation between politics and economics as a general background to the issues of global governance and related policy, as well as to the ideological component.

### OPTION 4: CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT IN A GLOBAL WORLD

In the major Conflict & Development in a Global World, students follow courses on non-Western societies, and learn about the implications of insights in this field for the study of Western societies.

#### • Sustainable Development

This course offers students an insight into the complexity of implementing the concept of sustainable development, in terms both of content and of policy. In the first section of the course, the history and the conceptual framework of sustainable development is briefly addressed. Next, the international agreements emerging from the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro (1992) constitute an important starting point from which the developments of the past decades are outlined, on the basis of, among other things, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change/Kyoto Protocol and other UN conventions and conferences. Furthermore, the results of the so-called Rio+20 conference to make up a state of play are discussed. Finally, a state of affairs is presented concerning the implementation at the different levels of policy: the United Nations, European and Belgian strategy with respect to sustainable development. During the first part students are asked to present a team work related to one particular issue. The second section of the course is a 'status questionis' of the way in which the concept is operationalized. Central to this elaboration are the mutual relations between the different dimensions of sustainable development. In this second section of the course, the lectures will be alternated with workshops presupposing active participation by the students.

#### • Rural Sociology

This course tackles a range of processes of agrarian transformation in the recent past. This will be done using a historical-sociological framework and with a specific focus on dynamics of class formation/differentiation, capitalization of the rural sector... Lastly, considerable attention will be paid to the emergence of resistance following crucial transformations in the rural economy. The course will hereby provide a couple of introductory classes wherein a general theoretical framework will be presented about agrarian transformation and rural sociology and capitalization of the rural economy. After this introductory part, a selection of current debates within the field of rural sociology will be further elaborated.

#### • Politics of Islam

This course provides students both theoretical understanding and methodological knowledge about the contemporary political, social and cultural manifestations of Islam in our global world. At a theoretical level, the course aims at providing knowledge and insight into the ways in which Muslim/Islamic mobilization arises. This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the major intellectual and ideological debates, political and social movements as well as cultural trends at the intersection of politics and Islam. The course will offer the opportunity to discover the diversity of modern and current Islamic political, social and cultural manifestations and, in doing so, help students to understand in a more nuanced and informed manner some of the pressing issues of our times.

## 3. MASTER DISSERTATION

Working on a master dissertation is performing your own quantitative or qualitative research, and writing it up in a scientific paper. The master dissertation is supervised by a Ghent University professor.

For all useful information, please consult the Master's Dissertation regulations at the faculty website:

[ugent.be/ps/en/education/administration/masters\\_thesis.htm](http://ugent.be/ps/en/education/administration/masters_thesis.htm)

