Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

Coláiste na nDán, na nEolaíochtaí
Sóisialta & an Léinn Cheiltigh
College of Arts, Social Sciences
& Celtic Studies

Bachelor of Science (Social Science)

Student Handbook

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Welcome

I would like to welcome all new BSc Social Science undergraduates and returning students to University of Galway for the 2025/26 academic year.

I hope that you will all enjoy your course in the Social sciences, as well as the cultural and social activities that University of Galway and the city of Galway have to offer. I would encourage you to take part in as many of the activities of the University as possible. Join clubs and societies and take part in activities; it is by doing this that you can really connect with the University experience and make the most of your time here. Learn about the Community Knowledge Initiative and find out about the various volunteering opportunities available to you.

Most of the teaching takes place in person, on campus. Attend all your lectures and seminars and take part actively. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with staff with any specific questions that may arise. There are support staff to assist you, and as the BA Government Programme Director, I will be available to advise and support you. This handbook gives you the key information about your course. Please read it carefully.

The BSc (Social Sciences) programme is a modular degree combining core and elective modules. The programme draws from a number of key existing modules that are cognate to Social Scientific inquiry and study. New, comprehensive, and innovative modules are always under development, which strongly focus on enhancing student's contemporary knowledge, research skills and employability, both nationally and internationally. Students are given a broad understanding of the Social Sciences in years one and two, undertake an internship with an NGO or SME in year three, and choose a specific study pathway in year four that is most appropriate to their requirements and future employability or continuing education needs. Students choose from the following study pathways: 1) Environmental Social Studies (ESS), 2) Politics, Society & Identity, 3) Community Engagements & Development or, 4) Culture, Creativity & Enterprise.

As Programme Director, I have overall responsibility for the running of the programme. My office is room 319, Áras Moyola and my email is judith.oconnell@universityofgalway.ie.

All the best,

Judith O'Connell
Programme Director, BSc Social Sciences,
Lecturer, School of Political Science and Sociology
University of Galway

Important Information

1. **Academic Calendar Dates**
Here you will find a list of important upcoming dates for the 25/26 academic year, including; study weeks, exam dates, holidays, etc.: **Academic Term Dates - University of Galway**.

2. **Attendance**
It is the duty of a student to attend every scheduled lecture/tutorial and to undertake other academic activities (such as essay assignments, laboratory classes, project work, seminars, tutorials etc.) as required in each of the subjects, unless prevented by some unavoidable cause of absence. Students, therefore, are strongly recommended to attend all module lectures and tutorials. In the case of the latter, without weekly participation (i.e. by keeping up with the prescribed or recommended readings and by contributing to class discussion) it is highly unlikely that students will produce work of a standard expected from small group teaching and learning.

3. **Canvas**
Canvas is a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A VLE is a web-based application designed to facilitate lecturers in the management of modules for their students, especially by helping lecturers and learners with course administration. A VLE is used to supplement face-to-face lectures and tutorials. Learn all about Canvas **here.**

4. **Referencing**
The School of Political Science and Sociology advises that students **must use** the Harvard (UL) Referencing Style for all assignments and essays. Details on the Harvard (UL) referencing style, and examples, are available from the University of Galway library **here**.

5. **Academic Writing Centre**
The Academic Writing Centre (AWC) provides one-on-one tutorials and email consultations on essay writing. These are free and available to everyone, regardless of experience or grade average. They are located in the main Library.

6. **Academic Integrity Policy**
Academic integrity is a fundamental value of any university community. As a principle, it assumes that all student interactions with the academic institution are entered into in the spirit of honesty. This value gives the student responsibility for ensuring that all assignments that they submit for academic purposes are their own work.

7. **Disability Support Service (DSS)**
Disability support is available to University of Galway students who need support or reasonable accommodations due to the impact of a disability, ongoing physical or mental health condition, or a specific learning difficulty. These supports are provided through DSS. Click **here** for further information.

8. **Exam Support**

   Student Services have a range of valuable supports on offer to help you both before and during exams. Workshops, helplines and online resources are just some of the many options available and have been developed. **Here** is a list of useful policies and procedures. You will also find information about exam repeats, appeals, deferrals, past papers, alternative arrangements, etc.

9. **Student Enquiry Centre**

   For any enquiries about student life, services and support, contact the **Student Enquiry Centre**. You can drop into them on the first floor of the Arts/Science Concourse from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. You can also email SEC@universityofgalway.ie.

10. **Chaplaincy**

    The Chaplaincy is here to help students navigate the challenges associated with university life. Don't know who you need to speak to? That's where Chaplaincy comes in. They are available on campus for a chat from Monday - Friday and are here to listen.

11. **Counselling**

    Student Counselling provides a free hybrid service of in-person and online one-to-one counselling. They also provide group counselling and workshops. Seeking counselling is normal here and is not a sign that you are unable to cope, but of strength and resourcefulness. Counselling support about 10% of the student population each year. Any problem, large or small, if unresolved, is welcomed here.

12. **Examination and Assessment Process**

    Student examination and assessment in the University is governed by a set of **important policies and processes** which outline:
    a) the academic rules which all programmes and modules must comply with for the awarding of degrees and
    b) the way in which exams and assessment are conducted.

    The University's degree structure and assessment process is aligned to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System to allow for recognition of awards across Europe. Consequently, programmes are structured in multiples of 5 ECTs, with 60 ECTs making up a full year of undergraduate study and 90 ECTs for postgraduate study.

    Degree classification is normally based on a student's results in pre-final (30%) and in final (70%) year and degree awards are classified from pass to first class honours. Results are approved by the University's College Exam Boards with independent validation of marks by External Examiners. College Boards, Academic Council and its sub-Committee, Academic Standing Committee are the key decision-making bodies in relation to student examination and assessment.

    The School of Political Science and Sociology uses a categorical marking system across its UG and PG programmes. These categorical marks are applied only at the level of assessed components (and NOT overall modular marks) to foster consistency across the programme and achieve a better distribution of marks across degree grades.
    Fail: 0, 25, 35
    Pass: 42, 45, 48
    Lower Second: 52, 55, 58
    Upper Second: 62, 65, 68
    First: 72, 75, 78.

13. Extensions and Deferrals

If you are unable to submit your work on time, you must apply to the Module Coordinator or Seminar Leader for an extension no later than 24 hours in advance of an assessment deadline. If granted, the maximum extension will be no more than one week (7 calendar days). This requirement applies to all students, including those with a LENS (Learning Educational Needs Summary) report. If you have extenuating circumstances where more than 7 calendar days are required, the authorisation process depends on the weighting of the piece of assessment:

- Where the module assignments of course work constitutes <u>less than 30% of the overall mark</u>, this will be considered by the Module Coordinator or Seminar Leader in line with the **Extenuating Circumstances policy**.
- Where the module assignments and coursework constitutes <u>over 30% of the overall mark</u>, you must apply 7 days in advance of the assessment deadline directly to the College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies following the **Extenuating Circumstances policy** and completing the Extenuating Circumstances form. The extension request must be based upon a medical certificate and/or relevant supporting documentation.

14. Late submission without an extension

For module assignments and work constituting 20% or less of the overall mark: if you submit an assignment after the deadline without submitting an extension request and/or extension request approval, the work will be marked and a penalty will be applied.

- Late submissions will be penalised at a rate of 2 marks per day off the mark originally awarded. (E.g. if the essay merits a mark of 68, and was submitted one day late, the mark will go down to 66).
- No work is accepted or marked if submitted more than 7 working days after the deadline without an extension.

15. Feedback On Assignments

Feedback timeframe policy: normally, assignments will be marked within 3 weeks from the submission deadline. Feedback from your lecturer/seminar leader is provided through **Canvas.**

16. Parking Information

There are different types of spaces on campus, including spaces for staff permit holders only, student permit holders only, shared use (staff student permit holders), visitor/non-permit holder pay-and-display/Pay by Phone (P&D) spaces.

You need a permit to park in University of Galway, or you can buy a ticket from P&D machines or Pay by Phone. Please note, that P&D tickets only apply to spaces marked in blue adjacent to the meters - P&D tickets do not allow you to park anywhere else. Permit holders can use P&D spaces, but you must buy a ticket.

Your permit/P&D ticket allows you to park in specific places and you must familiarise yourself with the zones, and which permit applies to what carpark. There are also 'reserved' spaces and loading bays - do not park in these.

You may use the universally accessible parking spaces if you display a valid and registered 'blue badge' permit issued by the IWA.

Student parking permits are available through an online system for registered students. Allow plenty of time on your first visit to campus with your car.

17. Class Representatives

The Class Rep is the Voice of your Class and represents the views of the majority of the class. They help to solve both individual and class-wide problems. If you decide to run for Class Rep, your responsibilities will include communicating between your class and the course lecturers, attending Comhairle Chomhaltas na Mac Léinn and your College Council meetings to help formulate Student Union policies and arranging class parties, hoodies etc.

18. Student Complaints Process

The purpose of the Student Complaints Procedure is to provide a formal mechanism for students to have their complaints heard and resolved. The Procedure is not intended to be a disciplinary one, However, the Complaints Procedure provides students with an opportunity to raise issues of concern to them, frequently makes recommendations for improvements to University processes and, where appropriate, can provide redress to students.

It is intended that this complaints procedure will allow for matters to be dealt with fairly, transparently and in a timely fashion, for the benefit of current and future students and the wider University Community.

19. End of Semester Feedback

We ask students to complete student feedback forms in person (in the lecture) at end of each semester, and this feedback is undertaken over weeks 10-12. It is important for lecturers to get your views about how well you have experienced and engaged with the modules, so we encourage you to provide your considered feedback at these points.

20. Staying Informed throughout Year 2

Please note that there is a great deal of information available on the School's website, including timetables, course outlines, contact details and online materials: **School of Political Science and Sociology - University of Galway.**

21. Noticeboard

Information for 2nd year students regarding seminar group allocation, timetabling issues, etc. will be posted on the 2nd year CANVAS site of SPSK3101/2 and on the 2nd Year Notice Board at the School of Political Science & Sociology, Floor 2, Aras Moyola at the beginning of each semester.

22. CANVAS

Please note that from time to time the School will need to circulate information to all 2BA students and will use lectures and Canvas for these purposes. Please make sure you attend to any notices that circulate via Canvas. Do not ignore them!

Programme Structure: Year 1

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Optional
T1151	Principles of Physical Geography	5	2	Core
BSS1100	Digital Citizenship	5	1	Core
EC1110	Introduction to Economic Policy	5	1	Core
SP1125	Introduction to Politics	5	1	Core
BSS1101	Introduction to the Social Sciences	5	1	Core
TI1102	Geography in Practice	5	1	Core
SP1120	Practicing Politics	5	1	Core
BSS1102	Digital Skills for the Social Sciences	5	2	Core
T1150	Principles of Human Geography	5	1	Core
SP1126	Introduction to Sociology	5	2	Core
SP1121	Practicing Sociology	5	2	Core

The module outlines, as well as any relevant course information, will be made available on Canvas and during the lectures.

CÉIM

First year students: Take part in CÉIM! Weekly CÉIM peer learning sessions are student led and are about working collaboratively in small groups to develop independent learning skills, discuss new topics on the course, prepare for upcoming assignments and exams, and have some fun! Initiated by University of Galway Students' Union in 2013, CÉIM is run as a partnership between students, academic staff and the Students' Union.

CÉIM supports 1st year students to transition successfully to University of Galway, make friends and create connections within their subject area, develop a sense of belonging, gain a greater understanding of coursework and ultimately proceed to 2nd year. **Learn more and find out how to take part**

Programme Structure: Year 2

This year has a lot more choice. Students must complete 60ECTS this academic year to progress into the third year of the programme.

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Optional
SP212	Classical Social Thought	5	2	Optional
TI248	Coastal Environments	5	2	Optional
BSS2101	Cooperative Learning and Group Research Methods	10	2	Core
TI230	Economic Geography	5	1	Core
EC267	Economics of Public and Social Policy	5	1	Optional
TI2112	Environmental Planning, Sustainability and Climate Action	5	2	Optional
SP2122	European Politics	5	1	Optional
SP2117	International and Global Politics	5	1	Optional
TI2102	Introduction To GIS	10	1	Core
TI2108	Introduction to Palaeoclimatology	5	2	Optional
BSS2103	Introduction to Sustainability 1	5	1	Core
SP220	Methods For Social and Political Science	5	2	Core
SP2123	Modern Political Thought	5	2	Optional
TI229	Political & Cultural Geography: Identity, Race & the Nation	5	1	Core
SP235	Social Issues and Policy Responses	5	1	Optional
SP2116	Sociology of Health	5	1	Optional
TI2111	Theory & Practice in Geography	5	2	Core
SPL307	Youth Work Principles & Practice	5	2	Optional

*Due to a timetable clash it is only possible to take either TI2108 or TI2112

Programme Structure: Year 3

Students have the option to pick the modules that suit their interests, thus tailoring the degree to their interests. All students must complete 60ECTs to pass the academic year. This normally means 30ECTs in both semesters. Most modules are 5ECTs (although some can be 10ECTs) so it is important to check this information carefully. The total ECTs for the year will be displayed on your registration portal

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Optional
TI235	Biogeography	5	1	Optional
SP404	Development And Change	5	1	Optional
SP3195	Equality, Diversity and Collective Action	5	1	Optional
SP3206	Government Field Trip	5	1	Optional
BSS3102	International Work Placement for Social Scientists	30	2	Optional
MG3113	Megatrends	5	1	Optional
TI2110	Perspectives on Climate Change	5	1	Optional
SP3204	Policymaking, Lobbying and Advocacy	5	1	Core
BSS3100	Professional Skills and Pathways for Social Scientists	10	1	Core
AR2108	Space, Place and the Irish Landscape	5	1	Optional
PSS2102	The Live Arts Event: Theory and Practice	5	1	Optional
PS3109	Vertically Integrated Projects 1	5	1	Optional
BSS3101	Work Placement for Social Scientists	30	2	Optional

Students will be automatically registered for all 'core' modules but can choose 'optional' modules from the list provided. Students cannot choose modules outside those provided above.

All module information will be available from the various School websites, and the two main Schools are Sociology & Political Science and Geography. If you need additional module information, you must email the module lecturer directly. Please note that the Programme Director does not have this information.

Programme Structure: Year 4

Students MUST COMPLETE 60ECTS each academic year and are strongly advised to carefully manage their time and workload over the course of the academic year. The 20ECTS for the dissertation module is allocated to the second semester so the bulk of the work will need to be completed then. That said, students should begin work on this research as soon as possible.

Module Code	Module Title	ECTS	Semester	Core/Optional
TI311	Advanced Gis	5	2	Optional
TI2113	Agricultural Policy, Farming and the Rural	5	2	Optional
SP3214	Biosociality and Bioeconomy: The Value(s) of Living Things	5	2	Optional
SP3199	Care, Power, Information	5	1	Optional
SP701	Children & Young People in Families Today	5	2	Optional
TI303	Coastal Dynamics	5	1	Optional
SP3139	Comparative Government and Politics	5	2	Optional
SP3213	Contemporary African Politics	5	2	Optional
SP3208	Contemporary American Politics	5	1	Optional
SP405	Contemporary Social Thought	5	2	Optional
TI3127	Critical Geographies of Children	5	1	Optional
SP404	Development And Change	5	1	Optional
SP3211	Empathy in Action	5	2	Optional
BSS3106	Environmental Sociology	5	1	Core
SP3195	Equality, Diversity and Collective Action	5	1	Optional
SP3193	Introduction to Social Work	5	2	Optional
TI3130	Introduction to Spatial Planning	5	1	Optional
SP721	Ocean and Marine Politics	5	2	Optional
TI338	Palaeoecology - Reconstructing Past Environments	5	2	Optional
SP219	Political Sociology	5	1	Optional
TI335	Research Project Design & Development	5	1	Core
BSS4100	Research Seminar in Social Sciences	20	2	Core
SP3215	Security & World Affairs: People, Planet, Places	5	2	Optional
SP4131	Smart & Liveable Cities and Suburbs	5	2	Optional
SP3197	Thinking Politically: The Power of Ideas	5	1	Optional
TI324	Urban Geography: Planning the Modern City	5	2	Optional
TI326	War & Representation: Spaces & Politics of the Media	5	1	Optional
SP618	Welfare Words: Key Words in Social Work & Social Welfare	5	2	Optional

| SPL304 | Women, Men & the Economy: Critical Explorations of Theory & Policy | 5 | 2 | Optional |
| SP3137 | Youth and Society | 5 | 2 | Optional |

*Due to timetable clashes it is only possible to take either TI303 or TI3127/TI326 or TI3130/TI324 or TI338

Contact Details

Programme Director & Politics and Sociology Coordinator

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