Module Title: Sociology Capstone

Module Code: SOU44100

Module Name:

- **ECTS Weighting: 20**
- **Semester/Term Taught: 1&2**
- **Contact Hours: 1 hr lecture and workshop**
- **Module Personnel: Richard Layte and Annatina Aerne**

Module Learning Aims and Content:

 The Sociology Capstone Module provides students with guidance, tools and skills to successfully write their final undergraduate thesis. This module spans both Michaelmas and Hilary Terms with the final dissertation consisting of a piece of empirical research of between 8000-10,000 words (excluding references) to be submitted in Hilary Term. Students work with an individual supervisor from the Department of Sociology at Trinity College.

The module consists of 12 sessions divided into three parts over two terms:

Part I (Weeks 1-6 in Michaelmas Term) discusses issues that are fundamental to guide the dissertation proposal and its analytical scope including (i) how to formulate research questions, (ii) how to write a literature review, (iii) how to structure a dissertation and a research proposal and (iv) how to deal with ethical issues. During Part I, students develop a research proposal that will be submitted following reading week.

Part II (Weeks 8-12 in Michaelmas Term, i.e. after reading week). The class is split into two groups based on the methods of the student dissertation: Group 1 (quantitative projects) will be taught by Prof. Richard Layte and Group 2 (qualitative projects) will be taught by Prof. Andrew Finlay. Students decide which of these two groups they wish to attend based on the topic and methodology proposed. Each groups is taught aspects of research design such as access, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

Part III (1 session in Hilary Term) consists of individual presentations and group feedback of each dissertation project. Students have the opportunity to present their work to fellow students and the module coordinators and to get feedback.

Module Learning Outcomes:

Having successfully completed this module, you will be able to:

•   identify a sociological topic or problem and formulate appropriate research question(s);

•   critically discuss and synthesise relevant literature and link it with the research problem;

•   discuss and reflect on their research methodology including ethical issues;

•   analyse data and link new and original findings to existing literature and theoretical issues;

•   discuss and reflect on their work-in-progress through individual in-class presentations;

•   demonstrate the research skills required to carry out postgraduate research;

•   write a dissertation to professional standards.

Recommended Reading List:

•   Bryman, A., (2016) Social Research Methods, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

•   O'Leary, Z. (2017) The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project (3rd edition), London: Sage.

•   Thomas, G. (2013) How to do your Research Project, London: Sage.

Module Pre-Requisite:

Module Co-Requisite:

Assessment Details:

100% - An 8000-10,000 word dissertation based on empirical research submitted in Week 10 of Hilary term 2026.

Module Website: