

SOC41160 — Sustainable Solutions and Applied Social Change

Module Information	
Module Code	SOC41160
Module Title	Sustainable Solutions and Applied Social Change
Department	Sociology
Year Group	Postgraduate (MSc)
Module Personnel	Dr Marta Eichsteller, University College Dublin
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	10 ECTS
Semester	Semester 1 (Autumn)
Contact Hours	22 hours (11 x 2-hour seminars)

Module Content	
Module Description	This module introduces students to an original analytical framework for understanding and designing responses to major global challenges, including inequality, climate change, forced displacement, and political violence. Drawing on the PACT constellation framework, which systematically integrates Policy, Activism, Commerce, and Transformative Innovations as co-producers of social solutions, students develop the capacity to analyse complex social problems from multiple stakeholder positions and to evaluate the strengths and limitations of different intervention strategies. The module situates applied social change within a critical sociological perspective, asking not only what works, but for whom, under what conditions, and with what unintended consequences. Students engage with real-world case studies drawn from international development, sustainability, and social policy, and work toward independent project proposals that connect theoretical frameworks to practical change strategies. The module is a core component of the MSc Comparative Social Change and provides the conceptual spine for programme-level learning on evidence-based social

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	intervention, stakeholder analysis, and applied research design.
Module Learning Aims	This module aims to equip students with an original and transferable analytical framework for understanding how global social problems become solvable. It situates applied social change within a critical sociological perspective, developing the capacity to analyse complex problems from multiple stakeholder positions and to design evidence-informed responses across the Policy, Activism, Commerce, and Transformative Innovations pillars of the PACT constellation.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, students will be able to: 1. Apply the PACT constellation framework (Policy, Activism, Commerce, Transformative Innovations) to analyse responses to global social challenges from multiple stakeholder perspectives. 2. Critically evaluate existing solutions to social problems, identifying their theoretical assumptions, evidence base, and structural limitations. 3. Synthesise academic literature with policy documents, activist manifestos, and business case studies to produce integrative applied analyses. 4. Design an evidence-informed social change intervention, articulating its rationale, target population, theory of change, and evaluation approach. 5. Communicate complex sociological arguments to diverse audiences, adapting register and format for academic, policy, and public contexts. 6. Reflect critically on the ethical and political dimensions of social intervention, including questions of power, representation, and unintended consequences.
Indicative Reading / Resources	A full reading list is provided on Brightspace. Core texts include: Spector, M. and Kitsuse, J.I. (2017 [1977]). <i>Constructing Social Problems</i>. Routledge. Eggers, W.D. and MacMillan, P. (2013). <i>The Solution Revolution: How Business, Government, and Social Enterprises Are Teaming Up to Solve Society's Toughest Problems</i>. Harvard Business Review Press. Malhotra, N. (ed.) (2022). <i>Frontiers of Social Innovation</i>. Stanford University Press.

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	Dietz, S. (2023). Decisions for Sustainability. Cambridge University Press. Sen, A. (1999). Development as Freedom. Oxford University Press. Selected policy documents, NGO reports, and corporate sustainability strategies (provided via Brightspace).

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Critical Analysis Essay 50%; Applied Social Change Project 50%
Assessment Details	Critical Analysis Essay (50%, CWN): 2,500-word essay applying the PACT constellation framework to a global social challenge of the student's choice. Students must draw on at least two pillars of the framework and engage critically with the academic literature. Deadline: Week 9 (3 PM). Applied Social Change Project (50%, CWN): 3,000-word project proposing an evidence-informed social change intervention. Must include a problem analysis using the PACT constellation, theory of change, stakeholder mapping, and brief evaluation framework. Deadline: Week 12 (3 PM). All submissions via Brightspace. Late submissions without prior agreement will incur a penalty of 5% per day, in line with the UCD/TCD joint programme policy.

Additional Information	
Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	Attendance: Students are expected to attend all seminars. More than two unexcused absences may affect the final grade. Academic Integrity: All submitted work must comply with the academic integrity policies of both UCD and TCD. The use of generative AI tools must be declared and used in accordance with the module's AI assessment guidelines (available on Brightspace). Programme: MSc Comparative Social Change (UCD/TCD Joint Programme). Module coordinator contact: marta.eichsteller@ucd.ie

