

Trinity College Dublin
Department of Sociology

University College Dublin
School of Sociology

MSc in Comparative Social Change



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



www.tcd.ie/sociology
www.ucd.ie/sociology

Building on a Tradition of Sociological Excellence

An innovative new programme - the MSc in Comparative Social Change - has been developed by the Department of Sociology at Trinity College and the School of Sociology at University College Dublin (UCD) to critically explore the social, cultural and economic forces that drive social change today. The programme aims to develop students' knowledge of major social change issues, such as globalisation, the changing roles of women and the interrelated areas of migration, education and employment, and to offer insights into the different forms they take across states.

There is a rich tradition of sociological education at both universities and today Trinity and UCD are Ireland's top two ranked sociology departments respectively (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2019).

Students undertaking this collaborative Masters will benefit from a greater range of academic expertise both in terms of teaching and research supervision. Students will also enjoy access to library facilities, online resources and support services at both universities and will have the opportunity to experience student and intellectual life on two distinct campuses.

MSc in Comparative Social Change

Ireland has been transformed due to migration, globalisation, the introduction of same-sex marriage, the repeal of the abortion ban, and increasing secularisation. This course uses the recent experience of Irish social change in a comparative European and global context to provide training in substantive topics relating to issues of comparative social change.

This one-year full time course has a significant international dimension drawing on the rich and informative experiences of other EU member states, North America, the four Asian Tigers, plus the BRIC countries, particularly Brazil, India and China.

Students have the opportunity to study with leading academics, with experience of policy development, who are involved in international research networks. The programme provides advanced training in conceptualising, designing and conducting comparative research, across countries, and examines the role that this can play in policy development.

Course Structure and Assessment

The MSc in Comparative Social Change provides students with both the theoretical frameworks and practical research skills necessary to understand the processes and pressing issues presented by global social change.

The taught part of the course is comprised of three core modules and a range of optional modules which students can select depending on their academic interests. Coursework is examined through a combination of formal examination and continuous assessment such as essays, presentations, fieldwork and group projects.

Required Course Modules

Research Methods

Globalisation and Social Change:
India, China and Brazil

Introduction to Comparative Social
Change: Concepts and Cases

Optional Modules

The Migration Challenge: Comparative
Educational Perspectives

Migration, Labour and Conflict

Gender and Social Change in
a Comparative Context

Nationalism and Social Change

Economic Globalisation and
Social Change

Comparing Healthcare Systems

Nonprofit Sector in Comparative
Perspective: Politics, Regulations and
Business

* Optional modules may vary from year to year.

In addition, students complete a dissertation, not exceeding 20,000 words, with one-to-one supervisory support from an expert in the student's chosen field. The pool of academic supervisors for the research dissertation is all full-time staff from Trinity's Department of Sociology and all full-time staff from the School of Sociology at UCD.

Students who are unable to proceed to the dissertation or who fail to achieve a satisfactory mark for the dissertation element may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Comparative Social Change.

"This is a very distinctive MSc course with a strong focus on the comparative aspects of social change. Much thought had been given to ensuring that the comparative dimensions informed not only the core courses, but also the choice of optional modules. (...) This is an impressive degree and genuinely joint programme between TCD and UCD."

Professor Mike Savage, London School of Economics, External Examiner 2016-19

Career Opportunities

The MSc in Comparative Social Change is particularly relevant for students who are interested in pursuing careers in research, policy development, the public sector, nongovernmental organisations and national or local government. Students receive a solid academic training in social change issues - such as gender, education and the labour market - which can be applied to real-world problems. This training has the potential to open up career opportunities in fields such as advocacy, the media and communications. Furthermore, policy-relevant and practice-based components, such as fieldwork projects, have been designed to contribute to the training and employability of the next generation of researchers, adding an extra dimension to the MSc programme.

Students also learn valuable writing, communication, problem solving and policy assessment skills - transferrable skills which can be applied to a wide range of careers and further postgraduate study.

"Without the MSc in Comparative Social Change I would never have got into the PhD programme at the European University Institute."

William Foley, CLASS OF 2018

"I'd recommend the programme for anyone considering working for international NGOs, public sector, as a social researcher, and even if you want to stay within the world of academia."

Darragh Miller, CLASS OF 2018

"I would highly recommend this program not only for those who are already pursuing careers in Sociology, but also for those who want to have a broader and clearer view of our current society."

Monika Pedroso, CLASS OF 2017

Some of our former students are currently PhD students in Trinity, UCD, and the European University Institute. Others are working in nonprofit and governmental organisations like Peter McVerry Trust, DÍNIT, and Alcohol Action Ireland.

Admission Requirements

Candidates should normally have achieved an upper second class honours degree (2.1) or equivalent, preferably with a social sciences component and excellent academic references. GPAs of at least 3.0 out of 4, or equivalent, will be expected from international applicants.

All applicants whose first language is not English and who have not been educated through the medium of English will need to present evidence of English language competency.

How to Apply

If you are interested in applying for this programme please apply online at: www.tcd.ie/courses

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