

A2 Sociology G674: *Exploring Social Inequality and Difference*

This unit builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in the AS units and seeks to develop links between the nature of sociological thought, the methods of sociological enquiry and the core sociological themes of power, social inequality, socialisation, culture and identity. Candidates study and explain patterns of inequality in the contemporary UK.

There are two key issues to consider:

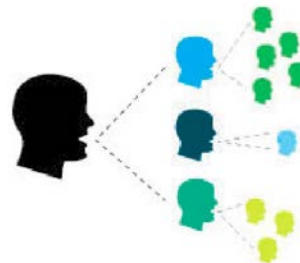
1. **Social inequality and difference illustrated by the study of gender, class, ethnicity and age**
2. **Exploring sociological research on social inequality and difference.**



Candidates may carry out their own small-scale research projects as a way of enhancing a sociological understanding of methodology, substantive topic areas and core themes.

As an A-level unit, candidates are encouraged to show an understanding of the links between the nature of sociological thought, the methods of sociological enquiry and the core themes of power, social inequality, socialisation, culture and identity. Candidates are encouraged to think holistically and develop their skills of thinking as a sociologist.

1. Social inequality and difference			
Unit Content	R	A	G
Patterns and trends of inequality and difference related to social class			
Patterns and trends of inequality and difference related to gender			
Patterns and trends of inequality and difference related to ethnicity			
Patterns and trends of inequality and difference related to age			
Patterns and trends of inequality and difference in the workplace			
Functionalist explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of functionalist explanations			
Marxist explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of Marxist explanations			
Neo-Marxist explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of Neo-Marxist explanations			
Feminist explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of feminist explanations			
Weberian explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of Weberian explanations			
Post-modern explanations of the patterns and trends			
Evaluation of post-modern explanations			
Sociological explanations of the changing class structure			
Evaluation of theoretical explanations of contemporary class structures			
The interrelationship of the different factor for explaining inequality			
Explanations for inequality through the intersection of class, gender, ethnicity and age			

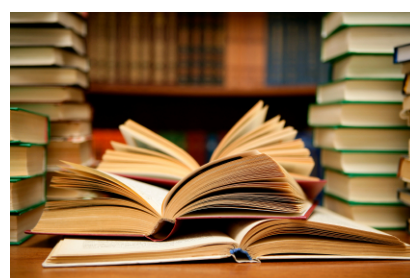


2. Exploring sociological research into social inequality and difference

Unit Content	R	A	G
Candidates need definitions of all concepts listed. They need to understand how sociologists use them in the context of research.			
Key concept: longitudinal studies			
Key concept: case studies			
Key concept: pilot studies			
Key concept: value freedom			
Key concept: objectivity			
Key concept: subjectivity			
Key concept: respondent validation			
Key concept: researcher imposition			
Key concept: reflexivity			
Key concept: sampling techniques (random, stratified, quota, snowball, purposeful)			
Key concept: target population			
Key concept: access			
Key concept: gatekeeper			
Positivist methodological issues and concerns			
Interpretivist methodological issues and concerns			
Realist methodological issues and concerns			
Feminist methodological issues and concerns			
<i>Also all concepts from AS Unit G671 Exploring... topics (see next pages)</i>			

AS G671: Exploring the research process

Unit Content	R	A	G
An overview of the main stages of social research			
An overview of the main principles of research design			
The implications of sample size and type			
Stages and issues in the research process: research questions			
Stages and issues in the research process: operationalization			
Stages and issues in the research process: primary data collection methods			
Stages and issues in the research process: secondary data collection methods			
Stages and issues in the research process: sampling			
Stages and issues in the research process: access			
Stages and issues in the research process: ethics			
Stages and issues in the research process: pilot studies			
Stages and issues in the research process: interpretation of data			
Key concept: validity			
Key concept: reliability			
Key concept: representativeness			
Key concept: generalisability			



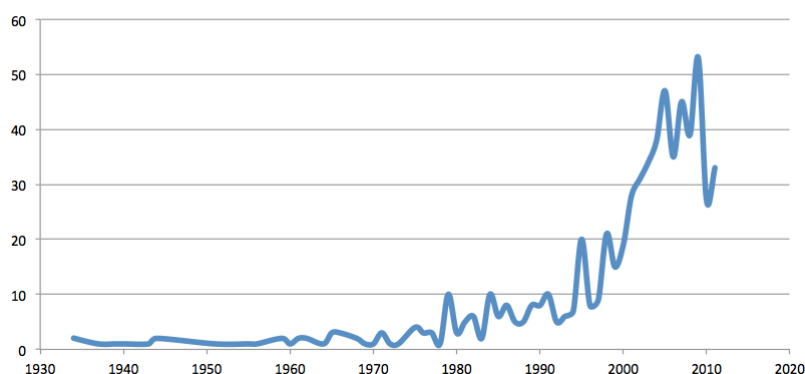
AS G671: Exploring the use of quantitative data-collection methods and analysis in the context of research

Unit Content	R	A	G
An overview of quantitative methods of data collection			
The advantages of quantitative methods of data collection			
The disadvantages of quantitative methods of data collection			
The topics quantitative methods of data collection are most suitable for			
Quantitative data collection methods: questionnaires			
Quantitative data collection methods: structured interviews			
Quantitative data collection methods: statistical data (official and non-official)			
Quantitative data collection methods: content analysis			
Key concept: patterns			
Key concept: trends			
Key concept: cause and effect			
Key concept: positivism			
Key concept: reliability			
Key concept: objectivity			
Key concept: value freedom			
Key concept: quantitative data analysis			

AS G671 Exploring the use of qualitative data-collection methods and analysis in the context of research

Unit Content	R	A	G
An overview of qualitative methods of data collection			
The advantages of qualitative methods of data collection			
The disadvantages of qualitative methods of data collection			
The topics qualitative methods of data collection are most suitable for			
Qualitative data collection methods: observation			
Qualitative data collection methods: unstructured interviews			
Qualitative data collection methods: semi-structured interviews			
Qualitative data collection methods: personal documents			
Qualitative data collection methods: ethnography			
Qualitative data collection methods: focus groups			
Key concept: meanings and experiences			
Key concept: interpretivism			
Key concept: Verstehen			
Key concept: validity			
Key concept: empathy			
Key concept: rapport			
Key concept: qualitative data analysis			

Number of Sociology Articles Containing the Phrase "Mixed Methods" 1934-2011



AS G671 Exploring the use of mixed methods in the context of research

Unit Content	R	A	G
Why sociological researchers adopt mixed methods to their research			
How mixed methods are used in sociological research			
The limitations of mixed methods in sociological research			
Key concept: triangulation			
Key concept: methodological pluralism			
Key concept: fitness for purpose			

G674 Exam Technique

	R	A	G
Understanding how to structure and answer compulsory question 1 (15 marks)			
Understanding how to structure and answer compulsory question 2 (25 marks)			
Understanding how to structure and answer option question A (20 marks)			
Understanding how to structure and answer option question B (40 marks)			
Writing in timed conditions			
Understanding what the question is asking			
AO1: Defining key terms			
AO1: Explaining sociological concepts/theories/research methods in enough detail			
AO1: Explaining sociological concepts/theories/research methods clearly			
AO1: Using a range of sociological evidence			
AO2a: Linking back to the specific question throughout			
AO2a: Using the most relevant and appropriate sociological evidence			
AO2a: Applying sociological evidence to the question			
AO2a: Interpreting sociological evidence (exploring what evidence <i>means</i> or <i>shows</i>)			
AO2b: Evaluating sociological evidence			
AO2b: Considering alternative explanations to sociological views			
AO2b: Including evaluation throughout			
AO2b: Using an evaluative conclusion that directly relates to the question			



Using the Specification Check:

Revised (Red): Look through books and notes for all key terms, contemporary examples, explanations and sociologists relevant to the aspect of the specification.

Checked (Amber): Can answer part *a* and part *b* questions based on these topics (ideally in timed conditions).

Confident (Green): Happy that you are secure in both your knowledge of the subject content and applying it to different exam questions.