

Sociology is kind

Aisling Sweeney, a Sociology undergraduate at the LSE reflects on her reasons for studying Sociology.



I decided that I wanted to study Sociology at University about 2 months into my A-Levels. Prior to that, I hadn't really known much about it, but pretty much immediately, I loved it. When reflecting on why I fell so hastily in love with it (when I was writing my personal statement), I guessed that it was perhaps because it took all of the aspects of History that I loved (basically, studying humans and how they've impacted on the wider world, and vice versa), but without any of the 'boring' stuff, like opposing historians' views on the importance of the conservative faction in the downfall of Cromwell. Yawn.

Plus, Sociology had a cool new feel about it that History didn't. To me, History conjures up an image of a stuffy old white man in a tweed jacket with round glasses giving a monologue about some centuries-dead royal. Perhaps, on reflection, I am just thinking of David Starkey. Nevertheless, with Sociology in mind, I picture someone cool, dynamic, controversial, and with a strong will for change, and for me that feels exciting in a way that not a lot of the subjects I studied at school really did.

However, regardless of how exciting Sociology is to me, I think it was always a sound choice in my head because I knew it would equip me to decide the way in which I wanted to help better societies, and to do it. This, of course, was the only clear goal I really had for my career, partly because helping as many people as possible seems the most consistent way to find job satisfaction, and partly because I can't think of anything more important to do with my life. Following my first year at LSE, I want to do this by researching and campaigning for women's rights- so I'll see you for my masters, Gender department!

Sociology, to me, is a subject that is there to help those people who want to help other people. Obviously, you get your Durkheims who just want to be right all the time, ("I know the real facts about society, Pick me!"), but on the whole, sociologists seem pretty occupied with making the world better, as best they can. Often a sociologist's skill, in my view, lies in being able to identify the causes of social problems, and provide enduring solutions- rather than just patching up issues with short-term fixes. And for that reason, I'm in.

Finally, on the subject of 'why Sociology?', I will say, Sociology because... it makes injustice, inequality and discrimination transparent, and it makes holding opinions, proving your views and changing the status quo almost prerequisites of success in the field. To me, that is what makes Sociology such a uniquely brilliant, enjoyable, and obvious degree choice. Regardless of whether you think it's exciting, or 'academic', Sociology is undoubtedly one of the kindest degrees. By that, I mean, it enables us all to step back and see what it is that's wrong with the world, and gives us the experience and innovativeness to start identifying and solving these problems through theory or independent ideas. So, to conclude, I really do love Sociology, because it's kind, and it lets me be kind. Hopefully, when I graduate, for the living wage.

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