SOCIAL SCIENCES MINI LECTURES

ALL

Business, law or social sciences at BCU: what makes our degrees unique?

What makes studying a business, law, or social sciences degree at Birmingham City University unique? In this presentation, students explore the range of degree programmes and specialist pathways available within these subject areas. More importantly, they will learn about the fantastic opportunities at BCU to enhance their employability, develop transferable skills and support their career prospects.

PSYCHOLOGY

How do we look at the brain?

An introduction to the techniques psychologists use to examine the brain. The session includes elements on scanning and neuropsychology, as well as exploring the use of such techniques to diagnose and treat brain injuries.

Geographical profiling and catching serial murderers

How offenders live and move through their daily environment leaves digital, physical and psychological traces. These traces can be used as clues to help understand the patterns and movements made by serial offenders – which can often be used to solve cases, and prevent others serial offences from happening. This talk shows your students the principles of how geographical profiling works in serial offender cases, and focuses on the geographical profiles left behind by some of the most notorious serial murderers in the UK.

The psychology of stalking behaviour

Stalking and pathological predatory behaviour is something that has only recently been taken seriously by police and law enforcement. It is understood that stalking behaviours are on the rise and the impact this has on victims can be huge and deeply damaging, with victims being made sick, losing their jobs and their family-life being destroyed. In some cases, victims have been murdered by their stalker. This talk looks at the different types of stalking and stalker pathologies and how it can be prevented, focusing on some well-known stalking cases.

What are personality disorders?

In the last few years, we have heard more about different types of personality disorder and the problems they pose for people. This talk looks at the different types of personality disorder, how they are diagnosed, how they develop and the implications for those diagnosed with personality disorders. The talk also focuses on the supposed links between crime, violence and certain personality disorders such as Narcissistic or Psychopathic personality disorders.

The psychology of empathy with violent offenders/prisoners

Based upon Dr Elle Boag's research, this session focuses on how engaging with serious violent residents during a carceral tour impacts on both empathic responding and attitude toward violent offenders in general. Using anecdotes and empirical evidence, this session aims to increase audience understanding of the mechanism of empathy as a mechanism for attitude change.

Parapsychology: alien visitation and conspiracy theories

In this session, we examine the paranormal phenomenon of alien abductions – the idea that people are visited and sometimes abducted by extra-terrestrials from another planet – as well as exploring the conspiracy theories associated with it. We critically investigate the evidence presented by believers and sceptics, and consider what psychology and psychological research in theory can tell us about this paranormal phenomenon.

The psychology of addiction

This session is a brief insight into the psychological underpinnings of both substance and behavioural addictions. We cover both types of addiction in general and then specifically delve deeper into Gaming disorder; we outline factors which contribute to the engagement and maintenance of video game use, as well as questioning many of the definitions and associations made within the literature.

What is mindfulness?

This session explores the foundations of mindfulness, a topic in positive psychology that has grown in interest over the past few decades. We continue to gain insight into the applications of mindfulness-based practices, exploring some of the positive health and wellbeing outcomes that result from developing and practicing mindfulness.

CRIMINOLOGY

An introduction to sociological theories of crime

This mini lecture introduces the student to some of the key sociological approaches within which crime is explored. Key approaches that students will travel between are: Structural Functionalism, Conflict Theories and Symbolic Interactionism. Throughout the lecture, students will become exposed to a myriad of perspectives that not only will broaden their perspectives on why crime takes place but will also awaken their 'sociological imagination'.

Is Kim Kardashian a feminist?

In this mini lecture, Professor Elizabeth Yardley explores what feminism is, as well as what it isn't. She explores its key ideas and development over the last 300 years, from Mary Wollstonecraft to the Spice Girls and Kim Kardashian. At the end of this lecture, students will be able to identify the three core principles of feminism and think about its relevance for crime and harm today.

Understanding hate crime

This session introduces students to the concept of hate crime and how we can understand hate crime socially, legally and academically. This session explores the historic development of hate crime legislation in England and Wales. Drawing on contemporary case studies, we explore how hate crimes operate as a form of social control and policing.

Use of police force and the taser system

When Robert Peel created the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829, he envisaged a different organisation to previous forms of law enforcement and public governance. Rather than controlling society, the 'new police' would work in conjunction with and obtain the consent of the communities they served. The use of force continues to be a contentious aspect of policing. Successive governments have grappled with balancing the need to protect officers from harm whilst ensuring that a culture of violent tactics and practices are not endorsed. The lecture examines police use of force and debates surrounding the potential challenges that such actions can have to civil liberties, democratic freedoms and police legitimacy.

Tackling the rising force of cyber crime

Learning about hacking, surveillance and ransomware attacks, students will delve into both personal and state-sponsored hacking, exploring recent high-profile cases and the motives behind them. Students will learn about the dangers of surveillance and how it can be used to violate privacy and civil liberties. Finally, the session looks at the rising threat of ransomware attacks, including methods used by attackers and the impact on businesses and individuals. Throughout, students will be encouraged to discuss and analyse real-world cases of cybercrime to deepen their understanding of the topic.

Are you a good citizen?

Does abiding by the law make you a good citizen? Is good citizenship defined by active participation in wider public life such as voting and engaging in legal protests? This session debates these issues and it then asks students to consider an alternative perspective. We consider citizenship as the coming together of individuals to create novel rights and duties. We consider citizenship as an inventive practice of crafting new communities of membership and/or ideals concerned with enacting just social relations.

Examining globalisation through sport

Globalisation affects all of us. Sociologists aim to understand the processes involved in globalisation to assess the impact of these processes on contemporary life. One way of achieving this is by examining globalisation in particular contexts and this session examines the globalisation of modern sport. Sport will be examined as a popular form of culture and a key element of everyday life for billions globally. The growth of the English Premier League (EPL), the hosting of mega events such as the Olympic Games and our understanding of sport fandom will all be discussed in the session. Sport will be examined sociologically and the ways that it has been affected by globalisation will be analysed.

Time matters

How do sociologists study time? Why is time a relevant object of study for sociologists? What is social time and why does it matter? In this session, we'll briefly overview the existing work on the sociology of time and think about the ways in which the social, economic, and political ordering of time affects our everyday lives, prospects, and expectations.

What has gender and race to do with 'Love Island'?

When watching a show like 'Love Island', what thoughts and values do we form about the contestants? How do we judge them? And how do we take those value judgements about race and gender to understand our everyday life? In this talk, we discuss theories related to representation, specifically through the lens of Stuart Hall's work. Our discussion centres around the use of stereotypes by the media to define our understanding of gender and race, and how these ideas are perpetuated and disseminated throughout popular culture. We also explore how media and popular culture contribute to the formation and reinforcement of societal attitudes and beliefs regarding race and gender, and how these representations can result in inequality.

Are people disabled or are cities disabling?

Cities like Birmingham are not simply backgrounds to social life. They are more like texts written as much by their users as their architects. As we move through the city, we perform its designs and architectures - sometimes conforming but sometimes departing from the planner's script. As an example of this performativity, this session on urban sociology will challenge over-medicalised and individualistic accounts of disability. Instead, we focus on the social model of disability, which advocates barrier removal and argues that 'you can't have an excess of access' in the urban landscape.

BLACK STUDIES

The emergence of the 'awkward Black girl' on TV

Representation matters, but how much? When it comes to the representation of Black women on TV, the historical tropes have largely been negative and one dimensional. However, since the 2010s, there has been a proliferation of the 'awkward Black girl' trope on terrestrial and streaming networks. Are these characters unsung representations of an authentic self that often hides behind what we see on social media? Or are they just modern iterations of what Black Feminist scholar Patricia Hill Collins calls 'controlling images?' We examine a few case studies and define what is so 'awkward' about the contemporary Black girl on TV. Additionally, we assess whether or not this is any different from depictions of the past.

Black lives have always mattered: Race and rights in Black British political history

'Black lives matter' has become the rallying cry for drawing attention to the ongoing plight of people of African descent who have suffered (and continue to suffer) from discriminative treatment and compromised life outcomes, as a result of racially unjust procedures, systems, and structures both domestically and abroad. Whilst often centred in the American context, this talk will focus specifically upon Black British political history and the direct influence of this history upon the significance of racial and ethnic difference on life experiences in contemporary Britain.

Understanding 'Izzat' (family honour) and its impact on the lives of young Asians and Asian communities

This talk explores how the concept of 'Izzat' (family honour) pervades many aspects of the lives of young Asians and acts as a force for social control.

Working as a youth worker

In this talk, members of the 'Youth Work and Communities' team from BCU discuss the youth work approach to working with young people, including how it differs from other approaches, for example, teaching and social work. It uses examples from practice to illustrate the practice-related dilemmas that youth workers navigate.

Youth work in a digital world

This lecture takes a deeper look into professional working with young people, the impact of digitalisation and how we can embed digital skills into our work. From understanding the effects of social media on young people to the inclusion of digital safeguarding tools in practice, this session highlights how youth workers are able to navigate the risks and opportunities of working with young people alongside an increased digital society.