

**Note:**

The following curriculum is a consolidated version. It is legally non-binding and for informational purposes only.

The legally binding versions are found in the University of Innsbruck Bulletins (in German).

**Original version** published in the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 19 February 2008, Issue 21, No. 188

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## **Complete version from 1 October 2020**

Curriculum for the

### **Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory**

at the School of Political Science and Sociology of the University of Innsbruck

#### **§ 1 Qualification Profile and Study Objectives**

- (1) The Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory belongs to the group of programmes in social sciences.
- (2) Social scientific theory for the purpose of elaborating theoretic-conceptual requirements for research is – next to methodology and material expertise – as such one of the three pillars of the social sciences. The quality of applied and practical- empirical research critically depends on the theoretical ground work. The Master's programme conveys knowledge of foundational paradigms and corresponding discourses in social sciences as well as the relevance of theoretical decisions for practice and empiricism of the social realm.
- (3) The Master's programme fosters in all modules – beyond subject-specific competencies – soft skills such as communicative abilities, particularly presentation techniques in terms of knowledge acquired in the Master's programme, team work competencies, consolidated rhetorical and written expression, enhanced independent performance and the ability to critical reflection and tolerance towards other positions.
- (4) In the design of the teachings of all modules close attention is paid to the use of the newest media for deepened and flexible knowledge transfer.
- (5) The study objective consists in the enhanced theory competency as basis for social scientific knowledge. Graduates are qualified to independently work on scientific problems, to evaluate scientific knowledge and to apply it in new contexts particularly relevant for research and to creatively refine it.
- (6) The Master's programme prepares for
  - occupations in academic institutions and particularly for a continuing doctorate and/or
  - executive, planning, analytical or consulting occupations in public administrations, the private sector as well as transnational governmental and non- governmental organisations;
  - professional occupations in the broad field of social research and social counselling.
- (7) The educational objective of the Master's programme includes gender competence. Therefore, the current state of gender research is the subject of a special course and is, additionally, integrated in all modules as a cross subject topic.

## § 2 Admission

- (1) Admission to the Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory requires one of the following:
  - a degree of a Bachelor's programme in a related field;
  - a degree of a Bachelor's programme in a related field obtained from a university of applied sciences;
  - an equivalent degree obtained from an accredited postsecondary institution in Austria or abroad.
- (2) A Bachelor's degree in Political Science or a Bachelor's degree in Sociology obtained from the University of Innsbruck is considered a degree in a related field at any rate.

## § 3 Scope and Duration of Studies

The Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory comprises 120 ECTS-Credits, which is equivalent to the duration of studies of four semesters. One ECTS-Credit is equivalent to a workload of 25 hours.

## § 4 Types of courses and maximum number of students per course

- (1) Courses without continuous assessment:

Lectures (VO) are courses held in lecture format. They introduce the research areas, methods and schools of thought for a given subject. Maximum number of participants: 200
- (2) Courses with continuous assessment:

Seminars (SE) provide in-depth treatment of scientific topics through students' presentations and discussion thereof. Maximum number of participants: 30.

## § 5 Procedure for the allotment of places in courses with a limited number of participants

Places in courses with a limited number of participants are allocated as follows:

1. Students enrolled in the Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory potentially facing a prolongation of their duration of study due to postponement are given preference in registration.
2. Students enrolled in the Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory are given preference in registration over students of other programmes.

## § 6 Compulsory and elective modules

- (1) The following compulsory modules with a total of 30 ECTS-Credits are to be taken:

1.	Compulsory Module: Philosophy of Science and Methodology of Social Sciences	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO Philosophy of Science and Methodology of Social Sciences</b> The lecture presents meta-theoretical and methodological positions which determine the various paradigms in the social sciences, e.g. logical positivism, the approach of Thomas Kuhn, Critical Rationalism and semantic views of scientific theories in modern philosophy of science. Furthermore the discourses on scientific understanding and explaining will be discussed, as well as problems of axiological neutrality, social laws, causality and progress in the social sciences.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Philosophy of Science and Methodology of Social Sciences</b> In the seminar, students independently work on texts of the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences in an exemplary fashion.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students are able to characterize and critically evaluate meta-theoretical questions and positions of social science theories as well as fundamental issues of economic development.
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none

2.	<b>Compulsory Module: Theory-Based Empirical Social and Policy Analysis</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ECTS-Credits</b>
a.	<b>SE Theory-Based Quantitative Empirical Social and Policy Analysis</b> This seminar deals with the inter-linkage of theoretical positions and empirical research questions; theoretical positions and their resulting consequences for quantitative empirical research are discussed.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Theory-Based Qualitative Empirical Social and Policy Analysis</b> This seminar deals with the inter-linkage of theoretical positions and empirical research questions; theoretical positions and their resulting consequences for qualitative empirical research are discussed.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students are able to apply theoretical models within specific empirical research projects.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

3.	<b>Compulsory Module: Master's Thesis Colloquium</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ECTS-Credits</b>
	<b>SE Master's Thesis Colloquium</b> The course offers a forum to assist current master's theses. The current state of the work is presented as an overview and partial aspects are elaborated in-depth.	2	2.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.5</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> The students are able to elaborate and present partial aspects of their master's thesis.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

4.	<b>Compulsory Module: Preparation of the Master's Thesis</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ECTS-Credits</b>
	Agreement on the topic, the scope and the form of the Master's Thesis on the basis of a brief summary of the contents (abstract) as well as agreement on the work processes and the study progress. Planning of an appropriate time frame for the completion of the Master's Thesis.		5
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> After successful completion of this module, the students will be able to write a brief summary of the content of the planned Master's Thesis (abstract), to outline an anticipated schedule and to conclude a written Master's Thesis agreement.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

5.	Compulsory Module: Master's Thesis Defence	h	ECTS-Credits
	Oral defence of the master's thesis		2.5
	<b>Total</b>		<b>2.5</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Presentation, reflection on, and analysis of master's thesis results in the overall context of the master's programme; the focus is on demonstrating evaluation and method competences, as well as on presenting the results.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> successful completion of all other modules and of the Master thesis		

(2) Elective modules with a total of 70 ECTS-Credits are to be taken:

1.	Elective Module: History of Social and Political Thought	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO History of Social and Political Thought</b> The lecture gives an overview of social and political ideas from the beginning of the history of thought to classical sociological theories of the 19th century. In this context, its meaning for the current discussion in social sciences is referred	2	5
b.	<b>SE History of Social and Political Thought</b> Students individually elaborate exemplary important works from the history of social and political thought.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students are able to describe the history of social and political thought in its importance for contemporary social science.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

2.	Elective Module: Classical Sociological Theory	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO Classical Sociological Theory</b> The lecture gives an overview of the paradigms developed in the foundation phase of sociology, in particular the works of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel. Moreover, also lesser-known sociology approaches in their environment as well as the immediate prehistory of the development of sociology (e.g. Comte, Marx) are treated.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Classical Sociological Theory</b> In the seminar, students independently work on exemplary texts in the field of classical sociology theory.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students know how to characterize and critically reflect the paradigms of classical sociology and apply them to issues of contemporary sociology.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

3.	Elective Module: Contemporary Sociological Theory	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO Contemporary Sociological Theory</b> The course introduces students to the research workshop of contemporary sociological theory. Perspectives of contemporary important sociological theories are elaborated. The lecture gives an overview of the most important contemporary sociological theories and central concepts of post-classical theory discourse, such as micro and macro approaches, action and structure, critical theory and system theory which are important in Germany, and neofunctionalism as well as historical world system theory, theoretical implications of gender research as well as postmodern and postcolonial sociological approaches.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Contemporary Sociological Theory</b> The course deals with exemplary works of contemporary sociological theories.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students are able to characterize and critically reflect the postclassical theoretical landscape in its development, strategies and differences.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

4.	Elective Module: Systemic Social Theories	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO Systemic Social Theories</b> The lecture provides an overview of systemic and holistic concepts of social phenomena as represented by the works of Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann. Additionally, the course deals with systems theoretical oeuvres of Gregory Bateson and new developments as the post-Luhmann school and neofunctionalism.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Systemic Social Theories</b> In the seminar, students independently work on exemplary texts in the field of systemic social theories.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students know how to describe systemic approaches and to evaluate their scientific and practical potential. They are able to critically reflect and apply systemic social theories.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

5.	Elective Module: Theories of the State, Democracy and Power	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	<b>VO Theories of the State, Democracy and Power</b> The lecture gives an overview of the historical development and current theories of state, democracy and power. In this context, the fundamentals of normative political thought and contemporary issues of political philosophy are treated.	2	5
b.	<b>SE Theories of the State, Democracy and Power</b> In the seminar, students independently work on exemplary texts in the field of theories of the state, democracy and power.	2	5

	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students know how to differentiate and critically reflect and evaluate the most important theories of the state, democracy and power. They are able to work on exemplary texts in the field of theories of the state, democracy and power independently and theory-driven.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

<b>6.</b>	<b>Elective Module: Theories of Action</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ECTS-Credits</b>
<b>a.</b>	<b>VO Theories of Action</b> The course deals with sociological theories which form the abilities to act of social subjects as their primary starting point for the analysis of social action, institutional forms and social structures. In this context, it can be distinguished between comprehension-oriented (interpretative, e.g. symbolic interactionism) and explanation-oriented (nomological, e.g. rational choice theories) approaches. In view of classical and contemporary theories, issues of the relationship of action and structure, individual action creativity and communicative, socio-structural and cultural contexts of sense and action are discussed.	2	5
<b>b.</b>	<b>SE Theories of Action</b> In the seminar, students independently work on exemplary texts in the field of theories of action.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students have knowledge in comprehension-oriented (interpretative) and explanation-oriented (nomological) sociological action theories. They are able to describe and analyse the relationship between action and structure, individual action creativity and action contexts.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

<b>7.</b>	<b>Elective Module: Culture and Society</b>	<b>h</b>	<b>ECTS-Credits</b>
<b>a.</b>	<b>VO Cultural Theory: Culture and Society</b> The lecture will offer an overview of the diversity of the concepts of culture, that are central to the social sciences, and the consequences of related theoretical choices for understanding the social.	2	5
<b>b.</b>	<b>SE Cultural Theory: Culture and Society</b> In the seminar, students independently work on exemplary texts in the field of culture and society.	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> Students have knowledge in different cultural sociological concepts of modelling the relation between culture and society. They are able to recognize and describe the explanatory power of appropriate concepts for analysing cultural and social processes.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

8.	Elective Module: Theory and History of Gender Relations	h	ECTS-Credits
a.	VO Theory of Gender Relation	2	5
b.	SE Theory of Gender Relation	2	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> The students are able to evaluate core social scientific strands of theories of women's and gender studies and can differentiate between key questions of gender studies. They have knowledge of social movement research (keyword: feminist movements) as well as of the connectivity of gender studies to the humanities, cultural studies, social sciences and economic disciplines. They are able to classify the relevance of gender as a fundamental structural category in social contexts.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

9.	Elective Module: Interdisciplinary Skills	h	ECTS-Credits
	Providing the availability of places, courses corresponding to 10 ECTS-Credits may be taken from the curricula of other Master's programmes at the University of Innsbruck.	-	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> This module serves to expand the study programme as well as the acquisition of additional qualifications.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> The prerequisites specified in the respective curricula must be met.		

#### 10. Individual Choice of Specialisation:

For individual specialisation modules corresponding to a maximum of 20 ECTS-Credits can be freely chosen from the Master's Programmes offered at the University of Innsbruck. The prerequisites specified in the respective curricula must be met.

11.	Elective Module: Professionals Practical Training 1	h	ECTS-Credits
	Instead of a part of 10 ECTS-Credits from the elective modules according to No 10, a professional practical training with a total of 250 hours can be completed in order to get insights into an area of practice in a national or international organisation with sociologically relevant fields of activity or research projects. A written report is to be written; this equals 10 ECTS-Credits. The training can only be taken after successful completion of the second semester at the earliest. The Director of Studies has to give permission before starting the professional practical training.	-	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> This module serves to broaden the scope of studies and to test and apply practice-oriented qualifications acquired in the study programme.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

12.	Elective Module: Professionals Practical Training 2	h	ECTS-Credits
	Instead of a part of 10 ECTS-Credits from the elective modules according to No 10, a professional practical training with a total of 250 hours can be completed in order to get insights into an area of practice in a national or international organisation with sociologically relevant fields of activity or research projects. A written report is to be written; this equals 10 ECTS-Credits. The training can only be taken after successful completion of the second semester at the earliest. The Director of Studies has to give permission before starting the professional practical training.	-	10
	<b>Total</b>	-	<b>10</b>
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> This module serves to broaden the scope of studies and to test and apply practice-oriented qualifications acquired in the study programme.		
	<b>Prerequisites:</b> none		

### § 7 Master's Thesis

- (1) Students of the Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory are required to write a master thesis. The master thesis is a scientific piece of work providing proof of the ability to work on a scientific subject in an independent and substantial way, as well as methodologically acceptable manner. To enable the students to complete writing the Master's Thesis within 6 months (corresponds to 30 ECTS-Credits) acc. to §81 (2) Universities Act, the students must pass the "Preparation of the Master's Thesis" (corresponding to 7.5 ECTS-Credits) prior to working on their Master's Thesis (20 ECTS-Credits). The study programme is completed with the Master's Thesis Defence (corresponding to 2.5 ECTS-Credits).
- (2) The topic of the master thesis is based on a compulsory module according to § 6 section 1 No 1 to 8.
- (3) Students are entitled to propose the topic of their master thesis or to choose from a number of proposed topics.
- (4) The Master's Thesis corresponds to a workload of 20 ECTS-Credits.

### § 8 Examination Rules

- (1) Modules, with the exception of the compulsory module "Master's Thesis Defence", "Professionals Practical Training 1" and "Professionals Practical Training 2" and "Preparation of the Master's Thesis" are evaluated by the evaluation of the courses of the resp. module (course examinations).
- (2) For courses immanently relevant for examinations, the method of examination (written/oral examination(s)) is determined and announced by course instructors prior to the beginning of the course.
- (3) The method of examination (written or oral) for lectures is determined and announced by course instructors prior to the beginning of the course.
- (4) The performance evaluation of the modules "Professional Practical Training 1" and "Professional Practical Training 2" takes place through "successfully completed" or "unsuccessfully completed" by the Director of Studies.
- (5) The compulsory module "Preparation of the Master's Thesis" acc. to § 6 par. 1 no. 5 is evaluated by the supervisor of the Master's Thesis based on an abstract. Positive evaluation reads "successfully completed", negative evaluation "unsuccessfully completed".
- (6) The performance evaluation of the final module "Master's Thesis Defence" pursuant to § 6 section 1 No 4 takes place in the frame of an oral exam before an examination senate, which is comprised of three persons including the supervisor for the master thesis.



## **§ 9 Academic Degree**

Graduates of the Master's Programme Sociology: Social and Political Theory are awarded the degree "Master of Arts", in short "MA".

## **§ 10 Coming into force**

- (1) This curriculum comes into force on 1 October 2008.
- (2) The modification of the curriculum published in the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 27 June 2014, Issue 36, No 541 comes into force on 1 October 2014 and applies to all students.
- (3) The changes of the curriculum acc. to the version of the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 28 June 2019, Issue 67, No. 593 come into effect on 1 October 2019 and are to be applied to all students.
- (4) The changes of the curriculum acc. to the version of the University of Innsbruck Bulletin of 23 July 2020, Issue 43, No. 492 come into effect on 1 October 2020 and are to be applied to all students.