Understanding Society

A Pathway to Further Study

Application pack for 2018/19
HOW TO APPLY

What Happens (and When)

Send in your application form by **Friday 14 September 2018**

You will be invited for an interview in **early October**

Successful candidates will be offered a place to start the course from **Tuesday 30 October 2018**

More information and advice

You are advised to read the information in this pack carefully before completing your application form. We are very happy to help or to answer any questions you may have, so don’t hesitate to get in touch.

If you have any queries about the course, please email understanding-society@bristol.ac.uk.

How and when to apply

Admission to the course is based upon your application form and an informal interview. The deadline for applications for the course is **Friday 14 September 2018**. Interviews will be held in early October.

Who can apply?

The course is open to all. It is designed primarily for mature students (over the age of 21) from the local area, who wish to return to further study, or younger students who may not have conventional prior qualifications. You do not need to have any previous qualifications to apply and applications from those returning to study after a gap are encouraged. The most important thing is to explain in your personal statement (on the application form) why you would like to study on the course.
ABOUT THE COURSE

Understanding Society is a short course, designed primarily to help mature students from the local area progress to further study, such as a degree in the School for Policy Studies. The course ran for the first time from October 2017 and, after a successful pilot, is now being offered again.

The course will run on 14 Tuesday evenings, 6pm to 9pm, from **30 October 2018**. You do not need to have any prior qualifications to apply. The most important thing is to explain in your personal statement (on the application form) why you would like to study on the course. The course will be led by Emily Moreton, with contributions from a range of subject experts and advice and support on applying for further study at Bristol or elsewhere.

What it’s all about?

This course is for anyone interested in making sense of the society that we live in. It's an interactive course, covering a wide range of topics, from social inequalities to elections; September 11th to the justice system; protests, the environment, and what it really means to be part of society.

The course will draw on participants’ and tutors’ experiences, social and conventional media, research projects, and a wide range of other sources, to inform our debate and discussions in class. There will also be opportunities to develop your study skills – including note-taking, essay writing and participating in discussion.

Dates for the course

The course will meet on 14 Tuesday evenings (6pm to 9pm), starting on 30 October 2018, with breaks for half-terms and Christmas. The classes will all be held at the Faculty of Arts, Woodland Road in Clifton. The course tutor will be Emily Moreton.

The dates for the course are 30 October; 6, 13, 20, 27 November; 4, 11, 18 December 2018; 15, 22, 29 January; 5, 12, 26 February 2019 (break for half-term on 19 February).

What does the course aim to achieve?

Most of all, we want you to have an enjoyable experience of returning to study. It's important to realise that this won't be like school: we want you to have your own thoughts and opinions (and disagree with the tutor sometimes!) and there will be an emphasis on work completed in your own time, with support and advice provided during the class meetings. We hope you will go away from the course feeling excited about the topics discussed. You should also gain confidence for continuing your studies and a sense of the options that are open to you.

The course will encourage you to develop skills in:

- **Reading and researching** a range of sources. We’ll be looking at lots of different types of sources which help shed light on our society.

- **Discussion:** There will be an emphasis on class discussion and debate as well as on critical analysis of the sources. This is a great way to improve confidence and to start thinking about what you are reading. This leads towards…

- **Writing:** There will be an emphasis in the opening weeks of the course on planning and writing essays and shorter assignments: so don't panic if you haven't written one before or if you are out of practice!
How is the course marked?

You will be awarded a mark for the course as a whole, which will be based on the marks for more than one assignment. You need 40% overall to pass the course.

What happens after the course?

There are two possible routes into further study at the University of Bristol from this course:

- If you feel confident about starting a degree straight away, you can apply for an undergraduate degree in School for Policy Studies, studying full- or part-time. Please note that some degree programmes may require GCSE grades in relevant subject/s e.g. Maths.
- If you feel like you need a bit more preparation before starting an undergraduate degree, you can apply for the Foundation Year in Arts and Humanities, a way into university for people without formal qualifications. The University is currently exploring options to create routes into degrees in Social Sciences and Law from this programme from 2019. [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/courses/foundation/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/arts/courses/foundation/)

The course tutor and course director will advise you on your options, and support your application to any of these programmes. You can find out more about mature students at Bristol University here: [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/mature/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/mature/)

Course fee

The course fee for Understanding Society is £350.

We have a number of bursaries available to help students who may be unable to pay the course fee in full. If you apply for a bursary, you will be asked to complete a short form which will be assessed by the Student Funding Office.

Please note that you must arrange payment before beginning the course.
Frequently asked questions

We have put the answers to some frequently asked questions below. If you have a question that is not covered here, then please get in touch. We will be happy to help, or to discuss any concerns you have.

What happens after I apply?
We will send you an acknowledgement of your application form within 21 days of receiving it. We will then write to invite you for a short informal interview in early October 2018.

What will I be asked at interview?
One aim of the interview is to give you a detailed picture of the course, and of the routes to further study that it provides. So, the interview is partly an opportunity for you to ask questions about the course and about returning to study. We will ask you about: your reasons for wanting to study on the course; what you are interested you about studying society and how it works; how the course would fit in with your other commitments; your aims and ambitions after you finish the course.

I don’t have A-Levels (or) I don’t have a relevant GCSE (or) I didn’t do well at school… can I apply?
Yes! You do not need to have any previous qualifications to apply for the course, as long as you can demonstrate that you are motivated and enthusiastic, that you enjoy history, and that you are committed to the idea of studying at a higher level.

How do you decide who gets a place on the course?
Admission to the course is not based on previous achievements or qualifications. We are looking for students who are motivated, enthusiastic and committed; who have strong reasons for wanting to return to studying; and who can demonstrate that they will be able to manage the demands of study at this level. We hope to accommodate as many students as we can on the course, though it may not be possible to give a place to everyone who applies.

What if I am not offered a place?
Anyone who is not offered a place will be encouraged to talk through other options.

Will I automatically be offered a place on a degree afterwards?
No, you will need to apply for a place. You will be given lots of information on the options for continuing your studies as part of the course.

What if I'm not sure I want to continue at the end?
The Understanding Society course should be useful and enjoyable in itself. If you decide not to apply for a degree at the end, we hope you will have gained important skills and confidence. Often evidence of further study at this level can be useful in career progression or in taking on work in the community.

How can I fit my studies around work and/or family?
The course itself is taught one evening per week, on 14 evenings over six months. This format is designed to make it accessible to a wide range of students. On top of this, we would normally expect you to complete up to 5 hours of work in your own time per week. There will be advice during the course on managing your studies, and you will be with a group of mature students who are faced with similar pressures on their time – the group atmosphere can be useful in adjusting to the academic demands of the course.

How many past students have gone on to a degree?
Last year 8 students commenced the course, of whom 7 completed it and 2 applied for further study at the university straight away, while others are considering future applications. Our sister course in the English Department, Reading English Literature, has run every year since 2007, and more than 50 students have gone on to further study in that time. There is also a similar course in History, Ways Into History, which has been running since 2016.
Understanding Society: A Pathway to Further Study

Application Form

Please complete this form in BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS and in black ink.

You must attach a passport-sized photograph to the top of this form.

Personal Details

TITLE: ________  FORENAMES: _________________________________________

SURNAME: _________________________________________

ADDRESS (for all correspondence):
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _________________________________________

HOME PHONE NUMBER: ___________________________________

DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER: _________________________________

DATE OF BIRTH: _________________________________________

NATIONALITY: ___________________________________________

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (please indicate the award, the institution and the date. Please indicate clearly any University of Bristol awards):
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
Do you have any unspent criminal convictions? Yes ☐ No ☐
If ‘yes’ please send separate details, marked ‘Strictly Confidential’, to Mr. Tom Sperlinger, c/o Faculty of Arts, 3/5 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1TB.

Are you disabled? Yes ☐ No ☐
If you answered yes, how would you describe your disability? (please tick one only).
1) Dyslexia ☐
2) Sight impairment ☐
3) Hearing impairment ☐
4) Mobility difficulties ☐
5) Personal care support ☐
6) Unseen disability (e.g. diabetes, asthma, epilepsy) ☐
7) Mobility difficulties ☐
8) Multiple disabilities ☐
9) Other (please specify) .................................................................

Do you have access or support requirements (i.e. level access, induction loop, interpreter, information in large print or alternative formats)? Yes ☐ No ☐
If yes, please give details of any support required on a separate sheet, and we will contact you to discuss your requirements.

Personal Statement

Please comment on the next page, in no more than 500 words, on your reasons for wishing to study on the Understanding Society course. You may use the space provided, or attach an additional sheet if you prefer.

In your personal statement, you may wish to comment on: your interest in studying society (books you have enjoyed, or films or newspaper articles; particular questions that interest you); your experiences of study in the past (whether positive or negative); your reasons for wanting to return to study now; what you would like to achieve by the end of the course; whether you would like to go on to study for a degree in Policy Studies or other further study; your other hobbies and interests.
Declaration

I confirm that the information given on this form is true, complete and accurate, and that no information requested or other material information has been omitted. I consent to the processing of my data by the University of Bristol for the purpose of dealing with this application.

Applicant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ...........

All decisions by the University are taken in good faith on the basis of statements made on your application form. If the University discovers that you have made a false statement or have omitted significant information from your application form, for example regarding examination results, it may withdraw or amend its offer, or terminate your registration, according to circumstances.

When completed, please return this form to: understanding-society@bristol.ac.uk

Before you send!
Have you:
…included photo?
…completed your personal statement?
…signed your form?