Each September, at the dawn of the new academic year, we are very excited. And yet, a little nostalgic as well... As we welcome a new cohort of students who embark on their university journey with us, we also say farewell to those who have finished their voyage. In any case, it is always an exciting time! On that note, we share with you a little embarrassing (mostly to Chief Pirate Mike Sheaf and Pop Star Roberto Kulpa) photo from the Welcome Party 2016.

Time flies! A photo from the Welcome Party 2016... and Graduation 2019.

What Do Students Think?

2019 FRESHERS’ VOICE

Saffron Dunsdon, Lady of Studystone:
“The first couple of weeks with our modules has exceeded my expectations, as the team have been very welcoming. The coursework has been presented in a concise and manageable way, allowing me to work well and to experiment with ideas. I’m glad to know that there is so much support offered for assignments like the Writing Cafe, tutor sessions and extra support.”

Michelle Fenix, Cakeslayer:
“I have enjoyed my first weeks at the university and so far found the course to be both interesting and challenging. I have already tried lots of new things, and found the Sociology team to be really supportive in encouraging our ideas. I was nicely surprised that the modules vary on assignments we get to complete, and that we get this kind of choice. I am happy that I chose to study Sociology here and am looking forward to further challenging myself.”
ESRC Festival of Social Science

An annual celebration of social sciences took place in November.

“This year we are showcasing the positive ways that our social sciences researchers are changing the lives of vulnerable and harder-to-reach groups with work that empowers them as individuals, that reduces barriers to their participation in society, or that highlights the challenges they face. ESRC Festival of Social Science takes place each year in November.”

The Sociology team presented work on the following topics:

- Empowering harder-to-reach groups through food.
- Sociology beyond the campus: Engaging students in applied research.
- Prisoner life stories through Dartington-based ‘LandWorks’.
- Patient activism and digital media.

“What I have liked the relevance of the session to what we are doing at that specific moment. I also like the amount of info provided and the follow-through with relevant material emailed or posted on Facebook afterwards as promised.”

What Do Students Write About?

**DISSERTATION AWARDS 2019**

In recognition of student achievements, each year we award the best Sociology dissertation with the Brendan Heron prize. In 2019 this went to:


Students always surprise us with the broad and exciting variety of topics and methods they choose to employ. This includes surveys, interviews and visual analysis as well as innovative analysis of media such as Instagram. The array of choices is truly impressive.

Some of the best works completed in 2019 were:

- Annie Watson – ‘An exploration of attitudes towards women joining the Royal Marines amongst men serving in the corps’.
- Fez Endalaust – “Migrants – we have more to lose”. Examining migrant sex workers’ perceptions on the impact of UK policy on prostitution’.
- Joel Gilhespy – ‘Exploring Contemporary Grief’.
**Winner of the Best Community Archive Award!**

**MAKER MEMORIES PROJECT LED BY DR LYVINIA ELLESCHILD WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION!**

The Maker Memories project is supported by Maker with Rame Community Interest Company (CIC) in partnership with The Box. Lyvinia is a member of the CIC and the project’s Research Director. This link with the University has meant students from BSc Sociology and BA Media Arts have been able to play important roles in recording stories and using their creative skills in engaging way. From the accolade:

*We were impressed by the range of diverse communities that Maker Memories has engaged on this project to date, including and empowering a number of inter-related yet distinct groups, such as young people, the (now) elderly who had once visited the camp, people engaged with the music scene, environmental issues and cultural preservation.*

---

**STUDENT VOICES**

**From Free Pizza to Social Justice?**

**BY HARRIET MARKS, YEAR 2**

When I put Sociology at Plymouth as my firm choice on UCAS, I could not have anticipated the extent to which I enjoy the course and university experience. From free pizza at the Freshers Fair, to the recent public talk on criminal justice, I quickly found that the university has so much to offer!

Now in my second year, I love the course content combined with the frequent opportunities to choose what to research and write about. It helps to stay passionate (yep! that’s correct word here!) and motivated about every assignment I complete. I also like reflective pieces, which make me think more about my own life!

I am never short of things to do in Plymouth: from the socials run by student societies or trips to the Pavilions for live music, to going out with my flatmates to the Hoe and Barbican for cheesy chips or shopping in Drake’s Circus. Student life in Plymouth is the best of both worlds: proximity to the sea mixed with the city life.

I even enjoyed group presentations – they really boosted my confidence. I was surprised to learn about environmentalism and sustainability – that is not something you hear about when ‘sociology’ is named – yet the lectures were fascinating and thought-provoking, particularly when we explored how they link to consumerism.

Tutorials work best for me personally, as I get to ask questions about ideas I have about my assignments, while lecturers’ office hours are when I go and ask for feedback on first drafts.
Public mistrust of those in authority and failings of public organisations frame disputes over attribution of responsibility between individuals and systems. Exemplified with examples, including the Aberfan disaster, the death of Baby P, and Mid Staffs Hospital, this book explores parallel conflicts over access to information and privacy. Exploring the use of the FOIA (The Freedom of Information Act) as a research tool, Mike offers a unique contribution to the development of sociological research methods, and debates connected to privacy and secrecy in the information age.

Hannah Arendt, Environment, and Friendship?

September is a busy month also in the academic conference circuits. This year, Dr Jonathan Clark presented a paper: “Hannah Arendt’s challenge to the social sciences: the political and ontological problems of methodology” at the “Higher Education in Times of Crisis – Hannah Arendt’s Intellectual Legacy and Political Impact” conference, at the Vilnius-based European Humanities University, Lithuania. Not far away, in Prague, right about the same time, Dr Roberto Kulpa delivered a presentation entitled: “Places and spaces of friendships: On the importance of physical, virtual, and imagined ‘spaces’ in establishing and living friendships.”

Prof. Alison Anderson was co-organiser of the 15th biennial Conference on Communication and Environment, held in June 2019 at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. The event attracted over 300 scholars from 25 countries.

Are you interested in learning more about our research-informed Sociology programme? Come and meet us at Applicant Days! Also see further information on our website.

MIKE SHEAFF PUBLISHES NEW BOOK

EMLOYMENT FACTFILES

Sociology Graduate Wins Prestigious Government Award

Former Sociology student, Ed Pyle (now an analyst for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) is a recent UK Government Social Research Award winner!

He is author of the Office for National Statistics report on Loneliness ‘What Characteristics and Circumstances Are Associated with Feeling Lonely?’.

We congratulate Ed and take pride in helping our students to achieve their dreams.