



Relationships, Resources, and Power | SOU33112

Year	Junior Sophister
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	22
Pre-requisite	
Semester	1
Module Leader & Lecturer	Prof Richard Layte
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Module Outline:

We spend our whole lives immersed in our social groups but just as fish don't recognise the water in which they swim, humans rarely take notice of the role which social groups play in their lives. Yet our social relationships are central to social identity, beliefs, and attitudes. The quantity and quality of our social relationships with others will have a large bearing on the resources that are available to us, our social status, and outcomes such as educational success and our mental and physical health. Another name for social relationships is 'social networks' and sociologists have been interested in social networks since the foundation of the discipline in the 19th Century. This concept has become increasingly important with the advent of social media and digital networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but the concept of social network has a much longer lineage in Sociology and is important for understanding both digital and non-digital social processes. Week by week, the module examines the role of social relationships in key debates in sociology such as social networks in elite power, the dynamics of social protest, health and well-being and romantic and sexual relationships. Each week we take a specific issue assess the role which social networks play in explaining the dynamics involved and whether social networks in digital space are different from face-to-face contact and if so, the implications of this.



Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will have acquired the ability to:

- Understand the relational approach to explanation in the social sciences and particularly the importance of social relationships for individuals and societal level processes.
- Know the meaning and empirical measurement of social network concepts.
- Understand the relationship between social network analysis and core debates within sociology around social cohesion, cooperation, community, power, social capital and individual health.
- Understand the role of social networks in the maintenance and breakdown of social norms and the implications of this for social change.
- Be able to explain and apply dynamic social network processes in small world, diffusion and tipping models.

Assessment:

- 65% - 1500-word essay
- 25% - 1-hour multiple choice term test
- 10% - Tutorial group attendance and participation

Failure to attend at least half of the tutorials will automatically result in a 10% deduction (one full grade) from the overall module grade.

Recommended Reading List:

- Christakis, N. and Fowler, J. (2011) *Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*, Harper Press, London.
- Jackson, M.O (2019) *The Human Network: How We're Connected and Why it Matters*, Atlantic Books, London