

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Welcome back to Student Hub Live. Well, it's been a jam packed morning, and I have some more exciting guests to introduce you to. But first, let me take a trip to HJ on the hot desk and see how everyone's doing at home.

**HJ:**

As always, we've been doing really well and we absolutely loved the session introducing psychology. It was a great way to understand what's coming up in our study, and lots of things that we'd be thinking about as well. And hearing about how our guests, Lee and Haley, came into the subject, we were talking about that in the chat as well.

So Hunter wanted to help others, and when starting psychology loved it immediately, and found a talent for it. Jane did the Open Learn forensic psychology course, which she recommends, and says is absolutely fantastic. And Richard works in a mental health setting. So is studying psychology to give him a bit more insight into his patients.

So it's just brilliant hearing the way that everyone's been drawn into their subjects just through their different experiences and what they've studied before as well. And I know there's lots of us as well looking forward to this session on social science and global studies because there's a lot of us who have just started our modules as well. So do let our fantastic guests know your thoughts, comments, and questions on the session, and keep an eye for any widgets that come up for you to let us know your thoughts as well.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Absolutely. And if there is something that we don't have a chance to cover off because I know today's been very, very busy and you'd like to know the answer, email [StudentHub@Open.AC.UK](mailto:StudentHub@Open.AC.UK). We'll get it to the right person and make sure that we answer your questions because I bet there are lots of them, particularly if you're starting on something like DD102 or one of our level 1 modules in terms of the social sciences and global studies. And that's what we're going to be talking about now. I have some more chairs who basically oversee the module to introduce you to. I have Ieman, Teresa, and Janet.

Now one of the things that students may do early days in a module is find their module website. This is really important. And then they may find their forum, and start going and talking to people on it. So that can be a really exciting thing. Let us know in the chat if that's something that you've already done, and what you thought of it.

But I wonder if I could just invite the three of you to maybe say something. Many chairs are often on those forums to see how the students are, answer questions, and of course they're moderated by other team members as well. But Ieman, what can you tell us about what's going on in your forum world?

**IEMAN HASSAN:**

Great. Well, it's lovely to meet everybody, and we've obviously been meeting lots of people on the forum as well. And I've been working with my co-chair on DD102, Zoe Doy. So lots of things which I'm sure are common to many of the students starting on the modules.

One of the questions that we've had is about tutorial options. We have quite a sort of intricate start in terms of our tutorial options. And that can be a little bit confusing. So we have responded to that in terms of the main big one with the session, which we had on Monday, and then follow up that we are having sort of in the next few weeks.

But we have said do contact their tutors to find out about those. And more broadly about tutorial options, Janet's going to talk a little bit more about that. Another big issue we've had on DD102 is that we currently use is about referencing. We currently use Harvard, OU Harvard, but the university is rolling out Cite Me Right.

And so there's been quite a lot of uncertainty about what students should do around that. And so we have said that we can use both. We've put up some information about it, but again the key thing will be to talk to your tutors. And tutors will absolutely be able to guide students through that process in terms of referencing, and not to worry about it. It's very early days, and as long as people have a go, that's the key thing at this stage.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Absolutely. So I guess in your sense then forums have been a really great space for you to be able to maybe pick up on people's anxieties or concerns, clarify things, and also provide information. So that's really, really helpful. Theresa, what's been going on in your forum land?

**TERESA WILLIS:**

Yeah, like DD102, we've had a lot of questions around things like study skills and tutorials. But another key thing for us that we've picked up on is actually the use of the forums themselves. So there's different types of forums, especially on DD105. We have activity forums, which are embedded within the module so you'll be answering questions as you go along.

But in addition, we have kind of the-- you'll have a tutor group forum and a cluster group forum as well. And it's a really great space to communicate with other students, but to ask questions of your tutor as well. But one thing we've picked up on is that a lot of students are asking about external kind of forums, and social media sites around kind of Facebook groups and WhatsApp groups.

So we just want to stress that although we know that these can be great ways for students to meet other students and kind of share experiences that the best place for you to go for advice is always to your tutor. So you just to say be careful when you're using these external sites, and always seek kind of clarification and advice through your tutor rather than relying on information in these external sites as you move through your module.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Absolutely absolutely. So we've been looking today through colleagues within arts and humanities at some of the various interesting topics they've got. And social sciences and global studies are no exception. In fact, you know, Suzanne says is anyone more confused? Because she's not sure what path to take because it's all so interesting.

I mean, the one thing I would say is that level one does give you that opportunity to try things and explore them. And you do specialise towards the end of the qualification. But I wonder, Janet, if you can tell us a little bit about some of the different lenses that are used within social sciences and global studies?

**JANET HUNTER:**

Yes, so I'm on DD103, which is for most people the second level one module that they will study. So they might have decided to specialise by that point or they might have kept it open. But we have eight disciplines within the social sciences and global studies. And they all look at things in different ways. Obviously, politics has a particular bias compared to environmental studies, but they all mesh together.

And one thing that we do within the level one module is just that we have themes that draw different ideas and different disciplines together. So one key theme that we have that comes across all of the level one modules is inequalities, which we'll all be aware of inequalities and certainly over the pandemic we've been more aware of inequalities than perhaps we have in the past.

So that's something that we do in DD103, and that links with our other two key themes, which are rights and justice. But those are the three that we look at on DD103.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Hmm, and as you say that this is one particular area that does span across all of the different modules. I mean, how does inequalities work in DD102?

**IEMAN HASSAN:**

Right. Yeah, well, if we start off actually with inequalities, we start off with the street. But inequalities is one of the key areas that we think about. And in fact, this time as well on the first assignment we are asking students to think about differences in inequalities. So inequalities we see as the unequal distribution of valued social resources within society or between societies.

So such as valued resources, such as education, housing, health. And we also go on to look at inequalities in terms of consumption. And we look at how we consume goods and services, and we think about the sort of unequal distribution around those, and the impacts on different groups. And then also thinking about inequalities within the global supply chain as well. So quite a breadth that we cover as we go through the module.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Hmm, hmm, hmm. And I know students are looking forward to those first assignments on that topic, which is all about writing in your own words. Teresa, how do inequalities work through a criminological lens?

**TERESA WILLIS:**

Yeah, so we look at inequalities from a number of different kind of perspectives. So in the first instance, we look at inequalities and how who we are and where we're born, and things like race come into who's more likely to be seen as being a criminal or who's more likely to be targeted by kind of the criminal justice system for certain activities?

Then we move on and we also look at things like, how inequalities impact upon people's ability to access the criminal justice system. So are people treated differently because of being able to afford better kind of legal representation and things like that? So and then we also look at inequalities in terms of punishment. So are certain groups more likely to escape kind of harsher punishments than others? So it's something that runs through the entire module as we look at different elements of the criminal justice system.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

And this is one of the interesting things I personally find about interdisciplinary approaches is that you guys have all got fairly different takes on the same sort of topic area, different concerns, and different methods and ways of looking at these. But all, I guess, add different perspectives and contributions to something that we all have an experience of in our everyday life.

So let's have a think then about this notion of qualification. So Suzanne had said a bit earlier that she's not sure she's on the right qualification, and I'm sure many students hearing about all of these exciting areas are thinking, gosh, you know, am I on the right path? And what can I do about that? So, Teresa, I wonder if you could talk a little bit about how students might know that and what the options are as of the whole range.

**TERESA WILLIS:**

Yeah, yeah, so our school offers-- there's eight different disciplines, and there's 30 qualifications, and 34 different modules, so there's a lot there. And I think it's important to say that you might not know at this point, and that's absolutely fine. Because as you move through these modules. in particular DD102 and DD103, you'll have a chance to kind of explore different disciplines.

And if you do find that you're not in the right place, or you think you might have signed up for a qualification and it's not for you, it's level one, so you have plenty of opportunities to change. And it's OK to change your mind. I think many of us have changed our minds as we've moved through our academic careers. So if you do think that you might not be in the wrong place, I'd say just get in touch with student support team, and they can talk you through your options, and make sure that you do end up on the right pathway.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

And we've asked people at home what sort of support they've already accessed. There's been a huge range. So our word cloud about the various things that people have engaged with shows that people have been using things like the module website primarily, which is a great place to start, but also they've been engaging with forums, their tutor.

But also things like the library, digital skills, being reflective, and doing some of those activities, looking at study skills. TGF, I think that may be a Tutor Group Forum, which is a forum where one tutor can access there maybe 15 or 20 students in a sort of smaller group. Others are things like WhatsApp, and the study planners, the library website. Computing help desk, great source of support there as well. And the psychology website.

So people are using the various services, and also the various information sources, which is just absolutely wonderful to see. I wonder if we might sort of look at the three different examples. I mean, I mean, DD102 is a very common starting point for many qualifications.

**IEMAN HASSAN:**

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, in terms of 102, it's very much the core social science module in terms of a starting point. So it's a very broad based social science that we cover within social science. All the disciplines, which I hope are sort of scrolling along at some point in front of everybody. So but social science can be done with other disciplines.

So we cover social science with economics, with sociology, with geography, and so on. So it's a really good broad based starting point. And the key thing is that people can get an idea about, as Teresa said, get an idea about what they're interested in.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Hmm, so lots and lots of different things. And people have been filling in our question about what will you do with your degree. We'll take a look at that in just a moment. So if you haven't contributed do put one or three things in the boxes in terms of some of your aspirations that you've got. Janet, what can you tell us about environmental studies and that whole area?

**JANET HUNTER:**

Yes, so DD103 people would come to environmental studies from U116 quite normally so they would do environments and then come to DD103. And that is a social science perspective of the environment. So that environmental studies pathway follows through, rather than the science, which is another option. You can follow through environmental studies, and what the impact of the environment is on people and their surroundings. So that's a really interesting pathway that students might take.

But something that we also see on the forum is that actually students haven't necessarily decided what to do at this point. So they might be thinking, am I going to do environmental studies? Am I going to do geography? And you can do either of those from the level one modules that you've already decided to study.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

And Teresa, what about the options in criminology?

**TERESA WILLIS:**

Yeah, DD105 is very much a criminology module. So unlike the others, we're solely focusing on criminology. But some of our students do come to us having done DD102 first, but a lot of our students are also on joint honours degrees. So we have a lot of students who are studying criminology and psychology as well as criminology and law in addition to those doing just straight criminology or an open degree.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

So we've been asking people at home about their aspirations. Let's take a look and see what everyone wants to do with their qualification. Here can see there are lots and lots of things. But some of the things, including counselling; teaching; child services; hospice work; prison officer; going for master's, and of course, we do that at the Open University also; youth justice; writing poetry; forensic; family liaison officer; integrative therapist; don't know yet; get my dream job.

So lots of variety there as well. And I mean, I wonder if we could just sort of end by talking about one key point, which is that despite this really exciting content and some key theories that students are going to learn about, actually level one is teaching students many things, many skills. And you can pretty much take these anywhere. The things that in the social sciences are all about using evidence, et cetera, that referencing you're talking about a bit earlier.

These are things we can have in our bag of academic skills and use. So what would you say to students who may sort of think, gosh, there is a lot of content. What is my priority here in terms of focusing on?

**IEMAN HASSAN:**

That's a really great question. I think the key thing is that people remain open-minded. It is level one. You're going to be introduced to an awful lot of content. Have a think as you go through what kinds of topics, and what issues, and what skills that you are interested in. So you might be that you really enjoy writing or it could be that you're more interested in working with numbers.

So think about your own skills. And again, we always say, people are bringing so much themselves, and sometimes we sort of departmentalize it and think, oh, that's just our past life, and this is study, and this is completely new. Actually, no. We bring so much to it. But think through. As you're going through, remain open-minded and think, what am I really interested in? What are the skills that I enjoy doing? And those are the things that you can then begin to sort think about as you work through and begin to come to a decision about what pathway you want to take. So the key thing is to be open-minded.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

HJ, how's everyone doing at home? Have we answered lots of people's questions? Are they feeling excited as they were at the beginning of the day?

**HJ:**

Oh, definitely. I know we're really excited to start out our study journeys. And we're already getting in touch with our tutors, getting on the forums to introduce ourselves as well, and just getting into everything to do with the module. We're looking at our module materials, and getting set up. And it's just really an exciting time. So it's great to hear how everyone's all positive and happy about it.

And we just had a little chat about day-to-day inequalities as well as we've been speaking about with our guests. So we've been talking about things like, mental health inequality. How it may not be treated as the same as physical health. Alana said, race is still a major inequality issue. Boss said disability. And I know myself in my day job I encounter homelessness as well.

So even if we think we live in a 21st century modern country, there's still lots of inequality. And the good thing is that we're taking this as positive experiences. How we can use our study to help people, to understand, to gain insight, and improve things individually as well. So it's all very positive in the chat.

**KAREN FOLEY:**

Brilliant. That's wonderful. Well I know that 47% of you are studying more than one module, so stay tuned for our next session, which is about study intensely. I know a lot of people are interested in this area. But in the meantime, Iman, and Teresa, and Janet, thank you so much for coming along, and being wonderful smiley chairs of the level one module, and giving our students a bit of reassurance. And it was really interesting to hear what you have to say about the forums also. So thank you. Right, our next video--

**IMAN HASSAN:**

Thank you.

--is-- thank you. Our next video is why are we so fascinated by ghost towns? And then we'll be back, as I said, to talk about flexible study intensity. So what happens if you want to up or down weight the amounts that you're studying with The Open University? 1 See you in just a minute.

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