

# **SOCIOLOGY**

## **Doctoral (PhD) Program in SOCIOLOGY**

**Academic Degree:** Doctor (PhD)

**Professional Qualification:** Researcher

**Duration of Study:** 3 / 4 years

**Mode of Study:** Full-time, Self-study, Part-time

### **QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

The development of global processes in social terms and the dynamic changes taking place in all areas of life create the need for specialists who have the necessary competencies to understand and analyze society in its entirety, features and specifics, as well as to predict social trends, operationalize them and show their application in life situations and environments. The doctoral program in Sociology meets the need for highly qualified personnel by preparing specialists who can develop and improve the scientific, cultural, and educational system, bringing a high degree of professionalism and creativity to their work and a committed attitude to reality.

The curriculum of the specialty is in line with the principles of modern university education, is oriented towards the effective application of social knowledge, and is focused on establishing stability and success in society and on the personal level.

In preparing doctoral students, the Department of Sociology strives to create opportunities for:

- application of modern teaching methods
- development of skills for scientific research
- full scientific communication with doctoral students
- formation of skills for teamwork
- adherence to values in science
- development of projects and participation in sociological research
- inclusion in scientific forums
- inclusion in the department and the professional community.

#### **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM**

The training of doctoral students in the specialty "Sociology" aims to prepare specialists with the necessary qualifications to carry out research, analytical, investigative, expert, administrative and other specialized activities related to the social structure and the activities within it.

#### **3. GENERAL QUALIFICATION AND SPECIALIZATION OF THE PROGRAM**

In the preparation of doctoral students in sociology, emphasis is placed on the depth of knowledge and the ability to critically use knowledge to carry out professional analyses, make comparisons, give 1 expert assessments and recommendations when making important

decisions about the processes in society and in various institutions. Special attention is paid to the formation of doctoral students as scientists with a high linguistic and communication culture. This is necessary in view of the specifics of the region in which the South-West University of Social Sciences "Neofit Rilski" is located and with the processes of globalization and deepening of the integration of Bulgaria as a member of the European Union.

#### **4. ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCES ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK**

##### **4.1 Knowledge (theoretical and/or factual)**

- The holder of a doctoral degree in sociology possesses sufficient and in-depth theoretical knowledge in key areas of sociology;
- Has the necessary factual knowledge in the field of: history of sociology, the essence of sociology as a discipline, the different levels of sociological knowledge;
- Has knowledge of the conceptual apparatus and sociological tools;
- Has knowledge of methodological approaches to analysis.

##### **4.2. Skills (cognitive and/or practical)**

- Applies acquired knowledge in depth and comprehensively in his/her professional activities;
- Synthesizes and evaluates the necessary information from various sources;
- Plans, prepares and conducts sociological research;
- Processes empirical information;
- Is able to analyze public opinion, attitudes and behavior of social groups and individuals;
- Can work with different communities, contact representatives of institutions at different levels.

##### **4.3. Independence and responsibility**

- Orients and reacts promptly in problematic social situations;
- Can competently analyze them and propose solutions and realistic forecasts;
- Has an expert position on trends in Bulgarian and global realities;
- Gives complex assessments and recommendations when making important decisions for the development of society and social processes in an international, national and regional context.

##### **4.4. Learning competence**

- Able to apply their knowledge and skills to solve specific tasks in a national, regional and international environment;
- Has a formed attitude for continuous learning throughout life;
- Has mobility and acquisition of skills in new and non-standard situations;
- Has competitiveness on the labor market in the country and abroad.
- Speaks foreign languages, exchanges information.

##### **4.5. Communicative and social competences**

- Can take responsibility in his/her professional activities and demonstrate independent thinking;

- Has social and communicative competences – is able to work in a team;
- Formulates problems and proposes solutions;
- Expresses his/her views in a comprehensible manner, demonstrates understanding and solidarity towards other participants in the process.

#### 4.6. Professional competences

- Can develop the theoretical model, methodology and tools of sociological research;
- Organizes and implements field studies on various topics related to social reality;
- Knows and applies programs for processing empirical information;
- Analyzes the data obtained from the research;
- Gives expert assessments of the state of various processes, phenomena, communities and institutions.

### 5. AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL REALIZATION

The educational and qualification degree "Doctor" in Sociology provides an opportunity for:

- successful realization in prestigious areas of public life such as science, education, communications, social management, business, public administration, marketing;
- realization in both state and private institutions and organizations, and in the non-governmental sector.

## STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

№	NAME OF ACTIVITIES	Form of preparation and implementation			Form of recognition
		CREDITS	HORARIUM	lectures, seminars, laboratory exercises, self preparation, consultations, participation, other	exam, current assessment, interview, certificate, report, protocol, certification, other
I.	EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY				
1.	General Sociology	4.0	120	30 l. / 15 s. (45 a / 75 sp)	exam
2.	Research Methods	4.0	120	30 l. / 15 s. (45 a / 75 sp)	exam
3.	Project preparation and management	3.0	90	30 l. / 60 sp	exam
4.	English language	4.0	120	15 l. / 15 e. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
5.	Elective course from the first group	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
6.	Elective course from the second group	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
	ОБЩО :	21.0	630		
II.	RESEARCH ACTIVITY				
1.	Developing a dissertation project	10.0	300	consultations/independent	interview

				preparation	
2.	Research and referencing literature on the topic of the dissertation	10.0	300	independent preparation	interview
3.	Presentation of research methodology and tools	10.0	300	consultations/independent preparation	interview
4.	Publication of articles (refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information or non-refereed publications with scientific review)	15.0	450	independent preparation/consultations	publication
5.	Participation in scientific forums (conferences, round tables, seminars, symposiums, webinars)	10.0	300	participation	certificate/program
6.	Participation in a research project	20.0	600	participation	certificate
7.	Conducting field research (implemented based on modern sociological theories and methods of analysis)	15.0	450	independent preparation	report
8.	Writing the dissertation	29.0	870	consultations/independent preparation	discussion
	<b>ОБЩО :</b>	<b>119.0</b>	<b>3570</b>		
<b>III. PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY</b>					
1.	Student consultations	5.0	150	consultations	report
2.	Checking written work	5.0	150	independent preparation	report
3.	Theses reviews	5.0	150	independent preparation	protocol
4.	Participation in seminars and supporting the work of the teaching assistant	5.0	150	independent preparation	interview
	<b>ОБЩО :</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>600</b>		
<b>IV. OTHERS</b>					
1.	Participation in department meetings	5.0	150	participation	protocol
2.	Participation in working groups and committees for the preparation of documentation that supports educational and administrative activities (including audit, accreditation, post-accreditation control, etc.)	10.0	300	participation	protocol
3.	Participation in the organization and conduct of scientific forums	5.0	150	participation	certificate
	<b>ОБЩО :</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>600</b>		
	<b>TOTAL (for the overall duration of study):</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>5400</b>		
<b>ELECTIVE COURSES</b>					
	<b>Elective course from the first group</b>				
1.	Sociology of Social Managment	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
2.	Sociology of Media and Public Communications	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
	<b>Elective course from the second group</b>				
1.	Sociology of Science and Education	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam
2.	Sociology of Religion	3.0	90	15 l. / 15 s. (30 a / 60 sp)	exam

## ANNOTATIONS OF COURSES

## COMPULSORY COURSES

### GENERAL SOCIOLOGY

**ECTS CREDITS:** 4

**Assessment:** exam

**Methodical Guide:**

**Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Prof. DSc Valentina Milenkova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: [vmilenkova@swu.bg](mailto:vmilenkova@swu.bg)

**Weekly Hours:** 2 lectures + 1 seminar

**Type of Exam:** Written

#### **Annotation:**

The main objective of the course “General Sociology” is to introduce doctoral students to the conceptual and substantive domains of sociological science by progressively mastering the key sociological categories, principles, and methods of sociological research, analysis, and interpretation embedded in the lecture material.

The course traces the “becoming” of individual social lifeworlds and the formation of sociological theories in the process of establishing sociology as a science. The emergence and development of sociological thought and ideas are systematically presented. A key problematic area involves the explication of fundamental principles, major systems of sociological thinking, and sociological problem fields. The reconstruction of the constellation of social worlds that constitute the subject of the discipline becomes a kind of “invitation” for doctoral students to engage with sociology. Throughout the course, doctoral students are introduced to a wide range of literature — both classical and modern

#### **Content of the course:**

The course in General Sociology aims to introduce students to both theoretical and empirical sociology. To this end, the lectures and seminars are divided into two main modules: 1) theoretical and 2) empirical.

#### **Teaching and Assessment Method:**

The program provides for the preparation of the doctoral student on all the indicated topics within 45 hours of lectures and seminar exercises. Independent work is developed, and an exam is conducted on the topics covered in the syllabus.

## RESEARCH METHODS

**ECTS credits:** 4

**Assessment:** exam

**Methodical Guide:**

**Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mario Marinov, Department of Sociology

E-mail: [mario\\_marinov@swu.bg](mailto:mario_marinov@swu.bg)

**Weekly Hours:** 2 lectures + 1 seminar

**Type of Exam:** Written

#### **Annotation:**

The main objective of the course “Research Methods” is to familiarize doctoral students with the entire research process, its structural features, and the specific requirements involved in the creation and use of tools for empirical sociological research (ESR). The course thoroughly examines the organization of work, content requirements, and research problems at each stage of ESR. It analyzes the cognitive capabilities of different research

methods, the limits of applying empirical knowledge, the validity of ESR, as well as possible errors and misuses of empirical sociological information.

**Content of the course:**

Doctoral students acquire practical skills for conducting empirical sociological research (ESR). The entire cycle of its implementation is simulated, with doctoral students developing their own individual projects including an ESR program, theoretical model, hypotheses, questionnaire, and a data processing plan. They are trained to independently analyze data from univariate and bivariate distributions, as well as to work with basic statistical coefficients. At the end of the course, doctoral students defend their independently developed ESR project and interpret univariate and bivariate sociological distributions.

**Teaching and Assessment Method:**

The program provides preparation for the doctoral student on all specified topics within 45 hours of lectures and seminar exercises. Independent work is developed, and an exam is conducted on the topics covered in the syllabus.

## **ELECTIVE COURSES**

### **SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL MANAGEMENT**

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Methodical Guide:**

**Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petrana Stoykova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: [petrana\\_stoikova@swu.bg](mailto:petrana_stoikova@swu.bg)

**Weekly Hours:** 1 lecture + 1 seminar

**Type of Exam:** Written

**Annotation:**

The main objective of the course “Sociology of Social Management”, intended for doctoral students, is to introduce them to key and significant theories and doctrines in the field of governance from antiquity to the present day. The course aims to equip students with knowledge and skills for sociological analysis of the functioning and formation of power, and the implementation of various types of policies – both in the context of globalization and within Bulgaria. Doctoral students will also acquire knowledge and competencies for conducting research-based analysis of political doctrines and processes taking place in Bulgaria, including the structure of governance and power in the country, as well as the various types of authority and forms of governance.

**Content of the course:**

Within the course, doctoral students learn the theoretical and conceptual framework related to the types of governance and their functioning in the modern world. A special focus of the course is the development of skills for sociological analysis of the processes of articulating and making power-related decisions, as well as critical reflection on current issues of governance and the exercise of power in today's world.

**Teaching and Assessment Method:**

The program provides for the doctoral student's preparation on all specified topics within 30 hours of lectures and seminars. Independent work is developed, and an examination is held based on the topics in the syllabus.

## SOCIOLOGY OF MEDIA AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Methodical Guide:**

**Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer: Prof. DSc. Dobrinka Peycheva**

E-mail: [peichevad@swu.bg](mailto:peichevad@swu.bg)

**Weekly Hours:** 1 lecture + 1 seminar

**Type of Exam:** Written

### **Annotation:**

The objective of the course “**Sociology of Media and Public Communications**”, designed for doctoral students in the professional field of Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies, is to familiarize students with the significance and role of communications and media in the social-communicative activities of individuals, groups, and societies. It also addresses media literacy as a key competence in the digital age, the socializing and educational resources of media and communications, and their role in the development of societal spheres and institutions.

The course content emphasizes both theoretical and applied dimensions of the influence of media and communications on the transformations of individuals, groups, communities, and social processes.

### **Content of the course:**

The training includes the study of the role of communications and media in shaping public opinion across different contexts and time periods. It explores both classical and diverse contemporary models and techniques of mass communication influence and their effects, as well as various methods and techniques used to study them.

### **Teaching and Assessment Method:**

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester, taking into account ongoing assessment and examination results.

## SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

**ECTS credits:** 3

**Assessment:** exam

**Methodical Guide:**

**Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer: Prof. DSc Valentina Milenkova, Department of Sociology**

E-mail: [vmilenkova@swu.bg](mailto:vmilenkova@swu.bg)

**Weekly Hours:** 1 lecture + 1 seminar

**Type of Exam:** Written

### **Annotation:**

The main objective of the course “**Sociology of Science and Education**” is to acquaint doctoral students with the key social issues related to science, education, and the institutional structures of education and research, as well as their role in socio-economic development..

The content of the course has a theoretical-applied nature with a strong practical focus, structured around several thematic areas. Key concepts, theories, and perspectives in the field of the Sociology of education and science are examined. Doctoral students are introduced to the historical development of knowledge institutions, particularly universities and research institutes, as forms of scientific and intellectual life.

**Content of the course:**

The course includes an overview of contemporary trends in the development of science and scientific knowledge. Special attention is given to the evolution of the "European Higher Education Area" and the related processes, values, and elements that shape it. Key topics include the processes of diversification and innovation in higher education and science, as well as the development of the principles and practices of lifelong learning as a key EU strategy and a central principle for its future.

The course also presents educational and research policies in both national and European contexts. Special focus is placed on the scientific community and scientific mobility. Various empirical indicators and studies in the field of science and education are examined. The course also includes the operationalization of various concepts from the fields of science and education.

**Teaching and Assessment Method:**

The program provides for the doctoral student's preparation on all specified topics within 30 hours of lectures and seminars. Independent work is developed, and an examination is conducted based on the topics in the syllabus.

## **SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION**

**ECTS credits:** 3**Assessment:** exam**Methodical Guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mario Marinov, Department of SociologyE-mail: [mario\\_marinov@swu.bg](mailto:mario_marinov@swu.bg)**Weekly Hours:** 1 lecture + 1 seminar**Type of Exam:** Written**Annotation:**

The main objective of the course “**Sociology of Religion**” is to introduce doctoral students to the issues surrounding non-traditional spiritual communities, their main representatives, and their presence in Bulgaria. The course aims to develop a sociological sensitivity in doctoral students toward the relationship between the individual and the social group – how different non-traditional religious communities as social formations with distinct cultures interact internally, with each other, and with the broader society. Another key objective is to cultivate an understanding of the relationship between empirical observation, data analysis, and sociological theory.

**Content of the course:**

During the course, doctoral students develop an understanding of non-traditional religious communities and, on this basis, apply similar methods of observation, analysis, and theorization to other aspects of social life. The course aims to enrich students' comprehension of new religious movements and their role in contemporary society. It provides examples of key representatives of non-traditional religious communities, explores their social dimensions, and addresses issues such as the role of the family within these movements. Attention is given to the contradictions and conflicts associated with non-traditional religious communities, as well as to the research methods specific to their study. Special focus is placed on the social construction of reality in relation to new religious movements and the sociologist's particular perspective on them.

**Teaching and Assessment Method:**



The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester, based on the evaluation of the course assignment (in the form of an independent paper) and the exam in the course.