



understanding the societies of yesterday and today to act in the world of tomorrow

# Master of arts (MA) in social sciences

## GENERAL OUTLINE

### Objectives

The Master of Arts in Social Sciences is a cycle of training in direct contact with research and the world of work. Designed as an interdisciplinary course based on four major issues in the contemporary world, the programme is enhanced by the numerous local and international research projects of the Institute of Social Sciences.

### Career prospects

At the end of the degree course, you will be able to:

- apply the latest knowledge in areas of specialisation such as the regulation of social inequalities, the personal and professional paths, the knowledge concerning the body, health and medicine, media discourse and cultural products in the public arena;
- develop issues specific to your areas of specialisation by establishing connections between conceptual frameworks and the realities of social life;
- synthesise the findings of scientific work and conduct research projects of interest to the policy;
- make use of adequate methodological tools to carry out your research project;
- participate, through your analysis and argumentation skills, in debates, collaborate in writing reports and articles, and intervene in the press and the media.

University studies allow to develop, in addition to specific academic skills, a great many transverse skills such as: oral and written communication, critical, analytical and summarising faculties, abilities in research, the learning and transmission of knowledge, independence and the ability to make judgements in the field of specialisation and overlapping areas.

This panoply of skills is excellent preparation for a wide range of employment opportunities such as:

- Research and teaching (Universities and Universities of applied sciences)
- Public administration, at national and international levels
- Office of Statistics and polling institutes
- Media
- Non governmental organisations
- Associative networks
- Private sector.

Alumni move into a wide variety of roles, for example as a communications officer for a theatre or youth liaison officer for a large administrative authority.

Other positions and alumni testimonials:  
[unil.ch/perspectives/unil-et-apres](http://unil.ch/perspectives/unil-et-apres)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Organiser

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences:  
[www.unil.ch/ssp](http://www.unil.ch/ssp)  
Institute for Social Sciences:  
[www.unil.ch/iss](http://www.unil.ch/iss)

### Degree awarded

Master of Arts (MA) in Social Sciences

### ECTS credits

120

### Duration

4 semesters

### Teaching language

French. Recommended level: C1.  
A good level of English (B2) is advised for reading academic texts.

### Study advisor

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### More information

[www.unil.ch/ssp/master](http://www.unil.ch/ssp/master) > Sciences sociales

## EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

### Core curriculum

The core curriculum focuses on developing methodological skills and a multi-disciplinary understanding of social sciences. It also allows students to develop a sense of teamwork before they engage in a collaborative project during a practical research workshop. Designed as genuine research hubs, these are all led by two or three teaching staff, who create synergies between their different ways of approaching the topic in question.

### Orientations

You can decide on the focus you want your course to have by choosing one of the four options available to you. Options are chosen after the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of enrolment on the Master's course. Each option consists of:

- a core module with classes and seminars dedicated to exploring a specific topic in detail;
- free-choice options so that you can tailor the programme to your needs and interests;
- an optional placement in a professional environment.

The classes in the core module make up the main part of the option. These are designed to reflect real research environments and are all led by two or three teaching staff, who combine their knowledge and experience in different ways to tackle the topic concerned. The optional classes module gives you the opportunity to specialise, based on your interests and professional objectives (by choosing classes from other streams in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences or other faculties at UNIL, or by going on an exchange to a partner institution) but also to add a professional element to your course with an internship.

### *Life Path, Inequalities and Social Policies*

The increase in social inequalities represents a major challenge in the 21st century. This option examines how class, gender or racial inequalities impact individuals' life paths. It explores the biographical effects associated with events such as unemployment, the birth of a child, divorce or migration. Urban field studies and external experts bring a practical perspective to the course, which takes a multidisciplinary approach that draws on aspects of sociology, social psychology, gender studies and social policy.

### *Human Rights, Diversity and Globalisation*

The increasing movement of individuals, knowledge, technologies, practices, standards and policies on different territorial scales represents a major challenge in the process of globalisation. At the same time, globalisation and the development of standards at the transnational level affect how individuals move, both locally and nationally. This option draws on contributions from historical and political sociology, the sociology of law, anthropology and social

psychology. It includes work on archives, ethnographical approaches, biographical interviews and qualitative and quantitative surveys.

### *Culture, Communication and Media*

This option examines the communications processes involved in cultural construction and reproduction, in the sense of both "cultivated culture" and "ordinary culture". What are the mechanisms of power, ideology and the cultural industry in the era of "new media" and "digital capitalism"? How is the body interrogated and "promoted" in various professional spheres and contemporary public spaces? These issues are covered using a combination of qualitative approaches and cross-disciplinary reflection.

### *Body, Medicine, Technologies and Health*

This option offers a pluralistic approach to the issues associated with the body, sexuality and managing suffering in the contemporary context. In particular, it focuses on analysing the social and ethical issues associated with the development of new technologies for transforming human or post-human bodies and the political and institutional mechanisms associated with the governance and globalisation of health. The classes deal with these various topics from a range of perspectives: anthropological, social, political, legal, institutional, technological, psychological and moral.

### Dissertation

Your dissertation marks the end of your programme of specialisation. It demonstrates your ability to absorb knowledge and see a project through to its end, both from the perspective of the empirical, methodological and theoretical rigour it requires, and the time management and practical know-how it involves.

## SYLLABUS\*

### Core curriculum, 39 ECTS credits

#### Orientation, 51 ECTS credits

- Specific courses  
27 ECTS credits
- Free-choice courses or internship  
24 ECTS credits

#### Master's thesis, 30 ECTS credits

\* subject to changes.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Admission requirements

The candidate must hold a Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, in Sociology or in Anthropology awarded by a Swiss university.

Holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded by the UNIL with a minor in social sciences are admitted to the Master of Arts in social sciences, with or without conditions.

Another degree or academic title in related areas may be judged equivalent and give access to the Master's degree in social sciences, with or without conditions.

### Enrolment and final dates

It is possible to start the programme of the Master of Arts in Social Sciences degree in the autumn or spring semester.

Applications to be submitted before the deadlines to the Admissions Office:

[www.unil.ch/immat](http://www.unil.ch/immat)

Autumn semester: 30 April

Spring semester: 30 November

Candidates needing a visa to study in Switzerland must apply for enrolment two months prior to these deadlines.

### Start of courses

Autumn semester: mid-September

Spring semester: mid-February

Academic calendar: [www.unil.ch/central/calendrier](http://www.unil.ch/central/calendrier)

### Part-time Master's degree

Under certain conditions, a Master programme can be followed part-time. See [www.unil.ch/formations/master-temps-partiel](http://www.unil.ch/formations/master-temps-partiel).

### General information on studies, guidance

[www.unil.ch/soc](http://www.unil.ch/soc)

### Accommodation and financial assistance

[www.unil.ch/sasme](http://www.unil.ch/sasme)

### International

[www.unil.ch/international](http://www.unil.ch/international)

### Mobility

The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences has over 100 agreements in place with partner universities, where you can study for part of your Master of Arts in Social Sciences and obtain credits.



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