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Studying Social Sciences

at the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

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The city of Düsseldorf

Düsseldorf is the capital of Germany's most populous federal state, North Rhine-Westphalia. Situated geographically and economically at the heart of Western Europe, the state capital with a population of 620,000 has developed strong international ties and has established itself as an important economic, academic, and cultural partner within the European Union. [Düsseldorf](#) is an internationally renowned banking centre and the home of continental Europe's largest Japanese expatriate community. The new and growing Harbour Media Centre provides a location for many companies engaged in communication and information technology. Electronic firms and start-ups also flourish in the city's business landscape. Düsseldorf's famous fashion industry contributes to the charm and "joie de vivre" of the city.

Besides the Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf is the home of a number of research institutes and educational facilities, such as the Robert Schumann Conservatory, the Academy of Fine Arts, the University of Applied Sciences and the Academy of Business Administration.



The Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf

The [Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf](#) is situated in the south of the city on a large and pleasant campus site. Initially it was founded as a Medical Academy in 1907 and first became the University of Düsseldorf in 1965. In January 1966, the University established the Faculty of Arts and Natural Sciences in addition to the Faculty of Medicine. Today about 35.000 students can choose from a large range of disciplines, now also including economics, law, social and cultural sciences.

The Heinrich Heine University has an outstanding academic reputation despite its fairly recent foundation. It supports international exchange programmes both on student and on staff level with partner universities in regions as diverse as California and Beijing, Cambridge and Naples. The Institute of Social Sciences itself has established more than 30 international partnerships.



The Institute of Social Sciences

The Institute of Social Sciences at the Heinrich Heine University offers a unique way to study Social Sciences by combining the disciplines of political science, sociology and media studies to form an integrated social studies bachelor and master programme:

BA Social Sciences

MA Political Communication

MA Political Sociology

MA European Studies

All our programmes highly emphasize methodological training in research and practice. The Institute of Social Sciences' study programmes have repeatedly attained high rankings in Germany.

Bachelor Programme of Social Sciences

The Bachelor programme in Social Sciences is an interdisciplinary study programme. It combines the subjects sociology, political science and communication and media studies and therefore offers students a broad study experience.

In very general terms, the BA programme in Social Sciences focuses on contemporary problems of modern society. It aims to impart substantial knowledge of the disciplines involved and provides methods to extend and deepen this knowledge. Topics of the programme include the analysis of social norms and institutions, the social structure of society, political systems and processes in different areas and the fundamental role information and commu-

nication media plays in modern society. Further topics are the major changes on the international level, especially globalisation and the European integration process.

The special features and aims of the **bachelor programme of Social Sciences** are the following:

- ⇒ to introduce basic theories and major research results in sociology, political science, media and communication studies to the students,
- ⇒ to provide training in empirical research and in methods of analysis and explanation including survey techniques, aggregate data analysis and multivariate statistical methods,
- ⇒ to improve communication skills and the use of modern media,
- ⇒ to promote teamwork and social competence,
- ⇒ to prepare students for the professional job market by requiring three months of work-placement including preparation and evaluation courses given by professional experts.

The programme structure is comprised of modules combining thematically, methodically and systematically related courses.

The following types of courses are offered:

Basic courses introduce students to academic work on topics of the three disciplines (only held in German).

Intermediate courses focus on intensive discussions about specific disciplinary topics. These courses give students the opportunity to improve their academic proficiency.

Advanced courses offer students the opportunity to research, present and discuss a topic independently.

Furthermore, **research projects** are designed to enable students to apply academic theories and methods in teamwork. **Work-placement** evaluation courses give students the opportunity to reflect on their practical experience. Students are also advised on how to proceed with their studies. Language courses help to improve job-oriented proficiency in at least one foreign language.

MA Programme of Political Communication

The MA programme of Political Communication is an interdisciplinary study programme combining communication and media studies and political science. Additional courses included in the programme are provided by related disciplines in the humanities such as sociology. The programme focuses on the presentation, communication, and perception of politics in modern societies and on the interaction between media and politics. Students gain insight into the political and social structures, within the mass media that determine political communication, as well as the social, economic, political, and cultural processes that lead to change in these structures.

An integral part of the programme is training in advanced methodology to enable students to reflect on existing knowledge and to analyse social reality critically.

Topics of the master programme of Political Communication include:

- ⇒ development of the media system and of the relationship between political and media actors,
- ⇒ factors influencing the development of the media system
- ⇒ mediatization of politics,
- ⇒ social and cultural change and its effects on social integration, fragmentation, and political culture,
- ⇒ influence of the media on political participation,
- ⇒ processes of opinion-building and the influence of interpersonal and mass media communication,
- ⇒ comparison of government and media systems in different countries,
- ⇒ the public's view on Europe and the European public sphere,
- ⇒ consequences for democracy and the legal and ethical dimensions of political communication.

MA Programme of Political Sociology

The MA programme in Political Sociology is an interdisciplinary study programme that combines the analytical perspectives of sociology and political science to examine the structures, processes, and dynamics of modern societies. It is designed for students interested in exploring the social foundations of political life, the interplay between societal change and political behaviour, and the mechanisms through which power, inequality, and collective action shape contemporary democracies.

The programme introduces students to central debates in political sociology, including the study of social stratification and political participation, the transformation of political institutions, and the impact of cultural and demographic change on political systems. Students gain insight into how social groups, organisations, and networks influence political processes, and how political decisions, in turn, shape social realities.

A core element of the MA programme in Political Sociology is advanced methodological training. Students acquire competencies in both qualitative and quantitative research, enabling them to conduct independent analysis of political and social structures. This methodological foundation equips graduates with the tools needed to critically evaluate empirical findings and to contribute to academic and applied research.

Topics of the master programme of Social Sciences include:

- ⇒ social structure and culture of contemporary societies,
- ⇒ political systems and policies,
- ⇒ political participation and the election process in developed democracies,
- ⇒ functions and pre-requisites of the rule of law and of welfare states,
- ⇒ mechanisms of informal social control and deviant behaviour,
- ⇒ role of markets and organisations in modern economies,
- ⇒ new forms and functions of publicity and communication and the role of mass media in the information society
- ⇒ international relations, comparative politics and European integration.

MA Programme of European Studies

The MA programme in European Studies is an interdisciplinary study programme combining political science, sociology, and related social science disciplines with a strong focus on the political, economic, and social dynamics of European integration. It is designed for students who wish to gain an in-depth understanding of the European Union, its institutions, policies, and societal impacts. The programme provides both academic foundations and practical analytical tools to explore Europe's role in a globalised world.

The programme introduces students to current debates on European politics, governance structures, and integration theories. It examines the interaction between national and supranational actors, the functioning of EU institutions, and the consequences of Europeanisation for member states and citizens. Students gain insight into the political, social, and communicative processes that shape contemporary Europe.

An essential component of the MA programme in European Studies is advanced methodological training, which enables students to conduct independent empirical research, ensuring that graduates are equipped to analyse complex political and social phenomena within the European context.

Topics of the master programme of European Studies include:

- ⇒ institutions, decision-making processes and governance structures of the European Union,
- ⇒ theories and models of European integration,
- ⇒ European public policy and its implementation in member states,
- ⇒ political communication and public opinion in Europe,
- ⇒ social and cultural dimensions of Europeanisation,
- ⇒ democracy, legitimacy, and the rule of law in the European Union,
- ⇒ Europe's role in international politics and global governance,
- ⇒ comparative perspectives on political systems and political cultures within Europe.



Office of Internationalisation

The International Office at the Institute of Social Sciences assists students interested in studying in a foreign country as well as students currently participating in an exchange programme. Dr Guido Quetsch is the International Coordinator of the Institute of Social Sciences. He advises students who are planning a stay in a foreign country and is also the Institute's contact person for incoming students from our partner universities.

Partnerships

The Institute of Social Sciences has established a broad Erasmus network of partnerships with 29 universities.

Belgium	Brussels
Croatia	Zagreb
Estonia	Tartu
Finland	Rovaniemi – Tampere – Turku
France	Alençon – Besançon – Cergy Pontoise Anglia
Great Britain	Ruskin – Reading – Queen's Belfast – Ulster – West of Scotland
Greece	Athens
Iceland	Akureyri
Italy	Bologna – Milano
Japan	Yamanashi (not as an Erasmus partnership)
Lithuania	Vilnius

Netherlands	Nijmegen
Poland	Kraków – Toruń – Wrocław
Spain	Cádiz – Granada – Pamplona
Czech Republic	Prague
Hungary	Budapest

Please visit the [website of the Internationalisation Office](#) for more information concerning your studies. It provides a helpful guide for new incoming students, an overview of courses held in English, instructions as to how to enrol in your selected courses as well as other useful information.

International Office of the University

As a central institution, the [International Office of the university](#) fulfils diverse functions concerning the internationalisation and international relations of Heinrich Heine University. It is responsible for the admission and enrolment of international students of partner universities and offers a variety of welcome events and support services for international students (e.g. FEEL AT HOME, Buddy Programme).



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