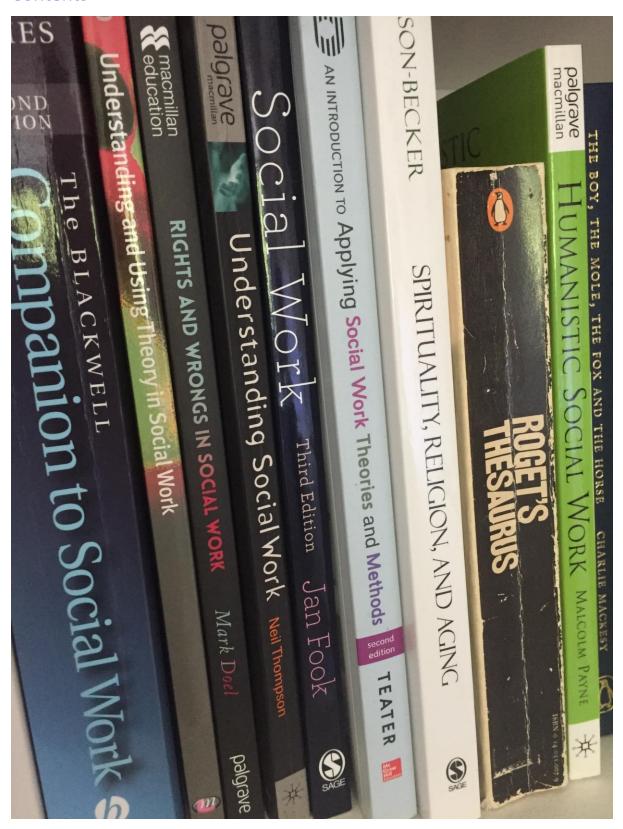


# Preparing for your Journey into Social Work- 2024/25

Firstly, congratulations on being accepted to study Social Work at Brunel University London and taking your first steps toward becoming a social worker. This pack is aimed at providing you with suggestions for Books, Radio programmes and Podcasts, TV programmes and Films and other activities you might wish to engage with as part of your preparation for being a student with us. It is not compulsory. Rather, we thought that for those who have time, we would offer you a fun set of resources. Feel free to dip in and out as you have time and interest.

We look forward to meeting you when classes begin and learning about your experiences on this great adventure of social work as we build a community of learners. There is no better time to become a social worker!

# Contents



- The work our students produce
  - Reflections
  - Personal Stories
    - Study Skills
  - Academic Reading
    - Podcasts
    - TV & Film

Have a look at each of the sections and choose what interests you. We have provided materials that are mostly available via streaming platforms so hopefully you will be able to access everything easily. If you have any hiccups finding anything, as technology has bad days too, please just email us using the contact details below!

If you'd like to follow us on social media, our Twitter, Facebook and Linkdin pages are:

https://twitter.com/brunelsocwork?lang=en

(8) Social Work at Brunel University | Facebook

https://www.linkedin.com/company/brunel-msc-in-social-work/



1 - Fiona Verity - Professor of social work

Click on the links below to view examples of the work our students get involved in during their studies:

#### **Brunel Social Work Book Reviews**

Book reviews written by our students and published in professional academic journals

### **Co-productions through the Arts**

Here you can see the results of our students' collaboration with our experts by experience (people with lived experience of using social work services).

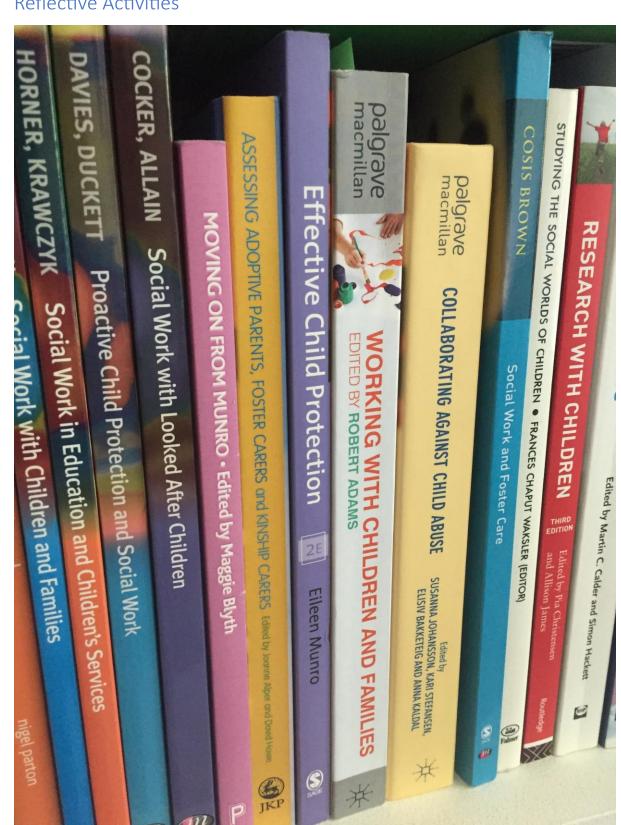
### **Podcast: How Does the Social Work?**

Our students research, plan and co-host our podcast

Students' involvement in research projects: the following projects involve our students and staff in collaboration.

- <a href="https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Projects/The-Migration-of-Social-Workers-to-and-from-the-UK">https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Projects/The-Migration-of-Social-Workers-to-and-from-the-UK</a>
- <a href="https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/projects/parenting-across-cultures-in-contemporary-england">https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/projects/parenting-across-cultures-in-contemporary-england</a>
- https://www.brunel.ac.uk/research/Projects/Mixed-families-in-contemporary-London

# **Reflective Activities**





2 - Dr Mike Thomas. Senior Lecturer and Associate Dean for Equality and Diversity. This is a picture from the Pride in London march which takes place every summer to celebrate LGBTQ+ communities. Staff and students from Brunel take part in the march every year- please look out for information on the march as we head into the summer period.

In the midst of the upheaval in the world this is a key time to be joining the Social Work profession. The work that social workers do is being highlighted in the news and media on a daily basis. Social workers themselves are re-thinking how they practice. Whilst some things feel uncertain, we believe that this is a perfect time to become a social worker as we are entering a period of change and uncertainty from which we can shape opportunity and a strong identity as a profession. A key aspect of commencing training is knowing why you are there, in other words as we asked at your interview, why do you want to become a social worker?

#### Activity One: Why Social Work?



3 -

Think about what has drawn you to choose Social Work as a career. Spend at least 30 minutes writing down your thoughts and ideas. You could write a narrative as if you were writing a diary, or draw a mind-map! When you have finished place your thoughts somewhere safe. You may wish to return to

them later! Outlining your thinking now provides a great spring-board from which to leap and a future reminder for you to see how far you have progressed as you grow and develop.

## **Activity Two:** Following Social Media and the News:



4 - Sherwyn Sicat. Division Lead Social Work

This activity is something you can start doing now, or may be doing already, so is nice and simple!

A really important aspect of becoming a Social Worker is understanding society and the world we live in; this means keeping abreast with what is happening around us. A brilliant source of this information is in the News and in Social Media...remember, not all news sources are accurate!!

Make sure that once a day you engage with news sources and look for stories which may relate to or impact social work. Current news about the cost of living crisis and its effect on people, families and services is a good place to start. Alternatively look on the social media platforms you use - see what is being said about local, national and world events: and start to ask questions such as:

- Is this a valid account of events?
- How might this news impact on those involved or the wider community?
- Is social work implicated in this story?
- What can I learn from listening to this?
- What are the different views being presented about this one story?

Useful Social Media and News Channels

Twitter: Start by exploring <u>@BrunelSocWork</u>, or explore <u>@BASW</u> or <u>@SocialWorkEng</u>

Listen to the Radio: Try and stick to more objective news outlets such as Radio 4 rather than opinion stations such as TalkRadio or LBC. Or try one of your local radio stations in order to know more about what is happening on your doorstep. The key thing is that when you listen question everything you hear!

Watch TV: Have a look at the news as it is presented on TV. Try swapping between the channels to see how stories are reported differently! Listen to the language used in reference to people, does it differ across social groups?

Read the newspapers: If you belong to your local library you may be able to sign up to PressReader which allows you to access a range of papers for free. Look at how different papers approach stories with different perspectives!!



5 - Lesley La-Croix Lecturer in Social Work

**Activity Three**: *Understanding contemporary Social Work Practice.* 



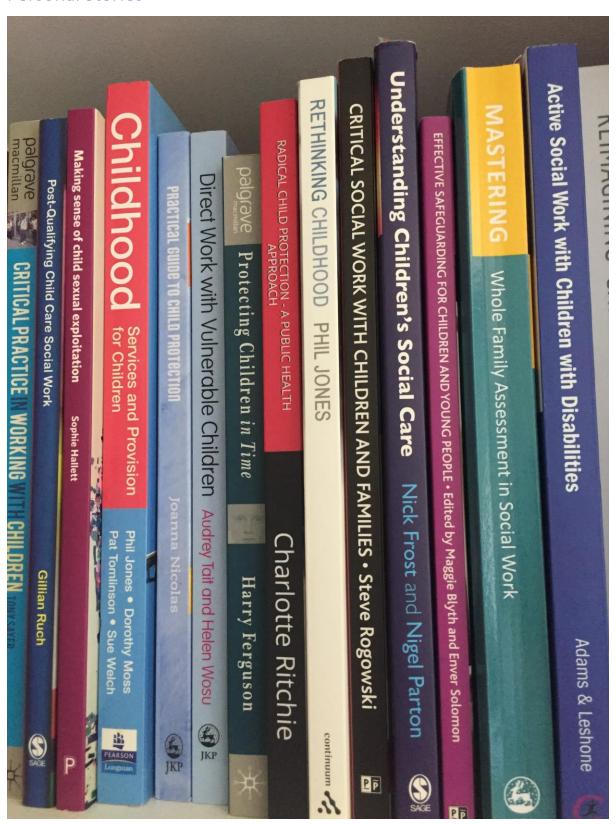
#### 6 - Dr Yohai Hakak. Programme Lead

In the aftermath of Covid 19, information and knowledge is evolving fast. There are some very good blogs and free access narratives being published online which are responsive to the pressures being felt within the profession. If you wish to keep up to date click on the links to follow Community Care Online which is the online magazine for Social Workers in the UK. Another really good start is to look at Research in Practice where there are numerous blogs to choose from, usually written by very well respected authors.

It is also very important to be aware of the work of our Social Work regulator. So do visit the website for <u>Social Work England</u>. Explore the site as there is some useful information about professional standards and also about recent events.

In addition there is the membership organisation the <u>British Association of Social Work</u> (we tend to refer to it as BASW). Again have a look at their website - if you go their events section there is a great set of very relevant podcasts and discussions about the impact of Covid-19. They are worth listening to if you have time!

# **Personal Stories**



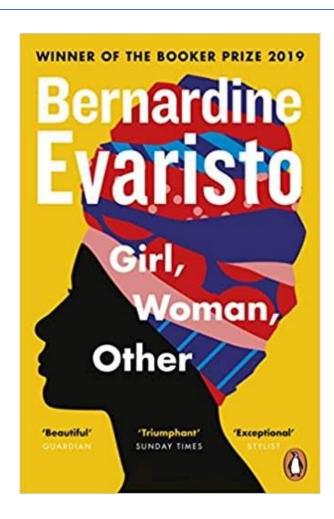
As a Social Worker it is really important to understand and empathise with the life experiences of others. Whilst we tend to talk about the similarities among groups of people and have a desire to

label people using specific categories (race, religion, caste, class, gender) it is fundamentally important to recognise that every one person's story is different. A good starting place is to watch the video from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, before you dive into some of the recommended autobiographies!



7 - Watch this talk which Chimamanda recorded for TED talks.

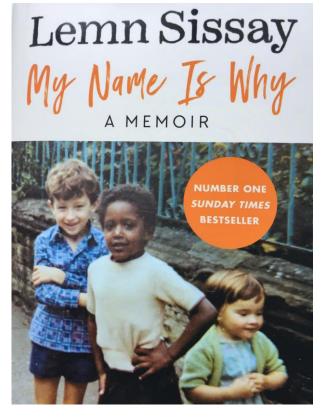
These books are a selection of those we think are particularly good, there are plenty more for you to explore or choose from. Within this selection there should be one or two which speak to your specific interests.



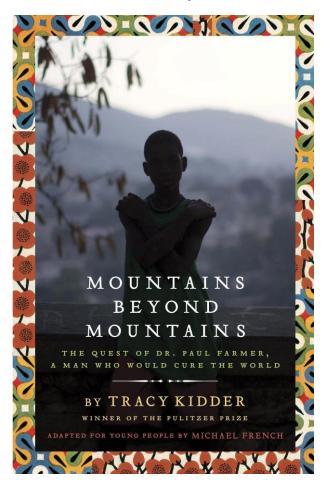
8 - Joint winner of the Booker prize Prof Bernadine Evaristo is Professor of creative writing here at Brunel.



9 - Oi, by David L Jackson is a hard hitting account of how tough the care system. The book exposes the issues children in care can face, how these issues can follow people for the remainder of their lives and how decisions professionals make can be both life saving but can also cause life long issues.



10 - Lemn Sissay's very poignant autobiographical account of his childhood, told through his reading of the records kept in his Social Work files.



11 - This book is about Paul Farmer and primarily his work in Haiti. It is a broad look at international charity work and what one person from modest circumstances can do.



12 - For anyone wishing to see some book reviews by current and former students, and to see what you may also be able to get involved with at Brunel here is a link to our list of book reviews:

https://www.brunel.ac.uk/student-blog/Post?id=b46ec573-9ece-4302-87b3-1facad964fd0

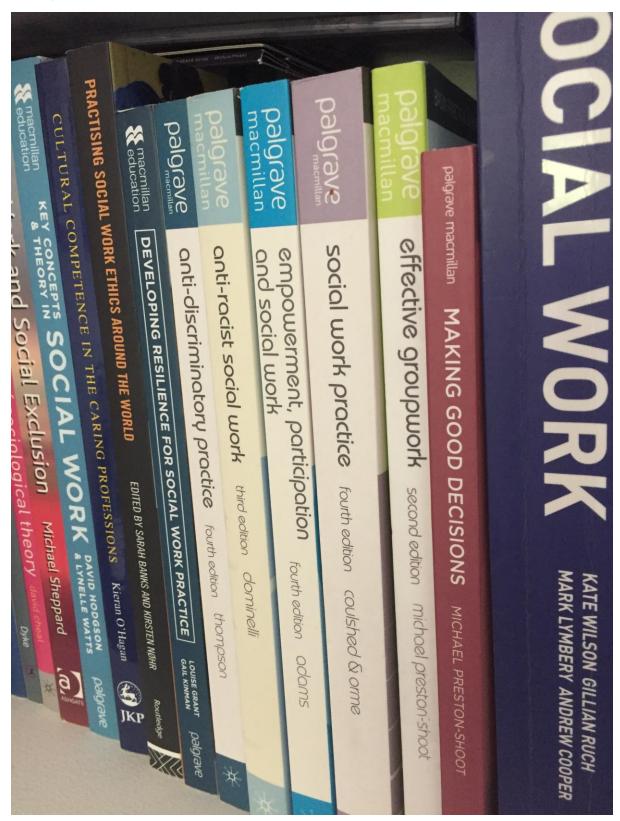






13 - Critsina Asenjo-Palma - Lecturer and Researcher in Social Work

# Study Skills



The progression to Masters Level study is sometimes more challenging than it appears at first. You have completed an undergraduate degree and are ready to explore materials in depth! However, to

do this you need to continually build upon and further develop your study skills. Academic reading and writing are the same as learning a language - you need to be using it regularly in order to maintain a good standard.

Before starting your course it is worth taking some time to think about how you best study. First create a space in your home where you can study. This might involve clearing a bookcase, buying stationary, finding a desk or allocating a corner of your bedroom where you can study. It might also mean speaking with your family and friends about how they will help you find space (and headspace) in order to concentrate and learn.

Start to think about how you learn. Think about your strengths and weaknesses when studying and think about what strategies you can use to minimise them. Do you need to read faster, take better notes, critique more clearly, improve referencing.....these are skills you will have employed in your undergraduate degree, so think about which you feel less confident so that you can focus on building those.

When you arrive at Brunel and register formally as a student you will have access to our Study Skills Advisors who are an excellent support. In the meantime if you wish you can explore some study skills guides.

# Study Skills Guides:



You can read about study skills in different places:

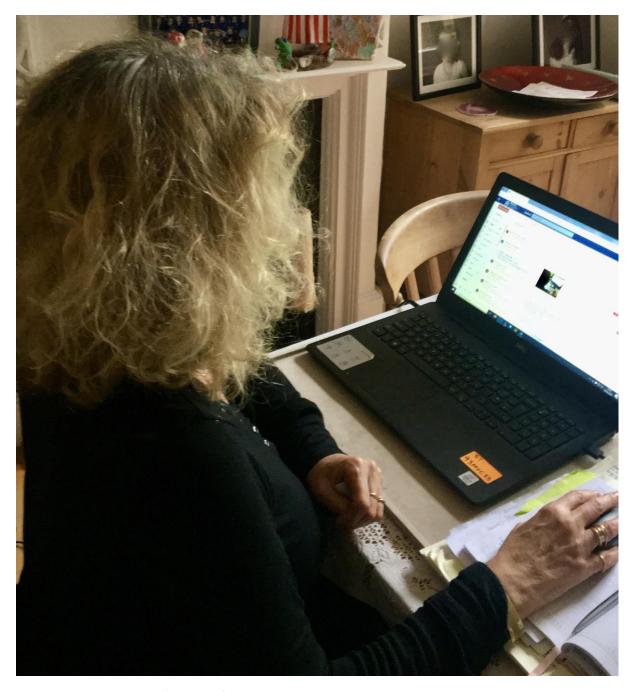
Textbooks Look online for Master level study skills guidebooks choose one which speaks to the ares
you wish to build on. The market is saturated with these books so if you are unsure we recommend
Sheila Cottrell's ever popular book pictured here - it is now in it's 5th edition!

**Websites** There are lots of websites available which host study skills pages. The best will be those hosted by Universities or recognised professional bodies. Here are some we recommend:

Brunel ASK study skills team

<u>Oxford University</u> has some good resources too

# **Placements**



Placements are practical 'hands on' modules in which you work in a real social work team or related agency, alongside qualified social workers on real life cases.

Some of the things you will experience on placement are:

1. Direct contact and direct work with vulnerable people in their real lives and in real life settings.

- 2. Weekly supervision and a strong support team around you to support and guide your practice and development.
- 3. An opportunity to be placed in an area of work that you have no previous experience of.
- 4. Build upon your existing skill sets and learn many new and transferable skills
- 5. A detailed Placement Guide and related placement templates to assist you in placement

#### You should expect the following:

- 1. To complete a placement application for each placement, this occurs at the start of the course and before each placement can be found for you
- 2. Once you secure an invite to an interview you are expected to attend and treat this like a professional interview (guidance will be given on this task)
- 3. You will work a full working day, 7 hour (excluding lunch hour). You will need to be prepared to work flexibly and this may mean extended work into the evenings. This is for both 70 and 100 day placements which are in two contrasting settings/service user group
- 4. You need to commit to the schedule of full time / part time attendance. For full time placements this will be 5 full days a week, 3 days a week alongside 2 days a week university attendance in term time and 5 days per week at placement at other times. For part time students, you will need to commit to 3 full days per week in year 2 and year 4.
- 5. You will need to commit to travelling up to 2 hours each way to placement on a daily basis alongside your personal commitments.
- 6. You will link your academic learning and placement development and make sense of the application of a wide range of social work theories, approaches, methods and research.

### Placement Exercise



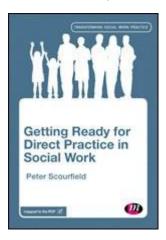
In preparation for the course please familiarise yourself with the Social Work England Professional Standards <a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/</a>

and

British Association of Social Work (BASW), Practice Capability Framework (PCF) <a href="https://www.basw.co.uk/social-work-training/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf">https://www.basw.co.uk/social-work-training/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf</a>.

#### Exercise:

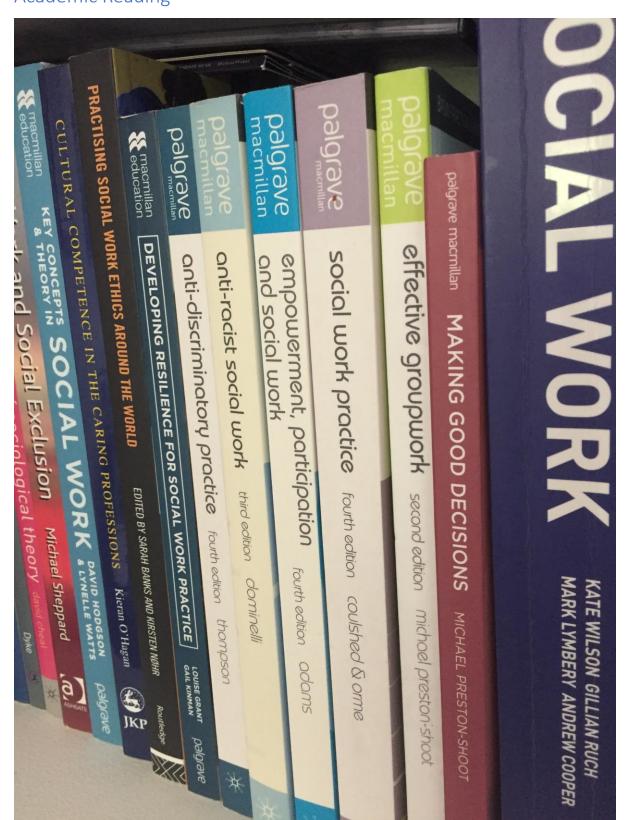
Begin to plot areas of work that you need to develop and build upon in relation to your current skills, knowledge, and values. Pay especial attention to how you already meet the PCF 'entry onto course' level and how you will build up to 'readiness for direct practice' level.



14 - Access or read the following book in preparation:

Getting Ready for Direct Practice in Social Work by Peter Scourfield, 2017 Sage Learning Matter

# Academic Reading



When we sat down to write this list we realised the possibilities are endless - however, we know you have a lot of academic reading and exploration waiting for you when you start, so are going to keep these as treats for you!

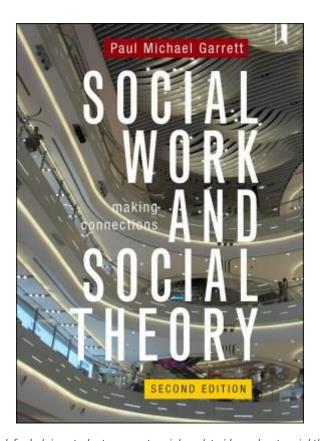
For now we recommend just a few textbooks you can have a look at, which are:

Garrett, P. (2018) Social Work and Social Theory, 2nd Ed., Policy Press

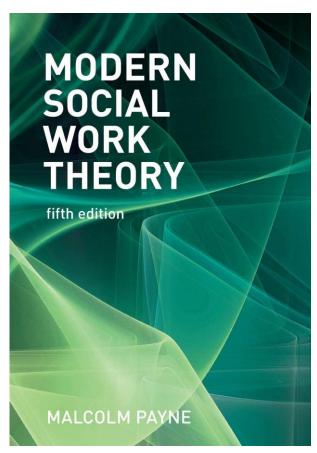
Parker, J. (2020) Introducing Social Work, Sage.

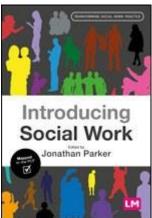
Payne, M. (2020) Modern Social Work Theory, 5th Ed., MacMillan

Mandelstam, M. (2019) Safeguarding adults and the law: An A-Z of law and practice



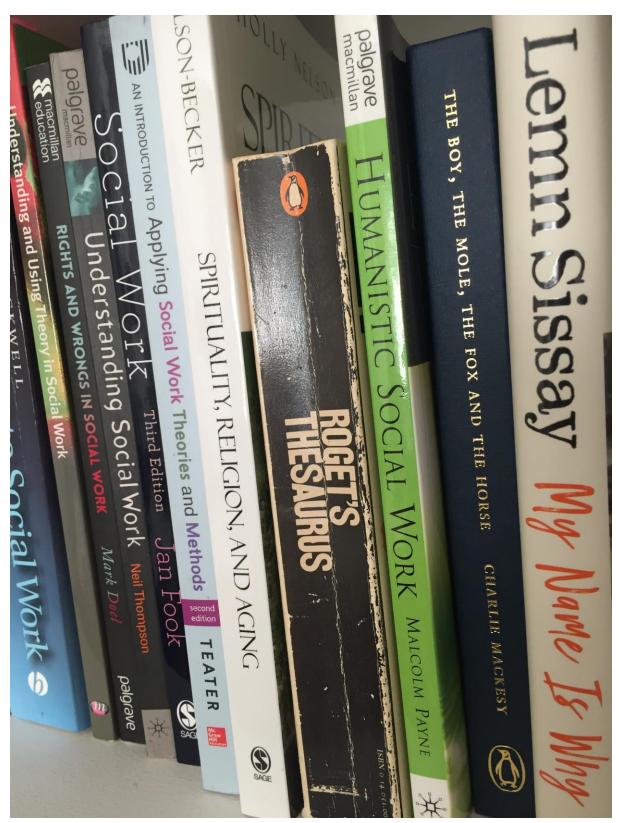
15 - This is a really useful book for helping students connect social work to ideas about social theory. It covers aspects such as social norms, social institutions and issues relating to inequalities.



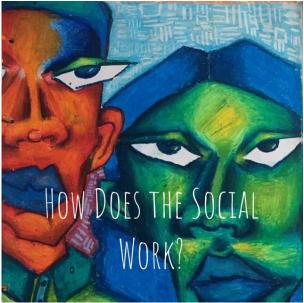


Safeguarding
Adults and
the Law
An A-Z of
Law and
Practice
Michael
Mandelstam

# Audio and Podcasts







16 - How Does the Social Work?

https://open.spotify.com/show/0BPBW5TWUeHhtVjaW9F6zm?si=1bf970e6a6f94215&nd=1

For those of you who like to listen whilst on the move podcasts are an excellent source of information and knowledge. There are many out there, so it is a case of sifting through what you find. It is really good to also hear what is happening globally so please don't shy away from information from other countries.

For those of you with Spotify this is a podcast series lead by Dr Yohai Hakak in which current and formed students create podcasts on contemporary social work issues. How does the Social Work? includes interviews with social workers, academics and those with lived experience. It also covers current debates and critiques of social work theory and practice. You will also have the chance to produce and create further episodes in this series as a student at Brunel:

https://open.spotify.com/show/0BPBW5TWUeHhtVjaW9F6zm?si=1bf970e6a6f94215&nd=1

Yohai Hakak has also produced a number of films covering elements of social work directly which are a great insight into social work and people who interact with them.

His main film 'Life at the Other End' is here:

It is very engaging film which gives the camera and microphone to people living with disabilities to give their own opinions on how disability and social work have affected their lives.

This is a list of the top 40 social work podcasts from around the world, mainly these are from the UK, USA and Australia.

https://blog.feedspot.com/social\_work\_podcasts/









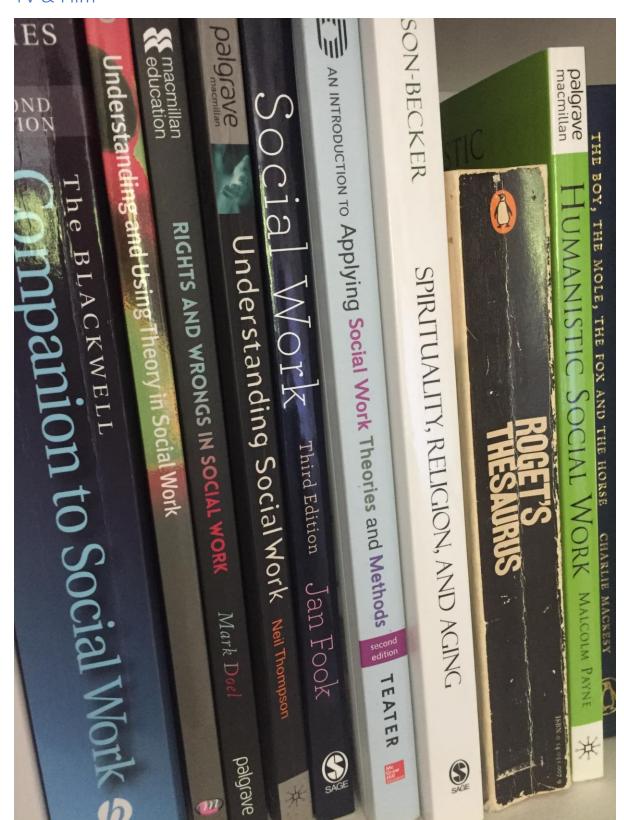
Somer on Rudio is a podicast that talls stories explaring human experience and American society Produced and hosted by Juhn Bleven. Some on Rudio comes from the Center for Documentary Studies (COS) at Date University and is distributed by Phys. Socian 1 histories may of a distributed by Phys. Socian 1 histories may of a distributed by Phys. Socian 1 histories may of a distributed by Phys. Socian 1 histories may of a distributed by Phys. Socian 1 histories may of the Phys. Socian 1 histories of the Phys. Socian 1 historie

In Season 4, John Blewen and Cherjeral Kumanyika explore democracy in America—past and present—in twelve biweekly episodes. The series retells the story of the country, or pivotal parts of that history, while exploring critical questions like. How democratic was the U.S. ever

#### Twitter Feed



Lawrence Gikchman at anythonen - 4s by the increase of the inc



Recommending films and TV programmes is slightly tricky as we know you will all have varying access to media providers (Sky, Netflix, Amazon Prime etc). What is listed here is a selection of films and TV series for you to choose from depending on what access you have.



17 - It's All Gone Pete Tong

is a sometimes poignant and touching account of drug addiction and disability and how these things can change a person's life fundamentally. Told through a high energy and quirky comedy style this film exposes how devastating these things can be without preaching or judging any of those involved.



18 - Children of Men

is an account of a dystopian near future in which poverty and state oppression has accelerated, it delves into the experience of asylum seekers, refugees or anyone deemed as a minority or transgressive. It explores how difficult it is to live unmolested by the state and how inequality and humanity are ultimately incompatible.

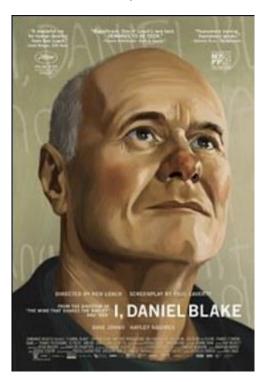
Mark Fisher described Children of Men as one of the most important films to understand where UK society may be headed without reclaiming the sense of common humanity that has been receding in public debate, services and welfare since 1979.

"what is particular about the [film's] dystopia is that it is specific to late capitalism". In fact, insists Fisher, "when looking at Children of Men, we inevitably recall the phrase attributed to both Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek: it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism"

This is a film that sets the context in which social work can and should be seen as a political and social profession as well as an individual welfare one, if we don't act to prevent it, this film tells us, this is where our current society will lead us.



Is the true story of a journalist and and Irish women searching for the son she was forced to give up for adoption many years later. This is an engaging film which non the less touches on some of the significant issues in adoption practices and their consequences



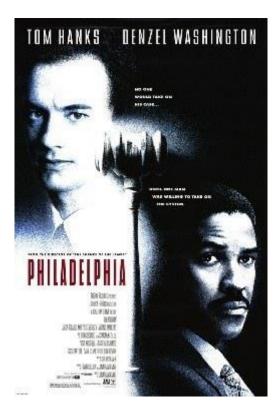
20 - I, Daniel Blake

is a tour de force of social conditions in Britain since 2010 and focusses on the experience of people and families in their real lives and how dramatically political decisions and policy can effect real people.



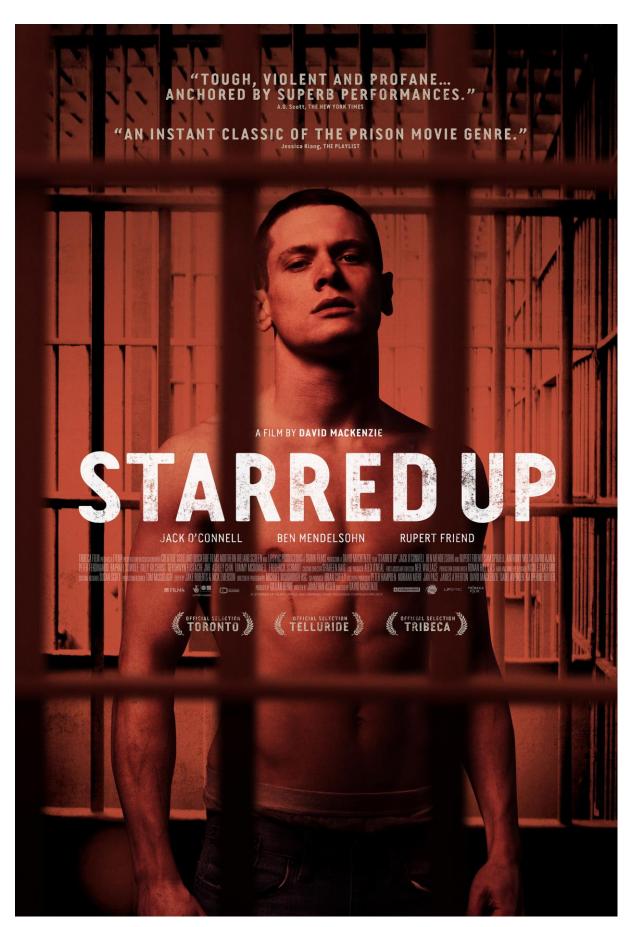
21 - Secrets & Lies

is a film that follows an adopted woman and her birth mother finding each other in adulthood and how this effects both women and their families deeply. This covers both the highs and lows of reunification after so many years from a personal and family perspective.



22 - Philadelphia

Is a powerful film which deals tackles prejudice and moral panics. In particular this film deals powerfully with Homophobia and the discriminatory way in which the gay community has been linked with serious disease and moral judgements. In this film the HIV / AIDS scare in the 1980s and 1990s is the context but we can see this is still prescient with current moral and discriminatory linking of MonkeyPox with the gay community.



23 - Starred Up

is a film that delves into the experiences of incarceration and masculinity in England in particular the experiences of young men and how they must adapt and behave to survive in prisons. This is a very gritty and realistic portrayal that has been said to accurately (more than many other films or series) portray what it is like in the UK prison system in the 21st century.



24 - I Care a Lot

The film follows a con woman who makes a living as a court-appointed guardian. She convinces the legal system to grant her guardianship over elders that she pretends cannot take care of themselves. She places them in an assisted living facility, where they are sedated and lose contact with the outside world. She sells off their homes and assets, pocketing the proceeds.

A good film that brings home how vigilant we as social workers must be to really safeguard vulnerable people and of both others and our own motivations.



25 - The Father

psychological drama that follows a man living with dementia



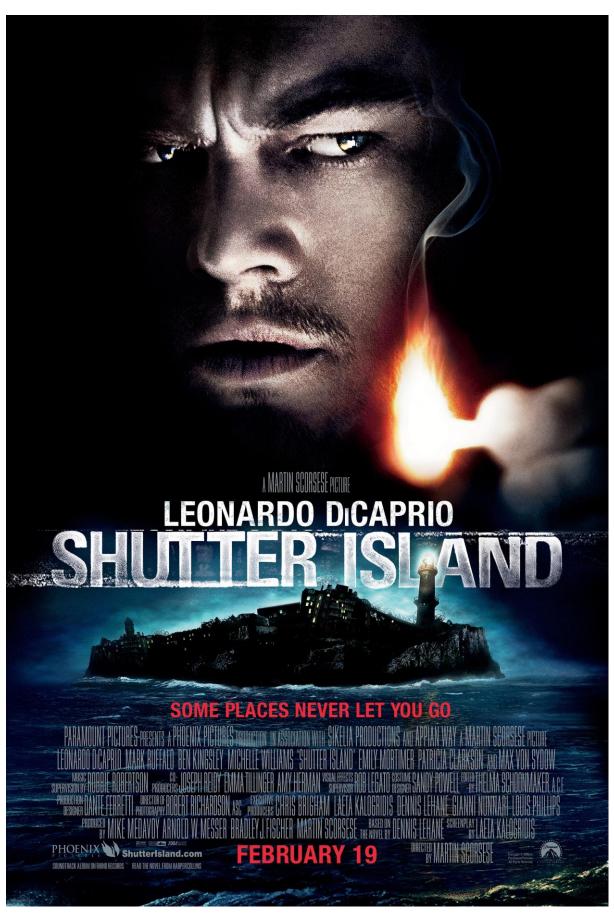
26 - One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

A classic film starring Jack Nicholson about Mental Health and Institutionalisation in the USA in the 1970s

# "HOLLYWOOD COME IN ... YOUR TIME IS UP TRAINSPOTTING IS HERE AND IT'S TOE-CURLINGLY GOOD" \*\*\*\*\* Trainspotting Trainspotting Trainspotting Trainspotting Trainspotting The state of t

27 - Trainspotting

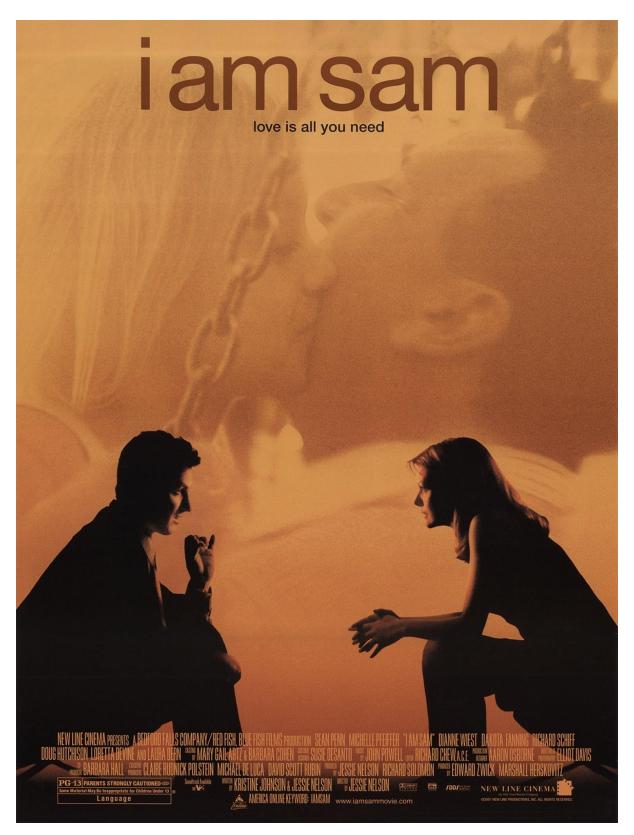
Pivotally influential film about heroin use in 1990s Scotland and the horrors and dynamics of peoples lives where Opiate use and impoverished social conditions collide



28 - Shutter Island

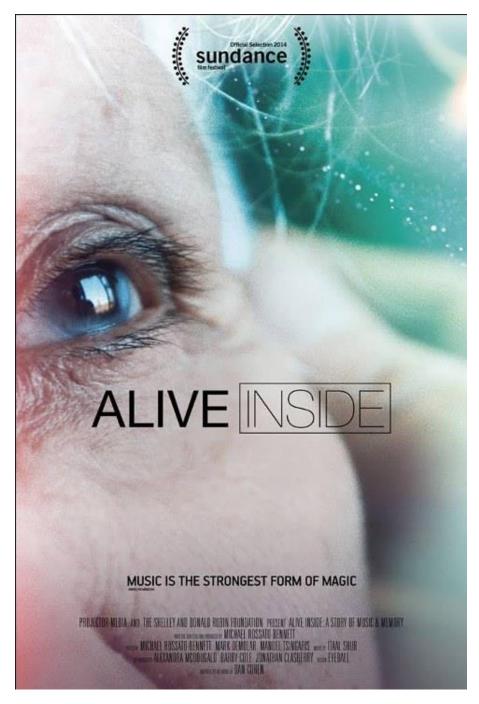
Is a film which dramatises some of the experimental approaches taken to mental health issues in large institutions.





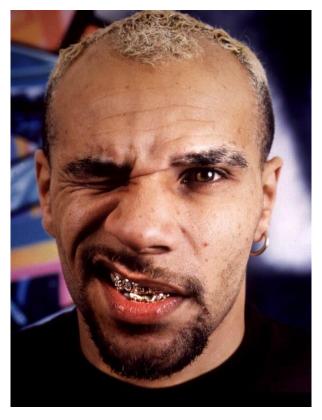
29 - **I am Sam** 

is a powerful story about family and disability and the strength of family relationships even in seemingly impossible situations.



There are so many TV Programmes worth exploring. Have a look at the documentary series such as Panorama, Dispatches.

There are also some really good mini-series which have portray stories which have a public interest have a look at some of these:



30 - GOLDIE - WHEN SATURN RETURNZ DOCUMENTARY (1998)

Honorary Doctor at Brunel, Goldie is a pioneer of Jungle music both on his own and with Rufige Kru Goldie's influence on music and sub-culture should not be underestimates, without him British music would not be where it is today.

In this series on youtube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRGH25iK7TY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRGH25iK7TY</a> Goldie explores his own experience of growing up in the children's home.



31 - **Damned** 

Is a comedy about a frontline social work team starring Joe Brand and Alan Davis. An entertaining and light hearted look into social work practice, not entirely accurate but gives a good flavour and insight into how practice and the absurdity of practice can sometimes play out.



32 - Skint

Is a series of short monologues / talking heads dramatisations of life under the policy of austerity and economic fallout from the Global Crash of 2008, and the social and individual ramifications of leaving the EU and the global pandemic

 $\underline{https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p0bmv88w/skint?msclkid=ada77152d14511ec8af201adc6905279}$ 









33 - Michael McGrath-Brookes - Lecturer & Admissions Tutor.

Interests include philosophy and philosophy of social work, psychoanalysis. Extensive experience in Children's Social Work and Child Protection

If you have any questions about the information provided please do email Yohai Hakak at yohai.hakak@brunel.ac.uk. In the meantime, we wish you all a healthy, restful and enjoyable summer.....see you in late September!!!

