Social and Policy Sciences

Undergraduate

BSc (Hons) Sociology
BSc (Hons) Social Policy
BSc (Hons) Sociology and Social Policy
BSc (Hons) Social Sciences
Welcome from the Head of Department

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences is a leading centre for the study of sociology, social policy, international development and social work. Many of our staff are at the forefront of their discipline and are widely respected as empirical researchers, theorists, policy analysts and educators. We have a serious commitment to understanding local and global challenges. As the map of global power, poverty and wealth changes and as new environmental and transnational risks emerge, research to understand and solve social problems becomes ever more important.

Our research record is outstanding. For example, in 2011 we were awarded the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for our work on poverty and vulnerable people and in the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) an impressive 80% of our publications were judged as world-leading or internationally excellent (3* or 4*). Our degree courses are consistently ranked amongst the best in the country. For example, sociology has been ranked 3rd, and social work 4th in The Complete University Guide 2017.

Bath graduates have outstanding success in finding relevant employment or further training. This is a reflection of the confidence that comes from studying in a world class institution and of the work related skills gained by students, especially those who choose to undertake a placement as part of their degree.

We are keen to share our enthusiasm for our subject with you and enable you to develop the knowledge and skills to take your interest in the world around you into a rewarding, socially aware career.

We look forward to meeting you!

Dr Joe Devine
Head of Department
Social and Policy Sciences at Bath

When you come to study with us you will be engaging with leading experts in the field whose research has real impact on national and international social policy and on sociological debates. This means your learning will be inspired, guided and developed by leading teachers and researchers, helping you to challenge received wisdom and develop your own ideas to better understand and respond to some of society’s most pressing issues.

Why study Social and Policy Sciences at Bath?

- Our degree courses are designed to allow you considerable flexibility including the option to pursue specific themes and interests
- We offer a professional placement opportunity in your third year – highly valued by employers and giving you an advantage in the competitive job market when you graduate
- The Department places great emphasis on high quality teaching and prides itself on a personal approach to its students, who benefit from small group teaching and individual support
- According to the results of the 2016 National Student Survey, the overall satisfaction level of our students is 94% (sociology)
- League tables show that the Social and Policy Sciences degrees at Bath are among the very best (Sociology is ranked 3rd in The Complete University Guide 2017)
- We have an excellent reputation for cutting edge research and innovative teaching. In the Research Excellence Framework (REF2014) an impressive 80% of our publications were judged as world-leading or internationally excellent (3* or 4*).

At Bath it is possible to study:

- BSc (Hons) Sociology
- BSc (Hons) Social Policy
- BSc (Hons) Sociology and Social Policy
- BSc (Hons) Social Sciences

Sociology

Sociology is the study of society, how it is organised and how we experience life in society. Studying at Bath gives you the opportunity to explore important contemporary issues such as ‘is inequality harmful to society as a whole?’, ‘how does science affect society?’, ‘does the globalisation of corporations undermine the nation state?’, ‘how do different societies mourn their loved ones?’, ‘is there racism and sexism in the criminal justice system?’, ‘is there a threat from terrorism?’ and ‘what is the place of religion in modern societies?’.

Sociology teaching at Bath is based upon its international and interdisciplinary research strengths in conflict and security; state, corporate and interpersonal power; racism and gender inequality; the life course; wellbeing; families and childhood; developing societies and global governance; transnational corporations and global capitalism; social movements and resistance.

The core of our Sociology degree comprises units which will help you get to grips with the idea of social science, the key concepts and a practical guide on how to undertake rigorous sociological research. You can enrich the rest of your degree from other sociology units or units in social policy, psychology, economics, politic and languages, education, management and international development.
Social Policy

Studying Social Policy will enable you to analyse changes in government policy and their impact on society, considering issues such as ‘how did the welfare state develop and how does it really work?’, ‘how does the welfare state in the UK compare with those elsewhere in Europe?’, ‘how are families affected by government policies?’, ‘can governments shape peoples’ attitudes to ethnic minorities and migrant workers?’, ‘what is social justice?’ and ‘who makes public policy and in whose interests?’.

Bath is one of the leading UK centres for social policy research and teaching. Here you will study some of the major problems which face society today: the growing inequalities of wealth and poverty, social conflict and disorder, work and pensions, public services and the role of markets. You will examine critically the policies which governments are pursuing, for example in healthcare and social protection, in the UK, in other European countries and elsewhere. The course will equip you with skills in policy analysis, which you can take into your future employment, as well as enabling you to make sense of the major social challenges that we face in the 21st Century.

Sociology and Social Policy

This joint honours degree provides an opportunity to combine the main features of the sociology and social policy degrees. The course provides a good example of the Department’s approach to social science by linking theoretical and practical approaches to questions of inequality and social justice.

Social Sciences

This is our most flexible degree, offering a broad-based training in the social sciences. It is especially appropriate for those who are interested in the social sciences in general, and do not wish to specialise in one particular discipline. You can choose units from sociology, social policy, economics, psychology, politics and languages, education, management and international development.

I chose to come to the University of Bath because the degree offered really good, specific units that I was really interested in. I’ve most enjoyed being able to study a real range of courses from psychology to international development, even though my degree is in sociology. It’s equipped me with a range of skills which will be really helpful in the future. The brilliant thing about the course is you can direct your career path, you can choose the units which most suit your future career plans. And the university offers really good lecturers who are currently in the field themselves; they are undertaking their own research so they are teaching first hand things they are also studying themselves.

Joel Thomas
BSc (Hons) Sociology
Your degree structure

The Sociology, Social Policy, Sociology and Social Policy, and Social Sciences BSc (Hons) degrees are delivered full time over three years, or over four years with a professional placement year (in year three).

Our degrees are modular, consisting of self-contained units, taught and assessed on a semester basis. Assessment consists of a combination of coursework essays, class exercises, projects, oral presentations and examinations. As you progress through each semester and successfully pass the assessments, you will receive credits for the units, thus providing you with a clear indication of your academic progress.

In years one and two you take core, compulsory units that lay the foundations for understanding social science theory, and choose extra units to explore more fully your chosen disciplines. In the final year you are offered a range of advanced units, most of which reflect the research expertise of the staff in the Department. You will also complete your dissertation, which is your opportunity to collect and analyse data on a topic that fascinates you (you may have made a start on this during your placement year).

“Studying Sociology and Social Policy at Bath has given me the best possible footing for progressing into work. As well as being viewed highly by many of the core corporate employers linked to the university, it is known across the country as one of the top places to study. The mixture of research skills (both quantitative and qualitative) and the range of subjects to choose from enabled me to tailor my degree to how I want to work.

The degree is perfect for those who have interests outside of sociology, for example units in international development, politics, psychology and languages are a feature of the course options and you will inevitably branch out into one of these areas. I have been able to pursue my interest in development issues which is an element of freedom I see as vital to my degree. I can therefore illustrate to employers that I have a broader understanding of many issues and a wider experience than many other universities may offer and this has allowed me to apply for jobs within the international development and charities sector.

In addition, the course can also be tailored to how you work as an individual. Looking at the structure and assessment of courses on offer you can ensure you have as many exam assessments as you can, or mainly essay based assessments meaning you have some control over maximising your working style. The dissertation in the final year gives you the ultimate amount of freedom, where you can choose to focus on something that has not been covered, or on an area that has interested you throughout your three or four years at the University.”

Rosie Fisher
BSc (Hons) Sociology and Social Policy
# Social & Policy Sciences degree structures

## Year 1
- **Common first year for all Social and Policy Sciences degrees**
  - Introductory units in sociology, social policy and social research (qualitative and quantitative approaches)
  - At this early stage students would start to plan which area of specialism they might like to pursue in Years 2-4 (e.g., childhood and youth or criminal justice).
  - Options include economics, psychology, politics, languages, international development, management, education.

## Year 2
- **Social research methods (qualitative and quantitative approaches)**
- **Units in contemporary social theory and philosophy of social science**
- **Units in social justice, power, policy analysis and family policy**
- **Units in contemporary social theory and philosophy of social science, social justice, power and policy analysis**
  - This flexible course allows you to make 80% of your choices from units across the whole Faculty

## Year 3
- **Optional professional placement year**

## Final Year
- **Dissertation**
  - **Power in society**
  - **Social protection, European social policy**
  - **Power in society, European social policy**
  - This flexible course allows you to make 80% of your choices from units across the whole Faculty

Options include death and dying, corporate power, sexual violence, complexity and social dynamics, gender, work, social movements, politics, political sociology, psychology, languages, international development, economics, religion and social politics, media and terrorism.

Core units

For further details on the units available, please see our website: [www.bath.ac.uk/study](http://www.bath.ac.uk/study)
Compulsory units

Year 1 compulsory units

Understanding society: Britain in global context
This unit introduces students to sociological accounts of the nature and recent evolution of British society in the context of transnational/global processes and changes, and the main social divisions in society (in particular, class, gender, and race).

Classical sociological theory
This unit aims to help students appreciate and identify the distinctions and relationships between the conceptualisation of societies and their problems by classical sociologists. We also introduce students to some of the key concepts and theories shaping contemporary sociological analysis and explore the relationships between sociological thinking and its applications to specific contemporary social issues.

Social problems and social policy
In this unit you will critically assess changing ideas about social problems. In the UK in the early and mid-20th Century, poverty, poor health, bad housing, lack of opportunities and hunger were seen as ‘social evils’ that had to be conquered. Later in the 20th Century, problems such as obesity, racism, inequality, and teenage pregnancy have attracted more media and public attention. Social science approaches to social problems use evidence to ask whether this attention is justified, and if it is what policies should be put in place by governments to deal with the problems.

Social policy, welfare and the state
Three themes run through this unit: citizenship, equality, and the role of the state. These themes are used as a framework for tracing the changing relationship between welfare and the state in the UK and the main areas of social policy in the UK today. The main areas we will explore are health care, housing, and cash benefits; primarily in the UK, but also compared with systems in other countries.

Introduction to qualitative methods
This unit will help you develop your skills as an active social science researcher. Through doing hands-on research you will be introduced to key aspects of qualitative methodological traditions and research design. Alongside this you will be introduced to the practice and techniques of searching, evaluating and referencing literature, all of which will be key to your success as an undergraduate student.

Year 2 compulsory units

Building on year 1, all students attend more advanced units on qualitative social research methods and quantitative data analysis which will help you develop a critical appreciation of social research methods and the opportunity to apply your knowledge to designing, conducting and analysing your own research project. You will undertake training in the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), and you will explore the social production, uses (and misuses) of statistics. We also encourage you to reflect on the ethical implications of, and how to undertake, qualitative research when using methods such as participant observation and interviews. There are no further compulsory units if you are doing the Social Sciences degree.

For other degrees the additional compulsory units differ depending on the course. For those studying Sociology or Sociology and Social Policy, you will take: Contemporary Sociological Theory, where you will develop an in-depth understanding of late twentieth and early twenty-first century social theory and consider how it has answered to the problems of contemporary social life; and Philosophy of the social sciences, where you will be asked to consider what counts as ‘knowledge’ about the social world, what can we know, and how can we know it? Social Policy students have policy-focused units: Family matters (where you will explore the nature, structure and functions of the family and place the study of the family in the wider context of contemporary social trends); and Social policy evaluation (looking at how to evaluate policy effectiveness and issues such as the unintended consequences of policy).

There are two more compulsory units for students of Social Policy or Sociology and Social Policy: Social justice (which will show you how ideas about fairness, equality, poverty and rights are a matter of different political perspectives and different ideas about the role of the state in social policy); and Making and communicating policy (developing your skills in policy investigation and analysis by enhancing your theoretical understanding of power and the policy process).
Final year compulsory units

As the culmination of your academic study, the dissertation is an exciting opportunity for you to spend time researching a subject that you feel passionate about. Over two semesters in the final year, you will carry out a literature review, develop a research question, design and implement a project, and write a 10,000 word dissertation. Excellent dissertations have included work on the impacts of court culture on rape cases, self-care for people with type I diabetes, and the challenges faced by traveller communities. The dissertation is the only final year compulsory unit if you are on the Social Sciences degree.

An additional compulsory unit for students of Sociology or Sociology and Social Policy is Power in society, where you consider the origin and operation of power in society. There is a compulsory unit shared by students of Social Policy or Sociology and Social Policy which is European social policy, where you will be introduced to the concept of ‘welfare regimes’ as a means to compare social policies in European countries. If you are a Social Policy student you will have a further compulsory unit on Social protection, comparing different ways that the state helps meet the financial needs of diverse groups, with a focus on the implications of an ageing population, increased family breakdown and growing ‘worklessness’ for the delivery of social security.

Optional Units

A wide range of optional units are offered on all four degree courses, over half of which are taught by other University of Bath departments. Here is just a small sample to give you a flavour of the range on offer within the Department:

Ideas about ‘terrorism’

This unit examines how ‘terrorism’ and political violence are explained, researched, thought and communicated about and with what effect. It focuses first on questions of definition. What is a ‘terrorist’? When does a ‘terrorist’ become a ‘freedom fighter’? The key concept of ‘state terrorism’ is examined as is the phenomenon of the ‘military-industrial-academic-complex’. The role of counterinsurgency and torture in conflict provide a case study as does the use of the internet in communicating war and ‘terror’.
‘Race’ and racism
In this unit we look at how concepts like ‘race’, ethnicity, culture and identity are conceptualised so we can better understand the phenomenon of racism which blights the lives of many people from minority ethnicities within communities.

Understanding religion in the contemporary world
This unit offers you a challenging and dynamic overview of the key debates surrounding the role of religion in social politics and public policy around the world. You will explore key historical and theoretical perspectives that show how religious actors, values and institutions have played a key role in the shaping of human society. We will use policy-specific case studies to illustrate the dynamic influence of religion on forms of public action and processes of nation-building as diverse as poverty-reduction, education, international development and global security.

Sociology of criminal justice policy
In England and Wales there are a number of laws and policies in place to protect witnesses, (alleged) offenders and employees within the criminal justice system, but they do not always work in practice. For example, there are special measures to help witnesses give evidence in court; yet vulnerable witnesses (such as rape victims) continue to find giving evidence very distressing. In this unit you will explore how criminal justice laws and policies come about, and the cultures within the police, courts and prison system that help us explain their (in)effectiveness in practice.

Introduction to international development
This unit provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of International Development and familiarises students with some of its key issues, concepts and methods. The course uses a number of case studies to survey a range of issues concerned with development and focuses on a set of core questions. Who are the poor, and why are they poor? How can we understand the nature of change? What role do agencies and social movements play in development?
Placements

All undergraduates on the Sociology, Social Policy, Sociology and Social Policy and Social Sciences degree courses have the opportunity to undertake a one-year placement during the third year. Over the years, the University has built up contacts with a large number of organisations that can provide the high standard of training we expect. The excellent employment rate of our students is due in no small measure to the ‘hands-on’ experience and skills they acquire from their placement.

Why choose to do a placement?

- The placement is an opportunity to apply the theory you have learnt in a practical context
- It will enable you to learn about an organisation and its area of work, and to evaluate potential future career paths
- The placement can provide the material on which to base your final year dissertation
- The transferable, professional skills that you acquire during your placement are highly valued by employers and give you a competitive edge in the graduate job market
- Students are sometimes offered permanent graduate jobs by their placement providers

How would I get a placement?
The dedicated Placements Officer will support and guide you through the recruitment process to help you gain your placement. In the first year you will receive briefings on CV writing and interview skills, and will be given information on the choices that are likely to be available to you. In the second year you will start applying for placements. Many are advertised by the Placements Officer but you will be expected to research opportunities for yourself as well. The onus is on you to find a placement, with full support from the Placement Team.

On your placement
Your Placements Tutor will provide you with advice and support throughout and you will be guided by your workplace supervisor. You’ll have regular contact with your Placements Officer and if you’re on a placement in the UK, a member of our staff will visit you.

You’ll need to satisfactorily complete a minimum of 30 weeks on placement and submit two reports and a poster assignment about your placement during this time. You will contribute to a placement poster event in your final year.

The majority of the placements are paid but some are unpaid or offer only a small allowance. You will pay reduced tuition fees for the placement year.

What kind of job could I do?
There are placements in a wide range of commercial, voluntary and governmental organisations, including: social research organisations and charities; political organisations; international development organisations; and public policy and affairs departments. BSc Social Policy and BSc Sociology and Social Policy students undertake their placements mainly in policy related organisations; but BSc Sociology and BSc Social Sciences students can also take up placements in any area of business (such as, marketing, public relations, human resource management, and finance). In addition, all students are able to apply for teaching positions in the UK or abroad.

The following are some of our recent placement providers:

- Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons
- London Metropolitan Police
- The Welsh Government
- HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency)
- Big Issue
- Citizen’s Advice Bureau
- SENSE (national charity for people with impaired sight and hearing)
- Adfam (support group for families of drug and alcohol users)
- City Year (youth and education charity)
- Morgan Stanley
- Panasonic
- Vauxhall
- Disney
“I decided to do a year placement in order to develop my statistical skills needed for my dissertation. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to work within the House of Commons as a Social and General Statistics Researcher. Upon arrival I instantly felt like a valued member and was given huge responsibilities. Within the first few weeks I was regularly providing statistical data to MPs and producing official research papers and reports. Throughout the year I was given wider opportunities and challenges to develop and stretch my expertise. However this was coupled with great support and guidance not only from my work colleagues, but also from the university placement supervisors.

Doing a placement has made me realise the real value of this opportunity that the University of Bath offers. The sheer volume and quality of skills, as well as the depth of the knowledge I have gained during my placement year is extraordinary. Having an insight into how the workplace is run and what skills are valued is a real asset; giving me a huge advantage not only in my final year, but also will undoubtedly benefit my future career.

John Wood
BSc (Hons) Social Policy
Placement with the House of Commons
Careers and destinations

Bath graduates are very successful in today’s competitive labour market; the 2015 Complete University Guide ranks us equal 4th in the UK for graduate prospects.

Graduates of the Department of Social and Policy Sciences are found in a wide range of occupations. Many are attracted to careers that centre on the challenges and demands that society faces. Career options include employment in: social and policy research organisations, academia, social care services, public services, overseas development, public relations, teaching, journalism and media, marketing, customer services, finance and accounting, as well as a range of other jobs in national and international organisations including governmental and non-governmental institutions.

“The Bath experience developed me as a person; it gave me the confidence to be ambitious and the skills to succeed in my chosen career. I rose up the ranks of the Government Social Research service and ended up with the top research job, as head of the Government Social Research Service, with its 1000 or so members working across government departments. As an employer, I found that Bath social science graduates often had the skills I was looking for - academic rigour, grounded in a real world approach, with the practical skills needed to succeed in social research.”

Sue Duncan
University of Bath alumna, President of the Social Policy Association and former Chief Government Social Researcher

“Placements offer a unique opportunity to gain practical experience before graduating, in a wide range of industries and countries. There is a great deal of support available from the Careers Advisory Service and the department itself, as well as a great deal of scope to draw on what you have learnt in your final year.

My experiences over the course of my placement year have given me more direction and confidence in my future career plans, as well as a unique insight into a sector I have always been interested in. In addition, skills such as organisation and planning can be even further developed from the experience of full-time work, regardless of the job itself. I am glad that I chose to apply for placements and feel more focused and prepared to enter my penultimate year of study.”

Alicia Friend
BSc (Hons) Social Sciences
Placement with the Welsh government
Integrating exceptional research into your learning experience

A key benefit of studying in the Department is the strong link between research and teaching. You will be taught by leading experts in their field who are dedicated to making a difference in both research and teaching. This includes academics whose excellence has been recognised by the award of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education. There are five key areas of research within the department:

**Children, young people and families**
Families lie at the heart of society and our research engages with family poverty, children’s rights and family practices. The impact of our research includes influencing the development of the Child Poverty Act 2010. You will have the opportunity to research these issues as units on the family, childhood, and sexual violence.

**Lifelong health and wellbeing**
Two themes here are international development, poverty and wellbeing; and death and society, including how friends and family can support people dying at home. Our research has been used by Oxfam and been featured on BBC Radio 4 and BBC1, and in the *Guardian* and *Telegraph*. Options taught in these areas include development, health and illness, and death and society.

**Work and welfare**
Our research in this area contributes to major policy debates including: unemployment and welfare; and gender inequalities, employment and parenting. Our academics have worked with the Department of Work and Pensions, the European Commission and the International Labour Organization. You could hear about this research through units on economic sociology and work relationships, power and organisations, understanding industrial behaviour, and welfare reform.

**Global transformations and insecurity**
Research under this theme explores issues such as: democracy and religion; global movements and conflict; and identity and culture. Our work has been used by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as well as in expert testimony in terrorism cases. Teaching in this field includes units on identity, religion, terrorism, racism, manufacture of consent, and international politics of development.

**Governance and Policy Design**
We investigate how policy is made, who helps to make it, and with what implications. Research areas include anti-poverty programmes in South Asia, micro-finance in sub-Saharan Africa, and public policy in the UK and European Union. Our research has been used by many organisations including the United Nations and European Commission. You could learn about this and other research in units on development, European social policy, political sociology, and criminal justice.

In addition, in 2013 the University of Bath established the internationally-recognised **Institute for Policy Research (IPR)**. The IPR brings together many of the University’s research strengths to foster inter-disciplinary research of international excellence and impact. It bridges the worlds of research, policy and professional practice to enable us to address some of the major policy challenges we face on a local, national and global scale. The IPR runs a comprehensive programme of Public Lectures, produces Policy Briefs on a range of subjects and enables student placements and visits with Parliament.
About Bath

Bath is a great place in which to be a student. The University occupies a purpose-built campus which is safe and friendly with a vibrant international community, excellent student services, outstanding arts facilities and a first-class sports complex.

The campus has open views across the beautiful hills of the West Country but is less than 2km from the World Heritage City of Bath - one of the most elegant and interesting cities in the UK, famous for its Roman baths, medieval Abbey, Georgian squares and sweeping crescents. Bath offers some of the best shopping and cultural attractions outside of London. There is a great selection of restaurants, cafés, bars, pubs and clubs. The city has three theatres, cinemas and many fascinating museums and galleries.

Frequent bus services link the campus, city and major student residential areas. Bath is not far from Bristol International Airport, providing rapid access to international destinations. By train, London is approximately 90 minutes and Bristol only 15 minutes away. You are always connected to your work, your home and your social life when studying.
**Key Facts**

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<th>Course</th>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Sociology L300</td>
<td>Three years</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Sociology L304</td>
<td>Four years with placement</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Social Policy L404</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Sociology and Social Policy LL34</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Sociology and Social Policy LL43</td>
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<td>BSc (Hons) Social Sciences L305</td>
<td>Three years</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSc (Hons) Social Sciences L306</td>
<td>Four years with placement</td>
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**Typical offers:**

- Sociology: AAB
- Social Policy: AAB
- Sociology & Social Policy: AAB
- Social Sciences: ABB
- GCSE or equivalent: Mathematics and English minimum Grade C is required. We also welcome applications from students with other equivalent qualifications.

Mature students are encouraged to apply. Applications from mature students will be assessed on the basis of an Access Course, or relevant experience, previous qualifications, and/or an essay set by the admission’s tutor.

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences also offers undergraduate degrees in Social Work and Applied Social Studies, and International Development with Economics; please refer to our separate brochures or visit our website.
See what our students have to say about studying our social and policy sciences degrees

Getting started with Augmented Reality

1. Download the free Aurasma App from the App store or Google Play store
2. Open your web browser and visit: bit.ly/bathchannel then select Follow
3. In the Aurasma App use the camera view (tap the icon), hold your device over an image when you see this symbol: Watch the video come to life!