



PennState

College of the Liberal Arts

CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Department of Sociology and Criminology

The Pennsylvania State University

211 Oswald Tower

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2023–2024

THE M.A. PROGRAM

Penn State's M.A. program in Criminology is a general program that is designed to enhance students' knowledge of the causes and consequences of crime, society's response to crime, and the research methods and statistical techniques used to study these issues.

Advisers

M.A. candidates undertake their first year of study with the assistance of an interim adviser (typically the faculty member to whom the student is assigned as a graduate assistant) appointed by the Graduate Officer.

The Graduate School at Penn State requires that all M.A. candidates meet with their advisers prior to each registration for the purpose of discussing the candidates' progress toward their degrees.

Course Requirements (See Appendix A for Checklist)

The M.A. in Criminology requires 37 credits, including the following courses:

- CRIM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies
- CRIM 501 Criminal Justice System
- CRIM 512 Theories of Crime and Deviance
- SOC 513 Sociological Research Methods
- SOC 574 Statistical Methods for Social Research
- SOC 575 Statistical Methods for Nonexperimental Research

In addition, students must complete:

- CRIM seminars—12 hours (not fulfilled by Individual Studies, CRIM 596)
- SOC seminar—3 hours
- M.A. thesis credits—6 hours (CRIM 600)

Required seminars in research methods and statistics assume background gained through some combination of undergraduate course work and individual study. Students who are not confident in their basic statistical knowledge are encouraged to take SOC 470 or a comparable course in a related department prior to enrollment in SOC 574.

The Graduate School requires that M.A. candidates complete 6 thesis credits, generally acquired during the summer after the first year of graduate study or during the second year.

Additional courses are selected by the students in consultation with their faculty committees.

Required Course Load

The Graduate School specifies that students holding twenty-hour-per-week assistantships must carry 9–12 course credits per semester. Thesis and dissertation credits count toward this requirement; there is no limit on the number of these credits that can be taken, and after the first year they are frequently used to meet the required course load.

Grade-Point Average

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required to graduate. However, criminology faculty expect students' grade-point averages will be 3.50 or above. Students with grade-point averages below 3.25 are considered to be performing below satisfactory level.

Thesis Committee

Before completion of the second semester of study, the student should select and obtain the consent of three graduate faculty members to compose an M.A. committee. At least two of the committee members, including the chair of the committee, must be tenure-line criminology faculty. One of the criminology faculty is designated by the student to be thesis adviser and committee chair. Typically, M.A. candidates should convene a meeting of their three-member committee at the beginning of their third semester in the graduate program.

Thesis

Students are advised to take advantage of all opportunities during their first year of study to develop an M.A. thesis proposal and then to begin work on the thesis during the first summer.

Preparation of the thesis in journal format is encouraged. M.A. candidates are required to submit a thesis acceptable to their M.A. committee and to defend the thesis at a meeting with committee members. Students are expected to defend the thesis before the beginning of the third year. All theses are subject to regulations detailed in the Office of [Thesis and Dissertations](#) of the University, and a one-page abstract of the thesis must be filed with the Graduate School.

Time Limit for the M.A.

The University requires that students must complete the M.A. degree within four years of their initial enrollment. However, students who do not complete the M.A. degree within two years are not guaranteed to receive financial aid.

THE PH.D. PROGRAM

Ph.D. Qualifying Evaluation

A Qualifying Evaluation is required by the Graduate School of all students aspiring to enter a Ph.D. program at Penn State. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the student's potential to successfully complete a high-quality Ph.D. program. If approved for qualifying, the student is officially admitted to the Criminology Ph.D. program.

The Qualifying Evaluation, which is conducted by the Graduate Committee, is based on a dossier prepared by the student (prompted by a Form sent to students). The student dossiers will contain: the approved M.A. thesis; an additional paper; an up-to-date CV, and a Plan of Doctoral Study supplied by the student. The additional paper must have been written during the course of graduate study at Penn State. The Plan of Doctoral Study must include a checklist of classes already taken, probable course selections for the future, a rationale for the proposed courses, plans for comprehensive exam areas and dissertation, and probable faculty committee members. **In addition, the student must provide a written release allowing the Graduate Committee to examine all violations of academic integrity that have been filed with the Academic Integrity Office during his or her term of graduate study at Penn State.** After admission to qualifying, Ph.D. students are required to meet with their advisers prior to each subsequent registration for the purpose of discussing the candidates' progress on their plans of study and revising such plans as appropriate.

For students who earn the M.A. degree in Criminology at Penn State or for those entering with the M.A. but required to write a thesis, the Qualifying Evaluation shall take place no later than the semester following the M.A. thesis defense. For students who earned an M.A. degree with thesis in a criminology/criminal justice-related field at another institution, the Qualifying Evaluation shall take place at the end of the second semester of graduate work at Penn State.

The Graduate School requires that the student must be registered as a full-time or part-time student for the semester in which the Qualifying Evaluation is held. Appeals of Qualifying decisions can be filed with the Graduate Officer and will be heard by the criminology graduate faculty.

The Ph.D. Committee

The candidate's Ph.D. studies, including comprehensive examination and dissertation, are conducted under the supervision of a Ph.D. committee. The Ph.D. committee is composed of at least four members of the graduate faculty, at least two of whom must be criminology tenure-line faculty and one of whom must be from outside the Department of Sociology and Criminology. One criminology tenure-line faculty member is designated chair of the Ph.D. committee; ordinarily this person also serves as general adviser and director of the dissertation. The process of Ph.D. committee formation

begins with the student obtaining the consent of the faculty members the student would like to have appointed. The student then submits to the Graduate Officer the names of each faculty member along with a description of the role to be played by each on the committee. This submission will be reviewed by the Graduate Officer. If approved, the proposed committee will be submitted for final approval by the Graduate School. Students must identify and convene their Ph.D. committee **no later than one semester following their Qualifying Evaluation.**

Course Requirements (See Appendix B for Checklist)

For the Ph.D. in Criminology at Penn State, a minimum of 30 course credits (including thesis credits) are required beyond the M.A. degree. No more than three of these credits may be for Individual Studies (CRIM 596). Please note that the allowed Individual Studies (CRIM 596) credits count toward the 12 ELECTIVE credits and not the 6 REQUIRED seminar credits. *All Ph.D. candidates also must have completed all courses required for the M.A. degree in Criminology at Penn State, or their equivalent.*

The 30+ course credits beyond the M.A. must include:

CRIM 591 Teaching Sociology/Criminology	1 hour
CRIM Seminars	6 hours
Elective Seminars	12 hours

*The remaining required hours are filled through thesis credits and/or additional electives. All seminars should be selected in consultation with the Ph.D. committee.

Language/Communication Requirement

The Criminology program has no formal foreign language or communication requirement. However, it is highly recommended that the student pursue additional training in statistics, computer science, a foreign language, technical writing, and/or specialized methods or theory, insofar as these will further their research and career plans. Decisions about advanced work in these areas are made by students in consultation with their committees.

The University requires each Ph.D. candidate to demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Proficiency is expected at the time of admission to the Graduate School and must be formally certified in accordance with departmental policy before admission to Ph.D. qualifying. A comprehensive training program in English as a Second Language is offered to international students through the Department of Speech Communication. Many domestic and international students can benefit from taking courses in technical writing available through the Department of English, the School of Communications, and the Graduate School.

Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training

All entering graduate students are expected to complete 8 hours of SARI training (<https://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari>). This requirement will be fulfilled through the following courses and activities:

- (1) CITI training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) (**3 hours**): The Office of Research Protections (ORP) will provide the conduit to this training via the SARI Resource Portal on the ORP website (<https://citi.psu.edu/>). All first-year students are responsible for sending their certificates of completion to the Graduate Officers and Graduate Program Coordinator before the end of the fall semester of their first year.
- (2) SOC/CRIM 500 (**3 hours**): This course, which all incoming students are required to take, will devote 3 hours of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research.
- (3) SOC/CRIM 591 (**1 hour**): This course, which all students are required to take, will devote 1 hour of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research.
- (4) Centrally sponsored RCR opportunities beyond CITI training (**1 hour**). Centrally sponsored RCR opportunities will engage students in cross-disciplinary conversations about research ethics. Ample opportunities exist for students to fulfill this requirement, including RCR workshops, Research Integrity brownbag sessions, Survival Skills and Ethics professional development programs, and IRB workshops. Students are responsible for identifying, scheduling, and documenting the 1 hour of training.

Grade-Point Average

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required to graduate with a doctorate. However, the expectation is a grade-point average of 3.50 or above.

Comprehensive Examination

A comprehensive examination will be administered by the student's Ph.D. committee. Candidates are required by the Graduate School to have a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State at the time of the Comprehensive Examination, and they must be registered as full-time or part-time degree students for the semester in which the Examination is taken. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing. The Comprehensive Examination shall be

placed in the student's departmental file. The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to ensure competency in the theory, research, and methods of criminology. At the discretion of the Ph.D. committee, examination content will include material on (1) general criminological theory, (2) criminal justice/law, (3) research methods/statistics, and (4) the student's area of specialization.

The Comprehensive Examination consists of written and oral segments. The written closed-book exam will be administered in morning and afternoon sessions on two consecutive days. It can be administered in-house or remotely. The oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination occurs in a meeting of the candidate with the Ph.D. committee. This shall be an occasion for feedback and discussion of the student's written examination and often will include an initial discussion of the student's plans for dissertation research. The oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination must be scheduled two weeks in advance with the Graduate School. The oral portion can be held fully in-person (encouraged), fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be strongly considered, but the student and adviser must agree on the mode. If the student and adviser cannot agree on the mode, the Graduate Program Head will make the final decision. Either the student or adviser can appeal the decision of the Graduate Program Head to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Timing of the Examination. Students who entered the Penn State graduate program in Criminology with a B.A./B.S. must pass the exam before the end of fall semester of their fourth year to be eligible for continued funding. They are expected, however, to take the exam before the beginning of the fall semester of their fourth year. Thus, ***expected timing*** is before their seventh semester; ***required timing*** is by end of their seventh semester.

Students entering the program with an M.A. must pass the exam before the end of fall semester of their third year to be eligible for continued funding, but they are advised/expected to take the examination prior to the beginning of the fall semester of their third year. Thus, ***expected timing*** is before their fifth semester; ***required timing*** is by end of their fifth semester.

Repeating the Examination. Students who fail the Comprehensive Examination may repeat it once, so long as time limits are not exceeded.

Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation provides evidence that the student can conduct independent scholarship. According to the Penn State [*Graduate Bulletin*](#), "The ability to do independent research and competence in scholarly exposition must be demonstrated by the preparation of a thesis on some topic related to the major subject. It should represent a significant contribution to knowledge, be presented in a scholarly manner,

reveal an ability on the part of the candidate to do independent research of high quality, and indicate considerable experience in using a variety of research techniques.”

Dissertation Proposal Hearing. The student’s dissertation research is conducted under the supervision of the Ph.D. committee. The purpose of the Dissertation Proposal Hearing is to arrive at a detailed, mutually agreeable contract between the student and the committee as to what the Dissertation will include. Ideally, the hearing should be scheduled at a point at which a substantial literature review has been conducted and drafted, and at which methodological questions have been worked out in detail. The hearing also provides the committee with an occasion on which to make any final recommendations for the student’s course work. The hearing may be held in combination with the oral portion of the Comprehensive Examination.

Timing of Proposal Hearing. Students entering the graduate program in Criminology at Penn State with a B.A. or B.S. are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their fourth year. They should certainly have held the hearing by September of their fifth year. Students entering the program with an M.A. are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their third year. They should certainly have held the hearing by September of their fourth year.

Dissertation Defense. Completion of the requirements for the Ph.D. includes a formal oral defense of the dissertation. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing. As stipulated in the Penn State [Graduate Bulletin](#): “Both the thesis director and the student are responsible for ensuring the completion of a draft of the thesis and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral examination (Defense). Major revisions to the thesis should be completed before this examination. The dissertation should be in its final draft, with appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, etc., at the time of the oral examination; both the content and style should be correct and polished by the time this final draft of the thesis is in the hands of the committee. It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to provide a copy of the thesis to each member of the doctoral committee at least one week before the date of the scheduled examination.” Prompted by the student, the Graduate Secretary will notify faculty and students in the Department of the Defense and invite them to attend. The [Graduate Bulletin](#) specifies that the final oral examination, which serves as the Defense of the dissertation, shall be “related in large part to the dissertation, but may cover the candidate’s whole program of study . . .”

The final oral examination can be held in-person (encouraged), fully remote, or hybrid with some individuals participating in-person while others participate remotely. Student preference for delivery mode should be considered, but the student and adviser must agree on the mode. If the student and adviser cannot agree on the mode, the Graduate Program Head will make the final decision. Either the student or adviser can appeal the decision of the Graduate Program Head to the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Timing of the Dissertation Defense. The formal defense of the dissertation shall be scheduled by the Graduate School upon receipt of written notification from the Ph.D. committee chair that the committee judges the dissertation to be satisfactory for a defense. **Two weeks notice** is required by the Graduate School. The deadline for holding the defense is **seven weeks before commencement**. The student must be registered as a full-time or part-time degree student for the semester in which the final oral examination is taken.

ASSISTANTSHIPS

All Criminology graduate students receive teaching or research assistantships. The program makes every effort to continue from year to year the assistantship of each graduate student who: (1) maintains a satisfactory level of academic performance; (2) fulfills the duties associated with the assistantship (performance of these duties is evaluated at the end of each semester); and (3) completes their degree requirements in a timely fashion (see below). One of the most important of these time requirements is completion of the M.A. thesis by the first day of the third year of graduate study. Continuation of funding is, of course, subject to the availability of funds.

Graduate students given research or teaching assignments are responsible for carrying out their duties throughout the entire semester. For those with teaching assignments, the semester (or summer session) does not end until grades are computed and posted. Graduate student teachers must be present for each class session. Any absences except for last minute emergencies must be approved in advance by the Graduate Director and alternative arrangements for the class, acceptable to the Graduate Director, must be made. It is not acceptable for graduate student teachers to miss class without the consent of the Graduate Director. Similarly, research assistants are expected to be present for scheduled meetings as well as for any occasions for which they have scheduled duties.

Criminology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. Completing the Ph.D. should take three more years for students who earn their M.A. at Penn State and four years for students who enter the Penn State Ph.D. program after earning an M.A. elsewhere. Students who take longer to complete the respective degrees are considered to be behind schedule, and in such cases department financial aid will not typically be available.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Annual Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, students receive written feedback on their performance from the Graduate Officer, based on faculty discussion at the annual review meeting that is held at the end of the spring semester. Information for this performance evaluation is obtained from all faculty who have had a particular student in a seminar, supervised an independent study course for the student, or served on the student's M.A. or Ph.D. committee. Course grades and assistantship evaluations are also reviewed for each student.

Residency Requirements

There are additional Graduate School requirements that apply to Ph.D. candidates: Over some twelve-month period after admission to Ph.D. qualifying, the candidate must spend at least two semesters (which may include the semester in which the Qualifying Examination is taken) as a registered full-time student engaged in academic work at the University Park campus. After the residency requirement is met and the Comprehensive Examination passed, status as a student must be maintained by continued registration for credit or noncredit dissertation research courses for at least two semesters of each calendar year until the dissertation is accepted by the doctoral committee. See the Penn State [Graduate Bulletin](#) for further information about all Graduate School requirements.

Graduation

At the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students are responsible for informing the graduate recorder of their intent via LionPATH (effective fall 2016), filing a diploma card, and paying the thesis fee. If the student does not graduate until some subsequent semester, it is necessary to inform the graduate recorder again of the intention to graduate at the beginning of the actual semester of graduation. Deadlines are given in the [Registrar calendar](#).

Format details for both M.A. and Ph.D. theses are provided in the [Thesis Guide](#). Ph.D. candidates must submit a final copy of the thesis to the Graduate School Thesis Office by the announced submission deadline for the semester or summer session in which the degree will be conferred.

Appeals

If a student believes that professional considerations justify an exemption from any of the requirements of this handbook, the student can appeal for such an exemption to the Graduate Committee. If the Graduate Committee sees fit to do so, or if the student wishes to appeal a Graduate Committee decision, the matter can be brought before the Graduate Faculty in Criminology. With the concurrence of the Department Head, a

decision of the Graduate Faculty is binding. Neither the Graduate Committee nor the Graduate Faculty is empowered to exempt the student from requirements set forth in the [Graduate School](#).

A process is set forth in the Graduate Bulletin for appeals of dismissal from the graduate program or termination of assistantship funding.

Additional University Requirements

This Criminology Program handbook is supplementary to the University's [Graduate Bulletin](#). The student is responsible for knowing the requirements of the Penn State Graduate School concerning thesis deadline dates, payment of fees, filing for diplomas, time limitations on degree qualifying, and so on.

Professional Conduct

Graduate students are expected to conform to the highest standards of professional conduct. All academic integrity violations will be addressed in accordance with the College's Policies and Procedures for Academic Integrity. All graduate students are expected to be familiar with the [Policies and Procedures](https://la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/)(<https://la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/>).

Questions about professional ethics also arise in another context, the use of human subjects for research purposes. To provide safeguards for all concerned, the University requires that any use of human subjects for research, instructional, or continuing education activities be submitted for institutional review. Further information can be obtained from the Office for Regulatory Compliance, 212 Kern Building.

Typical Schedule for M.A./Ph.D. Students in Criminology

	Courses	Requirements	Objectives
Yr 1-FA	CRIM 500 (Intro Grad Studies) CRIM 512 (Crim Theory) SOC 574 (Statistics I) CRIM/SOC/Elective Seminar		Get oriented to the program
Yr 1-SP	CRIM 501 (Criminal Justice) SOC 575 (Statistics II) CRIM/SOC/Elective Seminar		
Yr 1-SU			Assemble M.A. Committee
Yr 2-FA	SOC 513 (Research Methods) CRIM/SOC/Elective Seminar Thesis Credits		Develop M.A. Thesis Proposal
Yr 2-SP	CRIM/SOC Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 591 (Teaching Seminar) Thesis Credits		Complete and defend M.A. Thesis
Yr 2-SU	Thesis Credits	Defend M.A. Thesis	Develop/submit Thesis for publication
Yr 3-FA	CRIM Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) Thesis Credits	Pass Qualifying Evaluation	Develop/submit papers for publication; Develop dissertation idea
Yr 3-SP	CRIM Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) Thesis Credits		Continue working on research papers; Begin preparing for Comps
Yr 3-SU	Thesis Credits		Prepare for and pass Comps; Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-FA	CRIM Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) Thesis Credits	Pass Comps	Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-SP	Dissertation Credits		Complete Dissertation Proposal; Dissertation Research
Yr 4-SU	Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Proposal Hearing	Dissertation Research; Job Market Prep
Yr 5-FA	Dissertation Credits		Dissertation Research; Job Search
Yr 5-SP	Dissertation Credits	Dissertation defense	Complete Dissertation; Job Search

Appendix A. Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with a B.A.

M.A. Requirements

Course Requirements		Course name (if elective)	Course Num	Sem/Yr
CRIM 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
CRIM 501	Criminal Justice System (3 credits)			
CRIM 512	Theories of Crime and Deviance (3 credits)			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab option)			
SOC 575	Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits)			
CRIM 600	MA thesis (6 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective in Criminology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			

M.A. Thesis Title:	
Committee Chair (name)	
*Other Committee Members	1)
	2)
Thesis approved by all committee members (date)	
Semester/year degree conferred	

*committee must include three members, at least two in criminology

Ph.D. Requirements

Course Requirements (30+ credits total)		Course Name	Course Num	Sem/Yr
CRIM 591	Teaching seminar (1 credit)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Thesis credits (12 credits) and other elective seminars to total 30+			

Qualifying Exam (date passed)	
Ph.D. Committee Chair (name)	
Ph.D. Committee Members	1)
	2)
	3)
Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved)	
Final dissertation defense (date approved)	
Dissertation Title:	
Semester/year degree conferred	

Appendix B. Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with an M.A.

Core Courses (required if no equivalent from student's M.A. program)		Requirement waived? (yes/no)	Penn State course if not waived	
			Course Num	Sem/Yr
CRIM 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
CRIM 501	The Criminal Justice System (3 credits)			
CRIM 512	Theories of Crime and Deviance (3 credits)			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab option)			
SOC 575	Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits)			
SOC 591	Teaching Crim/Soc (1 credit)			

Ph.D. Course Requirements (30+ credits total, must include the following)		Course Name	Course Num	Sem/Yr
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
CRIM 5xx	Elective seminar in Criminology (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective seminar (3 credits)			
XXX xxx	Elective credits (12 thesis credits and other elective seminars for 30+)			

Qualifying Exam (date passed)	
Ph.D. Committee Chair (name)	
Ph.D. Committee Members	1)
	2)
	3)

Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved)	
Final dissertation defense (date approved)	
Dissertation Title:	
Semester/year degree conferred	

Appendix C. Guidelines for Criminology Students Pursuing Degrees in Sociology

The Criminology graduate program serves as both an interdisciplinary doctoral program and as the criminology specialty area of the Department of Sociology and Criminology. This combination is at the core of the program's identity, and we highlight it in recruiting both graduate students and faculty. To fully realize the program's role as the criminology specialty area, we have created the means for those students who consider themselves sociologists to earn degrees in Sociology, provided that they meet appropriate requirements. Fortunately, the structure and requirements of the Criminology graduate program are closely coordinated with those of the Sociology graduate program, so the task is not complex.

Course requirements. Below this section of the handbook, the course requirements for both graduate programs are listed. The two sets of requirements are quite compatible, and we have found that, with proper course selection, it is straightforward for students to meet the Sociology requirements in the course of completing the Criminology requirements. Note that most of the courses in the Sociology M.A. program are also required in the Criminology M.A. program. The only Sociology course not required for the master's in Criminology is SOC 502 Sociological Theory. *Thus, a student who completes the Criminology master's degree requirements can complete the Sociology master's degree requirements by adding Sociological Theory.*

Because the Criminology program serves as the criminology specialty area of the Department of Sociology and Criminology, the four seminars in Criminology will satisfy the major area requirement in Sociology. Criminology elective credits can be used to complete the Sociology minor requirement. SOC 502 Sociological Theory can count as one of the four Criminology elective seminars.

Comprehensive exam requirements: The comprehensive exam requirements of both programs have the same basic form, which is two days of in-house exams, followed by an oral exam. Ph.D. committees are responsible for writing the exam questions and evaluating the written and oral answers. In both programs committees have the option of requiring students to write a dissertation proposal in advance of the comprehensive exam and having the oral exam also serve as the proposal hearing. In both programs the doctoral committee is free to determine the content covered by the comprehensive exam, though in Criminology there are four areas of coverage: criminology, criminal justice, methods and statistics, and the student's specialization area. Thus, a single exam can satisfy the comprehensive exam requirements of both programs. It is recommended that the exam questions for Criminology students seeking Sociology degrees not be limited to the study of crime. At a minimum, they should also include non-criminological themes from the student's area of specialization.

Ph.D./M.A. Thesis Committee: The doctoral or master's committees of criminology students earning sociology degrees should be chaired by (or at least co-chaired by) a criminology faculty member with a joint title in sociology. Doctoral committees should include at least two criminology faculty members (including the chair) and at least one non-criminology member of the sociology faculty. Master's committees should include at least one of each.

Dissertation or thesis topic: Criminology students earning sociology degrees must complete dissertations or theses on sociological topics.

“Transferring” to Sociology or Criminology: Criminology students who wish to receive sociology degrees will be transferred “on the books.” This requires the signature of the Sociology graduate officer, who has the discretion to decline the request if they judge that the student’s performance is not up to standards or that the student’s interests are not appropriate to the Sociology program.

All Sociology students are eligible to choose Criminology as their major or minor area, even if they were not originally admitted as Criminology students. Any students originally admitted to Sociology who complete the requirements of the Criminology program will have the option of earning either degree. The Criminology graduate officer will have signature authority and discretion for students transferring to the Criminology degree program. For students transferring from Sociology to Criminology, the two graduate officers and department head will negotiate funding and oversight on an individual basis.

Graduate committee oversight of students’ programs: The Criminology graduate officer and graduate committee will take primary responsibility for the oversight of all Criminology students regardless of which degree they seek. This includes functions such as conducting annual reviews and judging whether students are making satisfactory progress to warrant continued funding. For Criminology students who are seeking Sociology degrees, the Sociology graduate officer and graduate committee will have secondary oversight with authority to overrule their Criminology counterparts on all matters except funding from the Criminology budget. (In other words, the Sociology graduate committee will delegate direct oversight to the Criminology graduate committee, which will act in the capacity of the Criminology specialty area of Sociology. But “final authority” will still reside in the Sociology graduate committee since these will officially be Sociology students.)

Comparison of Criminology/Sociology Ph.D. Requirements

Master's

Year 1 Fall	CRIM 500 SOC 574 CRIM 512 CRIM 5xx	Intro to Graduate Studies Statistical Methods Criminology Theory Elective Seminar in CRIM
Year 1 Spring	CRIM 501 SOC 513 SOC 575	Criminal Justice Systems Sociological Research Methods Statistical Methods for Non-Exp Research
Year 2 Fall	CRIM 5xx CRIM 5xx CRIM 600	Elective Seminar in CRIM Elective Seminar in CRIM 3 M.A. thesis credits
Year 2 Spring	CRIM/SOC 5xx CRIM 5xx CRIM 600	Seminar in CRIM or SOC Elective Seminar in CRIM 3 M.A. thesis credits

Years 3–5

Option 1. Ph.D. in Criminology

CRIM/SOC 591	Teaching Seminar
CRIM 5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM
CRIM 5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM
5xx	Elective Seminar
5xx	Elective Seminar
5xx	Elective Seminar
5xx	Elective Seminar
12+ Elective Credits (Thesis Credits and/or Elective Seminars)	

Option 2. Ph.D. in Sociology

CRIM/SOC 591	Teaching Seminar
Major	
CRIM or SOC5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM or SOC in major area
CRIM or SOC5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM or SOC in major area
Crim or Soc5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM or SOC in major area
Soc 502	Theories of Society
Minor	
Crim or Soc5xx	Elective Seminar in CRIM or SOC
5xx	Elective Seminar in minor area
5xx	Elective Seminar in minor area

APPENDIX D. Dual-Title in Criminology and Social Data Analytics (SoDA)

Criminology doctoral students seeking to attain and be identified with an interdisciplinary array of tools, techniques, and methodologies for social data analytics, while maintaining a close association with criminology, may apply to pursue a dual-title Ph.D. in Criminology and Social Data Analytics. Social data analytics is the integration of social scientific, computational, informational, statistical, and visual analytic approaches to the analysis of large or complex data that arise from human interaction. The dual-title Ph.D. program provides additional training with the aim of providing scientists with the skills required to expand the field of social data analytics, creatively to answer important social scientific questions, and communicate effectively with both academic and nonacademic audiences.

Admission Requirements

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements stated in the **General Information** section of the [Graduate Bulletin](#). Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Criminology and the Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. Applicants interested in the dual-title degree program may note their interest in the program on their applications to Criminology and include remarks in their personal statements, in which they address the ways in which their research and professional goals in sociology reflect related interests in Social Data Analytics-related research.

To be enrolled in the dual-title doctoral degree program in Social Data Analytics, a student must submit a letter of application and transcript, which will be reviewed by the Social Data Analytics Admissions Committee. An applicant must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4-point scale) to be considered for enrollment in the dual-title degree program. Students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Social Data Analytics no later than the end of the fourth semester (not counting summer semesters) of entry into the Criminology Ph.D. program and before taking the comprehensive exam.

Dual-Title Requirements

For the Ph.D. in Criminology at Penn State, a minimum of 30 course credits (including dissertation hours) are required beyond the M.A. degree requirements. See earlier sections of this handbook for specific information regarding these requirements. The minimum course work requirements for the dual-title Ph.D. degree in Social Data Analytics are as follows:

- SoDA 501 (3 credits)
- SoDA 502 (3 credits)
- 12 or more elective credits in Social Data Analytics from a list of courses maintained by the Social Data Analytics Committee. Collectively the elective credits must satisfy the following requirements:
 - (A) Core analytics distribution. 3 or more credits in courses focused on statistical learning, machine learning, data mining, or visual analytics. Courses approved as meeting this requirement are designated (A) on the list of approved electives.
 - (Q) Quantification distribution. 6 or more credits in courses focused on statistical inference or quantitative social science methodology. Courses approved as meeting this requirement are designated (Q) on the list of approved electives.
 - (C) Computational/informational distribution. 6 or more credits in courses focused on computation, collection, management, processing, or interaction with electronic data, especially at scale. Courses approved as meeting this requirement are designated (C) on the list of approved electives.
 - (S) Social distribution. 6 or more credits in courses with substantial content on the nature of human interaction and/or the analysis of data derived from human interaction and/or the social context or ethics or social consequences of social data analytics. Courses approved as meeting this requirement are designated (S) on the list of approved electives.
 - Beyond the AQCS designations, classes are also given a *departmental cluster*.
 - DC1 classes have the following prefixes (STAT, APLNG, CAS, CRIM, CLJ, PLSC, SOC, HDFS, and DEMOG).
 - DC2 classes have the following prefixes (GEOG, IST, CMPSC, CSE, EE, and IE).
 - Students need *at least* 3 credits in DC1 and DC2.
 - Students need 6 or more credits in approved courses outside the primary program.
 - Students should have 3 or fewer credits in approved courses at the 400-level.

Students or faculty may request that the Social Data Analytics Committee consider approval of elective designations for any course, including temporary approvals for experimental or variable-title courses. Students are encouraged to take interdisciplinary courses that carry multiple (A), (Q), (C), (S) designations, as well as to select SoDA electives that also meet requirements of the primary program. Within this framework, final course selection is determined by the student in consultation with academic advisers from their home department and Social Data Analytics.

Through satisfaction of home degree requirements and appropriate choice of electives to satisfy multiple criteria, students may fulfill these requirements with as few as 12 credits outside their home program (SoDA 501, SoDA 502, and 6 credits of appropriate interdisciplinary electives). There is no formal maximum number of credits from the primary degree that can be double-counted toward the SoDA degree. For those meeting the SoDA elective requirement with the minimum of 12 credits, the outside-program minimum effectively limits the number of primary degree credits that count toward SoDA at 6. Adopting programs and advising committees may limit the number of credits taken for the SoDA degree that can count toward home degree requirements.

Appendix E. Quantitative Methods Certificate

The Penn State Sociology and Criminology programs have exceptional strength in quantitative research methods and statistical analysis techniques, both in their graduate faculty and in their consequent course offerings. Capitalizing on these strengths, students in Sociology and Criminology can earn a certificate in Quantitative Methods (QM) in place of a minor (with approval from the Graduate Committee). To earn a QM certificate, students must (1) complete four approved methods/statistics courses (12 hours) beyond SOC 513, 574, and 575 (see below); (2) include a quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee; and (3) one of the areas covered in the comprehensive exam must be quantitative methods.

A quantitative methodologist is defined as a faculty member who teaches graduate level quantitative methods and/or who has a publication record in quantitative methods. The Department of Sociology and Criminology Quantitative Methods Certificate (QMC) committee will determine which faculty meet this criterion. Committee members outside of the Department of Sociology and Criminology may also meet the qualifications to serve as the quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee. The QMC committee must approve any outside members who are requested to serve in this role.

Courses listed below can be used to meet the four-course requirement mentioned above. Additional courses will also be considered, and new ones will be added as they become available. Institute for Social Research Summer Institute courses can also be used upon the approval of the committee (one-week workshops are excluded). A student may petition the QMC committee to add a course to the list.

ECON 500 Mathematical Economics
ECON 501 Econometrics
ECON 502 Microeconomic Analysis
ECON 503 Macroeconomic Analysis

STAT 500 Applied Statistics
STAT 501 Regression Methods
STAT 502 Analysis of Variance and Design of Experiments

STAT 503 Design of Experiments
STAT 504 Analysis of Discrete Data
STAT 505 Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis
STAT 506 Sampling Theory
STAT 509 Design and Analysis of Clinical Trials
STAT 510 Time Series Analysis

SOC 518 Survey Methods I: Survey Design
SOC 519 Survey Methods II: Analysis of Survey Data

SOC 572 Foundations of Causal Analysis in the Social Sciences
SOC 573 Demographic Techniques
SOC 576 Applied Mathematical Demography
SOC 577 Event History Analysis
SOC 578 Multilevel Regression Models
SOC 579 Spatial Demography
SOC 597 Advanced Structural Equation Models
SOC 597 Categorical Data Analysis
SOC 597 Measurement Issues in Social Data

HDFS 517 Multivariate Study of Change and Human Development
HDFS/PSY 526 Measurement in Human Development

Other courses not listed above may be approved to meet the QMC course requirement by the Department of Sociology and Criminology QMC committee.

A student who has met the requirements for the QM certificate must write a letter to the director of graduate studies specifying how they have been met and requesting the award of the certificate. Students who are approved will receive a letter confirming the completion of all requirements and a signed certificate.

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