



PennState

College of the Liberal Arts

SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Department of Sociology and Criminology

Penn State

211 Oswald Tower

814-865-2527

2024–2025

Contents

THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (M.A.) PROGRAM	4
Advisers	4
Course Requirements (See Appendix A for Checklist)	4
Required Course Load	5
Grade-Point Average.....	5
Thesis Committee.....	5
Thesis.....	5
Time Limit for the M.A.	5
THE DOCTORAL DEGREE (PH.D.) PROGRAM.....	6
Ph.D. Qualifying Evaluation	6
The Ph.D. Committee.....	6
Course Requirements (See Appendix A or B for Checklist)	7
Language/Communication Requirement.....	7
Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training	8
Grade-Point Average.....	8
Comprehensive Examination	8
Timing of the Comprehensive Examination	9
Repeating the Comprehensive Examination	10
Dissertation.....	10
Dissertation Proposal Hearing.....	10
Timing of Dissertation Proposal Hearing	10
Dissertation Defense.....	10
Timing of the Dissertation Defense.....	11
ASSISTANTSHIPS	11
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.....	12
Annual Evaluation.....	12
Residency Requirements	12
Graduation	12
Appeals	13
Additional University Requirements	13
Professional Conduct.....	13
Typical Schedule for M.A./Ph.D. Students in Sociology	14
Appendix A. Checklists for Students Who Enter the Program with B.A. Degree	15
Appendix B. Checklist for Students Who Enter Program with M.A. Degree.....	17

Appendix C. Dual-Title Degrees 18
Appendix D. Certificates 19
Appendix E. Guidelines for Criminology Students Pursuing Degrees in Sociology 24
Appendix F. Guidelines for Sociology Students Pursuing Degrees in Criminology..... 26

THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (M.A.) PROGRAM

The core of the M.A. program is a set of courses designed to enhance students' knowledge of substantive specialty areas in sociology, social theory, sociological research methods, and statistics. It is not a stand-alone or terminal M.A. degree program. Instead, it is embedded within the doctoral degree program, with students earning an M.A. on the way to a doctoral degree (Ph.D.).

Advisers

M.A. candidates undertake their first year of study with the assistance of an interim adviser. This will be a faculty member to whom the student is assigned as a graduate assistant, appointed by the Sociology Program's Director of Graduate Studies (or "DGS"). Advisers are reassigned each year and thus may change over the course of time in the program. M.A. candidates should meet with advisers prior to each registration for the purpose of discussing progress toward degree.

Course Requirements (See Appendix A for Checklist)

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

SOC 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies – 1 credit

SOC 501 Theories of Society I – 3 credits

1 additional course in social theory, chosen from one of the following:

- SOC 502 Theories of Society II – 3 credits *or*

- CRIM 512 Criminological Theories – 3 credits

SOC 513 Sociological Research Methods – 3 credits

SOC 574 Statistical Methods for Social Research – 3 credits*

SOC 575 Statistical Methods for Nonexperimental Research – 3 credits*

5 elective courses – 15 credits

- At least 4 must be electives in Sociology (SOC 5xx)^

- Remaining may be Sociology or other 500-level graduate course

SOC 600 Thesis Research – 6 credits

* Depending on the instructor, a 1 credit lab may also be required

^ For cohorts entering before Fall 2025, at least 2 must be Sociology (SOC 5XX)

Note: Required courses 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 Intermediate Social Statistics or a comparable course in a related department prior to enrollment in SOC 574.

Required Course Load

The Graduate School specifies that students holding twenty hour/week assistantships must carry 9–12 course credits per semester. Thesis credits (SOC 600) and dissertation credits (SOC 601) 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. Review the [GCAC-501 Credit Load policy](#) for additional information.

Grade-Point Average

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required to graduate. However, sociology 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. Review the [GCAC-404 Satisfactory Scholarship policy](#) for additional information.

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 sociology faculty. One of the sociology 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 Theses and Dissertations](#) of the University.

Time Limit for the M.A.

Sociology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. Not defending the M.A. degree before the beginning of the third year is considered poor performance, and it places the student at risk of losing department funding and continuation in the program.

THE DOCTORAL DEGREE (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 Sociology 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 their 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 Sociology 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 sociology or sociology-related field at another institution, the Qualifying Evaluation shall take place by the end of the third 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 Director of Graduate Studies and will be heard by the sociology graduate faculty. Review the [GCAC-604 Qualifying Examination – Research Doctorate policy](#) for more information.

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 sociology tenure-line faculty and one of whom must be from outside the Department of Sociology and Criminology. The committee must include faculty

members having recognized expertise in the major and minor areas of specialization selected by the student. One sociology tenure-line faculty member is designated chair of the Ph.D. committee; ordinarily this person also serves as main adviser 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 completes the Graduate School's Research Doctoral Committee Appointment Signature Form. This submission will be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies. 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**. Review the [GCAC-602 Ph.D. Committee Formation, Composition, and Review - Research Doctorate policy](#) for more information.

Course Requirements (See Appendix A or B for Checklist)

The Ph.D. in Sociology requires 19 credits, including the following courses:

SOC 591 Teaching Sociology - 1 credit

SOC 592 Writing for publication - 3 credits

5 additional electives – 15 credits. Of these 5 elective courses:

- No more than one 3-credit course may be for Individual Studies (SOC 596 or another program's 596).
- At least 3 must be substantive sociology courses. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

Ph.D. candidates also must have completed all courses required for the M.A. degree in Sociology at Penn State, or their equivalent.

Language/Communication Requirement

The Sociology 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 (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 (citi.psu.edu/). All first-year students are responsible for sending their certificates of completion to the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Coordinator before the end of the fall semester of their first year. Penn State requires renewal of CITI training every three years.
- (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. Review the [GCAC-404 Satisfactory Scholarship policy](#) for additional information.

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 in sociology is to ensure competency in the earlier-described major and minor areas of specialization. At the discretion of the faculty committee, examination content, while focusing on the major and minor areas of specialization, may incorporate aspects of general social theory, research methods, and statistics.

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. Native English speakers will have three hours for each session, and non-native speakers will have four hours. The Student Disability Resources (SDR) Office permits reasonable accommodations. The student's exam schedule can be adjusted based on accommodations with an approval letter from SDR. 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 Comprehensive Examination

Students who entered the Penn State graduate program in Sociology with a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.)/Bachelor of Science degree (B.S.) must pass the exam before the end of fall semester of their fourth year to be eligible for continued funding. They are encouraged, however, to take the exam before the beginning of the fall semester of their fourth year. Thus, *encouraged 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 encouraged to take the examination prior to the beginning of the fall semester of their third year. Thus, *encouraged timing* is before their fifth semester; *required timing* is by end of their fifth semester.

Repeating the Comprehensive Examination

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

Review [the GCAC-606 Comprehensive Examination – Research Doctorate policy](#) for more information.

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 Dissertation Proposal Hearing

Students entering the graduate program in Sociology at Penn State with a B.A. or B.S. degree are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their fourth year. They must have held the hearing before the beginning of their fifth year. Students entering the program with an M.A. degree are advised to hold the formal Dissertation Proposal Hearing during their third year. They must 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 [GCAC-607](#), the dissertation committee chair and the student are responsible for ensuring the completion of a draft of the dissertation and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral

examination (i.e., 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 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 two weeks before the date of the scheduled examination." [GCAC-608](#) 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.

Review the [GCAC-608 Final Oral Examination – Research Doctorate policy](#) for more information.

ASSISTANTSHIPS

All Sociology 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 duties associated with the assistantship; (3) completes degree requirements and milestones in a timely fashion; and (4) demonstrates satisfactory departmental citizenship and professionalism. 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. If a graduate student is the instructor of record (e.g., teaching their own class or teaching a lab section that has its own course registration), graduate student teachers must be present for each class session. Any absences except for last-minute

emergencies must be approved in advance by the Director of Graduate Studies and alternative arrangements for the class, acceptable to the Director of Graduate Studies must be made. It is not acceptable for graduate student teachers to miss class without the consent of the Director of Graduate Studies. Similarly, research assistants are expected to be present for scheduled meetings as well as for any occasions for which they have scheduled duties.

Sociology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. degree. Completing the Ph.D. should take three more years for students who earn their M.A. degree at Penn State and four years for students who enter the Penn State Ph.D. program after earning an M.A. degree elsewhere. Students who take longer to complete the respective degrees and are making good progress may be awarded one additional year of funding, following a formal application and review process, but this is not guaranteed. Students will not be awarded more than one additional year of funding from the department.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Annual Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, students receive written feedback on their performance from the Director of Graduate Studies, 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 course, 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 School of their intent via LionPATH (effective fall 2016), filing a diploma card, and paying the thesis and/or dissertation fee. If the student does not graduate until some subsequent semester, it is necessary to inform the Graduate School 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 and Dissertation Handbook. Ph.D. candidates must submit a final copy of the thesis to the Graduate School Office of Theses and Dissertations 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 Sociology. With the concurrence of the Department Head, a decision of the Graduate Faculty is binding. Neither the Graduate Committee nor the Graduate Faculty can deviate from requirements set forth in [GCAC-802](#).

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 Sociology 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 [Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures](#).

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 Sociology

	Courses	Requirements	Objectives
Yr 1-FA	SOC 500 (Intro Grad Studies) SOC 502 (Theories of Society) SOC 574 (Statistical Methods) SOC 5XX Elective course		Get oriented to the program
Yr 1-SP	SOC 503 (Contemporary Sociology) SOC 575 (Statistical Models for NonExperimental Research) SOC 5XX Elective course		
Yr 1-SU			Assemble M.A. Committee
Yr 2-FA	SOC 513 (Research Methods) SOC 5XX Elective course(s) SOC 600 Thesis Credits		Develop M.A. Thesis Proposal
Yr 2-SP	SOC 591 (Teaching Sociology) SOC 5XX Elective course SOC 600 Thesis Credits		Complete and defend M.A. Thesis
Yr 2-SU	SOC 600 Thesis Credits	Defend M.A. Thesis	Develop/submit Thesis for publication
Yr 3-FA	SOC 5XX course(s) Elective course(s) SOC 600 Thesis Credits	Pass Qualifying Evaluation	Develop/submit papers for publication; Develop dissertation idea
Yr 3-SP	SOC 592 Writing for publication (Fall or Spring) SOC 5XX course(s) Elective course(s) SOC 600 Thesis Credits		Continue working on research papers; Begin preparing for Comps
Yr 3-SU	SOC 600 Thesis Credits		Prepare for and pass Comps; Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-FA	SOC 5XX or Elective course(s) if needed SOC 600 or SOC 601 Thesis/Dissertation Credits	Pass Comps	Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-SP	SOC 601 Dissertation Credits		Complete Dissertation Proposal; Dissertation Research
Yr 4-SU	SOC 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Proposal Hearing	Dissertation Research; Job Market Prep
Yr 5-FA	SOC 601 Dissertation Credits		Dissertation Research; Job Search
Yr 5-SP	SOC 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Defense	Complete Dissertation; Job Search

Appendix A. Checklists for Students Who Enter the Program with B.A. Degree

M.A. Requirements

Course Requirements (37 credits)		Course name (if elective)	Course Num	Sem/Yr completed
SOC 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
SOC 502	Theories of Society (3 credits)			
SOC 503 or CRIM 512	Contemporary Sociology or Criminological Theories (3 credits)			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits*)			
SOC 575	Statistical Models for Nonexperimental Research (3 credits*)			
SOC 600	MA thesis (6 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx or XXX 5xx	Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)			

Electives must be at the 500 level or higher, unless the course below the 500 level is needed for a dual-title or other requirement.

For cohorts entering before Fall 2025, 2 of 5 (rather than 4 of 5) electives must be Sociology (SOC 5XX)

* Depending on the instructor, a 1 credit lab may also be required

M.A. Thesis Title:	
Committee Chair, sociology (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 sociology.

Ph.D. Requirements

Course Requirements (19 credits)		Course Name and number (if elective)	Substantive elective?	Sem/Yr completed
SOC 591	Teaching Sociology (1 credit)		N	
SOC 592	Writing for publication (3 credits)		N	
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx or XXX 5xx	Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx or XXX 5xx	Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)			

Of the 5 elective courses: No more than one 3-credit course may be for Individual Studies (SOC 596 or another program's 596). At least 3 must be substantive sociology courses. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

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 Program with M.A. Degree

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 completed
SOC 500	Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
SOC 502	Theories of Society (3 credits)			
SOC 503	Contemporary Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 513	Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 574	Statistical Methods (3 credits)			
SOC 575	Stat. Models for NonExp. Research (3 credits)			

Ph.D. Course Requirements (19 credits total)		Course Name and number (if elective)	Substantive elective?	Sem/Yr completed
SOC 591	Teaching Sociology (1 credits)		N	
SOC 592	Writing for publication (3 credits)		N	
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx	Elective in Sociology (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx or XXX 5xx	Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)			
SOC 5xx or XXX 5xx	Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)			

Of the 5 elective courses: No more than one 3-credit course may be for Individual Studies (SOC 596 or another program's 596). At least 3 must be substantive sociology courses. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

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. Dual-Title Degrees

Dual-Title Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography

A special dual-title Ph.D. program is offered in Sociology and Demography. Details can be obtained from the Sociology DGS or director of the graduate program in Demography. Information is also available at demography.psu.edu/.

Students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography select demography as their major area of specialization for the comprehensive exam. They take additional courses in demographic topics to fulfill requirements as indicated by the Demography Dual-Title program. Some of these courses must be completed in disciplines outside the Department of Sociology. As long as they are recognized by the Dual-Title program, demography courses taken within the sociology department count toward both the sociology and demography degrees.

A minimum of a four-member committee is required for dual-Ph.D. students. Students must pass the qualifying evaluation in both Sociology and Demography. The chair of the student's dual degree committee must be on both the Sociology and Demography program faculty and also at least one other committee member must be on the Demography program faculty. Note that the second Demography program faculty can be from outside of Sociology. The dissertation of dual-degree students addresses a problem and draws on the research and scholarship of both the disciplines of sociology and demography.

Dual-Title Ph.D. in Social Data Analytics (SoDA)

The full detailed requirements for students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Data Analytics (SoDA) are available at soda.la.psu.edu/programs/graduate-program/. In addition to completion of the requirements of Sociology, dual-title Ph.D. students must complete additional coursework to meet requirements as indicated by the SoDA Dual-Title program. Due to overlap with Sociology program requirements, these coursework requirements often overlap.

Students must pass the qualifying evaluation in both Sociology and SoDA. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must be on the qualifying evaluation committee. Students must pass a comprehensive exam (as defined by Sociology) assessing mastery of Sociology and SoDA, as well as preparation for dissertation research. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must serve as chair or co-chair of the dissertation committee. Finally, the student must defend a dissertation with substantial content in SoDA.

Appendix D. Certificates

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 have one of the areas covered in the comprehensive be in quantitative methods; and (3) complete a practicum in which the student demonstrates proficiency in the application or teaching of methods/statistics (e.g., by teaching a stats/methods course, lab or workshop; authoring or co-authoring a paper on methods/statistics; or completing an internship at an applied research agency such as the U.S. Census Bureau).

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: Survey Design
SOC 519 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.

Survey Research Methods Certificate

Social scientists with expertise in survey methodologies are in high demand in academia, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and in the private sector. The Graduate Certificate in Survey Methodology supplements traditional graduate degree programs by providing graduate students with an integrated program of study that goes beyond the training in a single department.

Students in many different graduate programs—ranging from marketing to nutrition, educational psychology to political science—are exposed to some methods relevant to survey research. The three required courses in the certificate program provide students with competence in the collection of data and the analysis of survey data, along with practical experience in survey research operations and administration.

See polisci.la.psu.edu/graduate/programs-of-study/graduate-certificate-in-survey-methodology/ for more information on the certificate program, including admissions requirements, required courses, and electives.

Certificate in Social Network Analysis Applications in Criminology and Sociology (SNAACS)

Social network analysis is the formal study of relationships between social entities. Sociologists and criminologists often study the relationships between people, such as friendships or family ties, or between organizations, such as the links created between university departments through faculty co-authorships or between corporations through board interlocks. Questions of particular interest include what causes these links to form, their characteristics in terms of local features like communication frequency or global features like how they connect disparate groups of actors, their dynamics, and how they channel rights, obligations, information, and influence between entities.

The Penn State Department of Sociology and Criminology has exceptional strengths in the theory and analysis of social networks, both in its graduate faculty and in its consequent course offerings. What sets our department apart from others is our strong focus on issues pertaining to social psychological processes underlying network formation and dynamics, social network data collection in general and hard-to-survey populations, the importance of family and kinship ties and social support, networks over the life course, criminal and illicit networks, migrant networks, peer influence networks, spatially embedded network analysis, social media networks, and novel methods for modeling social networks, including computational and agent-based models of network processes.

Capitalizing on these strengths, as well as the interests of our students, students in Sociology and Criminology can earn a Certificate in Social Network Analysis Applications in Criminology and Sociology (SNAACS) in place of a minor area of concentration for Ph.D. students in Sociology and Criminology. To earn a SNAACS Certificate, students must complete the following:

(1) Complete one required 3-credit courses and three appropriate elective 3-credit courses for a total of 12 hours of course work. All students in the certificate program must complete the course Social Network Analysis (SOC 580), which deals with the theory and methods of social network analysis (3 hours). Students must also complete three additional approved courses that draw heavily on topics related to social network analysis (9 hours). These courses will need to be approved annually by the SNAACS certificate committee based on a review of several materials. To obtain approval, the student should submit a written request that includes: a) the course's syllabus, b) a brief description of the way social networks are incorporated into the course, and c) contact information for the instructor; ideally, these requests should be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the semester in which the course will be taught, but retroactive requests will be considered at the discretion of the Head of the SNAACS certificate committee. A list of courses with content that may be relevant is listed below.

(2) Include social network analysis as one of the major or minor areas or subareas on the student's comprehensive examination.

(3) Demonstrate the ability to apply the theories and/or methods of social network analysis in a research setting. This can be done in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Drawing heavily on the theories and/or methods of social network analysis in a substantial component of the dissertation. Note that the dissertation does not have to be primarily focused on social network analysis, but at least one component, such as a chapter, should make extensive use of networks related topics or methods. For instance, research on social support, social capital, peer influence, or family dynamics would all qualify, in addition to work that conducts formal network analyses. Approval of this component will be made by the Head of the SNAACS Certificate Committee, in consultation with the broader SNAACS committee, the student's Dissertation Chair, and the Directors of Graduate Studies in Sociology and Criminology.
- b. Submitting a sole- or co-authored manuscript to a recognized academic outlet such as a peer-reviewed journal or an edited volume that relies extensively on or develops social network analysis methods or theories. If a co-authored manuscript is submitted, it is expected that the student's contribution was substantial (e.g., typically, a first author for articles submitted to sociology journals, or an equal responsibility author); a short memo with a description of the student's role in the manuscript's drafting should be submitted along with co-authored manuscripts. To fulfill this requirement, the submitted manuscript and any accompanying materials must be evaluated and approved by the Head of the SNAACS Certificate Committee, in consultation with the broader SNAACS committee.
- c. Completing an internship that relies heavily on the theories and/or methods of social network analysis at a research agency or company with an emphasis on social network analysis. To fulfill this requirement, the student must meet with the head of the SNAACS certificate committee and discuss the internship's duration and focus. Approval will rest with the Head of the SNAACS committee, in consultation the broader SNAACS committee and the Directors of Graduate Studies in Sociology and Criminology.

Courses listed below may be eligible to meet the certificate's course requirements described above (item one). In each year, a student may petition the SNAACS committee to include one of the following courses, or others, as fulfilling these requirements. As the topical emphasis in each course shifts from year to year, approval will be based on the year's syllabus and potentially a discussion with the faculty member teaching the course. In general, courses that include substantial coverage of the theories and methods of social network analysis and an instructor who feels that this material is important to the course will be approved. Additional courses will also be

considered, and new ones will be added as we find out about them, and they become available. Courses other than those listed below will also be considered with a written request for approval from the Departmental SNAACS committee. The procedures described above will also be applied to these approval requests.

In the Department of Sociology and Criminology

CRIM 559 Communities and Crime
CRIM 597E Networks and Crime
CRIM 597F Crime and Health
SOC 521 Family Demography
SOC 522 Demography of the Life Course
SOC 523 Internal and International Migration
SOC 525 Immigration, Assimilation, and Inequality
SOC 526 Health Disparities
SOC 530 Sociology of the Family
SOC 531 Family Disorganization: Stress Points in the Contemporary Family
SOC 537 Biosocial Perspectives on the Family
SOC 576 Applied Mathematical Demography
SOC 579 Spatial Demography
SOC 584 Attitude Formation and Change

In other departments

CAS 563 Pairs and Pairings: Quantitative Methods for Interdependent Data
CSE 597 Graph Mining
CSE 597 Social Network Data Analytics
EE 556: Graphs, Algorithms, and Neural Networks
ENTR 571: Strategic Innovation in Corporate Networks
IE 512: Graph Theory and Networks in Management
INSC 846: Network and Predictive Analytics for Socio-Technical Systems
IST 597 Visualization and Advanced Analysis of Social Networks
MGMT 539: Seminar in Organizational Social Networks
PHYS 580 Elements of Network Science and Its Applications
PLSC 597 Social Network Analysis for Political Science
STAT 507: Epidemiologic Research Methods

A student who has met the requirements for the SNAACS certificate must write a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies and the head of the SNAACS committee documenting how they have been met and requesting award of the Certificate. Upon evaluation and approval from the SNAACS committee, approved students will receive a letter confirming the completion of all requirements and a signed certificate.

Appendix E. Guidelines for Criminology Students Pursuing Degrees in Sociology

The Sociology and the Criminology programs offer parallel, and partially integrated, courses of study. Occasionally students will decide, after receiving the M.A. degree in CRIM to complete the Ph.D. in Sociology. The two programs have developed a process for expediting such transfers.

Criminology students who wish to receive sociology degrees will be transferred to the sociology program. This requires the signature of the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies, 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.

Course Requirements

A student who completes the CRIM M.A. and Ph.D. requirements can complete the Sociology PhD course requirements by adding the sociological theory course (SOC 502), Writing For Publications (SOC592 or an equivalent criminology course), and at least one substantive sociology course. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

Ph.D. Qualifying Evaluation

CRIM Students pursuing the Sociology Ph.D. will be reviewed by both the Sociology and CRIM qualifying committees. The CRIM committee will assess the student's potential to successfully complete the program and produce a high-quality dissertation. The Sociology committee will review the student to assess the extent and breadth of their coursework in sociology.

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. Doctoral committees are responsible for writing the exam questions and evaluating the written and oral answers. In both programs the doctoral committee is free to determine the content covered by the comprehensive exam, though in CRIM there are recommended areas of coverage: criminology, criminal justice, methods and statistics, and specialization area. Thus, a single exam can satisfy the comprehensive exam requirements of both programs. The exam questions for CRIM students seeking Sociology degrees would not be limited to the study of crime. At a minimum, they should also include noncriminological themes from their area of specialization in sociology.

Doctoral or Master's Thesis Committee

The doctoral or master's committees of CRIM students earning Sociology degrees should be chaired by (or cochaired by) a CRIM faculty member with a joint title in Sociology. Doctoral and master's committees should include at least one CRIM faculty member (typically the chair) and at least one non-CRIM member of the Sociology faculty.

Graduate committee oversight of students' programs: The Criminology Director of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies 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.)

Appendix F. Guidelines for Sociology Students Pursuing Degrees in Criminology

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 Director of Graduate Studies will have signature authority and discretion for students transferring to the Criminology degree program. For students transferring from Sociology to Criminology, the two Directors of Graduate Studies and department head will negotiate funding and oversight on an individual basis.

This publication is available in alternative media on request. Penn State is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, and is committed to providing employment opportunities to all qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability or protected veteran status. UBR CLA 24-1040