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PennState
College of the Liberal Arts

CRIMINOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Department of Sociology and Criminology
The Pennsylvania State University

2025–2026

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THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE (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. 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 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 Criminology 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 Criminology requires 38 credits, including the following courses:

- CRIM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies – 1 credit
- CRIM 501 Criminal Justice System – 3 credits
- CRIM 512 Criminological Theories – 3 credits
- CRIM 513 Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology – 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
- CRIM 591 Teaching Criminology/Sociology – 1 credit
- CRIM 5XX seminars—12 credits
(*Examples: CRIM 533 Social Contexts of Criminal Sentencing; CRIM 559 Communities and Crime; CRIM 597 Special Topics in Criminology; CRIM 596 Individual Study does not count for this requirement*)
- CRIM 600 Thesis Research – 6 credits

Note: 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 Intermediate Social Statistics or a comparable course in a related department prior to enrollment in SOC 574 Statistical Methods for Social Research.

Required Course Load

The J. Jeffrey and Ann Marie Fox Graduate School specifies that students holding twenty-hour/week assistantships must carry 9–12 course credits per semester. Thesis credits (CRIM 600) and dissertation credits (CRIM 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, 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. 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 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 Theses and Dissertations](#) of the University, and a one-page abstract of the thesis must be filed with the Fox Graduate School.

Time Limit for the M.A.

Criminology program requirements are such that it should take two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. Students who do not complete the M.A. degree within two years are not guaranteed to receive continuation of funding.

THE DOCTORAL DEGREE (PH.D.) PROGRAM

Ph.D. Qualifying Evaluation

A Qualifying Evaluation is required by the Fox 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 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 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 Fox 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 criminology 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 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 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 submits to the Director of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies. If approved, the proposed committee will be submitted for final approval by the Fox 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)

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 CRIM 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 Seminars – 6 hours

Elective Seminars (CRIM or others) – 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 Fox 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 Fox Graduate School.

Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training

All entering graduate students are expected to complete 8 hours of SARI training (researchsupport.psu.edu/orp/education/sari-requirements/). 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 Fox 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. 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 Fox 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 Criminology 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 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 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 Criminology 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 should certainly have held the hearing by September 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 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](#), 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." 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 Fox 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 Fox 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 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 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. 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.

Criminology 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 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 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 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 Fox 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 Fox Graduate School requirements.

Graduation

At the beginning of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students are responsible for informing the Fox 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 Fox 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.

Professional Conduct

Graduate students are expected to conform to the highest standards of professional conduct. The Criminology Program follows the College of the Liberal Arts Graduate Student Academic Integrity Interim Policy. All students in the program are subject to that policy. The policy is available through the College's Academic Integrity webpage, la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/.

What is an Academic Integrity Violation?

An academic integrity violation is an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage, or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically. The following actions reflect the most common types of academic misconduct and therefore are prohibited behaviors in any academic context unless specified by the instructor, including both courses and academic assessments that are not associated with credit-bearing courses such as qualifying exams, comprehensive exams, dissertations, other milestone assessments, and SARI training. These descriptions illustrate the range of academic misconduct; there may be academic misconduct that falls outside these categories.

- (1) Unauthorized collaboration and/or accessing or using prohibited materials, tools, information, technologies, or study aids. This includes allowing another person to submit work or participate in academic requirements on one's behalf (sometimes called 'ghosting') or assisting another to engage in any form of academic misconduct.
- (2) Misrepresenting another's words, results, processes, or ideas in whole or in part without giving appropriate attribution, citation, or credit. Includes submitting another person's work as one's own (e.g., plagiarism). Other categorical examples include copying and tampering with another student's work.
- (3) Providing false information in fulfillment of an academic assignment,

exercise, publication, or another requirement, including making up data, sources, efforts, events, or results, and recording, reporting, or using them as authentic. Also includes altering or adjusting graded work to receive a favorable regrade.

- (4) Using the same academic work, in part or entirely, for credit more than once, unless specifically authorized by the instructor receiving the reused work.
- (5) Retaining, recording and/or disseminating instructional content when prohibited, including course exams, or other intellectual property, without the express written permission of the instructor(s) or intellectual property owner, or as permitted by their Campus Disability Coordinator.

Given the nature of graduate education, a determination must be made as to whether an action involves *research misconduct*, *academic misconduct*, or *both* as described below.

- (1) The following fall under the purview of academic misconduct policies: Alleged plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a thesis or dissertation in draft form or in work completed for a course (other than a finalized and submitted thesis or dissertation) or a non-course-based assessment that is not published.
- (2) The following fall under the purview of RP02: Addressing Allegations of Research Misconduct (policy.psu.edu/policies/rp02).
 - Plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a thesis or dissertation which has been finalized, signed, and submitted to a school or college to fulfill a degree requirement.
 - Alleged plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification in a research report, manuscript, or other scholarly work not related to a thesis, dissertation, or other work undertaken in fulfillment of a course requirement.
 - Allegations of plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification related to sponsored research.

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 [Fox 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 handbook is supplementary to the University's [Graduate Bulletin](#). The student is responsible for knowing Fox Graduate School requirements concerning thesis submission deadlines, fee payments, time limitations on degree, and so on.

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

	Courses	Requirements	Objectives
Yr 1-FA	CRIM 500 (Intro Grad Studies) CRIM 512 (Crim Theories) SOC 574 (Statistics I) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar		Get oriented to the program
Yr 1-SP	CRIM 501 (Criminal Justice) SOC 575 (Statistics II) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar		
Yr 1-SU			Assemble M.A. Committee
Yr 2-FA	SOC 513 (Research Methods) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Develop M.A. Thesis Proposal
Yr 2-SP	CRIM 513 (Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology) CRIM XXX Elective Seminar CRIM 591 (Teaching Seminar) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Complete and defend M.A. Thesis
Yr 2-SU	CRIM 600 Thesis Credits	Defend M.A. Thesis	Develop/submit Thesis for publication
Yr 3-FA	CRIM XXX Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits	Pass Qualifying Evaluation	Develop/submit papers for publication; Develop dissertation idea
Yr 3-SP	CRIM XXX Seminar(s) Elective Seminar(s) CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Continue working on research papers; Begin preparing for Comps
Yr 3-SU	CRIM 600 Thesis Credits		Prepare for and pass Comps; Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-FA	CRIM or Elective Seminar(s) if needed CRIM 600 or CRIM 601 Thesis/Dissertation Credits	Pass Comps	Dissertation Proposal development
Yr 4-SP	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits		Complete Dissertation Proposal; Dissertation Research
Yr 4-SU	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Proposal Hearing	Dissertation Research; Job Market Prep
Yr 5-FA	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits		Dissertation Research; Job Search
Yr 5-SP	CRIM 601 Dissertation Credits	Dissertation Defense	Complete Dissertation; Job Search

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

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	Criminological Theories (3 credits)			
CRIM 513	Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology (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)			
CRIM 591	Teaching Criminology-Sociology (1 credit)			

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 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. 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
CRIM 500 Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)			
CRIM 501 The Criminal Justice System (3 credits)			
CRIM 512 Criminological Theories (3 credits)			
CRIM 513 Theory Testing and Manuscript Writing in Criminology			
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 degree 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 degree 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 degree 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 degree 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 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.

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.

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.)

Comparison of Criminology/Sociology Ph.D. Requirements

Master's degree

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 513 CRIM 5xx CRIM 591 CRIM 600	Testing Theories and Writing Elective Seminar in CRIM Teaching Seminar

Years 3–5

Option 1. Ph.D. in Criminology

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

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 Fox 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 the Department of Sociology and 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. degree 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 Big Social Data: Approaches and Issues (3 credits)
- SoDA 502 Social Data Analytics: Approaches and Issues (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 needs 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. 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 their program's Graduate Committee). To earn a QM certificate, students must (1) complete three approved methods/statistics courses (9 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 exam 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 statistics/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's Directors of Graduate Studies 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 Director of Graduate Studies from the for the student's program must approve any outside members who are requested to serve in this role.

Courses listed below can be used to meet the three-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 student's Director of Graduate Studies (one-week workshops are excluded).

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 student's Director of Graduate Studies. To promote consistency across programs, the Sociology and Criminology Directors of Graduate Studies are urged to have identical approvals and processes, as much as possible.

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.

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.

Contact SRC Academic Adviser [Eric Plutzer](#) for more information on the certificate program.

Admissions Requirements

Applicants may apply to the program after completing 18 credits of graduate training (with a GPA of 3.3 or higher). The application process includes:

- An application at the [Fox Graduate School's student portal](#)
- A [non-refundable application fee](#) (currently \$65) to the Fox Graduate School
- An endorsement letter in support of your application from your adviser

Required Courses

- PL SC 518/SOC 518. Survey methods I: Modes of survey analysis
- PL SC 519/SOC 519. Survey methods II: Analysis of survey data
- PL SC 595a, SOC 595a, or equivalent. Internship in Survey Research

Electives

Students may select any two additional three-credit courses in intermediate and advanced applied statistics or interviewing techniques, as approved by the chair of the SRC Faculty Advisory Committee. There is no specific list of courses because offerings in the social and behavioral sciences change frequently and possibly offered under the 597 rubric. As a general rule, these courses must be at the 500 level, and they must have prerequisites equivalent to two semesters of applied statistics.

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.

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