SOCIOLOGY, M.S.

The Department of Sociology and the Department of Community and Environmental Sociology conduct a combined graduate program in sociology designed to prepare students for scholarly research, teaching, or applied work. The program leads to the master of science degree with a major in sociology and the doctor of philosophy degree in sociology. It also offers a minor to students earning a doctoral degree in other departments. All major areas of sociological inquiry are represented in the curriculum. The program consistently ranks at or near the top in studies of U.S. doctoral programs.

Distinguished faculty, outstanding students who learn from and support each other, an increasingly multi-ethnic student body, a curriculum covering a broad spectrum of sociological interests, thriving research projects in many areas, and a stimulating campus environment make UW–Madison an excellent choice for students interested in sociology and/or community and environmental sociology.

Members of the departments also participate in a number of interdisciplinary programs. Faculty and students are involved with several research institutes, including the Center for Demography and Ecology, the Center for Demography of Health and Aging, the Center on Poverty, the Institute on Aging, the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, the Applied Population Laboratory, the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies, the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. Further information about faculty and areas of study is available on the department websites: Department of Sociology (http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/soc), and Department of Community and Environmental Sociology (http://dces.wisc.edu).

DEGREES AND CAREER GOALS

The sociology graduate program admits students who intend to earn a Ph.D. Students complete a master of science degree on the way to the Ph.D. or receive a waiver of the program’s master’s requirements based on their having written a thesis and obtained a master’s degree previously. A few students leave the program after completing the master’s degree and pursue careers in the public and private sectors. Of those who graduate with the Ph.D., a majority obtain university teaching and/or research positions; others take research and/or administrative positions in government organizations or private firms.

FUNDING

The departments guarantee five continuous years of funding to all incoming students. Sources of funding include teaching assistantships, project assistantships, research assistantships, traineeships, and fellowships. In addition, some admitted students arrive with outside fellowships such as National Science Foundation or Fulbright awards. International applicants admitted to the program must complete a financial statement that provides evidence of sufficient funds to support themselves for their first year and the intent for support to continue throughout the duration of study. Even though departmental funding is guaranteed, international students must often provide additional financial support documentation, showing they can cover the gap between the amount the departments provide and the amount the U.S. State Department requires. Additional information about international student expenses can be found here (http://grad.wisc.edu/international).

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM DEGREE REQUIREMENTS AND SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.S.

MINIMUM GRADUATE DEGREE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

30 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE RESIDENCE CREDIT REQUIREMENT

16 credits

MINIMUM GRADUATE COURSEWORK (50%) REQUIREMENT

At least half of the coursework (i.e., 15 of the required 30 credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: GRADUATE WORK FROM OTHER INSTITUTIONS

With Program approval, students may count up to 14 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions toward the minimum 30-credit master’s degree requirement and the minimum 50% graduate coursework requirement. Coursework completed five or more years prior to admission to the master’s program may not be used to satisfy either of these requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNDERGRADUATE

With program approval, students may count up to 7 credits earned in an undergraduate degree program at UW–Madison toward the master’s degree requirements. If the courses are numbered 300–699, the credits may count toward the minimum 30-credit degree requirement. If the courses are numbered 700–999, the credits may also count toward the minimum 50% graduate coursework requirement. Coursework completed five or more years prior to admission to the master’s program may not be used to satisfy either of these requirements.

PRIOR COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS: UW–MADISON UNIVERSITY SPECIAL

With program approval, students may count up to 15 credits taken as a Special Student toward the Master’s degree requirements. If the courses are numbered 300–699, the credits may count toward the minimum 30-credit degree requirement. If the courses are numbered 700–999, the credits may also count toward the minimum 50% graduate coursework requirement. Coursework completed five or more years prior to admission
to the master's program may not be used to satisfy either of these requirements.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**

15 credits

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 700</td>
<td>Introductory Proseminar for Graduate Students</td>
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<td>SOC/C&amp;E SOC 361</td>
<td>Statistics for Sociologists II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 773</td>
<td>Intermediate Classical Theory</td>
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<td>SOC 735</td>
<td>Ethnomethodology &amp; Conversation Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC/ C&amp;E SOC 750</td>
<td>Research Methods in Sociology</td>
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<td>SOC 751</td>
<td>Survey Methods for Social Research</td>
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<td>SOC 753</td>
<td>Comparative and Historical Methods in Sociology</td>
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<td>SOC 754</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods in Sociology</td>
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<td>SOC 756</td>
<td>Demographic Techniques II</td>
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**OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT**

3.25 GPA required (3.0 in the first semester)

**OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS**

Students must earn a BC or above in all required courses. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

**PROBATION POLICY**

The status of a student can be one of three options:

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; student must submit an advisor-approved plan outlining specific steps for removal of probationary status and deadlines for doing so).
3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll).

**ADVISOR / COMMITTEE**

The director of graduate studies serves as an entering student’s advisor until the student has arranged for a faculty member who has shared interests to serve as his/her advisor and thesis director. Students are expected to have ongoing contact with their faculty advisor. All students are required to submit a yearly progress report that is read and discussed by a committee of faculty at an annual review.

**ASSESSMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS**

Master’s students write a thesis under the supervision of their major professor. After completing the thesis, students take a comprehensive oral exam covering general sociology, graduate work to date, and the thesis.

Occasionally students decide not to pursue the Ph.D. and opt to complete the requirements for a non-thesis master’s degree. In these rare cases, students complete course requirements and take the comprehensive oral exam.

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**

Students are expected to complete the master’s degree by the end of the summer after their third year in the program.

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

No language requirements.

**ADMISSIONS**

The program receives a large number of applications each fall from highly qualified individuals, requiring the admissions committee to be extremely selective. There is a very strong preference for students planning to pursue a Ph.D.; students whose goal is a master’s are rarely accepted. A cohort of around 20 students is ideal, in terms of providing quality training and making financial support available to all admitted students. Total graduate enrollment in the program is approximately 140 students. An undergraduate major in sociology is not a prerequisite. The admissions committee looks for academic excellence as indicated by undergraduate GPA and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, a writing sample, and references, plus interest in and motivation for graduate study in sociology as indicated by the statement of purpose. However, a weakness in one indicator can be balanced by evidence of strong abilities in the others. To apply, please submit an online application, all transcripts, statement of reasons for graduate study, writing sample, recommendations, and tests scores. GRE scores (general test only) are required of all applicants; in addition, international applicants are required to submit English Proficiency test scores—either TOEFL, MELAB, or IELTS.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature. They will also develop critical thinking skills that empower them to analyze strengths and weaknesses in the existing literature, identify knowledge gaps, evaluate evidence, synthesize information, and form conclusions. They will thus attain the skills necessary to conduct research with intellectual and ethical rigor, care, and creativity.
- Students will complete an original research project in one of the subfields of sociology. In doing so, they will learn to formulate ideas and develop research questions, interpret and evaluate existing literature on the topic, design a feasible research project, use an appropriate methodology, analyze and interpret the resulting data, and consider avenues for future research. They will write a thesis describing their research project and defend it during a comprehensive oral exam.
- Students will develop an understanding of the field of sociology by participating in a required introductory proseminar as well as completing required courses in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics along with elective courses in their area of interest. They will demonstrate their understanding by working as teaching assistants, project assistants, research assistants, and trainees; by presenting work-in-progress at informal brownbag colloquia; by preparing and submitting manuscripts resulting from their research.
for publication in respected journals; and by submitting papers for presentation at professional conferences.

- Students will retrieve, interpret, and evaluate social science literature and use it, along with their own understanding of relevant methodologies, to employ the most appropriate methods and practices in their own research.

- Students will develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research questions. They will also develop the breadth of knowledge and experience that empowers them to synthesize disparate information and use the resulting synthesis to respond creatively to challenges in their field of study.

- Students will communicate in a clear, organized, engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences. They will learn to develop grant proposals; gather, manage, and analyze data; write a thesis that is thought-provoking, concise, and persuasive; present research informatively; listen with care and patience; and give and receive feedback orally and in writing.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- Students will understand, recognize, and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct by developing effective relationships with faculty mentors, graduate student colleagues, and the undergraduate students whom they teach. In addition, they will design research, collect and analyze data, and interpret and report results with honesty and scientific rigor.

PEOPLE

Faculty: Professors Oliver (chair, Sociology), Green (chair, Community and Environmental Sociology), Bell, Borman (affiliated), Carlson, Collins, DeLamater, Emirbayer, Ermakoff, Ferree, Ford (affiliated), Friedland (affiliated), Fujimura, Gerber, Goldberg, Goldrick-Rab (affiliated), Herd, Kleinman, Logan, Massoglia, Maynard, Montgomery, Nordheim (affiliated), Raymo, Rogers (director, COWS), Schaeffer (director, UWSC), Schwartz, Seidman, Stoecker, Thornton (affiliated), Tigges, Wright; Associate Professors Alatout, Christens (affiliated), Curtis, Elwert, Feinstein, Fletcher, Freeland (director, Graduate Studies), Grodsky, Lim, Morales (affiliated), Nobles, Shoemaker (affiliated); Assistant Professors Conti, Engelman, Garoon, Goffman, Grant, Leachman (affiliated), Liu, Simmons (affiliated), Vargas, White, Xiong (affiliated)