

SOCIOLOGY, MS

The Department of Sociology and the Department of Community & 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 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 Applied Population Laboratory, the Center for Demography & Ecology, the Center for Demography of Health & Aging, the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, the High Road Strategy Center, the Holtz Center for Science & Technology Studies, the Institute for Research on Poverty, the Institute on Aging, the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, and the University of Wisconsin Survey Center. 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 & Environmental Sociology (<http://dces.wisc.edu/>).

DEGREES AND CAREER GOALS

The sociology graduate program admits students who intend to earn a PhD. Students complete a Master of Science degree on the way to the PhD or receive a waiver of the program's Master's requirements based on 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 or private sectors. Of those who graduate with the PhD, a majority obtain university teaching and/or research positions; others take research and/or administrative positions in government organizations, nonprofit organizations, or private firms.

ADMISSIONS

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This master's program is offered for work leading to the PhD. Students may not apply directly for the master's and should instead see the admissions information for the PhD. (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/sociology/sociology-phd/#admissiontext>)

FUNDING

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GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

The Bursar's Office provides information about tuition and fees associated with being a graduate student. Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information is available from the Graduate School.

Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum degree requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#requirements>) and policies (<https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policies>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/ Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail

Minimum 30 credits
Credit
Requirement

Minimum 16 credits
Residence
Credit
Requirement

Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	15 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/).
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.25 GPA required (3.00 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.
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 continue pursuit of the PhD 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.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES

The Departments of Sociology and Community & Environmental Sociology have one graduate program, and we admit only those students who intend to complete a PhD. Students admitted to the doctoral program earn a master's degree en route to the PhD. They complete the courses listed below and also write and defend a thesis. Students who earned a master's degree that included a thesis before entering the program may apply the work to the thesis requirement.

Master's Degree Course Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Required Courses		
SOC 700	Introductory Proseminar for Graduate Students	1
SOC/C&E SOC 361	Statistics for Sociologists II	4
SOC 754	Qualitative Research Methods in Sociology	3
SOC 773	Intermediate Classical Theory	3
Additional credits		19

Additional credits should be selected from SOC/C&E SOC courses and seminars restricted to graduate students (typically these courses are numbered 700-984). These additional credits may include no more than 9 credits numbered 985 and above (e.g., working group courses, independent reading courses, and thesis credits).

Those students affiliated with the multi-disciplinary Center for Demography & Ecology and Center for Demography of Health & Aging must complete these courses toward the Methods requirement:

SOC 674	Demographic Techniques I	3
SOC 756	Demographic Techniques II	3
Each semester, throughout the graduate program, CDE/CDHA students must also enroll in:		
SOC/C&E SOC 995	Research: Methodology Trainees	1-3

SOC/C&E SOC 997	Research: Demography and Ecology Trainees	1-3
Total Credits		30

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) serve as the official document of record for Graduate School academic and administrative policies and procedures and are updated continuously. Note some policies redirect to entries in the official UW-Madison Policy Library (<https://policy.wisc.edu/>). Programs may set more stringent policies than the Graduate School. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

PRIOR COURSEWORK

Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions

With program approval, students may transfer 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 ten or more years prior to admission to the master's program may not be used to satisfy either of these requirements.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special student at UW-Madison

Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/>) policy.

PROBATION

Refer to the Graduate School: Probation (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1217/>) policy.

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Each new graduate student is matched with a first-year faculty advisor who shares his or her research interests. The first-year advisor helps with the transition to graduate school, offers an introduction to department culture, provides a structured point of contact should questions or problems arise, and provides information and support as the student selects a permanent advisor and thesis director. Students are expected to have ongoing contact with their advisor. All students are required to submit a yearly progress report that is read and discussed by a committee of faculty during the annual review. In addition, all students are expected to create and regularly update an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and use it as the basis for conversations with their advisor about evolving goals, current strengths, and plans for mastery of new skills. A student's advisor serves as chair of the thesis committee, which is composed of

three graduate faculty members in Sociology and/or Community & Environmental Sociology.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits maximum are allowed, but only 12 are recommended.

TIME LIMITS

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

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
 - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (<https://osas.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

L&S POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC APPEALS

Graduate students have the right to appeal an academic decision related to an L&S graduate program if the student believes that the decision is inconsistent with published policy.

Academic decisions that may be appealed include:

- Dismissal from the graduate program
- Failure to pass a qualifying or preliminary examination
- Failure to achieve satisfactory academic progress

- Academic disciplinary action related to failure to meet professional conduct standards

Issues such as the following cannot be appealed using this process:

- A faculty member declining to serve as a graduate student's advisor.
- Decisions regarding the student's disciplinary knowledge, evaluation of the quality of work, or similar judgements. These are the domain of the department faculty.
- Course grades. These can be appealed instead using the L&S Policy for Grade Appeal (<https://kb.wisc.edu/lis/22258/>).
- Incidents of bias or hate, hostile and intimidating behavior (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>), or discrimination (Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>), Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/eo-complaint/formal-investigations/>)). Direct these to the linked campus offices appropriate for the incident(s).

Appeal Process for Graduate Students

A graduate student wishing to appeal an academic decision must follow the process in the order listed below. Note time limits within each step.

1. The student should first seek informal resolution, if possible, by discussing the concern with their academic advisor, the department's Director of Graduate Studies, and/or the department chair.
2. If the program has an appeal policy listed in their graduate program handbook, the student should follow the policy as written, including adhering to any indicated deadlines. In the absence of a specific departmental process, the chair or designee will be the reviewer and decision maker, and the student should submit a written appeal to the chair within 15 business days of the academic decision. The chair or designee will notify the student in writing of their decision.
3. If the departmental process upholds the original decision, the graduate student may next initiate an appeal to L&S. To do so, the student must submit a written appeal to the L&S Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Academic Affairs within 15 business days of notification of the department's decision.
 - a. To the fullest extent possible, the written appeal should include, in a single document: a clear and concise statement of the academic decision being appealed, any relevant background on what led to the decision, the specific policies involved, the relief sought, any relevant documentation related to the departmental appeal, and the names and titles of any individuals contributing to or involved in the decision.
 - b. The Assistant Dean will work with the Academic Associate Dean of the appropriate division to consider the appeal. They may seek additional information and/or meetings related to the case.
 - c. The Assistant Dean and Academic Associate Dean will provide a written decision within 20 business days.
4. If L&S upholds the original decision, the graduate student may appeal to the Graduate School. More information can be found on their website: Grievances and Appeals (<https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/>) (see: Graduate School Appeal Process).

OTHER

n/a

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

The Sociology graduate program offers students an array of professional development opportunities.

SOC 700 Introductory Proseminar for Graduate Students provides an overview of the discipline and the graduate program and addresses such professional development issues as teaching strategies and grant proposal writing. The proseminar also explores topics like productive advisor-advisee relationships, working effectively as part of a research team, co-authoring, and other matters important to graduate school success.

SOC/C&E SOC 875 Special Topics (Topic: Professional Development) covers a broad spectrum of topics – e.g., networking and peer support; time management; IRB approval and considering ethics throughout the research process; writing, revising, and submitting papers to scholarly journals; writing for public audiences; doing outreach work; speaking at conferences; investigating careers within and outside academia; and learning how to mentor.

SOC/C&E SOC 995 Research: Methodology Trainees, for students affiliated with the Center for Demography & Ecology and the Center for Demography of Health & Aging, covers essential professional development skills such as grant writing, data visualization, presentation design, publication writing, applying for academic and research jobs, and responsible conduct of research.

SOC/C&E SOC 997 Research: Demography and Ecology Trainees, for students affiliated with the Center for Demography & Ecology and the Center for Demography of Health & Aging, offers presentations of substantive work at the forefront of population sciences.

For students who are teaching for the first time, there is a weekly teaching workshop that focuses on issues typically of concern to new TAs—e.g., developing lesson plans, engaging students, facilitating discussions, and evaluating written work.

Students are encouraged to participate in “Working Groups” each semester. The departments offer nine of these training groups, each focusing on a different sociology subfield. The groups meet weekly and involve presentation and discussion of student and faculty work-in-progress as well as analysis of current developments and debates; often guest speakers from other universities join the conversation.

The departments host scholars from other institutions who speak at departmental colloquia as well as speakers from campus units such as the Havens-Wright Center for Social Justice and the Institute for Research on Poverty. Students are encouraged to attend these events. They are also advised to participate in the graduate program's workshops on career exploration and creating a professional website. Students are invited to collaborate with faculty and staff serving on department committees, and they are encouraged to develop leadership skills by becoming involved in the Sociology Graduate Student Association.

The departments provide small grants that assist students with research expenses and support those who are traveling to present their work at professional conferences.

The Sociology Department website (<https://sociology.wisc.edu/current-students-2/>) includes several pages containing valuable resources for graduate students – e.g., Diversity & Inclusion Resources for the Classroom, Collected Wisdom, Academic Job Market, and Blogs on Academia.

All graduate students are expected to create an Individual Development Plan to help them define interests and values, evaluate skills, develop specific plans for meeting degree milestones and professional goals, and communicate effectively with their advisors.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of major theories, methodologies, and research findings in the sociological literature. 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. Attain the skills necessary to conduct research with intellectual and ethical rigor, care, and creativity.
2. 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. Write a thesis describing their research project and defend it during a comprehensive oral exam.
3. 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. 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.
4. 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.
5. Develop analytical thinking skills that enable them to evaluate information pertinent to their research questions. 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.
6. Communicate in a clear, organized, engaging manner, using language, methods, and critical tools appropriate to the social sciences. 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.
7. 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. Design research, collect and analyze data, and interpret and report results with honesty and scientific rigor.