

GRADUATE PROGRAM in CRIMINOLOGY

Department of Sociology

The purpose of the Graduate Program in Criminology is to prepare students for professional employment in universities or government agencies. Reaching this goal requires a program with both breadth and depth, and one that emphasizes productive scholarship. This last requirement is facilitated by a maximum degree of student involvement in the research activities of the faculty members responsible for this program.

Program Requirements

Students choosing a major or minor in this program are responsible for meeting the general degree requirements described in the Graduate Catalog and those set forth in the Department of Sociology's [Graduate Student Handbook](#). In addition, students in the Graduate Program in Criminology must satisfy the following specific requirements:

1. All MA and PhD students in the area must satisfactorily complete one core course, Sociology 6460 -- Theories of Criminality.
2. Students also must complete a number of additional elective courses from the list below:
 - a. MA students must complete two additional Criminology courses
 - b. PhD students minoring in the area must complete three additional courses
 - c. PhD students majoring in the area must complete four additional courses

Exceptions to these requirements will be made only when a course is not taught during a student's enrollment in the program, or if unavoidable scheduling conflicts preclude a student from taking a course. Requests for exceptions must be submitted in writing to the Graduate Committee, which will consult with the faculty members in the program. If a request is approved by a majority of those faculty members, an appropriate substitute course *within the program* may be used to satisfy the requirement.

Course Descriptions

- SOC 6460. Theories of Criminality (3). A comprehensive review and evaluation of major theories, methods, and current research in criminology. Topics include classical and contemporary criminal theories, empirical evaluations of theories,

- and methodological and policy issues involved in the study of crime.
- SOC 6480. Crime Across the Life Course. (3) A thorough evaluation of research on crime using a life course perspective. Topics include an introduction to the life course perspective, the age-crime curve, and theories and concepts used to understand stability and change in crime across the life course (e.g., age-graded informal social controls, cumulative disadvantage, turning points in the life course, symbolic interactionism).
 - SOC 6490. Neighborhoods and Crime. (3) An extensive overview of classical and contemporary scholarship that examines the association between neighborhoods and crime. Discussion emphasizes the interplay between structural dimensions of neighborhoods and sociocultural community processes that influence crime. Topics include segregation and spatial dynamics of inequality, collective efficacy and informal social control, immigration, disorder.
 - SOC 7310. Adolescence. (3) This seminar examines theory, methods, and empirical research related to the sociological study of adolescence and the transition to adulthood. The life course perspective will be presented as a framework for examining this stage in the life course within social, historical, and spatial contexts. The course reviews contemporary topics in the study of adolescence including: romantic and sexual relationships; the changing roles of parent, family, and peer influences; school, neighborhood, and community effects; delinquency, crime, and violence; and the changing nature of the transition to adulthood. The course emphasizes the experiences of adolescents in the United States.
 - SOC 7410. Corrections (Future name: Social Responses to Crime). (3) A review and evaluation of important theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues surrounding the social construction of crime and social responses to crime. A major focus is on criminal justice responses, and the consequences of these responses, over the past forty years.
 - SOC 7430. Sociology of Violence (3). A comprehensive evaluation of theory, research and policy on serious interpersonal violence. Topics include crime trends, demographic variation in victimization and offending and the consequences and societal reactions to violence.
3. Comprehensive Examination
- Doctoral students majoring in criminology must satisfactorily complete an eight-hour written examination. The exam consists of two four-hour sections that comprise a general examination on the basic theoretical models in criminology, contemporary research findings, and the major issues confronting the field.

These course and examination requirements, in conjunction with requirements specified by the Graduate College and the Department of Sociology, are the minimal formal expectations. Beyond these, students are expected to construct a study plan to maximize the likelihood of becoming productive professionals in a competitive discipline. In addition, students are encouraged to pursue their interests by

enrolling in Sociology 6850 and 7850, Readings in Sociology. This is an excellent way to explore topics not covered in regular seminars (for example, possible thesis or dissertation problems and work on papers intended for presentation at professional meetings). However, it is important to keep in mind that these readings courses cannot substitute for the required, regularly-scheduled seminars.

Summary

The Graduate Program in Criminology has two important goals. First, its core curriculum requirements and examination policies are designed to insure that students acquire a thorough knowledge of the major issues and theories of criminology. Second, its diversified seminar offerings and flexible courses of independent study are designed to encourage students to develop several areas of expertise within criminology. Attaining both goals is essential for becoming a productive professional.

