

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**Handbook:**  
MA in Sociology  
MA in Criminology

2023-24

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT \* 801 22 STREET NW \* PHILLIPS HALL 409

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## **Department Faculty, Office Hours, and Contacts**

Our department's faculty are dedicated researchers, teachers, and mentors, and look forward to working with you on your own learning journeys, in classes, office hours, and informal conversations. Please learn more about our research and teaching specialties at the department's [website](#). The names listed below are the department's full-time faculty. We also employ part-time faculty every semester who teach courses in their areas of expertise. **You are encouraged to reach out to *any or all* faculty with relevant expertise, whether part time, full time, in our department, or in other parts of the University.**

All faculty have **office hours**, which means they have set aside regular times each week to meet with students, whether in person or via video. Some professors have office hours on a drop-in basis (i.e. no appointment needed) and others have an appointment system for their office hours, often using links such as [calendly.com](#) for students to make their own appointments within office hours. Office hours typically change each semester.

Where to find office hours:

- Sociology Department bulletin board in the reception area (PHIL 409)
- Often in the 'signature' section of faculty emails (e.g. a [calendly.com](#) link)
- On syllabi
- Email the front office [soc@gwu.edu](mailto:soc@gwu.edu)

In addition to office hours, appointments for meeting in person, via phone, or video, may be requested with faculty outside of office hours. Emailing is usually the best way to contact faculty.

**Full Time Faculty (including joint appointments):**

- Fran Buntman.** Office: PHIL 409-G. (she/her)  
Email: [fbuntman@gwu.edu](mailto:fbuntman@gwu.edu)  
Note: Director of Graduate Studies, Sociology and Criminology;
- Carlos Bustamante.** Office: PHIL 409-E. (he/him)  
Email: [cbustamante@gwu.edu](mailto:cbustamante@gwu.edu)  
Note: Director, Law and Society Minor.
- Robert Cottrol.** Office: Old Main 406A.  
Email: [bcottrol@law.gwu.edu](mailto:bcottrol@law.gwu.edu)  
Primary appointment: GW Law School
- Daina Eglitis.** Office: PHIL 409-I. (she/her)  
Email: [dainas@gwu.edu](mailto:dainas@gwu.edu)  
Note: Director of Undergraduate Studies, Sociology  
On leave Fall 2023
- Desmond Goss.** Office: PHIL 409F. (they/them)  
Email: [desmond.goss@gwu.edu](mailto:desmond.goss@gwu.edu)
- Hiroshi Ishizawa.** Office: PHIL 409-J. (she/her)  
Email: [ishizawa@gwu.edu](mailto:ishizawa@gwu.edu)  
Note: Chair, Department of Sociology
- Antwan Jones.** Office: PHIL 409-C. (he/him)  
Email: [antwan@gwu.edu](mailto:antwan@gwu.edu)  
Note: On leave for the 2023 - 2024 Academic year
- Michelle Kelso.** Office: PHIL 409-D. (she/her)  
Email: [mkelso@gwu.edu](mailto:mkelso@gwu.edu)  
Note: Director, Human Services and Social Justice  
On Sabbatical Spring 2024
- Ivy Ken.** Office: PHIL 409-H. (she/they)  
Email: [ivyken@gwu.edu](mailto:ivyken@gwu.edu)  
Note: Acting Director of Undergraduate Studies, Sociology, Fall 2023
- Xolela Mangcu.** Office: PHIL 409-O.  
Email: [xolelamangcu@gwu.edu](mailto:xolelamangcu@gwu.edu)  
Note: On Sabbatical Fall 2023
- Hilary Silver.** Office: PHIL 203.  
Email: [hilarysilver@gwu.edu](mailto:hilarysilver@gwu.edu)  
Note: Advisor for all first year Sociology MA students AY 2023-2024
- Eiko Strader.** Office: PHIL 342.  
E-mail: [strader@gwu.edu](mailto:strader@gwu.edu)  
Primary appointment: Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration
- Steven Tuch.** Office: PHIL 409-B. (he/him)  
E-mail: [steve@gwu.edu](mailto:steve@gwu.edu)  
Note: On Sabbatical Fall 2023
- Zimife Umeh.** Office: PHIL 409-I. (she/her)  
E-mail: [zumeh@gwu.edu](mailto:zumeh@gwu.edu)

**Elizabeth Vaquera.** Office: 2114 G St. NW. (she/her)

E-mail: [evaquera@gwu.edu](mailto:evaquera@gwu.edu)

Note: Executive Director, Cisneros Hispanic Leadership Institute  
Primary appointment: Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration

**Kathryne Young.** Office: 2000 H Street, NW.

E-mail: [kyoung2@law.gwu.edu](mailto:kyoung2@law.gwu.edu)

Primary appointment: GW Law School

## **Key Personnel and Contact Information**

**Department Chair:** Hiromi Ishizawa ([ishizawa@gwu.edu](mailto:ishizawa@gwu.edu)), 202-994-6897

**Operations Manager:** Octavia Kelsey ([okelsevg@gwu.edu](mailto:okelsevg@gwu.edu)), 202-994-6345

**Part-Time Assistant:** Heather Harper ([soc@gwu.edu](mailto:soc@gwu.edu)), 202-994-5325

**Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):** Fran Buntman ([gradsoc@gwu.edu](mailto:gradsoc@gwu.edu); [fbuntman@gwu.edu](mailto:fbuntman@gwu.edu)), 202-994-0266

**Department of Sociology:** Phillips Hall - Suite 409, 801 22nd Street NW (Academic Center) Washington DC 20052. Phone: (202) 994-6345 Fax: (202) 994-3239

**The Sociology Department Graduate Committee** is responsible for making admissions and award decisions and for dealing with academic issues as they pertain to the MA programs in Sociology and Criminology. The Graduate Committee consists of two to three members, currently Fran Buntman and Xolela Mangcu.

The **listserv for graduate students** is [gwgradsoc@hermes.gwu.edu](mailto:gwgradsoc@hermes.gwu.edu). All graduate students and most faculty are on this listserv. Students must ensure they receive emails from this email address. We send out important information and opportunities via this list, and also invite faculty and graduate students to share opportunities they encounter with our community. We have a nascent and developing MA alumni listserv.

**CCAS Graduate Advising:** The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) maintains extensive resources and sources of [information](#). Students with questions about CCAS rules and requirements may contact CCAS Graduate Student Services at [ccasgradserv@gwu.edu](mailto:ccasgradserv@gwu.edu). (Our department's point person in this office is usually Amélie Chenet-Smith.)

The **CCAS Graduate Student Digital Handbook** can be found at <https://columbian.gwu.edu/academic-policies>

## **Faculty Advisors and Thesis Directors**

### **Faculty Advisors and Thesis Directors**

All incoming Sociology and Criminology MA students are assigned a faculty member as an advisor at the beginning of their first semester at GW. **Students should meet with their advisor each semester to discuss their programs of study.** Meeting with other faculty to share goals, opportunities, and questions is strongly encouraged. Advisors and thesis directors are not necessarily the same person; i.e. advisors will not necessarily remain on as thesis directors.

**Identifying a Thesis Director:** Over their first year, students should be discussing their initial and developing ideas for a thesis, tentative thesis questions, and potential thesis methodologies with various faculty members as part of a *process* of deciding on a thesis topic and identifying an appropriate thesis director. (Many classes offer students the ability to explore relevant topics, methods, or questions that may inform their final thesis focus.) Resulting from that process of discussion and research, students should ask a faculty member to please serve as their thesis director.

Thesis directors replace faculty advisors and take on advising responsibilities. Thesis directors and students should also discuss an appropriate thesis reader. Note: Criminology students who opt for the comprehensive exam (versus thesis) retain their original faculty advisor.

Importantly, students must decide their thesis topic and have a mutually agreed upon thesis director BEFORE taking SOC 6999, i.e. the thesis credits. (There are no thesis classes.) You will need to be signed into the course via RTF. See more information on theses in the appropriate section below.

Thesis directors are typically regular full-time professors in the Sociology Department, including those with joint appointments. With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair of the Sociology Department, part-time faculty can also serve as thesis directors and readers. If you are unsure about whether a particular faculty member is full- or part-time, ask the Director of Graduate Studies.

## **Professional Development Seminar (Prosem)**

Getting the most out of graduate school, as well as successfully navigating the challenges of a graduate degree, involves more than learning course content. Attaining everything you can from your MA also involves absorbing the formal and informal culture of graduate student life, developing and utilizing networks of fellow students and faculty, and identifying and using the wide range of resources available to you. Those resources include (but are not limited to) your fellow students, your professors, the Columbian College (CCAS), GW as a University, and Washington, DC as a city and community(ies). Some of the specific opportunities and arenas for learning include developing research, attending non-class based lectures and conferences, and looking for jobs post-graduation. The proseminar is one of those opportunities.

**This seminar is required** for first year students and recommended for all students; it will meet six to eight times during the semester or academic year. There is no charge for this course. Failure to attend and engage in the prosem is considered relevant to renewal of financial aid, granting of graduate teaching assistantships, and the writing of letters of recommendation as well as, more informally, being an engaged departmental citizen. You should receive an email from [gradsoc@gwu.edu](mailto:gradsoc@gwu.edu) and/or [gwgradsoc@hermes.gwu.edu](mailto:gwgradsoc@hermes.gwu.edu) with the dates for the prosem each semester.

Various faculty members will lead the meetings. Some meetings will focus more on input from a faculty member or guest, and others will focus more on student engagement through discussion, questions, and answers to the topic of the session. While specific faculty members will lead each session, students are encouraged to follow up any of the topics and issues that are raised with other members of the department.

The prosem provides an introduction to various aspects and phases of professional life in sociology and criminology, in and beyond your MA. Topics are likely to include: Resources and Opportunities in the Department, College, University, and DC; Using Citation Software; Academic Writing; Managing Graduate Student Work-Life Balance; Researching and Writing a Thesis; Professional Presentations (e.g. Conferences) and Publications; Applying to Jobs; Applying to PhD, JD, and other Graduate Programs. We would be pleased to consider any additional topics requested by students.

## **MA in Sociology: Requirements**

A total of 12 classes, or 36 credits, are required for the degree, including three methods classes, two theory classes, two thesis 'classes' (i.e. 6 thesis credits), and five electives.

### **Methods**

SOC 6230: Research Methods (to be taken before SOC 6231 and SOC 6232) (Fall)

SOC 6231: Data Analysis (Spring)

SOC 6232: Qualitative Methodology (Spring)

\*All three methodology classes should be completed in the first year of the program.

### **Theory**

SOC 6238: Development of Sociological Theory (Fall)

SOC 6239: Contemporary Sociological Theory (Spring)

### **Thesis**

SOC 6999: Thesis Research (1<sup>st</sup> semester of thesis, usually Fall of second year)

SOC 6999: Thesis Research (2<sup>nd</sup> semester of thesis, usually Spring of second year)

- Thesis credits are taken as independent studies, not classes, under the direction of the thesis supervisor.
- Before registering for SOC 6999, you must get permission from your thesis director.

### **Electives**

Electives may be taken from the following list, organized by the three areas of faculty specialization in our department. With the permission of your advisor or the DGS, electives may also be taken from other departments or universities in the consortium.

#### **Social Inequality**

SOC 6245: Race Relations

SOC 6246: Comparative Race and Ethnicity

SOC 6248: Race and Urban Redevelopment

SOC 6252: Special Topics in Sociology\*

SOC 6263: Race and Crime

SOC 6265: Women, Welfare, and Poverty

SOC 6268: Race, Gender and Class

SOC 6271: Gender and Society

SOC 6286: Law of Race and Slavery



### **Urban Sociology**

SOC 6248: Race and Urban Redevelopment

SOC 6250: Urban Sociology

SOC 6252: Special Topics in Sociology\*

PSC 6211: Urban Politics

PSC 6212: Urban Policy Problems

GEOG 6243: Urban Geography

### **Criminology**

SOC 6257: Criminal Law<sup>#</sup>

SOC 6258: Deviance and Control

SOC 6259: Criminology

SOC 6260: Special Topics in Criminology\*<sup>#</sup>

SOC 6262: Punishment, Prison, and Power

SOC 6263: Race and Crime

SOC 6264: Organized Crime

\* Special Topics vary each semester. Students are encouraged to check with faculty advisors or thesis directors to ensure these classes will help you achieve your academic goals.

<sup>#</sup> For Fall 2023, Criminal Law is offered as SOC 6260.

### **Other Departments, the Consortium, and SOC 6295**

With the written consent of your advisor or the DGS, relevant courses in related departments (including consortium courses) may be taken for electives.

SOC 6295 is an independent study course. Before permission is granted to register for SOC 6295, students must submit a written plan of study that is approved by the department faculty member who will be directing the research.

**MA in Sociology: Planning Worksheet**  
(full-time schedule)~

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
<b>Year 1</b>	Course 1: SOC 6238 (Theory)	Course 1: SOC 6239 (Theory)
	Course 2: SOC 6230 (Methods Foundations)	Course 2: SOC 6231 (Quantitative Methods)
	Course 3: Substantive course/elective	Course 3: SOC 6232 (Qualitative Methods)
<b>Year 2</b>	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)
	Course 2: Substantive course/elective	Course 2: Substantive course/elective
	Course 3: Substantive course/elective	Course 3: Substantive course/elective

~Students who are part-time, are in the BA-MA program, or are pursuing their MA degrees on an accelerated schedule should develop planning worksheets with their faculty advisors taking into account their particular needs.

## **MA in Criminology: Requirements**

**Thesis option:** A total of 12 classes, or 36 credits, are required for the degree, including three methods classes, one sociology theory class, two criminology theory classes, one criminal law class, two thesis 'classes' (i.e. 6 thesis credits), and three electives.

**Comprehensive exam option:** A total of 12 classes, or 36 credits, are required for the degree, including three methods classes, one sociology theory class, two criminology theory classes, one criminal law class, five electives, and a comprehensive exam.

### **Methods**

SOC 6230: Research Methods (to be taken before SOC 6231 and SOC 6232) (Fall)

SOC 6231: Data Analysis (Spring)

SOC 6232: Qualitative Methodology (Spring)

\*All three methodology classes should be completed in the first year of the program unless a Criminology student is planning to take the comprehensive exam, in which case either SOC 6231 or 6232 may be taken in the second year of the program.

### **Sociological Theory**

One of two theory classes:

SOC 6238: Development of Sociological Theory (Fall) OR

SOC 6239: Contemporary Sociological Theory (Spring)

### **Criminology**

SOC 6258: Deviance and Control

SOC 6259: Criminology

### **Criminal Law**

SOC 6257: Criminal Law

\*This class should be completed in the first year of the program.

# For Fall 2023, Criminal Law is offered as SOC 6260.

### **Electives**

SOC 6260: Special Topics in Criminology\*

SOC 6261: Sociology of Law

SOC 6262: Punishment, Prison, and Power

SOC 6263: Race and Crime

SOC 6264: Organized Crime

SOC 6266: Gender and Criminal Justice

There are a large number of potentially appropriate elective classes that may be taken from other departments on topics such as cybersecurity, forensics,<sup>&</sup> human rights, law, psychology, restorative justice, terrorism, and violence, to name some broad

substantive areas. Students should discuss the most appropriate electives with their faculty advisor or thesis director to ensure the electives will enhance academic and career goals.

\* Special Topics vary each semester. Students are encouraged to check with faculty advisors or thesis directors to ensure these classes will help you achieve your academic goals.

& Many Forensic Science courses require substantial science background, especially chemistry, and are therefore encouraged for those who have strong science training. Courses that have previously been identified as not being science-based include FORS 6254 (Forensic Psychiatry), FORS 6208 (Terrorism), FORS 6253 (Homicide Investigation), FORS 6255 (Child Abuse Investigation), FS 6256 (Forensic Pathology).

### **Thesis or Comprehensive Examination**

Criminology students may elect to take a comprehensive exam instead of a thesis. Two additional electives (i.e. substituting for six credits of SOC 6999) should be chosen. As noted below, the comprehensive examination is taken over a four-day period, usually in the final semester of the degree.

## MA in Criminology: Planning Worksheets

### Thesis Option (full-time schedule)

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	Course 1: SOC 6230 (Methods Foundations)	Course 1: SOC 6231 (Quantitative Methods)
	Course 2: SOC 6258 (Deviance and Control)	Course 2: SOC 6259 (Criminology)
	Course 3: SOC 6257 (Criminal Law) (SOC 6260 for Fall 2023)	Course 3: SOC 6262 (Qualitative Methods)
Year 2	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)
	Course 2: Substantive course/elective	Course 2: SOC 6239 (Theory)/elective
	Course 3: SOC 6238 (Theory)/elective	Course 3: Substantive course/elective

Criminology MA students who are planning to write a comprehensive exam rather than a thesis have greater latitude in planning their sequence of classes because there is less urgency for them to complete both SOC 6261 and SOC 6262 in their first year in the program.

Students who are part-time, are in the BA-MA program, or are pursuing their MA degrees on an accelerated schedule should develop planning worksheets with their faculty advisors taking into account their particular needs.

## **DegreeMap, Exceptions, and Petitions**

“[DegreeMAP](#) is an online advising and auditing system for degrees and certificates which will display the requirements for the student’s program of study and apply the student’s individual academic history to those requirements.” Any time students take classes that do not conform to the narrow degree requirements as identified in DegreeMap, students need to request the DGS ([gradsoc@gwu.edu](mailto:gradsoc@gwu.edu)) to put in a petition to authorize the permitted exception (e.g. an approved elective from another department) to count appropriately towards your degree. Students requesting DegreeMap petitions must include their GWID number in the email.

Please also cc the front office ([soc@gwu.edu](mailto:soc@gwu.edu)) on your petition request.

DegreeMap petitions need to be formatted very specifically by the DGS, and students are requested to please clearly explain what they need based on the logic of the formatting. If possible, students are requested to please draft their petitions in the appropriate format. The format is as follows:

General format:

School. Degree name. Course number and name being petitioned and for what.

Example:

CCAS. MA-Criminology. Count EDUC 8122 Qualitative Methods for the SOC 6232 Qualitative Methods requirements.

## **MA in Criminology: Comprehensive Examination Option**

The comprehensive exam is a take-home exam consisting of two essay questions. Responses should be typed, double-spaced, 11- or 12-point font. The maximum length of both essays is 40 pages, excluding references. Questions will test students' knowledge of criminological theory, empirical studies, and/or criminal law, focusing on classes taken within the Department of Sociology. Where possible, one or both essay questions will be oriented to a student's particular interests.

**Timing:** The comprehensive exam should be taken during a student's final semester in the program, no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> week of classes in that semester.

- Exams should be taken during the regular academic year, and only under unusual circumstances would an exam be administered during the summer.
- Students typically receive exam questions at 12 noon on a Thursday and return it by 12 noon the following Monday. (Students may request different scheduling based on the same pattern.) Students with disability accommodations allowing for extra time are eligible to receive that additional time.

**Administration:** Students are responsible for contacting their faculty advisor early in their final semester to initiate the exam process.

- Advisors will coordinate the exam, by soliciting faculty to write and read questions and determining when the exam will be taken.
- Two faculty members (one of whom may include the current advisor) will each write, read, and evaluate a question. There is a second reader on each question; usually the two faculty members serve as readers for each other's questions, though alternative readers can be identified if necessary for particular topics or circumstances.
- No faculty member will be asked to write more than one question per exam, unless a question needs to be retaken by the student.

**Grading:** The grade options for each question are: High Pass, Pass, Conditional Pass, or Fail.

- Students who receive a Conditional Pass on any question will be required to revise their answer in response to the readers' feedback. A passing grade will be contingent on successful revision of the problematic answer. (Successful revision will result in a grade of High Pass or Pass on that question). Unsuccessful revision will result in a grade of Fail on that question, which will require answering a new, substitute question.
- Students who receive a grade of Fail on either question will be required to answer a new, substitute question.
- If a student Fails a question on the second attempt, the student fails the exam and is terminated from the program.
- Students who retake a question must do so by the last week of classes in their final semester.

- In order to receive a High Pass on the entire exam, the student must receive a High Pass on both questions.
- Any rewriting of exams typically takes place two weeks after the original exam on the same four day schedule, or two day schedule if only one question needs to be rewritten.

Department Assessment of comprehensive exams:

In order to comply with accreditation requirements from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, our department must complete an evaluation of every comprehensive exam written by our Criminology MA students as one way of determining whether the learning outcomes for our graduate program have been met. The evaluations will be analyzed in aggregate as part of an effort, over time, to guide our strategies for improvement. These data are being collected so that we may evaluate the department's strengths and weaknesses, not the individual student's. Nonetheless, we believe it is helpful to communicate to students what the department's broad goals are. Our intended criminology graduate program learning goals are:

1. Students will be able to articulate criminological theories, evaluate the limitations and strengths of a variety of theoretical approaches, and apply theories to the analyses of why and how crime occurs and how criminality and responses to it are key components of societies.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of and analytical skills in criminology and the workings of (at least the US) criminal justice system(s) including to
  - a. explain key changes in the structure and functioning of institutions of crime and criminal justice and
  - b. situate criminal justice issues, institutions, and practices within broader social processes and structures.
3. Students will be able to recognize, explain, and employ a variety of sociological and criminological research approaches and findings; formulate and test appropriate research questions; analyze research studies and critically consume research-based information especially in relationship to crime and criminal justice systems; design and implement a research project in criminology or criminal justice; and collect, code, and analyze criminological data using qualitative and quantitative research methods.
4. Students will be able to connect key theoretical and methodological approaches from sociology to criminology and associated fields. Examples of connections include those between urban sociology and crime, stratification (race, class, gender, nationality, etc.) and criminal justice system workings, criminal law and punishment, and power, resistance and corrections.
5. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of and ability to employ professional academic writing in presentation of evidence; assessment of theories, data, and relevant literatures; and analytical skills including with the goals of constructing evidence-based arguments and effectively communicating findings.



The internal/faculty evaluation of each comprehensive exam will take the following form:

Task	Score (each component worth 5 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Knowledge of appropriate theoretical perspectives</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ability to critically analyze key theoretical/conceptual perspectives</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding of, and comprehensiveness of response to, the specific issues raised in exam</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capacity to critically address criminological issues using appropriate social science tools</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quality of writing and use of citation style that conforms to discipline conventions</li> </ul>	
<p><b>TOTAL (out of 25)</b></p>	

## **MA Thesis: Processes, Deadlines, and Assessment**

- All three research methods classes (SOC 6230, 6231, and 6232) should be taken in the first year of the program so students have a strong understanding of fundamental methodological options and decisions in guiding their choice of research topics and questions.

Below is a set of guidelines to assist MA students and faculty to work through the thesis process in a timely, organized manner. A thesis is researched and written under the supervision of a director by signing up for SOC 6999 over two semesters for six credits in total. Choosing a thesis topic and director needs to take place prior to enrolling in SOC 6999, by the end of their first year and/or before taking thesis credits. Students are not permitted to enroll in SOC 6999 without their director's permission. Ideally, readers will also be identified at this initial stage but where helpful, directors can allow the student to wait before making the decision about a reader. Directors and students need to have ascertained a clear research path before signing up for the first SOC 6999 credits, and adequate progress before signing up for the subsequent SOC 6999 hours.

### **1. Choosing a Thesis Topic, Director, and Reader**

Choosing a thesis topic, question, and methodology, as well as a thesis director is an iterative process of student research and conversation with one or more members of faculty. Choosing a director is an important part of the process of writing a thesis. To identify the appropriate person, students should, at the very least, meet with all the faculty whose research areas correspond to their topics of interest. The Sociology Department's [website](#) includes a description of each professor's research interests, projects, and recent publications. Visit professors during their office hours or set up appointments to meet with them; be prepared to describe your own research interests and also find out more about the professor's interests.

**Readers:** Once a thesis director is chosen, the student should, in consultation with the thesis director, decide on a thesis reader from among the faculty. Readers typically play a more limited role in the thesis process, but should ideally be involved from the beginning.

**Co-directors:** Some faculty may suggest or prefer directing the thesis together with another professor as co-directors. If a student has co-directors, a reader is not required.

Fill in the **Thesis Topic Approval Form** (included at the end of this handbook) and submit it to your thesis director for signing, and then to the DGS ([gradsoc@gwu.edu](mailto:gradsoc@gwu.edu)), before signing up for SOC 6999 credits. With the permission of your thesis director, this form may be submitted before a final decision is made about a reader. You will also need to submit [a RTF form](#) with your director's signature to be enrolled in these credits.

Once a thesis director is chosen, he or she becomes the student's new faculty advisor, replacing the student's originally assigned Advisor.

## **2. Regular Meetings with Thesis Director and Reader**

Students are required to meet with their thesis directors at least once a month to report progress on the research, or more frequently if the director and student agree on such a schedule. The student should also meet with the reader periodically based on your director's preferences. These meetings should occur over the academic year unless the director and reader have indicated that they are available to work with the student during the summer.

## **3. Planning Your Thesis**

Some faculty members may want you to write a formal thesis proposal; you may also have completed a thesis proposal for SOC 6230. Other faculty may have particular requirements to help you clearly identify your proposed topic, question, methodology, and timeline. In addition, IRB (see below) requirements may stipulate particular documentation. Whether you are required to have a formal proposal or alternative plan, keep in mind that if you plan to graduate in May, you need to begin the first thesis credits (SOC 6999) in Fall with a clear plan for research and writing agreed upon between you and your director, and possibly including the reader.

### **The Institutional Review Board (IRB), Human Subjects, and Timelines**

If students are collecting data from human subjects (interview, surveys, observations, etc.), they are strongly encouraged to have their thesis proposal completed one calendar year prior to the graduation date because their project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB in the [Office of Human Research \(OHR\)](#). Preparing an application for the IRB requires several additional steps, and that extra time needs to be considered. Failure to obtain Human Subjects approval could result in the University requiring the student to redo the thesis, with newly-collected data. The IRB approval process cannot begin until you have gotten approval from your thesis director, which depends on completion of, at the minimum, the research methods section of your thesis proposal.

## **4. Thesis Completion Timeline**

Students must turn in sections and/or drafts of the thesis to their director on a regular basis. The intention or desire to graduate in a certain semester is not the deciding factor in whether a thesis is approved. The director's evaluation of these drafts, along with the reader's input, will determine whether graduation may occur on course or need to be delayed. *Students should expect that quality work will require many rounds of revision; it is not unusual for theses to go through five, ten, or even more drafts, in part or in whole, before they are ready for final submission.*

A reader's involvement may vary. It is, however, strongly encouraged that, at minimum, the reader be informed of the student's progress when the thesis is approximately halfway completed.

The following table is a typical thesis completion timeline:

Deadline	Task
6 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student delivers the full thesis to the thesis director.
4 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The director gives feedback to the student on the draft.
3 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student delivers the revised thesis to the director and reader.
1 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The director and reader provide feedback on the draft.
Final thesis deadline set by CCAS	The student makes final revisions, the director and reader approve the final version, and the student submits the thesis to the graduate school.

All theses must conform to the manuscript standards described on the GW Electronic Theses and Dissertations Submission [website](#). Students are encouraged to use our internal [database](#) to find examples of student theses from our department, and the library to find other examples of theses from our department as well as other universities.

## 5. University/College Deadlines and Related Requirements

Deadlines are noted in the [ETD section](#) of the library's website, and may differ slightly from year to year. Please consult this website for exact dates.

Expected ETD Approval Deadline <sup>&amp;</sup>	Degree Conferral
Mid-August (e.g. August 16) Three week CE* grace period after the beginning of the Fall semester.	Summer Fall
Early December (e.g. December 10) Three week CE* grace period after the beginning of the Spring semester.	Fall Spring
Late April (e.g. April 29) Summer as the CE* grace period	Spring Summer

&All revisions must be completed by the ETD Approval Deadline. To guarantee time to make revisions, it is recommended to submit about a week ahead of the deadline. These deadlines are fixed and a thesis cannot be submitted after these dates if the student wishes to graduate in the respective semester.

After the final version of the thesis has been approved by the student's thesis director and reader, the student and director complete the **Thesis Approval Form** (attached at the end of this Handbook) and transmits the forms to the DGS.

## **6. Additional Time for Thesis (and Degree) Completion: Continuing Enrollment (CE) and Continuing Registration (CR)**

A student who cannot complete their thesis (or incomplete) by the deadline may request \*Continuing Enrollment (CE) over the summer or winter breaks. Thesis directors must agree to this option and then students email [ccasgradserv@gwu.edu](mailto:ccasgradserv@gwu.edu), copying the DGS, to facilitate the CE. The above table summarizes the approximate timeline for CE deadlines and the implication for degree conferrals.

The three-week grace period does not apply to Incompletes.

If more time is needed, students will need to register for one credit of Continuing Registration (CR) for the subsequent semester (i.e. Fall or Spring) and pay the prevailing fee for one credit of tuition.

Thesis directors and readers need to agree to updated deadlines and agree on revised pathways to completion. Be sure to consult your thesis director and/or the DGS as well as CCAS throughout the process.

## **7. Department Assessment of MA Theses**

In order to comply with accreditation requirements from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, our department must complete an evaluation of every master's thesis written by our Sociology and Criminology MA students as one way of determining whether the learning outcomes for our graduate program have been met. The evaluations will be analyzed in aggregate as part of an effort, over time, to guide our strategies for improvement. This data is being collected so that we may evaluate the department's strengths and weaknesses, not the individual student's. Nonetheless, we believe it is helpful to communicate to students what the department's broad goals are. The Criminology graduate program learning goals are noted above and our intended Sociology graduate program learning goals are as follows:

1. Students will demonstrate a sociological knowledge of and analytical skills in the substance of their major and minor fields, including stratification, urban sociology, and criminology.

2. Students will be able to explain the process of sociological research; critically consume research-based information; design a sociological research project; and collect, code, and analyze sociological data using qualitative and quantitative research methods.
3. Students will be able to articulate sociological theories, evaluate the limitations and strengths of a variety of theoretical approaches, and apply theories to the analysis of social life.
4. Students will demonstrate a knowledge of and ability to employ professional academic writing in presentation of evidence; assessment of theories, data, and relevant literatures; and analytical skills.

The internal/faculty evaluation of theses will take the following form:

Task	Score (each component worth 5 points)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Statement of a problem or articulation of hypotheses (clarity of issue relative to appropriate theory)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Literature review (relevance, comprehensiveness, theoretical focus)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Data (appropriateness and relevance of data to problem/hypothesis)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analysis (effectiveness of analysis in addressing problem/testing hypothesis)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conclusion/integration (clarity in summarizing how analysis adds value to theoretical understanding of problem/issue)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writing (quality of prose; citation style conforms to discipline conventions)</li> </ul>	
TOTAL (out of 30)	

This evaluation is for the department’s internal use only and is not meant to be shared with the student who has written the thesis. However, students are welcome to inquire how well their work has met the department’s learning objectives.

## **Graduation and Commencement**

Most aspects of graduation and commencement are handled by CCAS (and the University). Our department is delighted to celebrate our own graduates in numerous ways, including an internal reception for graduates and their families.

The College has deadlines for applying for graduation; students nearing graduation should consult the [Office of the Registrar](#) and look out for relevant emails from CCAS and the University. There are late fees for missed deadlines.

Participation in the annual commencement ceremony held in May is open to students who have applied to graduate in the current Spring semester, the preceding Fall semester, or the upcoming Summer session. If students have completed almost all their requirements and have a reasonable expectation that they will be able to complete all requirements during the following summer, they may participate in the May commencement ceremony. Summer graduates who elect to attend the preceding May ceremony must apply for graduation no later than March 15.

## **Membership in Professional Associations**

We strongly encourage students to join professional organizations corresponding to your interests and career goals. The American Sociological Association (ASA) and the American Society of Criminology (ASC) are the premier professional organizations in, respectively, Sociology and Criminology fields.

Regional associations include the Eastern Sociological Society (ESS) and the Southern Sociological Society. The ESS Annual Meeting is often one of the first opportunities for our graduate students to present papers or posters at an academic conference. These events also provide myriad opportunities for meeting others in your field and career networking. Be sure to visit the ESS site for meeting information, submission guidelines, and deadlines.

The District of Columbia Sociological Society (DCSS) is a local association which we also highly recommend joining. DCSS is an active group of academic and nonacademic sociologists across the DC, Virginia, and Maryland local area. The Society meets two or three times a semester for presentations and discussions about research, teaching, and other disciplinary-relevant issues. The meetings provide excellent local networking opportunities for students.

There are also many other valuable professional resources and organizations, including those listed below, along with their web addresses.

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences [www.acjs.org](http://www.acjs.org)  
American Sociological Association [www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)  
American Society of Criminology [www.asc41.com](http://www.asc41.com)  
Association of Black Sociologists <http://associationofblacksociologists.org/>  
District of Columbia Sociological Society <http://www.dcsociologicalsociety.org/>  
International Sociology Association <http://www.isa-sociology.org/>  
Law and Society Association <http://www.lawandsociety.org/>  
National Institute of Justice <http://www.nij.gov/Pages/welcome.aspx>  
Society for the Study of Social Problems [www.sssp1.org](http://www.sssp1.org)  
Sociologists for Women in Society [www.socwomen.org](http://www.socwomen.org)  
Southern Sociological Society <http://www.southernsociologicalsociety.org>  
Urban Affairs Association <http://urbanaffairsassociation.org/>  
Comprehensive list of associations: <http://www.sociosite.net/associations.php>



## **Fellowships and Awards**

The vast majority of funding available to our MA students is offered with associated offers of admission to some, not all, accepted applicants. There are seldom additional internal tuition or merit funding opportunities within the university subsequent to admission. There are, however, external merit scholarships and internal and external competitions for certain funding sources. See, for example, the [Office of Graduate Student Assistantships and Fellowships](#) (OGSAF) and [Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service](#). OGSAF is also a good source of support for students applying to prestigious external scholarships. The Nashman Center is a wonderful resource for students interested in civic engagement and public service, including via research. They also run the particularly prestigious [Knapp Fellowship for Entrepreneurial Service Learning](#), open to both undergraduates and graduates.

Our department offers our MA students the opportunity to apply for salaried Graduate Teaching Assistant, or GA, positions, for up to 20 hours a week. These are excellent professional development opportunities as well as good part-time jobs. Please look out for emails soliciting applications, usually in November-December and July-August, based on CCAS's timetables.

Our department also offers Annual Student Recognition Awards as part of graduation celebrations. These awards are conferred on the basis of faculty nominations, recognizing student achievement in research and writing in either a class research paper assignment or a senior or graduate thesis. Each winner will receive a certificate of recognition at the department Graduation Reception and a small (\$100) cash award. (These awards do not appear in the CCAS Celebration program.)

Excellence in Research and Writing

*For a graduate student in Sociology and/or Criminology.*

Best Graduate Assistant Award

*For service in Sociology courses during the academic year.*

Ruth A. Wallace Memorial Award for Excellence in Research and Writing

*For one undergraduate or graduate student with a paper focused on an issue related to gender.*

## **Online Resources**

### **General Resources**

GW Sociology

<https://sociology.columbian.gwu.edu>

GW Sociology Directory

<https://sociology.columbian.gwu.edu/people>

CCAS Graduate Students

<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-students>

DegreeMAP

<https://registrar.gwu.edu/degreemap>

Office of the Registrar Application Deadlines

<https://registrar.gwu.edu/application-deadlines>

### **Thesis Resources**

Office of Human Research

<http://humanresearch.gwu.edu/>

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Forms

<http://humanresearch.gwu.edu/IRBforms>

Electronic Theses and Dissertations Submission

<https://library.gwu.edu/gw-etds>

Electronic Theses and Dissertations Formatting

<https://library.gwu.edu/formatting-etd-content>

Library Databases for Dissertations and Theses

<https://library.gwu.edu/searching-for-dissertations>

ETD Approval Deadlines

<https://library.gwu.edu/etd-deadlines>

## University and CCAS Resources and Policies

### Resources

GW Portal (Home Page)

<http://my.gwu.edu/>

CCAS Academic Calendar

<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/academic-calendar/>

GW Schedule of Classes

<http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>

GW Bulletin

<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/>

CCAS Graduate Student Digital Handbook

<https://columbian.gwu.edu/academic-policies>

GW Graduate Program Regulations

<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/university-regulations/>

CCAS Graduate Office Contacts

<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-studies-contacts#studentservices>

“The Source” for Graduate Students

<http://graduate.admissions.gwu.edu/the-source>

GW Student Experience

<http://columbian.gwu.edu/gw-experience>

GW Libraries

<http://www.library.gwu.edu/>

GW Email Accounts and Technology Help Desk

<http://it.gwu.edu/>

GWU is part of the [Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area](https://www.consortium.org/) which provides additional options for students to take classes and draw on area resources: <https://www.consortium.org/>

**There are many academic and non-academic sources of support including:**

Research and writing help: [academiccommons.gwu.edu/writing-research-help](https://academiccommons.gwu.edu/writing-research-help)

GW’s Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.gwu.edu>

Fellowships and Awards:

<https://gradfellowships.gwu.edu>

<https://serve.gwu.edu/grants-awards-and-fellowships>

<https://serve.gwu.edu/knapp-fellowship-entrepreneurial-service-learning>

Disability Support Services: <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu>

Counseling and Psychological Services:  
[healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services](http://healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services)

University Police:

- In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions, see the Emergency Response Handbook at [safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook](http://safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook)
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out.
- Stay informed: [safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed](http://safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed)

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement offers the following resources:

[Resources on Allyship](#)

[Resources on Anti-Semitism](#)

[Resources on the Black Experience](#)

[Resources on Decolonization](#)

[Resources on Disability Culture](#)

[Resources on Elections and Politics](#)

[Resources on Gender and Sexuality](#)

[Resources on Implicit Bias & Microaggressions](#)

[Resources on Intersectionality](#)

[Resources on Race & Anti-Racism](#)

[Resources for Faculty](#)

[Resources on Safely Protesting](#)

[Resources on Social Class](#)

[Resources on Wellness](#)

[Black-Owned Businesses in the DMV-Area](#)

[Resources to Further Education](#)

[Chosen Name, Gender Identity & Pronouns](#)

## **Policies**

[University Code of Academic Integrity](#): All students are expected to familiarize themselves with, and abide by, the GW Code of Academic Integrity, updated in Summer 2021. Please note that there are many definitions of cheating, including conduct such as submitting the same or similar work to different instructors without permission. The Sociology Department's policy is that this statement covers work that is identical, substantially the same, or slightly rewritten versions of the same paper.

<https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>

[Religious holidays](#): Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.

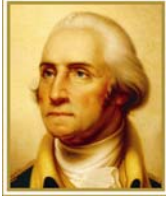
<http://provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines>

## MA Program Forms

As noted above, students and faculty need to fill in and submit to the Department the **Thesis Topic Approval Form** early on in the process of confirming the thesis topic and director. Upon completion of theses, students and directors need to submit the Thesis Approval Form. CCAS and GWU also require completion of the ETD forms.

Faculty advisors (not students) need to complete the **comprehensive examination Results Form** for Criminology students completing a comprehensive exam.

Various other forms may need to be completed for individual students on a case by case basis, e.g. petitions to the Dean for leaves of absence.



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**THESIS TITLE DECLARATION (MASTER'S)**

The student named below intends to work toward the following Master's Thesis.

Departmental Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ GWID: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: Crim      Soc      First semester in program: \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed  
thesis title:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Thesis Committee:**

	Name	Signature
Director:	_____	_____
Co-Director:	_____	_____
Reader:	_____	_____

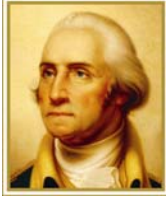
**Note: 1. This form must identify a Director; a Reader (or Co-Director) is optional.  
2. Most theses have a Director and Reader but it is also an option to have two co-directors instead of a Director and Reader. Fill in as applicable.**

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**Time Frame:**

Intended semester of completion: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_



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**THESIS COMPLETION APPROVAL (MASTERS)**

**The members of this student's Thesis Committee, having read the student's Master's Thesis, all agree that it is acceptable in its current form.**

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **GWID:** \_\_\_\_\_

Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ First semester in program: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Committee:**

	Name	Signature
Director:	_____	_____
Co-Director:	_____	_____
Reader:	_____	_____

**Note: Most theses have a Director and Reader but it is also an option to have two co-directors instead of a Director and Reader. Fill in as applicable.**

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