THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

HANDBOOK

MA in Sociology
MA in Criminology

2026-27

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Key Personnel and Contact Information

Department Chair:	Ivy Ken (ivyken@gwu.edu), 202-994-1886
Operations Manager:	Octavia Kelsey (okelseyg@gwu.edu), 202-994-6345
Part-Time Assistant:	Anastasya Radzilowicz (soc@gwu.edu), 202-994-5325
Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):	Matthew Kafafian (gradsoc@gwu.edu), 202-994-1886
Department of Sociology:	Phillips Hall - Suite 409 801 22nd Street NW (Academic Center) Washington DC 20052

Phone: (202) 994-6345 Fax: (202) 994-3239

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. (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. You can find up-to-date information about GPAs, continuous registration, incompletes, and other matters there.

Listserv for Graduate Students: gwgradsoc@hermes.gwu.edu. All graduate students and most faculty are automatically added to 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 with our community. If you believe you are not on this list, please email the front office (soc@gwu.edu) to be added.

Office Hours: All faculty have **office hours**, which are regular times each week when they meet with students. Office hours typically change each semester and can be found:

- Sociology Department bulletin board in the reception area (PHIL 409)
- Sociology Department website (only applicable for full-time faculty)
- often in the "signature" section of faculty emails and on syllabi

Academic Advisor and Thesis Director

Academic Advisor: All incoming Sociology and Criminology MA students are assigned to Dr. Matthew Kafafian as their academic advisor at the beginning of their first semester at GW. **Students should meet with Dr. Kafafian each semester to discuss their program of study** (Phillips Hall 409I; m.kafafian@gwu.edu). Meeting with other faculty to share goals, opportunities, and questions is strongly encouraged. The academic advisor is different from a thesis director, although the two can be the same. Criminology students who opt to take the comprehensive exam will retain their original academic advisor.

Thesis Director: The thesis director is the faculty member who agrees to take on advising responsibilities and thesis collaboration with the student. Students may identify their thesis director at any time, ideally by the end of the first year. More information on identifying a thesis director and other components of a thesis committee can be found at *Choosing a Thesis Topic, Director, and Reader*.

Faculty

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 here are full-time faculty. In addition, the department employs part-time faculty who teach courses in their areas of expertise. **Students 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.**

Fran Buntman
Office: PHIL 409G (she/her)
fbuntman@gwu.edu

Carlos Bustamante
Office: PHIL 409E (he/him)
cbustamante@gwu.edu
Co-Director, Law & Society Minor

Robert Cottrol
Office: Old Main 406A
bcottrol@law.gwu.edu
Primary appointment: GW Law School

Kaitlyn DaVisio
Office: PHIL 409K
k.davisio@gwu.edu

Daina Eglitis
Office: PHIL 409I (she/her)
dainas@gwu.edu
Director of Undergraduate Studies

Desmond Goss
Office: PHIL 409F (they/them)
desmond.goss@gwu.edu

Hiromi Ishizawa
Office: PHIL 409J
ishizawa@gwu.edu

Antwan Jones
Office: PHIL 409C (he/him)
antwan@gwu.edu
Note: On leave Fall 2026

Matthew Kafafian
Office: PHIL 409I (he/him)
m.kafafian@gwu.edu
Director of Graduate Studies

Michelle Kelso
Office: PHIL 409D (she/her)
mkelso@gwu.edu
Dir., Human Services and Social Justice

Ivy Ken
Office: PHIL 409J (she/they)
ivyken@gwu.edu
Chair, Department of Sociology

Xolela Mangcu

Office: PHIL 409O
xolelamangcu@gwu.edu

Hilary Silver
Office: PHIL 203
hilarysilver@gwu.edu

Eiko Strader
Office: PHIL 342
strader@gwu.edu
Primary appointment: Public Policy; WGSS

Elizabeth Vaquera
Office: 2114 G St NW (she/her)
evaquera@gwu.edu
Exec. Dir., Cisneros Hispanic Leadership Inst.

Kathryne Young
Office: 2000 H Street NW
kyoung2@law.gwu.edu
Primary appointment: GW Law School

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)

- In preparation for the MA thesis, it is advantageous to complete all three methods courses 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 (1st semester of thesis, usually Fall of second year)
SOC 6999: Thesis Research (2nd semester of thesis, usually Spring of second year)

- Thesis credits are taken as independent research hours, not classes, under the direction of the thesis supervisor.
- Before registering for SOC 6999, you must get permission from your thesis director and fill out an RTF or RTF-EZ form.
- RTFs should be submitted to ccasgradserv@gwu.edu, and RTF-EZs should be submitted to registrar@gwu.edu. Copy gradsoc@gwu.edu when sending these emails.

Electives

SOC 6242: Housing and Homelessness
SOC 6244: Sociology of Families and Kinship
SOC 6245: Race Relations
SOC 6246: Comparative Race and Ethnicity
SOC 6248: Race and Urban Redevelopment
SOC 6250: Urban Sociology
SOC 6252: Special Topics in Sociology*
SOC 6257: Criminal Law
SOC 6258: Deviance and Control
SOC 6259: Criminology
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 6265: Gender, Welfare, and Poverty
SOC 6266: Gender and Criminal Justice
SOC 6267: Policing
SOC 6268: Race, Gender, and Class
SOC 6271: Gender and Society
SOC 6273: The Sex Industry
SOC 6286: Law of Race and Slavery
SOC 6291: Methods of Demographic Analysis
* 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. You may take more than one Special Topics course during your course of study.

Other Departments and the Consortium

With the written consent of your advisor and the DGS, relevant courses in related departments (including consortium courses) may be taken for electives. It is strongly encouraged to seek out courses within the Department of Sociology rather than pursue courses outside the department.

Independent Study

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. It is strongly encouraged to seek out existing courses rather than pursue the SOC 6295 option.

MA in Sociology: Sample 2-Year Schedule*

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	Course 1: SOC 6238 (Theory)	Course 1: SOC 6239 (Theory)
	Course 2: SOC 6230 (Methods)	Course 2: SOC 6231 (Quant. Methods)
	Course 3: Substantive course/elective	Course 3: SOC 6232 (Qual. Methods)
Year 2	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

*The chart provided is a guide, not a requirement. Students who are part-time, are in the BA-MA program, or are pursuing their MA degrees on an accelerated schedule should develop their schedule with their academic advisor based on their particular needs.

MA Thesis: Processes, Guidance, and Deadlines

A thesis is a formal document that demonstrates a student's ability to complete an original research project. By writing a thesis, a student develops research and writing skills that are recognized in the field and the university as indicators of scholarly expertise. In both sociology and criminology, the thesis project develops the student's the ability to: conceptualize a research problem, frame the problem theoretically, design a study, synthesize relevant scholarly literature, find or collect data, select and employ an appropriate method of analysis, integrate findings into existing substantive and theoretical literature, demonstrate critical thinking, document and cite sources properly, and express all aspects of the research clearly and accurately. The thesis provides a fundamental experience in scholarship and allows a student to both understand and contribute to their field. Thesis research is conducted under the guidance of a faculty committee, which is composed of two members: a thesis director and a faculty reader.

The guidelines that follow are intended to assist MA students and faculty in working through the thesis process, beginning with registering for Thesis Research credits and identifying a topic and a thesis director.

Thesis Research Credits: SOC 6999

Thesis students must take two sections of SOC 6999 (Thesis Research, 3.0 credits) over two semesters for six credits in total. No letter grades are assigned for SOC 6999, and this is not a class that meets as a group. Rather, Thesis Research credits provide space in the student's schedule to devote at least 10 hours a week to the thesis project over the course of the second academic year.

Identifying a thesis topic and securing a thesis director need to take place PRIOR TO registering for SOC 6999, since students are not able to enroll in SOC 6999 without their thesis director's permission. Students must have agreed upon a clear research path with their thesis director before registering for the first section of SOC 6999s, and made adequate progress before signing up for the subsequent section of SOC 6999.

By the end of the first year, students must complete the **Thesis Title Declaration Form** and submit it to their thesis director for signing, and then to the DGS (gradsoc@gwu.edu), before signing up for SOC 6999 credits. With the permission of the thesis director, this form may be submitted before a final decision is made about a reader. Students will then need to submit an RTF form with the thesis director's signature to be enrolled in these credits. RTFs should be submitted to ccasgradserv@gwu.edu, and RTF-EZs should be submitted to registrar@gwu.edu.

Choosing a Thesis Topic, Director, and Reader

Choosing a thesis topic, question, and method, as well as a thesis director is an iterative process of student background work and discussions with members of faculty. Over their first year, students should discuss their initial and developing ideas for a thesis,

tentative thesis questions, sources of data, and potential methodological approaches with various faculty members as part of a *process* of deciding on a thesis topic and identifying an appropriate thesis director. As part of this process, students should, at the very least, meet with all faculty whose research areas and/or methodological specialties correspond to their topics of interest. The Sociology Department's website includes a description of each professor's research interests, projects, and recent publications. Students can visit professors during their office hours or set up appointments to meet with them, and should be prepared to describe their own research interests and find out more about the professor's interests. Resulting from that process of discussion and background work, students should ask a faculty member to serve as their thesis director.

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, and with ample justification, part-time faculty can also serve as thesis directors and readers. If a student is unsure about whether a particular faculty member is full- or part-time, they can ask the Director of Graduate Studies.

Readers: In consultation with the thesis director, the student will decide on a thesis reader and ask that faculty member to serve on their committee. Readers typically play a more limited role in the thesis process, but could be involved from the beginning. This arrangement will be negotiated among the thesis director, the reader, and the student. If a part-time faculty member is chosen, they should be aware that they will not receive compensation for serving as a thesis reader.

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

Academic Advisor: Once a thesis director is chosen, they become the student's new academic advisor, replacing the student's originally assigned academic advisor.

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 thesis director and student agree on such a schedule. The student should also meet with the reader periodically based on the committee's preferences. These meetings should occur over the academic year unless the director and reader have indicated they are available to work with the student during the summer.

Planning Your Thesis

Some faculty members may want students to write a formal thesis proposal, or to revise the thesis proposal they completed for SOC 6230. Other faculty may have particular requirements to help students clearly identify their proposed topic, question, theoretical framework, method, and timeline. In addition, IRB (see below) requirements may stipulate particular documentation.

Whether a student is required to have a formal proposal or alternative plan, they should keep in mind that successfully completing the thesis in time to graduate in May requires beginning the first Thesis Research credits (SOC 6999) in Fall of their second year with a clear plan for research and writing, agreed upon between the student, the thesis director, and the reader.

We recommend that all three research methods classes (SOC 6230, 6231, and 6232) be taken in the first year of the program so that students will have a strong understanding of fundamental methodological options and decisions to guide their choice of thesis topics and questions.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB)

If a student is collecting data from human subjects through interviews, surveys, participant observation, or other direct methods, they must receive approval or exemption from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process takes time, so **students are strongly encouraged to have a thesis proposal completed one calendar year prior to the graduation date**. Projects must be reviewed and approved by the IRB in the Office of Human Research (OHR), and data collection cannot begin until that approval is received. 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 the student has gotten approval from their thesis director, which depends on completion of, at the minimum, the research methods and introduction sections of the thesis proposal.

Many students in the department have gone through the IRB process, and some have given permission to share their IRB application documents with future students. If a student would like to see some examples, they should talk to the DGS and their thesis director.

Timeline for Thesis Completion

Students must turn in sections 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 4-5 or even more drafts, in part or in whole, before they are ready for final submission. It is customary to provide the thesis director and reader 2-3 weeks to review each draft and provide feedback.

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 full-time student thesis completion timeline:

Deadline	Task
1+ years prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student should explore possible thesis directors by checking websites, reading publications, visiting office hours, submitting a research proposal, and gauging interest.
1 year prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student must formalize the request for an advisor by obtaining their signature on the Thesis Title and Committee Form and the RTF/EZ Form, and registering for 3 credits of SOC 6999 for the following semester.
2-3 semesters prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student does the research: agrees on research plan with director and reader; submits an IRB application if necessary; identifies or collects data; reads and synthesizes research on the topic; identifies a theoretical framework; analyzes data; begins writing each thesis section. The student registers for 3 credits of SOC 6999 for potential final semester.
8-12 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student provides sections or drafts of the thesis to the thesis director, receives feedback, and makes revisions as many times as required. The student and director request the reader's availability and provide potential dates for drafts.
6-7 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student delivers the full thesis to the director for consideration.
4-5 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The director gives feedback to the student on the draft, noting required revisions.

3-4 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The student delivers the revised thesis to the director and reader.
1-2 weeks prior to CCAS thesis deadline	The director and reader provide feedback on the draft, noting required revisions.
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.

Examples of Theses

It is a terrific idea to skim through other theses written in our program. The department keeps hardcopies of older theses in the beige filing cabinets at the end of the hallway, and you can ask the Operations Manager or Part-Time Assistant for access to those. Students can also look up all theses through Gelman Library at ScholarSpace. At this site, students can search for *sociology* or *criminology* along with any keywords, author names, or thesis advisor/reader names they are interested in.

Formatting

Students must ensure that the formatting of their document is in line with University and CCAS formatting requirements. If students have questions about the formatting of their document, please reference the Master's Thesis ETD Submission page. Anna Marie Siegal is currently the CCAS staff member in charge of approving the ETDs of master's students for publication, and students are also more than welcome to schedule an appointment with her to discuss the formatting of their document before they submit the final version to the ProQuest platform. You can contact them at ccasgradserv@gwu.edu.

University/College/Department Deadlines and Related Requirements

Deadlines are noted in the ETD Approval Deadlines section of the CCAS website, and may differ slightly from year to year. The deadlines listed on the website are fixed and a thesis cannot be submitted after these dates if the student wishes to graduate in the respective semester. **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. Dates are summarized below for convenience, but please consult the website for exact dates.

ETD Approval Deadlines	Degree Conferral Semester and Date
December 11, 2026 @ 5:00PM	**Fall** 2026 (Date: January 8, 2027)
April 30, 2027 @ 5:00PM	**Spring** 2027 (Date: May 16, 2027)
August 15, 2027 @ 5:00PM	**Summer** 2027 (Date: August 31, 2027)

After the final version of the thesis has been approved by the student's thesis director and reader, they complete and sign the **Thesis Completion Approval Form** and the director transmits the form to the DGS (gradsoc@gwu.edu).

Applying to Graduate

Students must complete a graduation application through GWeb for the semester they hope to have all academic requirements (including the thesis) completed. The deadlines for the application to graduate are typically one semester prior to graduation. If a student does not receive approval for their thesis by the published deadline, they may apply to graduate in the following semester.

Additional Time for Thesis (and Degree) Completion: Continuing Enrollment (CE) and Continuing Registration (CR)

A student whose thesis is not approved by the director and reader 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, copying the DGS at gradsoc@gwu.edu, to facilitate the CE. The above table summarizes the approximate timeline for CE deadlines and the implication for degree conferrals.

If time is needed beyond that, 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 ($2,154 for 2026-27).

Thesis directors and readers need to agree to updated deadlines and agree on revised pathways to completion. Students must be sure to consult their thesis director, reader, and the DGS, as well as CCAS throughout the process.

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 below 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.

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.

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)

- In preparation for the MA thesis, it is advantageous to complete all three methods classes in the first year of the program. If a Criminology student is planning to take the comprehensive exam, 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.

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

- *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.

- There are many potentially appropriate elective classes that may be taken from other departments on topics such as cybersecurity, forensics, 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.
- Many Forensic Sciences 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 complete a comprehensive exam instead of a thesis. Two additional electives (i.e. substituting for six credits of SOC 6999) should be chosen. More information about the comprehensive exam can be found on the next page.

MA in Criminology: Sample 2-Year Schedule*

Thesis Option

	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
Year 1	Course 1: SOC 6230 (Methods)	Course 1: SOC 6231 (Quant. Methods)
	Course 2: SOC 6258 (Deviance & Control)	Course 2: SOC 6259 (Criminology)
	Course 3: SOC 6257 (Criminal Law)	Course 3: SOC 6262 (Qual. Methods)
Year 2	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)	Course 1: SOC 6999 (Thesis Research)
	Course 2: SOC 6238 (Theory) or Elective	Course 2: SOC 6239 (Theory) or Elective
	Course 3: Substantive course/elective	Course 3: Substantive course/elective

*The chart provided is a guide, not a requirement. 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 based on their particular needs.

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 together 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 11th 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.

- The advisor 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.
- Each student will sign an AI Policy and Academic Integrity Guidelines contract in the presence of the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Department Chair to confirm that generative AI will not be used to produce or assist in any of the answers or work for their comprehensive exam. This form will be shared after the scheduling of the comprehensive exam has been finalized.

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.

Applying to Graduate

Students must complete a graduation application through GWeb for the semester they hope to have all academic requirements (including the comprehensive exam) completed. The deadlines for the application to graduate are typically one semester prior to graduation. If a student does not receive approval for their comprehensive exam by the published deadline, they may apply to graduate in the following semester.

Additional Time for Degree Completion: Continuing Enrollment (CE) and Continuing Registration (CR)

A student who cannot complete their comprehensive exam (or incomplete grade in a course) by the deadline may request Continuing Enrollment (CE) over the summer or winter breaks. Academic advisors must agree to this option and then students email ccasgradserv@gwu.edu, copying the DGS at gradsoc@gwu.edu, to facilitate the CE.

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.

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.

DegreeMap, Exceptions, and Petitions

Students can find official information about their progress toward the degree through DegreeMap.

Any time a student takes a class that does not conform to the narrow degree requirements as identified in DegreeMap, the student needs to request the DGS (gradsoc@gwu.edu) create a petition to authorize the permitted exception (e.g., an approved elective from another department) to count toward their degree. In that email to the DGS, the student should include:

- GWID number
- reason for exception
- draft of petition in formatted language

  DegreeMap petitions need to be formatted very specifically by the DGS, and students are requested to clearly explain what they need based on the logic of the formatting:

  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.

Letters of Recommendation

Faculty are usually eager to write letters of reference for you when you apply for a job or another academic program. Be sure to request a letter at least one month in advance. Along with your request, provide the following materials:

- the date the letter is due,
- copies of your coursework and any feedback you received from the professor,
- any application content you have generated, such as a cover letter or statement of purpose,
- a paragraph about why this position/program interests you,
- a paragraph about what makes you well-suited for it (this is not the time to be humble!),
- a current resume or CV,
- one or two paragraphs of brief autobiography—where you are from, what extracurricular activities you are committed to, any awards you have received, your GPA, what your interests are, what you hope to do in the future, etc. If you have already graduated, make sure to include what you have been doing since graduation and why you are pursuing this particular career or academic path,

- a brief description of the program/position you are applying to,
- the name and/or links to the program or position,
- instructions for how the professor should submit the letter, and
- anything you want the letter to highlight.

Professional Development Seminars

The Department will periodically schedule opportunities for graduate students to be introduced to various aspects of professional life in sociology and criminology, in and beyond the MA degree. These events are meant to socialize graduate students into the norms of academia, and to uncover the "hidden curriculum" of graduate school.

These events may focus on practical skills, such as using citation management software, as well as bigger topics like dealing with rejection in academia. On some occasions, the Department will schedule these sessions in conjunction with the American Sociological Association, which offers virtual proseminar sessions.

Membership in Professional Associations

We strongly encourage students to join professional organizations corresponding to their interests and career goals.

The District of Columbia Sociological Society (DCSS) is a local association that we 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. One of the fall meetings every year usually includes an address by the incoming President of the American Sociological Association.

Regional associations include the Eastern Sociological Society (ESS) and the Southern Sociological Society, and they hold annual meetings. 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 the field and career networking. Students should be sure to visit the ESS site for meeting information, submission guidelines, and deadlines.

The American Sociological Association (ASA) and the American Society of Criminology (ASC) are the primary national-level professional organizations in these fields. There are also many other

valuable professional resources and organizations, including those listed below.

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences www.acjs.org
American Sociological Association www.asanet.org
American Society of Criminology 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
Sociologists for Women in Society 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

Travel Money: Students who submit a paper to a professional meeting and have it accepted for presentation *may* be eligible to receive a modest amount of travel support from the department and CCAS, depending on the budget situation of the College and the University. The availability of funds varies from year to year, so students who would like more information should contact the DGS.

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.

GIA Positions

Our department offers our MA students the opportunity to apply for salaried Graduate Instructional Assistant (GIA) 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. If you are selected for a GIA position, CCAS does not permit you to do any part-time work over the 20 hour a week GA position. From a practical perspective, it is very hard and for most people, impossible to do a graduate degree full-time (9 credits is considered full-time for graduate work) and work more than 20 hours a week.

Department Awards

Our department 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 an MA 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 Award
  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

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.

CCAS 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 (please check the website for specific deadlines).

Alumni Information

We would love to hear from you! Getting updates from our alumni is one of the most gratifying parts of our jobs. Please email any of your professors or staff members any time, and do provide us with a post-GW email address after you graduate. Check the department's social media accounts for announcements of events. There is also an alumni listserv at masocalum@hermes.gwu.edu and we encourage you to post announcements and keep in touch with your alumni colleagues.

Online Resources

GW Sociology https://sociology.columbian.gwu.edu
CCAS Graduate Students https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-students
DegreeMAP https://registrar.gwu.edu/degreemap

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 Thesis Approval Deadlines https://library.gwu.edu/etd-deadlines

University and CCAS Resources

GW Portal (Home Page) http://my.gwu.edu/
GW Schedule of Classes http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/
GW Bulletin http://bulletin.gwu.edu/
GW Graduate Program Regulations http://bulletin.gwu.edu/university-regulations/
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/
CCAS Academic Calendar http://bulletin.gwu.edu/academic-calendar/
CCAS Graduate Student Digital Handbook https://columbian.gwu.edu/academic-policies

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 is one of 18 institutions in the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area, 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
- 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
- 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
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out.
- Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed
- The Office of Community, Culture and Inclusion 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

AI and Academic Integrity: While the Department of Sociology currently does not have a departmental AI Usage Policy, the GW Code of Academic Integrity has clear guidelines regarding plagiarism. In accordance with the GW Code of Academic Integrity, plagiarism is broadly defined as misrepresenting work, words, ideas, or a sequence of ideas as original or one's own. Moreover, in accordance with the GW Code of Academic Integrity, plagiarism can also include failure to attribute another's words, ideas, sequence of ideas, data, and/or other work material without necessary in-text attribution. Thus, in circumstances in which generative AI has been found to be substantially used to produce the work, words, ideas, or sequence of ideas for a thesis, coursework, or other product in pursuit of their MA degree requirements, the student may be reasonably found in violation of GW's Code of Academic Integrity. This also means using slightly revised work that is derived from generative AI. As a result, we ask that you save your initial versions/draft materials/outlines/iterations of your thesis, course work, comprehensive exam, or other work, as individual faculty reserve the right review the progress of your work if there are concerns about AI usage. Individual faculty also reserve the right to request students for verbal explanation (in however format the faculty member/instructor sees fit [e.g., verbal defense, public presentation]) of their thesis, coursework, comprehensive exam or other products in pursuit of their MA degree requirements if there are concerns of AI usage. Please speak with individual faculty members and instructors about their own guidelines and expectations for AI usage as some faculty members may prohibit the use of it for coursework or theses altogether, whereas other faculty may have their own policies around proper disclosure of AI use.

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 need to submit the **Thesis Title Declaration Form** to the DGS early in the process of confirming the thesis topic and director. Upon completion of a thesis, the thesis director must submit the signed **Thesis Completion Approval Form** to the DGS by the approval deadline. CCAS and GW also require completion of the **ETD Approval Form** by the approval deadline.

Faculty advisors (not students) must submit the **Comprehensive Examination Results Form** to the DGS for any Criminology student completing a comprehensive exam. Faculty should please reach out to the DGS to request this form.

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.