Sociology

Degrees Offered

• Master of Arts
• Doctor of Philosophy

Nature of the Program

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology offers an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology. All students entering the program will be enrolled as doctoral students. Students entering the program with a BA/BS will be dually enrolled in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs until they complete the M.A. requirements.

The Ph.D. program is designed for students who are interested in working as professional sociologists in teaching and research. The curriculum emphasizes foundational coursework in sociology, including theory, methods and statistics, as well as courses and independent research in an area related to the department's specializations in:

• crime, law, and deviance;
• inequality, diversity, and equity;
• social psychology and group processes;
• sociology of religion.

The department is strongly committed to teaching, mentoring, and collaborative research with students. Members of the faculty have received major research grants, won national teaching and research awards, published several books and numerous academic articles, and served as the editor or editorial board members of prestigious journals. In many cases, students have worked as research collaborators with faculty and co-authored publications.

FACULTY

PROFESSOR AND CHAIR

• James Nolan, III - Ph.D. (Temple University) Sociology
  Criminal justice, Group and social processes

PROFESSORS

• Sharon R. Bird - Ph.D. (Washington State University) Sociology
  Social Inequality (race/ethnicity/class/gender/LGBTQ+), Workplace equity, Research methods
• Henry H. Brownstein - Ph.D. (Temple University) Sociology
  Distinguished Research Professor. Drugs and society, Drug policy, Violence, Qualitative research methods
• Walter S. DeKeseredy - Ph.D. (York University) Sociology
  Anna Deane Carlson Endowed Chair of Social Sciences. Violence against women, Critical criminology, Masculinities and crime, Criminology theory
• R. Gregory Dunaway - Ph.D. (University of Cincinnati) Sociology
  Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
• S. Melissa Latimer - Ph.D. (University of Kentucky) Sociology
  Gender/race/ethnicity, Inequality/labor markets/welfare systems
• Daniel Renfrew - Ph.D. (Binghamton University) Anthropology
  Environmental and political anthropology, Social movements, Latin American cultures
• Karen Weiss - Ph.D. (SUNY-Stony Brook) Sociology
  Criminology, Victimization, Gender/sexuality/culture
• Rachael A. Woldoff - Ph.D. (Ohio State University) Sociology
  Community, Crime, Inequality/race/class
• Joshua Woods - Ph.D. (Michigan State University) Sociology
  Social psychology, Media, Complex organizations, Sociology of risk

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

• Corey Colyer - Ph.D. (Syracuse University) Sociology
  People processing systems, Agencies of social control
• Katie E. Corcoran - Ph.D. (University of Washington) Sociology
  Theory, Organizations, Culture, Criminology, Religion, Social networks
• Lisa M. Dilks - Ph.D. (University of South Carolina) Sociology
Social psychology, Group processes, Law and society, Quantitative methods

- Amy Hirshman - Ph.D. (Michigan State University) Anthropology
  Mesoamerican archaeology, Social complexity, Ceramics

- Jason Manning - Ph.D. (University of Virginia) Sociology
  Conflict and social control, Violence, Sociology of knowledge

- Christopher P. Scheitle - Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University) Sociology
  Religion, Science in society, Crime, Organizations

- Rachel Stein - Ph.D. (University of Akron) Sociology
  Criminology, Victimization, Media and crime

- Heather M. Washington - Ph.D. (Ohio State University) Sociology
  Community, Crime, Family, Inequality

- Jesse Wozniak - Ph.D. (University of Minnesota) Sociology
  Policing, Criminology, Deviance, State power

SERVICE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

- Jennifer Steele - Ph.D. (Pennsylvania State University) Rural Sociology
  Natural resource sociology, Rural and community development

TEACHING ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

- Susanna Donaldson - Ph.D. (University of Iowa) Anthropology
  Anthropology of work, Identity, Appalachian cultures

ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- Enkeshi El-Amin - Ph.D. (University of Tennessee, Knoxville) Sociology
  Critical race and racism, Urban Sociology, Community, Black Appalachia

- Aaron C. Foote - Ph.D. (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) Sociology
  Urban and environmental sociology, Social movements, Inequality

TEACHING ASSISTANT PROFESSORS

- Lindsay Kahle Semprevivo - Ph.D. (Virginia Tech) Sociology
  Youth inequality, School violence, Sexual orientation and criminology

- Kirsten Younghee Song - Ph.D. (Rutgers University) Sociology
  Culture, Transnationalism, Young adulthood, Inequality

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

- Ronald C. Althouse - Ph.D. (University of Minnesota) Sociology
  Theory, Work, Occupational safety and health

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS EMERITI

- Ann L. Paterson - Ph.D. (Michigan State University) Sociology
- Patricia C. Rice - M.A. (Ohio State University) Anthropology
- Joseph J. Simoni - Ph.D. (University of Notre Dame) Sociology
- William I. Torry - Ph.D. (Columbia University) Anthropology

Admissions

PH.D. IN SOCIOLOGY

The program in Sociology only admits directly to the Ph.D. In addition to WVU’s general admission requirements (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#classificationtext), applicants to the Doctoral program must have minimum of a 3.0 overall GPA in the prior degree. Students who enter the program with a Bachelor’s degree or a non-thesis Master’s degree are required to complete the M.A. degree (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/eberrycollegeofartsandsciences/sociologyandanthropology/ma/) as part of their progress toward the Ph.D. As part of the graduate application, applicants must include official transcripts from all colleges and universities previously attended, a personal statement, a writing sample, a curriculum vitae, and letters of recommendation from at least three people familiar with the student’s academic record and potential for graduate study. An official statement of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores must also be provided. The GRE should be taken within two years of the application submission.

The personal statement (statement of purpose) should address the applicant’s research interests and how they might add to our graduate program. The statement should also identify faculty members they might work with if they were admitted to the program. The statement should be approximately
one page in length. The writing sample should provide evidence the applicant can synthesize ideas and demonstrate critical thought. The sample might include a senior research paper or sections of a thesis project.

List of Admission Requirements:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/)
- Transcripts from all institutions attended
- Three letters of recommendation from academic references
- Curriculum Vitae
- Statement of purpose
- Writing Sample
- GRE

International Applicants:

- See the steps to apply for admissions and access the application here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/)
- International applications should view additional requirements here (http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/internationaltext) and here (https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/how-to-apply/apply-for-2020-2021/international-graduate-applicant/)
- Language proficiency is required in order to hold a graduate teaching assistantship. See here (https://elli.wvu.edu/testing-resources/english-proficiency-gtas/).

Application Deadlines:

- The Sociology program admits students for the Fall semester only
- Completed applications should be received by January 15th
- Students who apply by the deadline will receive priority consideration for funding
- Applications may be reviewed past the deadline pending the availability of space
- Exceptional applicants may be nominated by the Sociology program for competitive University Fellowships. Qualified applicants will be notified if they are nominated. More information on WVU fellowships can be found here (https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/fellowships/).

Certain application requirements may be waived based on a preliminary review of an application by the program.

Admission Requirements 2023-2024

The Admission Requirements above will be the same for the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

MA Major Code: 1470

PhD Major Code: 14B8

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Sociology, M.A.

For specific information on the following program, please see the link to the right:

- Sociology, Ph.D.

Degree Progress

All students will have a plan of study and will receive, at a minimum, a yearly letter of evaluation.

MASTERS

In addition to maintaining GPA requirements, full-time students must receive acceptance of their thesis proposal no later than November 20 of the third semester of the M.A. program (see the Sociology Graduate Handbook for details (https://soca.wvu.edu/students/graduate-students/graduate-handbook/)).

DOCTORAL

Comprehensive exams should take place in the last semester of coursework or the first semester following the completion of coursework. Students might complete comprehensive exams and a dissertation proposal defense in the same semester, provided they complete the comprehensive exam process by mid-semester (see the Sociology Graduate Handbook for details (https://soca.wvu.edu/students/graduate-students/graduate-handbook/)).
COURSES

SOC 522. Contemporary Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.

SOC 600. Becoming a Sociologist. 1 Hour.
The purpose of this seminar is to socialize students into the discipline and profession of sociology. Training to become a professional sociologist includes learning information on (a) policies and procedures, (b) the importance and means of presentation of self, and (c) information on research, teaching and service. Students are required to take this course during their first semester.

SOC 601. Professional Research/Writing. 1 Hour.
PR: SOC 600. Focused on the successful completion of independent research. Topics include understanding how to write a scholarly journal article, providing critical feedback on others' scholarly work, time management skills for successful completion of a research project, and identifying appropriate journals for submission of manuscripts.

SOC 610. Advanced General Sociology. 3 Hours.
Introduces students to five main areas of Sociology—principles of sociology, individuals and groups, inequality, institutions, and change, while also introducing them to the three areas of emphasis in the Sociology program—crime, community, and culture. Students will be able to determine their area of research focus and be further exposed to faculty research within a particular content area.

SOC 615. Sociological Data Analysis and Interpretation 1. 3 Hours.
Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses of social science data. Topics include descriptive statistics, elementary statistical inference, and linear regression. The use of statistical software to conduct data analysis is also explored.

SOC 616. Sociological Data Analysis and Interpretation 2. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 615. Advanced regression-based analysis of social science data. Topics include nonlinear regression, mediation and path analysis, methods for analyzing panel data, and techniques for examining categorical dependent variables. The use of statistical software is also explored.

SOC 620. Sociological Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Focuses on the logic of framing and designing social research: Philosophical foundations, connections between theory and methods, narrowing research questions, and making design and data collection decisions. Emphasis on reading and critiquing published studies.

SOC 630. Classical Social Thought. 3 Hours.
This course introduces students to the general concepts, principles, and perspectives used in the study of social reality, with an emphasis on the highly influential works that were important in founding the field of sociology.

SOC 632. Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis Software. 3 Hours.
This course examines the basic functions of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software and shows how it can be used to analyze a variety of types of qualitative data. Topics covered include how to open, import, and manage qualitative data, how to code/recode the data, summarize and report it, and perform a wide variety of procedures.

SOC 640. Quantitative Analysis Using Stata. 3 Hours.
Interpretation and application of social scientific quantitative data analysis concepts and techniques using Stata. Examination of the basic functions of Stata and shows how it can be used to analyze quantitative datasets. Topics covered include descriptive and inferential statistics, how to manage datasets in Stata, and how to perform a wide variety of statistical procedures using Stata.

SOC 689. Field Work. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Departmental consent. Supervised field work.

SOC 697. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper, scholarly project, or a dissertation. Grading is S/U.

SOC 698. Thesis. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. This is an optional course for programs that wish to provide formal supervision during the writing of student reports (698), or dissertations (798). Grading is normal.

SOC 700. Navigating the Job Market. 1 Hour.
This course is designed to help students successfully navigate the job market. There are four main topic areas covered in this course. These include 1) getting started, 2) the interview process, 3) getting the job, and 4) surviving the first year as a faculty member. Students will take this class in the same semester they defend their dissertation proposal.

SOC 710. Teaching Sociology. 3 Hours.
Students will engage in the literature on teaching and learning, exploring the major issues involved in teaching sociology at the university level. Each student will work with an instructor in the activities that constitute the teaching enterprise in an “apprenticeship” role for the semester. Students are expected to develop a course plan by the end of the semester.

SOC 711. Writing in Quantitative Methods. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 615 and SOC 616. This course provides students with the resources to write a polished quantitative paper that is suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The students will revise the paper they have completed as part of the requirements for SOCA 615/616, a research paper from a substantive course, or a paper that is part of a research or grant project.
SOC 715. Advanced Statistical Methods for Sociology. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 615 and SOC 616. Course covers statistical methods beyond basic descriptive and inferential analysis. Topics may include categorical analysis, structural equation modeling and/or hierarchical linear models. The use of statistical software is also discussed.

SOC 720. Sociological Survey Methods. 3 Hours.
Provides students with tools to evaluate and design survey research projects critically in sociology. Key topics include relationships among sampling, questionnaire construction, and mode choice. Course designed around types of error in surveys and ways to minimize.

SOC 721. Qualitative Methods. 3 Hours.
Provides students with tools to evaluate and design qualitative research projects critically. Focuses on philosophical foundations and researcher/subject roles, considerations associated with data collection, and data analysis methods.

SOC 722. Mixed Methodology for the Social Sciences. 3 Hours.
Focus is on designing and conducting a mixed methods research study including how to identify appropriate research questions and answering them by combining quantitative and qualitative methods approaches.

SOC 724. Structural Equation Modeling for the Social Sciences. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 640. Focus on how to specify, estimate, and test structural equation models. Topics include path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and linear models with latent variables. Emphasizes applications to substantive problems in the social sciences.

SOC 725. Introduction to Evaluation Research Methods. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 620. This course serves as an introduction to evaluation methodology and to the evaluation tools commonly used to assess effectiveness of a wide variety of programs and policies.

SOC 726. Ethnographic Investigation. 3 Hours.
Training in theories and practical application of ethnographic methods. Focus is on understanding the types of questions best answered by ethnographic investigations, why such methods are appropriate, and hands-on training in various styles of ethnography. Students will perform original ethnographic research using the concepts and tools gained.

SOC 727. Demographic Research Methods. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 620. This course will comprise an overview of demographic data and methods commonly used by professionals in public health practice and research. The course is a graduate level seminar.

SOC 728. Content Analysis. 3 Hours.
Advanced introduction to the analysis of textual content for social insight; surveys classic approaches and recent advances in quantitative and qualitative content analysis; students design and execute projects that analyze textual data for social inference.

SOC 729. Experimental Design and Analysis for Sociology. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 615 and SOC 616. How to design, carry out, and analyze experiments. Various designs are discussed and their respective differences, advantages, and disadvantages are noted. The use of statistical software to conduct analysis is also explored.

SOC 730. Sociological Explanation. 3 Hours.
Addresses the development and application of sociological theory to empirical research questions. Includes the logic of theory, strategies and steps in constructing theories, and strengths and limitations of theories.

SOC 740. Theories of Crime and Deviance. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 610. Graduate-level foundation of theory and new empirical research in sociological criminology. Focus is definitive statements from important theoretical traditions and critical empirical tests of these theories. Critiques of the theories or the research generated by them and attempts to translate theories into policy and action.

SOC 750. Systemic Inequalities. 3 Hours.
Examines inequalities that are built into societies’ legal, social, and economic structures, with an emphasis on intersecting processes and experiences of inequality. Focuses on analysis of classical and contemporary theories and research and applications to contemporary debates about inequality. These center on a variety of social spheres such as education, housing, labor markets, and the criminal justice system.

SOC 760. Space, Place, and Community. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 610. Sociological based ideas about space, place and community, discussing the theoretical contributions in these areas, assessing the methodological contributions to the discipline and linking them all to sub-areas within community, including urban, rural, medical and environmental sociology.

SOC 770. Sociology of Religion. 3 Hours.
This course examines factors that lead to conversion, apostasy, and religious commitment and explores what makes certain religious traditions more effective at gaining and retaining members. Focuses on analysis of classical and contemporary sociological theories of religion that provide a framework for understanding past, present, and future religious phenomena, including the role of religion in society.

SOC 780. Individual and Society. 3 Hours.
PR: SOC 610. Examines micro and macro-linkages and uncovers relationships between society and the perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals.

SOC 790. Teaching Practicum. 1-3 Hours.
PR: Consent. Supervised practice in college teaching of sociology.
SOC 793. Special Topics. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. Investigation of topics not covered in regularly scheduled courses.

SOC 795. Independent Study. 1-9 Hours.
Faculty supervised study of topics not available through regular course offerings.

SOC 797. Research. 1-9 Hours.
PR: Consent. Research activities leading to thesis, problem report, research paper or equivalent scholarly project, or a dissertation. (Grading will be S/U).

SOC 798. Dissertation. 1-6 Hours.
PR: Consent. This is an optional course for programs that wish to provide formal supervision during the writing of student reports (698), or dissertations (798). Grading is normal.