

Social Sciences, MSS

Department: History Department; Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology Department

College: College of Humanities and Social Sciences; College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Overview

About This Degree

The master of social science is an applied, interdisciplinary degree in social sciences administered by the history, political science, and sociology programs. Students apply to and take half of their coursework in one of the primary departments. Of the remaining courses, half must be in a secondary department, and the remainder can either be in a third department, or can consist of a cluster of courses from various departments decided upon by the student and his or her committee. This gives students the unique opportunity to earn a graduate degree in the social sciences while pursuing multiple academic interests. Students can take courses in areas such as history, political science, anthropology, psychology, applied economics, natural resources, and more.

Sociology focus: The portion of coursework in sociology provides a unique integrative and reinforcing combination of demographic, organizational, political-economic, and social-psychological orientations to the study of major domestic and global issues. The sociology program has a particular strength in environmental and natural resource sociology and is one of the top programs for these areas in the United States. The focus of the MSS degree in sociology has traditionally emphasized aspects of international rural and community development. The MSS degree offers multidisciplinary graduate training for candidates desiring in-depth applied understanding of human performance, human environments, and/or the structuring of social, political, and economic systems.

Career Options

Because this degree is so customizable, each student's career path will vary depending on their individual MSS program. This is an applied degree. Individual options and plans of study can be arranged in consultation with the student's supervisory committee. Recent MSS graduates often pursue applied positions in community development, though several have entered PhD programs to continue their education.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

Applicants for the MSS program preferably have a bachelor's degree in sociology or an equivalent social science. If students have a different major, but have taken core sociology classes in methods, theory, and statistics, and have adequate exposure to the discipline, they may still be considered.

Application Requirements:

- Complete the [online application](#)
- Pay the \$55 application fee
- Score at or above the 40th percentile on in the GRE
- Have a 3.0 or higher GPA on your last 60 semester or 90 quarter credits
- Provide transcripts of all college/university credits
- Provide three contacts for letters of recommendation
- Provide a letter of intent

International students have [additional admissions requirements](#).

Admissions Deadlines

The department has the following deadline:

- Fall semester – February 1
- Applications are accepted after this deadline, but students are less likely to be considered for financial assistance.

Master's Degree Plan Options

For the **MSS**, students must pursue the following option:

- The **Plan B** option requires the production of a paper or creative work of art and is expected to reflect equivalent scholarship standards as a thesis.

Financial Assistance

The Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology Department provides financial assistance to almost all of its graduate students, typically through research and teaching [assistantships](#). These funds are distributed based on student qualifications, performance, and interests.

A variety of additional funding opportunities are available, including [fellowships](#), [scholarships](#), [tuition awards](#), and [travel support](#). Additionally, students may be eligible for subsidized [health insurance](#) through qualifying assistantships.

Program Requirements

[Click here](#) to see course requirements for the **Master of Social Sciences**.

Contact

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Get Involved

Professional Organizations, Honor Societies, and Clubs

American Sociological Association: As the national organization for sociologists, ASA is well positioned to provide a unique set of services to its members and to promote the vitality, visibility, and diversity of the discipline. Working at the national and international levels, the association aims to articulate policy and implement programs likely to have the broadest possible impact for sociology now and in the future.

International Association for Society and Natural Resources: IASNR is an interdisciplinary professional association open to individuals who bring a variety of social science and natural science backgrounds to bear on research pertaining to the environment and natural resource issues.

Population Association of America: PAA is a nonprofit, scientific, professional organization established to promote the improvement, advancement, and progress of the human race through research of problems related to human population. PAA members include demographers, sociologists, economists, public health professionals, and other individuals interested in research and education in the population field.

Rural Sociological Society: RSS is a professional social science association that promotes the generation, application, and dissemination of sociological knowledge. The society seeks to enhance the quality of rural life, communities, and the environment. Membership in RSS includes persons professionally employed in the field of rural sociology, or those interested in the objectives of the society. RSS holds annual meetings in different locations every year.

Labs, Centers, Research

Institute for Social Science Research on Natural Resources: This is an interdisciplinary laboratory that promotes training in natural resource and environmental sociology. As with the Population Research Laboratory, research at the ISSRNR is coordinated with undergraduate and graduate degrees and is among the strongest programs at USU and in the country.

Population Research Laboratory: This lab is one of the oldest and best established demographic labs in the region. The PRL was organized to promote a balanced training program in demography at both undergraduate and graduate levels and to centralize and expand various research activities related to population. Faculty associated with the PRL conduct numerous research projects and support many students as they pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees with a specialization in demographics or population study.