Sociology, MS, PhD

Specialization(s): Demography (PhD); Environment and Community (PhD); States and Markets (PhD)
Department: Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology Department
College: College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Overview

About This Degree

The graduate program in sociology provides a unique combination of demographic, organizational, political-economic, and social-psychological aspects to the study of major domestic and global issues.

Graduate students have the opportunity to merge basic foundation coursework in social theory and research methods with more specialized training in selected specialty areas, which are environment and community, demography, and states and markets. 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. In this area, the department collaborates with faculty in natural resources, water engineering, and other physical and social sciences.

There is also a strong emphasis on teacher development, with a required teaching seminar for doctoral students, opportunities for students to teach their own courses, and strong teaching mentoring from faculty.

They must also choose from one of the remaining two specializations as their secondary area of study.

Career Options

Most PhD graduates in sociology obtain careers in academia and research. They are employed at universities or with government agencies. Most students who graduate with the MS continue on to complete a PhD, either at USU or at other universities. Other students interested in working in sociological methods, statistics, and demography can find employment with local, state, and federal agencies and also with nonprofit organizations.

What it takes

Admissions Requirements

Applicants for the MS 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.

Applicants for the PhD must have completed an MS in sociology or related discipline, with master's-level sociology core courses and a research-based master's thesis.

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 **MS**, students must pursue the following option:

- In the **Plan A** option, students complete graduate-level coursework and must write a thesis.

Financial Assistance

The 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 Science**.

Click here to see course requirements for the **Doctor of Philosophy**.

PhD Qualifying Exams:

Students must pass a written comprehensive exam in their third year in the program. The exam will be based on their particular specialization.

Contact

Advisor(s)

Douglas Jackson-Smith
Professor, Director of Graduate Studies for Sociology
Office: MAIN 216 H
Phone: (435) 797-0582
Email: doug.jackson-smith@usu.edu

Faculty

Leon Anderson, PhD, University of Texas - Austin
Department Head and Professor
Area: Inequality, crime and deviance, qualitative methods
Office: MAIN 216 B
Phone: (435) 797-9296
Email: leon.anderson@usu.edu

Amy Bailey, PhD, University of Washington
Assistant Professor
Area: Race and ethnicity, social mobility, migration
Office: MAIN 216 D
Phone: (435) 797-8635
Email: amy.bailey@usu.edu

Edna Berry, PhD, Ohio State University

Professor
Area: Demography, human ecology, methods
Office: MAIN 224 J
Phone: (435) 797-1245
Email: eddy.berry@usu.edu

Steve Daniels, PhD, Duke University
Professor
Area: Community development, conflict management
Office: MAIN 216 C
Phone: (435) 797-1255
Email: steve.daniels@usu.edu

Reed Geertsen, PhD, University of Utah
Professor
Area: Sociological theory, medical sociology
Office: MAIN 216 G
Phone: (435) 797-1246
Email: reed.geertsen@usu.edu

Christy Glass, PhD, Yale University
Associate Professor
Area: Social change
Office: MAIN 224 E
Phone: (435) 797-1258
Email: christy.glass@usu.edu

Douglas Jackson-Smith, PhD, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Professor, Director of Graduate Studies for Sociology
Area: Rural and environmental sociology, interdisciplinary studies
Office: MAIN 216 H
Phone: (435) 797-0582
Email: doug.jackson-smith@usu.edu

Richard Krannich, PhD, Pennsylvania State University
Professor
Area: Environmental, community, and rural sociology, research methods
Office: MAIN 216 B
Phone: (435) 797-1241
Email: richard.krannich@usu.edu

Peggy Petrzelka, PhD, Iowa State University
Associate Professor
Area: Rural and environmental sociology, public sociology
Office: MAIN 216 E
Phone: (435) 797-0981
Email: peggy.petrzelka@usu.edu

Eric Reither, PhD, University of Wisconsin – Madison
Associate Professor
Area: Demography, sociology of health
Office: MAIN 224 L
Phone: (435) 797-1217
Email: eric.reither@usu.edu

Michael Toney, PhD, Brown University
Professor

Area: Demography, ecology
Office: MAIN 224 K
Phone: (435) 797-1238
Email: mike.toney@usu.edu

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.

USU Sociology Graduate Students Association: All matriculated graduate students in the department are eligible for voluntary membership in the SGSA. In addition to fostering friendships with fellow graduate students, the SGSA elects representatives to several decision making bodies. The SGSA president is a member of the USU Graduate Student Senate. Also, the SGSA sends representatives to ad hoc departmental committees, and the SGSA president is a voting representative in Department Graduate Faculty and Graduate Program Executive Committee meetings. In recent years, the SGSA has provided input into revisions of graduate program rules, department policies and procedures, and graduate student funding policy.

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.