

MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF CRIMINOLOGY

GW's master of arts in criminology program emphasizes that crime and criminal justice need to be understood in social context, informed by strong research skills and theoretical rigor. Drawing on criminology's roots in sociology, racism and police abuse of force are as much the subject matter of our program as are classes in punishment and criminal law. Through research and coursework, students develop an understanding of how societies define, facilitate, or reduce crime and the social conditions that contribute to increasing or decreasing crime.

Criminology graduate students gain an excellent grounding in theory (criminology, deviance and control, and sociology), various quantitative and qualitative research methods, and criminal law. Students choose substantive classes from the Department of Sociology and in other fields of study at GW (e.g., forensic science (<https://forensicsciences.columbian.gwu.edu/>), transnational security (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/security-policy-studies-program-study/>), gender studies (<https://wgss.columbian.gwu.edu/>)) or through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area (<https://consortium.org/>). Criminology students may choose between writing a thesis and taking three elective courses or writing comprehensive exams and taking five elective courses, as part of the 36 credits in total required for the MA.

The Department's dedicated faculty works with a small graduate student body, allowing for strong professional relationships among both the faculty and graduate cohort. The program's Washington, DC location expands opportunities for internships, jobs, research, and exposure to a diverse, vibrant, and engaging city and metro area. Financial aid is offered to select academically competitive students. Salary-only graduate teaching assistantships are available to many of our students—graduate assistant experience is an additional source of professional expertise. While most students in the MA program have undergraduate backgrounds in criminology, criminal justice, or other social sciences, students from an array of fields, from finance to neuroscience, have been accepted as students and successfully completed their degrees.

Graduates of the MA in criminology program go on to work in or reform the criminal justice sector, take positions in research and social change work in the government, nonprofit, and business sectors, as well as pursue PhD and JD degrees.

Visit the program website (<https://sociology.columbian.gwu.edu/ma-criminology/>) for additional information.

ADMISSIONS

Admission deadlines: Fall – April 1 (February 1 for applicants applying for assistantships/fellowships)

Spring – October 1

Applications received after the above dates will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Standardized GRE not required.
test scores:

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or the PTE Academic is required of all applicants except those who hold a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from a college or university in the United States or from an institution located in a country in which English is the official language, provided English was the language of instruction.

Minimum scores for the program are:

- Academic IELTS: an overall band score of 6.0 with no individual score below 5.0; or

- TOEFL: 550 on paper-based or 80 on Internet-based; or

- PTE Academic: 53

Applicants who do not meet minimum English language requirements may be eligible for our full-time Applied English Language program.

Recommendations: (3) academic letters of recommendation required:

Prior academic records: Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended must be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission. If transcripts are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translation alone should be uploaded into your application.

Statement of purpose: In an essay of 250 – 500 words, state your purpose in undertaking graduate study in your chosen field. Include your academic objectives, research interests, and career plans. Also discuss your related qualifications, including collegiate, professional, and community activities, and any other substantial accomplishments not already mentioned on the application. If you are applying for an assistantship or fellowship, you should also describe any teaching or research experience you have had.

Writing Sample: The writing sample should be a minimum of 5 pages and typically not exceed 30 pages. It is very important you choose a sample that demonstrates your ability to write according to academic standards. Where possible, the substance and topic of the sample should overlap with the substance of the degree being sought and should reflect academic conventions, including citations and references.

International Please review International Applicant Information applicants only: (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants> (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/international-graduate-applicants/>)) carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:

Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Office of Graduate Studies
The George Washington University
801 22nd Street NW, Phillips Hall 107
Washington DC 20052

For additional information about the admissions process visit the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences Frequently Asked Questions (<https://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate-admissions-faq/>) page.

Contact:

askccas@gwu.edu
202-994-6210 (phone)

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

REQUIREMENTS

This program is a joint offering of the Department of Sociology and the Department of Forensic Sciences.

The following requirements must be fulfilled:

The general requirements stated under Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate Programs (<http://bulletin.gwu.edu/arts-sciences/#regulationsgraduatetext>).

Thesis option—36 credits, including 21 credits in required courses, 9 credits in elective courses, and 6 credits in thesis.

Non-thesis option—36 credits, including 21 credits in required courses, 15 credits in elective courses, and successful completion of a master’s comprehensive examination.

Code	Title	Credits
Required		
SOC 6230	Foundations of Research Methods	
SOC 6231	Quantitative Methods	
SOC 6232	Qualitative Methods	
SOC 6238	Development of Sociological Theory	
or SOC 6239	Contemporary Sociological Theory	
SOC 6257	Criminal Law	

SOC 6258 Deviance and Control

SOC 6259 Criminology

Electives

Thesis students take 9 credits in three graduate-level elective courses. Non-thesis students take 15 credits in five graduate-level elective courses. Electives must be relevant to the student’s program of study. Such courses might be in Sociology (SOC) (see preapproved elective options, below), in other departments (e.g., Forensic Science) and schools (e.g., Elliott School of International Affairs), or through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Students must have the permission of their advisor or the director of graduate studies to take courses outside of the department.

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

SOC 6295 Research (May be taken once for 3 credits toward degree requirements with the permission of their advisor or the director of graduate studies.)

Required for thesis students:

SOC 6999 Thesis Research (Taken for 3 credits in each of the final two semesters for a total of 6 credits. The permission of the advisor or the director of graduate studies is required.)

Required for non-thesis students:

Successful completion of a master’s comprehensive examination.