Criminology, PhD

The PhD program in criminology provides students with comprehensive training in criminological theory, research methods, and data analysis. The program also promotes advanced understanding of substantive issues related to criminology, including government policy and the justice system by providing students with well-rounded experiences as teachers, scholars, and researchers through rigorous interdisciplinary coursework, research training, and teaching opportunities. Paramount to the goals of the program is the formulation of critical thinking skills and the application of evidence-based reasoning and analytics to contemporary criminological issues.

The doctoral program has a research emphasis and primarily prepares criminologists for positions at colleges and universities or research positions in academic, private, and government institutions. For a summary of where the department's recent graduates have found employment, view Recent Student Placement on the Department of Sociology and Criminology website.

Graduate students work closely with faculty on collaborative research as well as developing independent research programs. In addition to valuable research experiences, students also can obtain substantial training and experience in undergraduate teaching, including online courses. The department training program includes an orientation workshop for new teaching assistants; a credited teaching seminar, SOC:7010 Teaching Sociology, for advanced graduate students; courses on instruction; and an opportunity for these graduate students to design and teach their own courses under the mentorship of faculty.

Learning Outcomes

The graduate program in the Department of Sociology and Criminology develops professionals who are qualified to conduct original research in the field of sociology and criminology and serve the discipline and larger community through teaching and/or other applications of sociological and criminological knowledge. The program’s specific learning outcomes are outlined below.

Goals and Outcomes

- Develop the expertise to conduct original research in sociology and criminology that is publishable in scholarly outlets.
- Develop a professional skillset in research methodology commonly used in the social sciences, particularly sociology and criminology.
- Develop a professional skillset in social science theories pertaining to sociology and criminology.
- Develop professional expertise in substantive sociological and criminological research areas, which at a minimum includes graduate-level competence in both a major and minor area of research.
- Develop scholarly writing and communication skills.
- Serve the discipline and broader community as sociologists and criminologists.
- Be prepared to teach in the field of sociology and/or criminology.
- Understand the goals, practices, and standards of research and applied professionals associated with the discipline of sociology and/or criminology. This includes developing a firm grasp of the principles of ethical research.