SOCIOLoGY, MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN DIGITAL SOCIOLoGY

Program goals

The purpose of the M.S. in Sociology with a concentration in digital sociology is to teach students to analyze digitally native data through the lens of social justice. The program aims to prepare graduates to shape emerging local, national and global conversations about big data, privacy, algorithms, inequality and social movements. The sociology department believes in the importance of developing new ways of doing sociology that are both public and critical. The program brings together a cross-disciplinary course sequence in methods, theory, big data analysis, data visualization, social network analysis, digital sociology, public sociology and digital social problems, culminating in two practicums. Students create meaningful projects from the beginning of the program, building a digital portfolio exhibiting their proficiency in applying sociological theory, methodology and critical analysis skills to the digital world.

Learning outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate a mastery of the key concepts, including diversity and inequality, developed by classical and modern sociological theorists.
2. Students will organize and integrate information into a cohesive overview of current knowledge and demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate the meaning, value and contribution of published literature in the field.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to design and implement an appropriate collection and analysis of data, which is a critical response to theory and current literature in the field of sociology.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to draw reasoned conclusions based on qualitative and/or quantitative evidence relevant to the discipline of sociology.
5. Students will demonstrate the ability to present their work as a cohesive artifact to their relevant publics.

VCU Graduate Bulletin, VCU Graduate School and general academic policies and regulations for all graduate students in all graduate programs

The VCU Graduate Bulletin website documents the official admission and academic rules and regulations that govern graduate education for all graduate programs at the university. These policies are established by the graduate faculty of the university through their elected representatives to the University Graduate Council.

It is the responsibility of all graduate students, both on- and off-campus, to be familiar with the VCU Graduate Bulletin as well as the Graduate School website and academic regulations in individual school and department publications and on program websites. However, in all cases, the official policies and procedures of the University Graduate Council, as published on the VCU Graduate Bulletin and Graduate School websites, take precedence over individual program policies and guidelines.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on academic regulations for graduate students.

Degree candidacy requirements

A graduate student admitted to a program or concentration requiring a final research project, work of art, thesis or dissertation, must qualify for continuing master’s or doctoral status according to the degree candidacy requirements of the student’s graduate program. Admission to degree candidacy, if applicable, is a formal statement by the graduate student’s faculty regarding the student’s academic achievements and the student’s readiness to proceed to the final research phase of the degree program.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following degree candidacy policy as published in the VCU Graduate Bulletin for complete information and instructions.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on degree candidacy requirements.

Graduation requirements

As graduate students approach the end of their academic programs and the final semester of matriculation, they must make formal application to graduate. No degrees will be conferred until the application to graduate has been finalized.

Graduate students and program directors should refer to the following graduation requirements as published in the Graduate Bulletin for a complete list of instructions and a graduation checklist.

Visit the academic regulations section for additional information on graduation requirements.

Apply online at graduate.admissions.vcu.edu (http://www.graduate.admissions.vcu.edu).

Admission requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Semester(s) of entry:</th>
<th>Deadline dates:</th>
<th>Test requirements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.S.</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Jul 1</td>
<td>GRE General</td>
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</table>

In addition to the general admission requirements of the VCU Graduate School (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/graduate/study/admission-graduate-study/admission-requirements), the following requirements represent the minimum acceptable standards for admission.

Preference is given to students who have a substantial background in sociology, such as an undergraduate major or minor or 18 or more college-level credit hours in sociology. Students with an undergraduate or graduate degree in a closely related field will also receive consideration for admission.

Degree requirements

In addition to general VCU Graduate School graduation requirements (http://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regis/grad/graduation-info), the following requirements apply:

1. Credit hour requirements: Students in the M.S. in Sociology program are required to earn a minimum of 36 graduate-level credit hours beyond the baccalaureate. At least one-half of the credit hours presented for graduation must be at the 600 level or higher.
2. Other requirements: Students in the online digital sociology concentration area typically fulfill the M.S. program requirements
through the completion of two three-credit practicum projects in SOCY 699. These projects should demonstrate their theoretical and methodological mastery of the subject area. Full-time students should take the practicum requirement during the fall and spring semesters of their second year in the program. The final product is a research project that contributes to the student's goals and meets the standards for publication in the sociology department's online journal. Practicum projects must relate to at least three of the four substantive areas in the concentration: professional digital practice, sociological analysis of digital use, digital data analysis and critical digital sociology.

**Required core courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 502</td>
<td>Contemporary Sociological Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY/STAT 508</td>
<td>Introduction to Social Statistics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 601</td>
<td>Sociological Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 602</td>
<td>Applications of Sociological Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 699</td>
<td>Seminar in Sociological Practice</td>
<td>6</td>
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**Digital sociology concentration courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 525</td>
<td>Digital Social Problems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 616</td>
<td>Digital Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 656</td>
<td>Social Network Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 673</td>
<td>Public Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCY 676</td>
<td>Digital Data for the Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elective (with approval of the graduate program director) 3

**Total Hours** 36

**Total graduate credit hours required (minimum) 36**

**Graduate program director**

Tara M. Stamm, Ph.D.
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Phone: (804) 828-9432

**Program website:** sociology.vcu.edu (http://www.sociology.vcu.edu)