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. This concentration, which may be completed fully online, 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.

Student learning outcomes

Sociology core 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; 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.

Digital sociology concentration-specific outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to use digital tools as part of sociological practice.
2. Students will analyze naturally occuring digital data for social research.

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 today. (https://www.vcu.edu/admissions/apply/graduate/)

Admission requirements

Degree:	Semester(s) of entry:	Deadline dates:	Test requirements:
M.S.	Fall	Jun 1	

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 (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/academic-regs/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 and presentation in various sociological publics. 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.

Course	Title	Hours
Required core courses		
SOCY 502	Contemporary Sociological Theory	3
SOCY/STAT 508	Introduction to Social Statistics	3
SOCY 601	Sociological Research Methods	3
SOCY 602	Applications of Sociological Research Methods	3
SOCY 699	Seminar in Sociological Practice (course may be repeated; six credits required for degree)	6
Digital sociology concentration courses		
SOCY 616	Digital Sociology	3
SOCY 673	Public Sociology	3
SOCY 676	Digital Research Methods and Design	3
SOCY 677	Digital Data Visualization and Analysis	3
Electives (with approval of the graduate program director)		6
Total Hours		**36**

The minimum number of graduate credit hours required for this degree is 36.

The department offers opportunities for qualified undergraduate students to earn both an undergraduate and graduate degree in a minimum of five years by completing approved graduate courses during the senior year of their undergraduate program. See the program page in the Undergraduate Bulletin (https://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/college-humanities-sciences/sociology-program/sociology-bs/#acceleratedbsandmstext) for details.

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