Master of Arts in Sociology

Program information

College	Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters		
Department or school	Sociology		
Degree abbreviation	M.A.	**CIP code**	45.1101
Program website	https://www.fau.edu/artsandletters/sociology/graduate/graduate/		

Our commitment to you

This Academic Learning Compact describes the program's mission, what students who complete the program will know and be able to do and how faculty assess that learning. Florida Atlantic University publishes a compact for every degree program and standalone certificate so students, families, employers and the community can see what each program commits to providing its graduates.

Program mission

The Sociology M.A. program provides students with advanced training in sociological theory, research methods, and subfields of their choosing through small seminars and close collaboration with faculty. Students obtain a broad foundation in sociological principles and concepts; improve their critical thinking, communication, and analytic skills; and prepare for doctoral study or careers in education, research, data analysis, public policy, nonprofits, social services, law, community organizing, and consulting.

Florida Atlantic University's mission

Florida Atlantic University is recognized as an opportunity university and R1 research institution dedicated to transforming lives through education, discovery, and innovation. We empower students to achieve economic mobility, advance knowledge that creates meaningful impact, and forge partnerships that drive prosperity and connection in the communities we serve.

How the program supports the university mission

The program supports the university's mission by educating students about major sociological theories, concepts, and research findings; strengthening their critical thinking, communication, and research skills; and preparing them for meaningful and rewarding careers in a variety of fields. It also equips students to scientifically investigate pressing social issues and apply their knowledge and skills to address real-world problems.

About the program

Students in the Sociology M.A. program study research design, qualitative and quantitative research methods, classical and contemporary sociological theories, and a wide range of subjects, including culture, political economy, poverty and inequality, race and gender, work and labor, health, and global social change. Through small seminars and close collaboration with faculty, students have opportunities to explore their intellectual interests and develop their own research projects. The program is a great fit for students who are intellectually curious, fascinated by human behavior, culture, and society, and interested in understanding social problems and making a difference in the world.

Student learning outcomes

By graduation, students will be able to demonstrate outcomes in three core areas: content/discipline knowledge and skills (Outcome 1), communication skills (Outcome 2) and critical thinking skills (Outcome 3). Faculty assess all three core outcomes every year.

A. Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills

What graduates will know and be able to do in their field

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

☒ **Declarative knowledge:** key vocabulary, history, theories and concepts of the field

☒ **Research skills:** finding, gathering, analyzing and reporting information the way the field does

☒ **Technical skills:** hands-on tools and methods of the field, such as software, instruments, lesson plans or business reports

Graduates will be able to identify, understand the fundamental arguments of, and distinguish among major theoretical traditions and theories in sociology

Graduates will also be able to understand basic sociological research methods and design research that produces valid knowledge, including the following specific skills:

-Conceptualizing and operationalizing concepts and variables
-Selecting research methods appropriate to research questions
-Developing appropriate sampling and case selection strategies
-Properly implementing data collection and analysis procedures
-Writing coherent and complete research proposals

How students show it

Final papers or term projects from graduate seminars.

Where it is assessed

SYA 6117, SYA 6126, SYA 6305, SYA 6315, SYA 6909, SYA 6971, SYD 6426, SYD 6517, SYD 6705, SYD 6934, SYO 6535, SYP 6035

B. Communication Skills

How graduates will share ideas and work with others

Areas this program addresses (check at least two)

- ☒ **Written communication:** clear, well-organized writing suited to the audience and purpose
- ☒ **Oral communication:** well-organized presentations that connect with an audience
- ☐ **Other forms of communication:** visual, media, performance or exhibit work
- ☒ **Team/collaborative communication:** contributing to group projects and shared goals

Graduates will be able to will be able to write thesis-driven papers with clear arguments, logical structure, and concise abstracts.

Graduates will also be able to effectively summarize and synthesize the arguments and findings made by the authors with whose work they are engaged.

How students show it

Final papers or term projects from graduate seminars.

Where it is assessed

SYA 6117, SYA 6126, SYA 6305, SYA 6315, SYA 6909, SYA 6971, SYD 6426, SYD 6517, SYD 6705, SYD 6934, SYO 6535, SYP 6035

C. Critical Thinking Skills

How graduates will analyze, create and solve problems

Areas this program addresses (check at least one)

- ☒ **Analytical skills:** weighing evidence, comparing ideas and judging arguments
- ☒ **Creative skills:** combining knowledge to create something new, such as a design, performance or proposal
- ☒ **Practical skills:** applying knowledge to real situations, such as a business proposal, lesson plan or grant

Graduates will be able to formulate empirical research questions that reflect basic sociological principles for explanatory and exploratory research.

How students show it

Final papers or term projects from graduate seminars.

Where it is assessed

SYA 6117, SYA 6126, SYA 6305, SYA 6315, SYA 6909, SYA 6971, SYD 6426, SYD 6517, SYD 6705, SYD 6934, SYO 6535, SYP 6035

D. Other Skills (optional)

Additional outcomes the program commits to, such as ethics, leadership or professional practice

N/A

How students show it

N/A

Where it is assessed

N/A

Assessment approaches

Every year, faculty review samples of student work to see how well students are meeting all three outcomes, and they use what they learn to improve the program.

Each year, a faculty committee evaluates anonymized final seminar papers and projects using a standardized rubric to assess students' knowledge of sociological theory, research competencies, critical thinking, and communication skills. Faculty analyze the results for first- and second-year students, comparing their performance against established benchmarks. The findings are used to identify areas of strength and weakness and guide improvements to the program.

Assessment methods may change over time.