

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

CREDIT UNIT STATEMENT

Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology

(Applicable to students admitted in the academic year 2025-26 and thereafter)

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology consists of four different categories of courses: (i) pre-sessional course, (ii) compulsory courses, (iii) elective courses, and (iv) capstone project, which are taught using distinctive learning modes. Students are required to successfully complete a total of 60 credits, including 3 compulsory courses (6 credits each) and 5 elective courses (6 credits each), plus a capstone project (12 credits).

Although we use 150 hours of student learning activity (including both contact hours of around 30-39 hours and all other forms of student learning activity) as the norm for a 6-credit course, and expect around 300 hours of student learning activity (including both contact hours of around 12 hours and all other forms of student learning activity) for a 12-credit course, the contact hours and output requirements for different types of courses vary according to the learning modes employed. The total study load of the Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology is around 1,500 hours, including 252-324 total contact hours.

1. Pre-sessional course (18 hours, non-credit bearing)

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology requires students whose previous degree is not in the discipline of sociology to complete a mandatory pre-sessional course prior to the commencement of the programme. Students whose first degree is in the discipline of Sociology may also elect to take this course on an optional basis. The pre-sessional, self-paced course takes around 18 hours, and will be delivered via the HKU Online Learning platform. It will equip students with basic knowledge in key areas of the discipline, including sociological theories and concepts (6 hours), social stratification (3 hours), culture and society (3 hours), globalization (3 hours) and social change (3 hours).

2. Compulsory courses (6 credits)

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology requires three compulsory courses. Teaching normally takes the form of a 3-hour lectures or a mixture of lectures, tutorials, workshops and seminars each week throughout a regular semester. Outputs normally come in a mix of essay, project and presentation, report, plus in-class test and/or examination, totaling around 4,000-6,000 words. (100% coursework).

3. Elective courses (6 credits)

The Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology requires five elective courses. Up to two of these courses can be advanced undergraduate courses that are cross-listed, chosen with approval from the Programme Director and the relevant course teacher. Teaching normally takes the form of a 3-hour lectures or a mixture of lectures, tutorials, workshops, and seminars each week throughout a regular semester. Outputs normally come in a mix of essay, project and presentation, reports, plus in-class test and/or examination, totaling around 4,000-6,000 words. (40-100% coursework, 0-60% exam).

4. Capstone project (12 credits)

The capstone project course is a component of the Master of Social Sciences in the field of Sociology. Students will conduct a research project under the guidance of a designated academic supervisor from the Department. Students have to develop a research topic and implement it over two semesters. Students will work in groups under an academic supervisor from the Department. Individual project will only be considered on an exceptional basis and with approval from the programme director. Students will be in regular consultation meetings with their academic supervisor (about 12 contact hours), and are expected to spend much of their time on research and writing. Assessment of the capstone project will be based on progress reports, oral presentation and a final written report of a reasonable length, about 8,000 words for individual project and around 12,000 – 18,000 words for group project, depending on actual group size. (100% coursework).

April 2024