



Universiteit Utrecht



MASTER DEGREE PROGRAMME FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

Sociology and Social Research

Realize your master plan.

Sociology and Social Research

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Have you ever bought anything over the Internet? Why do you trust the seller to send you the goods you've paid for? Imagine a society whose members didn't trust each other: would it function less well than one whose members did trust each other? Does trust lead to stable relationships, extended networks and ultimately to a wealthy and stable society? Does trust result automatically from the pursuit of individual interest? Or does it require specific institutional arrangements?

These are the sorts of questions that are addressed in the MSc programme Sociology and Social Research.

The programme provides you with the understanding, insight and skills that will equip you to undertake theoretically and methodologically advanced research in sociology, and the social sciences in general. It focuses on theoretical models, advanced research methods and the problem-guided application of theory and methods to selected fields.

The programme explores the issue involved in seeking to explain collective behaviour and macro-phenomena as the products of individual behaviour. Specifically, students learn to apply exchange theory, game theory, micro-economic theory and network theory in order to understand the

dynamics of interactions, networks, stratification and the development and nature of social institutions.

In each semester of the first year, students follow two courses that focus on theory, one course on methods and statistics, and one workshop. The workshops integrate the theoretical and statistical knowledge provided in the other courses, and students learn how to apply it to actual research questions. The second year continues with research training, research seminars, and the final Master's project. Students conclude the programme with a Master's thesis and a draft research article for international publication.

The thesis is supervised by Senior Fellows of the Inter-university Centre for Social Science Theory and Methodology Research (ICS).



Courses

1 Theory Construction and Model-building

This course focuses on the basic principles of theory construction, and the application of social science theory to the key problems of sociology (cohesion, inequality and rationalisation).

2 Applications of Social Theory I: Stratification and Households

This course aims to provide insight into the extensive research field of social stratification and households.

3 Advanced Statistics I: Multivariate Statistics

This course teaches students how to use multivariate statistics for the analysis of empirical data (using SPSS).

4 Integrative Practical I (Semester 1 teaching staff)

In this practical, the theoretical and methodological knowledge acquired in the courses on social theory (1, 2) will be integrated with the skills acquired during the course on Multivariate Statistics (3). (Last 4 weeks of Semester I)

5 Applications of Social Theory II: Networks and Social Capital

This course focuses on (1) how social networks bind individual action, and (2) the theory of social capital.

6 Field Orientation and Skills

This course, consisting of class meetings with student presentations, is designed to help students choose the field in which they wish to conduct research for their thesis.

7 Advanced Statistics II: Advanced MANOVA and Multivariate Regression, Multi-level Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling

8 Integrative Practical II (Semester 2 teaching staff)

In this practical, students complete two assignments related to theoretical courses during the semester and two from the fields of ongoing research projects. (Last 4 weeks of Semester II)

9 Electives

Students participate in an international summerschool (such as Essex, Ljubljana or Ann Arbor) and follow some selected courses that contribute usefully to the thesis project.

10 Research Seminar

The research seminar monitors the theoretical and empirical part of the thesis project.

11 Thesis Project

The thesis consists of a theoretical elaboration of a research problem, followed by an empirical test of some implications of the theory. The thesis may take the form of a publishable research paper.

This Master's programme in Sociology and Social Research has the status of 'Utrecht Prestige Master', a reflection of the fact that the research field to which it relates is one in which Utrecht University has a leading reputation worldwide. As a result, students have access to a network

of excellent researchers, and special funding, including a number of teaching and research assistantships, and grants and bursaries to enable students to participate in summer schools at other internationally acclaimed universities or research institutes.

During my studies at University College Utrecht (social sciences) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (economics), I became increasingly interested in the interdisciplinary field of social and economic networks. Instead of applying directly for a PhD position after obtaining my Master's degree, I decided to enter the Sociology and Social Research (SaSR) program in order to broaden my theoretical and statistical knowledge. After one year study at the Utrecht School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, I definitely do not regret my decision

Although the curriculum does not exclusively focus on one topic, such as network research, you have the opportunity to further specialize during your master thesis. The small classes, the international environment, and the approachability of the professors contribute to a truly academic atmosphere. Despite the fact you have to work hard, you have plenty of time to recover during the long summer and winter breaks.

Martijn Burger - student





Research masters

- Development and Socialisation in Childhood and Adolescence
- Educational Sciences: Learning in Interaction
- Methodology and Statistics of Behavioural and Social Sciences
- Migration, Ethnic Relations and Multiculturalism
- Social and Health Psychology
- Sociology and Social Research

The Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Utrecht University is one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious universities, a research university by nature. Our work is recognised internationally for its high quality and innovative approach. The Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences offers six research Master's degree programmes (MSc degree). The two year programmes (120 EC) are taught in English. Graduates from our programmes are prepared for a career in science, whether in academia, a research institute, a government organisation, a consultancy, an NGO or a private enterprise.

Eligibility

We admit graduates with a Bachelor's degree in the social or behavioural sciences, but students with a degree in other subjects may also be eligible. You should have an above-average academic record, including a strong research interest and a good command of English. Your undergraduate degree must also have included sufficient courses on research methods/statistics.

Our approach

Our programmes combine theory with methodology, and theory and practice come together in research workshops. Students write a thesis which may ultimately be submitted to a scholarly journal for publication.

The programmes feature small-group, personal teaching by highly experienced lecturers. Teaching groups allow an intensive exchange of ideas between lecturers and students.

Find out more?

For more information about the Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, student facilities, admissions and an application form, go to www.uu.nl/internationalmasters.

For more information on finance, go to www.uu.nl/financialassistance.

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Important links for more information

- www.uu.nl/internationalmasters
- www.uu.nl/masters