

## **FACT**

The program provides you with the tools to apply innovative techniques, current research, and community collaboration for justice system assessment and improvement. The curriculum includes classes, seminars, and workshops that impart specific skills in the areas of research, evaluation, data analysis, crime control and prevention, and organizational leadership.

“The Criminal Justice MA Program at Governors State University is practical and academically rigorous.” Kenneth O’Keefe, Criminal Justice Program Coordinator, Prairie State College.

“This program provides criminal justice professionals a great opportunity to give something back to their communities...It’s an excellent program.” Daniel Martin, Chief, New Lenox Police Department.

## **Leadership**

Criminal justice system innovation requires strong leadership. The GSU master’s program in Criminal Justice develops your abilities through a curriculum focusing on leadership theory and methods, self-assessment of leadership strengths, improvement in leadership skills, and planning and system change management.

## **Creative Problem-Solving**

The program provides you with alternative paradigms from which to assess the current system. Courses focus on problem-solving at various stages of the criminal justice process, with community collaboration as a foundation to problem-solving techniques. Networking with a diverse and experienced student body, Criminal Justice students come from diverse career and educational backgrounds. You will have ample opportunities to network and exchange ideas not provided in other educational settings.

## **Faculty**

GSU faculty has an extensive history of applied and theoretical experience in the criminal and juvenile justice fields, and has developed a broad array of networks to provide extensive hands-on experiences for our students. Faculty experience in leadership, community involvement, and research provides a rich, dynamic background to this innovative program.

## **For more information:**

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# Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

# College of Arts and Sciences

## Admissions Requirements and Recommended Preparation

In addition to the university admissions requirements, students applying to the Criminal Justice MA program must:

- have a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.75 (out of a possible 4.0);
- submit a letter of application explaining a statement of personal interest in pursuing a master's degree in criminal justice;
- submit three professional or academic letters of reference; and
- Completed applications must be submitted by May 15 for a fall, September 15 for spring, and January 15 for summer session admission.

Students seeking admission to the GSU Criminal Justice MA Program with a GPA lower than 2.75 may petition to the graduate program admissions committee for admission. As criminal justice is an interdisciplinary field of study, students may apply for the MA in Criminal Justice at Governors State University with a baccalaureate degree in any field from an accredited university. We recommend undergraduate courses in the following areas: criminal or juvenile justice, general social science or criminal justice research methods, introductory statistical analysis, survey courses in the criminal justice system, juvenile justice, policing, court and judicial systems, race and gender studies, policy issues, and policy analysis. Strongly recommended undergraduate courses include: theories of deviance and criminal or delinquent behavior, international criminal justice systems, restorative justice, community-based justice, research methods, criminology, the criminal justice system, and constitutional issues pertaining to the justice system. The Criminal Justice MA program will admit students conditionally if they do not meet the undergraduate prerequisites for the graduate core courses, pending successful completion of 12 Criminal Justice MA program credits.

## Admission to Candidacy

Criminal Justice MA students must apply for candidacy upon completion of 18 credit hours (9 of these credit hours must be in the required courses). Students applying for candidacy to graduate with the MA in Criminal Justice must meet the following requirements:

1. Complete a minimum of 9 hours in the required courses, except for the thesis, directed readings, or problem-solving practicum, with a grade of "B" or better in each course;
2. Complete a minimum of 9 hours of elective course work with a grade average of "B" or better;
3. Successfully demonstrate the skills and abilities outlined under "Statement of Expectations" above (students working on a remediation plan will not be admitted to candidacy); and
4. Establish a Graduate Committee.  
The Graduate Committee must include a project advisor (must be a member of the Criminal Justice Faculty) and two other graduate faculty members (one of which must be another Criminal Justice faculty member, a faculty member from a graduate program in a related discipline, or a faculty member from another graduate program at Governors State University). A Graduate Committee may contain one outside member, who must be a tenured or tenure-track professor from a graduate program at an accredited university. Students apply for candidacy by completing a "Criminal Justice MA Program Application for Candidacy" form, including a list of the student's courses and grades to date, intended graduation project option (thesis, directed readings, or practicum), and a statement from the student's advisor regarding the student's prospects for completion within 4 years. The Criminal Justice MA Program Coordinator will review the application and indicate whether the student is admitted to candidacy, if additional coursework is required, or if the student will not be admitted to candidacy. Students denied admission to candidacy may appeal this decision to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office.

## Graduation Requirement

Criminal Justice MA students must complete their approved graduate project (with a "Pass" grade) during the term they intend to graduate. They must demonstrate the expected behavioral qualities outlined under "Statement of Expectations" above, and they must not have an active remediation plan at the time of graduation. Students may opt for one of the three possible graduate projects:

1. Master's Thesis - a traditional master's thesis including thesis statement, theory and hypotheses, literature review, research design, data collection and analysis, findings, conclusions, limitations, and bibliography; or
2. Directed Readings - selection of two specific areas of interest (each completed in a separate 3-credit course), development of readings lists in each, a semester-long dialogue with the lead professor, and a 72-hour take-home examination based on the readings; students must complete two independent directed readings projects, with two different lead professors; or
3. Problem-Solving Practicum - the student selects an issue or problem in the community or workplace, organizes individuals and stakeholders, conducts a needs assessment, develops and implements solutions to the problem, measures the early outcomes of the problem-solving initiative, and prepares a practicum report explaining the development, implementation, and outcomes of the project.

In addition to the requirements for candidacy outlined above, Criminal Justice MA students must complete the following requirement in order to attain the Master's degree:

1. the remaining required courses, with a "B" or better;
2. the remaining elective courses such that the grade average for all elective courses is a "B" or better; and
3. their graduate project with a Pass ("P") grade, which is determined by a vote of the three-member graduate project committee.

## Curriculum

The Criminal Justice MA curriculum contains a core (required) sequence of classes comprising 16 credit hours covering a broad range of topics. This provides the leadership, analysis, and management foundation upon which students will build the remainder of their graduate studies. The curriculum provides for 15 elective credits, permitting students to specialize in particular areas of criminal or juvenile justice. Students complete the curriculum with a 6-credit graduation project - a two-course sequence involving a master's graduate research course and thesis, directed reading examinations in two subject areas, or a problem-solving practicum (implementation of a problem-solving initiative in the justice arena) covering two terms.

## Curriculum listing

Students must meet all university requirements for a master's degree.

## Required Courses (18 Hours)

- CJUS - 6020 Seminar in CJUS Grad. Studies (3)
- CJUS - 7010 CJUS Leadership: Theory and Practice (3)
- CJUS - 8100 Theories of Crime and Deviance (3)
- CJUS - 8200 Research Applications (3)
- CJUS - 8300 CJUS System Org. Finances & Admin. (3)
- CJUS - 8400 The Justice System and the Community (3)

## Electives (12 Hours)

Students must also complete 12 hours of electives in any of the following areas. Students may also take courses in the different areas with program coordinators' approval.

- Understanding Crime and Deviance
- Policy and Crime
- Admin., Planning, & System Change Management
- Digital Forensics and Computer Security

## Thesis/Directed Readings/Practicum (6 Hours)

Select one of the following options:

### A. Master's Thesis Option (6 Hours):

The Master's Thesis requires the student to develop an original research idea resulting in a research project entailing a description of the topic, issue, or problem, a literature review, development of a research hypothesis and questions, data collection and analysis, findings, conclusions, and limitations. The thesis must be approved by three faculty members, one of which is the thesis director. The students normally complete the thesis over two semesters; the first semester CJUS-8700 will complete a full proposal for the thesis, the second semester CJUS-8990 will complete the research project.

CJUS - 8700 Graduate Research (3)

CJUS - 8990 Graduate Thesis (3)

### B. Directed Readings Option (6 Hours)

The directed readings option requires the student to take two directed readings courses (each directed readings includes a 3-credit hour course). The first directed readings emphasizes content from the required core curriculum. The second directed reading emphasizes content from the elective curriculum.

CJUS - 8891 Directed Readings—Req. Curriculum (3)

CJUS - 8892 Directed Reading—Elec. Curriculum (3)

### C. Problem-Solving Practicum (6 Hours)

Working with a committee of three faculty members (the practicum director must be a Criminal Justice faculty member, and one member may be from another faculty), the student selects an issue or problem in the community or workplace, develops a plan to resolve or reduce the problem, and prepares a practicum report explaining the development, implementation, and outcomes of the project.

CJUS - 8880 Problem Solving Practicum (6)

### Total with Thesis/Project - 36 Hours

