Constitution
Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA)
Adopted April 22, 2015

Article I. Name
The name of this organization is hereby the Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA).

Article II. Purpose Statement
The purpose of this organization is to represent, advocate for, and meet the needs of Georgia State University’s Sociology graduate student body. The SGSA serves as the organizing mechanism for academic, social, professional, and community outreach opportunities for its members. Furthermore, the SGSA organizes all graduate student representation for the Georgia State University Sociology department.

Article III. Affiliation
The SGSA is affiliated with the Georgia State Sociology department. The SGSA serves the graduate students of the Georgia State Sociology department, and organizes graduate student representation for the department’s various committees as needed.

Article IV. Requirements for Membership
Membership is automatically granted to all graduate student currently enrolled in GSU’s Sociology Department. From time to time, members may be asked to make donations for special events, but the SGSA does not collect regular dues.

Article V. Officer Descriptions
SGSA officers, hereby termed “board members,” form an executive board in which authority and responsibility are horizontally shared. Board members meet to provide updates on their individual progress as well as to develop programs and initiatives cross-functionally. Board member positions include:

- President
- Vice-President
- Administrative Chair
- Communications Chair
- Community and Social Event Chair
- Academic Development Chair

Powers and duties of the board members shall include:

Board Responsibilities: As a group, board members attend and run SGSA meetings, sit on the Constitution Committee, attend the 1st and 2nd meetings of committees that report to them, develop surveys, plan retreats, communicate information about the committees to the other board members, hold board meetings before the term begins to plan for the semester, and train new board members.

President: Presides over meetings, works in tandem with other board members on projects as required, and represents concerns of the student body and SGSA to the Sociology Department
faculty and University at large as the Student/Faculty Liaison, responsible for running elections, has final OK on decisions, responsible for remaining board members, in charge of Student Representative committee in which case this position works with the Department Chair and the Graduate Advisor.

Vice-President: Acts as right hand to the President, fulfills the President’s role when the President is unable to fulfill the required duties and/or the position is vacated, and is responsible for the overseeing of committees. The Vice-President will be mentored by the President and will potentially take over as President during the following year.

Administrative Chair: Takes notes at SGSA meetings, keeps track of SGSA membership, maintains financial records and the SGSA budget, processes and submits all paperwork required for SGSA’s continued affiliation with GSU, maintains Google Drive, constructs surveys, sends information for the newsletter to the Communications Chair, oversees Budget Committee, and creates agenda for meetings.

Communications Chair: Creates and maintains SGSA website and social media entity, sends email notifications, sends newsletter, manages surveys, sends social media updates.

Community and Social Event Chair: Plans and facilitates social gatherings, coordinates volunteer and outreach opportunities for SGSA members in the Atlanta community. Oversees Social, Mentoring, and Recruitment committees.

Academic Development Chair: Works with Communications Chair to create and maintain an online directory of academic opportunities relevant to the Sociology graduate student body, including but not limited to scholarship/fellowship/funding resources, conference and proposal calls.

Article VI. Election of Officers
Board members will be elected the middle of the spring semester of the current year. They will train under the incumbent for the position to which they were elected until the end of the spring semester. The newly elected board will begin their service in the summer semester. During this time, the new board will plan for the upcoming year. The new board will lead the organization through the following fall and spring semesters, and train the next board to begin serving in the following summer. Each board will serve from the beginning of the summer semester until the end of the following spring semester (three semesters).

Elections will be held through a secure online survey, no later than the first Monday of spring break. The current President will send a call for candidates to all graduate students in the Georgia State University Sociology Department between February and early March. Candidates can be nominated or self-nominate. All nominated candidates will be required to submit a statement of intent, indicating the position of interest and the candidate’s capacity to fill that position, to the current board no later than seven days before the election date.

A list of candidates, the text of their statements of intent, and a link to the secure survey shall be sent to all graduate students in the Georgia State University Sociology Department so that the
entire graduate student body may vote online within a given time frame.

In the event of only one person running for an elected position, that person should be automatically inducted.

If a vacancy occurs during the normal term, a special election shall be called at the next meeting, with the same election process. Board members elected in this manner will still need to reapply for nomination for the next election. There is no limit to the number of terms a board member may serve.

In the event that a board position is not filled within two attempts to fill the position, the remaining board members and committees will absorb the required duties of that position for the remainder of that board term.

Appointing Representatives for Departmental Committees
The SGSA agrees to be the organization responsible for recruiting graduate representatives for the Sociology Department’s various faculty committees. All Sociology graduate students have the opportunity to submit their candidacy for a graduate student representative position. They will send their interest, along with a short biography, the name of the faculty committee they are interested in serving on, and an explanation of why they want to serve on that committee. Then SGSA will send a list out of the prospective student representatives, along with their biographies and explanations, and will ask all graduate students to vote on the candidates. The candidates with the most votes will be appointed as the graduate student representatives.

Article VII. Removal of Officers
If there is a request from a general member or a board member to remove an individual from their board position, the President and vice-President will discuss the validity of the request and present the issue to the full board. Violation of the Student Code of Conduct will automatically lead to a request for removal. If there is a request for removal, the individual in question can present evidence in their favor to the board. The decision of removal will be left for the remaining board members to vote upon. If the President or Vice-President is the individual in question, the Administrative Chair will step in to present the initial case. If a board member is removed, a special election will be held to fill that position.

Article VIII. Officer Transitions
Newly elected board members will be notified via email within one week after elections are closed. Immediately following the election of the incoming board, a retreat (as outlined below) should be scheduled for all existing and incoming board members to attend. It is suggested that this retreat occur before the incoming board members attend board meetings. During this retreat, a second retreat should be scheduled.

Pending acceptance to the position, newly elected board members are required to attend all board meetings and general meetings for the rest of the school year in order to learn their new roles. (Given that the scheduled time of general meetings may conflict with the incoming board’s availability, an incoming board member should meet with their incumbent to discuss what they missed if they cannot attend meetings.)
Transition of duties will occur primarily during the summer, in which existing board members will conclude their training of the incoming board members and officially hand over the reigns.

**Board Retreats**
First Retreat: Immediately following the election of the incoming board, a retreat should be scheduled for all existing and incoming board members to attend, in which existing members will discuss their positions and the backstage of SGSA. This retreat will be organized to the likings of the board members, lasting anywhere from a few hours to a full day. It is suggested that this retreat occur before the incoming board members attend board meetings. Before the conclusion of this retreat, a second retreat should be scheduled.

Second Retreat: The exiting and incoming board members must attend a 2-day retreat prior to the incoming board members taking over their newly elected positions. The incumbent board will plan this retreat. It is suggested that this retreat take place during the Maymester. Retreat activities and discussions will focus on team building and the transitioning of positions. The retreat will provide exiting and incoming board members with a chance to meet in a relaxed setting prior to the upcoming academic year. During this retreat, exiting board members will pass over SGSA materials, and both exiting and incoming board members will create a skeleton calendar for the upcoming school year.

**Article VIX. Advisor**
The sociology faculty member holding the title of Graduate Director shall serve as the Advisor for the SGSA.

**Article X. Meetings**
Board Meetings: Board meetings will be held at least once a month. If necessary, all officers hold the power to call a special meeting to address time sensitive issues with the whole board. Additionally, board members are required to meet/communicate prior to general meetings to organize and prepare for the meeting.

Committee Meetings: Each committee must hold an introductory meeting prior to planning their respective committee duties, in which their board representative must attend. Following meetings are to be organized at the discretion of the committee chairs. Each committee chair is responsible for taking notes during each committee meeting and communicating (via email, hardcopy, etc.) those notes to their board representative. Additionally, the committee chair will send a brief (2-4 sentence) update to their board representative to be included in the newsletter.

General Body Meetings: The President and other board members facilitate these meetings. The Administrative Chair is responsible for taking notes at these meetings, organizing them for institutional memory, and sending them to the Communications Chair for the newsletter. Meetings will be used as the main route of disseminating information to the general sociology graduate student body. They will go over committee updates, upcoming events, and will be utilized as a forum to get feedback and suggestions from graduate students. A reminder of this meeting, as well as an overview of what will be discussed at the meeting (e.g. skeleton agenda), should be sent out one day prior to general body meetings. The agenda for this meeting should be created based on items suggested by board members, committee chairs, and the general body. General body meetings should be held at least once a month. If necessary, the board has the
power to call emergency general body meetings to address time sensitive issues and/or to hold meetings more regularly.

**Article XI. Quorum**

Changes to SGSA’s operations and/or structure must be ratified by a majority of respondents to a secure online survey. For all other matters, attendance of a minimum of 3 members shall constitute a quorum for any meeting at which a vote is to be taken. The board has the right to solicit further input from members via email, online survey, or face-to-face meeting for up to three days before and three days after any meeting where a vote was taken. In the event that there is a time sensitive issue that needs to be voted on and there are not enough votes from the general body to make a decision, the board is allowed to make a formal decision for the organization (as long as the general body has been notified well in advance of the upcoming vote.)

**Article XII. Dues and Fees**

The SGSA will not collect dues or fees. The SGSA may collect donations if necessary. The SGSA will be funded by Student Activity fees through the College of Arts and Sciences fee council.

**Article XIII. Amendments**

The Constitution Committee is responsible for drafting and proposing amendments to the general body during a general body meeting. After the initial proposal, the proposed amendments will be sent to the graduate student body at large to enable access for those unable to attend the meeting. The board will then hold secure online voting for members to vote on the amendments. A minimum of 3 votes is needed to make a decision. In order for a constitutional amendment to be ratified, a majority of respondents must be in favor. In the event that there is a time sensitive issue that needs to be voted on and there are not enough votes from the general body to make a decision, the board is allowed to make a formal decision for the organization (as long as the general body has been notified well in advance of the upcoming vote.) Amendments and revisions to the constitution must be reviewed by Student Activities once adopted by the organization.

SGSA Constitution: The purpose of this Constitution is to communicate the guiding principles and processes for SGSA. It will include all of the required policies and procedures for SGSA. The constitution will also include several appendices to be edited annually:

A. Institutional Requirements
   a. Maintaining charter
   b. Applying for funding (and midyear funding)

B. Board-Specific Appendices
   a. How current board accomplished tasks (e.g. retreat, budget/application for funding, etc.
   b. Suggestions from current board for future boards

This constitution is a living document. It should be reviewed (and edited, if necessary) at the second retreat by the existing and incoming board, and reviewed again by the end of the first term of the incoming board. If any changes are to be made, the board must go through the entire amendment process.
Article XIV. Hazing Policy
“This organization prohibits its members, both individually and collectively from committing any acts of hazing as defined in the Student Code of Conduct at Georgia State University.” (The most revised version of the Code of Conduct can be found on the Dean of Students website http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/).

‘Hazing’ means any intentional, negligent or reckless action, activity or situation that endangers or is likely to endanger the physical health of an individual or causes an individual pain, embarrassment, ridicule or harassment as a condition or precondition of gaining acceptance, membership, office or other status in a student group, whether or not such group is formally recognized by the University and regardless of the individual’s willingness to participate. Actions and situations that may constitute hazing may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- forcing or requiring the drinking of alcohol or any other substance;
- forcing or requiring the consumption of food or any other substance;
- calisthenics (e.g., push-ups, sit-ups, jogging, runs);
- treeings (e.g., tying someone up and throwing food or other substances on them);
- paddle swats;
- line-ups (e.g., yelling at or harassing people in a formation);
- theft of any property;
- road trips (e.g., dropping someone off and leaving him/her to find his/her own way back);
- scavenger hunts;
- causing an individual to have fewer than six (6) continuous hours of sleep per night;
- conducting activities that do not allow adequate time for study (e.g., not allowing an individual to attend class, causing one to miss group projects);
- forcing or requiring partial or complete nudity at any time;
- performing acts of personal servitude for members (e.g., driving them to class, cleaning their individual rooms, serving meals, washing cars, shopping, laundry);
- forcing or requiring the violation of University policies, federal, state or local law.”

Article XV. Organization Agreement
The Sociology Graduate Student Association agrees to abide by the Georgia State University Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, agrees to abide by all Student Activities policies, to check the organization’s OrgSync account, mailbox, communicate via email upon request, update the organization’s records on OrgSync, attend a student organization orientation annually, and renew the organization by May 1st.

Article XVI. History of the Constitution
The following are dates of creation and revision:
Rev. 9.17.13
Rev. 11.20.14
Rev. 3.11.15
Rev. 4.22.15