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# INTRODUCTION

Information that is general and applies to all programs and graduate students is at the beginning of the handbook. Program specific material will be separate and all material necessary for your program will be under one heading. Therefore, if you are in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. Program, you can find everything you need under the joint program heading.

The Department of Sociology offers four separate degree programs: (1) The Dual degree B.A. /M.A. program; (2) The professional M.A. only program; (3) the Joint Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy (M.A. /Ph.D.) program; and (4) Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree program. All provide students with both a broad exposure to the discipline of sociology as well as in-depth study in special areas of expertise. The broad knowledge of sociology comes through course work in a variety of substantive areas, as well as through training in research methodologies, statistics, and theory. The faculty's interest and expertise lie in six specific areas: (1) Health; (2) Life Course; (3) Gender; (4) Sexuality; (5) Race and Ethnic Relations; and (6) Urban Studies. The Department's approach is to enable students to apply sociological principles in a real-world environment and to foster a close working relationship between faculty and graduate students.

The B.A. /M.A. Program is appropriate for qualified GSU undergraduate students who have completed two years as a Sociology major with a GPA of 3.5. Students will apply for the B.A. /M.A program in their junior year—making sure to take SOCI 3010, SOCI 3020, and SOCI 3030 by the end of their junior year. In their senior year, participants will take four graduate courses and apply for the graduate program. In their fifth year, participants will finish the M.A. coursework, and either do an internship or write a thesis.

The Terminal M.A. degree program is a professional program that trains recipients to become research leaders in applied sociology, or nonprofit and governmental programs. It highlights methods and data analysis while offering theoretical training in one or more areas of choice. Qualified students are accepted into the M.A. only program after completing a baccalaureate degree. Students enroll in the data analytic tract M.A. program if they are interested in a terminal, professional degree designed to qualify them for work in research, nonprofit organizations, or other social service analysis or decision-making field. This degree is not for the student thinking about getting a Ph.D.

The Joint M.A. /Ph.D. and Ph.D. only programs are the same programs except that those entering the joint program do not have an M.A. degree in sociology or a social science discipline, and those in the Ph.D. program enter with having already earned an M.A. degree in sociology or another similar social science discipline. The Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program is appropriate for qualified students who have completed a baccalaureate degree and whose goal is obtaining a Ph.D. Students in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program are awarded an M.A. and Ph.D. over the course of their studies. The Ph.D.-only program is appropriate for qualified students who have already successfully completed a master's degree in sociology or a closely related social science field (we accept students with graduate degrees in non-social science fields into our Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program).

### Career Planning

Students often arrive wanting to study one very specialized topic. However, attending graduate school should be a time of tremendous intellectual growth and expansion, an opportunity to stretch the mind in many new directions. Students are encouraged to learn about a wide range of sociological theories and methodologies and to become acquainted with several substantive areas in sociology. Doing so will make students better sociologists—and future professors. However, high levels of competence and expertise, and the ability to make research contributions that advance knowledge, require specialization (i.e., the intensive study of a specific area within the discipline of sociology). In general, students need to think about balancing broad sociological knowledge with specialization.

The need for specialization is greater at the Ph.D. level than the M.A. level, so Ph.D. students should think about the areas in which they plan to specialize (take their doctoral exams). To ensure preparation for the exams, students should elect to take the core area courses associated with their exam area as early as possible.

The need for a broader education is best for those that wish primarily to teach. Teaching at a two-year or four-year college means needing a very broad sociological knowledge base as you will be expected to teach a variety of sociology courses. For those interested in a research career or working at an R1 university, an extensive methodological education is necessary. The ability to answer a variety of research questions using a variety of methodologies will make you indispensable.

## **FACULTY, STAFF, AND DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNANCE**

The following position summaries describe the roles of various department members as they relate to graduate students.

### Director of Graduate Studies

Professor Katie Acosta is the Director of Graduate Studies. The departmental Director of Graduate Studies is the administrative director of the graduate program in sociology. They are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program, including such matters as recruitment; admissions; GRA/GTA/GLA awards, assignment, and evaluation; curriculum development; scheduling of graduate courses; administration of Ph.D. exams; liaison with the College Graduate Services Office; and program oversight.

They serve as chair of the Graduate Committee and primary advisor to the Chair of the Department on the graduate program.

### Academic Program Coordinator of Graduate Studies

The Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Sociology is [Brittany Galuskin](#). Students should contact the coordinator whenever questions arise concerning the academic transcripts.

### The Graduate Committee

The graduate program in sociology is supervised and guided by the departmental Graduate Committee, which is composed of four faculty members and the Director of Graduate Studies, who serves as the chairperson. This committee reviews major policy issues and makes recommendations to the departmental faculty who establish the curriculum and other major departmental policies governing the graduate program. The Graduate Committee also advises the Graduate Director, hears student petitions, reviews applications to the graduate program, and provides admission recommendations to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

### Chair of the Department

Professor Eric Wright is the Chair of the Department. The Chair of the Department supervises all aspects of the running of the department. The department chair is the final authority in every area of the graduate program.

### Director of Instruction

The Director of Instruction is Maura Bernales. The Director of Instruction supervises the teacher- training program for graduate students. The Director provides teaching resources, guidance, and support to faculty and students.

### Other Departmental Committees

The Department of Sociology has several other committees, including the Diversity and Community Outreach Committee, the Executive Committee, the Research Committee, the Teaching Committee, and the Undergraduate Committee. The Diversity and Community Outreach committee coordinates various volunteer and service activities and focuses on diversity issues. The Research Committee facilitates and supports departmental research. The Teaching Committee evaluates the performance of graduate instructors and supports graduate teaching assistants and instructors in the teaching of their courses. The Undergraduate Committee and the Director of Undergraduate Studies are responsible for running the undergraduate Sociology program.

A graduate student representative is included in all but the Executive and Program committees. The Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA) coordinates the selection of graduate student representatives for the various committees.

## **SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (SGSA)**

The central function of the [Sociology Graduate Student Association](#) is to increase graduate student participation in departmental business, announce social gatherings, and share ideas. Graduate student representatives actively involve themselves in departmental committees. These representatives then forward the information gathered from these meetings to the Graduate Student Listserv (Soci-Grad) or at SGSA meetings. The information provided from the representatives allows all graduate students to be aware and involved in departmental news and provide feedback and suggestions.

Additionally, the SGSA provides a forum without the presence of faculty or staff for students to discuss openly issues, needs, and wants that could improve students' educational experience, the department, and sociology program. Furthermore, to bolster an increase in synergy between graduate cohorts, the SGSA hosts events such as socials and movie analysis.

This group is only as good as its participants. It is highly encouraged for graduate students to attend meetings and SGSA events to help foster relationships with other students and the department in general, and to enhance your academic career at GSU. Meeting dates and times are emailed to all graduate students on the listserv. You may contact the SGSA by [email](#) or [Facebook](#). In addition, an [alumni network](#) is also available.

## **SOCIOLOGY FACULTY**

**KATIE ACOSTA** (Connecticut) Associate Professor

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Director of Social Justice Certification Program

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**ERIC WRIGHT** (Indiana University) Professor  
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**HEYING JENNY ZHAN** (Kansas) Associate Professor  
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**JUN ZHAO** (University of Georgia) Assistant Professor  
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## ADVISEMENT AND ADVISING

Either the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or the Academic program Coordinator in the Graduate Services office are responsible for most advisement of graduate students. Contact the Graduate service office if you are not seeing one of your courses or milestones populated in [DegreeWorks](#) or if you are blocked from enrolling into a course because of a prerequisite. For your first year as graduate students, the Director of Graduate Studies will assign you a faculty advisor who will advise you on course selections and general professional development.

For those in the B.A. /M.A. or Data Analysis M.A. only program the DGS can assist with finding internships and will assign you academic faculty advisor for two years. [The purpose of the Faculty Advisor](#) is to broadly mentor students on the expectations of the graduate program, guide them in learning more about their areas of interest, and help socialize them into the field of sociology.

Specific advisement on courses, timelines, and program requirements will be done by the Director of Graduate Studies and the office of graduate services. Although official approval of schedules is not required, it is recommended that all students discuss their registration plans with their faculty advisors. Students should also stay in contact with their faculty advisor for general mentoring within the discipline. When a student begins to formulate a topic for a thesis or dissertation, the student should ask a sociology graduate faculty to serve as the chair of that project, who will also serve as their Faculty Advisor. Find the mentor guidelines [here](#).

# GENERAL COURSEWORK-RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## Grades

In graduate courses, grades of A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C, F, I, IP, W, and WF will be given, and for SOCI 8999, 8980, 9001, and 9999 and certain other courses, the grades S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) will be used. These grades (S or U) will not be computed in the student's cumulative grade-point average but a minimum of 3 hours must be graded S.

A student must have a cumulative grade point average of B or better in order to receive a graduate degree. If a student's cumulative grade-point average falls below a B average or 3.0 GPA at the end of a semester, an academic warning will be issued from the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences. If at the end of the next twelve (12) semester hours of enrollment a 3.0 or better cumulative GPA is not achieved, the student will be dismissed from Georgia State.

A student must receive a grade of B or better in the required Core Courses. If a student receives a lower grade (B- or lower) in the required courses, the student must repeat the course the next time the course is offered to rectify the grade.

## Courses and Non-Course Hours

Students in the Joint and Ph.D. only programs must take SOCI 8000 in the fall semester of their first year. Students in the B.A./M.A. and M.A. only programs do not have to register for this course, but should plan on attending one or more of the topics that are of interest or as they pertain to the needs of the program.

Credits from courses or non-course hours taken in sociology at GSU can count toward either the M.A. degree or the Ph.D. degree. Under no circumstances can credits be counted toward both degrees. \*See joint program

Students in the Joint and Ph.D. only programs can take one (8000-level or higher) graduate course at the M.A.- level and one course at the Ph.D.-level from another GSU department/institute and count it as an elective with prior approval from the Director of Graduate Studies. Requests for approval should be made to the Director of Graduate Studies via email at least two weeks prior to the course start date.

SOCI 8970 (Directed Reading) is designed to enable a student to study a subject area in which the Department does not currently offer as a graduate course, or to study a special topic in greater depth than is dealt within an existing graduate course. A student may take no more than three credit hours in SOCI 8970 for each degree program. Enrollment in SOCI 8970 requires consent of the faculty member under whom the student desires to study. Students interested in taking a directed readings course must prearrange it with that faculty member prior to enrollment. The Graduate Director must approve all SOCI 8970 courses in advance.

# SOCIOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAMS

## DUAL DEGREE—B.A. /M.A. IN SOCIOLOGY

### M.A. in DATA ANALYTICS

The Dual B.A. /M.A. program is designed for the ambitious and talented undergraduate to complete a Master's degree in one year beyond the B.A. In order to take advantage of the time savings, undergraduates should make sure all undergraduate pre-requisites are completed by the end of their junior year. The dual degree program is a 31 credit hour degree program beyond the Bachelor's degree (25 credit hours of course work and 6 credit hours of non-course work) that is started in their undergraduate senior year. Participants will need to take SOCI 3010: Social Statistics, SOCI 3020: Research Methods, and SOCI 3030: Sociological Theory in their junior year at the latest. The B.A. /M.A. program consists of a Master's Core (A), Master's Electives (B), and Other Master's Requirements (C).

#### A. Master's Core Course Work (16 hours):

- SOCI 8010: Intermediate Social Statistics (3)
- SOCI 8020: Research Methodology (3)
- SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods (3)
- SOCI 9010: Advanced Social Statistics (4)
- SOCI 9020: Advanced Research Methodology (3)

#### B. Master's Elective Course Work (9 hours):

Substantive sociology courses or advanced data analysis courses as electives:

- SOCI 8030: Sociological Theory I (3)
- SOCI 8102: Life Course Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8156: Sexuality and Society (3)
- SOCI 8216: Gender and Society (3)
- SOCI 8212: Race & Ethnic Relations (3)
- SOCI 8226: Urban Sociology (3)
- SOCI 9230: Health & Illness (3)

Advanced Methods courses:

- SOCI 9050: Advanced Topics in Research Methods (3)
  - SOCI 8160: Domestic Field School (3)
  - GEOS 6520 Quantitative spatial analysis (4)
  - SOCI 8900: Applied Sociology and Evaluation Methods (3)
  - PMAP 8521: Evaluation Research: Design & Practice
  - PH 7711: Epidemiological Methods (3)\*
  - PH 8890: Special topics in Biostatistics (3)\*
  - EPRS 9570: Hierarchical Linear Modeling (3)\*
  - SOCI 8900/GERO 8700: Intervention Research Design (3)
- Any other Methods course with permission from the DGS and course instructor.

#### C. Other Master's Requirements (6 hours):

Choose a thesis or a non-thesis option. For the thesis option, you must register for 6 hours of SOCI 8999.

Thesis option

- SOCI 8999 Thesis Research (6)
- A thesis proposal, thesis, and oral defense.

Non-thesis option

- SOCI 8980: Internship (6)

### Thesis Concentration

An approved thesis is the best pathway for students who plan to go on to obtain a Ph.D. If this route is selected, you will need to start working on your proposal in the summer after your senior year. This thesis will be supervised and directed by a faculty committee, composed of a chair (who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology) and two additional faculty members (who must be on the Graduate Faculty). One member of the thesis committee may come from outside the Department of Sociology. The student in consultation with the faculty involved, although the Director of Graduate Studies officially approves the thesis committee and the Chair of the Department officially approves and appoints the thesis committee, chooses this committee. The required forms for selecting a thesis committee chair and a thesis committee are at the back of the handbook.

A student discusses a thesis topic and research ideas with first their chair and then the committee, then writes a thesis proposal and submits it to the thesis chair and then committee for approval. After it is approved, the student submits the study to IRB making sure to list their committee chair as the PI and adding them to the IRB signoff along with the department chair. Once the IRB has approved the project, the student conducts the research and prepares a written report of the results. After several drafts, the student is normally in a position to defend the thesis at a meeting of the thesis committee and other interested faculty. The chair and committee determine when a thesis is ready to be defended. The chair of the thesis committee must circulate an abstract of the thesis to the faculty at least one week prior to the defense. The entire thesis must also be made available to all interested faculty at least three days prior to the defense. The thesis committee is the sole judge of the adequacy of the thesis, and two-thirds of the committee must approve the thesis before it can be submitted for acceptance to the Graduate Services Office of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Thesis chair, committee members, and Department Chair must sign the Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form, located in the back of this handbook.

Effective time management is essential for the successful completion of a Master's thesis—especially for those in the B.A. /M.A. program. All faculty members have many demands on their time, including supervision of graduate student research. Evaluating a thesis draft is, and should be, a time-consuming process. Students must allow faculty at least two weeks to read and comment on a draft proposal or chapter. A completed thesis draft is likely to require even more time. Additionally, most students will need to submit multiple drafts for evaluation before scheduling a defense. Students should discuss their timeline with all committee members, so they can work around faculty travel or research commitments. The student is ultimately responsible for the timely completion of a Master's thesis. Students must work within committee members' time constraints to make steady progress on their own research.

The thesis is the final requirement for the M.A. degree and as such will not be accepted by the Graduate Office until all other requirements for the M.A. are satisfied. A thesis may be submitted for final approval no earlier than the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate and no later than the thesis deadline. In addition, the student must have registered for graduation two semesters in advance of graduating.

### Formatting and Submitting a Master's Thesis

Theses in sociology must use the American Sociological Review format for reference citations. Students should consult a current issue of the American Sociological Review for guidance on citing sources in the text and in the reference section. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the final version of the thesis complies with all the style, format, and other requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences as detailed on the Graduate Services Office webpage. Please note that the student, rather than the advisor, is solely responsible for conformity to the current College guidelines.

A preliminary copy of your final thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Services Office in advance

of their published deadline. You need not have defended your thesis before having it reviewed by the appropriate Graduate Services representative.

The final approved thesis must be submitted electronically to the Graduate Services Office by their posted deadline. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE, as the date is set as late as possible to allow time for graduation clearance. To allow time for any final revisions, the oral defense should be scheduled no later than two weeks prior to the deadline. Final approval by the Graduate Services Office signifies official approval and eligibility to graduate.

The student must arrange with the Graduate Services Office for bound copies of the approved theses, [Thesis Binding Form](#). The cost of binding is the responsibility of the student. At present, this cost amounts to \$12.50 per copy for a master's thesis and \$10.50 per copy for a doctoral dissertation. All students are required to provide one bound copy of their thesis for the Sociology Department's library and one bound copy to their thesis chair.

### Internship Concentration

Students will take two separate internships of their choice in a field in which they wish to work. The internships can involve either program evaluation or working for an organization. All students should write and submit an internship capstone paper to the Director of Graduate Studies.

The internship paper is the final requirement for the M.A. degree and as such, the Graduate Office will not accept the non-thesis form until all other requirements for the M.A. are satisfied. The non-thesis form may be submitted for final approval no earlier than the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate and no later than the non-thesis deadline. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE, as the date is set as late as possible to allow time for graduation clearance. There is a non-thesis form located on the [graduate services office \(A&S\) webpage](#) that must be signed by both the student and the graduate director. In addition, the student must have registered for graduation two semesters in advance of graduating. Final approval by the Graduate Services Office signifies official approval and eligibility to graduate.

**DUAL DEGREE B.A./M.A.  
RECOMMENDED COURSE OF STUDY**

YEAR 1		FALL	SPRING
Courses	ENGL 1101 MATH 1101 (or higher) SOCI 1101 Area D Lab Science Area B Elective		ENGL 1102 SOCI 1160 POLS 1101 Area D Lab Science Area B elective

YEAR 2		FALL	SPRING
Courses	HIST 2110 Area F Language Area C Elective SOCI Elective 3000/4000 Area E Social Science Elective		SOCI 3020 SOIC 3201 Area H Elective Area H Elective SOCI Elective 3000/4000

YEAR 3		FALL	SPRING
Courses	SOCI 3010 Area F Elective SOCI Elective 3000/4000 SOCI Elective 3000/4000 Area H Elective		SOCI 3020 SOCI 3201 Area H Elective Area H Elective SOCI Elective 3000/4000

YEAR 4		FALL	SPRING
Courses	SOCI 8010 SOCI 8020 SOCI 3030 Area H Elective Area H Elective		SOCI 9010 SOCI Elective 8000 SOCI Elective 3000/4000 SOCI Elective 3000/4000 Area H Elective

YEAR 5 (Thesis)		FALL	SPRING
Courses	SOCI 8342 SOCI Elective 8000 SOCI 8999		SOCI 9020 SOCI Elective 8000 SOCI 8999 <b>Defend Thesis</b>

YEAR 5 (Internship)		FALL	SPRING
Courses	SOCI 8342 SOCI Elective 8000 SOCI 8980		SOCI 9020 SOCI Elective 8000 SOCI 8980

## **M.A. IN SOCIOLOGY – without continuing to the Ph.D.**

### **Professional Specialization in Data Analysis**

The Data Analysis M.A. program is designed to train students to become research leaders in applied sociology, or non-profit and governmental programs. It highlights methods and data analysis while offering theoretical training in one or more areas of choice.

Qualified students are accepted into the M.A. Program after completing a baccalaureate degree. Students should enroll in the data analysis M.A. program if they are interested in a terminal, professional degree designed to qualify them for work in research, non-profit organizations, or other social service analysis or decision-making field. This degree is not appropriate for students who ultimately seek to earn a PhD.

Minimum 31 credit hour degree program: 25 credit hours of course work and 6 credit hours of non-course work (internship and capstone paper). If a student needs to take SOCI 3010: Social Statistics, SOCI 3020: Research Methods, and/or SOCI 3030: Sociological Theory (or their equivalents, as determined by the Director of Graduate Studies), these courses must be taken as non-credit prerequisites for SOCI 8010, SOCI 8020, and SOCI 8030. The M.A.-Only program consists of a Master's Core (A), Master's Electives (B), and Other Master's Requirements (C).

#### A. Master's Core Course Work (16 hours):

- SOCI 8010: Intermediate Social Statistics (3)
- SOCI 8020: Research Methodology (3)
- SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods (3)
- SOCI 9010: Advanced Social Statistics (4)
- SOCI 9020: Advanced Research Methodology (3)

#### B. Master's Elective Course Work (9 hours):

Substantive sociology courses or advanced data analysis courses as electives:

- SOCI 8102: Life Course Sociology(3)
- SOCI 8116: Sociology of Aging (3)
- SOCI 8122: Death, Dying, and Loss (3)
- SOCI 8156: Sexuality and Society(3)
- SOCI 8216: Gender and Society (3)
- SOCI 8212: Race & Ethnic Relations (3)
- SOCI 8226: Urban Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8238: Critical Race Theory (3)
- SOCI 9002: Writing for Publication (3)
- SOCI 9230: Sociology of Health & Illness (3)

One elective should be in an advanced data analysis or data collection method:

- SW 8320: Grant Writing (3)
- CNHP 8100: Grant Writing (3)
- CSD 9930: Grant Writing in Social and Behavioral Sciences (3)
- PMAP 8251: Grant Writing and Management (3)
- STAT 8800: Statistical Consulting (3)
- SOCI 9050: Advanced Topics in Research Methods (3)
- SOCI 8160: Domestic Field School (3)
- SOCI 8900: Applied Sociology and Evaluation Methods (3)
- SOCI 8900/GERO 8700: Intervention Research Design (3)

One additional substantive or methodological elective of your choice from offerings either #1 or #2.  
\*Any other methods course may be taken with permission from the graduate director and course instructor.

C. Other Master's Requirements (6 hours):

SOCI 8980: Internship (3)

Students will take an internship of their choice in a field in which they wish to work. The internship can either involve program evaluation or working for the organization. All students should write and submit an internship capstone paper to the Director of Graduate Studies. See the attached Internship capstone paper rubric.

### Sociology Internship Final Report

The internship capstone paper in Sociology is a three-part report of no more than 10-pages, double spaced, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. It should be well written (free of grammar errors and/or underdeveloped thoughts). The report should be an honest reflection of your internship experience. Please do not feel pressured to glamorize your experience or to make it appear meaningful if in fact it was not. Even the most disappointing internship experiences can offer opportunities for growth and learning. Consider how your internship experience (complete with its ups and downs) has shaped your thinking as a Sociologist.

#### Part I Organization Overview:

Students should begin their report by describing the organization or agency where they are conducting their internship. For this section, you should rely upon the organization's literature and website as well as on your observations. If you are working with a large organization that runs many different programs, write your organization overview about the program with which you are most familiar. Please be sure that your organization overview addresses the following questions.

- What are the goals of the organization?
- What is its target population?
- What values inform the organization's key goals?

Part I should be no more than 2 pages long.

#### Part II Reflection:

In the second part of the report, students will reflect on their participation in the organization. Students should explain the weekly tasks they were responsible for completing. Students should also reflect on their growth through the internship experience. Please be sure to address the following questions.

- What skills did you learn while conducting your internship?
- In what ways has your internship experience influenced your views about nonprofit or community work.
- In what ways has your internship experience affected your views about your own capabilities and career plans?

Part II should be 3-4 pages long.

#### Part III Links between Sociological Perspectives and Your Internship Experience:

In the third part of the report, students should think about the concepts and theories they learned in their sociology courses in relation to their internship experience. In this section, students should draw connections between their learning of Sociology through a traditional classroom setting and their learning of Sociology through an applied experience. Please be sure to address the following questions.

- Did your internship experience allow you to use some of the skills you previously acquired in your academic course work? For instance, were you able to practice using certain methods in supporting the organization's goals?
- Discuss what your internship experience taught you about a sociological concept or phenomenon which you had previously studied. For example, your internship may have provided you with new insights into issues pertaining to gender differences, social class or racial discrimination, or police discretion. Be sure that you explain the concept fully in sociological terms and that you discuss the specific ways in which your internship has helped you understand it more clearly.

Part III should be 4-5 pages long.

**Internship Capstone Papers are due no later than the last day of in-person classes for the semester.**

Students with post-Bachelor's degree course work from other accredited institutions may petition to transfer up to 6 hours (2 courses) of course work towards the M.A. degree following petition to, and approval by, the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. With the approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies, up to 6 hours (2 courses) of advanced data analysis may be taken in a related field or fields with approval of the graduate director. A program checklist is available at the end of this handbook for use in tracking progress.

The capstone paper (non-thesis) is the final requirement for the M.A. degree and as such, the Graduate Office will not accept the non-thesis form until all other requirements for the M.A. are satisfied. The capstone non-thesis form needs to be submitted for final approval no earlier than the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate and no later than the non-thesis deadline. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE, as the date is set as late as possible to allow time for graduation clearance. There is a non-thesis form located on the [College of Arts and Sciences webpage](#) that must be signed by both the student and the graduate director. All deadlines can be [found on this link](#). In addition, the student must have registered for graduation two semesters in advance of graduating. Final approval by the Graduate Services Office signifies official approval and eligibility to graduate.

## M.A. - ONLY

### RECOMMENDED COURSE OF STUDY

YEAR 1	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
<b>Courses</b>	SOCI 8010: Intermediate Statistics SOCI 8020: Research Methods Elective 1	SOCI 9010: Multivariate Data Analysis Elective 2 Elective 3	None
<b>Other Requirements</b>	None	Begin Internship Search	Secure Internship Site

YEAR 2	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
<b>Courses</b>	SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods SOCI 8980 Internship	SOCI 9020: Adv. Research Methods SOCI 8980 Internship	
<b>Other Requirements</b>	Start Internship Work Start Capstone Paper	Complete Internship Work Complete Capstone Paper	

## **JOINT M.A. /PH.D. IN SOCIOLOGY**

Minimum of ninety semester credit hours (52 semester hours of course work (25 at M.A. and 27 at Ph.D.) and at least 38 semester hours of non-course work (6 at M.A. and 32 at Ph.D.). Consisting of a Master's Core (A), Master's Electives (B), Other Master's Requirements (C), Doctoral Core (D), Doctoral Specialty areas (E.), Doctoral Electives (F), and Other Doctoral Requirements (G). A program checklist is available at the end of this handbook for use in tracking progress through the program.

**A. Master's Core Required Course Work (16 hours):**

- SOCI 8000 Proseminar in Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8010 Intermediate Sociological Statistics (3)
- SOCI 8020 Research Methodology (3)
- SOCI 8030 Sociological Theory I (3)
- SOCI 9010 Multivariate Sociological Data Analysis (4)

**B. Master's Elective Course Work (9 hours):**

Students are required to take three elective courses in the sociology department. These courses provide students with an opportunity to take substantive courses of interest. Students with post-Bachelor's degree course work from other accredited institutions may petition to transfer up to 6 hours (2 courses) of course work towards the M.A. degree following petition to, and approval by, the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. With the approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies, up to 3 hours (1 course) may be taken in a related field or fields and/or up to 3 hours of SOCI 8970, Directed Readings may be taken.

**C. Other Master's Requirements (Minimum of 6 hours):**

- SOCI 8999 Thesis Research (Minimum of 6)
- A thesis proposal, thesis, and oral defense.

**D. Doctoral Core Required Course Work (9 hours):**

- SOCI 8342 Qualitative Methods in Sociology (3)
- SOCI 9020 Advanced Research Methodology (3)
- SOCI 9030 Sociological Theory II (3)

**E. Area of Specialization Coursework (6 hours):**

To prepare for doctoral exams in one or more areas, students should select two of the following area core courses as part of their elective options.

- SOCI 8102 Life Course Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8156 Sexuality and Society (3)
- SOCI 8216 Gender and Society (3)
- SOCI 8212 Race & Ethnic Relations (3)
- SOCI 8226 Urban Sociology (3)
- SOCI 9230 Sociology of Health & Illness (3)

**F. Doctoral Elective Course Work (12 hours):**

Doctoral elective courses are offered on a rotating schedule. With the approval of the departmental Director of Graduate Studies, up to 3 hours (one course) may be taken in a related field and/or up to 3 hours of SOCI 8970: Directed Readings may be taken.

**G. Other Doctoral Requirements (Minimum of 32 hours):**

- SOCI 9999 Dissertation Research (Minimum of 32)
- Written doctoral exams, a dissertation proposal, dissertation, and oral defense.

### Additional Notes

Students entering the Joint M.A./Ph.D. program with a Master's degree in Sociology are required to have earned an A- or higher in courses equivalent to our Department's M.A.-level courses in statistics (SOCL 8010), methodology (SOCL 8020), and theory (SOCL 8030) prior to taking the Ph.D.-level required courses in those areas. If they have not taken these courses or if they did not earn an A- or higher in them, they will have to take them.

A maximum of six (6) semester hours of approved post-baccalaureate graduate credit from other accredited institutions may be accepted toward a master's degree program. Students with post-master's credit from other institutions of higher learning may transfer up to nine (9) credit hours of work towards the Ph.D. degree following petition to, and recommendation by, the Director of Graduate Studies in Sociology and approval by the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences. Students can only petition for course credit for courses that have not led to another degree. To petition for transfer credit, the student must complete the [required form](#).

All funded students in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program will be appointed to GTAB (teaching associate) at the completion of their M.A.-level coursework. All funded students in the Ph.D. only program will be appointed to GTAB at the completion of 18 hours of coursework at GSU. Students who are appointed, as a GTAB must successfully complete SOCL 9000: Teaching Sociology and SOCL 9001: Teaching Internship prior to their appointment and as a condition of continued funding. The hours accumulated while taking SOCL 9001: Teaching Internship cannot count toward graduation.

M.A. students should register for SOCL 8999 (Thesis Research) when working on their thesis proposal or thesis research. They are required to register for at least six credit hours SOCL 8999, either during one semester or over several semesters. Ph.D. students should register for SOCL 9999 (Dissertation Research) when they are working on their dissertation proposal or dissertation research. They are required to register for at least 32 credit hours of SOCL 9999. SOCL 8999/9999 are not traditional courses; they are called non-course hours. They simply mean the student is registered and working under the supervision of a thesis or dissertation advisor.

**JOINT M.A. /PH.D. IN SOCIOLOGY**  
**RECOMMENDED COURSE OF STUDY**  
**FULL-TIME STATUS**

YEAR 1		FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8000: Pro-seminar SOCI 8010: Intermediate Statistics SOCI 8020: Research Methods M.A. Elective 1	SOCI 8030: Theory I SOCI 9010: Multivariate Data Analysis M.A. Elective 2	None	
Non-Course Credits	None	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*	
Other Requirements	None	Thesis Proposal Work Form Thesis Committee	Submit Thesis Proposal	

YEAR 2		FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	M.A. Elective 3	None	SOCI 9000: Teaching Sociology	
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999* (12 hours)	SOCI 8999*	
Other Requirements	Thesis Work	M.A. Coursework Complete Defend Thesis	None	

YEAR 3		FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods SOCI 9030: Theory II SOCI 9001: Teaching Internship Ph.D. Elective 1	SOCI 9020: Adv. Research Methods Ph.D. Elective 2 Ph.D. Elective 3	None	
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	
Other Requirements	None	Form Dissertation Committee	Dissertation Proposal Work	

YEAR 4		FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	Ph.D. Elective 4	None	None	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Begin Portfolio Dissertation Proposal Work	Ph.D. Coursework Complete Portfolio Defend Dissertation Proposal	Complete Portfolio Dissertation Work	

YEAR 5		FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	None	
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	
Other Requirements	Dissertation Work	Defend Dissertation		

\*As Needed

**JOINT M.A. /PH.D. IN SOCIOLOGY**  
**RECOMMENDED COURSE OF STUDY**  
**PART-TIME STATUS**

YEAR 1	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8000: Pro-seminar SOCI 8010: Intermediate Statistics	SOCI 8030: Theory I SOCI 9010: Multivariate Data Analysis	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*
Other Requirements	None	None	None

YEAR 2	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8020: Research Methods M.A. Elective 1	M.A. Elective 2 M.A. Elective 3	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*
Other Requirements	None	Thesis Proposal Work Form Thesis Committee	M.A. Coursework Complete Submit Thesis Proposal

YEAR 3	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods SOCI 9030: Theory II	SOCI 9020: Adv. Research Methods Ph.D. Elective 1	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 8999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Thesis Work	Defend Thesis	None

YEAR 4	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	Ph.D. Elective 2 Ph.D. Elective 3	Ph.D. Elective 4 Ph.D. Elective 5	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	None	Ph.D. Coursework Complete Form Dissertation Committee	Dissertation Proposal Work

YEAR 5	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Declare Specialty Areas Prepare for Doctoral Exams Dissertation Proposal Work	Doctoral Exams Defend Dissertation Proposal	Dissertation Work

YEAR 6	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	
Other Requirements	Dissertation Work	Defend Dissertation	

\*As Needed

### [Master's Thesis](#)

An approved thesis is required of all students in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program. This thesis will be supervised and directed by a faculty committee, composed of a chair (who must be a member of the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology) and two additional faculty members (who must be on the Graduate Faculty). One member of the thesis committee may come from outside the Department of Sociology. The student in consultation with the faculty involved, although the Director of Graduate Studies officially approves the thesis committee and the Chair of the Department officially approves and appoints the thesis committee, chooses this committee. The required forms for selecting a thesis committee chair and a thesis committee [are available here](#).

A student discusses a thesis topic and research ideas with first their chair and then the committee, then writes a thesis proposal and submits it to the thesis chair and then committee for approval. After it is approved, the student submits the study to IRB making sure to list their committee chair as the PI and adding them to the IRB signoff along with the department chair. Once the IRB has approved the project, the student conducts the research and prepares a written report of the results. After several drafts, the student is normally in a position to defend the thesis at a meeting of the thesis committee and other interested faculty. The chair and committee determine when a thesis is ready to be defended. The chair of the thesis committee must circulate an abstract of the thesis to the faculty at least one week prior to the defense. The entire thesis must also be made available to all interested faculty at least three days prior to the defense. The thesis committee is the sole judge of the adequacy of the thesis, and two-thirds of the committee must approve the thesis before it can be submitted for acceptance to the Graduate Services Office of the College of Arts and Sciences. Thesis chair, committee members, and Department Chair must sign the Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form.

Effective time management is essential for the successful completion of a Master's thesis. In the second year, second semester, students will only register for thesis hours. They will spend that semester writing e their thesis. Students must allow faculty at least two weeks to read and comment on a draft proposal or chapter. A completed thesis draft is likely to require even more time. Additionally, most students will need to submit multiple drafts for evaluation before scheduling a defense. Students should discuss their timeline with all committee members, so they can work around faculty commitments. The student is ultimately responsible for the timely completion of a Master's thesis.

The thesis is the final requirement for the M.A. degree and as such will not be accepted by the Graduate Office until all other requirements for the M.A. are satisfied. A thesis may be submitted for final approval no earlier than the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate and no later than the thesis deadline. In addition, the student must have registered for graduation two semesters in advance of graduating.

### [Formatting and submitting a Master's Thesis](#)

Theses in sociology must use the American Sociological Review format for reference citations. Students should consult a current issue of the American Sociological Review for guidance on citing sources in the text and in the reference section. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the final version of the thesis complies with all the style, format, and other requirements of the [College of Arts and Sciences as detailed on the Graduate Services Office webpage](#). Please note that the student, rather than the advisor, is solely responsible for conformity to the current College guidelines.

A preliminary copy of your final thesis should be submitted to the Graduate Services Office in advance of their published deadline. You need not have defended your thesis before having it reviewed by the appropriate Graduate Services representative.

The final approved thesis must be [submitted electronically to the Graduate Services Office](#) by their posted deadline. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS DEADLINE, as the date is set as late as possible to allow time for graduation clearance. To allow time for any final revisions, the oral defense should be scheduled no later than two weeks prior to the deadline. Final approval by the Graduate Services Office signifies official approval and eligibility to graduate.

The student must arrange with the Graduate Services Office for bound copies of the approved theses, [Thesis Binding Form](#). The cost of binding is the responsibility of the student. At present, this cost amounts to \$12.50 per copy for a master's thesis and \$10.50 per copy for a doctoral dissertation. All students are required to provide one bound copy of their thesis for the Sociology Department's library and one bound copy to their thesis chair.

## PH.D. - ONLY IN SOCIOLOGY

This degree is appropriate only for students who have already earned a Master's degree in Sociology or related field. Minimum of sixty-three semester credit hours (31 semester hours of course work and at least 32 semester hours of non-course work) beyond the Master's degree, consisting of a Doctoral Core (A), Doctoral Specialty Core (B.), Doctoral Electives (C), and Other Doctoral Requirements (D).

### A. Doctoral Core Required Course Work (16 hours):

- SOCI 8000 Proseminar in Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8342 Qualitative Methods in Sociology (3)
- SOCI 9010 Multivariate Sociological Data Analysis (4)
- SOCI 9020 Advanced Research Methodology (3)
- SOCI 9030 Sociological Theory II (3)

NOTE: If a student needs to take SOCI 8010 Intermediate Social Statistics, SOCI 8020 Research Methods, and/or SOCI 8030 Sociological Theory I (or their equivalents, as determined by the Director of Graduate Studies), these courses must be taken as non-credit prerequisites for SOCI 9010, SOCI 9020, and SOCI 9030. This generally pertains to students admitted to the Ph.D. program who have an M.A. degree in a non-sociology program. However, students who earned less than an A in their M.A. program on equivalent courses will have to repeat the equivalent prerequisite here.

### B. Area of Specialization Coursework (6 hours)

To prepare for doctoral exams in one or more areas, students might prepare by selecting two of the following area core courses as part of their elective options.

- SOCI 8102 Life Course Sociology (3)
- SOCI 8156 Sexuality and Society (3)
- SOCI 8216 Gender and Society (3)
- SOCI 8212 Race & Ethnic Relations (3)
- SOCI 8226 Urban Sociology (3)
- SOCI 9230 Health & Illness (3)

### C. Doctoral Elective Course Work (9 hours):

With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, up to 3 hours (one course) in a related field and/or up to 3 hours of SOCI 8970: Directed Readings.

### D. Other Doctoral Requirements (Minimum of 32 hours):

- SOCI 9999 Dissertation Research (Minimum of 32)
- Written doctoral exams, a dissertation proposal, a dissertation, and oral defense

### Prior Coursework and Transfer of Credit

Students entering the Ph.D.-Only program with a Master's degree in Sociology are required to have earned an A- or higher in courses equivalent to our Department's M.A.-level courses in statistics (SOCI 8010), methodology (SOCI 8020), and theory (SOCI 8030) prior to taking the Ph.D.-level required courses in those areas. If they have not taken these courses or if they did not earn an A- or higher in them, they will have to take them.

A maximum of six semester hours of approved post-baccalaureate graduate credit from other accredited institutions may be accepted toward a Master's degree program. Students with post-master's credit from other institutions of higher learning may transfer up to nine (9) credit hours of work towards the Ph.D. degree following petition to, and recommendation by, the Director of Graduate Studies and approval by the Office of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. Students can only petition for course credit for courses that have not led to another degree.

### Course of Study

The Department expects students to make regular and timely progress in the program. The student, with the assistance of the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the Director of Graduate Studies, and their Faculty Advisor should plan a program of study with the following course of study in mind. Student progress is evaluated against this course of study within the annual review process, described below.

Funded students must follow this course of study or their funding is at risk of being rescinded.

## PH.D. - ONLY

### RECOMMENDED COURSE OF STUDY

### FULL-TIME STATUS

YEAR 1	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8000: Pro-seminar SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods SOCI 9030: Theory II Elective 1	SOCI 9010: Multivariate Data Analysis SOCI 9020: Adv. Research Methods Elective 2	None
Non-Course Credits	None	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	None	None	None

YEAR 2	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	Elective 3 Elective 4	Elective 5	SOCI 9000: Teaching Sociology
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Form Dissertation Committee	Dissertation Proposal Work	Ph.D. Coursework Complete Dissertation Proposal Work

YEAR 3	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 9001: Teaching Internship	None	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Begin Portfolio Dissertation Proposal Work	Portfolio Defend Dissertation Proposal	Complete Portfolio Dissertation Work

YEAR 4	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	
Other Requirements	Dissertation Work	Defend Dissertation	

\*As Needed

**PH.D. - ONLY**  
**RECOMMENDED COURSE OF**  
**STUDY**  
**PART-TIME STATUS**

YEAR 1	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 8000: Pro-seminar SOCI 8342: Qualitative Methods	SOCI 9010: Multivariate Data Analysis SOCI 9020: Adv. Research Methods	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	None	None	None

YEAR 2	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	SOCI 9030: Theory II Elective 1	Elective 2 Elective 3	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	None	None	None

YEAR 3	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	Elective 4	Elective 5	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Form Dissertation Committee	Dissertation Proposal Work	Ph.D. Coursework Complete Dissertation Proposal Work

YEAR 4	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	None
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*
Other Requirements	Declare Specialty Areas Prepare for Doctoral Exams	Doctoral Exams Defend Dissertation Proposal	Dissertation Work

YEAR 5	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
Courses	None	None	
Non-Course Credits	SOCI 9999*	SOCI 9999*	
Other Requirements	Dissertation Work	Defend Dissertation	

\*As Needed

## [PhD Portfolios](#)

There are three portfolio elements required of each student: the creation of the reading list, a substantive literature review, and a complete analytical paper.

### **1. Creation of Reading List**

Students will identify two of the department's six areas of concentration (Gender, Health, Life Course, Race and Ethnic Relations, Sexuality, and Urban Studies), and in consultation with their committee, will craft an individualized reading list that reflects the intersection of these two substantive areas and relates to the student's unique research interests. The construction of the reading lists is expected to be done primarily by the student themselves. They can receive feedback from their committee, and can collaborate with other graduate students, but the ultimate reading list should be uniquely related to their specific research interests and is expected to be comprised of roughly 40-60 sources. Before the student writes their substantive literature review, the reading list must be approved by the student's committee. Students can begin drafting their reading list at any point in their program and are encouraged to do so before completing their PhD coursework, in order to facilitate completing the portfolio within one year of completing coursework.

2. A substantive literature review that draws upon the agreed upon reading list and which demonstrates mastery of the literature. This element is expected to be no more than 12 pages excluding references (with standard fonts and margins). The student completing the literature review will respond to a tailored question determined in consultation with the portfolio evaluation committee.

3. A complete analytical paper that is deemed, in the judgment of the evaluation committee, to be ready to be submitted for peer review to a journal. This element is expected to be about 25 pages excluding references (with standard fonts and margins). It should include all parts of a typical research paper including an introduction, literature review, methods section, results and conclusions/discussion. The analytic paper may include data used in an MA thesis (or other research project) but the analytic paper must go well beyond the student's MA thesis. The analytic paper should demonstrate the student's growth and fluency in their chosen areas of specialization.

No one other than the student should contribute to the writing of either of the required elements in the portfolio. When submitting the final analytical paper, the student should include the previously approved reading list, and their previously submitted literature review to facilitate grading for the evaluation committee.

After the student's portfolio has been evaluated by their portfolio committee, faculty can collaborate with the student to coauthor an article for publication.

### **Formation and Structure of PhD Portfolio Committees:**

Students individually select the primary faculty member of their portfolio evaluation committee. This faculty member must have full graduate faculty status and agree to serve in this role. Then, a secondary member of the student's portfolio evaluation committee will be appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). Students are encouraged to provide a list of potential secondary faculty members, but the DGS will decide who will serve in this role. The secondary faculty member need not be an expert in the substantive areas being evaluated. Faculty with associate graduate faculty status are eligible to serve as the secondary faculty member. Non-tenure track faculty members can serve in the role of a secondary faculty member, but they can also refuse to serve.

### **Evaluation of the Portfolio:**

Both members of the evaluation committee must agree that each element of the portfolio is passable.

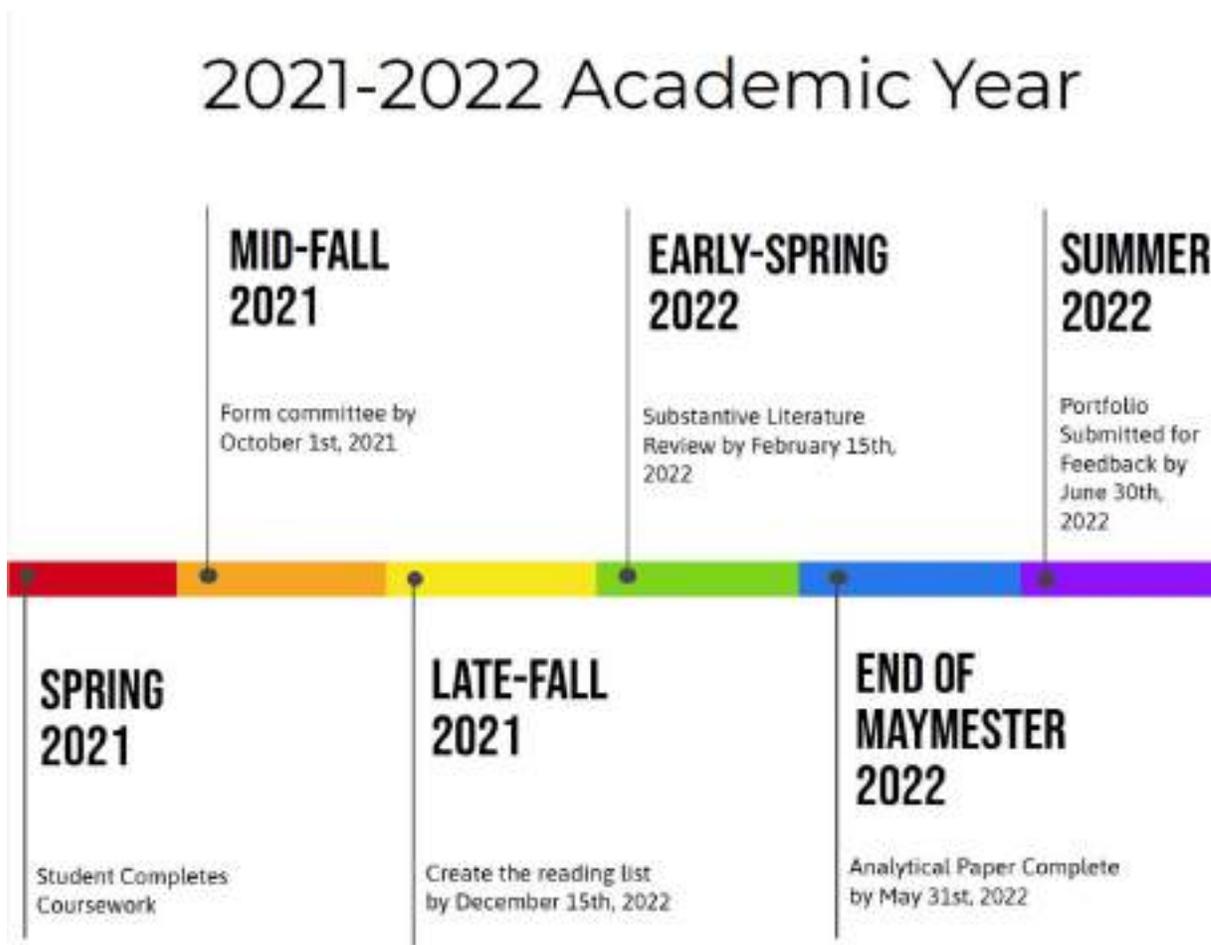
In the event of disputes regarding whether a student's portfolio should pass, the Director of Graduate Studies will be asked to do an independent evaluation of the work or assign a third faculty member to perform this independent evaluation. If the director of graduate studies is a member of the given portfolio committee where there is not agreement on whether the student should pass, the department chair will be called in to assess the student's work, or to assign a third faculty member to do so. If both the DGS and the department chair are on the evaluation committee, the DGS will assign a third faculty member to

If both elements are deemed to be passable, the student successfully completes the portfolio. If both of the elements are deemed to be outstanding, the student will receive a "high pass" for the overall portfolio. The portfolio should be deemed successfully completed if the student demonstrates strong analytic writing, a degree of breadth and depth in their chosen substantive areas, and the ability to situate their research theoretically and empirically within the existing body of published work in their chosen substantive areas.

The DGS is responsible to check that the written elements submitted for each student's portfolio has not been plagiarized. If the DGS is a member of the evaluation committee, then the Department Chair will evaluate the

elements for plagiarism. If the DGS and the department chair or both on the committee, then the Director of Instruction will evaluate the elements for plagiarism.

[For more information, see the suggested Portfolio timeline](#) [and](#) frequently asked questions documents.



**1) Who can choose whether to take a comprehensive exam or complete a portfolio?**

All students who were accepted into our graduate program before January 2021 (and who have already passed comprehensive exams) will have the option to either take two comprehensive exams or complete a portfolio. All students who begin the graduate program in Academic Year 2021-2022 or later must complete a portfolio.

**2) What is the cutoff date by when students need to decide if they are doing a Portfolio versus the exams?**

If you intend to complete the comprehensive exam you should declare your intention to take the exams in December when the DGS sends out an email asking for this information.

All PhD students should declare their intention to complete a Portfolio in their last semester of course work. You can formally declare your intentions to complete a portfolio earlier than your last semester of course work, however, you should note that declaring your intentions to complete a Portfolio

suggests that you are ready to begin actively working on that Portfolio. You will have one year (12 months) from declaration to submission of the Portfolio.

All students must declare their intention to complete a Portfolio or the comprehensive exams no later than one semester after completing academic coursework in order to be making adequate progress toward degree.

**3) If a student fails the traditional comprehensive exams, can they then do a portfolio instead?**

No. Once a student has chosen a path they must continue on that path until they have succeeded.

**4. Is there a specific deadline by which students must be done with the portfolio?**

Because the portfolio is an individually tailored milestone, there is not a universal deadline by which you must be done. However, all students must complete the portfolio no more than one-year (12 months) from the date of declaring their intention. Students should set deadlines with their portfolio advisor for completing each of the 4 major steps. It is up to you and your advisor to ensure that you adhere to deadlines at each major step to ensure an on time final submission.

**5. Can students defend their dissertation proposals before completing their portfolio?**

No. The portfolio is designed to be inherently a stepping-stone for students to bridge the work completed at the Master's level with the dissertation work. The portfolio must be submitted and successfully completed before a dissertation proposal defense.

**6. How much above and beyond the work done for a Master's degree does the portfolio need to be?**

If you completed a Master's thesis at Georgia State or another institution you may take one major finding from the MA thesis and expand the theoretical/analytic analysis of the thesis for your portfolio article. Your portfolio submission should be substantively different from the Master's thesis and the portfolio committee will determine your successful completion in part based on how much your work has grown since completing the thesis.

The literature review portion of the portfolio should go beyond the literature include in the MA thesis in that the portfolio should explore the overlap in two clearly defined areas of Sociological research. Further the portfolio should identify gaps/limitations in these how these two substantive sociological areas approach the research. Further, the final portfolio article submission should demonstrate a critical analysis of these literature and the student's fluency in the subareas.

[Doctoral Specialty Examinations](#)

Joint M.A. /Ph.D. and Ph.D.-Only students who entered the program prior to 2021 can choose to take comprehensive exams in lieu of submitting a portfolio. The purpose of the Doctoral Exam is to determine whether a student has a sound understanding of sociology in the two chosen specialty areas. Successful performance will require students to go beyond their course work; they should expand their knowledge by reviewing books and articles on theories, methods, and research findings from specially prepared reading lists. The exam requires answers to questions designed to test the student's knowledge of the field as well as organizing, synthesizing, and writing abilities.

The exam is a three day (72 hours) take home exam in which students answer one question in each chosen area (2 questions total). Each exam area will consist of 2-3 questions indicating the diverse field of research in that area. Students select one question in each area to answer. The department's specialty areas are: (1) Health, (2) Life Course, (3) Gender, (4) Sexuality, (5) Race, and (6) Urban Studies. Exams are held once per year during spring break.

The exam is distributed on a Monday morning and is due the Thursday morning of the same week. Each separate answer is limited to 10-12 pages, including footnotes/endnotes, but not including references. Although a specific number of references are not required, all answers must include enough referenced material to sufficiently answer each question and demonstrate a sound understanding of each specialty.

Students must take the exam at the first opportunity after they successfully complete all doctoral course work. Although students can opt to take the exam in their last semester of coursework. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the core specialty courses in their two specialty areas prior to taking the exam, but this is not required (core specialty courses are not “core”). Students in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program cannot take the Doctoral Exams until they have successfully defended their M.A. Thesis, completed all requirements for the M.A. degree, and completed all of the core coursework for the Ph.D. degree.

Students are responsible for informing the Director of Graduate Studies by email of their intention to take the examination and the two specialty areas in which they will take the exam; notification must occur by December 1 prior to the spring break exam. Failure to take the examination on the agreed date will constitute an exam failure and the following spring will constitute their one other opportunity to take it.

Students are urged to study diligently for these exams. Reading lists are available from the departmental Director of Graduate Studies. Register for SOCI 9999 during the semester preparing for and taking the doctoral exams.

The Chair of the Department will appoint two faculty to each of the six areas to form an exam committee. Each exam area’s task will be to construct and grade the Doctoral Examination for their area. They will use the syllabi from the prior three years of the core specialty area course, as well as, the seminal readings included on the reading list to create the exam. The exam committees will be formed in the fall; they will attend one meeting in early December with all spring exam takers to answer questions about the exams. They will construct the exam in early spring and send to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Director will construct the individual exams and send to the examinees by 9AM on the Monday of spring break. Examinees will return the completed exam to the Graduate Director by 9AM on Thursday morning of spring break. The Graduate Director will make the exams anonymous and send them out to the exam committees the Monday following spring break. The exam committees will have 5 weeks to grade the exams. A numerical scale governs the decision to “high pass,” “pass,” or “conditional fail” or “fail”. In the event of a failure on the exam, the student must wait to retake the Doctoral Exam at the next offering. A student will be dismissed from the program upon a second failure of the Doctoral Examination, though the student can petition the graduate committee in writing for a third attempt.

While the exam committee is responsible for the grades, the Director of Graduate Studies will assess the exams for plagiarism using turnitin.com. This is a tool used to make the assessment easier—but it is just a tool and it has its own flaws. All exams will be thoroughly vetted by the DGS regardless of the originality score provided by turnitin.com. If the DGS determines that plagiarism has occurred, the Director of Instruction will be asked to confirm the finding. If it is confirmed, paperwork will be filed with the office of academic dishonesty. This policy allows students to appeal the charge. If the charge is successfully appealed, then the student will receive the grade given by the exam committee. If the charge is upheld, the student will follow the stipulations spelled out in the filed paperwork. The Office of Academic Dishonesty has approved this procedure as the most fair in terms of not biasing the grade with issues of academic dishonesty.

Schedule for the spring exam:

- Submit (via email) their "Notification of Intent" to the Director of Graduate Studies by December 1.
- Meet with Graduate Director, receive all exam prep material, go over plagiarism guidelines and subsequently be able to ask exam committee members questions related to the exam in early December including best preparation strategies.
- The exam will be distributed (via email) at 9AM on the Monday of spring break.
- Students have 72 hours to complete the exam. Complete exams must be submitted (via email) to the Director of Graduate Studies by 9AM on Thursday of spring break.
- Exam committees will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the students' grades on the exam within 5 weeks, who will then immediately notify the students (approx. 4/20).

Grading System for the Doctoral Exam:

Each faculty committee member grades each individual answer on a ten-point scale, ranging from a low of "1" to a high of "10." The committee members' grades for a particular answer are averaged to produce a summary score for that particular answer. The Committees are responsible for meeting and discussing their grades for each answer—particularly if there is disagreement about an exam answer. If the committee cannot come to agreement on a particular answer, (e.g. one grades as a pass and another grades as a failure) then the Chair of the department will assign a third committee member to read the exam and act as tiebreaker. Each student's exam ends up with two summary scores, one for each area answer (i.e. the average of the faculty grading each question, rounded to the nearest whole number).

- HIGH PASS: Must obtain a score of 9-10 on the answer.
- PASS: Must obtain a score of 7-8 on the area answer.
- CONDITIONAL FAIL: Be allowed to rewrite an answer in the same semester, a student must earn a score of 5-6 on each area answer.
- FAIL: Must repeat the exam the following spring offering, a student must earn a score of 4 or lower on each area answer.

The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for supervising all phases of the Doctoral Examination, checking for plagiarism and academic dishonesty, and informing the Chair of the Department and the Office of Graduate Studies of the College of Arts and Sciences of the results.

After completion of Doctoral Exams, a student is eligible to prepare and defend a doctoral dissertation proposal.

### Dissertation Proposal

A dissertation proposal that outlines the sociological issues, research questions/hypotheses, research methodology, analytical steps, anticipated findings, and study limitations is required of all dissertation proposals. Students must orally defend the proposal at a meeting with their dissertation committee and other interested faculty and students. The committee must unanimously approve it before the student is officially considered to be working on the Ph.D. dissertation. Following the defense, the dissertation committee members and the department chair must sign the Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Form, located at the end of this handbook. The next step is to get IRB approval (note that the dissertation chair must be named in the IRB application as faculty PI and the faculty PI and department chair must approve the IRB submission by signing off on it), and then the student may begin conducting their dissertation research. A student is admitted to candidacy and earns ABD (All But Dissertation) status with the successful defense of their dissertation proposal.

The proposal serves as a plan for action. All empirical research consists of careful, systematic, and pre-planned observations of some restricted set of phenomena. The approved proposal describes a study that if conducted competently and completely should provide the basis for a report that would meet all the standards for acceptability (by a journal or book publisher for example). The acceptability of results is judged exclusively in terms of the adequacy of the methods employed in making, recording, and interpreting the planned observations. Accordingly, the plan for observation, with its supporting arguments and explications, is the basis on which the thesis, dissertation, or research report will be judged. With the exception of plans for qualitative research, proposals for theses and dissertations should be in final form prior to the collection of data.

Accordingly, once the contract has been made, all but minor changes should occur only when arguments can be made for absolute necessity or compelling desirability. This refers to the data collection and analyses in the proposal. The committee can and should expect your best work in terms of writing, interpreting data analysis, and adding new research to the literature review. Expect several drafts before your committee is satisfied with your work. Under most circumstances, substantial revisions should be made only with the explicit consent of the full committee. Once the document is approved in final form, neither the student nor the sponsoring faculty members should be free to alter the fundamental terms of the contract by unilateral action—meaning get approval for any changes from the committee prior to making changes.

In general, proposals consist of three chapters:

- 1) An introduction (a framework and rationale for the problem or phenomena to be studied, the research problem and question, and the contributions this study will make);
- 2) A literature review (consisting of a theoretical framework, and a discussion of the existing literature on your area that makes an argument for your particular study), and,
- 3) A methods section that explains how you will answer your research question (i.e., the data, the theoretical constructs you will use, and how you will analyze the data).

If proposing a three-article dissertation, follow the same approval process as for the monograph process. Such a proposal should introduce and provide the literature reviews and methodologies for each article. If, for some reason, at a subsequent point the student decides that the traditional monograph format is more desirable for his or her dissertation, the student can petition the dissertation committee requesting a shift to the traditional monograph format (and vice versa), a request that will be routinely granted. Our purpose here is to help the dissertator get through the dissertation process in a timely manner.

Below is a dissertation and master's thesis guideline to support you in drafting a proposal:

## Research Proposals

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Designing research is a very creative process. Andrew Abbott calls a good proposal 1/3 creativity and 2/3s rigor. But it is not creative writing in the fiction sense. Rather, you are creatively designing a study that can answer your research question. The rigor comes from the arguments and justifications for each methodological decision you make.

**In general, a research proposal will consist of four sections: Introduction, literature review, Research design and methods, and supporting materials (e.g. references, appendices, timeline).**

These proposal guidelines preference quantitative research to some extent and engage in some othering of qualitative research. I apologize for that. Quantitative research proposal writing is quite a bit more formulaic than is qualitative research and thus, coming up with guidelines is easier in connection with quantitative research. Expert qualitative researchers have added extensively to this guide to make it user friendly for qualitative research as well.

Depending on the type of project you are conducting, there will be some variability in the research process, however, there are general steps often involved. The first step is often to identify your research topic and develop your research question. If applicable, you should also develop your research hypotheses. The next step is to conduct a thorough but targeted literature review. You may have to modify your research question based on what you learn in the literature review. Part of the literature review should be to focus on what data and methods prior research used. If using secondary data you should also start to become familiar with the sample and measures. This will allow you to assess if you can answer your initial (or modified) research question or if you need to modify your question or find another data source. If you are conducting primary data collection you need to start developing your research plan. Your research plan should be step-by-step and detailed like a recipe.

Within these general steps, there are other important considerations. For example, what is the feasibility of conducting the research, especially if collecting your own data? How long will the study take? Do you have the expertise and/or support to carry out the project? If there are reasons that you might not be able/ready to pull off the "big project" that you really want to conduct, you should consider a more manageable question to engage in as a "stepping stone" to the larger project down the road.

The first three sections or chapters become with some alteration (such as verb tenses being changed from future to past tense) the first sections or chapters of your final thesis or dissertation. In other words, writing the proposal completes a good portion of the final product.

Things to keep in mind:

Writing and research is an iterative process, so expect to make modifications and **numerous drafts**.

As students, the goal should be to gain the toolkit you need to carry out the research you want to conduct over the course of your career. Taking opportunities to engage in research that will help you develop those research tools is as important (if not more important) than answering that *burning* question you have.

### The Research Question

- A social research question is a question about the social world that you seek to answer through the collection of and analysis of empirical data.
- Three types of research questions: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory.
  - Descriptive questions define and describe social phenomena.
  - Explanatory identify causes and effects of social phenomena
  - Exploratory questions seek to answer questions on new or little studied phenomena.
  - In general, explanatory and exploratory questions tend to have more social and scientific relevance than do descriptive questions. Primarily, because description is also included in explanatory and exploratory research. In the publishing world, explanatory and exploratory research is more highly valued than descriptive research.
- Most of you are pretty clear on the area of sociology you wish to focus on but becoming an expert in that area(s) require extensive and in-depth readings of the research methods and findings that have been employed in prior research, and the broader scholarly discussion that is taking place regarding your research area As you read through the literature, note the gaps in the research and questions that remain to be answered. Some articles will say future research should do.... Choose one or two of the most interesting gaps or future research needs you identify. If you are using secondary data, it's important to keep in mind what the sample and measures include (and doesn't include). Next conduct an exhaustive literature search to check to see if others have already addressed each gap adequately. When you start to come across the same articles/books over and over again, you can feel fairly confident that your search is exhaustive. However, it is your responsibility to make sure claims that you make are accurate and reflect what the prior research says (and doesn't say). Create a list of all sources you checked out or those that look interesting and relevant.
- Also think about how specific the research question is. You want it to be specific enough that it can be answered for a thesis in 25-60 pages. In a dissertation, there may be one more general research question with a few subquestions that can be answered in 80-180 pages.
- Think about the question—is it descriptive, explanatory or exploratory? What method might be appropriate to address your research question? Remember, the question should always drive the method, not the other way around. There is no such thing a good (or superior) method outside of the context of the research question.
- If you are using secondary data, it's important to keep in mind what the sample and measures include (and doesn't include). Next conduct an exhaustive literature search to check to see if others have already addressed each gap adequately. When you start to come across the same articles/books over and over again, you can feel fairly confident that your search is exhaustive. However, it is your responsibility to make sure claims that you make are accurate and reflect what the prior research says (and doesn't say). Create a list of all sources you checked out or those that look interesting and relevant.

### Chapter 1: Introduction

- In the first section (a few paragraphs for a thesis, a few pages for a dissertation) set up your research topic as a social problem or an interesting sociological topic. Why is it important to study this? This section is designed to “hook the reader”; get the readers to be interested in the topic and want to keep reading your proposal and to want you to conduct the research.
  - Alternatives may be to start with a debate in the literature. Or to start with statistics describing the pervasiveness of the topic, or perhaps describe general misunderstanding about a topic (again, use statistics).
  - Make sure to frame the paragraphs in such a way that readers understand what you are doing. Don't leave half your thoughts in your head.
- Some people like to end section 1 with the research question. Others will start section 2 with the research question. Make sure there is a literal question in this paragraph. Most people just include a research topic. Provide the actual question. Regardless, discuss your topic in-depth in the section 2. What are the specific research questions you will address in this study?
- Section 3: This is the “contribution” section. Here is where you explain why this is an important topic to research. Science is communication. What fields of literature's conversations will your research join or contribute to? It is important for you to not be humble here. Be honest and don't overstate your case, but

help your reader understand how your research will address different sociological bodies of knowledge, or practice or policy. You need to tie your research topic into a larger field or body of literature in sociology (think theory). This gives some context to your topic. Tell the reader what the sociological importance of your research is. You want to be broad and general here.

- The next section will provide a *general* overview of the method you will employ to address your research question and “fill the gap(s). Nothing too specific or elaborate, just what you need to flesh out the specific question(s) you wish to answer and give the reader an sense of the method you will employ.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Conduct a review of the scholarly literature related to your research question. This review must be a *synthesis* of the literature. Take care to avoid the following: 1) “and then” writing, or chronological narrative that represents a simple summary of the literature, 2) “all about” writing, or encyclopedic approach that says a little about everything, and 3) “data dumping” that puts everything out there with no discernable structure.

Follow these guidelines when searching for articles:

- Use peer reviewed scholarly journals rather than popular magazines, newspaper articles or the internet.
- Use scholarly books published by university presses or academic trade publishers.
- In general, select recent publication (i.e. 2000 or later). However, if an article is written in 1952 but is extremely pertinent (has many citations or is considered a seminal piece) then use it. If it is not well cited by other authors and it is this old then probably it’s part of a field that died before it got started due to some flaw.
- It is harder to assess how well cited (used) books are. Use book reviews to help you evaluate the books you use for your literature review. Your advisor can help you here as well. Books reviewed in ASR, AJS, Contemporary Sociology, all of which are very prestigious is a good sign.
- Choose primarily research publications—they answer research questions using empirical data (qualitative or quantitative research) for the literature review. Limit editorials and book reviews.
- Avoid websites for literature unless you are looking for specific statistics, such as HIV rates or census numbers. Then go to the CDC or UNAIDS organization or the census. If you do not know who the sponsor of a website is, it may not be legitimate.
- You want original sources. If study B cites research found in study A and you want to cite study A also, but only have read study B, then you need to get study A. Otherwise you are depending on Study B getting the information correct, and they may or may not have. They may have left some important nuance out. Better to go directly to the original source.
- For those conducting exploratory research, the existing literature might not be available or adequate if you stick to the above formulaic literature gathering methods. When the existing literature is scarce, we use what is available. We get very creative here and look to comparable phenomena’s literature at times to show how the phenomena might operate.

Writing a literature review:

- The purpose of a literature review is to explain what we already know about the research topic and use that knowledge to justify (argue the need for) your project.
- Notice that you are engaging in a discussion with other scholars in the field, not summarizing a bunch of articles. You are telling a story about what we do (and don’t) know on a topic, and advancing this empirically if you are conducting an actual research project.
- Start becoming a student of articles and books, in regard to how others set up their argument and how they use prior research to “support” their story rather than trying to tell the “story of the literature.”
- Synthesize the literature
  - The literature should be organized by topic, not author.

- Start with an outline of the points you want to make in your literature review and be sure that you are sticking to that outline (unless, of course, the outline needs to be modified).
- Use your references (citations) to help you make your points—support your statements, provide backup statistics or other forms of evidence.
- Again, remember to define all key terms and assume the reader is **not** familiar with the work you are citing.
- Write a concluding paragraph that summarizes briefly what we know (just learned) about the topic, but also highlight what we do **not** know. What is the gap in the literature? Or what has not yet been done. Or end with a critique of how the research has been conducted to date if your project will improve upon it methodologically. In other words, end with demonstrating the need for your project. Restate the purpose of your project—which the purpose and need for should now be clear. Be sure to emphasize the significance of your research that will fill the gap or extend the literature.
- Theoretical framework—some faculty like to see this incorporated into the literature review and others will want it as a separate section or chapter. Ask your chair which s/he prefers. It can come at the beginning or the end or a separate section.
  - The purpose is to describe the theories you will be using in your project and explain how they relate to your topic.
  - Start by explaining the theory(ies) in general (broad overall arguments).
  - Then explain how they have been applied to your topic in past research. (or why they haven't if they haven't).
  - Explain how these theories will inform your project. Think about:
    - Why are you using these theories?
    - What will an analysis of your topic from these perspectives contribute?
    - How does the theoretical framework impact your project?

### Section 3: Research Design—Methods Section / Chapter

The purpose of this section is to describe and explain your research design. Include issues like, what type of time dimension is best for studying your topic and why (cross-sectional or longitudinal)? What are the strengths and limitations of your design? As social scientists we are required to document all our methodology and be transparent. This is where that happens. Do not wait until after your literature to write this section. Think about your design when you write your literature review and pay attention to the methods and data sources used by the studies you are reviewing. The proposal writing process is iterative and as you build your own methods, it might change (usually does change) what literature you emphasize in your review or affect the argument you are presenting in your review.

Start with an introductory paragraph in which you introduce your research question and the overall study design, data source(s), and analysis method. Be clear about whether you are using secondary data or collecting your own data. Secondary data can be publicly available survey data (ICPSR) or archived textual data or oral histories. Secondary data is not limited to quantitative research. If you are collecting your own data, briefly introduce your interviewing, ethnographic, sampling, and measurement choices.

In general, there are 3 sections to a methods section: The data section, the constructs section, and the analysis section. For a thesis/dissertation that is using quantitative data and methods, the proposal can follow the below sections in a fairly formulaic way.

For those using **qualitative** methods, the method is reflexive and allows for changes in the design if needed. For the purposes of the proposal, you should specify as clearly as possible what you intend to do, and how; you will need to append all interview guides, and it is wise to include as many questions as you can (lots of probes, even if you might not use all of them). Your methods should be clearly grounded in the literature you present in your lit review. Before you can begin work on your study and after your proposal has been approved, your project will have to go before the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You can make changes to your methods (or interview guides), if needed as you progress, but all modifications must be approved by the IRB before implementation.

- Section 1: Data
  - The purpose is to identify the best data source or collect your own data to answer the research question. So the data source must be capable of answering your research question. Address this issue first.
  - If collecting your own data (we do not advise this for the MA thesis simply because it will increase time to completion, but certainly can be done for the MA thesis), discuss the procedures you will implement to ensure a high quality sample. What is your mode of observation? Your units of analysis? How will you collect your data?
  - If using secondary data, it is important to demonstrate why this is the best dataset to use for your study. You want to show that it is a high quality dataset—provide information to prove this such as response rates, if it's well known and used in the field. The only or best dataset with the constructs you need. Anything else you can think of to show why its the
  - Sampling methods
    - If collecting your own data, are you using probability or nonprobability sampling methods? What is your population of interest (target population)? Do you have a sampling frame? If so, what is it?
    - What kind of sampling technique will you use?
    - Do you have any preliminary data to suggest what your sample will look like?
    - If using secondary data, provide all the sampling information from the dataset you are using. How did the original PI's collect their data?
    - If doing textual or discourse analysis, explain how you decided on which texts to include, and how you plan to code your data. (This can change too, based on the data. These changes do not have to be submitted to IRB, but all initial projects must be submitted to IRB. Those which do not involve human subjects will be exempt.
  
- Section 2 Construct Measurement
  - Clearly define the theoretical constructs you will be using. What is the main concept you are investigating: what other concepts will be examined (Note the concepts' potential frequencies, magnitudes, structures, processes, causes and consequences?)
  - How will you operationalize your concepts? What questions will you ask? Or what questions ARE ASKED on the secondary dataset If you are going to perform in-depth interviews, what will you ask of your interviewees?
  - What are the levels of measurements of the variables (quantitative proposals)?
  - Variables exist in qualitative research as well. They are often called themes, but they are textual versions of some concept that varies across people.
  - Are you using an inductive or deductive approach? If not, what other types of qualitative analysis will you conduct—(e.g. conversation analysis?)
  - Clearly state your hypotheses or expectations.
  - Identify and operationalize your variables. Discuss causal relationships between the variables; that is, identify the independent and dependent variables.
  - Identify confounding factors that you wish to control for (providing there are any).
  - Identify the strengths and limitations of your construct measurement section.
  
- Section 3: Data Analysis
  - Explain the data analysis method you will use in detail. Explain how the method you are using works. How will you know that you have supported or not supported your hypotheses? Or that you have met your expectations? Explain how you will know you have found something substantively and/or statistically significant. How will you interpret the findings?
  - What are the limitations or weaknesses of your analysis approach?

Finally, write a formal conclusion to the proposal to highlight the overall significance of the proposed project for the field.

#### Section 4: References:

- Include a bibliography of the articles you reviewed, and any other books or articles you refer to in the text. This page should be titled REFERENCES (in capital letters, centered and no quotation marks).
- Use ASA style for your references.

#### Appendices:

- Human subjects issues need to be addressed if you are collecting your own data. In appendix A, which should be attached to your proposal, include a statement that addresses IRB concerns. What are risks and benefits to your participants? Include a consent form. Include an interview guide or survey or other instrument being used to collect data. If you think monetary compensation is necessary, include that information and explain how that will or will not incentivize participation

#### Additional Writing Tips

- Organization:
  - Outline each section before you begin writing—this will help you stay focused and organized.
  - Make sure to use good headings and subheadings throughout your proposal to help guide the readers through the various transitions you will be making.
  - Be sure that every paragraph and every sentence within that paragraph has a *purpose*; you are trying to make an argument, not fill up pages.
  - Make sure all information is in the right place (e.g. introductory material is in the introduction—not literature review and literature review is in the review section not introduction.)
  - Be concise—avoid using excess words—each word should have a purpose. When we publish, we often literally have to cut words to make our word limits. More importantly, ideas are more powerful when concisely stated.
- Tone should be formal/professional
  - Avoid contractions
  - Avoid “you” (nothing alienates a reader more than a statement like “you probably think...” when in fact the reader does not agree.
  - In some cases, it is appropriate to use, “I”. This is especially true in the methods section.
  - “I think” and “I believe” are not necessary in the literature review section. Since your job is to convince the reader to agree with you, state your observations not as your opinions, but as facts found in the literature.
- Using Sources:
  - Be sure that all ideas that are not originally your own are properly cited.
  - Cite the original person who created the idea, not someone else who summarized it.
  - Do not assume your readers have read the material you are citing. Therefore, define all key terms and explain all ideas clearly that you are referencing.
  - Paraphrase. Keep quotes to a minimum in the proposal. Quotes should be used only in the following two cases:
    - To convince the reader the author actually said what you say they said—rarely necessary in reviewing articles.
    - When authors make a profound and direct statement that cannot possibly be given justice by paraphrasing.
  - All quotes that are more than 39 words should be indented.
- Clarity: After you complete the first polished draft of your proposal, ask a non-academic friend to proofread your proposal to see if it makes sense to them. Revise your paper to clarify anything that is unclear to them.
- Proofread. You should print, proofread, and edit your proposal numerous times. It is very, very obvious when scholars do not put enough effort into proofreading and revising their papers. Do not expect your thesis or dissertation director to copyedit for you.

## Dissertation

An approved dissertation is required of all candidates for the doctoral degree. A dissertation should be an original contribution to knowledge by the student. In it, the student gives a complete discussion of the sociological thinking involved in formulating a topic, provides a careful description of the research methods and findings, and lays out the meaning and implications of the research. Each student must have a Dissertation Chair who will give guidance and direction to the student during the research and writing stages of the project. The Dissertation Chair must be a member of the graduate sociology faculty. Dissertation Chairs are requested by the student, then approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, and appointed by the Chair of the Department of Sociology.

A Dissertation Committee, chaired by the Dissertation Chair, will be formed to supervise and evaluate the student's proposal and dissertation. The Dissertation Committee must have three to five members. Committee members are nominated by the student (in consultation with the Dissertation Chair and faculty expected to be involved), approved by the Director of Graduate Studies, and approved and appointed by the Chair of the Department.

Although committee members may be selected from the graduate faculty of other academic departments of Georgia State University or from the graduate faculty of other accredited institutions of higher learning, a majority of the members of the Dissertation Committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology at Georgia State University. If a student wishes to alter the composition of the Dissertation Committee after members have been appointed, a petition must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies who will present the petition to the Graduate Committee for action.

Students may find it useful to examine Ph.D. dissertations completed by previous sociology graduate students. Copies are available either in the Department or via the [GSU Library](#).

### Roles and Responsibilities of the Dissertation Committee Chair and Members

The Chair of the committee works most closely with the dissertator. The chair monitors all drafts and determines when the proposal or dissertation is ready to go to the committee. This means that students should choose a faculty member with expertise in the dissertation topic area and/or methodology to chair their committee. Other committee members should be chosen to complement the knowledge base of your committee by either their substantive or methodological expertise. If the chair is less knowledgeable methodologically, then the chair and a committee member that is an expert need to come to an agreement *a priori* of the extent of additional work the non-chair committee member will conduct. Unless otherwise discussed and agreed upon *a priori*, non-chair committee members should only be expected to read a defensible draft of the proposal and dissertation. Thus, they should not be engaging in proofreading but rather reading for:

- (1) A clear and coherent research question/hypothesis
- (2) Logical flow to arguments
- (3) Complete, accurate and comprehensive literature review
- (4) Appropriateness of and expertise in methodology used
- (5) Accurate and appropriate interpretation of results
- (6) Discussion of the research findings within the broader scientific discourse.

### Monograph or Three-Article Dissertation

Students must complete a doctoral dissertation representing an original research project. The dissertation paper may be organized in one of two ways: 1) a traditional monograph format (like a book), or 2) students may complete a three-article dissertation. The traditional sociology dissertation is written in the monograph style, with a single overall argument carried throughout the entire document. This does not mean a single results chapter like the M.A. thesis; rather the theme is carried out across several results chapters. The three article dissertation has three independent arguments—one for each article. In order to complete the three-article dissertation, students must complete three interrelated research articles and an additional introduction chapter and conclusion chapter to frame the three articles. It is in the introduction and conclusion that the relationships between the three independent articles are shown.

Students may not submit articles which have been previously published or submitted for course grades as part of a three-article dissertation; however, it may be permissible for students to submit chapters (of a traditional monograph dissertation) or articles of their dissertation for publication before their dissertation is defended, with permission of the dissertation committee. If an article has been published prior to the defense of the dissertation, the student must obtain the copyright permission from the copyright holder in order to include the article in the dissertation.

To utilize the three-article format or the monograph format, as a first step, the student must get the dissertation committee to agree to the format chosen. This should be done prior to or at the proposal defense. The purpose of this directive is to save the dissertator time. The student's committee will decide whether a three-article format is suitable for the proposed dissertation and acceptable to all members of the committee. There may be many research topics, research questions, and types of data for which the student's committee will not consider this model appropriate. If in doubt about which is the best format for your dissertation, discuss this with your dissertation chair. The ultimate question that should decide this is, is there one overall argument or are there three distinct, but interrelated, arguments being made?

In general, the articles should fit the following set of criteria to qualify for inclusion: (1) the three articles must all be in the same subarea of sociology. The student's committee will make the determination as to how closely linked the articles can be or must be. (2) No articles written prior to entry into our graduate program can be counted. (3) The three articles must fit the criterion of being based primarily on original quantitative or qualitative empirical research. However, with the permission of the dissertation committee, the student may be allowed to include one article that does not fit this criterion, as it may not call for original data collection or preparation. Some examples include, but are not limited to theoretical articles, policy essays, and methodology articles. (4) Students should be urged to submit their articles for publication as early as possible. (5) Overall, the corpus of five chapters (which includes the three articles) must be approved by the student's committee as representing a contribution to the field *at least comparable* to that of a typical monograph style dissertation in our department. The final determination of dissertation acceptance will be based on the quality of the research and the importance of the overall contribution of the work as reflected by the articles as a set.

The student must write an acceptable dissertation, as defined by the Chair and Committee, and pass a final oral defense of that dissertation. At least two-thirds of the Dissertation Committee must give written approval of the dissertation for it to be submitted for acceptance to the Graduate Services Office of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Dissertation Committee is the sole judge of the professional adequacy of the dissertation. The normal procedure is for the student to submit drafts of chapters to the Dissertation Chair, who makes critical suggestions for revision, and reviews rewritten chapters. When the Dissertation Chair feels, one or several chapters are ready for other committee members to review, he/she tells the student to distribute them to the committee members, who read them and suggest revisions. When the Dissertation Chair determines the dissertation is at the appropriate stage of development, the dissertation defense is scheduled. At that time, the Dissertation Committee decides whether it will accept the dissertation, based on the adequacy of the research, the soundness of the student's interpretation of the data, and, ultimately, the work's contribution to knowledge in the discipline of sociology. The Dissertation Committee has the right to require further revisions after the defense.

Effective time management is essential for the successful completion of a Doctoral Dissertation. All faculty members have many demands on their time, including supervision of graduate student research. Evaluating a dissertation draft or chapter is, and should be, a time-consuming process. Committee chairs will read all drafts and chapters until such a time as they release the completed draft to the committee. Students must allow their chair at least two weeks to read and comment on a proposal draft or chapter. Additionally, most students will need to submit multiple drafts to their chair for evaluation before the chair thinks it is complete and final and is willing to send it to the committee members to schedule a defense. A completed dissertation draft is likely to require even more time for committee members to read (2-3 weeks). Students should discuss their timeline with all committee members, so they can work around faculty travel or research commitments. The student is ultimately responsible for the timely completion of a Doctoral Dissertation. Students must work within committee members' time constraints to make steady progress on their own research.

Oral dissertation (and proposal) defenses may be scheduled during the fall, spring, and summer semesters (regular or Maymester) at the discretion of their committee. It is the sole responsibility of the student to make steady progress on his or her own research. Students should think about, carefully plan around other deadlines (e.g. applying for jobs), and avoid asking committee members to read dissertations "at the last minute."

There will be an oral defense of the dissertation, at which time the student will describe and discuss the work he or she has done, defend its merit, and answer any questions about it that arise. This defense of the dissertation is open to interested faculty and students. The Dissertation Chair should notify faculty and students in the Department of Sociology about the topic, time, and place of the defense, and circulate a research abstract of it at least two weeks in advance. The entire dissertation must also be made available to interested faculty members at least one week prior to the defense. Additionally, the Dissertation Chair, all committee members, and the Department Chair must sign the Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form, located at the end of this handbook.

The dissertation is the final requirement for the Ph.D. degree and as such will not be accepted by the Graduate Office until all other requirements for the Ph.D. are satisfied. A dissertation may be submitted for final approval no earlier than the beginning of the semester in which the student will graduate and no later than the dissertation deadline. In addition, the student must have registered for graduation two semesters in advance of graduating.

Dissertations in sociology must use the American Sociological Review format for reference citations. Students should consult a current issue of the American Sociological Review for guidance on citing sources in the text and in the reference section. It is the student's responsibility to make certain the final version of the dissertation complies with all the style, format, and other requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences as detailed on the Graduate Services Office webpage. Please note that the student, rather than the advisor, is solely responsible for conformity to the current College guidelines.

### [Embargoing your Dissertation](#)

All dissertations must be uploaded electronically to [Scholar Works](#). This makes your dissertation publicly available. In order to restrict access because you want to publish it as a book, you can embargo your dissertation. An Embargo makes the work inaccessible for a specified period of time, usually one year, but possibly 6 months or 2 years. Once the time limit expires, the dissertation is automatically released unless an extension is requested. Embargoes need to be approved by the College of Arts & Sciences graduate services office. The office of Graduate Services will ensure that your request has the support of the DGS and the college's associate dean for research and graduate studies. For more information on the embargo process, please contact Chad Van Gorden at [cvangorden1@gsu.edu](mailto:cvangorden1@gsu.edu).

## OTHER GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### [Completion of M.A. Prior to Matriculation into Ph.D. Only Program](#)

Students accepted into the Ph.D.-Only Program must have completed their Master's degree prior to matriculating at Georgia State. If a student's Master's degree is incomplete, that student may petition the Graduate Committee for a one-semester extension. Students requesting this extension must supply all documentation required by the Director of Graduate Studies to support the request (for example, a letter from the student's thesis chair or Master's program advisor). Ph.D.-Only students who are awarded funding must complete their Master's degrees prior to matriculation or their graduate assistantships from the Sociology Department will be rescinded. Students who request and receive one-semester extensions must have completed their Master's degrees before the start of the spring semester. Supporting documentation of completion is required. Students failing to complete their Master's degree by the start of the spring semester will be scholastically terminated from the sociology graduate program.

### [Academic Residence](#)

Four semesters of residence are required, two of which must be consecutive; during all four semesters the student must register for at least six hours of coursework. A Doctor of Philosophy degree shall be conferred only on that student who holds a distinguished record of academic achievement and has maintained a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0 for a minimum period of three academic years of post-baccalaureate study. On the recommendation of the major department and with the approval of the appropriate associate dean, up to one-half of the residence requirement may be waived based on competence obtained through coursework completed elsewhere.

### [Continuous Enrollment](#)

Students in all graduate programs must maintain enrollment totaling 6 hours (or more) over all consecutive three-semester periods (including summers). In other words, the total enrollment of the current term plus the two terms preceding it must add to 6 hours or more at all times. The status of all students will be checked by the midpoint of each term for compliance with the [continuous enrollment requirement](#). Any student whose enrollment is out of compliance will receive a registration hold preventing all current and future registration. Those students will be notified by an e-mail message sent to their official Georgia State University's e-mail account. In order to graduate, students must be actively enrolled in the program of study during the semester in which they finish degree requirements for graduation.

To resume their programs, students with continuous enrollment holds must file for [re-entry](#) by the published deadline and must enroll at a level sufficient to satisfy the continuous enrollment criterion. That is, their enrollment in the re-entry term plus the two terms preceding it must total to 6 hours or more. The maximum required enrollment level for the re-entry term is 6 hours.

### [Institutional Review Board Approval](#)

All student research that involves human subjects; including the analysis of secondary data, must be approved by [GSU's Institutional Review Board \(IRB\)](#). You will receive training on this in Soci 8000. All student research that requires IRB approval requires faculty sponsorship and the IRB review is submitted under the faculty member's name. This means that when you submit your thesis, capstone paper, or dissertation proposal for IRB approval, list yourself as the student PI, your chair as the PI and make sure the IRB protocol is routed such that your chair must sign off on the protocol as well as the departmental chair signs off on the protocol.

### [Repeat to Replace Policy](#) for Graduate Students

# ADEQUATE PROGRESS, MILESTONES AND ANNUAL STUDENT REVIEW

## College Mandated Times to Completion and Annual Review Progress

By university policy, all credit presented for the M.A. degree must be earned within seven calendar years and credit presented for the Ph.D. degree must be earned within ten calendar years. Students wishing to petition this requirement should consult graduate services and complete a [Petition for Deviation form](#).

The department expects students to make [regular and timely progress](#) in the program. The student, with the assistance of the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the Director of Graduate Studies, and their Faculty Advisor should plan a program of study in line with their program's defined course of study. Student progress is evaluated against this course of study within the annual review process.

## Annual Student Evaluation

The Director of Graduate Studies and all faculty will review students' progress annually. The goal of the evaluation is to assess each student's performance and progress in the program in order to better assist and guide the student. These evaluations focus on a student's degree progress. All aspects of a student's activities and performance are reviewed, including progress, academic performance, professionalism, and ethical orientation.

The annual milestones meeting occurs at the end of every Spring semester. In this meeting, the research I faculty come together to assess the progress of each individual graduate student. These meetings are an opportunity for us to share with one another what we perceive to be students' strengths and their areas of growth in the hopes that we, the faculty, might be better able to support your success.

In preparation for this meeting, each student must reach out to their thesis/dissertation chairs to schedule an advising conference meeting. First year students should schedule these meetings with their first-year advisors. Advising meetings should happen before the end of April. Please see the [advising conference form](#) which the faculty will be using as a guide during those meetings. If you have not selected a thesis/dissertation chair and are not a first-year student consider which faculty member you can ask to speak on your behalf. Schedule a meeting with this faculty member and share your progress with them. Lecturers do not have graduate student responsibilities. So, unless you have a commitment from one of the department lecturers to serve as your chair, it is not recommended that you ask them to host an advising conference with you.

After your meeting with your advisor and submission of your advising form, faculty will come together to evaluate each student's progress. Each student will receive a review letter documenting the results of that meeting.

The annual review also serves as the basis for the development of a corrective action plan if significant problems or weaknesses are identified. In those instances when a student's performance is judged unsatisfactory, an evaluation letter will be sent that includes notice of probationary status (i.e., scholastic warning). Students receiving such a warning will be evaluated again during the spring semester of that academic year. If at that time the faculty judges that the circumstances have not changed and the student's performance is again rated as unsatisfactory, a dismissal action will be initiated. As with appeals for failure to meet progress guidelines, students may appeal their pending dismissal, see "Appeals Procedures". If a funded student's performance is judged unsatisfactory, they must make significant progress toward completing the corrective action plan or their funding will be rescinded.

## Milestones

We evaluate coursework, milestones towards degree, professional development activities (e.g. presenting at conferences and/or publishing papers). Deviations from the courses of study may happen. Such may result in negative annual evaluations and the loss of funding, but they will not risk dismissal from the program unless the following dismissal deadlines are not met. Failure to meet the dismissal deadlines will be considered grounds for scholastic termination by the College of Arts and Sciences. The stated dismissal deadlines hold for full-time and part-time students.

### M.A. - ONLY PROGRAM

MILESTONE	COURSE OF STUDY	DISMISSAL AFTER
Complete M.A. Coursework	4 Semesters	10 Semesters
Complete Internship	4 Semesters	12 Semesters
Complete Capstone Paper	4 Semesters	14 Semesters

### JOINT M.A. /PH.D. PROGRAM (FULL-TIME)

MILESTONE	COURSE OF STUDY	DISMISSAL AFTER
Complete M.A. Proposal	3 Semesters	6 Semesters
Complete M.A. Coursework	5 Semesters	10 Semesters
Complete M.A. Thesis	5 Semesters	10 Semesters
Complete Ph.D. Coursework	8 Semesters	16 Semesters
Complete Doctoral Exams	11 Semesters	20 Semesters
Complete Dissertation Proposal	11 Semesters	22 Semesters
Complete Dissertation	14 Semesters	30 Semesters

### JOINT M.A./PH.D. PROGRAM (PART-TIME)

MILESTONE	COURSE OF STUDY	DISMISSAL AFTER
Complete M.A. Proposal	6 Semesters	9 Semesters
Complete M.A. Coursework	9 Semesters	14 Semesters
Complete M.A. Thesis	9 Semesters	14 Semesters
Complete Ph.D. Coursework	12 Semesters	19 Semesters
Complete Doctoral Exams	14 Semesters	23 Semesters
Complete Dissertation Proposal	15 Semesters	26 Semesters
Complete Dissertation	18 Semesters	30 Semesters

### PH.D.- ONLY PROGRAM

MILESTONE	COURSE OF STUDY	DISMISSAL AFTER
Complete Ph.D. Coursework	6 Semesters	12 Semesters
Complete Doctoral Exams	8 Semesters	14 Semesters
Complete Dissertation Proposal	8 Semesters	16 Semesters
Complete Dissertation	11 Semesters	22 Semesters

\*\*\*All include summer semester\*\*\*

## ASSISTANTSHIPS AND OTHER FUNDING

The financial assistance available to students through the Department of Sociology includes graduate research assistantships (GRAs), graduate teaching assistantships (GTAs), graduate laboratory assistantships (GLAs), and in some cases, financial support for students to travel to sociology conferences. Information about other possible sources of financial support is available at the [Financial Aid Office](#), [Panther Career Net](#), and the [GSU Scholarship Office](#). Information regarding the [Graduate Assistant Policies may be found here](#).

### [Departmental Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships \(GRAs/GTAs\)](#)

[Graduate Research and Teaching Assistantships \(GRAs/GTAs\)](#) are available for qualified students in the Department of Sociology on a competitive basis.

### [Application for and Awarding of Assistantships](#)

Assistantship decisions are based on the student's performance and progress in the sociology graduate program, the needs of the Department, and the availability of funds. Departmental GRA/GTA appointments are typically made for multiple years, contingent upon the student's academic progress, the needs of the Department, and budgetary considerations. Incoming students apply for departmental assistantships as part of their regular application package. If a student is not awarded an assistantship when they are accepted into the program, they may apply for departmental assistantships by completing the required Funding Application Form, due each year early in the spring semester. Students who enter the Ph.D.-Only Program are only eligible for graduate assistantships if their Master's degrees are complete by the beginning of the fall semester.

### [Duties of Assistantships](#)

Typical duties performed by graduate teaching assistants may include; conducting library/database searches, copying articles, collecting/entering data, performing analysis, writing/editing, presenting research, assisting with the running of a course, grading, recording of grades, attending class, providing a good role model for students in the course, taking role/attendance, assisting students, holding regular office hours, taking notes, copying handouts/tests/etc., posting grades/materials online, enforcing course policies, leading discussion or giving lectures.

All funded graduate students must teach their own course as a Graduate Teaching Assistant B (GTAB) after the successful completion of the Department's two teaching classes (SOCI 9000: Teaching Sociology and SOCI 9001: Teaching Internship). Funded students must take SOCI 9000 in the spring of their second year. Ph.D.-Only students with Master's degrees in Sociology may take SOCI 9000 during the spring of their first year with permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. SOCI 9001 requires the permission of the instructor and the successful passing of SOCI 9000 (completing the class with a grade of B or higher). SOCI 9000 prepares students for the classroom. SOCI 9001 places student-instructors into an undergraduate sociology class at Georgia State University; student-instructors teach their own class under the direction of their SOCI 9001 instructor. SOCI 9000 is offered in the summer semester and SOCI 9001 is offered in the fall semester. As a GTAB, a student teaches one undergraduate course per semester (fall, spring, and summer) and works four hours as a GRA (fall and spring only) for a faculty member.

### [Qualifications for Assistantships](#)

Assistantships are for full-time students only. To be considered full-time, a student must be taking the number of courses specified in the given Course of Study (typically three courses up until the completion of coursework). Graduate assistants must register for 18 credit hours each semester. These credit hours should include a combination of coursework and required non-coursework hours (e.g. SOCI 8999 or SOCI 9999). Students holding regular assistantships may not work full-time outside the Department of Sociology. Part time work outside the Department may be acceptable if it does not interfere with your GRA/GTA obligations.

GRA/GTA appointments are highly competitive and awarded for assistance provided to the department and faculty. If the appointment is not a student's first priority, then the assistantship will be reassigned to another student.

Students wishing to dual enroll in another non-sociology graduate program must seek approval by petition from the Graduate Committee prior to enrolling. Students receiving graduate assistantships from the Department of Sociology risk losing their assistantships if they do not gain such prior approval from the Graduate Committee.

### [Dates of Assistantships](#)

Graduate assistants in the Sociology Department are employed on a semester-based appointment. Assistantships begin on the first day of classes for each semester.

Pay Structure:

Fall: September – December

Spring: January – April

Summer: June – July

\*Payment are made on the last day of each month

### [Time Limits](#)

Students in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. program are eligible for (Sociology) funding through the end of the spring semester of their fifth year. Students in the Ph.D.-Only program are eligible for (Sociology) funding through the end of the spring semester of their fourth year. Continued assistantships depend on the student's academic progress, successful performance of their assigned duties each semester, the needs of the Department, and budgetary considerations. Funded students **MUST** follow the recommended course of study or their assistantship may be revoked the next semester.

Students may petition the Graduate Committee for a leave of absence if a medical or similar emergency occurs. Upon the granting of the absence, the funded student may take time off from the program and continue receiving a graduate assistantship when rejoining the program.

### [Tuition Waivers](#)

All departmental assistantships come with a tuition waiver. M.A.-level Graduate Assistants making at least \$6,000 per academic year receive a tuition waiver. Ph.D.-level Graduate Assistants making at least \$12,000 per academic year receive a tuition waiver from the College of Arts and Sciences. In order to remain eligible for a tuition waiver, students must register for a minimum of 12 credit hours in spring and fall semesters and 15 credit hours in summer semester.

### [Student Fees](#)

Tuition waivers do not include student fees, which the student is responsible for each semester. Student fees can be located at [Student Financial Services](#). Most graduate students are eligible for [payment plans](#) through the university for fall and spring semesters. Payment plans are not available for summer semester.

### [Required Student Health Insurance](#)

All international students and Graduate Assistants receiving full tuition waivers must enroll in the [Mandatory Student Health Insurance Plan](#). The University System of Georgia has contracted for premium coverage health insurance at a reduced rate. Students may waive out of the mandatory health insurance program if they have equivalent group-plan protection. Other students may sign up for the Voluntary Student Health Insurance Plan.

### [Student Travel](#)

The Sociology department sets aside a part of the departmental budget to assist students in building their

professional careers through presenting at conferences. The department will award 5-6 travel grants to students presenting at conferences each fiscal year. To be eligible for this funding, student must be on the conference program. (Being “on the program” means the student is delivering a paper or has been asked to be an organizer or discussant for a session.) Contingent on budgetary limitations, the Department provides \$500 per year in travel expenses to students who are on the program in a national meeting. Students on the program in a regional meeting are provided with \$250 per year. A student can receive travel funds for a single conference in a given fiscal year and is eligible to get conference funding twice over their student career at GSU Sociology.

Given the budgetary limitations, the department clearly cannot fund every student that applies. Therefore, the department has decided to formalize this process into a competitive travel award. The department will prioritize national conferences over regional conferences. Within national conferences, ASA has priority over SSSP and SWS. If you plan to be an applied sociologist, you can make an argument for why the applied sociology conference should take precedence for you. If you are going on the job market and a specialized conference will assist you with better career opportunities, you can make that argument as well. This information will be taken into account when prioritizing travel award applications.

We will also prioritize students that are finishing their Ph.D. degree and need to network and build their reputations. This means that students closer to the job market will be prioritized first. However, we recognize that reputations take a while to establish so students presenting from their M.A. theses or from faculty led research projects will also be prioritized over other research projects. Additionally, paper presentations are more prestigious than round table and/or poster presentations. If you are going on the job, market and wish to attend the ASA job placement event, which is also a good reason to apply.

#### Conference Priority

ASA

SSSP/ SWS

Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology /American Evaluation Association

Special topical conference with strong career prospects

Regional conferences

#### Individual Level Priority

Presenting from Dissertation

Presenting from GRA or faculty collaborative research

Presenting from M.A. thesis

Presenting other research

#### Presentation Priority

Paper presentation

Roundtable presentation

Poster presentation

# DISMISSAL, APPEAL, GRIEVANCE & DISHONESTY PROCEDURES

## Dismissal Procedures

The Department of Sociology is committed to supporting students in their progress through the program consistent with the maintenance of acceptable academic and professional standards. There are, however, occasions when the standards of the College of Arts and Sciences or the Department of Sociology are not met and dismissal (called scholastic termination by the College of Arts and Sciences) must be considered.

It is the College of Arts and Sciences that ultimately assumes responsibility for both the admission of students and, in rare cases, their dismissal. Nonetheless, a sociology student is subject to program, department, and college standards. The procedure for dismissal and appeal differs somewhat when a departmental standard (e.g., progress guidelines) or a college standard (e.g., cumulative GPA) is violated. When a departmental standard is violated, the Director of Graduate Studies will initiate the dismissal action. When a college standard is violated, the Associate Dean takes the dismissal action for the Social and Behavioral Sciences.

## Appeal Procedures

Reasons for initiating dismissal at the departmental level include:

- Not successfully taking corrective action as the result of an unsatisfactory annual evaluation
- Violation of professional ethical principles endorsed by the American Sociological Association
- Failure to pass a thesis or dissertation defense within two semesters after a failed defense
- A second unsuccessful attempt to earn a passing grade (B or higher) in any graduate sociology course
- Failure (a grade of C or lower) of two or more graduate sociology courses
- Unsatisfactory (a grade of U) completion of two or more graduate sociology courses graded on a Satisfactory Unsatisfactory (S/U) scale

The student will receive notice from the Director of Graduate Studies that dismissal is being considered. The student may appeal this, in writing, to the Director of Graduate Studies, although such an appeal must be received no later than 20 business days after notice was given. The Graduate Committee will consider the appeal. At the meeting called for this purpose, the student has the opportunity to present evidence, including any testimony from faculty with whom the student has worked, that the student is capable of successful completion of the graduate program and that the conditions leading to the dismissal action represent atypical behavior or the presence of temporary, mitigating circumstances. The committee will inform the student of their decision within 30 business days of receiving the appeal.

Actions of the Graduate Committee may include, but are not limited to: (a) let the dismissal action stand, in which case the student may not continue in the program. (b) Place the student on probation and specify remedial actions, which must be taken before the student, may continue in the program. Such actions are at the discretion of the Graduate Committee as informed by faculty who are familiar with the student's work. Retaking courses with low grades is one possible action. A deadline for completing such remedial action must be specified. (c) Allow the student to complete requirements for a terminal master's degree (if the student is in the Joint M.A. /Ph.D. Program).

If an appeal is granted and the student is placed on probation, the student's Faculty Advisor and Director of Graduate Studies will monitor whether the student has met the specified requirements by the specified deadline. If the student has not done so, the Director of Graduate Studies will again initiate a dismissal action. The student may again appeal the action to the Graduate Committee. If the student believes

that a decision by the Graduate Committee decision has been arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory, the student may appeal its decision in writing to the Chair of the Department. This action must be taken within 20 business days of the date of the Graduate Committee's decision.

If the student does not appeal the decision or if the appeal is denied at the departmental level, the Director of Graduate Studies will forward the recommendation for dismissal to the Associate Dean for Social and Behavioral Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Associate Dean will notify the student that this has occurred. The student may then appeal the decision through normal channels within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Reasons for initiating dismissal at the college level include, but are not limited to:

- A second failure to pass the Ph.D. Specialty Examination
- Failure to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0

In such cases, the Graduate Committee is not empowered to consider an appeal. The student should refer to the GSU appeal procedures at this level.

#### [Grievance Procedures](#)

The department follows the current procedures and policies of the College of Arts and Sciences regarding grade appeals and other complaints. Students who believe that they have been treated in an unethical, unprofessional, or unfair manner by university faculty, staff, administrators, or fellow students should act to correct the situation. Several procedures are available to do so. First, students may bring the situation to the attention of their advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the chair of the department. At the college level, students may bring their complaint to the attention of the Associate Dean. Students may also discuss the situation with the University's ombudsperson. Finally, students may follow formal grievance procedures. See the GSU website for the [Student Grievance Policy](#).

#### [Departmental Policy on Academic Honesty](#)

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology strongly affirm the following principles:

- Work presented by students in fulfillment of class requirements or other requirements of an academic program should be that student's own work, and not that performed by someone else.
- Granting of credit for such work implies that the piece of work has been accomplished for a particular course or requirement.
- The same piece of work should not be presented for credit for two different courses or requirements without special arrangements being made with relevant faculty.
- Falsification of any kind of data is a violation of academic and ethical principles.

The department follows the University's Policy on Academic Honesty described in the [Graduate Catalog for Georgia State University](#) and the College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Bulletin. All violations of Georgia State's policy on Academic Honesty are formally reported to the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The College of Arts and Sciences procedures for reporting and appeal are followed.

## General Information

### [Registration](#)

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with computer registration procedures at GSU and should register by appointment as provided by the [Registrar's Office \(Registration\)](#). Most sociology graduate courses do not require special authorization from the Department prior to registration, but a number of them do. Authorization can be obtained for a course by emailing your Panther ID number, error message and the CRN of the course to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in order to receive an override.

### [Course Loads](#)

Nine credit hours (or three courses) are the normal course load for full-time unfunded students. Graduate Assistants must register for at least twelve credit hours per semester. The maximum course load for graduate students is twenty-one credit hours per semester. Part-time students may take six credit hours per semester.

### [Part-Time and Full-Time Student Status](#)

The Department of Sociology classifies students as “full-time” if they are taking nine or more credit hours per fall or spring semester and as “part-time” if, they are taking fewer than nine credit hours per fall or spring semester. For the summer semester, students are classified as “full-time” if they are taking six or more credit hours and as “part-time” if, they are taking fewer than six credit hours. The Department’s distinction follows the requirements for federal financial aid.

### [Scheduling of Courses](#)

Every year the University publishes a projected schedule of courses for that year. Students should consult it to see when required and elective courses are scheduled. Students should check with their advisors and plan when they will take their required classes and other courses. In addition, near the beginning of each spring semester, the Department develops its projected schedule of courses for the next academic year. It is available to students as an aid in planning their course work (contact the Graduate Director).

### [Graduate Student ListServ \(Soci-Grad\)](#)

All graduate students are required to subscribe to the Graduate Student ListServ. The department will add your GSU email address. You may not unsubscribe your GSU email address from the listserv. You may, however, forward email from your GSU email address to another email address.

### [Petition](#)

If a student believes that he or she can justify, for professional reasons, being exempt from any of the requirements of this Handbook, the student may request that the Director of Graduate Studies ask the departmental Graduate Committee (or the petition committee appointed by the Chair) to hear the student's views.

### [Leaves of Absence](#)

Students who wish to take a leave of absence for personal or medical reasons should submit such requests in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies for consideration by the Graduate Committee. Such requests must specify the intended duration of the leave of absence, usually specified in semesters. A maximum of one year may be requested at a given time, although extensions may be requested by following the same procedure.

Departmental progress guidelines may be adjusted for departmentally approved leaves of absence; any time limitations for completing degrees as specified by Georgia State University or the College of Arts and Sciences are unaffected.

### [Application for Graduation](#)

A student must apply for graduation through the [Office of the Registrar](#) at least two semesters in advance of the expected graduation date. [The deadlines for application](#) for each semester's graduation are published in the Graduate Bulletin and on the Graduate Services Office webpage.

# FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

## M.A. IN SOCIOLOGY CONCENTRATION IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM CHECKLIST

COURSE #	TITLE	HOURS	SEMESTER	GRADE
CORE				
SOCI 8010	Intermediate Statistics	3		
SOCI 8020	Research Methods	3		
SOCI 8342	Qualitative Methods	3		
SOCI 9010	Multivariate Data Analysis	4		
SOCI 9020	Advanced Research Methods	3		
ELECTIVES				
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS				
SOCI 8980	Internship	6		
	TOTAL:	31		

## JOINT M.A. /PH.D. PROGRAM CHECKLIST

COURSE #	TITLE	HOURS	SEMESTER	GRADE
<b>M.A. CORE</b>				
SOCI 8000	Proseminar	3		
SOCI 8010	Intermediate Statistics	3		
SOCI 8020	Research Methods	3		
SOCI 8030	Sociological Theory I	3		
SOCI 9010	Multivariate Data Analysis	4		
<b>M.A. ELECTIVES</b>				
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
<b>M.A. NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>				
SOCI 8999	Thesis Research	6		
<b>PH.D. CORE</b>				
SOCI 8342	Qualitative Methods	3		
SOCI 9020	Advanced Research Methods	3		
SOCI 9030	Sociological Theory II	3		
SOCI _____	Specialty Area 1:	3		
SOCI _____	Specialty Area 2:	3		
<b>PH.D. ELECTIVES</b>				
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
<b>PH.D. NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>				
SOCI 9999	Dissertation Research	32		
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>90</b>		

**JOINT M.A. /PH.D.  
PROGRAM CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)**

Other Program Requirements

Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposal Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

M.A. Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctoral Exam Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proposal Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph.D. Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PH.D. – ONLY  
PROGRAM CHECKLIST**

COURSE #	TITLE	HOURS	SEMESTER	GRADE
<b>CORE</b>				
SOCI 8000	Proseminar	3		
SOCI 8342	Qualitative Methods	3		
SOCI 9010	Multivariate Data Analysis	4		
SOCI 9020	Advanced Research Methods	3		
SOCI 9030	Sociological Theory II	3		
SOCI _____	Specialty Area 1:	3		
SOCI _____	Specialty Area 2:	3		
<b>ELECTIVES</b>				
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
SOCI _____		3		
<b>NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>				
SOCI 9999	Dissertation Research	32		
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>63</b>		

**PH.D.—ONLY**  
**PROGRAM CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)**

Other Program Requirements

Doctoral Exam Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proposal Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Defense Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph.D. Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **REQUIRED ACADEMIC MILESTONE FORMS**

All academic milestone and graduation forms are available through the College of Arts and Sciences website at <https://cas.gsu.edu/academics-admissions/required-milestones/>.

These forms include:

- Master's Thesis and Non-Thesis Status
- Change of Concentration
- Appointment of Doctoral Dissertation or Master's Thesis Committee
- Proposal/Prospectus Approval for Doctoral Dissertation or Master's Thesis
- Non-Thesis Master's Capstone Project Approval
- Doctoral Dissertation or Master's Thesis Approval