

GRADUATE HANDBOOK

2005-2006



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
TULANE UNIVERSITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Goals of the Program	1
Degree Requirements	1
Master of Arts.....	1
Required Courses.....	1
Doctor of Philosophy.....	2
Required Courses.....	2
Comprehensive Examinations.....	3
Preliminary Examination in Social Theory.....	3
Area Examination.....	3
Instructions for Ph.D. Area Examination.....	4
Dissertation.....	5
Summary of Degree Requirements and Recommended Course Sequence.....	5
Requirements.....	5
Recommended Course Sequence.....	6
Criteria for Funding	8
Timing.....	8
Maintaining Reasonable Progress.....	9
Annual Evaluations.....	9
First Year Review.....	9
Second Year Review.....	10
Honor Code.....	10
Graduate School Rules & Regulations	10
Deadlines for Commencement.....	10
Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Assistants	11
Departmental Grievance Procedures	13

GRADUATE STUDY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY TULANE UNIVERSITY

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The Department of Sociology at Tulane University has three principal goals: (1) to foster and conduct scientific research in the subject matter of the discipline and to disseminate the findings of that research through scholarly publication; (2) to foster excellence in teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels; and (3) to serve the larger community and society through the proper application of sociological knowledge.

The Department's program of graduate study aims to train and develop professional sociologists who are qualified to conduct original research and to teach at the college and university level. This requires mastery of sociological theory, research methods, statistics, and the substantive literature of the discipline. All the formal hurdles and requirements imposed on graduate students are in the service of these ends.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

The Master's Degree requires 24 credit hours of course work. Included in those hours are one theory course, one methods course, two data analysis courses, and four electives.¹ In addition to required courses, students will complete a Master's thesis. This thesis is typically a research manuscript of article length, format, and quality; normally it is suitable for journal submission.

Required Courses

- SOCI 710: Intermediate Social Theory
- SOCI 720: Intermediate Sociological Methods
- SOCI 725: Qualitative Analysis
- SOCI 730: Intermediate Data Analysis

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

The doctoral degree in sociology requires 25 course credit hours beyond credits earned in the

¹ Students entering with a Master's degree *in sociology* from another program may have the option of transferring courses from that program to cover their electives. Transfer credit rules are described on the Graduate School website. Both M.A. and Ph.D. students will meet with the Graduate Director prior to the beginning of their first semester at Tulane to discuss appropriate course work and arrange for minimum competency exams in methods and statistics. Successful completion of additional undergraduate and/or master's level coursework may be required to make up deficiencies. Credit for remedial courses (i.e., SOCI 303 and SOCI 304) will not count toward completion of the M.A. or Ph.D. degrees.

Master's program. There are four required courses beyond those required for the Master's degree: one theory course, one data analysis course, one research tool course, and one pedagogy course. In addition, students take five electives. Students may, in consultation with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies, take courses in other departments to fulfill elective requirements. Students must get approval from the Director of Graduate Studies before enrolling in courses offered outside the Sociology Department. If the course is not pre-approved, the Graduate School will not provide a tuition waiver for that course.

In addition to course work, the Ph.D. requires successful completion of comprehensive examinations (see below), at least one semester of teaching experience, a defended dissertation proposal, and a completed Ph.D. dissertation.

Required Courses

- **SOCI 715: Advanced Topics in Social Theory.** This course may not be offered as frequently as other core courses; so students should take it the first time it is offered during their program of study assuming they have completed SOCI 710.
- **SOCI 735: Advanced Topics in Data Analysis.** The specific course content rotates based on faculty interests. Students can take this course any time after the completion of SOCI 730, whether or not they have already completed other Master's requirements. Only with the approval of the Graduate Director and the Graduate Studies Committee may students substitute a different statistics course for this requirement when SOCI 735 is not offered.
- **SOCI 798: Teaching Sociology.** Students must complete this one-credit seminar on pedagogies and the mechanics of teaching before they teach their own course. Students ordinarily take this course in their fourth year in the program, given that they typically teach their own course during the fifth year.
- **Research Tool Course.** Students must complete either an additional data analysis course or a methods course, either inside or outside the department, depending on the student's particular research agenda and in consultation with the student's faculty advisor. The Department of Sociology does not include a foreign language among its degree requirements, but some students may pursue specialty areas that logically dictate mastery of an appropriate foreign language. If such a student needs language training to conduct dissertation research, foreign language courses may be substituted for the Research Tool requirement. The student's selection of a particular course to meet the Research Tool requirement will be evaluated and approved by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Comprehensive Examinations

There are two types of examinations that students take in partial fulfillment of their Ph.D.: (1) a preliminary examination in social theory and (2) an area examination in which they demonstrate expertise in a particular substantive area of research. Together, these two examinations comprise their Comprehensive Examinations.

Preliminary Examination in Social Theory

The Social Theory committee administers a common cohort-wide preliminary examination in social theory at the end of the spring semester of the third year. Typically, all students in a particular cohort are required to take the same examination at the same time. This theory exam is a 72-hour take-home exam.

The Social Theory committee evaluates the examination, and representatives of the Social Theory committee may also conduct an oral defense of the examination. The examination may receive an evaluation of PASS WITH DISTINCTION, PASS, PASS WITH NOTED DEFICIENCIES, or FAIL.

Students failing the theory exam are required to retake it by the end of the summer (August). Ordinarily, a second failure on this exam will result in dismissal from the program. Students who do not adhere to the above schedule for the preliminary exam in social theory will have their funding suspended.

Area Examination

Students also write an area examination in which they demonstrate proficiency in a substantive sociological area. The format of the area examination is normally that of a review essay of **no more than fifty pages** that surveys the theories, methods, findings, and "hot topics" over the past decade within the student's chosen area of specialization.

The area examining committee is comprised of three faculty members the student chooses (subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies). The student and examining committee determine the precise area the examination covers (subject to the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair of the Department).

Students submit this essay to the examining committee by the end of the seventh semester in residence (December 6). If the exam is not acceptable at this time, the student has until **February 15th of the following semester** to submit the revised version.

Failure to turn in the area exam by the above deadline results in failure of the exam. If the area exam is not successfully completed at this time, it is considered the equivalent of two failures and, ordinarily, will result in dismissal from the program.

Instructions for Ph.D. Area Examination

The area examination paper should reflect the writer's expertise in a recognized area of specialization within the field of sociology. If students wish to pursue an area that is not listed as a section of the American Sociological Association or in an area for which our department does not offer any course work, the student must get approval from the chair of your area exam committee **before** beginning to write the first draft of the manuscript.

The area examination presents four major challenges for the writer; the examining committee evaluates the manuscript on its success in meeting these four objectives.

First, this manuscript should demonstrate that the writer is familiar with the literature in the selected area of specialization. It is essential that the student cite and summarize the most influential publications in the field (both classic and recent publications). The student must remember to summarize or explain key ideas.

Second, this manuscript should demonstrate that the writer has not only read but integrated the literature and can identify the big questions *that push the area forward*. What are the most important conceptual issues? What are the new theoretical perspectives? What new lines of empirical research are most promising? Why? Students should highlight the cutting edge of their field throughout the entire manuscript, and explain why particular theoretical issues or empirical topics are on the cutting edge and why others are of little value.

Third, this manuscript should convey to the readers *what the writer thinks about all that s/he has written/read*; a successful area exam not only catalogues and ranks the literature in terms of importance, centrality, and research generated, but also gives voice to the writer. You must demonstrate the student's own analytic ability to assess the field. Clearly distinguish your own views and evaluations from the ideas and criticisms of other scholars (properly cite sources of criticism). Take a position and clearly identify it as your own. If you are in agreement with others, then say so. If you disagree, then explain why.

Fourth, this manuscript should demonstrate the author's ability to write well.

Finally, the student would be wise to submit an outline or brief overview of the main issues/topics that he or she plans to address in the paper along with a tentative bibliography **before** beginning to write the first draft of the area examination.

Dissertation Prospectus/Dissertation

The final requirement is the successful completion of the Ph.D. dissertation. For students to remain in good standing and to ensure ample time to complete the dissertation, the department expects students to defend a dissertation prospectus by the end of the eighth semester.²

According to the Graduate School rules and regulations, students are approved for “Admission to Candidacy” for the Ph.D. degree upon successful completion of all course work, comprehensive examinations, and dissertation prospectus. Students must be admitted to candidacy at least one semester before the completion of the dissertation. Students should plan on successful defense of the dissertation by the end of the tenth semester, which coincides with the end of departmental funding.

SUMMARY OF DEGREE REQUIREMENTS & RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE

Requirements

1. M.A. Degree
 - a. 24 course credit hours plus completed thesis
 - b. SOCI 710: Intermediate Social Theory
 - c. SOCI 720: Intermediate Sociological Methods
 - d. SOCI 725: Qualitative Analysis
 - e. SOCI 730: Intermediate Data Analysis
 - f. Master's thesis

2. Ph.D. Degree
 - a. Successful completion of the master's degree (as per above)
 - b. 25 course credit hours beyond the master's degree
 - c. SOCI 715: Advanced Topics in Social Theory
 - d. SOCI 735: Advanced Topics in Data Analysis
 - e. SOCI 798: Teaching Sociology
 - f. Research Tool course
 - g. Successful completion of Comprehensive Examinations: (1) preliminary examination in social theory, and (2) the area examination
 - h. At least one semester of teaching experience
 - i. Ph.D. prospectus and dissertation

² The committee may require that the students defend the proposal or the dissertation itself in a public presentation format.

Typical/Recommended Course Sequence³

The following sequence assumes that students (a) enter without a master's degree or graduate transfer credits; (b) continue studies through the Ph.D.; (c) have a maximum of 10 semesters of assistantship and tuition scholarship; (d) have a usual course load of three courses; and (e) have not tested out of courses.

SEMESTER	COURSE
FIRST	SOCI 710: Intermediate Social Theory SOCI 720: Intermediate Sociological Methods One (1) Elective
SECOND	SOCI 725: Qualitative Analysis SOCI 730: Intermediate Data Analysis One (1) Elective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and confer with thesis advisor. • Identify and begin work on thesis topic. • First Year Review at end of semester.
1 st SUMMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on thesis, aiming for a complete draft by end of summer.
THIRD	Two (2) Electives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred thesis completion is at the end of the third semester. • Students may complete SOCI 735 if offered.
FOURTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required thesis completion is at the end of the fourth semester (plus the following summer if necessary). • If thesis is completed, work on preparing thesis for submission to professional journal. • Students may complete SOCI 715 if offered. • Second Year Review at the end of the semester, and formal admission to Ph.D. program if recommended by thesis committee.
2 nd SUMMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare thesis for publication review. • Identify specialty area, and begin preparation for Preliminary Social Theory Exam and Area Exam.
FIFTH	SOCI 735: Advanced Topics in Data Analysis Two (2) Electives <i>Note:</i> The department recommends that all electives for Ph.D. should be tied to Area Examination or dissertation research as much as course availability allows.

³ This course sequence is contingent on course availability.

SIXTH	<p>SOCI 715: Advanced Topics in Social Theory Two (2) Electives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for Preliminary Examination in Social Theory. • Constitute Area Exam committee. • Identify and commence work on Ph.D. dissertation topic. • <i>May: students the take preliminary exam in social theory (if the exam is not successfully completed, the makeup date is the following August).</i>
3 rd SUMMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and write for Area Examination. • Prepare manuscripts for publication.
SEVENTH	<p>Research Tool Course One (1) Elective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Submit Area Examination by December 6 of this semester.</i> • Finalize dissertation topic.
EIGHTH	<p>SOCI 798: Teaching Sociology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final Makeup of Area exam by February 15 or dismissal from program.</i> • Defend dissertation prospectus by end of semester. • Admission to Candidacy. • Work on dissertation research (to continue through the summer).
NINTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on dissertation. • Teaching assignment. • Enter the job market.
TENTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and defend dissertation. • Teaching assignment. • Sign a contract for your new position!

CRITERIA FOR FUNDING

TIMING

The course of study leading to the Ph.D. in Sociology is designed as a five-year program for students entering without a master's degree in Sociology. Assuming reasonable progress each year as determined by annual evaluation, and contingent on the availability of funds, entering students are assured that they will be recommended for up to ten semesters of graduate assistantship and tuition scholarship. Students rarely receive funding beyond five years; while they are welcome to remain in the program beyond that period, they will be expected to arrange for their own funding.

The five-year program assumes that students begin their graduate studies without a Master's degree. The typical funding package offered to most students who do not enter with a Master's degree in Sociology (10 semesters of assistantship and tuition scholarship) also assumes that students will spend at least one semester writing a Master's thesis and two semesters writing a dissertation. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to pursue publication of their research during semesters in which they have reduced course loads. Semesters devoted to thesis and dissertation credits are exempt from tuition; the graduate schools pays for "thesis (or dissertation) credits" during these periods.

Students who enter with a M.A. in Sociology are normally expected to complete their Ph.D. work within six to eight semesters. Normally, students who enter with a M.A. in Sociology will be recommended for a maximum of eight semesters of graduate assistantship and tuition scholarship.

If students do not complete their M.A. or Ph.D. work within the allotted time for departmental funding, students must continue to be registered for thesis or dissertation research credits every semester until they defend their thesis or dissertation. The "continuous registration" rule is described on the Graduate School website (www.tulane.edu/~gradprog).

The semesters described above are fall and spring semesters. We do not offer graduate-level courses in the summer. Summers can, however, be a productive time to work on publications or to finish assignments remaining from the preceding year. Note that the department typically does not provide funding for students during the summer. As students progress through the program, they can expect that their productivity over the summer will be important to completing their Ph.D. work within the specified five-year time frame.

MAINTAINING REASONABLE PROGRESS

"Reasonable progress" reflects two things, course grades and staying on track in fulfilling the various degree requirements in a timely fashion.

The graduate school requires a minimum average quality-point ratio of 3.0 (B). If a student receives a grade of B- or lower, the Graduate Dean, in consultation with the department, will consider the student for probation. A second grade of B- or lower, however, will result in automatic dismissal from the program.

Students who fall behind can have their funding suspended. Suspension of funding is normally automatic if:

1. the Master's degree is not completed by the end of the summer following the fourth semester of study;
2. comprehensive examinations have not been completed as required;
3. all degree requirements are not completed by the end of the tenth semester of study.

The department is aware that extenuating circumstances can impede a student's progress through the program (for example, an illness that requires a semester's leave of absence). These situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis and, if deemed appropriate, an extension of these deadlines will be granted by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Department Chair and the Dean of the Graduate School. However, extensions will be given only in exceptional cases.

ANNUAL EVALUATIONS FOR FIRST AND SECOND YEAR STUDENTS

First Year Review

Recommendations for funding for continuing students are typically due to the Graduate School in March. Therefore, all notifications of stipends will be contingent on the availability of funds and successful completion of the spring semester and course work. To that effect, at the end of the spring semester of the first year, if it is necessary to reduce the number of funded continuing students, a faculty committee will rank those with grades lower than A-. In addition to grades, the committee will evaluate one paper written during the year and selected by the student in question.

All foreign students are required to take an ESL course in the summer preceding their first year or during the fall semester of their first year. Those who fail to achieve the minimum required grade on the exam in the course repeat it in the spring. Students who fail the fall exam will be notified that their funding for the second year is contingent upon successfully demonstrating proficiency in English by passing the second year attempt at the ESL exam.

Second Year Review

While students are reviewed annually, the most important of these reviews occurs at the end of the second year. This review assesses all of the student's work in the program to that point. After the oral defense of the M.A. thesis, a student's committee will make a recommendation to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) about whether the student should continue on to the Ph.D. program along with the reasons for the recommendation. The DGS will then review the student's performance in the program and make a recommendation concerning the student to the sociology faculty as a whole. If either recommendation is negative, the student's file will be available for review by the faculty. A vote of the faculty will determine the outcome.

The outcome of Second Year Review is either (1) termination at the master's level, (2) continuation at the master's level (with suspension of funding if the thesis is not completed by the end of the summer following the second year), or (3) admission to the Ph.D. program.

HONOR CODE

The following appears on Graduate School website and bears repeating: “The Graduate School expects students to conduct their academic endeavors with honesty and integrity. Activities covered by the Honor Code include course work, examinations and research. This Honor Code outlines individual responsibilities as well as procedures to be followed if there is a question concerning a student's academic honesty or integrity. These values are held in common by all departments and enforced by the sanctions of the Dean of the Graduate School. All students enrolled in the Graduate School are subject to these regulations and should be familiar with this Honor Code. A copy of the Honor Code is available in the Graduate School office.” All graduate students should make themselves aware of the provisions of the Honor Code and act accordingly.

GRADUATE SCHOOL RULES & REGULATIONS

All Graduate School rules and regulations are described in detail on the Graduate School website (www.tulane.edu/~gradprog).

DEADLINES FOR COMMENCEMENT

Each student is responsible for meeting mandatory Graduate School deadlines for commencement. These deadlines include the “Application for Degree” form (in January for May graduation, in June for August graduation, and in October for December graduation), delivery of thesis or dissertation in its final format to the Graduate School (first week of April for May graduation, mid July for August graduation, and first week of December for December graduation), and payment of all graduation fees. These exact deadlines are updated every year and are posted on the Graduate School website.

GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Serving as a teaching assistant in this department is an important part of your graduate training. Your performance in this role affects faculty perceptions of your commitment and dedication to becoming a competent sociologist. In order to clarify our expectations associated with serving in as a graduate assistant, we are providing you with the following guidelines.

The graduate teaching assistant assignment begins one week prior to the first day of classes and ends 48 hours after the end of the examination period.

Graduate students who are awarded a graduate teaching assistant stipend should comply with the following guidelines:

- Work 18 hours per week.
Hours may vary from week to week, but the average hours across weeks should not exceed 18 hours. Students may not work for other departments on campus during the academic year without pre-approval from the Graduate Studies Committee.
Ordinarily, students may not work in an instructional capacity for other departments, but may be allowed to work as research assistants as long as the hours do not interfere with TA/RA responsibilities within the Department of Sociology. Students may work as paid tutors on campus as long as they are not serving as the teaching assistant for the particular course for which they are tutoring.
- Meet with supervising professor on a regular basis.
Some professors may require weekly or semi-weekly meetings. Be punctual for all meetings.
- Check mailbox, e-mail, and graduate student bulletin board frequently.
Access to information in a timely fashion is its own reward. Some professors may establish a regular schedule of communicating with the graduate assistant through notes or memos via the mail box.
- Complete assignments in a timely fashion.
Professors may require non-negotiable deadlines for certain tasks. These tasks should become a high priority for you.
- Take the work seriously.
Avoid errors in the execution of T.A. duties. What may seem like an inconsequential error (especially clerical tasks) can have disastrous, or at least, embarrassing consequences.

Supervising professors may require graduate assistants to do any of the following tasks within the 18 hour per week guidelines:

- photocopying (classroom or research materials)
- administration/clerical duties
(correspondence, filing, record keeping, typing, phone calls)
- teaching-related activities
(grading, developing assignments & exams, guest lecturing, running discussion sections & review sessions, holding office hours, tutoring, attending class, assisting in the proctoring of exams, reading course materials)
- research-related activities
(collecting, coding, entering, and cleaning data, computer programming, proofreading, commenting on papers)
- library work for research or teaching purposes
- written documentation of research activities
(especially important for computer/research tasks and library searches)
- written summaries of literature searches

If a conflict arises between a graduate student's progress in the program and graduate assistant demands, it is the student's responsibility to bring these conflicts to the attention of the supervising professor and negotiate a mutually agreeable solution. None of the faculty has any interest in impeding any student's progress, so achieving such a resolution should rarely be a problem. If it is, the student should discuss the situation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

If a faculty member experiences problems with the student's performance of her/his duties as a teaching or research assistant, it is the obligation of the faculty member to communicate the problem to the student in a timely fashion. Likewise, it is also the student's obligation to respond to the faculty member's complaint in a timely fashion. If the individuals involved cannot resolve the problem satisfactorily, they should consult with either the Director of Graduate Studies or the Chair for outside mediation.

If a student continues to neglect his/her normally expected assistantship duties without good cause, by either (1) refusing to do the assigned work or (2) doing the work in an unsatisfactory way, even after a faculty member has communicated the problem to the student, the Director of Graduate Studies or the Chair has intervened, and outside mediation has not resolved the problem, the Department will seek the termination of the assistantship before the end of the period of appointment according to the regulations and procedures of the protection of academic freedom of graduate, teaching, or research assistants (pursuant to Article XII of the Statement on Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Responsibility, May 17, 1971).

DEPARTMENTAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The departmental provides guidelines and procedures for addressing grievances concerning academic issues. Should you encounter a situation in which you feel a grievance is warranted, it is imperative that you consult and follow these guidelines. The following procedures are in accordance with those approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility of Students (October, 1989 version).

1. Within one month of receiving a grade or other cause of complaint, a student should make an informal attempt to resolve the grievance by approaching the instructor or other academic supervisor. If the instructor cannot be reached due to summer vacation or other circumstances, contact should be made **as soon as possible or within two weeks of the beginning of the following semester.**
2. If student and instructor cannot arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution within **seven days**, the student should submit a written statement of the alleged grievance to the chair of the department.
3. If the grievance is against the chair, the statement should be submitted to the vice-chair of the department, who will then preside over all matters discussed below.
4. If a grievance cannot be resolved by informal mediation within **seven days** of its referral to the department chair, the student will be informed of his or her right to bring the matter before a departmental grievance committee. The student will be granted **48 hours** from the time of notification of right of grievance hearing to notify the chair of his or her decision. The chair shall schedule the grievance hearing, if requested, within **72 hours** of such notification.
5. Request by parties involved in the grievance process for extensions of the above time limits shall be entertained by the chair and granted only in extreme cases.
6. The departmental grievance committee shall consist of three faculty members appointed by the chair of the department. Ideally, the committee will consist of members who have had no previous formal affiliation with the student. A new committee will be selected for each grievance case.
7. The chair shall advise the committee members of the name of the student and shall notify the student of the composition of the committee at least **24 hours** before the hearing.
8. Requests by students to remove a faculty member from the committee for cause or by committee members to remove themselves for cause shall be entertained by the chair and granted only in extreme cases.

9. The chair shall not serve as a committee member, but the chair or chair's appointee shall serve as the moderator of all grievance hearings.
10. Both the student and the instructor have the right to submit written statements of their opinions concerning the grievance to the grievance committee and shall be encouraged to do so. Both parties also have the right to appear before the committee during the hearing and shall be encouraged to do so. Neither party is obligated to submit a written opinion nor to appear personally before the committee. Choice regarding these options shall not be weighted in committee deliberations.
11. Instructors against whom grievances are filed are obligated to submit to the committee all written materials (test, papers, record of grades, and so forth) which bear directly on the grievance case unless those materials already have been returned to the student. Instructors are expected to retain written materials for a period of at least **six months** following the end of the semester in which the material was submitted for purpose of grading.
12. Parties giving testimony in a hearing shall be segregated before and during testimony.
13. Testimony, but not committee deliberation, during a grievance hearing shall be tape-recorded and tapes kept on file for **six months** after the hearing.
14. The committee shall render a decision in the grievance matter within **three days** of the hearing. Committee records should contain not only the decision but an explanation of the grounds upon which the decision was reached. Summary statements of decisions and their grounds shall be sent by the chair to the student, the faculty member against whom the grievance was filed, and the dean of the student's college.