



Graduate Handbook



Department of Sociology

Mather Memorial Building

Case Western Reserve University

Graduate Regulations

Effective Fall Semester 2011

Graduate Requirements in Sociology

This document is effective for all students entering in the Fall of 2011 and thereafter. The regulations covered in this document relate specifically to the Department of Sociology. It is the **responsibility of the student** also to be **aware of all regulations, policies, and procedures** set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies at Case. These may be found in the General Bulletin of the University.

Please note that in many instances, the requirements of the department surpass the minimum degree requirements set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies.

OBJECTIVES

The graduate program in Sociology prepares Ph.D. students for careers as researchers and teachers in academic settings as well as public and private organizations. The Department emphasizes the *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course*, *Medical Sociology*, and *Research Methods*.

ADMISSION TO THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

All graduate students (except undergraduate students participating in the *Integrated Graduate Studies*, or *IGS*, program) are admitted to the Ph.D. program, and should expect to spend approximately 2 1/2 years (5 semesters) in coursework and at least two years completing their dissertation project. Ph.D. students may petition for an M.A. upon completion of those requirements (outlined later in this document). *IGS* students must all meet these same requirements for their M.A. degree.

Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

To receive the Ph.D., students must fulfill all program requirements pertaining to **(1) coursework**, **(2) comprehensive examinations**, and **(3) the dissertation**.

1. COURSEWORK: Completion of 63 hours of coursework, including 18 hours of SOCI 701 dissertation hours, as specified below.

These core requirements set forth the Department's view that the specialization in the *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course* and *Medical Sociology* must build upon competence in both sociological theory and research methods. In addition, elective courses from other substantive areas of sociology are included in the curriculum. This course list is subject to additions and changes. Check with your advisor before making selections.

Sociological Theory (6 credits)

SOCI 400: Development of Sociological Theory (3)

SOCI 401: Contemporary Sociological Theory (3)

Research Methods (12 credits)

SOCI 406: Sociological Research Methods I (3)

SOCI 407: Sociological Research Methods II (3)

Plus TWO of the following or courses approved by the Graduate Committee:

SOCI 414: Qualitative Research Methods (3)

SOCI 473: Methods of Life-Course Research (3)

SOCI 509: Problems in Data Analysis (3)

Medical Sociology (9 credits)

SOCI 443: Medical Sociology (3)

Plus TWO electives in Medical Sociology (these may include the following or others approved by the department graduate committee):

SOCI 411: Health and Social Behavior

SOCI 419: Sociology of Institutional Care (3)

SOCI 413: Sociology of Stress and Coping (3)

SOCI 465: Health Care Delivery (3)

Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (9 credits)

SOCI 469: Aging in American Society (3)

Plus TWO electives in the Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (these may include the following or others approved by the department graduate committee):

SOCI 413: Sociology of Stress and Coping (3)

SOCI 419: Sociology of Institutional Care (3)

SOCI 461: Sociology of the Life Course (3)

SOCI 496: Aging and Public Policy (3)

Electives in other Areas of Sociology (9 credits)

THREE electives in Sociology, (these may include, among others):

SOCI 410: The Individual in Society (3)

SOCI 449: Social Inequality (3)

SOCI 460: Sociology of Law (3)

SOCI 461: The Life Course (3)

SOCI 470: Family Structure and Process

SOCI 472: Work and Family: U.S. and Abroad (3)

SOCI 500: Advanced Social Theory (3)

Dissertation Hours (18 credits)

SOCI 701: Dissertation Ph.D.

Note: A limited number of elective courses may be taken outside of the Sociology Department with the prior approval of the department graduate committee. Generally, these courses must be taught by an individual holding the Ph.D. in Sociology or an individual with a secondary faculty appointment in the Department of Sociology. Petitions for these courses must include the description of the course from the General Bulletin, the name of the instructor and syllabus.

Concentrations

Students must concentrate in two of the following areas:

- 1) Sociology of Aging and Life Course
- 2) Medical Sociology
- 3) Research Methods

Concentrations for Sociology of Aging and Life Course, Medical Sociology, and Research Methods consist of completing the required and elective courses as specified in Part One (1) of this document and the completion of a comprehensive exam in that area.

Other important notes related to coursework

Independent “Readings and Research” courses (601) are allowed as elective courses on a limited basis. Students must petition for these arrangements, and have the prior approval of both the faculty member and the department graduate committee.

All 601 and 701 courses must have a faculty sponsor. A meeting with the faculty sponsor must occur prior to the start of the term, and a schedule of readings, meetings, and course “products” should be developed at that time. A one-page description of the projects must also be submitted to the department graduate committee by the beginning of the semester. That description will be included in the student’s file. To receive a pass at the end of the term, the student must satisfactorily meet all requirements set forth in that plan.

Those students who enter the program with an M.A. degree in Sociology may petition to use up to 9 credits (3 courses) of previous Sociology coursework to satisfy Ph.D. degree requirements. This is possible because the total number of courses taken during Ph.D. study in Sociology will exceed the minimum number as set by the School of Graduate Studies. As such, it is not possible to receive an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Case if you have received approval to use 9 hours of prior work toward the M.A., unless additional course work is taken. The department will not provide tuition credit for such course work.

Course Incompletes

Taking a grade as an incomplete is a serious matter. It should only be done for reasons of serious health or personal problems. To receive an incomplete, students must provide the faculty member of record for that course with a written request. This is to be submitted along with the Office of Graduate Studies Arrangement to Resolve an Incomplete Form. This form requires that an explicated date of completion be noted and all requirements necessary for its resolution be met at that time. Incompletes that are not resolved by that date result in the grade of “F” on the student’s permanent record.

2. TWO COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

Students will complete comprehensive exams in each of the areas of department specialization, *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course*, *Medical Sociology*, and *Research Methods*.

The Sociology of Aging and the Life Course and the Medical Sociology comprehensive exams are “reading list” based, meaning that in addition to the required and relevant course work, the student is expected to have mastered the materials provided in the respective reading lists, which include, but are not limited to the syllabi for the required and recommended elective courses in that concentration. The Research Methods comprehensive exam is a mixture of readings-based and course-based materials. Students interested in this comprehensive exam are strongly encouraged to discuss this with the Methods concentration committee. Students are also expected to have reviewed the recent literature in the field (past 2-3 years) as represented by the major journals in the respective areas. Students wishing to make rapid progress through the doctoral program may begin taking exams before all course work is completed, if the student has completed the required and elective course work in that specialization area.

The format of the comprehensive exam is a 75 hour “take-home” exam. Students have access to their materials and resources, but are restricted from seeking help from other persons. The typed exam is submitted both electronically and in paper form to the Department of Sociology. It is then graded by the comprehensive exam committee in that area of concentration.

In order to remain in good standing, students must begin taking these exams no later than the semester after the completion of course work (typically the second semester of the third year of the program), and must take (or re-take, in the case of a failed exam) at least one exam each semester until both exams are completed. A failed exam must be retaken before another exam is attempted.

The exams will be given by an Examination Committee of three faculty members with expertise in the area. The chair of the examination committee and at least one other faculty must be a core member of the department. The examinations will be offered no more than once a semester and twice a year. Exams are NOT given during the summer session.

Students who twice fail to pass a comprehensive examination in a single concentration will be recommended to the School of Graduate Studies for academic separation.

3. ORIGINAL DISSERTATION DEFENDED SUCCESSFULLY: A minimum of 18 credit hours must be successfully completed

The Dissertation Committee shall consist of at least four Case Western Reserve University faculty members, including one whose primary appointment is completely outside the Department of Sociology.

Each student shall request a faculty member to serve as chair of this committee. Once the faculty member agrees to serve as chair, the student, together with the chair, shall then select the other three members. The chair of the committee and two other members must be tenure track members of the Department of Sociology. The final, outside member should have a CWRU faculty appointment.

The **dissertation committee** is approved by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Chair of the Department of Sociology. However, students may initiate a request for a change in the composition of the committee by petitioning the Director of Graduate Studies prior to applying to the School of Graduate Studies to schedule the dissertation defense.

The dissertation process begins with the completion of a **prospectus**. The prospectus for the dissertation should be discussed in a private meeting (or series of meetings) between the student and his or her committee members. The committee must have the complete prospectus at least **two weeks** in advance of what is viewed as a final private meeting. Once the committee deems the students ready for a **public hearing**, a date for the public hearing may be set. In order to ensure maximum opportunity for all students and faculty to attend the defense exam, they are normally not scheduled during the first or last weeks of the semester, or during the final exam period. They are also **not typically scheduled during either the fall or the spring break periods**. Exceptions will be made only to accommodate faculty schedules.

Once the public prospectus date has been set, the student must distribute a 2-3 page **summary** of the prospectus to all faculty and graduate students **one week prior** to the defense. An **announcement** of the prospectus defense must also be **posted and circulated by the Department** to all faculty and students at **least one week** in advance of the hearing. Students do not announce their own defense dates.

The **dissertation defense** needs to be scheduled with the prior approval of the Department Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, and all committee members. This approval must be obtained prior to submitting forms to the School of Graduate Studies (the School of Graduate Studies requires that all forms be turned in 3 weeks prior to the defense). All defenses must occur during the academic year as established by the University. In order to ensure maximum opportunity for all students and faculty to attend the defense exam, **they are normally not scheduled during the first or last weeks of the semester, during the final exam period or during fall or spring break**. Exceptions will be made only to accommodate faculty schedules.

The **defense of the complete dissertation** can be scheduled only after final approval by the dissertation committee of a **complete draft** of the dissertation. The “defense” draft of the **complete dissertation** must be available for review by the dissertation committee **at least one month** prior to the planned date of the defense.

Once the public defense date has been set, the student must distribute a 2-3 page **summary** of the dissertation to all faculty and graduate students **one week prior** to the defense. A complete copy of the dissertation must also be provided to the main office at that time. An **announcement** of the dissertation defense must also be **posted and circulated** to all faculty and students at **least one week** in advance of the hearing. Please ask the Department Administrator to post these announcements at least one week before the deadline.

On the day of the final defense, **the student is responsible** for providing the committee members with the official signature forms from the School of Graduate Studies. It is also the student's responsibility that these forms are submitted to the School of Graduate Studies by the designated deadline.

Prior to graduation, the student is **required to submit a professionally bound and labeled copy of the dissertation to the Department and an electronic copy** to be housed in the Sociology Main Office. Members of the faculty are on 9-month contracts, and students should therefore be sensitive to this in making work-related requests that fall outside of the academic year. **Formal committee meetings, prospectus hearings, and final dissertation defenses will not be scheduled during the summer months.**

Other issues related to doctoral study:

It is the **student's responsibility to schedule** a meeting with one of the graduate advisors each semester. These meetings should be held late fall and late spring, when the schedule of classes has been released. In these meetings, coursework, examinations, the dissertation and other requirements necessary to finish the Ph.D. degree will be discussed.

At the beginning of the fall term, all first-year students must submit an official **planned program of study** form to the graduate advisor. The graduate advisor will assist the student with this form.

Students must file for **pre-candidacy** after the completion of all course work in order to be able to enroll in 701 hours.

A student is advanced to candidacy once she or he has completed all coursework and both comprehensive exams. A **separate planned program of study** is submitted if the student decided to also apply for the MA degree and an updated planned program should be submitted at the time of **advancement to candidacy** degree. The student must formally apply for advancement to candidacy through the School of Graduate Studies.

While the Department is committed to funding students to the greatest degree possible, renewal of support will depend upon academic performance and progress. Annual reviews assess performance and progress and determine whether or not a student is in *good standing*. Reasons for being "not in good standing" include, but are not limited to, having one or more grades of "incomplete" that have extended for more than one semester or failure to attempt comprehensive exams as outlined. Under university guidelines, all incomplete grades must be converted by the following semester or they run the risk of becoming "fail." **Students who are not in good standing as of the end of the academic year, will NOT be considered for tuition or stipend support for the next academic year.**

Course work taken during the period a student is not in good standing will NOT count toward degree requirements. A student may return to *good standing* by satisfying the incompletes or taking/remediating the required examinations. However, funding for tuition or stipend may not be available until the following fall.

We recognize the need for flexibility in requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. A student may petition for a change in the application of one or another of the requirements by detailing the reasons for the requested change. The petitions should be directed to the Department's Director of Graduate Studies who will consult with the Department's Graduate Committee.

Petition to the Department of Sociology for Reinstatement in the Doctoral Program:

Any student seeking reinstatement in the doctoral program of the Department of Sociology (following a separation due to academic performance) must submit a written petition that presents evidence of academic progress or growth in identified areas of weakness. Applicants must demonstrate discernable progress and/or provide significant new information concerning competence or skills (e.g., additional training).

In reviewing such petitions, the department faculty will consider the likelihood of success in the program. The faculty may impose specific conditions for reinstatement and may appoint a specific faculty member as the "point person" for advising/overseeing the student's work and progress.

As part of the deliberation, the department may request a detailed timeline and plan for completion of the program. This plan may include, as applicable: plan of study, timeline for taking comprehensive exams, timeline for completion of prospectus and/or dissertation. If requested, this plan could also detail measures to be undertaken to maximize success in the program or accomplish the conditions of reinstatement.

Ph.D. students enrolled Fall 2010 and earlier have the option of completing the degree requirements in effect when they entered the program or the current program. Students entering Fall 2011 will be required to meet the current requirements.

Requirements for the M.A. Degree

As noted under the Ph.D. requirements, students are normally not admitted for the M.A. degree. However, students may apply for the M.A. under the *Integrated Graduate Studies (IGS)* program, and Ph.D. students may wish to apply for the M.A. after completing the requirements listed below.

To receive the M.A., students must fulfill the following program requirement pertaining to **(1) coursework**, and **(2) a comprehensive examination**.

1. COURSEWORK: Minimum of 27 hours of coursework, as specified below:

Sociological Theory and Research Methods (9 credits)

SOCI 400: Development of Sociological Theory (3)

SOCI 406: Sociological Research Methods I (3)

And either:

SOCI 401: Contemporary Sociological Theory (3)

~OR~

SOCI 407: Sociological Research Methods II (3)

Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (3 credits)

SOCI 469: Aging in American Society (3)

Medical Sociology (3 credits)

SOCI 443: Medical Sociology (3)

Electives in Sociology (12 credits)

Two of the elective courses must be in the areas of either *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course*, *Medical Sociology*, or *Research Methods*, and the remaining two elective courses must NOT be in these areas. Information on which specific courses meet these criteria can be obtained from the graduate director or graduate advisor(s).

NOTE: For those not having taken a course in statistics and probability in their previous work, STAT 201 or PSCL 282 (or its equivalent) is required. However, these do not count toward the 27 hours needed for the M.A.

No more than 9 semester hours at the 300 course level may be included in the requirements for the M.A. degree.

2. One Comprehensive Exam in Age and the Life Course, Medical Sociology, or Research Methods

Students pursuing the Ph.D. may apply for the M.A. degree after completing the course work listed above and after having passed a comprehensive exam in one of the concentrations listed above. This requirement also applies to *IGS* students.

Planned Program of Study		
Course Number	Course Name	Hrs.
SOCI 400	Development of Sociological Theory	3
SOCI 401	Contemporary Sociological Theory	3
SOCI 406	Sociological Research Methods 1	3
SOCI 407	Sociological Research Methods 2	3
SOCI 469	Aging in American Society	3
SOCI 443	Medical Sociology	3
<i>Methods Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>Medical Sociology Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>Sociology of Aging and the Life Course Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>General Electives (9 hours)</i>		