

Graduate Handbook for the Department of Sociology

*Policies and Procedures for the Department of Sociology
and Programs for Africana Studies and Women's &
Gender Studies*

2014-2015

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1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- 1.1 This *Handbook* specifies requirements and procedures that govern the faculty and students in the graduate program of the Department of Sociology, the Program in Africana Studies, and the Program in Women's & Gender Studies. This *Handbook* supplements the regulations contained in the *Graduate Catalog*. All students pursuing an advanced degree in the Sociology Department should study each of these documents. The responsibility for the satisfactory completion of all advanced degree requirements rests with the student.
- 1.2 The student has the right to petition the Graduate Committee for exception to any of the following departmental policies.
- 1.3 The rules in effect at the time of the student's entry into the program will remain in effect through the duration of that student's program of study. However, should program requirements change, a student may opt to fulfill all of the new degree requirements.
- 1.4 The Department of Sociology endorses the [ASA Code of Ethics](#). All graduate students should familiarize themselves with its contents.

2. ADMISSION POLICIES

- 2.1 In addition to the admission standards prescribed by the Graduate School, students requesting admittance to an advanced degree program in Sociology must meet the following requirements:
 - A Bachelor's degree or, in the case of Ph.D. applicants, a master's degree from an accredited institution;
 - A "B" overall grade point average (3.0 on a 4 point system) in all sociology courses taken previously
 - For applicants to the master's program, a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (out of 4.0) for the last two years of undergraduate study.

Applicants must submit:

- Three letters of recommendation, preferably from former professors;
- Scores from the Graduate Record Examination (Verbal, Quantitative, and Writing Exam);
- The results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) for international students from non-English speaking countries.

Applicants to the Ph.D. program with less than fifteen hours of sociology-course work will be required to take fifteen semester hours in sociology at the 3000 level or above. These hours must be taken in addition to the minimum of thirty hours of course work in Sociology.

- 2.2 A student who earned a master's degree in the sociology program at Virginia Tech or is enrolled in that program and seeks admission to and funding for the doctoral program must, by January 15th:

- Write a letter of intent, stating objectives and rationales for seeking admission;
- Have three new letters of recommendation forwarded to the Graduate Director, at least two of which must be from members of the master's advisory committee;
- Submit a master's proposal or thesis that the student successfully defended during the previous fall semester as part of the application;

Though the department does not allow spring-semester admission for any other applicants, students currently enrolled in the MS program are eligible for admission to the doctoral program in the spring semester. The deadline for spring admission is November 1st. New funding is generally not available for spring semester.

- 2.3 BS students may apply, as they approach their last twelve months of undergraduate study, for enrollment in a BS/MS program of accelerated study, which permits the double-counting (toward both BS and MS degrees) a maximum of twelve hours of 4000- and 5000-level graded course work. See the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Undergraduate Advisor for list of double-countable courses.
- BS/MS applications are only accepted for fall semesters; and they must be complete by April 1st of the previous semesters.
 - Applicants must have attained in-major GPAs of at least 3.5 and overall GPAs of at least 3.2.
 - Required application materials include written statements of motivation and career objectives, and written documentation of experience and qualifications as reflected in a résumé and three letters of reference for each applicant.
 - If the Graduate Committee finds these materials acceptable, then at least four members will interview each applicant.
- 2.4 Students admitted to the doctoral program are expected to have met all requirements for the master's degree prior to the semester in which they begin doctoral study. If the degree is not completed by the time the Graduate Committee does its annual review of graduate students during the spring semester, then (a) funding cannot be reserved for that student for the next year, if applicable, and (b) the student will not be making satisfactory progress and permission to continue in the program may be denied.
- 2.5 A doctoral student who has earned a master's degree in another department must have defended a thesis or research manuscript before a committee in that other program, or before a committee of three faculty members in this one, prior to taking preliminary exams.
- 2.6 Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation. The university is subject to titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 11246, Governor Allen's State Executive Order Number Two, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office.

- 2.7 A person with a disability is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. In addition to those people who have visible disabilities – persons who are blind, deaf, or use a wheelchair – the definition includes people with a whole range of invisible disabilities. These include psychological problems, learning disabilities, or some chronic health impairment such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis, cancer, cardiac problems, HIV/ AIDS, and more. (Documentation of the disability may be required.) A person is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she has a disability, has a record of a disability, or is regarded as having a disability. Virginia Polytechnic Institute State University is committed to the policy of non-discrimination in employment and education and complies with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification. Those who require services must first contact the services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in the Dean of Students Office. To be eligible for services, documentation of the disability from a qualified professional must be presented to SSD upon request. (This statement is taken from the Dean of Students web page.)
- 2.8 All students admitted to the graduate program in sociology are required to have laptop computers with wireless technology. The laptops should have sufficient capabilities for running statistical software.

3. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- 3.1 A student's initial advisor will be the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS will serve to acquaint new students with the various procedures and requirements necessary for successful degree completion in Sociology, as well as to assist in planning specific course selections prior to the appointment of the permanent advisor.
- 3.2 To meet the Graduate School requirement for selection of the advisory committee prior to completing fifteen hours, a student's initial advisory committee may consist of the DGS plus a minimum of two or three members of the Graduate Committee for a master's or doctoral committee respectively. But, the student must select a permanent advisory committee before the completion of twenty-four credit hours of study. Members of the Graduate Committee who are not asked to serve on a student's permanent advisory committee will voluntarily withdraw themselves from any formal advising responsibilities, without prejudice. Use of the Graduate Committee as an advisory body is an option of the student.

3.3 Graduate Committees, M.S., Ph.D. Sociology

- 3.31 Master's committees, inclusive of the permanent advisor, are composed of a minimum of three (3) members. No fewer than two of these must be members of the faculty of the Department of Sociology, including affiliates and adjuncts. The chairperson must have a Ph.D. and be a full-time tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Sociology. If there are more than three members, at least half of the members must be members of the sociology faculty, including affiliates and adjuncts.

- 3.32 Doctoral committees are composed of at least four (4) members, at least three of whom are tenure-track members of the Department of Sociology. The chairperson must have a Ph.D. and be a full-time tenure-track faculty member of the Department of Sociology.

Graduate Committees, M.S., Ph.D. Sociology with options in Africana Studies or Women's & Gender Studies¹

- 3.4 Master's committees, inclusive of the permanent advisor, are composed of a minimum of three (3) members. Doctoral committees are composed of at least four (4) members. The committee chairperson must have a Ph.D. and be a full-time, tenure-track faculty member in the Department of Sociology. The majority of the committee must be full-time, tenure-track faculty members in the Department of Sociology.
- 3.5 After gaining the consent of various faculty members to serve on their committees, each student is to write a letter to the DGS formally requesting the appointment of the particular faculty (obtain Forms 1 and 2 from the Graduate Coordinator). Each student is obligated to obtain the signatures of their permanent advisor, other committee members, and the DGS and to distribute a signed copy of the letter to those faculty members and to the DGS. The Graduate School requires an employee identification number for each member of the advisory committee.
- 3.6 Graduate students may change their permanent advisors or any other members of the committee at any time during their courses of study. Such changes require approval of all faculty members concerned, both new and old members, using Forms 1 and 3.

In the case that one or more members do not approve the change in the membership of the advisory committee, an appeal may be made by either the student or the faculty member to the department Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee will make a recommendation to the Department Chair and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Expectations for Faculty Participation on Student Advisory Committees

- 3.7 All faculty serving on student advisory committees are expected to participate in the academic development of students and in directing their research programs. Such expectations include providing intellectual leadership in the research project, providing feedback on written work within three weeks of receiving the work during the regular academic year (Fall and Spring semesters), and a willingness and ability to schedule face-to-face meetings for students' professional development and socialization.
- 3.8 There is no maximum number of committees on which faculty may serve. At the same time, when faculty are approached to be a committee member or chair, they should consider whether the proposed committee would be optimal for the student, based on the student's stated research interest. In other words, faculty should guide students toward making wise choices of committee members based on expertise. Similarly, students should weigh the expertise and other committee obligations of faculty in choosing advisors and committee members. Performance of faculty in this important capacity will be part of regular faculty evaluations conducted by the Department Chair.

¹ Exception can be made with the approval of the Department Chair and the Director of Africana Studies or the Director of Women's & Gender Studies.

4. PLAN OF STUDY

- 4.1 All graduate students must complete a Plan of Study form indicating the courses the student plans to take to meet the minimum requirements for the designated degree.

All courses listed on the Plan of Study form, including supporting courses, must be taken on a letter grade (A-F) basis, except those courses approved by the DGS to be graded on a pass-fail basis only.

- Each doctoral student must indicate the semester for preliminary examinations.
- In consultation with the advisory committee, each student must assure that their plan of study satisfies the requirements for specialty areas.
- After the student's advisory committee approves the plan of study, the DGS confirms that all degree requirements are met and signs the completed form.
- After approval by the DGS, the Plan of Study form is given to the Graduate Coordinator, who files the Plan electronically with the Graduate School.
- The Plan of Study form must be filed electronically with the Graduate School prior to completing fifteen credit hours.
- The Graduate School must approve the plan of study.

- 4.2 A student may amend the Plan of Study form by submitting a Plan of Study Change.

- Obtaining approval from the advisory committee prior to deviating from the plan of study is recommended to ensure that the changes are acceptable to the advisory committee and that the student will still be in compliance with all relevant rules.
- To submit a Plan of Study Change, the student must obtain consent and signatures from each member of the advisory committee.
- The DGS must approve the changes.
- After approval is obtained, the Plan of Study Change is given to the Graduate Coordinator for electronic submission to the Graduate School.
- The Graduate School must approve the Plan of Study Change.

5. COURSE LOAD

- 5.1 To be considered full-time, graduate students normally register for twelve credit hours during any regular academic semester.

- Full-time first-year students on non-service funding or who are not funded are expected to take a minimum of twelve credit hours during the regular academic semesters.
- According to Graduate School requirements, students on assistantship must register for a minimum of nine hours, which may include thesis (SOC 5994) or dissertation (SOC 7994) credits.
- Students on assistantship may register for as many as fifteen hours but must receive special permission from the Graduate School.

- 5.2 Full-time M.S. students are required to maintain a designated number of contact (classroom) hours as follows:

- Each master's degree student must have at least nine contact hours each semester for the first year. The remaining three hours needed to meet the minimum credit hours can be thesis hours or other contact hours.
 - Each master's degree students must have at least six contact hours each semester during the second year, the remaining hours designated for thesis research.
 - A master's degree student can take less than six contact hours during and after the semester during which he or she completes course requirements for the degree.
- 5.3 Full-time Ph.D. students are required to maintain nine contact (classroom) hours each semester that will count toward the minimum requirements for the degree until they complete all course requirements.
- The nine hours includes regular classroom hours in Sociology, courses outside the department that satisfy specific requirements, and/or Independent Study hours.
 - The nine-hour requirement does not include Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914).
 - Students may reduce their contact hours to six in their third or fourth semesters if desired courses are not being offered at those times.
- 5.4 Under exceptional circumstances, students may be relieved of these requirements. Their request must be made in the form of an appeal to the Graduate Committee.
- 5.5 Part-time students are exempt from the contact-hour requirement.
- 5.6 Any student who will be away from campus for one or more semester or who for any reason will not be enrolling for one or more semesters should file the appropriate Leave of Absence form with the Graduate School.

6. DEGREES OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

- 6.1. The Department of Sociology, the Program in Africana Studies, and the Program in Women's & Gender Studies offers a Master's of Science Degree and A Doctorate of Philosophy Degree.
- 6.2 The Master's Degree has three options:
- Sociology
 - Sociology with Africana Studies
 - Sociology with Women's & Gender Studies
- 6.3 The Ph.D. has three options:
- Ph.D.
 - Ph.D. – Africana Studies Option
 - Ph.D. – Women's & Gender Studies Option

7. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER'S DEGREE

7.1 Course Requirements for a Master's Degree – Sociology

7.11 A minimum of thirty credit hours, distributed as follows:

- At least one course in sociological theory including either:
 - History of Sociological Thought – SOC 5104
 - OR
 - Contemporary Sociology Theory – SOC 5114
- At least three courses in sociological research methods including:
 - Research Methods – SOC 5214
 - Data Analysis – SOC 5204
 - Intermediate Data Analysis - SOC 5224
- At least four additional sociology courses (twelve hours) carrying graduate credit
- At least six hours but not more than ten hours of Thesis and Research SOC 5994

NOTE: Students can take more than ten hours of Thesis and Research – SOC 5994, but the additional hours **will not** count toward the minimum of thirty hours.

7.12 Students are required to take Orientation to the Discipline – SOC 5914, although this P/F course does not apply to the thirty hour minimum. Completion of this course and the Graduate GTA Workshop (Grad 5004) fulfills the department’s Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.

7.13 The Graduate School limits the number of 4000 level courses to six credit hours.

- Students should seek approval from their committee prior to enrolling in 4000 level courses.

7.14 The Graduate School requires students to have a minimum of twelve credit hours at the 5000 or 6000 level.

- This requirement is met through the department’s theory and methods requirements.

7.15 Students can count a maximum of three credits of Independent Study – SOC 5974 or Special Study – SOC 5984 toward the thirty hour minimum. This restriction does not apply to courses that are later approved as regular courses.

7.16 All entering students, funded or not, are encouraged to take GRAD 5004, Graduate Training Workshop. This is a one-credit, pass/fail course offered by the Graduate School that is offered during the week before classes begin. Completion of this course and Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) fulfills the department’s Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.

7.2 Course Requirements for a Master’s Degree – Sociology with Africana Studies

7.21 A minimum of thirty credit hours, distributed as follows:

- At least six hours of theory including:

- Africana Studies Theory – AfSt 5314
and at least one of the following courses in sociological theory including:
- History of Sociological Thought – SOC 5104
OR
- Contemporary Sociology Theory – SOC – 5114
- At least nine hours of research methods including:
 - Africana Studies Methods – AfSt 5234
 - Data Analysis – SOC 5204
 - Research Methods – 5214
- Three credit hours of Seminar in Africana Studies – AfSt 5224
- At least two additional sociology courses (six hours) carrying graduate credit
- At least six hours but not more than ten hours of Thesis and Research – SOC 5994

NOTE: Students can take more than ten hours of Thesis and Research SOC 5994, **but** the additional hours **will not** count toward the minimum of thirty credit hours.

- 7.22 Students are required to take Orientation to the Discipline – SOC 5914, although this P/F course does not apply to the thirty hour minimum. Completion of this course and the Graduate GTA Workshop (Grad 5004) fulfills the department’s Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.
- 7.23 The Graduate School limits the number of 4000 level courses to six credit hours.
- Students should seek approval from their committee prior to enrolling in a 4000 level courses.
- 7.24 The Graduate School requires students to have a minimum of twelve credit hours at the 5000 or 6000 level.
- This requirement is met through the department’s theory and methods requirements.
- 7.25 Students can count a maximum of three credits of Independent Study – SOC 5974 or Special Study – SOC 5984 toward the thirty hour minimum. This restriction does not apply to courses that are later approved as regular courses.
- 7.26 All entering students, funded or not, are encouraged to take GRAD 5004, Graduate Training Workshop. This is a one-credit, pass/fail course offered by the Graduate School that is offered during the week before classes begin. Completion of this course and Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) fulfills the department’s Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.

7.3 Course Requirements for a Master’s Degree – Sociology with Women’s & Gender Studies

- 7.31 A minimum of thirty credit hours, distributed as follows:

- At least six hours of theory including:
 - Feminist Theory – WGS 5914
 - AND at least one of the following courses in sociological theory including:
 - History of Sociological Thought – SOC 5104
 - OR
 - Contemporary Sociology Theory – SOC – 5114
- At least nine hours of research methods including:
 - Feminist Research Methodologies – WGS 5924
 - Data Analysis – SOC 5204
 - Research Methods – 5214
- WGS 5114 Foundations of Women’s & Gender Studies
- At least six hours of sociology courses carrying graduate credit, at least three hours of which must be from the following list: SOC 5624 (Women and Work) and SOC 5714 (Aging in Social Context)
- At least six hours but not more than ten hours of Thesis and Research – SOC 5994

Students can take more than ten hours of Thesis and Research SOC 5994, **but** the additional hours **will not** count toward the minimum of thirty credit hours.

- 7.32 Students are required to take Orientation to the Discipline – SOC 5914, although this P/F course does not apply to the thirty hour minimum. Completion of this course and the Graduate GTA Workshop (Grad 5004) fulfills the department’s Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.
- 7.33 Students are required to focus their theses on gender, sexuality, and/or feminist perspectives.
- 7.34 Students receive a certificate in Women’s & Gender Studies and the concentration is noted on their transcript.

8. COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D.

- 8.1 Students can obtain the Ph.D. in three ways.
- With no specialization
 - With a specialization in Africana Studies Ph.D. – Sociology and Africana Studies Option (**see Section 9**)
 - With a specialization in Women’s & Gender Studies Ph.D. – Sociology and WGS Option (**see Section 10**)

8.2 Requirements for the Ph.D., no specialization

- 8.21 The Graduate School requires a minimum of ninety semester hours of graduate study and a dissertation. Up to twenty-four hours of graded, graduate *transferred* course work can

count toward this requirement. These credits must be earned in graduate-level sociology courses or in related programs. The Director of Graduate Studies must approve all transfer credits.

- 8.22 A minimum of sixty-six credit hours of graduate study beyond those required for the master's degree
- 8.23 A minimum of thirty-six credit hours of coursework beyond those required for the master's degree
- At least thirty credit hours in courses numbered 5000 and above after enrolling in the doctoral program
- 8.24 Of the thirty-six credit hours, at least thirty credit hours must be Sociology (including American Indian Studies, Women's & Gender Studies, or Africana Studies) courses beyond the master's.
- Cross-listed courses with sociology can fulfill this requirement if the student enrolls in the course using the sociology course number.
 - Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) and Research and Dissertation (SOC 7994) cannot be used to meet these requirements.
 - No more than nine credit hours in Independent Study (SOC 5974) or Special Study (SOC 5984 or 6984) can be charged to the thirty hour minimum of Sociology courses. The restriction does not apply to courses that are numbered 5984 and are later approved as a regular courses.
- 8.25 A maximum of six credit hours of 4000 level courses.
- Students should seek approval from their committee prior to enrolling in a 4000 level course.
- 8.26 At least thirty credit hours but no more than sixty credit hours of Research and Dissertation (SOC 7994) are required.
- Up to nine hours of Research and Thesis (SOC 5994) can be used to fulfill this requirement.

8.3 Methods Requirements (no specialization):

Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the cognitive content of the following courses:

- Data Analysis SOC 5204, Intermediate Data Analysis SOC 5224, Research Methods SOC 5214, and Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214.
- There are no substitutes for Data Analysis SOC 5204, Intermediate Data Analysis SOC 5224, Research Methods SOC 5214, or Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214.
- Ph.D. students must have at least one more advanced methods (qualitative or quantitative) course. Options include but are not limited to:

- Survey Research Methods SOC 6204
- Application of Structural Equations in Education SOC/EDRE 6664

8.4. Theory Requirements (no specialization):

- Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the content of:
 - History of Sociological Thought SOC 5104 and
 - Contemporary Sociological Theory SOC 5114 and
- There are no substitutes for SOC 5104 (History of Sociological Thought) and SOC 5114 (Contemporary Sociological Theory).
- The student **must** take one of the following courses:
 - Advanced Topics in Theory SOC 6114, Contemporary Political Theory PSCI 5214
 - Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory PSCI 5224
 - Africana Studies Theory AfSt 5314
 - Feminist Theory WGS 5914
 - Other relevant 5000 or 6000 level theory that is approved by the student's advisory committee

8.5 Students may be exempted from any required theory or methods course in one of two ways:

1. **Students may take written exams.**
 - Faculty members who teach the courses will design and grade exams, and decide if students need to take the courses, based on the students' performances on the exams.
2. **Students provide documentation (e.g. syllabus, tests, assignments, papers, notes) from relevant prior course work and take oral exams.**
 - Faculty members who teach the courses will decide if students need to take the courses, based on the students' performances on the exams.

If the instructor of the course or a member of the student's advisory committee decides that a student is not exempt from taking a course, then the student must take the course.

8.6 Teaching Course Requirement (no specialization)

- Student must complete a college teaching course.
 - Sociology 5234 Sociological Issues in College Pedagogy fulfills this requirement.
 - The teaching course does not have to be taken in the department.
 - A teaching course taken outside the department does not count toward the required thirty-six hours.
- This course does not count toward the required thirty-six hours, unless it is Sociology 5234.

8.7 Major Area Requirements (no specialization)

Students must choose two areas of specialization for their doctoral studies. Students have two options for selecting their areas of specialization.

- Option One: Students select two areas of specialization from the list in 11.31. Students can specialize in either Africana Studies OR Women's & Gender Studies; however, students cannot specialize in both Africana Studies AND Women's & Gender Studies.
- Option Two: Students select one area of specialization from the list in 11.31 and another approved area not on the list. See below for procedure for selecting an area not on the list.

8.8 Students must complete courses and other requirements as designated by their Ph.D. Committee.

8.9 Students must complete any additional requirements of the Graduate School.

8.91 All entering students, funded or not, are encouraged to take GRAD 5004, Graduate Training Workshop. This is a one-credit, pass/fail course offered by the Graduate School that is offered during the week before classes begin. Completion of this course and Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) fulfills the department's Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.

9. COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D, AFRICANA STUDIES OPTION

9.1 The Graduate School requires a minimum of ninety semester hours of graduate study and a dissertation. Up to twenty-four hours of master's credits can count toward this requirement.

9.2 A minimum of sixty-six credit hours of graduate study beyond the master's degree is required.

9.21 A minimum of thirty-six credit hours of coursework required beyond the master's degree.

- At least thirty credit hours in courses numbered 5000 and above after enrolling in the doctoral program.

9.22 Of the thirty-six credit hours beyond the masters:

- Eighteen hours must be in Sociology courses beyond the master's.
- Cross-listed courses with sociology can fulfill this requirement if the student enrolls in the course using the sociology course number.
- Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) and Research and Dissertation (SOC 7994) cannot be used to meet these requirements

- No more than nine credit hours of Independent Study (SOC 5974) can be charged to the thirty hour minimum of Sociology or Africana Studies courses. The restriction does not apply to courses that are numbered 5984 and are later approved s regular courses.

9.23 Students must have twelve hours of Africana Studies courses, distributed as follows:

- Three credit hours in the History of Africana People (AfSt 5432)
- Three credit hours in Policy
- Six hours in special topics in Africana Studies
 - The special topics requirement can be met by taking AfSt 5354 twice or by taking AfSt 5356 once and an additional course approved by the student's advisory committee.

9.24 Students are expected to take or know the content of Africana Studies Seminar AfSt 5224.

9.25 Maximum of six credit hours of 4000 level courses.

9.26 At least thirty credit hours but no more than sixty credit hours of Research and Dissertation SOC 7994 are required.

- Up to nine hours of Research and Thesis SOC 5994 can be used to fulfill this requirement.

9.3 Methods Requirements (AfSt option):

- Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the cognitive content of the following courses:
 - Africana Studies Methods – AfSt 5234
 - Research Methods SOC 5214
 - Data Analysis SOC 5204
 - Intermediate Data Analysis SOC 5224
 - Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214
- There are no substitutes for Data Analysis SOC 5204, Intermediate Data Analysis SOC 5224, Research Methods SOC 5214, Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214, or Africana Studies Methods AfSt 5234.
- If students do not test out (see below), they should take Data Analysis SOC 5204 concurrent with or prior to Research Methods 5214.

9.4. Theory Requirements (AfSt option):

- Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the contents of
 - Africana Studies Theory – AfSt 5314
 - History of Sociology Thought – SOC 5104
 - Contemporary Sociological Theory – SOC 5114

- If students must take a course there are no substitutes for SOC 5104 (History of Sociological Thought) and SOC 5114 (Contemporary Sociological Theory), or Africana Studies Theory AfSt 5314.

9.5 Students may be exempted from any required theory or methods course in one of two ways:

1. Students may take written exams.

- Faculty members who teach the courses will design and grade exams, and decide if students need to take the courses, based on the students' performances on the exams.

2. Students provide documentation (e.g. syllabus, tests, assignments, papers, notes) from relevant prior course work and take oral exams.

- Faculty members who teach the courses will decide if students need to take the courses, based on the students' performances on the exams.
- Only one of these procedures can be attempted by any given student, and neither one can be repeated.
- If the instructor of the course or a member of the student's advisory committee decides that a student is not exempt from taking a course, then the student must take the course.
- The test for each course will take place during the final two weeks of the semester preceding the offering of that course just before the course offering in spring and fall. (See Appendix for Theory and Method Objectives.)
- Any student who wants to take a course-exemption exam for a particular course offered in the spring should notify the DGS by December 15 and August 1 for the Fall semester.
- The exams will be given one week prior to the start of classes.

9.6 Teaching Course Requirement (AfSt option)

- Student must complete a college teaching course.
 - Sociology 5234 Sociological Issues in College Pedagogy fulfills this requirement.
 - The teaching course does not have to be taken in the department.
 - A teaching course taken outside the department does not count toward the required thirty-six hours.

9.7 Major Area Requirements (AfSt option)

Students must choose two areas of specialization for their doctoral studies. Students have two options for selecting their areas of specialization.

- Option One: Students select two areas of specialization from the list in 11.31. Students can specialize in either Africana Studies OR Women's & Gender Studies; however, students cannot specialize in both Africana Studies AND Women's & Gender Studies.
- Option Two: Students select one area of specialization from the in 11.31 and another approved area not on the list. See below for procedure for selecting an area not on the list.

9.8 Students must complete the courses and other requirements as designated by their Ph.D. committee.

9.9 Students must complete any addition requirements of the Graduate School.

9.91 All entering students, funded or not, are encouraged to take GRAD 5004, Graduate Training Workshop. This is a one-credit, pass/fail course offered by the Graduate School that is offered during the week before classes begin. Completion of this course and Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) fulfills the department's Scholarly Ethics and Integrity Component in Graduate Education, as noted on the Plan of Study.

10. COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D, WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES OPTION

10.1 The Graduate School requires a minimum of ninety semester hours of graduate study and a dissertation. Up to twenty-four hours of master's credits can count toward this requirement.

10.2 A minimum of sixty-six credit hours of graduate study beyond the master's degree is required.

10.21 A minimum of thirty-six credit hours of coursework required beyond the master's degree.

- At least thirty credit hours in Sociology and Women's & Gender Studies courses numbered 5000 and above after enrolling in the doctoral program.

10.22 Of the thirty-six credit hours beyond the masters:

- Eighteen hours must be in sociology (SOC) courses.
- Courses cross-listed with sociology can fulfill this requirement if student enroll in the courses using the sociology course numbers.
- Orientation to the Discipline (SOC 5914) and Research and Dissertation (SOC 7994) may not be used to meet these requirements.
- No more than nine credit hours of Independent Study or Special Study (SOC 5974 or SOC 5984) may be charged to the thirty-hour minimum of Sociology and Women's & Gender Studies courses. The restriction does not apply to courses that are numbered 5984 and are later approved as regular courses.

- The remaining 6 hours may be taken in any department.

10.23 Students must have 12 hours of Women’s & Gender Studies courses, selected from the following list:

- WGS 5424 (Identity, Migration and Place), WGS 5564 (Women and Globalization), WGS 6004 (Topics in Women’s & Gender Studies), up to six credit hours from the list of approved electives in other departments upon approval by the WGS Director. WGS 6004 may be taken more than once if the topic varies.

10.24 Students are expected to take or know the content of WGS 5114 (Foundations of Women’s & Gender Studies). However, this course will not count toward the required 12 hours in Women’s & Gender Studies.

10.25 Maximum of six credit hours of 4000 level courses.

10.26 At least thirty credit hours but no more than sixty credit hours of Research and Dissertation SOC 7994 are required.

- Up to nine hours of Research and Thesis (SOC 5994) can be used to fulfill this requirement.

10.3 Methods Requirements (WGS option):

- Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the cognitive content of the following courses:
 - Feminist Research Methodologies WGS 5924
 - Data Analysis SOC 5204
 - Research Methods SOC 5214
 - Intermediate Data Analysis SOC 5224
 - Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214
- There are no substitutes for Data Analysis (SOC 5204), Intermediate Data Analysis (SOC 5224), Research Methods (SOC 5214), Sociological Issues in Qualitative Methodology SOC 6214, or WGS 5924 (Feminist Research Methodologies).
- If students do not test out (see below), they should take Data Analysis (SOC 5204) concurrent with or prior to Research Methods (SOC 5214).

10.4 Theory Requirements (WGS option):

- Ph.D. students are required to take and/or know the contents of
 - Feminist Theory – WGS 5914
 - History of Sociology Thought – SOC 5104
 - Contemporary Sociological Theory – SOC 5114
- There are no substitutes for SOC 5104 (History of Sociological Thought), SOC 5114 (Contemporary Sociological Theory), and Feminist Theory (WGS 5914).

- 10.5. Students are required to focus their dissertations on gender, sexuality, and/or feminist perspectives.
- 10.6 The student would receive a Women's & Gender Studies Certificate as well as having the concentration noted on the transcript.

10.7 Teaching Course Requirement (WGS option)

- Student must complete a college teaching course.
 - Sociology 5234 Sociological Issues in College Pedagogy fulfills this requirement.
 - The teaching course does not have to be taken in the department.
 - A teaching course taken outside the department does not count toward the required thirty-six hours.

10.8 Major Area Requirements (WGS option)

Students must choose two areas of specialization for their doctoral studies. Students have two options for selecting their areas of specialization.

- Option One: Students select two areas of specialization from the in 11.31. Students can specialize in either Africana Studies OR Women's & Gender Studies; however, students cannot specialize in both Africana Studies AND Women's & Gender Studies.
- Option Two: Students select one area of specialization from the list in 11.31 and another approved area not on the list. See below for procedure for selecting an area not on the list.

10.9 Students must complete the courses and other requirements as designated by their Ph.D. committee.

- 10.91 Students must complete any addition requirements of the Graduate School.
- 10.92 All entering Ph.D. students, whether funded or not, are encouraged to take Graduate Training Workshop. GRAD 5004. This is a one-credit, pass/fail course offered during the week before classes begin in the fall by the Graduate School. The credit from this course does not count toward the graduation requirement.

11. DEMONSTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

- 11.1 In addition to fulfilling the major area requirements, Ph.D. candidates must successfully demonstrate professional competence in **knowledge** and **practice**.
- 11.2 The mechanism for demonstrating the depth and breadth of **knowledge** in the two areas will be determined by the Ph.D. committee as described below. The knowledge in the two areas will be demonstrated with both a written and an oral component.

11.3 Areas of knowledge

11.31 The areas offered by the Sociology/Africana Studies/American Indian Studies/Women's & Gender Studies, adjunct, affiliated and emeriti faculty members are:

Africana Studies	Indigenous Studies
Aging	Inequality
Crime and Deviance	Mental Health
Culture	Qualitative Methods
Family	Race
Gender	Women's & Gender Studies
Global Political Economy	Work
Health	

11.32 Students may select two areas of specialization from the list above; however, students cannot specialize in any combination of Africana Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Women's & Gender Studies. If a student chooses to select one area of specialization from the list above and another area not on the list, the following restrictions apply:

- The additional area must be approved by the Graduate Committee before the applying student completes the 18th hour of coursework past the MS degree.
- This additional area can be developed by the student in conjunction with the doctoral advisory committee.
- The area-examining committee assembled by the student should have two faculty members from the Department of Sociology.
- Faculty members who can examine the student in the areas chosen include:
 - At least one tenure-track member of the Department of Sociology.
 - At most one member may be a member of Sociology's adjunct, affiliate, or emeritus faculty.

11.33 The demonstration of professional competence in **knowledge** can be exhibited through a variety of means. The mechanism for demonstrating depth and breadth of knowledge will be decided by the student's doctoral advisory committee. Regardless of the form, the finished product should exhibit comprehensive knowledge (e.g., state of the field) of the subject matter. The demonstration will consist of two parts: written and oral communication, the latter in a formal, public defense.

11.34 The demonstration of professional competence in **knowledge** should be completed prior to the completion of two-thirds of the student's total program of study, following completion of theory and methods requirement and college teaching course, at least nine months prior to graduation, and only after all incomplete grades are changed to letter grades. Students normally complete their doctoral exams in the fall of the third year of doctoral studies.

11.35 The DGS with the approval of the Chair of the department and in consultation with area faculty will appoint, to grade exams in each area, a standing committee of three faculty members each year, for two-year terms. Each standing committee will designate a chair of the committee. The chair will be a tenured member of the Department of Sociology. It is assumed that there will be rotation of faculty in each area on the standing comprehensive committee areas. The chair of the student's dissertation committee will also serve on the examining committee.

11.4 Professional competence in knowledge: Written examination

- 11.41 All faculty members in each area, not just the standing committee members, develop area reading lists. The appropriate standing committees will update each reading list annually, and they will provide the DGS with the list by March 31st each year. The reading list in each area will be posted on the departmental website by April 5th. Each reading list will have a minimum of 100 and a maximum of 150 readings, in article units. A book will count as five articles if it involves over 200 pages of assigned reading, as three articles if between 100-200 pages of assigned reading, and one article if less than 100 pages of assigned reading. Chapters and articles are considered equal. The chair, in consultation with the standing committee members, will update the area reading list by March 31st each year. The chair is also responsible for ensuring the exam committee grades the exam in the designated period (see below).
- 11.42 The area committee of three or four faculty members (which includes the student's advisory committee chair if that person isn't already on the standing committee) will set the examination questions in each area, given that students have applied to take the comprehensive on a specific date. The committee must submit questions to the standing committee chair at least one week prior to the written portion of the examination date (if there are students taking the exam in their area).
- 11.43 It is recommended that the written portions of the examinations consist of two sections each. The first section will usually have broad theoretical, substantive, and methodological questions. The second section may have questions that apply more specifically to a student's interest. The first section should include a mandatory question and a set of additional questions from which students will select to answer one.
- 11.44 Written parts of preliminary examinations can either be in-chambers or out-of-chambers.

In-chambers written prelim exams will consist of two, six-hour exams, one exam in each of the student's two areas of concentration. The number of questions, choices, and time allotted to answer various questions on each exam will be specified by the standing preliminary committee in the selected areas. Students taking in-chamber exams may use their reading lists for citation purposes in hard copy, but may not use books, notes, internet research, their own previously written material, or any other aids during the exam.

Out-of-chambers written prelim exams will consist of two forty-eight hour exams in the student's two areas of concentration.

- 11.45 Regardless of whether written prelims are taken in or out of chambers, students are required properly to cite all material, including their own, that they quote or paraphrase from a published document. Students should be wary of pasting their previously written notes into their responses.
- 11.46 Students wishing to take their preliminary examinations in a given area must inform the DGS by March 1 to take the examination in the Fall semester and by October 1 to take the examination in the Spring semester. Exams will be administered during the periods September 15 - September 30 and February 15 - March 1. Students may petition the

Graduate Committee to take the examinations at other times. These petitions will be granted only in rare cases, however.

11.5 Grading written examinations

11.51 All committees administering departmental examinations will meet and discuss final outcomes for each student prior to notifying students of their performance. The evaluation procedures for department examinations are as follows:

- Written Evaluations: Prior to the discussion of outcomes for any type of examination, faculty evaluators will specify in writing their decisions and reasons for those decisions.
- Feedback to Students: The faculty member responsible for notifying students of the final decision should provide an oral and written summary of the general strengths and weaknesses of the examination performances. *Results will be determined within ten working days of the last exam.*

11.52 Regardless of whether a student takes written preliminary examinations in or out of chambers, members of each standing committee will take no more than ten working days to evaluate the written work. After assessing written work, they may, by majority vote, permit the student to do one of the following:

- A. having answered all questions to the satisfaction of a majority of committee members in each area, proceed to schedule an oral defense (pending completion of the exam in the second area);
- B. having answered all but one question to the satisfaction of a majority of committee members in each area, revise and resubmit the answer to that question within two weeks (which revision may occur only once per examination);
- C. or, failing to do either of the above to the satisfaction of a majority of committee members, begin a new examination during the subsequent term.

11.6 Professional competence in knowledge: Portfolio

11.61 At the initiative of the student and prior to the second year of study, the student should submit a plan of study for the portfolio in either/both of the two areas. Members of the standing committee(s) (which include the student's doctoral advisor) should base the plan on dialogue with the student, by unanimous agreement among committee members, and provide documentation of approval to the student.

Items in the portfolio could include:

- position paper
 - personal statement of intellectual history, including research interests/plans
- and at least two other elements, such as those from the following list:
- sample syllabus
 - research report
 - conference paper / professional web contribution / encyclopedia entry
 - grant or fellowship application
 - manuscript under journal review
 - publication (article or chapter)

- 11.62 The student should work with an advisory committee chair throughout the process of completing the portfolio(s). When (usually fifteen-twenty months after approval of the plans) the student takes preliminary exams, portfolio submission should include documentation of the agreement with the original standing committee(s) who gave approval. In the subsequent assessment, there should be no more than one negative vote on any completed portfolio before a student schedules the oral examination.
- 11.63 Students can complete their professional competence in knowledge in any combination of two substantive areas listed above, in section 11.31. For example, a student may turn in a portfolio on Inequality and take a written examination in Methods. The student will then have an oral on both the portfolio and written examination (see section 11.7 below).
- 11.7 Members of the two examining committees will sign the (electronic) “Request to Admit to Preliminary Examination” form for the Graduate School. Members of these committees, including doctoral advisory-committee chairs, will appear on each student’s Plan of Study form as their doctoral advisory-committee members until such time as the student has passed the oral examination (11.8). After a student has passed, the Plan of Study form will be revised to include only members of the committee that will oversee the dissertation.
- 11.8 All doctoral students must demonstrate their competence in an oral examination, before the standing or ad hoc committees in charge of any substantive areas. Students may not schedule this oral examination until they receive notification of successful completion of all sections of the **knowledge** competence requirement. The oral examination is broad in nature and, according to university policy, open to the public. The Graduate School requires notification *two weeks prior to the oral*, which can occur only during regularly scheduled class or exam days at the university. *The entire faculty of the department must be notified of a scheduled final oral seven calendar days in advance.* The orals must be passed with no more than one dissenting vote from the committee.
- 11.9 To demonstrate professional competence in the **practice** of the craft of sociology, students must complete all of the following: preparing a professional quality paper (N.B. this paper can be from the dissertation) and presenting it to the sociology faculty and graduate students as part of the graduate research symposium, participating at least once as a paper presenter or discussant at a regional or national meeting or a professional organization, engaging in teaching training activities (including but not limited to the required college teaching class) and demonstrating competence in the classroom. The Ph.D. committee will decide if the student has demonstrated sufficient competence in **practice**.

12. THESIS: M.S. and Ph.D.

- 12.1 All M.S. students and all Ph.D. students are required to complete a master’s thesis or dissertation respectively.

Objectives

- 12.2 The master’s thesis is intended to be a relatively limited research exercise, focused on a manageable topic. It does not necessarily have to involve some completely new

contribution to knowledge. It can be a replication of an earlier investigation or an attempt to extend an established hypothesis. Nonetheless, the thesis should focus on a well-defined topic, restricted in scope, and carried out with care and rigor.

- 12.21 The doctoral dissertation should be of significant scholarly quality and be a credit to the candidate, his or her committee, and the department.

Proposals

- 12.3 Prior to doing the research, students must have a research proposal approved.
- 12.31 Proposals are written in consultation with the student's advisory committee. Because of the variability between committees and differences in research designs, students frequently should meet with and seek input from their advisory committee, particularly their chair, to ensure they have met the expectations for the form, content, and quality of their proposal.
- 12.32 When a majority of committee members agree that the proposal is ready to be defended, a formal proposal defense is scheduled.
- 12.33 Proposals are reviewed and approved by advisory committees at a formal proposal defense.
- 12.34 The proposal defense must be scheduled during regularly scheduled class days or examination days at the university.
- 12.35 Students should consult with their chair about expectations and procedures for the defense.
- 12.36 *At least seven days prior to the scheduled proposal defense*, a copy of the proposal must be made available to all departmental faculty, usually by placing a copy in the Sociology Department Office.
- 12.37 *A least two weeks prior to the proposal defense*, faculty must be given written notice that the defense is scheduled. Primary responsibility for the notice resides with the advisor, but students share the responsibility.
- 12.38 The outcomes of a proposal defense can include a pass, a pass contingent upon modifications being made, or failure.
- Committee members sign **Form 6** at the conclusion of the proposal defense and then the form is given to the Graduate Coordinator for filing
 - The student has the responsibility of having **Form 6** available for signing at the end of the proposal defense.
- 12.39 A proposal is not considered passed without Institutional Review Board approval. If the IRB does not approve the proposal, or requires significant modification, it is at the discretion of the committee to require another proposal defense.

- 12.4 The IRB must either review all research involving human subjects or issue a letter stating that the research is exempt from review. A flowchart to determine if the student must submit an IRB protocol or ask the IRB for a letter stating the research is exempt from review can be found at <http://www.irb.vt.edu/documents/Activities%20Requiring%20Approval.pdf>. The IRB approval letter or letter stating the research is exempt from review must be included in the final version of the thesis or dissertation.
- 12.41 Students should not begin collecting data on human subjects prior to successfully defending their proposals and receiving IRB approval.
- 12.5 Once a proposal is successfully defended, it constitutes a contract between the student and the committee with the understanding that some modifications may need to be made during the course of completing the research. The chair and the committee should approve any needed changes.
- 12.6 On the rare occasion that data collection on human subjects might reasonably precede the proposal defense, this should only be done with the consent of the committee and IRB approval.

Final Oral Examinations

- 12.70 Students planning to defend their thesis or dissertation must provide their full committee a complete draft of their document by **October 4** for a December graduation and **March 10** for a May graduation.
- 12.71 At least one week prior to the final date for submission of the thesis/dissertation to the Graduate Office, the candidate must pass a final oral examination. (*NOTE: The Graduate School requires a two-week advance notice of any final oral*). A student's advisor and committee shall arrange a suitable time and place for this examination, to be held during regularly scheduled class days or examination days at the university. The advisor will circulate a memorandum to all departmental faculty members, **at least seven calendars days in advance**, inviting them to attend the examination and notifying them that the thesis/dissertation is available for their perusal. Students share the responsibility for the notification to the department. When the final exam is scheduled with the Graduate School, the student should turn in a filled out **Application for Degree Card**.
- 12.72 The final oral examination will be on the thesis or dissertation and on other topics as deemed appropriate by the examining committee. No more than one dissenting vote from the candidate's committee can be registered for a successful defense.
- 12.73 While a student may successfully pass this examination, he or she normally will be requested to revise the thesis/dissertation before it is submitted to the Graduate School.
- 12.74 All thesis and dissertations are to be submitted to the Graduate School electronically. Instructions for ETDs can be found on the web at <http://etd.vt.edu/etd/submit/index.htm>. An additional copy is customarily given to the major professor.

13. FINANCIAL SUPPORT POLICY

Assistantships

13.1 The Department of Sociology appoints a limited number of graduate students to teaching or research assistantships. Graduate students appointed to full-time (twenty hours per week) assistantships are paid according to their step classification. A higher step level means a higher salary. First year master's students are step 5. Step 6 assistantships require completion of all master's degree requirements. Students must meet additional criteria to move to higher steps. Step increases are processed only at the beginning of an academic year. The stipends for those working fewer than twenty hours are prorated accordingly. All recipients are expected to remain in "good standing" (see Section 15).

- **Purpose:** The graduate assistantship program provides assistance to the department, as well as financial aid and professional training to students. Graduate assistants are university employees with the responsibility to discharge those duties prescribed by the university and Department of Sociology. **INSERT NEW TEXT** In turn, the Department of Sociology and the faculty member to whom an assistant is assigned should provide tasks that will ensure that the graduate assistant has opportunities to increase and utilize knowledge of the discipline. Nevertheless, the needs of the department are diverse, and some assignments may be of more routine and less interesting nature than others. In any event, the needs and financial resources of the department will be the most important criteria in the determination and allocation of specific assistantship assignments.

Students are to make arrangements at the beginning of each term with the faculty member(s) to whom they are assigned to determine work assignments and schedules.

The Graduate School requires that GTAs employed outside the department consult with their academic advisor and/or assistantship supervisor regarding the fulfillment of assistantships and graduate-study responsibilities. Such students must also notify the Graduate School about any additional employment agreements.

- **Hours:** Graduate assistants and the faculty members to whom they are assigned are responsible for monitoring the appropriate number of hours stipulated by their assignments (usually either ten or twenty per week on average over the course of a semester) and should discuss the workload at the beginning of each semester so that students may plan in advance for their study time. If a faculty member has not assigned enough work to fill a student's hourly commitment for a week, that student cannot be held responsible for the remaining hours later in the semester, without prior arrangement. Graduate assistants may be asked to maintain a record of hours worked per week and present it to their assigned faculty members.
- **Evaluation:** If a faculty member to whom an assistant is assigned considers the assistant's work performance unsatisfactory, the faculty member may apprise the Departmental DGS, who will forward the complaints to the Graduate Committee. After hearing the case, the committee will forward its recommendation to the Department Chair. The final decision will rest with the Department Chair.

Other Aid

13.2 In addition to graduate assistantship, several other forms of aid are sometimes available:

- Presidential Graduate Fellowship: These fellowships are for first year students and awarded on a highly competitive basis. The fellowship pays tuition, carries a non-service stipend equal to a normal assistantship, plus \$1,000 for research and travel.
- Cunningham Fellowships: These fellowships provide non-service funding at the highest pay step in support of dissertation research either in an academic year or the summer. All instructional fees are paid by the fellowship. Fewer than 20 fellowships are offered each year for the entire university. Thus, the competition for these fellowships is keen.
- National Fellowship Programs: Applications by any qualified student to national fellowship programs, such as those of the National Science Foundation and the American Sociological Association Minority Fellowship Program are encouraged. Most programs have fall deadlines.
- The university also maintains a loan program for student aid.

Travel Subsidy

13.3 The Department of Sociology subsidizes graduate students attendance to one professional meeting (or conference) per academic year, on the following basis:

- The meeting (or conference) is held outside of Virginia
- Students must be full-time, have no incomplete grades, and be in good standing; the Department Chair must approve all requests in advance of making travel arrangements;
- The University Travel Estimate and Approval Authorization form must be prepared, and the request to the Departmental Chair must include the amount requested, the name and location of the organization meeting, and the reason for attendance;
- Subsidies include
 1. \$100.00 for any student who is senior author as well as the presenter of a paper;
 2. \$150.00 for any student who has successfully completed all of doctoral exams and who wishes to attend meetings of the *American Sociological Association* or a major regional sociological association, but students are entitled to receive this subsidy only once and in their last year in their graduate career. **This amount is exclusively for those who are attending the meeting or conference in part for undertaking the job-search process.**

Thesis/Dissertation Subsidy

13.4 The Department of Sociology will provide, upon request, up to \$50 for thesis expenses and up to \$100 for dissertation expenses to help defray certain research costs, such as printing survey instruments, mail charges, or travel connected with thesis/ dissertation data collection.

14. TEACHING

- 14.1 All incoming students must take part in the Graduate School's GTA Workshop (GRAD 5004).
- 14.2 All PhD students must complete a course in pedagogy (SOC 5234 – Sociological Issues in College Pedagogy or a course in another department approved by the Director of Graduate Studies).
- 14.3 All PhD students must serve as instructor of record of at least one undergraduate course before completing their degrees (such courses may not include 4000-level courses, Sociological Theory, or Social Research Methods). Teaching experience acquired prior to admission into the doctoral program may satisfy this requirement, if approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- 14.4 Graduate Instructors must be in good standing; and have teaching experience or training or have other qualifications pertinent to the topics of the courses they are to teach (e.g., courses taken on those topics). A student applying to teach must submit the department's Teaching Excellence Committee (TEC) a cover letter of interest that outlines teaching philosophy, and other relevant information as required by the TEC.
- 14.5 All graduate instructors must arrange with the Teaching Excellence Committee of the department to appoint a faculty member to observe the class and evaluate the syllabi/assignments at least once during each course taught. Reports will be made directly to the students and not become parts of the students' files unless students request it.
- 14.6 The initial teaching appointment for each student is limited to one class in a semester. Subsequent assignments may include two sections of the same course in a single semester, if mutually agreed between the Department Chair, the student's advisor, and the student.

15. STUDENTS IN GOOD STANDING

- 15.1 Students are expected to take the courses and examinations required and otherwise to satisfy the requirements of the Graduate School and the department within the rules specified in the Graduate Catalog; The Graduate Student Ombudsperson's Policies, Procedures, and Expectations; and this Graduate Handbook for the Department of Sociology. Specifically, "normal progress" refers to the satisfactory completion of courses taken, the avoidance of accumulating incompletes, the scheduling of required courses, fulfillment of all departmental and Graduate School requirements in their proper sequence, and development toward assuming a professional role.
- 15.2 Each student also is expected to maintain a cumulative QCA of at least 3.0 on all work taken, including any prerequisites or supporting courses. The university uses an A through F-system in assigning grades. The grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be given when, because of extenuating circumstances, course requirements have not been completed. However, obtaining an "I" should be avoided except in the most dire circumstances and must be removed during the subsequent semester in order to prevent loss of good standing. Such loss of good standing, if not redressed during the subsequent semester, would result in a finding that the student was not in good standing and lead to a

recommendation to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the program after one calendar year following receipt of the incomplete.

- 15.3 In addition to the successful completion of academic work, students should endeavor to maintain the highest academic and professional standards of the department, university, and the profession to which they aspire. If a student conducts him or herself in a manner unbecoming a member of the academic discipline as defined by the [ASA Code of Ethics](#), such conduct may be reviewed at a meeting of the Department Graduate Committee convened for that purpose. The Graduate Committee's recommendations will be made known to the Department Chair who will decide what further action, if any, should be taken. Disciplinary actions will be in keeping with university policies and the [ASA Code of Ethics](#).
- 15.4 The progress of each active student will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee every year. Prior to the review by the Graduate Committee, each student should review his or her own record, together with his or her advisory committee, and complete an **Annual Evaluation Form (Form 7)**. First year students should confer with the Graduate Advisor to complete the form. The evaluation should be a complete, accurate, and frank appraisal of the student's progress through the program and the steps needed to complete the degree. The completed Annual Evaluation Form will represent an important part of the record to be considered by the Graduate Committee in its annual review of each student. The principal outcomes of the annual review are determination of a) whether a student is making satisfactory progress and b) whether financial assistance should be offered to the student for the coming academic year. "Satisfactory progress" is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for receiving financial assistance from the department.

Any student who has completed 12 hours of course work and is currently enrolled in the program is required to contact her or his committee chair prior to February 1. The student is responsible for providing the advisory committee chair (or possibly the Director of Graduate Studies, in the case of a first-year student) with a copy of a Plan of Study form and a completed Form 7.

The student's committee will review the student's progress toward completion of degree requirements. These requirements include the number of course hours completed, course grades, selection of a committee, and filing of the Plan of Study for all students. For MS students, the requirements also include progress on thesis. For Ph.D. students, the requirements include progress on preliminary exams and the dissertation. The review will also provide an evaluation of the student's professional development.

The student's committee will complete the review and submit a formal letter to the Graduate Committee by February 15. The letter will evaluate the student in four areas:

1. Coursework,
2. progress toward degree,
3. professional development, and
4. overall performance.

The Graduate Committee will then review each student based on the committee's review. Prior to April 15, the student will receive a formal letter from the Graduate Committee

informing him or her of their standing in the program. The student will also receive a copy of her or his committee's letter to the Graduate Committee.

- 15.5 Students who fall out of good standing at the time of annual review will be notified that there is no guarantee that they will receive funding in the future. If and when they return to good standing, then they will reenter the pool for financial assistance but not be given priority over funded students. In the case of a student who does not resolve the issue(s) by the time of the subsequent annual review, the Graduate Committee may recommend to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the program.
- 15.6 Courses completed more than five years ago for the M.S. program and more than seven years ago for the doctoral program require revalidation (see **Form 8**).

16. GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

- 16.1 The relationships between faculty and graduate students should be respectful. Every effort should be made to accommodate one another's professional needs and work routines, regardless of status. Nonetheless, below are some concrete guidelines to be followed to further structure the relationship between faculty and graduate students:
- a. That the prime purpose of an assistantship should be to attract and support good students who are committed to their own development as sociologists and to the maintenance of a high quality educational program.
 - b. That an element of reciprocity should exist, that the tasks performed by graduate assistants should not be viewed as a source of cheap labor, but as apprenticeships providing a learning experience; e.g., both in lecture preparation as well as test construction.
 - c. That all duties required of a graduate assistant by a professor, including lecture attendance and required readings, should count toward the ten, fifteen, or twenty hour limit prescribed by the initial assignment.
 - d. That when asked to prepare a lecture, the request is made at least two weeks in advance, except under extenuating circumstances.
 - e. That adequate time is given (one week) when requesting graduate assistants to conduct test reviews or prepare test questions or assignments.
 - f. That a graduate assistant's preference for a professor or instructor be given fair consideration provided the request is made in writing prior to the placement.
 - g. That graduate assistants will be given access to services, facilities, and supplies for the performance of their graduate assistant duties. When a professor requires extra materials or special equipment, the department or professor will provide such equipment.
 - h. That the graduate assistant activities are never in conflict with the normal classes of the graduate student.

- i. That as a general policy, weekly hours which are not used by the professor cannot be cumulated except in unusual circumstances such as the extra time necessary to grade exams. Informal agreements between faculty and students are, of course, possible.
- j. That the various departmental committees of which graduate students are often members make an effort to keep student representatives informed of their activities.
- k. That requests for reallocations of graduate assistant time, after allocations have been made, must be approved by the DGS or Department Chair following consultation with the concerned faculty members and graduate assistants.
- l. That alleged violations of the above guidelines should be mediated through the Graduate Committee.
- m. See also the [ASA Code of Ethics](#).

17. GRADUATE STUDENTS ON DEPARTMENT COMMITTEES

17.1 Graduate students are eligible to serve as voting members on the following departmental committees:

- a. Curriculum Committee: Two elected representatives of the graduate students.
- b. Executive Committee: One elected representative of the graduate students will serve, but the student: a) will absent him or herself from discussion of faculty evaluations and b) will not have access to materials pertaining to faculty evaluation.
- c. Graduate Committee: Two elected representatives of the graduate students will serve, but the students: a) will absent themselves from discussion of graduate student evaluation and b) will not have access to materials pertaining to graduate student evaluations.
- d. Graduate students will serve on other committees, including ad hoc committees, when such committees are formed and if they pertain to matters of direct importance to the graduate program, excluding matters of student and faculty evaluation.

18. USE OF DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES

Graduate students have access to computer facilities, photocopying, course-related materials, and resources **related to assistantship duties**. Other departmental resources will also be available for activities related to professional advancement, e.g. independent research, professional communications, and professional travel. Doctoral students especially are encouraged to take advantage of departmental resources for their professional development. Departmental resources should not be used for personal reasons, including printing papers for classes.

19. APPEALS PROCEDURES

Graduate students in the department may initiate formal appeal proceedings on decisions that alter the student's program status. Procedures for appeal are as follows:

- a. The student will consult with his/her advisor and then submit a letter of appeal to the departmental DGS within two weeks of the decision in questions. The letter must clearly state the grounds for the appeal (e.g., answer correctness, irregularity of procedure, extenuating circumstances, personal prejudice) and make a specific change request (e.g., nullify, reverse, or modify the decision).
- b. The DGS will transmit copies of the letter to the Department Chair and to the student's file.
- c. The Department Chair will appoint a three-member ad hoc review committee consisting of faculty members not previously involved in the situation in question.
- d. The ad hoc review committee will gather relevant information, interview the necessary people, make a recommendation regarding the student's appeal, and report to the Department Chair as expeditiously as possible. The Department Chair will render the final decision.
- e. The Department Chair's decision will be related in writing to the student with copies of the letter transmitted to the DGS, the student's advisor, and the student's file.

20. DEPARTMENTAL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 20.1 Applications for degrees must be filed early in the semester in which graduation is anticipated. Please review "Summary: Procedures and Deadlines for Graduate Students" in the Appendices.
- 20.2 Prospective graduates must complete **Form 9** and return it to the Graduate Coordinator by **April 1** to be assured listing in the departmental graduation program.
- 20.3 Requirement for participation in departmental graduation ceremony will be met by either of the following:
 - a. Submission of the final draft of your thesis/dissertation at least ten business days prior to commencement day.
 - b. Successful defense of your thesis/dissertation prior to commencement day.

21. A REMINDER

- 21.1 As the Graduate Catalog states: "All students are expected to assume all responsibility for knowledge of all regulations." A student's transition into the graduate program will be considerably eased by becoming familiar with the regulations specified in the Catalog, The Graduate Manual, as well as this Graduate Handbook for the Department of Sociology. Summaries of important timelines and deadlines in your progress are included in the first and last appendices.

Appendices and Forms

Appendix A: GUIDELINES FOR PROGRESS

The Master's degree program is normally a two-year program and the Ph.D. program normally takes four years beyond the Master's degree. The following indicate the major goals students are expected to accomplish each year. These guidelines pertain to full-time students.

Master's Students

First year master's students should take the required theory and methods courses, and three substantive courses. Students should select the chair of their thesis committee ("advisory committee") no later than the end of the second semester; students will need to identify the topic of their thesis well enough to make an appropriate selection of their chair. Ideally, students should select all the members of their thesis committee by the end of their second semester. Students should also file their **Program of Study** before the end of the second semester. Finally, during the summer students should work on their literature review and write the first draft of their thesis proposal.

Second year Master's students should take at least two more substantive courses to complete their course requirements. Students should defend their thesis proposal by the end of their third semester. Successfully defending the thesis proposal is one requirement for applying to our doctoral program, for those who are interested in doing so. Students should defend their thesis by the end of their fourth semester.

Ph.D. Students

First year doctoral students should take three courses per semester, taking required or elective courses, depending on the course availability. Students should select the chair of their dissertation committee ("advisory committee") by the end of their second semester. Ideally first year doctoral students should select all of their dissertation committee members by the end of their second semester. Students should also file their **Program of Study** before the end of the second semester. Finally, during the summer students should begin reading for prelims, begin to think seriously about their dissertation topic, and do background reading relevant to their dissertation.

Second year doctoral students should take at least two, and usually three, courses each semester, taking required or elective courses, as appropriate. Second year students should continue to study for prelims and should begin to refine the focus of their dissertation research. Students should spend a substantial amount of time in the summer between the second and third year reading and studying for prelims. They should also continue working on their dissertation proposal.

Third year students should complete any additional required courses. Significantly, third year students will take written and oral prelims. Prelims should usually be completed in the fifth semester – and not later than the end of the sixth semester of doctoral work. The dissertation proposal should also be defended by the end of the third year. It is logical that prelims should be completed before defending the dissertation proposal.

Fourth year students will have completed all requirements except the dissertation. They should complete the dissertation during the fourth year.

Appendix B. OUTLINE FOR THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

This outline is intended to serve as a guideline for developing a thesis proposal. While we expect the content and structure of proposals to vary on the basis of the particular research problem, this outline contains many of the essential components for designing a research project. Normally, a proposal should not exceed twenty pages. The student should contact his or her committee if questions arise concerning the form, content, and organization of the thesis proposal. The general structure of the thesis proposal is outlined below.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This section should present a theoretically concise statement of the sociological phenomenon to be addressed by your research. It should state the significance of the research, i.e. how your work will contribute to and expand on previous research in this area. Since the sociological questions will be elaborated throughout the proposal, this section should provide enough information to set the stage for the remaining sections of the proposal.

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

This section should contain a brief review of the theoretical and empirical literatures relevant to your research question. It should illustrate your knowledge of the important literature and your ability to interpret substantive research from a recognized theoretical framework. Focus your attention on only the empirical and/or theoretical studies that are directly relevant to your research problem. This review section should provide the theoretical rationale that will guide your entire project.

FORMATION OF OBJECTIVES

This section should provide a statement of the research objectives derived from the review of the literature. Depending upon the state of the literature and the nature of your research question, the hypotheses or objectives may be stated in more or less formal terms (e.g., predictions of the expected effect of an independent variable(s) on a dependent variable; a resolution of competing theoretical issues). Consult with your major advisor on the nature of the type of formulation appropriate for your particular thesis topic.

DESCRIPTION OF METHODS

Generally, the description of the methods to be used in your study will involve three separate components: **(1)** for surveys/interviews, a description of the sample and/or data gathering techniques; for case studies, a description of the case(s) selected; for participant observation studies, a description of participatory events; **(2)** a description of the variables to be examined in your study; and **(3)** a general description of the analytic strategy or statistical techniques used to address your research question. The “sample” description should convey how the sample or case will be selected, whether you will be collecting your own data or relying upon secondary sources, how many observations or cases you will be collecting or using if you are relying upon secondary sources, how many observations or cases will be selected, and (if applicable) the safeguards you will use to guarantee the protection of human subjects. The description of variables should include a discussion of how the variables will be coded or classified, whether you will use single or multiple indicators of your concepts, and (if applicable) how you will combine items to

develop “indices” or “scales”. The description of the analytic strategies should contain a discussion of the statistical procedures (bivariate or multivariate statistics), participant observations procedures etc., to be used and provide a brief statement about how this analytic strategy will allow you to address the substantive and theoretical issues underlying your proposal. Speculate on how your results will “feed back” onto your evaluation of the underlying theoretical framework.

TIMETABLE FOR ACTIVITIES

Your proposal should also include a general outline of how you will budget your time on various aspects of the research project. Obviously, such a timetable can only be a crude estimate of your labor on various aspects of the research project, but it does give you and your committee an idea about the manageability of your project.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

You should include a list of articles and books, with complete citations, which are the basis of your research.

Appendix C: METHODS AND STATISTICS OBJECTIVES

A. Methods

1. Logic of inquiry in science – traditional general and understanding
2. Research Design
 - a. how to choose between different modes of observation
 - b. general principles of basic designs:
 - i. experimental and quasi-experimental
 - ii. field research designs
 - iii. survey designs
 - iv. secondary data analysis
 - v. content analysis
3. Measurement
 - a. validity and reliability assessment
 - b. operationalization
 - c. scaling principle – nominal, ordinal, interval, ratio
 - d. standard scales
 - i. semantic differential
 - ii. Guttman
 - iii. Likert
 - iv. categorical
 - v. ranking
 - e. multiple vs. single indicators
 - i. index construction

B. Statistics

1. The distinction between descriptive and inferential statistics
2. How to compute and apply the following:
 - a. mean, median, standard deviation, variance
 - b. correlation coefficient, regression coefficient
 - c. tests for differences between means and proportions (Z, t, anova) one and two sample tests
3. How to interpret the results of various kinds of analyses:
 - a. correlation
 - b. regression
 - c. contingency table analysis
 - d. difference between means tests – one and two sample tests
4. Understand how “statistical control” works in multivariate analysis
5. Know assumptions underlying statistical procedures noted above
6. Be able to describe how statistical procedures can be used to address various research questions

C. Methods and Statistics

1. Be able to design a hypothetical study from the hypothesis stage, through the research design stage, the data collection stage, the data analysis stage, and the interpretation of analysis stage.

Appendix D: THEORY OBJECTIVES (to be updated/revised, 2014)

Theorizing involves contemplation, speculation and critical assessment of social life, and learning to theorize constitutes the primary objective of all theory courses. Specifically, doctoral students should know what characterizes a theoretically significant sociological problem and how to formulate such problems to guide their own research agenda. Concrete objectives for the theoretical process minimally include being able to complete the following tasks:

- Interpret an empirical finding from a theoretical standpoint
- Generate an empirically relevant statement from a theoretical standpoint, and
- Argue for the validity of a theoretical standpoint

The objectives listed below are merely building blocks for the larger objective of theorizing. In no way does familiarity with the following items equal sound theoretical reason.

PARADIGMS

Conflict Theory
Structural-functionalism
Social Exchange
Structuralism

Hermeneutics
Feminist Perspectives
Marxism
Symbolic Interactionism

Ethnomethodology
Phenomenology
Critical Theory
Black Sociology

CONCEPTS

alienation
anomie
class and class formation
assimilation
conflict
authority
consensus
bracketing
cosmopolitan and local
bureaucracy
definition of the situation
division of labor
ethnocentrism
exchange

generalized other
grand theory
ideology
integration
interdependence
institution
historicity
networks
organicism
paradigm
patriarchy
pattern variables
power
power elite

rationality
reciprocity
reification
relative deprivation
reference group
self-concept
social action
social distance
social order
social relationship
social system
structuration
sui generis
totality

DEBATES

1. Ontological
individual vs. society
order vs. change
abstracted empiricism
subjective vs. objective
macro vs. micro
idealism vs. materialism

consensus vs. coercion
evolution vs. revolution

2. Epistemological
positivism vs. anti-positivism
description vs. explanation

ideographic vs. nomothetic
quantitative vs. qualitative

3. Axiological
value-free vs. value-laden
knowledge vs. practice

Appendix E: SUMMARY: PROCEDURES & DEADLINES

MASTERS STUDENTS

Plan of study: submit prior to completing fifteen credit hours; usually by the end of the first semester. The DGS can sign as a temporary advisor or if no permanent advisor has been selected.

Permanent advisor: prior to completing fifteen credit hours, usually by the end of the first semester. Exceptions can be made, if needed, but are not encouraged.

THESIS:

Proposal defense: notice to faculty one week prior to defense; copy of proposal must be displayed in main office. See **Form 6** online.

Final thesis defense: two week notice must be given to the Graduate School (The Graduate Coordinator has form). Faculty must be notified one week prior to defense, and a copy of the thesis must be on display in main office. A Graduate School form must that will be emailed to the student's advisor must be signed at the time of defense.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Program of study: same as Master's above.

Permanent advisor: same as Master's above

PRELIMINARY EXAMS:

Written: no form needed; advise Director of Graduate Studies during previous term of intent to take exams and the areas of focus.

Oral: notify Graduate School two weeks prior to oral & fill out form (The Graduate Coordinator has form). Faculty must be notified one week prior to oral exam. A card that will be emailed to the advisor must be signed by the examining committee at the defense.

DISSERTATION:

Proposal defense: notice to faculty one week prior to defense; copy of proposal must be displayed in main office. Obtain **Form 6** from the Graduate Coordinator.

Final dissertation defense: A two-week notice must be given to the Graduate School (The Graduate Coordinator has the form). Faculty must be notified one week prior to defense, and a copy of the thesis must be on display in main office. A form must be picked up from the Graduate School and signed at the time of defense.

GRADUATION PROCEDURE

GRADUATION DEADLINE FOR UNIVERSITY: submit **Application for Degree** (AFD) to Graduate School by **October 1** for Fall graduation, **March 1** for Spring graduation, **June 1** for First Summer graduation, or **August 1** for Second Summer Graduation.

Participation in departmental graduation ceremonies can occur only if you meet either of the following:

- a. Fulfill the requirements of the Graduate School by ten working days before the date of graduation;
- b. Successfully defend a thesis or dissertation prior to graduation day.