



**PennState**

College of the Liberal Arts

Department of Sociology

Graduate Program Handbook

Department of Sociology  
Penn State University  
213 Oswald Tower  
814-865-6222

2020

**PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT GRADUATE PROGRAM  
HANDBOOK**

**Table of Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| GENERAL INFORMATION .....   | 4  |
| The Department .....  | 4  |
| Admission .....   | 5  |
| Assistantships and Other Forms of Financial Aid .....   | 5  |
| Program Length and Residency Requirement .....  | 6  |
| Language or Communication Requirement .....   | 7  |
| Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training .....  | 7  |
| Graduation.....   | 8  |
| Appeals .....   | 8  |
| Additional University Requirements .....  | 8  |
| Professional Conduct .....  | 8  |
| THE M.A. PROGRAM.....   | 9  |
| Advisors and Committees .....   | 9  |
| Course Requirements .....   | 9  |
| Annual Evaluation .....   | 10 |
| Thesis .....  | 10 |
| Dual-Title M.A. in Sociology and Demography .....   | 10 |
| THE PH.D. PROGRAM.....  | 11 |
| Ph.D. Candidacy Examination.....  | 11 |
| The Ph.D. Committee .....   | 11 |
| Committee Composition .....   | 12 |
| Course Requirements .....   | 12 |
| Dual-Title Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography.....   | 13 |
| Dual-Title Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Data Analytics.....  | 13 |
| Minor in Social Data Analytics.....   | 13 |
| Grade-Point Average .....   | 13 |
| Annual Evaluation .....   | 13 |
| Certificates .....  | 14 |
| Quantitative Methods Certificate in Sociology and Quantitative Criminology Option in<br>Sociology ..... | 14 |
| Certificate in Survey Methodology.....  | 15 |
| Admissions Requirements .....   | 15 |
| Required Courses.....   | 15 |
| Certificate in Social Network Analysis Applications in Criminology and Sociology<br>(SNAACS).....       | 16 |
| Transfers Between Sociology and CRIM Ph.D. Programs.....  | 18 |
| Professional Development .....  | 18 |
| Teaching Portfolio .....  | 18 |
| Comprehensive Examination .....   | 18 |
| Dissertation .....  | 19 |
| Preparation for Placement of Ph.D. Recipients .....   | 20 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Mock Job Talks and Mock Interviews.....   | 20 |
| Faculty Placement Committee .....   | 20 |
| THE MINOR IN SOCIOLOGY .....  | 21 |
| Appendix I: Sociology Requirements and Benchmarks .....                                     | 22 |
| Procedures for Major Milestones.....  | 22 |
| MA Procedures .....   | 22 |
| Committee.....  | 22 |
| Thesis Defense .....  | 22 |
| Thesis Submission .....   | 22 |
| PhD Procedures.....   | 22 |
| Candidacy Review .....  | 22 |
| Committee.....  | 23 |
| Reading List.....   | 23 |
| Comprehensive Exam (written) .....  | 23 |
| Comprehensive Exam (Oral Defense) .....   | 23 |
| Dissertation Proposal Defense .....   | 23 |
| Final Dissertation Defense.....   | 23 |
| Dissertation Submission.....  | 24 |
| Checklists.....   | 25 |
| Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with a BA .....                                | 25 |
| Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with an MA.....                                | 27 |
| Checklists for Optional Dual Degrees, Certificates, and Minors.....                         | 29 |
| Quantitative Methods Certificate.....   | 30 |
| Typical Timeline for Students Who Enter the Program with a BA .....                         | 31 |
| Typical Timeline for Students Who Enter the Program with an MA.....                         | 32 |
| Appendix II: A Process to Permit CRIM Students to Opt for A Ph.D. Degree in Sociology ..... | 33 |
| Course Requirements .....   | 33 |
| Ph.D. Candidacy Examination.....  | 33 |
| Comprehensive Exam Requirements.....  | 33 |
| Doctoral or Master’s Thesis Committee.....  | 33 |
| Admissions.....   | 33 |
| Graduate Committee Oversight of Students’ Programs.....                                     | 34 |

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The Graduate Program in Sociology at Penn State offers M.A. and Ph.D. degrees for those intending to pursue academic or nonacademic research careers in sociology. Students who pursue the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in Sociology at Penn State are exposed to an exciting intellectual and professional environment. Though located in a major university, our graduate program remains intimate in scale. A low student-to-faculty ratio promotes frequent interaction with leading scholars in theory, methods, and a wide range of substantive specialties. All students receive training in advanced social theory, research methodology, and statistics as they pursue substantive specialties of their choice. Details about the curriculum and a description of requirements and opportunities for graduate students are presented in the following pages. Additional information about the Sociology graduate program can be found at <http://sociology.la.psu.edu/>

The department also offers two dual-degrees programs: one in Demography and another in Social Data Analytics (SoDA). Additional information about the Demography dual title program can be found at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/demography>. Additional information about the Social Data Analytics dual title program can be found at <http://bdss.psu.edu/soda>. Additionally, sociology graduate students can participate in a host of minors and certificates, including those listed on the department's webpage.

### **The Department**

The most important resource available to graduate students is the Sociology faculty. Penn State Sociology faculty conduct state-of-the-art research projects on a broad spectrum of topics, many with significant policy implications. A sampling includes racial attitudes and stereotyping, poverty and child well-being, social networks and disease, immigrant incorporation, globalization and global inequality, intergenerational relationships, social change in India, economic restructuring and inequality, urban homelessness, family change, and social inequality in health. As a group, the faculty is highly productive and is consistently ranked among the strongest departments nationally. This intellectual environment provides outstanding opportunities for students to gain first-hand research experience.

The strength of the department is reflected in the achievements of the graduate students. Penn State students routinely present research papers at national conferences and publish articles in the top disciplinary and specialty journals. Students also benefit from the role played by our own department in the publication of scholarly journals. We are currently the home base for Sociological Methodology and Demography. Members of the Penn State Sociology faculty have also served as editors of the American Sociological Review, Sociological Theory, Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Journal of Marriage and Family, Criminology, Contemporary Sociology, Population Research and Policy Review, and the Journal of the American Statistical Association. Several students have worked as editorial assistants, participated in the review process, or become involved with the journals in other ways.

Research activity is channeled through the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI). SSRI is comprised of a number of specialized centers including the Population Research Institute (PRI). PRI occupies four floors in the same building as Sociology. PRI brings together over eighty faculty and sixty-five students from thirteen departments throughout the University, providing them with a stimulating interdisciplinary atmosphere as well as first-rate research facilities, technical assistance, and training. Professor Stephen Matthews directs the Demography dual-title program, which is affiliated with PRI. Other centers and programs with which Sociology maintains close ties are the Social Science Research Institute, the Center for Healthy Aging, the Survey Research Center, the Social Thought Program, the Association of Religion Data Archives, the Criminology Program, and the Pennsylvania Sentencing Commission. Funding for faculty research comes from the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Child Health and

Human Development, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Mental Health, the Lilly Endowment, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Hewlett, Mellon, and Spencer foundations. Faculty members have also received grants and contracts from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Through cross-listing of courses and joint or adjunct faculty appointments, our department is actively linked to multiple departments and programs, such as Anthropology; Geography; Statistics; Human Development and Family Studies; Political Science; Rural Sociology; Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies; and Education Theory and Policy. Sociology students frequently take courses offered by these departments and draw on the expertise of their faculties. In short, there are rich opportunities for graduate students in Sociology to benefit from the wide range of programs representing other disciplines at Penn State.

Excellent research facilities are available to all students. Sociology graduate students have access to three computer laboratories in Oswald Tower. These are located in 307, 918 and 806 Oswald Tower. Each laboratory is equipped with desktop computers that are loaded with a wide range of software suited to departmental research requirements and are linked to the departmental and PRI networks.

### **Admission**

Procedures for application to the Graduate Program in Sociology at Penn State are described in detail in the packet of application materials and at the department website. Consideration is given to: 1) undergraduate record (and graduate record for those applying after having completed some graduate work outside the department); 2) verbal and quantitative scores on the Graduate Record Examination (these are required by the department); 3) three letters of recommendation; 4) the sample paper submitted in support of the application; and 5) the description of the applicant's background and objectives and how well student interests fit with the strengths of the departmental faculty.

Students enter the program from a variety of academic disciplines. Many graduate courses in sociology, however, assume some pertinent background. Students with limited background in sociology may be asked to undertake foundational work in preparation for required courses. Students entering with an M.A. from another institution or in another field will have their records evaluated by the departmental Graduate Committee. If the content of the earlier graduate work differs substantially from the Penn State Sociology M.A. program, students may be required to complete selected courses in theory, research methods, statistics, or substantive areas before proceeding with their doctoral study.

### **Assistantships and Other Forms of Financial Aid**

Most graduate students in Sociology receive teaching or research assistantships. These assistantships provide living expenses and come with full tuition waivers. The assistantships bring more than financial support: They are an important means by which graduate students are integrated into the research and teaching activities of the department. Teaching assistants perform various functions: most teaching assistants participate in grading and advising enrollees; advanced students desiring teaching experience may be given full responsibility for an undergraduate course. Research assistants often find that their skills in writing and data analysis are sharpened by their assignments. A number of graduate students have seen their research assistantships develop into collaborative relationships and have become coauthors of conference presentations and published articles.

Although assistantships are not automatically renewed, the sociology department makes every effort to continue from year to year to offer an assistantship to each Sociology graduate student who: 1) maintains

a satisfactory level of academic performance; 2) fulfills the duties associated with the assistantship; 3) completes the M.A. within four semesters; and 4) completes the Ph.D. within six semesters after receiving the M.A. if the M.A. has been earned at Penn State, or within eight semesters if the M.A. was earned at another institution. Continuation of funding is, of course, subject to the availability of funds. Summer session does not count in the above time limitations. If a student requests continuation of financial assistance and this request is denied, the student will be advised by the sociology graduate officer, after consultation with the sociology graduate committee, as to the reasons for the denial. Students who seek funding beyond the normal limits specified above must formally apply for it. Their application materials will be evaluated by the graduate committee.

For students not on departmental assistantships, there are other forms of financial aid. A number of students have been the recipients of fellowships and traineeships funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Additional external fellowships and grants available to eligible students include American Sociological Association Minority Fellowships, dissertation grants from various federal agencies, student research grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council, and grants from private foundations, the United Nations, and the governments of other countries. Intramurally, the Graduate School administers University Graduate Fellowships, Minority Graduate Scholar Awards, Grants-in-Aid, and tuition remission awards. Through the University's Office of Student Aid, eligible students may receive National Direct Student Loans, Guaranteed Student Loans, University loans, and graduate work study assignments.

Students are encouraged to apply for dissertation year funding and our students have had excellent success in securing it both internally and externally. Internal support is available from the Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) of the College of Liberal Arts and a number of other Penn State dissertation fellowships, including the Alumni Dissertation Fellowship. In recent years students have received outside support for dissertation projects from NSF, National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and the American Educational Research Association.

The department attempts to ensure summer financial support for students who remain in residency during the summer session. The purpose of providing summer support is to enable students to stay in the area and make progress on their research and degrees. Many students are supported during the summer by ongoing grants from faculty research projects. Students who have completed the M.A. degree may teach summer session undergraduate courses, and beginning students may serve as teaching assistants in larger sections for other students who are teaching.

### **Program Length and Residency Requirement**

For both the M.A. and Ph.D. programs, departmental requirements take the form of course credits, as specified in the following sections of this document. The department requires no minimum number of semesters of study. If a student has an assistantship, it usually takes two years to satisfy requirements for the M.A. Completing the Ph.D. usually takes three more years for students who earn their M.A. at Penn State and four years for students who enter the Penn State Ph.D. program after earning an M.A. elsewhere. Although these time specifications are not hard maximums, students who take longer to complete the respective degrees may be considered to be behind schedule, and department financial aid may not be continued.

There are additional Graduate School requirements that apply to Ph.D. candidates: Over some twelve month period after admission to Ph.D. candidacy, the candidate must spend at least two semesters (which may include the semester in which the Candidacy Examination is taken) as a registered full-time student

engaged in academic work at the University Park campus. After the residency requirement is met and the comprehensive examination passed, status as a student must be maintained by continued registration for credit or noncredit dissertation research courses for at least two semesters of each calendar year until the dissertation is approved by the student's doctoral committee. See the Penn State Graduate Bulletin (on the web at <https://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/>) for further information about all pertinent Graduate School requirements.

### **Language or Communication Requirement**

The Department of Sociology has no formal foreign language or communication requirement. However, it is highly recommended that the student pursue additional training in statistics, computer science, a foreign language, technical writing, and/or specialized methods or theory, insofar as these will further research and career plans. Decisions about whether to take advanced work in these areas are made by each student in consultation with his or her advisor and Ph.D. committee. (Ph.D. Committees are described in more detail below)

The University requires each Ph.D. candidate to demonstrate high-level competence in the use of the English language, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Proficiency is expected at the time of admission to the Graduate School and must be formally certified in accordance with departmental policy before admission to Ph.D. candidacy. A comprehensive training program in English as a Second Language is offered to international students through the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences. Many domestic and international students can benefit from taking courses in technical writing available through the Department of English and College of Communications. Non-native English speaking students must pass a proficiency exam administered by the Penn State Graduate School before becoming eligible for classroom responsibilities as a TA or course instructor.

### **Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) Training**

All entering graduate students are expected to complete 8 hours of SARI training by the end of their first year of graduate study (<https://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari>). This requirement will be fulfilled through the following courses and activities:

1) Sociology/Criminology 500 (**3 hours**): This course, which all incoming students are required to take, will devote 3 hours of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research.

2) Sociology 591 (**1 hour**): This course, which all incoming students are required to take, will devote 1 hour of discussion-based training in the responsible conduct of research.

3) CITI training in the Responsible Conduct of Research (**3 hours**): The Office of Research Protections (ORP) will provide the conduit to this training via the SARI Resource Portal on the ORP website (<https://citi.psu.edu/>). All first-year students are responsible for sending their certificates of completion to the Graduate Officers and Graduate Program Coordinator before the end of the fall semester of their first year.

4) Centrally sponsored RCR opportunities (**1 hour**). Centrally sponsored RCR opportunities will engage students in cross-disciplinary conversations about research ethics. Ample opportunities exist for students to fulfill this requirement, including RCR workshops, Research Integrity brownbag sessions, Survival Skills and Ethics professional development programs, and IRB

workshops. Students are responsible for identifying, scheduling, and documenting the 1 hour of training. Students who, for whatever reason, do not take Sociology 591 in their first year of study should take **2 hours** equivalent of centrally sponsored RCR opportunities.

### **Graduation**

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the University of their intent to graduate. This should be done via LionPATH (eff. Fall 2016) at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to graduate. During the graduation activation period a name may be added or removed from the graduation list. The graduation activation period for a semester typically begins a week prior to the beginning of classes and continues for two weeks into that semester.

Format details for both M.A. and Ph.D. theses are provided in the Thesis Guide, available online at <http://www.gradsch.psu.edu/current/thesis.html> or at the Penn State Graduate School Thesis Office. Following editorial review of the thesis by that office, the student submits a final copy of the M.A. or Ph.D. thesis to the sociology graduate officer. In addition, Ph.D. candidates must submit a final copy of the thesis to the Graduate School Thesis Office by the announced submission deadline for the semester or summer session in which the degree will be conferred.

### **Appeals**

If a student believes that professional considerations justify an exemption from any of the requirements stated in this handbook, the student can appeal for such an exemption to the Sociology Graduate Committee. If the graduate committee sees fit to do so, or if the student wishes to appeal a graduate committee decision, the matter can be brought before the graduate faculty in Sociology. With the concurrence of the department head, a decision of the graduate faculty is binding. Neither the graduate committee nor the sociology graduate faculty is empowered to exempt the student from requirements set forth in the Graduate Bulletin.

### **Additional University Requirements**

This sociology department graduate program handbook is supplementary to the University's [\*Graduate Bulletin\*](#). The student is responsible for knowing the requirements of the Penn State Graduate School concerning thesis deadline dates, payment of fees, filing for diplomas, time limitations on degree candidacy, and so on.

### **Professional Conduct**

The Graduate Bulletin states: "By virtue of their maturity and experience, graduate students are expected to have learned the meaning and value of personal honesty and professional integrity before entering the Graduate School. Every student is expected to exhibit and promote the highest ethical and moral standards. A violation of such standards is regarded as a serious offense, raising grave doubt that the student is worthy of continued membership in the Graduate School community. The University Code of Conduct is found in Appendix 1 in the Graduate Bulletin. Violation of the Code may result in suspension or dismissal from the Graduate School."

The preceding paragraph addresses problems such as plagiarism, falsification of research findings, or misrepresentation. Questions about professional ethics also arise in another context, as regards the use of human subjects for research purposes. To provide safeguards for all concerned, the University requires



that any use of human subjects for research, instructional, or continuing education activities be submitted for institutional review. A summary review is required even for secondary analysis of publicly available data. Further information can be obtained from the Office for Research Protections, The 330 Building, Suite 205, or by visiting the ORP website at <http://www.research.psu.edu/offices/orp>.

## THE M.A. PROGRAM

### **Advisors and Committees**

M.A. candidates undertake their first year of study with the assistance of the graduate officer or an interim advisor appointed by the graduate officer. Before completion of the second semester of study, the student have selected their M.A. committee chairs and should begin thinking about the selection of three graduate faculty members to comprise an M.A. committee. By the end of the fall semester of the second year in residence the M.A. committee should have been formally constituted by obtaining the consent of committee members. At least two of the committee members must be Department of Sociology faculty. One member of the Sociology faculty is designated by the student to be thesis advisor and committee chair.

The Penn State Graduate School requires that all M.A. candidates meet with their advisors prior to each registration for the purpose of discussing the candidates' progress toward their degrees.

### **Course Requirements**

The core of the M.A. program is a set of courses designed to enhance students' knowledge of substantive specialty areas in sociology, social theory, sociological research methods, and statistics. A complete list of M.A. and Ph.D. course requirements is included as Appendix I.

Required for M.A. candidates are two seminars in social theory, chosen from among the following:

Sociology 502 - Theories of Society I  
Sociology 503 - Theories of Society II  
Sociology 512 - Criminological Theories

Additionally, three methods and statistics courses (plus labs) are required for the M.A.:

Sociology 513 - Sociological Research Methods  
Sociology 574 - Statistical Methods for Social Research  
Sociology 575 - Statistical Methods for Non-experimental Research  
Sociology 596 – Statistical Laboratory (fall and spring)

Sociology department seminars in research methods and statistics assume background gained through some combination of undergraduate course work and individual study. Students who are not confident of their basic statistical training may find it useful to seek remedial work at Penn State or elsewhere prior to enrollment in SOC 574.

All students in the M.A. program are also required to take Sociology 500, a one-credit Introduction to Graduate Study in Sociology. In the Fall of the first year, students are required to take SOC 500, a theory course, SOC 574 and an elective. In the spring of the first year, students are required to enroll in SOC 575, and either two electives, or one elective and a theory course (students may take their second theory course in the second year of their program too). In the fall of the second year, students are required to enroll in SOC 513. There is also a one-credit lab, which accompanies SOC 574 in the fall and SOC 575

in the spring. The Graduate School requires that M.A. candidates complete six thesis credits (SOC 600). These credits are generally acquired during the summer after the first year of graduate study or during the second year of residence. Additional elective courses are selected by each student in consultation with his or her advisor and/or the Sociology graduate officer.

For the M.A. in Sociology at Penn State, 37 course credits are required, no more than three of which may be for Individual Studies (SOC 596). The Graduate School specifies that students holding twenty-hour-per-week assistantships must carry 9 to 12 course credits per semester. Students receiving Fellowships are expected to enroll for 12 course credits per semester. A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required for graduation.

### **Annual Evaluation**

At the end of each academic year, students receive written feedback on their performance from the Graduate Officer, based on faculty discussion at the annual review meeting that is held at the end of the spring semester. Information for this performance evaluation is obtained from all faculty who have had a particular student in a seminar, supervised an independent study course for the student, or served on the student's M.A. committee. Course grades and assistantship evaluations are also reviewed for each student.

### **Thesis**

M.A. candidates are required to submit a thesis acceptable to their M.A. committee. The thesis is defended at a meeting with committee members, to be scheduled through the Sociology graduate secretary. Students are advised to take advantage of opportunities in Sociology 513 and in whatever substantive seminars they may take during their first year of study to develop an M.A. thesis proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to begin discussion of a thesis topic with a potential M.A. thesis committee chair before the end of the first academic year. The thesis should be written in journal format to enhance professional payoffs (meeting presentation and journal publication). The journal format also is important to give students practice in the most common form of scholarly writing. A one-page abstract of the thesis must be filed with the Sociology graduate officer. All theses must be submitted for a mandatory format review to the thesis office and are subject to regulations delineated in the Graduate Bulletin of the University.

### **Dual-Title M.A. in Sociology and Demography**

A special dual-title M.A. program is offered in Sociology and Demography. Details can be obtained from the Sociology graduate officer or director of the graduate program in Demography. Information is also available at <http://www.pop.psu.edu/demography>.

Dual-degree M.A. students must complete four courses in demography, one in each of the following pedagogic categories: 1) Demography Survey Course (if a population survey course was not completed as an undergraduate), 2) Demographic Techniques, 2) a seminar in Demographic Processes, and 4) a seminar in Population Studies. Multiple courses are offered in each of these categories each semester, and many of the courses can be taken within the sociology department and counted toward sociology degree requirements. Dual-degree M.A. students must write a thesis on a topic that draws on research questions and literature from both sociology and demography.

## THE PH.D. PROGRAM

### **Ph.D. Candidacy Examination**

A candidacy examination is required by the Graduate School for all students aspiring to enter a Ph.D. program at Penn State. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the student's potential to successfully complete a high quality Ph.D. program.

In the Department of Sociology the Ph.D. candidacy examination is conducted by the Sociology graduate committee. The evaluation is based on a dossier prepared by the student; ordinarily attendance by the student at the candidacy examination is not required. The student dossier should contain: Transcripts, assistantship evaluations, and faculty evaluations supplied by the graduate officer; the M.A. thesis, an additional paper, and a plan of doctoral study supplied by the student. The additional paper must have been written during the course of graduate study at Penn State. The plan of doctoral study must include probable course selections and faculty committee members. In addition, the student must provide a written release allowing the Graduate Committee to examine all violations of academic integrity that have been filed with the Academic Integrity Office during his or her term of graduate study at Penn State.

After admission to candidacy, Ph.D. students are required to meet with their advisors prior to each subsequent registration for the purpose of discussing the candidates' progress on their plans of study and revising such plans as appropriate.

For students who earn the M.A. degree in Sociology at Penn State, the candidacy examination is held at the earliest opportunity after the M.A. thesis has been successfully defended. The examination will take place no later than the semester following the M.A. thesis defense and should occur no later than fall semester of the third year. For students whose M.A. degree was earned at another institution, the candidacy examination shall take place at the end of the second semester of graduate work at Penn State. The Graduate School requires that the student must be registered as a full-time or part-time student for the semester in which the candidacy examination is held. Appeals of candidacy decisions can be filed with the graduate officer and will be heard by the Sociology graduate faculty.

### **The Ph.D. Committee**

The candidate's Ph.D. studies are conducted under the supervision of a Ph.D. committee. The committee is composed of at least four members of the graduate faculty, at least one of whom must be from outside the Sociology department or represent a different disciplinary perspective (based on scholarly work or field in which Ph.D. was received). The committee must include faculty members having recognized expertise in the major and minor areas of specialization selected by the student, as well as expertise in general social theory, research methods, and statistics. One faculty member is designated chair of the Ph.D. committee; ordinarily this person also serves as general advisor and director of the dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to choose a committee chair as early as possible. The student's chair can be of great help in selecting other committee members, especially members outside of the sociology department.

After obtaining the consent of the faculty selected for the committee, which requires their signatures on a committee appointment form, the student submits the names of those committee members to the graduate officer, together with a rationale for each selection. If approved, the proposed committee members will be submitted for final approval to the Graduate School.

Students must identify and convene their Ph.D. committee no later than one semester following their candidacy examination. The Ph.D. committee supervises the Ph.D. candidate's course of study, comprehensive examination, and dissertation. This includes approval of proposed course work to meet requirements for the major and minor areas of specialty.

### **Committee Composition**

A committee consists of at least four members. The chair of the committee must hold academic rank in the Department of Sociology. One member must be from outside of the Department of Sociology or represent a different disciplinary perspective, as defined above. Committees may include more than four members. A person who is not affiliated with Penn State but who has particular expertise in the candidate's research area may be added as a special member upon recommendation by the graduate officer. A special member is expected to participate fully in the functions of the doctoral committee. If the outside expert is asked only to read and approve the doctoral dissertation, that person is designated a special signatory of the dissertation. However, a special member/signatory does not count as one of the four required committee members.

### **Course Requirements**

A complete list of M.A. and Ph.D. course requirements is included as Appendix I. Ph.D. candidates must have completed all courses required for the M.A. degree in Sociology at Penn State, or their equivalent. All Ph.D. candidates are also required to complete Writing for Publications (SOC 592) and a one-credit Lab in Teaching Sociology (SOC 591). The lab in teaching sociology cannot serve to meet other Ph.D. requirements to be described subsequently, such as the requirement for a minimum number of seminars in Sociology.

In addition to these specific requirements common to all Ph.D. candidates, students must complete a total of five additional 3-credit courses. Of these five courses, at least four must be listed as sociology courses, at least five must be at the 500 level or higher, and at least three must be considered substantive courses (i.e., not statistics or methods). Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes: SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics. No more than one course may be in Individual Studies (Sociology 596).

### **Dual-Title Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography**

Students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in Sociology and Demography select demography as their major area of specialization. However, dual-degree students must complete a total of 24 course credits (12 credits, or 4 courses, at the M.A. plus 12 additional credits distributed among pedagogic categories) in demography. Some of these courses must be completed in disciplines outside the Department of Sociology. All demography courses taken within the sociology department can count toward both the sociology and demography degrees. A minimum of a four-member committee is required for dual-Ph.D. students. The chair of the student's dual degree committee must be on both the Sociology and Demography program faculty and also at least one other committee member must be on the Demography program faculty. Note that the second Demography program faculty can be from outside of Sociology. The dissertation of dual-degree students addresses a problem and draws on the research and scholarship of both the disciplines of sociology and demography.

### **Dual-Title Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Data Analytics**

The full detailed requirements for students pursuing the dual-title Ph.D. in Social Data Analytics (SoDA) are laid out in the University Bulletin. Admissions to the SoDA dual-title PhD must be completed prior to passing candidacy in Sociology. In addition to completion of the requirements of Sociology, dual-title Ph.D. students must complete 18 credits of coursework, including 6 credits in two required SoDA seminars, and 12 credits in approved electives. Due to overlap with Sociology program requirements, these coursework requirements do not result in 18 additional required credits. Students must pass a candidacy exam (as defined by the major program) assessing candidacy for both Sociology and SoDA. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must be on the candidacy committee. Students must pass a comprehensive exam (as defined by Sociology) assessing mastery of Sociology and SoDA, as well as preparation for dissertation research. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must serve as chair or co-chair of the dissertation committee. Finally, the student must defend a dissertation with substantial content in SoDA.

### **Minor in Social Data Analytics**

The requirement for the graduate minor in Social Data Analytics (which are described here---<http://bdss.psu.edu/soda>) include:

1. Complete 15 or more credits of prescribed coursework, including 6 credits in two SoDA seminars, and 9 or more credits in approved electives.
2. Pass a comprehensive exam (as defined by your major program) assessing mastery of the major discipline, as well as preparation for dissertation research. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty (who may also be on the faculty of the primary program) must serve on the dissertation committee. The Graduate School requires students wishing to pursue a graduate minor to be admitted to the minor program prior to passing the comprehensive exam in their major program.

### **Grade-Point Average**

A minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State is required for graduation. However, sociology faculty expect students' grade point averages will be 3.50 or above. Students with GPAs below 3.25 are considered to be performing below satisfactory level.

### **Annual Evaluation**

At the end of each academic year, students receive written feedback on their performance from the Graduate Officer, based on faculty discussion at the annual review meeting that is held at the end of the spring semester. Information for this performance evaluation is obtained from all faculty who have had a particular student in a seminar, supervised an independent study course for the student, or served on the student's M.A. or Ph.D. committee. Course grades and assistantship evaluations are also reviewed for each student.

## Certificates

Students may earn special certification in Quantitative Methods, Survey Research Methods, and Social Networks through additional course work and/or training.

### **Quantitative Methods Certificate in Sociology and Quantitative Criminology Option in Sociology**

The Penn State sociology department has exceptional strength in quantitative research methods and statistical analysis techniques, both in its graduate faculty and in its consequent course offerings. Capitalizing on these strengths, as well as the interests of our students, students in Sociology can earn a Certificate in Quantitative Methods (QM) in place of a minor. To earn a QM Certificate, students must (1) complete three approved methods/statistics courses (12 hours) beyond Soc 513, 574, and 575; (2) include a quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee and (3) a practicum in which the student demonstrates proficiency in the application or teaching of methods/statistics (i.e., by teaching a stats/methods course, lab or workshop; authoring or co-authoring a paper on methods/statistics; or completing an internship at an applied research agency such as the U.S. Census Bureau). Another requirement is that one of the areas covered in the comprehensive exam will be in quantitative methods.

Students in Sociology who take the Quantitative Criminology option do so by earning a Certificate in Quantitative Methods (as specified above). With the approval of the graduate committee, the QM certificate can be substituted for the Ph.D. minor area.

A quantitative methodologist is defined as a faculty member who teaches graduate level quantitative methods and/or who has a publication record in quantitative methods. The list of Sociology/CRIM faculty who meet this definition includes: Duane Alwin, Diane Felmlee, Steven Haas, Melissa Hardy, David Johnson, Thomas Loughran, Liying Luo, Molly Martin, Stephen Matthews, Eric Silver, Jeremy Staff, Jenny Van Hook, Ashton Verdery, and Scott Yabiku.

Committee members outside of the sociology department may also meet the qualifications to serve as the quantitative methodologist on the Ph.D. dissertation committee. The QM Certificate committee must approve any outside members who requests to serve in this role.

Courses listed below can be used to meet the four-course requirement. Additional courses will also be considered, and new ones will be added as we find out about them and they become available. Institute for Social Research summer institute courses can also be used upon the approval of the committee (one week workshops are excluded). A student may petition the QM committee to add a course to the list.

ECON 500 Mathematical Economics  
ECON 501 Econometrics  
ECON 502 Microeconomic Analysis  
ECON 503 Macroeconomic Analysis

STAT 500 Applied Statistics  
STAT 501 Regression Methods  
STAT 502 Analysis of Variance and Design of Experiments  
STAT 503 Design of Experiments  
STAT 504 Analysis of Discrete Data  
STAT 505 Applied Multivariate Statistical Analysis  
STAT 506 Sampling Theory  
STAT 509 Design and Analysis of Clinical Trials  
STAT 510 Time Series Analysis

SOC 518 Survey Methods I: Survey Design  
SOC 519 Survey Methods II: Analysis of Survey Data  
SOC 572 Foundations of Causal Analysis in the Social Sciences  
SOC 573 Demographic Techniques  
SOC 576 Applied Mathematical Demography

SOC 577 Event History Analysis  
SOC 578 Multilevel Regression Models  
SOC 579 Spatial Demography  
SOC 597 Advanced Structural Equation Models  
SOC 597 Categorical Data Analysis  
SOC 597 Measurement Issues in Social Data

HDFS 517 Multivariate Study of Change and Human Development  
HDFS/PSY 526 Measurement in Human Development

Other courses not listed above may be approved to meet the QMC course requirement by the Sociology/CRIM Departmental QMC committee.

A student who has met the requirements for the QM certificate must write a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies specifying how they have been met and requesting the award of the Certificate. Students who are approved will receive a letter confirming the completion of all requirements and a signed certificate.

### **Certificate in Survey Methodology**

Social scientists with expertise in survey methodologies are in high demand in academia, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and in the private sector. The Graduate Certificate in Survey Methodology supplements traditional graduate degree programs by providing graduate students with an integrated program of study that goes beyond the training in a single department.

Students in many different graduate programs—ranging from marketing to nutrition, educational psychology to political science—are exposed to some methods relevant to survey research. The three required courses in the certificate program provide students with competence in the collection of data and the analysis of survey data, along with practical experience in survey research operations and administration.

Contact SRC Academic Advisor [Dr. Eric Plutzer](#) for more information on the certificate program.

### **Admissions Requirements**

Applicants may apply to the program after completing 18 credits of graduate training (with a GPA of 3.3 or higher). The application process includes:

- An application at the [Graduate School's student portal](#)
- A non-refundable application fee (currently \$65) to the Graduate School
- An endorsement letter in support of your application from your advisor

### **Required Courses**

- PL SC 518/SOC 518. Survey methods I: Modes of survey analysis
- PL SC 519/SOC 519. Survey methods II: Analysis of survey data
- PL SC 595a, SOC 595a, or equivalent. Internship in Survey Research

### **Electives**

Students may select any two additional three-credit courses in intermediate and advanced applied statistics or interviewing techniques, as approved by the chair of the SRC Faculty Advisory Committee. There is no specific list of courses because offerings in the social and behavioral sciences change frequently and possibly offered under the 597 rubric. As a general rule, these courses must be at the 500 level, and they must have pre-requisites equivalent to two semesters of applied statistics.

## **Certificate in Social Network Analysis Applications in Criminology and Sociology (SNAACS)**

Social network analysis is the formal study of relationships between social entities. Sociologists and Criminologists often study the relationships between people, such as friendships or family ties, or between organizations, such as the links created between university departments through faculty co-authorships or between corporations through board interlocks. Questions of particular interest include what causes these links to form, their characteristics in terms of local features like communication frequency or global features like how they connect disparate groups of actors, their dynamics, and how they channel rights, obligations, information, and influence between entities.

The Penn State Department of Sociology and Criminology has exceptional strengths in the theory and analysis of social networks, both in its graduate faculty and in its consequent course offerings. What sets our department apart from others is our strong focus on issues pertaining to social psychological processes underlying network formation and dynamics, social network data collection in general and hard-to-survey populations, the importance of family and kinship ties and social support, networks over the life course, criminal and illicit networks, migrant networks, peer influence networks, spatially embedded network analysis, social media networks, and novel methods for modeling social networks, including computational and agent-based models of network processes.

Capitalizing on these strengths, as well as the interests of our students, students in Sociology and Criminology can earn a Certificate in Social Network Analysis Applications in Criminology and Sociology (SNAACS) in place of a minor area of concentration for Ph.D. students in Sociology and Criminology. To earn a SNAACS Certificate, students must complete the following:

- (1) Complete one required 3-credit courses and three appropriate elective 3-credit courses for a total of 12 hours of course work. All students in the certificate program must complete the course “Social Network Analysis (SOC 580)”, which deals with the theory and methods of social network analysis (3 hours). Students must also complete three additional approved courses that draw heavily on topics related to social network analysis (9 hours). These courses will need to be approved annually by the SNAACS certificate committee based on a review of several materials. To obtain approval, the student should submit a written request that includes: a) the course’s syllabus, b) a brief description of the way social networks are incorporated into the course, and c) contact information for the instructor; ideally, these requests should be submitted two weeks prior to the start of the semester in which the course will be taught, but retroactive requests will be considered at the discretion of the Head of the SNAACS certificate committee. A list of courses with content that may be relevant is listed below.
- (2) Include social network analysis as one of the major or minor areas or subareas on the student’s comprehensive examination.
- (3) Demonstrate the ability to apply the theories and/or methods of social network analysis in a research setting. This can be done in one or more of the following ways:
  - a. Drawing heavily on the theories and/or methods of social network analysis in a substantial component of the dissertation. Note that the dissertation does not have to be primarily focused on social network analysis, but at least one component, such as a chapter, should make extensive use of networks related topics or methods. For instance, research on social support, social capital, peer influence, or family dynamics would all qualify, in addition to work that conducts formal network analyses. Approval of this component will be made by the Head of the SNAACS Certificate Committee, in consultation with the broader SNAACS committee, the student’s Dissertation Chair, and the Directors of Graduate Studies in Sociology and Criminology.



- b. Submitting a sole- or co-authored manuscript to a recognized academic outlet such as a peer-reviewed journal or an edited volume that relies extensively on or develops social network analysis methods or theories. If a co-authored manuscript is submitted, it is expected that the student's contribution was substantial (e.g., typically, a first author for articles submitted to sociology journals, or an equal responsibility author); a short memo with a description of the student's role in the manuscript's drafting should be submitted along with co-authored manuscripts. To fulfill this requirement, the submitted manuscript and any accompanying materials must be evaluated and approved by the Head of the SNAACS Certificate Committee, in consultation with the broader SNAACS committee.
- c. Completing an internship that relies heavily on the theories and/or methods of social network analysis at a research agency or company with an emphasis on social network analysis. To fulfill this requirement, the student must meet with the head of the SNAACS certificate committee and discuss the internship's duration and focus. Approval will rest with the Head of the SNAACS committee, in consultation the broader SNAACS committee and the Directors of Graduate Studies in Sociology and Criminology.

With the approval of the department's graduate committee, the SNAACS certificate can be substituted for the Ph.D. minor area.

Courses whose content may be eligible for fulfilling certificate requirements

Courses listed below may be eligible to meet the certificate's course requirements described above (item one). In each year, a student may petition the SNAACS committee to include one of the following courses, or others, as fulfilling these requirements. As the topical emphasis in each course shifts from year to year, approval will be based on the year's syllabus and potentially a discussion with the faculty member teaching the course. In general, courses that include substantial coverage of the theories and methods of social network analysis and an instructor who feels that this material is important to the course will be approved. Additional courses will also be considered, and new ones will be added as we find out about them and they become available. Courses other than those listed below will also be considered with a written request for approval from the Departmental SNAACS committee. The procedures described above will also be applied to these approval requests.

*In the Department of Sociology and Criminology*

CRIM 559 Communities and Crime  
 CRIM 597E Networks and Crime  
 CRIM 597F Crime and Health  
 SOC 521 Family Demography  
 SOC 522 Demography of the Life Course  
 SOC 523 Internal and International Migration  
 SOC 525 Immigration, Assimilation, and Inequality  
 SOC 526 Health Disparities  
 SOC 530 Sociology of the Family  
 SOC 531 Family Disorganization: Stress Points in the Contemporary Family  
 SOC 537 Biosocial Perspectives on the Family  
 SOC 576 Applied Mathematical Demography  
 SOC 579 Spatial Demography  
 SOC 584 Attitude Formation and Change

*In other departments*

CAS 563 Pairs & Pairings: Quantitative Methods for Interdependent Data

CSE 597 Graph Mining  
CSE 597 Social Network Data Analytics  
EE 556: Graphs, Algorithms, and Neural Networks  
ENTR 571: Strategic Innovation in Corporate Networks  
IE 512: Graph Theory and Networks in Management  
INSC 846: Network and Predictive Analytics for Socio-Technical Systems  
IST 597 Visualization and Advanced Analysis of Social Networks  
MGMT 539: Seminar in Organizational Social Networks  
PHYS 580 Elements of Network Science and Its Applications  
PLSC 597 Social Network Analysis for Political Science  
STAT 507: Epidemiologic Research Methods

A student who has met the requirements for the SNAACS certificate must write a letter to the Director of Graduate Studies and the head of the SNAACS committee documenting how they have been met and requesting award of the Certificate. Upon evaluation and approval from the SNAACS committee, approved students will receive a letter confirming the completion of all requirements and a signed certificate.

### **Transfers Between Sociology and CRIM Ph.D. Programs**

The Sociology and the Criminology programs offer parallel, and partially integrated, courses of study. Occasionally students will decide, after receiving the M.A. degree in CRIM to complete the Ph.D. in Sociology. The two programs have developed a process for expediting such transfers. A detailed description of the transfer process is included in Appendix II.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development begins with enrollment in Sociology 500, Introduction to Graduate Studies, normally during the first semester in residence. One of the most important aspects of professional development is the participation in professional meetings. Students are strongly encouraged to begin presenting research papers at professional meetings as early as is feasible. In order to facilitate professional presentations by graduate students, the sociology department has established a student travel fund (partially supported by RGSO). A substantial budget for subsidizing travel of graduate students to professional meetings is available through the Fund that is wholly administered by a committee of graduate students chosen by the graduate student body. Criteria of eligibility for travel support and application procedures are available from the graduate student travel committee.

### **Teaching Portfolio**

Students who plan to pursue a career in college or university teaching should begin to develop material to be included in a teaching portfolio. A portfolio is a very useful tool when seeking employment that includes teaching responsibilities. Normally, the creation of an individual portfolio begins in Sociology 591, the lab in Teaching Sociology. All students have the opportunity, during summer sessions, to gain experience as Teaching Assistants and to teach their own courses. A strong portfolio will include traces of these experiences, including course outlines and materials along with course evaluations. Examples of teaching portfolios that have been prepared by previous graduates of the sociology department are available.

### **Comprehensive Examination**

A comprehensive examination will be administered by the student's Ph.D. committee. Candidates are required by the Graduate School to have a minimum grade-point average of 3.00 for work done at Penn State at the time of the comprehensive examination, and they must be registered as full-time or part-time degree students for the semester in which the examination is taken. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing.

The purpose of the comprehensive examination in sociology is to ensure competency in the earlier-described major and minor areas of specialization. At the discretion of the faculty committee, examination content, while focusing on the major and minor areas of specialization, may incorporate aspects of general social theory, research methods, and statistics.

The comprehensive examination consists of written and oral segments. The written comprehensive will be a closed-book examination administered in four three-hour sessions, normally morning and afternoon sessions on two consecutive days. At the discretion of the committee, up to one extra hour per session may be given to students who are not native speakers of English. The comprehensive examination is based on a reading list distributed to and approved by all members of the Ph.D. supervisory committee at least one month prior to the date of the written portion of the exam.

The oral portion of the comprehensive examination is a scheduled meeting of the candidate with the candidate's faculty committee. Normally, the oral part of the exam occurs two to three weeks after the written exam. The oral exam is an occasion for feedback and discussion of the student's written examination performance. The oral exam also consists of a dissertation proposal hearing (see below). If a student fails the comprehensive exam, the proposal hearing will be canceled. The oral portion of the comprehensive examination must be scheduled two weeks in advance with the Graduate School.

At the discretion of their Ph.D. committee, students may be provided with specific study questions in advance of the comprehensive examination. A file of old comprehensive examination questions has been compiled and is open to faculty and graduate students.

Students who entered the Penn State Graduate Program in Sociology with a B.A. are expected to take the comprehensive examination prior to the beginning of the fall semester of their fourth year and must pass the examination before the end of the fall semester of their fourth year to be eligible for continued funding. Those entering the program with an M.A. are expected to take the comprehensive examination before the fall semester of their third year and must pass the examination before the end of the fall semester of their third year to be eligible for continued funding. Students who fail the comprehensive examination may repeat it once, so long as the time limits specified in the preceding sentences are not exceeded.

A copy of the questions for the written section of the comprehensive examination is available to all members of the Graduate Faculty in Sociology. The comprehensive examination written by the student is placed in the student's departmental file.

### **Dissertation**

The Penn State Graduate Bulletin says this about the Ph.D. dissertation: "The ability to do independent research and competence in scholarly exposition must be demonstrated by the preparation of a thesis on some topic related to the major subject. It should represent a significant contribution to knowledge, be presented in a scholarly manner, reveal an ability on the part of the candidate to do independent research of high quality, and indicate considerable experience in using a variety of research techniques."

The student's dissertation research is conducted under the supervision of the Ph.D. committee. An early meeting of the Ph.D. committee should be held to give informal consideration to the dissertation plan and to make recommendations for course work, as may be appropriate.

A subsequent, formal dissertation proposal hearing should be scheduled at the same time as the oral portion of the comprehensive examination, as noted above. The goal is to come to a detailed, mutually agreeable contract between the student and the committee. The proposal should contain a clear statement of the research problem, a concise literature review, major hypotheses, a description of data sources, and a detailed plan for carrying out the analysis. The hearing also allows the committee to make any final recommendations for student course work.

To reiterate, the proposal hearing should occur in conjunction with the oral part of the comprehensive exam. Thus, students entering the Penn State graduate program in Sociology with a B.A. should have held the proposal hearing prior to the end of their fourth year. Those students entering the program with an M.A. are advised to hold a proposal hearing

prior to the end of their third year.

The formal defense of the dissertation is scheduled by the Sociology graduate officer with the Graduate School upon receipt of written notification from the Ph.D. committee chair that the committee judges the dissertation to be satisfactory for a defense. Three weeks notice is required by the Graduate School. The deadline for holding the defense is ten weeks before commencement. The student must be registered as a full-time or part-time degree student for the semester in which the final oral examination is taken. A favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the committee is required for passing.

As stipulated in the Penn State Graduate Bulletin: "Both the thesis director and the student are responsible for ensuring the completion of a draft of the thesis and for adequate consultation with members of the thesis committee well in advance of the oral examination (defense). Major revisions to the thesis should be completed before this examination. The dissertation should be in its final draft, with appropriate notes, bibliography, tables, etc., at the time of the oral examination; both the content and style should be correct and polished by the time this final draft of the thesis is in the hands of the committee. It is the responsibility of the doctoral candidate to provide a copy of the thesis to each member of the doctoral committee at least one week before the date of the scheduled examination." The graduate officer will notify other members of the graduate faculty in Sociology of the defense and invite them to attend. The Graduate Bulletin specifies that the final oral examination, which serves as the defense of the dissertation, shall be "related in large part to the dissertation, but may cover the candidate's whole program of study . . ."

### **Preparation for Placement of Ph.D. Recipients**

The sociology department makes every effort to encourage and support students in developing their own research productivity and teaching competence so that they are well prepared to seek academic or non-academic employment as they complete their Ph.D. degree. These efforts include curriculum, steady financial support during residency, encouragement and financial support for making professional presentations, and opportunities for teaching. All of these efforts are aimed toward having students ready to enter the job market with the strongest possible record of accomplishment, especially including scholarly publications and teaching excellence. The department has a strong record of placement of its graduates and it continually tracks their employment. Information about specific students and their current employment is available on the department website or by request.

During the year prior to the one when a student intends to complete a dissertation and actively seek employment, the graduate officers in Sociology and Criminology assemble candidates for several seminars. These are designed to help students understand the job market, familiarize them with the timing of events in their search for employment and specify the materials a student will need to prepare in advance of actually applying for positions. The materials include at a minimum a resume, a teaching portfolio and a draft cover letter. It is absolutely necessary to have developed these materials well in advance if actively seeking a position, preferably in the summer before doing so.

The seminars also cover the specifics of the job interview process including the nature of "job talks," how to handle personal interviews, and negotiations over terms of employment. A package of written materials pertaining to these issues is made available to candidates.

### **Mock Job Talks and Mock Interviews**

Early in the year of employment seeking, active candidates are strongly encouraged to sign up for simulated job presentations and simulated job interviews. These are opportunities for students to practice being a job candidate. Members of the faculty volunteer to take part as participants both as simulated presentation audience members and as interviewers. Students are provided systematic feedback on their performance in both settings by participating faculty. In many cases students are encouraged to repeat such practice sessions in order to improve a job presentation. It is essential to have completed these practice sessions well in advance of being a real candidate for a position.

### **Faculty Placement Committee**

The department maintains a standing committee of senior faculty members who, along with the graduate officers, participate in and oversee the preparation for placement process each year. Members of that committee make themselves

available to students who are seeking employment as aides in reviewing materials and in finding employment opportunities and assessing them.

### THE MINOR IN SOCIOLOGY

A minor in Sociology at the M.A. level for students in other departments or programs consists of 9 credits of Sociology, of which at least 3 credits must be in an organized 500-level seminar. A minor in Sociology at the Ph.D. level is composed of a minimum of 15 credits in the department, of which at least 6 credits must be in organized 500-level seminars. The student's program must contain:

1. 3 credits in research methods or statistics;
2. 3 credits in sociological theory; and
3. 6 credits in one area of emphasis.

Established program areas in the Department of Sociology are: demography; family, life course, and aging; criminology; stratification and inequality; sociology of education; urban and community studies; and quantitative methods.

Ph.D. candidates who intend to minor in Sociology should select at least one graduate faculty member in the sociology department for their doctoral committee.

## **Procedures for Major Milestones**

### **MA Procedures**

#### **Committee**

- 3 members are required; 2 must be from sociology
- Graduate school does not require committee appointment form, but GPA (graduate program assistant) should have the list by the beginning of your 2<sup>nd</sup> year

#### **Thesis Defense**

- Enrollment is not required
- Is not scheduled with the graduate school
- Student is responsible for scheduling with faculty and securing a room
- Final version of paper must be sent to committee 2 weeks before defense. This version should be an n<sup>th</sup> draft that has been revised according to the suggestions of your directing professor
- As part of the new learning objectives and assessment procedures, students will see the skills and knowledge we hope to see demonstrated in the written paper and the oral discussion

#### **Thesis Submission**

- Must follow Thesis Office Deadlines
- Format review is required
- Approval (signatory) page is required for submission
  - The form is available from the Thesis Office web site
  - This form is the responsibility of the student
  - Entire committee and either department head or program chair must sign
  - Retain and submit a signed copy for the department (required for candidacy review)
  - This form can be taken to the defense; however, it should not be signed and submitted until all corrections have been made and approved, and the paper is ready to be uploaded

### **PhD Procedures**

#### **Candidacy Review**

- Transcripts, writing samples, evaluations, etc. are reviewed by the Graduate Committee
- Enrollment is required
- Students must assemble a dossier that includes the following:
  - M.A. thesis
  - An additional paper written during the course of graduate study at Penn State
  - A plan of doctoral study. This should be developed in consultation with your major professor. The plan should include:
    - A checklist indicating what courses you have taken, what courses you plan to take, how those courses satisfy requirements (e.g., major area, minor area, dual title, formal minors, as well as the seminar requirement for the MA) – you may use the checklist provided in this document
    - A list of probable committee members
    - The areas in which you plan to comp
    - A 300- to 500-word description of what you plan for dissertation (e.g., key research questions; data identified; literatures you want to make a contribution).
  - A written release allowing the Graduate Committee to examine all violations of academic integrity that have been filed with the Academic Integrity Office during your term of graduate study at Penn State.
- After passing candidacy and during your 3<sup>rd</sup> year (2<sup>nd</sup> for incoming MA students) you need to call a meeting of your doctoral committee to discuss your plan of study, proposed dissertation work, and thoughts about how your plan of study will ready you for the job market

## **Committee**

- 4 members are required by the graduate school
- Graduate School does require a committee appointment form signed by every member of the committee and committee chair
- The specific members required by the Graduate School are outlined on the appointment form, which is available in the Graduate Programs Office, 213 Oswald
- Once you have completed your comprehensive exams, your committee should not be changed (unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as illness, leaving the university, etc.)

## **Reading List**

- The purpose of the reading list is to guide your individual study in two primary areas: major area and minor area. Dual-title and certificate programs have more specific requirements. For example, the major area is Demography, and one question set must cover 'basic demography' for Dual-title Demography students; QM Certificate students must have one question set on quantitative methods; SoDA students must comp in Social Data Analytics as their sociology minor area
- Although general expectations of length exist in terms of works, pages of reading, or pages of the reading list, the goal is to put together a set of readings in major/minor areas and somewhat more specialized research literature that will give you the foundation you need to be able to situate your dissertation within broader literatures and discuss topics and contributions in your areas of expertise
- The list should be developed (first) in collaboration with your major professor and then discussed with your doctoral committee with the understanding that the questions that will be asked in the written exam will be answerable on the basis of the readings on the list
- The list is supposed to extend and supplement the readings from your courses

## **Comprehensive Exam (written)**

- The dates for the written exam should be scheduled with the Graduate Program Office, 213 Oswald
- The written exam is not scheduled with the graduate school
- The written exam is typically held over two days, two sessions per day
- Enrollment is not required
- The exam is conducted by your formally appointed committee

## **Comprehensive Exam (Oral Defense)**

- The date of the oral defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance with the Graduate School
- The exam request form is available from the Graduate Programs Office, 213 Oswald
- The entire committee must be present
- Enrollment is required

## **Dissertation Proposal Defense**

- The proposal defense should occur in conjunction with the Oral part of the comprehensive exam
- The proposal should be circulated 2 weeks before the oral part of the exam
- The proposal should provide sufficient detail for the committee to be able to judge that
  - the project is suitable for the dissertation
  - the project will make a contribution to the research literature
  - the approach the student plans to take is a workable design
  - the data are available to allow the student to answer the proposed questions
- The proposal defense is not scheduled with the graduate school
- Enrollment is not required
- No forms are required

## **Final Dissertation Defense**

- The date of the defense must be scheduled at least 2 weeks in advance with the Graduate School
- The exam request form is available the from the Graduate Program Office, 213 Oswald
- Enrollment is required

- The entire committee must be present
- The final draft of the dissertation should be sent to the committee at least 2 weeks before the scheduled defense
- The draft should conform to the dissertation structure allowed by the department (traditional or 3 distinct papers)
- The student and major professor's expectations for this draft should be that it requires minor revisions
- Any member of the doctoral committee may delay the defense if, within 1 week of receipt, his/her judgment is that the draft requires another round of revisions before the defense can occur. The opinion is relayed to the major professor

### **Dissertation Submission**

- Must follow Thesis Office Deadlines
- Format review is required
- Approval (signatory) page is required for submission
  - The form is available from the Thesis Office web site
  - This form is the responsibility of the student
  - Entire committee and either department head or program chair must sign
  - This form can be taken to the defense, however, it should not be signed and submitted until all corrections have been made and approved



## Checklists

### Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with a BA

Name:

Year entered program:

Date:

### MA Requirements

| Course Requirement (37 credits)  |  | Course name (if elective) | Course Num | Sem/Yr completed |
|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------|------------------|
| SOC500                           | Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)                                      |                           |            |                  |
| SOC502                           | Theories of Society (3 credits)  |                           |            |                  |
| SOC503 or<br>SOC504 or<br>SOC512 | Contemporary Sociology or Sociology Today or Criminological Theories (3 credits) |                           |            |                  |
| SOC513                           | Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)  |                           |            |                  |
| SOC574                           | Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab)                                   |                           |            |                  |
| SOC575                           | Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits + 1 credit lab)                |                           |            |                  |
| SOC600                           | MA thesis (6 credits)  |                           |            |                  |
| SOC5xx                           | Elective in Sociology (3 credits)  |                           |            |                  |
| SOC5xx                           | Elective in Sociology (3 credits)  |                           |            |                  |
| XXX5xx                           | Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)                            |                           |            |                  |
| XXX5xx                           | Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)                            |                           |            |                  |
| XXX5xx                           | Elective in Sociology or other department (3 credits)                            |                           |            |                  |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| MA Thesis Title:                                |    |
| Committee Chair (name)                          |    |
| *Other Committee Members                        | 1) |
|   | 2) |
| Thesis approved by all committee members (date) |    |
| Semester/year degree conferred                  |    |

\*committee must include 3 members, at least 2 in sociology

**PhD Requirements**

| <b>PhD Course Requirement (19 credits total)</b>   |   | <b>Course Name</b> | <b>Course Num</b> | <b>Sem/Yr completed</b> |
|--|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| (4+ sociology courses, 5+ must be 500 level, no more than 1 independent study, 3+ must be substantive courses) |   |                    |                   |                         |
| SOC592   | Writing for publication (3 credits)                   |                    |                   |                         |
| SOC591   | Teaching workshop (1 credit)                          |                    |                   |                         |
| SOC5xx   | Elective seminar in sociology (3 credits)             |                    |                   |                         |
| SOC5xx   | Elective seminar in sociology                         |                    |                   |                         |
| SOC5xx   | Elective in sociology (3 credits)                     |                    |                   |                         |
| XXX5xx   | Elective in sociology or other department (3 credits) |                    |                   |                         |
| XXXxxx   | Elective in sociology or other department (3 credits) |                    |                   |                         |

Note: Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes: SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Candidacy Exam (date passed)                            |    |
| PhD Committee Chair (name)                              |    |
| PhD Committee Members                                   | 1) |
|   | 2) |
|   | 3) |
| Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved) |    |
| Final dissertation defense (date approved)              |    |
| Dissertation Title:                                     |    |
| Semester/year degree conferred                          |    |

**Checklist for Students Who Enter the Program with an MA**

Name:

Year entered program:

Date:

Non-PSU MA degree (institution/program/year):

| Core Courses (required if no equivalent from student's MA program) |   | Requirement waived? | PSU course if not waived |                  |
|--|---|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|  |   |                     | Course Num               | Sem/Yr completed |
| SOC500   | Introduction to Graduate Studies (1 credit)   |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC502   | Theories of Society (3 credits)   |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC503 or<br>SOC504 or<br>SOC512                                   | Contemporary Theory or<br>Sociology Today or<br>Criminological Theories (3 credits) |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC513   | Sociological Research Methods (3 credits)   |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC574   | Statistical Methods (3 credits + 1 credit lab)                                      |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC575   | Statistical Models for NonExp Research (3 credits + 1 credit lab)                   |                     |                          |                  |
| SOC591   | Teaching workshop (1 credit)  |                     |                          |                  |

| PhD Course Requirement (18 credits total)  |   | Course Name | Course Num | Sem/Yr completed |
|--|---|-------------|------------|------------------|
| (4+ sociology courses, 2+ must be 500 level, no more than 1 independent study, 3+ must be substantive courses) |   |             |            |                  |
| SOC592   | Writing for publication (3 credits)                   |             |            |                  |
| SOC5xx   | Elective seminar in sociology (3 credits)             |             |            |                  |
| SOC5xx   | Elective seminar in sociology                         |             |            |                  |
| SOCxxx   | Elective in sociology (3 credits)                     |             |            |                  |
| XXXxxx   | Elective in sociology or other department (3 credits) |             |            |                  |
| XXXxxx   | Elective in sociology or other department (3 credits) |             |            |                  |

Note: Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes: SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Candidacy Exam (date passed)                            |    |
| PhD Committee Chair (name)                              |    |
| PhD Committee Members                                   | 1) |
|   | 2) |
|   | 3) |
| Comprehensive exam and proposal defense (date approved) |    |
| Final dissertation defense (date approved)              |    |
| Dissertation Title:                                     |    |
| Semester/year degree conferred                          |    |

**Checklists for Optional Dual Degrees, Certificates, and Minors**

| Demography Dual Title PhD Program |   | Course Name | Course Num | Sem/Yr |
|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|--------|
| SOC423                            | Disciplinary Survey Course (3 credits)  |             |            |        |
| SOC573                            | Demographic Techniques (3 credits)      |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Demographic Methods Class (3 credits)   |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Demographic Processes Class (3 credits) |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Demographic Processes Class (3 credits) |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Population Studies Class (3 credits)    |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Elective Core Class (3 credits)         |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                            | Elective Core Class (3 credits)         |             |            |        |
| DEM590                            | Colloquium (1 credit)                   |             |            |        |
| DEM590                            | Colloquium (1 credit)                   |             |            |        |

NOTES: Courses may overlap with sociology major area; 24 credits total; no more than 3 credits independent study; at least 3 credits must be outside of sociology. DEM590 does not count toward the 24-credit requirement. Disclaimer: the director of this program has the final say on program requirements.

| SoDA Dual Title PhD Program |                           | Course Name | Course Num | Sem/Yr |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA seminar (3 credits)  |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA seminar (3 credits)  |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA Elective (3 credits) |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA Elective (3 credits) |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA Elective (3 credits) |             |            |        |
| XXXxxx                      | SoDA Elective (3 credits) |             |            |        |

NOTES: 18 credits of coursework, including 6 credits in two required SoDA seminars, and 12 credits in approved electives (may overlap with Sociology program requirements); must pass a candidacy exam (as defined by the major program) assessing candidacy for both Sociology and SoDA; member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must be on the candidacy committee; students must pass a comprehensive exam (as defined by Sociology) assessing mastery of Sociology and SoDA, as well as preparation for dissertation research. A member of the SoDA Graduate Faculty must serve as chair or co-chair of the dissertation committee. Finally, the student must defend a dissertation with substantial content in SoDA. Disclaimer: the director of this program has the final say on program requirements.

| Quantitative Methods Certificate | Course Name | Course Num | Sem/Yr |
|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| XXXXXX                           |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                           |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                           |             |            |        |
| Practicum in methods/statistics  |             |            |        |

NOTES: Courses may overlap if QM is minor area; 12 credits from approved list of courses; does not include SOC574 or SOC575; must include 1 QM faculty member on PhD committee. The practicum is an experience or publication that demonstrates proficiency in the application of methods/statistics (i.e., by teaching a stats/methods course, lab or workshop; authoring or co-authoring a paper on methods/statistics; or completing an internship at an applied research agency such as the U.S. Census Bureau).

| Minor in Social Thought |                         | Course Name | Course Num | Sem/Yr |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------|--------|
| SOC501                  | Classical Social Theory |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                  |                         |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                  |                         |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                  |                         |             |            |        |
| XXXXXX                  |                         |             |            |        |

NOTES: 5 courses (15 credits) with Social Thought content taught by faculty affiliated with the STP; 9+ credits (3+ classes) must be outside sociology; 1+ STP faculty must be on dissertation committee.



**Typical Timeline for Students Who Enter the Program with an MA**

|                            | Year 1   |                    |     | Year 2  |                    |  | Year 3  |  |   | Year 4+   |        |     |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------|-----|---|--------------------|--|---|--|---|---|--------|-----|
|                            | Fall   | Spring             | Sum | Fall  | Spring             | Sum  | Fall  | Spring   | Sum   | Fall  | Spring | Sum |
| <b>COURSES</b>             | SOC500<br>Year 1: Take courses that did not transfer: SOC574, SOC596, SOC502, (SOC503 or SOC504 or SOC512), SOC513, SOC575, SOC591 |                    |     | SOC592<br>Year 1 or 2: SOC5xx, SOC5xx, SOCxxx, XXXxxx, XXXxxx (3 must be substantive seminars)  |                    |  | SOC600<br>SOC600  |  |   | SOC600<br>SOC600  |        |     |
| <b>ACTIVITIES</b>          |  | Identify PhD chair |     | Prepare for comprehensive exam; dissertation proposal   |                    | Teach a class  | dissertation research   | dissertation research, apply for year 5 funding (optional) |   | dissertation research; job search   |        |     |
| <b>REQUIREMENTS</b>        | Trainings (e.g., CITI, SARI)   |                    |     | Candidacy Exam  |                    |  | Comp Exam & Proposal Defense  |  | Defend dissertation   |   |        |     |
| <b>INFORMAL BENCHMARKS</b> |  |                    |     | Revise MA paper for submission to journal; get another (collaborative) paper under review; keep departmental webpage up to date; develop professional network |                    |  | Continue to work on publications; attend and present at conferences |  |   | Apply for jobs; continue to work on publications; attend and present at conferences; work on job talk, go on interviews |        |     |
| <b>FORMS</b>               |  |                    |     |   | PhD committee form | **schedule comprehensive examination with grad school; comps exam signatory form |   |  | **Schedule defense, Intent to graduate, PhD exam signatory form, PhD. Signatory page, file dissertation |   |        |     |

\* one of these courses may count toward major area

\*\*The program head will notify Graduate Enrollment Services, providing two weeks' notice, when the candidate is ready to schedule the comprehensive examination or the final oral examination/final performance. Doctoral examinations are scheduled and announced officially by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services upon recommendation of the program head, and must not be held without official notification from the Graduate School. Two weeks' notice is required by the Office of Graduate Enrollment Services for scheduling any doctoral examination.



## Appendix II: A Process to Permit CRIM Students to Opt for A Ph.D. Degree in Sociology

The Criminology (CRIM) graduate program serves as both an interdisciplinary doctoral program and as the criminology specialty area of the sociology department. This combination is at the core of the CRIM program's identity, and we highlight it in recruiting both graduate students and faculty. To fully realize the CRIM program's role as Sociology's criminology specialty area, the Department has created a means for CRIM students to earn the Ph.D. in Sociology, provided that they meet appropriate requirements.

### **Course Requirements**

A student who completes the CRIM M.A. and Ph.D. requirements can complete the Sociology PhD course requirements by adding the sociological theory course (SOC 502), Writing For Publications (SOC592 or an equivalent criminology seminar), and at least one substantive sociology course. Substantive sociology courses must be taken from an approved list or approved by the graduate committee. The approved list includes: SOC 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 535, 537, 533, 534, 538, 544, 546, 551, 553, 557, 560, 579, and 580. SOC 597's will also be approved unless the course focuses primarily on methods or statistics.

### **Ph.D. Candidacy Examination**

CRIM Students pursuing the Sociology Ph.D. will be reviewed for candidacy by both the Sociology and CRIM graduate committees. The CRIM Graduate Committee will assess the student's potential to successfully complete the program and produce a high-quality dissertation. The Sociology graduate committee will review the student to assess the extent and breadth of his or her coursework in sociology.

### **Comprehensive Exam Requirements**

The comprehensive exam requirements of both programs have the same basic form, which is two days of in-house exams, followed by an oral exam. Doctoral committees are responsible for writing the exam questions and evaluating the written and oral answers. In both programs committees have the option of requiring students to write a dissertation proposal in advance of the comprehensive exam and having the oral exam also serve as the proposal hearing. In both programs the doctoral committee is free to determine the content covered by the comprehensive exam, though in CRIM there are recommended areas of coverage: criminology, criminal justice, methods and statistics, and specialization area. Thus, a single exam can satisfy the comprehensive exam requirements of both programs. The exam questions for CRIM students seeking Sociology degrees would not be limited to the study of crime. At a minimum, they should also include non-criminological themes from their area of specialization in sociology.

### **Doctoral or Master's Thesis Committee**

The doctoral or master's committees of CRIM students earning Sociology degrees should be chaired by (or at least co-chaired by) a CRIM faculty member with a joint title in Sociology. Doctoral and master's committees should include at least one CRIM faculty member (typically the chair) and at least one non-CRIM member of the Sociology faculty.

### **Admissions**

The CRIM Graduate Committee handles admissions and recruitment for all students whose primary interest is in criminology and/or criminal justice, including those pursuing sociology degrees, and takes full responsibility for funding those students.

Sociology students are eligible to choose crime, law and justice as their major or minor area, even if they were not originally admitted as CRIM students. Any students originally admitted to Sociology who complete the requirements of the CRIM Program will have the option of earning either degree. The CRIM graduate officer will have signature authority and discretion for students transferring to the CRIM degree program. For students transferring from Sociology to CRIM, the two graduate officers and department head will negotiate funding and oversight on an individual basis.

## **Graduate Committee Oversight of Students' Programs**

The CRIM graduate officer and graduate committee take primary responsibility for the oversight of all CRIM students regardless of which degree they seek. This includes conducting annual reviews and judging whether students are making satisfactory progress to warrant continued funding. For CRIM students who are seeking Sociology degrees, the Sociology graduate officer and graduate committee have secondary oversight with authority to overrule their CRIM counterparts on all matters except funding from the CRIM budget. (In other words, the Sociology graduate committee delegates direct oversight to the CRIM graduate committee, which will act in the capacity of the criminology specialty area of Sociology. But “final authority” resides in the Sociology graduate committee, since these will officially be sociology students.) The two graduate officers serve as ex officio members of one another’s committees in order to remain informed of the both committee’s actions and to ensure consistency across the department in the handling of students.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free to discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will be not tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-863-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY. U.Ed.LBA 04-156