

## Doctoral Degree Requirements in Social Psychology

*Revised August, 2015*

This list attempts to clarify the requirements and goals for completing the degree. There are some very specific requirements of the Graduate School that must be fulfilled by certain deadlines. Always refer to their website for guidelines, forms and deadlines:

[www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool](http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool)

### Overview of Requirements

- \_\_\_ 34 hours of course work (5000-level or above).
- \_\_\_ 30 hours of dissertation work supervised by social faculty.
- \_\_\_ First-year project with social faculty, and participation in mini-convention.
- \_\_\_ Second-year project with social faculty (Master's Thesis).
- \_\_\_ Comprehensive examination (2 components: General & Specialty)
- \_\_\_ Dissertation prospectus and oral defense
- \_\_\_ Dissertation and oral defense
- \_\_\_ Teaching (at least one semester as a teaching assistant)
- \_\_\_ Completion of all requirements in 6 years.
- \_\_\_ Establish Colorado residency in 1<sup>st</sup> year (for U.S. citizens).

### Course Work

All courses must be completed with a grade of B- or better to obtain credit. 30 of these hours must be completed before you receive your master's degree. No less than 5 credit hours (including dissertation hours, see below) is considered a full load for graduate students. A student may not enroll in more than 15 credit hours in any semester. Required courses are:

Required Courses Credit Hours	Credit Hours
Statistics 5741/5751 (year-long)	8
Social Theory Proseminar (two semesters)	6
Social Research Methods (one semester)	3
Additional Methods Course (one semester)	3
Professional Development Brownbag (1 hr/semester x 3 yrs)	6
Advanced Seminars (4 semesters) with at least 3 semesters in Social Psychology, a fourth semester can be a comprehensive, substantive psychology seminar or proseminar outside of social psychology (must be approved by Program Director if course is outside the department).	8-9
Total	34-35

## Doctoral Dissertation Hours

There are many grad school rules around dissertation hours. Please attend to them closely.

*Doctoral Dissertation Credit Hour Requirements:* To complete the requirements for the Ph.D. a student must register for a minimum of 30 dissertation credit hours. Distribution of those hours is as follows:

- A student may not register for more than 10 dissertation credit hours in any one semester, including summer.
- Not more than 10 credit hours taken in semesters prior to the semester in which the comprehensive examination is passed (this means you have completed *both* general and specialty comprehensive exams) may be counted in the 30 dissertation hours required for the degree. (If you take more than 10 before comps is passed, only 10 will count.)
- Not more than 10 dissertation hours of credit taken in the semester in which the comprehensive examination is passed may be included in the 30 credit hours required for the degree.

*Continuous Registration Requirement:* A Ph.D. student is required to register continuously as a full-time student, for a minimum of 5 dissertation hours in the fall and spring semesters of each year, beginning with the semester following the passing of the comprehensive examination and extending through the semester in which the dissertation is successfully defended (final examination).

*An example:* To meet these requirements, you might register for 3-4 dissertation hours per semester starting in the spring of your second year (earning 10 hours total by the end of year 3). Assuming you complete your comprehensive exam (so that you are done with both general and specialty exams) in the fall semester of year 4, you might then register for 5 dissertation hours each semester in years 4 and 5 (earning an additional 20 hours and, all told, completing the 30 hours required for your PhD).

*Note on Forms:* Detailed descriptions of the remaining degree requirements are provided next. \*\* indicates that you must meet a deadline for submitting a form to the Graduate School. All forms and deadlines can be found on the departmental resources page at

<http://www.colorado.edu/psych-neuro/graduate-programs/resources-current-graduate-students>

## **First Year Project**

A written, APA-style report of your first-year project must be completed and approved by June 1 of your first year. The report is read by your advisor and one additional social psychology faculty member, selected in consultation with your advisor. You should have the readers sign the *First Year Project Form*, available from the Social Program Secretary. The completed form and a final copy of your report is given to the Social Program Secretary for your file.

You will also orally present your first-year project in the department's mini-convention at the end of the spring semester.

## **Second Year Project (Master's Thesis)**

Before starting your second-year project, you will prepare a written proposal for your advisor and one additional faculty member in social psychology, selected in consultation with your advisor. A meeting will be scheduled early in your second year with the proposal readers to discuss the proposal. Once the readers approve the proposal, you should have both faculty members sign the *Second Year Project Proposal Form*, available from the Social Program Secretary. It is important to note that although you are required to get approval for the proposal, your completed thesis can deviate from the proposal at the discretion of your advisor. That is, you are not bound to report the proposed research in your thesis. The purpose of the written proposal and meeting is to provide experience in conceptualizing and discussing research, and the opportunity to receive formal feedback from program faculty, but if other research you subsequently conduct is more appropriate for the project, this may be reported instead.

The second-year project is to be reported in a written thesis in APA Style, which must be approved by December 31 of your third year. You will select two readers for your thesis (your advisor and one additional social psychology faculty, usually the same person who read the proposal). After they approve the thesis and the appropriate form is filed – which includes the signature of a third faculty member (see below), the Graduate School will confer the Master's degree. Note that your thesis does not need to be typed in the Graduate School format. You will give a copy of the final thesis to the Social Program Secretary for your file, but you do not need to send a copy to the Graduate School. You will also orally present your second-year research in brown bag at the beginning of the fall semester of your third year.

In the semester in which you will submit your written thesis, you need to file a *Candidacy Application for an Advanced Degree\*\** (check the space for M.A.) and an *Application for Diploma card\*\** with the Graduate School, early in the semester. Students in the social psychology program enroll for Plan II – non-thesis with final exam. Do not sign up for master's thesis hours. You may instead sign up for Independent Study hours if necessary.

Near the end of the semester you will file the *Master's Degree Examination or Project Report\*\**. You will need to have a third faculty member sign this form so that there are three

faculty total who have approved your Master's work. Prior to receiving your master's degree, you must have completed 30 hours of coursework. *Please note that Graduate School requires that all work associated with the master's thesis, including filing of forms with the Graduate School, be completed within 4 years from the date course work is started.*

### **Comprehensive Examination (3<sup>rd</sup> Year)**

You will complete your Comprehensive Examination in your third year. You may take up to, but no more than 10 hours of dissertation work by the time you complete the entire Comprehensive Examination. There are two sections of the Examination: General and Specialty. The General Exam is usually taken at the end of the spring semester of your third year. The Specialty Exam is to be completed by December 31 of your fourth year.

Early in the spring semester of your third year, it is wise to submit to the Graduate School a *Candidacy Application for Advanced Degree\*\** (Check the PhD space this time). You will also need to submit the *Doctoral Examination Report\*\** to the Graduate School for approval of your exam committee. Both forms are due at least two weeks prior to the completion of both sections of your Comprehensive Examination.

#### *General Exam*

Students wishing to take the General Exam during a specific year need to notify the Social Program Director by April 1 of that year, with the exam administered during May. The General Exam is take-home and consists of four questions to be answered from the following 3 areas:

- General breadth, addressing comprehensive issues across social psychology (1 question)
- Methodological issues (1 question)
- Content-specific, focusing more in-depth on a specific theoretical content area in social psychology (2 questions)

A faculty member in the program will take responsibility for organizing, administering, and grading the exam. Grading may be done by all program faculty.

#### *Specialty Exam*

The second section of the Comprehensive Examination is focused on your specific interests within the field. A Specialty Exam Committee will be formed for this part of the Exam. The Committee will be comprised of five members: the Chair is your advisor, two additional faculty will be your readers (at least one from the Social Program), and the other two members will be Social Program faculty who will sign the graduate school form. All committee members may be Social Program faculty. If greater breadth is deemed desirable, one of the readers may be from outside the Program/Department as long as the committee chair agrees to this arrangement.

Your Chair and the two readers of your Specialty Exam shall have responsibility for designing and grading this exam. Working with your Chair, you will define a subfield of social psychology for your Specialty Exam and develop a reading list in that subfield. By mutual agreement of yourself and your Committee, the Exam may be of two forms: (1) a set of Committee-approved questions within the subfield which you will answer; or (2) a general theoretical or review paper covering the literature in the subfield, using a *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review* article as a model. You need to meet with the Chair and readers of your Specialty Exam Committee to define precisely the form of this part of the exam and to set up a mutually agreeable schedule for its completion. Once you have passed both parts of the Comprehensive Exam, all five members of your Specialty Exam Committee will sign the *Doctoral Examination Report\*\**, given to the Social Program Secretary for proper routing.

### **Dissertation Prospectus (4<sup>th</sup> Year)**

A written prospectus consisting of an introduction, methods, and an outline of analyses will be submitted to your committee at the beginning of the year and defended orally to the committee (the Specialty Comprehensive Exam will often serve as your prospectus introduction). The dissertation committee will consist of 5 members and must include: the advisor, one psychology faculty member from outside social psychology, and one faculty member from outside the psychology department. The remaining 2 members can be from any program. Once approval of the prospectus has been obtained, the student should have the members sign the *Approval of Dissertation Proposal Form*, available from the Social Program Secretary.

### **Dissertation (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Years)**

A *Doctoral Examination Report\*\** must be turned into the Graduate School. The form must be submitted to the Graduate School once a date for your oral defense has been set and no later than two weeks prior to the defense—so your committee can be approved. This form should be given to the Social Program secretary for proper routing. (You should also pick up the Ph.D. graduation packet from the Graduate School which provides a checklist of their requirements.) At the oral defense, your committee will sign the *Doctoral Examination Report*, a *Final Grade Card\*\** and the *Signature Page\*\** to be included in the final submission of your dissertation to the Graduate School. The two forms are to be given to the Social Program secretary for proper routing.

At the time of your oral defense, you must be registered for at least 5 dissertation hours. The dissertation must be typed in the graduate school format, and one copy will be kept on file at the library.

*Please note that Doctoral students are expected to complete all degree requirements within six years from the date they start course work in the program.* In addition to this being a Graduate School requirement, keep in mind that departmental teaching and research assistantships may not

be offered after the fourth year and are generally not offered after the fifth year.

### **Extensions to Deadlines**

If you find that you are in need of a short extension to any of the deadlines mentioned for any of the milestones that must be completed, you will need to formally request an extension. First, you must meet with your advisor to explain your situation and verify that your advisor concurs with the necessity of an extension. You will then develop a written request for an extension, briefly explain the reason for the request, and include your proposed new deadline (the exact date) by which the requirement will be completed. This request should be completed in cooperation with your advisor and then should be submitted to the Program Director, cc'ing your advisor. The Program Director will evaluate your request and give you a written response. Both your request and the Program Director's response to your request will become a part of your permanent graduate school record.

### **Colorado Residency Guidelines (1<sup>st</sup> Year)**

At the beginning of your first year, you need to start keeping copies of documents that will prove you have established residency in Colorado. Beginning your second year, the department will pay for your tuition only at the in-state rate and this can be done only if you can prove that you have started living here in August, beginning of your first year. You should keep the earliest dated paperwork and continuous paperwork throughout the year as evidence of the start of your residence here. The following are ways to establish residency:

- Colorado driver's license
- Colorado vehicle registration
- Colorado voter registration
- Colorado income tax returns (copy)
- Rent receipts (or ownership and permanent occupancy of residential real estate)

Keep these items in a safe place and be ready to show them to a university official one year from the beginning of your graduate study. If you do not establish residency, you will have to pay the difference in the out-of-state vs. in-state tuition yourself – which is thousands of dollars. For further information about residency status, you can call 303-492-6868, or get printed tuition classification guidelines from the Tuition Classification Office, located at Regent 105. For further details see

<http://www.colorado.edu/registrar/state-tuition/criteria-establish-residency>

Ralphie's Guide to Student Life and the Registration Handbook both have a wealth of information for new students.