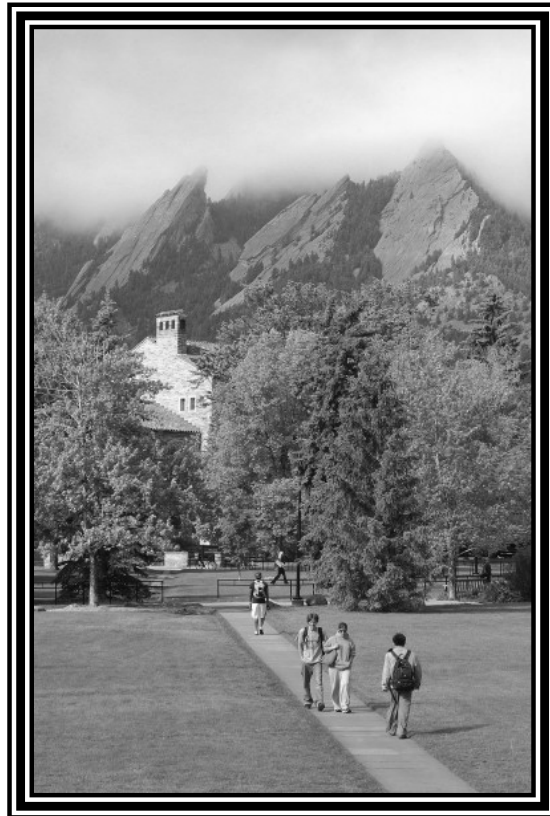


Handbook

Graduate Program in Sociology



University of Colorado at Boulder

Revised June 2006

Introduction

This document summarizes relevant policies for the Graduate Program in Sociology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Graduate students are subject to the rules described in the Handbook that are in effect at the time of their admission to the Program. Although updated through fall 2004, some policies will undoubtedly change, and the Graduate Assistant will keep track of such changes.

Essential information will periodically appear on *socbiz*, the departmental email list for graduate students. Much “official business” of the Department of Sociology transpires via email, and all enrolled graduate students must have email addresses and check their accounts regularly.

The Department of Sociology

The Graduate Program in Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder seeks to train creative and productive scholars and teachers. The Department maintains a strong emphasis in the theories and methods of the discipline while specializing in five areas:

- Crime and Deviance
- Environmental Sociology
- Gender
- Population Studies
- Qualitative Sociology

Graduate Degrees Offered

The Department of Sociology offers graduate training leading to the Ph.D. To the greatest extent possible, the program seeks to:

- Provide mentoring through one-on-one faculty-student relationships, as well as teams of mentors,
- Give students clear and informed feedback on progress toward their degrees,
- Socialize students into the norms of the profession by informing them about professional expectations and practices not traditionally covered in seminars,
- Train students to become competent teachers and researchers, and
- Provide sound basic training in theory and methods.

The Department does not maintain a separate M.A. program and does not encourage applications from students who wish to pursue an M.A. in Sociology as a terminal degree.

However, students may obtain an M.A. degree under three conditions:

1. Students already making satisfactory progress toward the Ph.D. may wish to receive the M.A. as a sign of progress toward the Ph.D. To do so, students must meet the M.A. degree requirements outlined later in this Handbook.
2. Students already making satisfactory progress towards the Ph.D. may also wish to receive the M.A. as a terminal degree when changes in their circumstances (e.g., change in career plans, relocation, family situations, etc.) result in their inability to meet Ph.D. degree requirements. If circumstances change and such students choose to return to the graduate program within two years of receiving the M.A., the Department will automatically readmit them.
3. Students whose progress toward the Ph.D. is below expectations can apply for the terminal M.A. If, in the future, they wish to pursue the Ph.D. in this Department they must reapply for admission to the Ph.D. program.

Detailed information on the requirements for the M.A. degree appears later in this Handbook.

Admission to the Program

The Graduate Program admits students only during the fall semester. Completed applications and supporting documents must be on file by January 1 for consideration for fall admission.

Prospective students must apply for admission first to the Department of Sociology. If accepted, the Department forwards the application to the Graduate School for consideration. Acceptance into the graduate program in the Department of Sociology does not guarantee Graduate School admittance.

In some cases, the Department or the Graduate School may grant provisional admission. If admitted provisionally, the Graduate School usually requires the student to complete 12 hours of graduate work with a GPA of 3.25 or better during the first year. In some cases, the Department may require a student to fulfill particular requirements for provisional acceptance.

Transfer of Credit

In accordance with Graduate School policy, the Department accepts a maximum of 21 graduate level credit hours from another college or university toward fulfillment of the requirements of the Ph.D. degree. Students may not submit requests for transfer of credit until the successful completion of six credits of graduate level course work on the CU Boulder campus with a 3.0 GPA. Transferred credits do not reduce the minimum registration requirements but may reduce the amount of work to be done through formal courses. The Department may recommend to the Graduate Dean that a maximum of nine graduate level credit hours from another college or university apply toward the requirements of the M.A. degree. Students wishing to transfer credit toward the M.A. degree must first complete a satisfactory record of performance over at least one semester in residence.

Request for transfer of credit forms to submit for consideration by the Graduate Committee are available from the Graduate Assistant. All students intending to transfer credits, including those coming from universities within the CU system—must meet with their faculty advisors to determine the suitability of particular courses for transfer of credit. The advisor will consult other faculty members, as needed. Students can claim hours only for approved courses when they apply for candidacy.

The Graduate Committee recommends that students who completed graduate coursework elsewhere take or re-take the four required courses [two in Theory, Data Analysis (SOCY 5021), and Research Design (SOCY 5031)] here at CU. However, students who completed similar courses elsewhere and wish to petition for waiver of these requirements should submit copies of syllabi, written work, and final grades from relevant courses to the Graduate Committee, before August 1 of the entering year. The Graduate Committee will review the request and make a decision prior to the start of the fall semester. Note that the transfer of credit does not imply waiver of courses. Waiver of required courses involves separate requests.

The Advising System

The Department matches every first-year student with a faculty member and an advanced Graduate Student to act as temporary advisors upon entering the program. Students have no obligation to keep this faculty member as a permanent advisor (although in some instances they may wish to do so) and students may change advisors at any time. Only members of the

Graduate Faculty of the Department of Sociology or those specifically appointed by the Graduate Committee can act as advisors to graduate students.

With the exception of those in the first year of the program, graduate students must seek their own faculty advisors. Although students find advisors in many different ways, the procedure for doing so often begins by locating faculty members with interests that match their own. After an introductory meeting, the student and faculty member should discuss each other's expectations, capacities, and timelines. Once a faculty member agrees to serve in the role of advisor, the student should notify the Graduate Assistant in writing or by email. Students should then work with the advisor to select other faculty members to serve on comprehensive examination and dissertation committees.

Teaching Assistantships

Most students receive financial support by serving as Teaching Assistants (TAs). Advanced students may teach their own courses as Graduate Part-Time Instructors (GPTIs). Graduate students in good standing are eligible for graduate teaching assistantships. Applications are available from the Graduate Assistant. Teaching assistantships and instructorships, as well as research appointments, are awarded by the Department of Sociology and approved by the Graduate School. Depending upon the type of appointment and the percent time involved, Teaching Assistants may receive tuition waivers for a specified number of credit hours. Such appointments are contingent upon "continued adequate progress" in a degree program. The Graduate School interprets this as the completion (receiving a letter grade and not an IW or IF) of at least five graduate credit hours per semester, or eight credit hours combined graduate and undergraduate course work.

Students may hold appointments in more than one department; however, the total of all appointments may not exceed 50%. Under extraordinary circumstances, a student may hold an appointment in excess of 50% with the prior approval of the Graduate Committee and the Graduate School.

The Graduate School stipulates that the total number of semesters of teaching support for a Master's student is eight semesters, not including summers. For all Ph.D. students, regardless of whether receiving the Masters' degree at C.U. or elsewhere, the total number of semesters of teaching support is twelve semesters, not including summers.

The Process of Making Teaching Assignments

The Chair of the Department makes teaching assignments and issues letters informing students of their assignments. Students receive this notification in as timely a manner as possible.

Students offered assistantships must sign a binding contract accepting the appointment and assuming responsibility to uphold it. The Department has no obligation to provide assistantships for more than one academic year at a time. An assistantship received in one academic year does not guarantee that an assistantship will be available in subsequent years. The Department generally does not accept applications for assistantships beyond a graduate student's 6th year of funding as a TA or GPTI (not 6 years in the program). However, such applications may be considered if opportunities of employment should arise.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances (as determined by the Chair of The Graduate Committee), the following criteria are generally used in making teaching assignments (established by the Graduate Student Association 12/09/98):

- 1) *Progress toward Degree*: Students who have adhered to the minimum requirements for the program (as detailed in this document) will be included in the pool of applicants for those positions. The Department will consider extenuating circumstances for those who have not met those requirements. The Department Chair makes the final decision on assignments.
- 2) *Matching Course Requests to Availability*: The Department will match these as best it can. Students will NOT be thrown out of the pool if there is not a match.
- 3) *Expertise in Area*: Includes such things as papers, research, and courses taken at the graduate level. This category takes into account different stages in the program.
- 4) *Teaching Experience*: Courses prepared and taught already. This would reduce work for the instructor and help to refine the quality of the course with each subsequent time taught.
- 5) *Teaching Quality*: Numerical average of previous two semesters' course grade and instructor grade on FCQs.
- 6) *Written Professional Projects*: Includes published articles, manuscripts under review, conference presentations, and awards/honors for written work.
- 7) *Cumulative GPA*

Research Assistantships

The Department encourages graduate students to pursue opportunities for funded research wherever possible. The Department's website features a link to potential funding sources, and students should work closely with faculty mentors to locate other sources.

<http://sobek.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/fundawards.html>

Cross-Campus Connections

The Department supports the efforts of other university units in which students may seek financial support for their research (as well as faculty mentors). Several of these are branches of the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS). IBS represents a multidisciplinary effort among researchers in the social and behavioral sciences. More detailed background information about IBS appears on the Web (<http://www.colorado.edu/IBS/>). The Institute of Behavioral Science includes the following Programs and Centers:

- Research Program on Environment and Behavior (E&B)
- Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center (NHRAIC)
- Research Program on Health Behavior (HB)
- Research Program on Political and Economic Change (PPEC)
- Globalization and Democracy Training Program (GAD)
- Research Program on Population Processes (Population Program)
- Population Aging Center
- Research Program on Problem Behavior (PB)
- Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV)
- Social Science Data Analysis Center (SSDAC)

Overview of Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

The following outlines program requirements, provides deadlines for meeting them, and gives an example of "adequate progress toward the degree." The Graduate Committee recognizes that alternative paths for adequate degree progress exist that differ from this illustration, that students entering the program with an M.A. degree could move through the program more quickly than others, and that differences among students may affect individual courses of study.

Students receive the Ph.D. degree after fulfilling the following requirements. Students should aim to fulfill these requirements within five to seven years.

- 1) *Time Limit:* The Graduate School allows six years from the commencement of course work in a graduate program for completion of requirements, including the filing of the dissertation. Under extenuating circumstances, a graduate student and his or her advisor may request by letter an extension of the time limit. This letter should go to the Graduate Committee and, if approved, the Chair of the Committee will forward the request to the Dean of the Graduate School.
- 2) *Minimum Course Hours and Levels:* Students must complete a total of 45 hours of course work credit hours (which can include independent study courses). At least 24 hours must be in the Department of Sociology on the Boulder campus. All courses taken within the Department of Sociology must be numbered 5000 or above to qualify for graduate credit.
- 3) *Successful Completion of Required Seminars:* These include Research Design, Data Analysis, Classical Theory, Contemporary or Postmodern Theory, the Sociology-in-Progress Seminar, and the Sociology Pro-Seminar.

Note on Transfer Credits and Waiver of Required Seminars: As discussed above (see “Transfer of Credit”), the Department recommends that students who have completed graduate coursework elsewhere take or retake the Theory and Methods sequence at CU. However, students who have taken similar courses elsewhere and who wish to waive these requirements should submit to the Graduate Committee, by August 1, a request that includes a copy of the syllabus from the similar course, all written work submitted for that course, and the final grade received. The Graduate Committee will review the request and make a decision prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The transfer of credit does not imply an approved course waiver. Students requesting course waivers must submit a separate request.

- 4) *Completion of Equivalent of “Preliminary Exams”:* A student’s GPA in the six required classes during the first year in the program represents the "preliminary examination." A minimum of 3.5 GPA in these courses and no single grade lower than a B- constitutes passing. Any student receiving a B- or below in any required course must meet with the Graduate Committee faculty to assess her/his progress. Students who do not pass prelims must retake courses as directed by the Graduate Committee. Failure to pass the second time will result in expulsion from the Ph.D. program. A student may then, with approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A. degree.
- 5) *Successful Completion of Theory and Methods Comprehensive Exams:* These written exams are given annually (usually early in August). Regardless of when the exams take place, results are not available until mid- to late September. The Graduate Committee administers the exams, which are drafted by faculty appointed by the Graduate Committee. The exams assess how well students

have integrated essential knowledge. Students are required to take the Methods exam at the end of the first year and Theory exam at the end of their second year. A student can choose to take both exams at the end of their first year. A student can apply to waive the requirement that they take the exams at the required time. The exams take place on separate days (Methods on one day and Theory on another). Students have 24 hours to complete the exams, and may rely on written or electronic notes (one CD or one jump drive with less than or equal to 256 MB; no laptops) but not books to do so.

Grading of Exams: Students receive grades of Pass, High Pass, which is truly exceptional, or Low Pass, which communicates to the student that he or she has met the bare minimum requirements and must meet with faculty to demonstrate improvement. Grades do not appear on students' official records. Students receiving High Pass may report this on their vitae and job application letters.

Students who fail one or both of these exams must retake failed exams the next year. Failure to pass the second time will result in expulsion from the Ph.D. program at which time a student may, upon approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A. degree

See the Appendix for more information on Comprehensive Exams.

- 6) *Successful Completion of Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam:* Students must take this exam no later than the second full week of August after their fourth program year. The student and the SCEC set the exam date and time. The format of the exam may vary. See the section on Years 3 and 4 below for further details.
- 7) *Successful Defense of Dissertation Proposal:* Students must prepare a written dissertation proposal and orally defend it before the Dissertation Committee before January of their fifth program year. Further details appear in the section on Years 5 and 6.
- 8) *Completion and Successful Defense of the Dissertation:* Students should complete dissertation research and defend by the end of their sixth program year. Students should obtain a copy of the Graduate School's "Specifications for Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations" from the Graduate Assistant. Additional information appears under Years 5 and 6 below.

The following is a typical sequence through the Program:

(See also <http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/checklist.html>)

Enter Program

On entering the graduate program in Sociology, all incoming students must take the Qualifying Statistics examination offered during Orientation.

Students who pass the exam will be enrolled in Data Analysis (SOCY 5021) when it is offered (usually in Spring). Incoming students who have already passed a graduate-level statistics course with a grade of B- or better may petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of this course. To do so, students must submit documentation (e.g., course syllabus and assignments) about the course to the Graduate Program Assistant by August 1 of the entering year. The student should submit these materials to the Graduate Chair via the Graduate Assistant. The Graduate Committee will review the documentation (in concert with the Methods teaching faculty) and make a decision about whether the student will be required to take the course.

Students who do not pass this exam must complete the non-credit course SOCY 4061 (Statistics) with a grade of B- or better [prerequisite for SOCY 5021 (Data Analysis)]. Because this is an undergraduate course, *the credit hours do not count toward the number of hours required for the graduate degree*. However, the grade received in the course *does* count in the cumulative graduate GPA.

Year 1

Required Seminars

- 1) SOCY 5001 (3 credits) Classical Theory
- 2) SOCY 5021 (3 credits) Data Analysis
- 3) SOCY 5031 (3 credits) Research Design
- 4) Second Theory Seminar (Modern OR Postmodern) OR Elective (3 credits)
- 5) SOCY 6821 Sociology-in-Progress (1 credit)
- 6) SOCY 6821 Sociology-in-Progress, Part II (1 credit)

Note: Courses may vary for students entering with a Master's degree.

Study for Methods and Theory Comprehensive Exams

Required: Take Methods Comprehensive Examination (summer after Year 1)

Year 2

For the purposes of deciding full-time registration status, students must meet one of the following criteria:

- take a minimum of five credits of graduate level course work prior to passing the specialty comprehensive exam
- take at least one doctoral dissertation credit prior to passing the specialty comprehensive exam
- take a minimum of five dissertation hours after passing the comprehensive exam

Required Fall and Spring Semesters

Enroll in elective seminars for a minimum of five credit hours a semester for full-time status in the program. Students who have not yet taken the second Theory Seminar should do so at this time.

Required Spring Semester: SOCY 6831 Graduate Sociology Professional Seminar (1 credit)

Study for Theory Comprehensive Exam

Required: Take Theory Comprehensive Exam

Students who successfully petitioned *not* to take the Methods Comprehensive Examination in Year 1 **MUST** take it when it is offered during the summer following Year 2 in the program.

Students must complete 30 credit hours (not including dissertation hours) by the end of Year 2 to be eligible for funding to teach in Year 3. The 30 hours can include independent study courses. Students may teach as GPTIs after completing 30 hours of course work.

Years 3 and 4

Students who requested and had approved not to take the Theory Comprehensive Examination in Year 2 **MUST** take it when it is offered during the summer following Year 3 in the program.

Required Course Hours

By the end of Year 4, students must have completed 45 hours of course work (24 in residence). Before taking the Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam and after completing course work, students may enroll for one dissertation hour for full-time status. However, students must keep

in mind that registering for one dissertation hour will make them full-time academically only. The IRS regulations require students to be registered at least 3 hours in order to be waived from student retirement plan. If students register for only 1 dissertation hour, a mandatory student retirement will be deducted from their payroll, if the student holds university appointment. For more information on this, please contact the Graduate Program Assistant.

After taking the Specialty Area Comp Exam, they must enroll in a minimum of five dissertation hours.

Develop Specialty Area

Students in Years 3 and 4 should concentrate on building expertise in a specialty area. In addition to coursework, this should include submitting papers to journals and conferences and preparing for the Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam. Students at this stage in the program should work closely with a faculty mentor or a mentoring team.

Form Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Committee (SCEC)

The student's Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Committee, or SCEC, administers specialty Area Comprehensive Examinations. This committee is composed of five members of the graduate faculty, chosen by the student in consultation with the advisor. At least three members (including the advisor) must come from the graduate faculty of the Department of Sociology. No outside members are required for the SCEC (but are required for dissertation committees, as outlined below). Students must advise the Graduate Committee of the members of the SCEC via the Graduate Assistant before the end of the first semester of the third program year. The Graduate Committee then approves the SCEC.

Optional Primary and Secondary Committee Members

Each graduate student, with the approval of her or his major professor, has the option to name one or two committee members as "secondary members." The primary/secondary designation is not required, but some students find the distinction helpful to divide the labor among committee members. Secondary members of Comprehensive Examination Committees may add their voices to committee decisions whenever they wish to, but especially when the "primary members" have a disagreement or otherwise ask for the secondary members' input.

There is no requirement or expectation that secondary members actively participate in oral defenses or evaluations of Comp Exams, but individual faculty members may feel comfortable “signing off” only after they have read everything and have fully participated in all committee meetings. Certainly, since both primary and secondary members must sign various forms needed for the student to graduate, both should always have copies of examinations. They may attend committee meetings and defenses, but they are not required to do so.

At most, only one committee member from outside the Department of Sociology can serve as a primary member. With the approval of the advisor, the student can make changes in “primary” or “secondary” status of committee members at any time. However, the Graduate Committee must approve any changes made in the four months before anticipated graduation.

Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Reading List

Students must submit a Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Reading List, approved by the Specialty Area Committee, to the Graduate Committee for approval before the end of the first semester of the student's Third Year. The student should create this list in concert with the advisor and other committee members. A signature form for SCEC approval of the Reading List is available on the website. <http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/specialtyarea.html>.

Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam is for the student to demonstrate mastery of the relevant literature in the area(s) of choice. Students must take this exam before the second full week of August after their fourth program year. The student and SCEC coordinate a date and time for the exam, as well as its format. Possibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- A written exam in which the student answers several questions (usually three out of five or six options). The SCEC creates the questions in concert with the student. The student has up to 24 hours to complete the exam.
- A two – to – three-hour oral examination answering the questions as above.
- An oral defense of one or two papers (publication potential) in the student’s specialty area

Students who fail this exam must retake it within a year. A second failure will result in expulsion from the Ph.D. program (at which time a student may, upon approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A. degree).

Application for Candidacy

At least two weeks before the Specialty Exam, students must obtain an “Application for Admission to Candidacy” form from the Graduate Assistant, who will process and forward it to the Graduate School.

Years 5 and 6

Required Dissertation Hours

Students who have completed the Specialty Area Comp Exam must register for a minimum of five dissertation hours each fall and spring semester until the dissertation defense. Thirty total hours are required; no more than 10 dissertation hours taken prior to the Specialty Exam can count toward the total requirement. Students can take up to 10 hours in the same semester as the Specialty Exam. These count toward the required 30 hours.

Formation of the Dissertation Committee

Students must work with their advisor to form a committee of five members. The Dissertation Committee may, but does not necessarily, consist of the same five faculty members who served on the SCEC. The student must designate one of these members as the Committee Chair, or two as Co-Chairs (one outside member may co-chair, but not chair a committee). The chair of the committee must have a Graduate Faculty appointment. Three members must be graduate faculty of the Department of Sociology, and one member must be graduate faculty from outside the Department but from the Boulder campus and the fifth member may be from either the Sociology graduate faculty or the graduate faculty of another CU Boulder department. A faculty member from another CU campus or university can serve on a Dissertation Committee pending approval of a request for a temporary appointment. Students may, with the approval of the Committee Chair, add a sixth member if the addition is consistent with Graduate School policy.

Optional Primary and Secondary Committee Members

Refer to the section on Specialty Area Committees above. The Graduate Committee must approve the composition of all Dissertation Committees before the student begins work on the dissertation. The student should provide the names (and primary or secondary designations, if used) to the Graduate Program Assistant to obtain this approval.

Dissertation Proposal and Defense

Students must write a dissertation proposal and orally defend it before the Dissertation Committee before January of their fifth program year. The Proposal should offer a working outline of the project, developed prior to the defense and in concert with (especially) the primary members of the Committee. Formats may vary from 10-12 page proposals to documents that are more extensive. However, proposals seldom exceed 30 pages, and no Committee expects students to submit finished chapters of a dissertation at this time. In general, a proposal should establish the topic(s) under investigation and state the relevant questions that have arisen thus far. It should also establish the methods and/or analytical techniques used in the initial stages of the research, keeping in mind that the need for additional or alternative strategies might arise as the research progresses. A timetable can help the student as well as the Committee, but given the unpredictability of research, this, too, might be subject to change. In short, no specific requirements for a prospectus can apply to every project.

Students must allow committee members at least two weeks before an oral defense to review the proposal and determine project suitability. Committee members may suggest changes during this time. The student may officially work on the dissertation project only after the Committee has approved the prospectus or revised prospectus with a majority vote. However, the work might well be underway (for example, as part of a course) at the time of the defense.

Students must bring a Report on Dissertation Proposal Defense Form, available on the website, to the defense.

<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/defense.doc>

After obtaining signatures, students must make two copies and follow the directions on the form for submission. An approved proposal is a contract between the Committee and student

who can expect to receive a Ph.D. only if he or she fulfills the proposal's objectives and successfully defends the dissertation.

Dissertation Research and Defense

Students should aim to complete dissertation research and defend by the end of the sixth program year. Primary committee members should read chapters or sections of the dissertation in progress. Secondary members may elect to read only the last draft, but the Committee member(s) and the student may negotiate this.

The Graduate School's requirements for the written dissertation appear in "Specifications for Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations," available from the Graduate Assistant.

The Ph.D. dissertation defense is a public event and any student or faculty member may attend. At least four Committee members must evaluate the defense as satisfactory in order to pass. Candidates who fail the defense will have a second opportunity to defend. The Committee must specify what the candidate should do to prepare. The Department has no obligation to give students a third chance to defend the dissertation. A Committee can (and usually does) require dissertation revisions even if the candidate passes the defense. In a case where a student fails his or her dissertation defense, he or she may reconfigure the dissertation committee (partially or completely). The student will be required to re-defend the dissertation proposal, and the time between the first and a subsequent defense must be at least eight weeks.

The M.A. Degree

The Department of Sociology does not have a Master's degree program. However, students may obtain the M.A. degree in transit to the Ph.D. if they wish, and students unable to complete Ph.D. requirements may pursue a terminal M.A. degree, pending approval by the Graduate Committee. The Department does not allow extra time for the completion of the M.A. degree.

Students may pursue the M.A. through Plan I, which involves a Thesis, or Plan II, which requires an exam. Guidelines for each plan appear below. Regardless of the plan chosen, all M.A. students must complete a minimum of 30 semester hours of graduate credit. These 30 hours must include the required Theory and Methods sequence (Research Design, Classical Theory, Data Analysis, and Modern OR Postmodern Theory) and Sociology-in-Progress. The

30 hours must also include at least six semester hours in at least two sociology seminars in the student's major field. Students may take a maximum of 6 hours of independent study. These may not be substituted for required seminars. In addition, all students must take courses from at least four different members of the sociology faculty. Finally, all M.A. students must designate a Master's Advisory Committee. This Committee must consist of at least three regularly appointed graduate faculty members from the Department of Sociology. Students select the members of the Committee and designate one as Chair. A candidate may, with the approval of the Chair of the Advisory Committee, place additional members on the Committee consistent with the rules of the Graduate School. Students must report the composition of the Committee to the Graduate Program Assistant, who will then submit the list to the Graduate Committee for approval. Committees do not have official standing until approved by Graduate Committee.

Steps involved:

1. Graduate Students wishing to do a terminal Master's Degree should first petition the Graduate Committee. This petition should consist of a letter stating why the student wishes to discontinue pursuing the Ph.D. and indicating their reasons for obtaining a Master's Degree. This letter should also indicate whether the student will follow Plan I (Thesis option) or Plan II (exam option). The student's Advisor/Chair must support this petition by sending a letter or email to the Chair of the Graduate Committee.
2. The student should also list the three members of the Master's Advisory Committee. Only one member may be from outside the department.
3. The Graduate Committee will review the petition and make a decision. The chair of the Committee or the Graduate Program Assistant will notify the student of the outcome.
4. Once the Committee makes a decision, the student must complete all of the Master's graduation paperwork. This paperwork will be available at the Graduate Program Assistant's desk.
5. The student must submit a candidacy application, diploma card, and the department will fill out the final exam form.
6. The advisor needs to submit a final grade card after the defense or exam.

Students are responsible for meeting deadlines posted on the Graduate School website. <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/>. Students may also contact the Graduate Program Assistant at the Department for this information.

Plan I — Thesis Option

For the MA degree, a student must complete twenty-four hours of coursework at the 5000 level or above (including the required Theory and Methods sequence and Sociology-in-Progress) and at least four and a maximum of six hours of thesis credits. Students must register for thesis credit hours in the semester of the thesis defense.

Preparation of a Written Thesis

The thesis must demonstrate competent and independent scholarship and make a useful contribution to sociological knowledge. An M.A. thesis is shorter and entails less original research than a Ph.D. dissertation. Students will find the format for the M.A. Thesis in "Specifications for Preparation of Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations," available from the Graduate Assistant or the Department's website:

<http://sobek.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/thesisdisspecs.pdf>

or from the Graduate School at: <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/Specs/Specs.html>.

Successful Oral Defense of the Thesis

The thesis defense is a public event at which the candidate explains and defends the thesis. The Advisory Committee assesses the adequacy of the thesis and the candidate's competence in the relevant areas of sociological knowledge. If more than one committee member votes against passing, the candidate fails the defense. Candidates who fail will have a second opportunity to make a successful defense. The committee must specify what the candidate should do in preparation for the second defense. If the candidate fails the second defense, the Department of Sociology has no obligation to provide another opportunity. The committee can require modifications in the thesis even if the candidate passes the defense. Satisfactory completion of these modifications is a condition of passing the defense.

Plan II — Non-Thesis Option

Under Plan II, a student must complete thirty hours of course work at the 5000, level or above (including the required Theory and Methods sequence and Sociology-in-Progress) and take a written exam in his or her major area within sociology. The Advisory Committee, here constituted as an examining committee, creates an exam that will assess the candidate's mastery of knowledge within his or her specialty area(s) of sociology. The M.A. exam is shorter and less comprehensive than the Specialty Area Comprehensive Examinations given prior to the Ph.D. The Committee, in concert with the student, determines whether there will be an oral defense of the exam. If more than one committee member votes against passing, the candidate fails the exam. Candidates who fail will have a second opportunity to take the exam. The committee must specify what the candidate should do in preparation for the second exam. If the candidate fails the second time, the Department of Sociology has no obligation to provide another opportunity.

Annual Review and Report

Each spring, the Graduate Committee evaluates graduate students' progress in the program. To achieve high-quality mentoring of graduate students, each student should prepare Annual Report and meet with his or her Advisor or Major Professor to review progress toward timely completion of the degree. The form for the Annual Report is available on the website:

<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/vitaeform.doc>

In the Report, students record course work, teaching assignments, comp exams completed, papers presented, awards and grants received, and other information relevant to evaluation. Students will receive the dates for submitting completed vitae via *socbiz*. A sample of this document appears in the Appendix. Students should complete the form and submit one copy to the Graduate Assistant and one to his or her advisor/major professor by the first week of March.

The student should then schedule a meeting with his or her advisor (or major professor) for a review of progress toward the degree. The precise deadline for this review depends on the date of the Graduate Committee meeting, but students and faculty will receive notice of dates via email (i.e., *socbiz*). As a rule, students should meet with advisors before April 15. In cases

where students meet regularly with the advisor, no additional meeting is necessary. However, in all cases, the advisor must provide documentation to the Graduate Assistant that the student is making satisfactory progress in the Program (or that the advisor and student have developed a binding plan to restore satisfactory progress).

Completion of the Annual Report and meeting with the advisor/major professor is REQUIRED. In addition, completion of the Annual Report and meeting with Committee Chair will be REQUIRED for all students applying for department funding (as TA or GPTI).

Before making fall funding decisions, the Graduate Committee will review the Annual Reports for the latter group, and may agree to fund individual students who demonstrate satisfactory progress. These students should also submit a timetable for future progress (i.e., completion of all exams, formation of committee, defending a proposal, completion of the dissertation, and graduation).

Pre-registration for Graduate Students

All graduate students should register as soon as possible after receiving registration materials. Graduate students who wish to enroll in independent study, dissertation hours, or master's thesis hours should contact the Graduate Assistant. Students who register late may incur financial penalties and will find it difficult to enroll in desired courses. Failure to complete registration as soon as possible may also lead to the cancellation of graduate seminars due to insufficient enrollment.

Time-Out Program

This allows students in the pre-Comprehensive Exam stage to leave the graduate program for a specified period without penalty. Students in good standing who wish to take Time-Out must: (1) petition the Graduate Committee for approval, and (2) apply through the Registrar's Office. The six-year clock does not run while a student is on Time-Out. Post-Comprehensive Exam students wishing to take Time-Out should see the Graduate Assistant.

Graduate Student Petitions

Students may petition the Graduate Committee to request exceptions to rules when extenuating circumstances exist. A petition should take the form of a concise memo or letter, depending on the amount of explanation required. Students should address petitions to the Graduate Committee. The text of the petition should include:

- 1) a summary of the issue,
- 2) a statement of students' preference of "audience" for the discussion of the petition (elected student representatives to the Graduate Committee will be included in the committee's deliberations of the student's petition only by request of the petitioner),
- 3) the names of the student's committee members,
- 4) the signatures of the student and his or her faculty advisor.

Submit petitions to the Graduate Program Assistant. In general, the Graduate Committee places petitions on the agenda of the next meeting following submission. The Graduate Committee meets regularly during the academic year, but not during summer. Students should plan to submit petitions in time for consideration during the fall and spring semesters.

The Committee considers petitions on a case-by-case basis. The outcomes of past petitions submitted to the Graduate Committee do not constitute policy and in no way indicate the possible outcome of future petitions submitted by other students.

Departmental Email Lists

Socyfac: This email list is for Department of Sociology faculty members only. Faculty members use this list for both official departmental communication and for personal communication among faculty.

Graduate students may not subscribe to the *socfac* email list. However, they may post to the *socfac* list if the content of the message relates to official departmental business.

Graduate students should not post personal messages to the *socfac* list.

Socbiz: This email list is for official departmental communication among faculty members, staff, and graduate students. All graduate students in the Department of Sociology are required to subscribe to this list, and faculty members may subscribe to *socbiz* if they so choose. Graduate students are required to check their official university account regularly. This is the only formal means of communication for graduate students in the Department of Sociology.

Graduate students and faculty members may both post to *socbiz* if the content of the message relates to official departmental business. Graduate students or faculty members should not post personal messages to the *socbiz* list.

Appendix: Additional Information about Comprehensive Examinations

The Comprehensive Examinations in Theory and Methods are given electronically, usually during late July and early August. Students have 24-hours to complete each exam. In response to questions about the purpose, structure, and grading of the comprehensive examinations, the Graduate Committee offers additional information below. This appendix provides clarification of procedures but does not change the way the exams are structured, administered, or graded.

Purpose of the Exams

Graduate programs in sociology routinely give Comprehensive Exams in Methods and Theory to assess students' understanding of these areas, both of which are essential to the practice of sociology. The exams are intended to evaluate students' ability to use theory, apply methods, and integrate knowledge in an efficient and appropriate manner. The material covered on the exams builds upon, and goes beyond, the content of the department's graduate seminars. Resources available for preparing for the exams include reading lists (available from the Graduate Assistant) and previous exams (available online: see "Resources" in the "Graduate Program" area of the department's website). The department does not provide answers to previous exams.

Structure of the Exams

The Theory Examination consists of three sections, covering Classical, Modern, and Postmodern/Contemporary Theory. Students choose one question among several offered in each section. The completed exam, therefore, consists of three answers, one in each of the three sections in the exam. Answers must be in essay form, using complete sentences and correct grammar and spelling. Answers should reflect students' ability to think creatively about the theories they have learned; another way to state this would be to say that the exams should reflect students' ability to analyze and synthesize the pertinent materials in the process of answering the questions. A serial presentation of the main points of different theorists—no matter how well done—with tangential references to the question at the beginning and end of the answer is no substitute for an answer that deals in depth with the substance of the question from the very beginning. In addition, students should avoid referring to secondary sources (e.g., Ritzer) in their comprehensive exam answers.

The Methods Exam requires students to answer three or four questions, sometimes with options for a particular question. One question often requires students to design an appropriate scientific study, in order to test students' ability to create a justifiable methodological approach to a particular social issue. Another type of question often incorporated on the exams is designed to evaluate students' ability

to apply and interpret quantitative methods. Importantly, there is no guarantee that these types of questions will be asked in each examination. Thus, students should be prepared to answer these types of questions as well as others related to methodological issues covered in classes and in readings.

Grading of the Exams

Students receive their grades by confidential letters from the Graduate Director distributed during mid- to late September. As explained in the Overview of Requirements for the Ph.D. (p. 7 of this Handbook), students receive grades of Pass, High Pass, which is truly exceptional, or Low Pass, which communicates to the student that he or she has met the bare minimum requirements. As stated in the letter, students receiving grades of Low Pass must arrange to meet with faculty to demonstrate improvement. In some instances, students must revise and expand on incomplete answers to particular questions. Grades do not appear on students' official records. Students receiving High Pass may report this on their vitae and job application letters. All students are welcome to make appointments with Examining Committee members if they wish to clarify why they received a particular grade.

Generally, the Theory and Methods Examining Committees each consist of three faculty members. Because the examinations assess students' comprehensive understanding of theory and methods, the committees may, but do not necessarily, include faculty who teach the required Theory and Methods courses.

All members of the Theory Exam committee read each Theory Exam in its entirety. Members grade the exams individually, and then meet for discussion of results. There is usually consensus on grades, but in instances where there is disagreement, committee members discuss and re-read relevant exams or particular questions until agreement is reached.

Typically, at least two Methods committee members read each question of the Methods Exam, with each committee member reading a portion of each student's exam. The committee meets for discussion of the results, and members read and re-read particular questions until reaching consensus on evaluation. Overall, there is usually an exceptionally high level of consensus among committee members.