

**Handbook**  
**Graduate Program in Sociology**

**Department of Sociology**  
**University of Colorado at Boulder**

*Revised May 2010*

## ***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 summer 2010, some policies will undoubtedly change, and the Graduate Program Assistant will keep track of such changes.

Essential information will periodically appear on *socybiz*, 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 - 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 and Interpretive 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 must be submitted online via “ApplyYourself” by December 15. Prospective students must apply for admission first to the Department of Sociology. If accepted, the Department forwards the application to the Office of Admissions for further processing. Acceptance into the graduate program in the Department of Sociology does not guarantee admission to the Graduate School.

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 submit requests for transfer of credit only after the successful completion of six credits of graduate level course work in CU Boulder campus with a 3.0 GPA. Transferred credits do not reduce the minimum registration requirements but may reduce the number of formal courses required. 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, for those who plan to receive the terminal M.A. or the M.A. in progress. 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. To clarify, students may transfer 21 credit hours for a Ph.D. and 9 for an M.A.

Request for transfer of credit forms to submit for consideration by the Graduate Committee are available from the Graduate Program 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.

### ***Waiving Required Courses***

The Graduate Committee recommends that students who completed graduate coursework elsewhere take or re-take the seven required courses here at CU. These courses include Sociological Theory (SOCY 5201), a second Theory seminar of the student's choice, Data 1 (SOCY 5111), Data 2 (SOCY 6111), Research Design (SOCY 5031), Graduate Forum I (SOCY 6821) and Graduate Forum II (Professional Seminar; SOCY 6831). 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 Program Assistant for review by 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 a separate request.

### ***The Advising System***

The Department matches every first-year student with a faculty member and an advanced graduate student to act as a temporary advisor 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). Graduate students in good standing are eligible for graduate teaching assistantships. Teaching assistantships and instructorships, as well as research appointments, are awarded by the Department of Sociology and approved by the Graduate School. Depending on 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 on "continued adequate progress" in a degree program. The Graduate School interprets this as the completion (receiving a letter grade and not Incomplete) of at least five graduate credit hours per semester, or eight credit hours combined graduate and undergraduate course work. The Department requires at least grade B or above in all required courses for adequate progress in the program.

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*. Please contact the Graduate Program Assistant immediately if this situation arises.

Advanced students may teach their own courses as Graduate Part-Time Instructors (GPTIs). However, students who have taught as GPTIs can be assigned TA positions in the future, depending on the Department's needs. In other words, having a GPTI assignment one semester does not guarantee the same assignment the next semester.

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.

Situations sometimes arise, particularly those of a medical nature, which make a student unable to complete his or her TA or GPTI assignment. Students facing such circumstances should inform the Graduate Chair as early as possible to discuss potential accommodations or alternative arrangements.

### *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, usually at the end of each semester. Students offered assistantships must sign a binding contract accepting the appointment. 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 (B or above in all required courses) 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*: Using measures on FCQs (Faculty Course Questionnaires).
- 6) *Written Professional Projects*: Includes published articles, manuscripts under review, conference presentations, and awards/honors for written work.
- 7) *Cumulative GPA*

NOTE: Summer teaching positions are made available according to the Department's needs. Only students who qualify as GPTIs are eligible for summer teaching. The Department Chair announces available courses, takes requests, and makes these assignments in late spring.

### ***Research Assistantships***

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

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 information about IBS

appears on the Web (<http://www.colorado.edu/IBS/>). IBS 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 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 six 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 dissertation. Under extenuating circumstances, a graduate student and his or her advisor may request by letter an extension of the time limit. This letter, accompanied by a statement from the advisor supporting the request, 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 or guided research). 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 Introduction to Social Statistics, Research Design, Data Analysis, Sociological Theory, a second theory seminar of the student's choice, and the Sociology Graduate Forum I and II.

Note on 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 Program Assistant, 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) *Successful completion of exams in Sociological Theory (5201) and Methods (5111 & 5031) by the end of the first year:* Students will take the Theory exam at the end of the first fall semester. The exam assesses students' understanding of the material in the seminar. The Methods exam is given at the end of the spring semester. It covers material in 5011 and 5031. Students who fail either exam must retake it the next year, and all students must pass both exams by the end of the second year. Students who enter the program with a Master's degree and waive Theory and Methods courses must still pass both exams.
- 5) *Completion of Equivalent of "Preliminary Exams":* A student's GPA in the seven required classes during the first year in the program represents what the Graduate School refers to as 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 dismissal from the

Ph.D. program. A student may then, with approval from the Graduate Committee, work toward a terminal M.A. degree.

- 6) *Successful first and second-year reviews:* At the end of the first and second year, faculty members teaching required courses, faculty mentor/ advisors, and faculty supervising TAs conduct a review of students' progress.
- 7) *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. Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work before taking specialty area comprehensive exam. The student and the Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam Committee 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.
- 8) *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.
- 9) *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/gradchecklist.pdf> )

### ***Enter Program***

Students take required courses during the first year. Incoming students who have already passed a graduate-level theory or methods course with a grade of B- or better may petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of the required course/s. See the section above on *Waiving Required Courses*.

### ***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 Program 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.

## ***Year 1***

### *Required Seminars*

(Courses may vary for students entering with a Master's degree.)

- 1) SOCY 5201 (3 credits) Sociological Theory
- 2) SOCY 5111 (3 credits) Data 1
- 3) SOCY 6111 (3 credits) Data 2
- 4) SOCY 5031 (3 credits) Research Design
- 5) Second Theory Seminar in student's area of interest (for example, Social Psychology, Feminist Theory, or a seminar from outside the department. See Appendix for a list.) (3 credits)
- 6) SOCY 6821 (2 credits) Sociology Graduate Forum I (fall and spring)
- 7) SOCY 6831 (1 credit) Sociology Graduate Forum II: Professional Seminar (spring of either first or second year)

### *Theory and Methods Exams*

Take Theory and Methods assessments (given fall and spring, respectively). The Theory exam will include material covered during the Theory seminar, taken during the fall semester. The Methods exam, given in the spring, will include material from Data 1 (taken during the fall semester) and Research Methods (taken during the spring semester). Students who enter the program with a Master's degree and waive Theory and Methods courses must still pass both exams. Students receive scores of "pass" or "not pass." The scores do not contribute to the final grades in the seminars.

## ***Year 2***

To maintain 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 after completing required course work and prior to passing the specialty comprehensive exam. Students must keep in mind that registering for one dissertation hour will make them full-time only in an academic sense. The TIAA-CREF regulations require students to register for at least 3 hours to receive a waiver from the student retirement plan. If a student holding a University appointment registers for only ONE dissertation hour, the University deducts a mandatory student retirement deduction from their payroll. In addition, under some circumstances, students may take dissertation credits before completing the specialty exam, but the Graduate Committee strongly encourages students to complete the exam first.
- 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.
- Complete 30 credit hours (not including dissertation hours) by the end of Year 2 to be eligible for funding in Year 3. The 30 hours can include independent study courses. Depending on availability, students may teach as GPTIs after completing 30 hours of course work.

Note: Students who have taught as GPTIs in one semester may be assigned to TA positions in another, as needed by the Department.

### ***Years 3 and 4***

#### ***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 only in an academic sense. The TIAA-CREF regulations require students to register for at least 3 hours to receive a waiver from the student retirement plan. If a student holding a University appointment registers

for only one dissertation hour, the University deducts a mandatory student retirement deduction from their payroll.

After taking the Specialty Area Comp Exam, students must enroll in a minimum of three to five dissertation hours to maintain the continuous enrollment requirement. Students should be aware that enrolling in only three hours puts them in part time status.

### *Develop Specialty Area*

From the time they enter the program, students should consider specialty areas and direct their work toward building a knowledge base in those areas. As a general guideline, students should consider how they intend to package themselves for the job market. The specialty areas are those in which the student will become sufficiently qualified to teach and do research. Students in Years 3 and 4 should concentrate on the task of refining the specialty areas. 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 consists 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 at CU Boulder. 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 Program Assistant before the end of the first semester of the third program year. The Graduate Committee then approves the SCEC and sends the recommendation to the Graduate School.

### *Optional Primary and Secondary Committee Members*

Each graduate student, with the approval of her or his advisor, 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 disagree 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 on the exam form only after they have read everything and have fully participated in all committee meetings. Because 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 at CU Boulder 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 develop a Specialty Area Comprehensive Examination Reading List in concert with the advisor and other committee members. When the committee agrees that the List is comprehensive, each member must indicate his or her approval on signature form. The student is responsible for obtaining approval and signatures. The form for approval of the Reading List is available on the website.

<http://socsci.colorado.edu/SOC/Graduate/specialtyarea.html>. Committee members may also indicate their approval by sending an email to the student, copied to the Graduate Program Assistant.

### *Specialty Area Comprehensive Exam*

1. 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 the fourth program year. Because students must be enrolled full-time during the semester in which they take the exam, students are

not advised to schedule the specialty comp during the summer months. Students must complete the required 45 hours of course work before taking the exam. The student and SCEC coordinate a date and time for the exam, as well as its format. Specialty Comp exams can take any of the following formats:

Option I: A written exam in which the student answers several questions created by the Specialty Comps Exam Committee. The student has up to 24 hours to complete the exam.

Option II: A two-to- three-hour oral examination answering the questions as above. These 2-3 hours must be within the same day.

Option III: An oral defense of one or two papers (publication potential) in the student's specialty area(s).

2. For Option I, the format of specialty comprehensive comps exam is up to the SCEC. The committee decides on the number of questions, types of questions and choices of questions.
3. For option I: students have up to 24 hours to complete the exam. The timing is defined as follows:
  - a. Two days of 12 hours each, OR
  - b. Three days of 8 hours each

These are the only two timing formats a committee may exercise.

Students who fail this exam must retake it within a year. A second failure will result in dismissal 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 Program 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 advisors 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 (provide the outside member requirement was met). 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 composition of the committee should be as follows:

- At least THREE members (including the Chair) must hold tenured or tenure-track regular Graduate Faculty appointments in Department of Sociology at CU Boulder;
- A FOURTH member can be from the Department of Sociology, from another department on campus, or off campus. The Graduate Committee will process the necessary faculty appointment under a special category. Because the Department processes this person's appointment, s/he counts as an inside, rather than outside member;
- A FIFTH member is designated as an OUTSIDE member. This person must hold a regular or tenured Graduate Faculty appointment from a department outside sociology, but on the CU Boulder campus.

Students may, with the approval of the Dissertation 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 the 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. The Graduate Student Resources page of the Department website has some examples and potentially useful information. Formats vary widely, but 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 en route 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 should be aware that they could incur retroactive charges from the University for changing graduate status. For students beyond the third year, these can involve substantial amounts of money.

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 (Intro to Social Statistics, Research Design, Sociological Theory, Data Analysis, and second Theory of student's choice, Grad Forum I and II). 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 obtain 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 the 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 from the Graduate Program Assistant.
5. The student must submit a candidacy application and diploma card. The Graduate Program Assistant and advisor 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

Under Plan I, a student must complete a total of 30 credit hours of coursework at the 5000 level or above (including 4–6 Thesis credits, the required Theory and Methods sequence, and Graduate Forum I & II) with grades of B or better. The student must also write and defend a thesis. 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/resources.html> or from the Graduate School at: <http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/current/academics/theses/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 30 hours of course work at the 5000, level or above (including the required courses) 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. First and second-year students have a comprehensive review by the faculty who teach the required courses, faculty mentor/advisors, and from faculty for whom they TA or RA during the first two years. Students in the third year and beyond should prepare an 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 Department website.

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 *socybiz*. Students should complete the form and submit one copy to the Graduate Assistant and one to his or her advisor/major professor during March/April.

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., *socybiz*). 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 Program 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 of all students.

### ***Time-Out Program***

The Time-Out Program 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:

- a summary of the issue,
- 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),
- the names of the student's committee members, and
- 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 *socyfac* email list. However, they may post to the *socyfac* list if the content of the message relates to official departmental business. Graduate students should not post personal messages to the *socyfac* list.

**Socybiz:** This email list is for official departmental communication with graduate students. All graduate students in the Department of Sociology are required to subscribe to this list, and faculty members may subscribe to *socybiz* 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 post to *socybiz* if the content of the message relates to official departmental business. Graduate students or faculty members should not post personal messages to the *socybiz* list.

### **Appendix**

#### **Partial List of Graduate Seminars offered in other departments at CU that will satisfy the second theory requirement in sociology.**

The following is a partial list of graduate seminars offered in other departments that will satisfy the second theory requirement in sociology. Additional courses may also qualify, pending review by the theory faculty and, in some cases, by the Graduate Committee. Note that some of these seminars may require instructor permission.

ANTH 5520	Symbolic Anthropology
ANTH 5530	Theoretical Foundations of Socio-cultural Anthropology
ANTH 7020	Contemporary Theory in Cultural Anthropology
ANTH 7620	Ethnography and Cultural Theory

COMM 6320	Rhetorical Theory
COMM 6360	Social and Cultural Theory
COMM 6440	Grounded Practical Theory
COMM 6740	Power and Control in Organizational Communication
ECON 7010	Microeconomic Theory I
ECON 7020	Macroeconomic Theory II
GRMN 5210	The Age of Enlightenment
GRMN 5410	Frankfurt School and Critical Theory
LING 6310	Sociolinguistic Analysis
LING 6320	Linguistic Anthropology
PHIL 5210	Philosophy and Social Policy
PHIL 5230	Bioethics and Public Policy
PHIL 5240	Seminar in Environmental Philosophy
PHIL 6200	Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy
PHIL 6400	Seminar in Philosophy of Science
PHIL 6490	Seminar in Philosophy of Language
PSCI 7024	Selected Political Theories
PSCI 7011	American Politics
PSCI 7046	Urban Political Economy
PSCI 7901	Special Topics: Social Theory