

ADD MAX PAGE LIMIT! (35 PP? 10,000 WORDS?)

Guidelines for Faculty and Students for the 2017-2018 SOCY Third-Year Paper

The goals for the third-year paper requirement are:

- 1) Students will be required to demonstrate their mastery of theory and methods through applying this knowledge to a research project of their choosing.
- 2) Students will be required to demonstrate that they can ask sociological research questions or articulate hypotheses, justify these questions or hypotheses using sociological literature, and answer them using competent analysis of empirical data.
- 3) For many students, this paper will, with some additional work, be published, giving students early experience with the publication process.
- 4) Through these competencies, the student should demonstrate that within the next couple of years, they will be ready to write a sociological doctoral dissertation.

Guidelines

1. The topic, framing, and approach need to be the student's own ideas, and the paper should be the student's own work. We define this as independently generating research questions, theorizing and/or bringing literature to bear on the questions, analyzing data, and writing the paper; it is permissible to collaborate in data preparation and to eventually coauthor the paper after it has been submitted as a third-year paper. The advisor should help the student clarify her/his thoughts, but make sure this paper represents the student's own thinking and skills. A suggestion for the early stages of the project is for the advisor to ask the student to bring a one-page memo detailing the topic/framing/approach that the advisor can then talk through with the student. Advisors and others can help the student understand how to conduct and interpret analyses more generally but cannot help them analyze their specific data or write the paper.

2. It is permissible to use writing and analysis from earlier course papers in the third-year paper. Reusing a previous Master's thesis or manuscript written to obtain a degree previous to entering CU is not permitted. If a student would like to use the data from that work for their third-year paper, they can do a different analysis of the same data.

3. The paper needs to incorporate sociological theory and literature to justify asking one or more sociological research questions/articulating hypotheses, as well as analyze original or secondary empirical data using an appropriate method for the question(s). It must be original work that makes a contribution to sociology (it can also contribute to other fields). Because students' use of both theory and methods are part of the assessment, purely theoretical or methodological papers aren't appropriate for this requirement.

4. The paper must indicate on its first page the name of a target journal and be formatted to conform to the submission guidelines of that journal, including length (though the paper must be a minimum of 8,000 words excluding any appendices). It is important that the paper be clearly written and formatted and free of typographical errors.

5. The advisor should meet regularly with the student to support the writing process and should

be willing to read and comment on one or more drafts. Both students and advisors should provide sufficient turnaround time for reading drafts and making revisions.

6. This year's due dates are December 15, 2017, or March 30, 2018, by 11:59 p.m. Mountain time. Papers must be submitted in Word or PDF format via email to susan.pryor@colorado.edu. Students must request that Susan confirm receipt of the paper, make sure the paper is blinded (i.e., does not include their name anywhere), and include the name of their target journal. Students need to end, as a separate file, a cover sheet that includes the paper's title, their name, and the name of their advisor. The student chooses which date to submit the paper, and review should take one month. In future years, we will move the latter submission deadline to March 1 to allow time for revise and resubmit decisions to be processed during the academic year.

7. The adviser and two blind faculty readers evaluate the blinded paper, providing a 1- to 2-paragraph journal-style review to the student and a confidential grading decision to the graduate committee. Separately from this decision, each reviewer should indicate whether they think the paper is ready to be submitted to the target journal. The advisor should also indicate how many drafts of the paper they have read and how many they offered to read. The blind reviewers will be drawn from a pool of 4 faculty whose grading work will be a service assignment. At least one blind reviewer will be familiar with the paper's method.

8. Initial grading options are pass, fail, or revise and resubmit (R&R). If students receive a pass, we recommend that they meet with their advisor to discuss next steps for preparing the manuscript for journal submission. Papers receiving an R&R must be revised and resubmitted within one month using the same submission guidelines as above. The graders will meet to create a clear list of points that must be addressed in the revision, taking care to ensure that the required revisions are feasible to be completed within a month. The student's advisor will hold a meeting to work through the revision requirements with the student, but the revisions must be the student's own work. The same committee will review the resubmitted paper, with the options of pass or fail. If the paper fails, the student may remain in the program the following fall but must then leave the program.

9. The grading standard is that the paper meets the four goals articulated at the beginning of this document.

10. Students can optionally enroll in MA credit hours, format the third-year paper as an MA thesis, and defend the thesis for an MA degree. A paper may be eligible as a passing MA thesis even if it does not meet the passing standard for a third-year paper.

11. Students are supported in the third-year paper writing process through two optional mechanisms that provide time and money. The first is summer funding after year 1 or year 2 (but not both) for the student to work on the third-year paper project. The second is 3 fall credits to work on the third-year paper, with a rough draft due in December.