2019-20 Guidelines for Faculty and Students for the SOCY Third-Year Paper

The third-year paper requirement is intended to give students extensive practice with the research process they will be using for their dissertation, as well as hopefully resulting in a journal article publication.

The third-year paper requirements are:
1) Students will be required to demonstrate that they can ask sociological research questions or articulate hypotheses, motivate these questions or hypotheses using sociological literature, and answer them using competent analysis of empirical data.
2) Students will be required to demonstrate that they can knowledgeably apply sociological theory and methods to a research project of their choosing.
3) Ideally, this paper will, with some additional work, result in a sole-authored journal publication in a journal of the student's choosing. Should the paper require more extensive revisions, it might also result in a future co-authored publication with a faculty advisor, fellow graduate student, or other collaborator(s).
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 and Mentoring

1. *Responsibility of the Student.* 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.

2. *Role of the Advisor.* 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. This memo should, ideally, be shared with the advisor during the spring semester of the second year of graduate school.

As the paper progresses, 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. Students may also want to workshop their paper in one of the departmental workshops to receive additional feedback on the work.

Advisors and others can provide some editing support in the reading of the drafts, but the paper should not be so heavily edited/rewritten that it no longer reflects the students' voice, style, or content. The advisor should help the student understand how to conduct and interpret analyses more generally but cannot help them analyze their specific data or write the paper. It is permissible to collaborate to eventually co-author the paper after it has been submitted and evaluated as a third-year paper.

3. *Previous research projects.* 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 conduct a different analysis of the same data.

4. *Theory and analysis.* The paper needs to incorporate sociological theory and literature to justify asking one or more sociological research questions and/or 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 contributes 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 works are not appropriate for the third-year paper.

5. *Support for writers.* 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 mid-December and recommended deadlines throughout the semester for turning in sections of the draft.

6. *Formatting.* The paper must be a minimum of 8,000 words and a maximum of 10,000 words, including references, tables, figures, and appendices. This length requirement mirrors typical standards in the field. It is important that the paper be clearly written, consistently formatted, and free of typographical errors. A target journal does not need to be identified, but it may be helpful to the student to have such a journal in mind in order to help focus on a potential audience and a desired style.

7. *Submission guidelines.* Before submitting the paper, students must make sure the paper is blinded (i.e., does not include their name anywhere). Students need to send, as a separate file, a cover sheet that includes the paper's title, their name, and the name of their third-year paper advisor.

8. *Due dates.* Upcoming due dates are **December 31, 2019**, or **February 15, 2020**, by 11:59 p.m. Mountain time. Papers must be submitted in Word or PDF format via email to carrie.bagli@colorado.edu. Carrie will confirm receipt. The student chooses which date to submit the paper, and review should take about one month. Moving the later submission deadline to February 15 will allow time for revise and resubmit decisions to be processed before the annual review process concludes. The timing of the submission and grading of the third-year paper will allow it to become an important data point in the third-year annual review process in April/May.

Review and Feedback

1. *Process.* After submission, the advisor evaluates the paper, along with two faculty readers who evaluate a blinded version of the paper. 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. The advisor and the two blinded faculty reviewers will provide a 1- to 2-page journal-style review to the student and a confidential grading decision to the graduate committee

based on a standard score sheet (see last page of this document). Separately from this decision, each reviewer should indicate whether they think the paper is ready to be submitted to an academic journal. The advisor should also indicate how many drafts of the paper they have read and how many they offered to read.

2. *Grading.* Initial grading options are high pass, pass, low pass, revise and resubmit (R&R), or fail. The operational definitions for each of the grading categories are:

High Pass: This designation is reserved for truly meritorious work that the committee views as ready for submission to a top-tier journal.

Pass: This designation is for papers that clearly meet, and in some cases even exceed, the requirements articulated at the beginning of this document.

Low Pass: This designation is for papers that have met the minimum standard identified in this document.

Revise and Resubmit: Papers that have failed to meet one or more of the requirements laid out in this document will receive an R&R designation.

Fail: This designation is for papers that are plagiarized, are substantially incomplete, have not satisfactorily addressed R&R comments, have persistent major flaws, do not analyze sociological data, or have other very serious concerns.

    2a. If students receive a *high pass, pass,* or *low pass,* we recommend that they meet with their advisor to discuss next steps for preparing the manuscript for journal submission.

    2b. Papers receiving an *R&R* will not pass unless they are improved, and they must be revised and resubmitted within one month using the same submission guidelines as above. The student will receive a list of points that must be addressed in the revision, with reviewers 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 discuss 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 high pass, pass, low pass, or fail.

    2c. A *fail* decision will trigger a substantial overarching review of the student's progress in the program, resulting in a decision either for the student to leave the program after the following fall, or to create a specific set of directives that the student must meet in the following year in order to remain in the program (this process was formerly called "probation").

3. *MA degree.* The department has reinstituted an *MA paper option* for students wishing to receive a Master's degree. Students can optionally submit and orally defend their third-year paper for an MA degree. A student may pass their MA defense even if they have failed the third-year paper requirement. Students may alternatively choose the *MA thesis option*, which involves enrolling in MA credit hours, substantially expanding and refining their paper to meet the higher standards of an MA thesis, and orally defending the thesis.

Third-Year Paper Instructions to Reviewers
Please write a 1- to 2-page journal article-style review, including constructive feedback and specific recommendations for revision. Please do not include any identifying information, as this review will be shared with the student.

Third-Year Paper Scoring Sheet*
*This is for internal evaluation purposes and will not be shared directly with the student.

Reviewer name: _____   Paper number: _____

Specific evaluation (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest standard for a third-year paper, please rank the paper on the following measures):

1	2	3	4	5	Clarity of Presentation
1	2	3	4	5	Originality in Terms of Topic and/or Approach
1	2	3	4	5	Theoretical Contribution
1	2	3	4	5	Research Design / Methods / Analysis
1	2	3	4	5	Empirical Contribution
1	2	3	4	5	Conclusions

Do you think this paper is ready to be submitted to a journal?
- o   Yes, as is
- o   Yes, with some revision
- o   Not without very substantial changes

Overall evaluation (please mark one):
- o   High Pass
- o   Pass
- o   Low Pass
- o   Revise and Resubmit (R&R)
- o   Fail

If you are the student's advisor, how many drafts of the paper were you asked to read? _____

If you are the student's advisor, how many drafts of the paper did you read? _____

Confidential comments to the graduate committee or to fellow reviewers: