

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM**

***GRADUATE STUDENT  
HANDBOOK***

July 2018

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. GRADUATE PROGRAM OVERVIEW	5
A. Programs of Study	5
B. Specialization Areas	5
III. THE GRADUATE FACULTY	7
IV. GRADUATE PROGRAM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	9
V. SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION	9
VI. ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID	10
A. Introduction	10
B. Admissions and Awards Committee	10
C. Admissions: General Policies	10
D. Financial Support: Introduction	13
E. Financial Aid: General Policies	13
F. Limitations on Receipt of Funding	17
VII. THE ADVISORY SYSTEM	19
VIII. TRANSFER AND RESIDENCY CREDITS	21
IX. TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS	22
X. CREDIT LOADS AND PERFORMANCE	24
XI. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS	256
XII. INTERNSHIP CREDIT	26
XIII. GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS	27
A. The MS Degree in Sociology	27
1. Program of Study Approval	27
2. Curriculum	27
3. Prerequisites	29
4. Thesis	29
B. Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology	30
1. Program of Study Approval	30
2. Curriculum -- General Policies	30
3. Doctoral Degree Requirements - For Students Entering With a Master's Degree	31
4. Doctoral Degree Requirements -- For Students Entering With a Bachelor's Degree	33
5. Designated Specialization Area Courses	37
6. Qualifying Review	38
7. Major Specialization Area Comprehensive Examination	38
8. Minor Specialization Area	41
9. Dissertation Proposal	41
10. Admission to Candidacy	42
11. Dissertation Defense	42
XIV. PETITIONING PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT WAIVERS	44
XV. GRANDPARENTING CLAUSE	44

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Program in Sociology at Utah State University was first organized in the 1930s through the efforts of Dr. Joseph Geddes, the founder and first Head of the department. The Sociology PhD program was established in the 1950s. In the ensuing decades the Sociology Graduate Program at USU has emerged as a regional and national leader in providing graduate training and research in selected areas of specialization linked to USU's regional location and its status as Utah's Land Grant University.

The Graduate Program in Sociology provides Master's and Doctoral level training with a unique integrative and reinforcing combination of demographic, organizational, political-economic, and social psychological orientations to major domestic and global issues. At the graduate level we place particular emphasis on three areas of specialization: Demography, Environment & Community, and Social Inequality. Students have the opportunity to merge basic foundation coursework in sociological theory and research methods with more focused training in selected specialty areas and apprenticeship roles in both basic and applied research projects. Sustained personal interaction between faculty and students is a hallmark and strength of the program.

The Sociology Program houses two active research units -- the Yun Kim Population Research Laboratory and the Institute for Social Science Research on Natural Resources. Faculty also play key roles in a number of interdisciplinary research and training units across campus including the Center for Society, Economy and the Environment, Center for Epidemiologic Studies, Center for Women and Gender, Center for Persons With Disabilities, Ecology Center, Utah Water Research Laboratory, Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, and the Institute for Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.

Consistent with the Land Grant mission of Utah State University and a long-standing research relationship between the Sociology program and the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, rural sociological issues have long been and remain an important component of the graduate curriculum and research efforts of many of our faculty and students. Each of the designated graduate program specialty areas provides opportunities to investigate rural social conditions and changes from multiple perspectives. At the same time, our research activities and course offerings address a broad range of issues that extend well beyond the rural-urban focus to encompass a broad array of regional, national, and global-scale issues.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program requirements for the Master of Science (MS) and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees in sociology. The handbook provides guidance to students and faculty in the sociology graduate program as well as others who may have an interest in the program. It supplements the information in the current Utah State University Catalog.

The student's Supervisory Committee helps in designing and approves the program of study, in

accordance with University, Departmental, and Program requirements. However, the careful planning required for acquisition of a systematic, integrated knowledge of your field is primarily up to each individual student; thus, you should consider thoroughly what courses and individualized plans will assist you in gaining this competence. *The student should understand that the requirements set forth in this document represent minimums.* The Supervisory Committee is responsible to work with each student to establish a program of study according to his or her individual interests and the committee's judgment of the student's needs and competencies. Students are responsible for knowing and meeting the requirements of the University and the Program. While the Supervisory Committee and especially your major professor are committed to assisting you, it is your responsibility to see that all necessary forms are properly executed and filed with the School of Graduate Studies Office.

Individual deviations from the policies set forth in this handbook will be considered only on a case-by-case basis and only under exceptional circumstances. These changes must have the approval of the student's Supervisory Committee and the Department Head or his or her delegated representative (typically the Director of Graduate Studies).

## **II. GRADUATE PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **A. Programs of Study**

The Sociology Program offers graduate work on the Logan campus leading to the MS and PhD degrees in Sociology. The Program places a high value on providing comprehensive training in theory and methods. All faculty and students are expected to be competent in these foundation areas of the discipline. The Master's program in Sociology is focused on foundation courses in sociological theory, methodology, and a set of electives consistent with the student's career goals. In addition, the Program offers three interdependent specialization areas at the doctoral level: (1) Demography; (2) Environment & Community; and (3) Social Inequality. A basic underpinning of the Program's doctoral program is the integration of general sociological theory and methods into these areas of program strength.

### **B. Specialization Areas**

#### **(1) Demography**

The Demography area of specialization is administered through the Yun Kim Population Research Laboratory. Graduate coursework is provided in social demography, population theories and policy and demographic methods, as well as various special topic seminars. The orientation is twofold: (1) basic and policy oriented research on sociological aspects of demographic structure and processes including migration, marriage and fertility, morbidity and mortality and technical demographic topics such as population estimates and projections; and, (2) the provision of demographic training to domestic and international students relevant to their respective settings. Research endeavors encompass a broad range of local, regional, national, and international projects in the areas of migration and population redistribution, family demography, life course and aging, health and disability, population/environment interactions, labor force, and population estimates and projections.

#### **(2) Environment & Community**

The faculty in this specialization maintain active research agendas in a wide variety of areas, including natural resource development and social change, global environmental change, coupled human and natural systems, natural resource dependency patterns, energy development, landscape and land use planning, community change and social well-being, public participation in environmental planning, social responses to hazardous technologies and other environmental risks, environmental equity and environmental justice concerns, public land management policies, linkages of environmental conditions with population change, applied community development, and a variety of other natural resource policy and management issues. Our faculty members have extensive domestic and international experience examining rural community development, labor market

restructuring, agrarian transformations, population and development, social movements, human-nature relationships, and land use changes. Faculty members have been engaged in cooperative research ventures with faculty in many other disciplines, including engineering, natural resource sciences, applied economics, and other physical and social sciences. Graduate curriculum offerings are focused on the sociology of natural resources, environmental sociology, community sociology, public sociology, and conflict management.

(3) **Social Inequality**

The Social Inequality specialization allows graduate students to explore how states, policies, organizations and labor markets come together to create differing opportunities and outcomes for diverse groups within society, as well as across societies. Our faculty conduct research on gender, racial, ethnic, and class inequalities within the United States and other countries, as well as comparative, cross-national research. Many important topics studied by faculty within our program – migration behavior, the effects of job quality on family stability and child well-being, health outcomes, environmental problems, labor market outcomes, the promotion of women and minorities to leadership positions, community development, etc. – are integrally linked to various forms and consequences of social inequality.

### III. THE GRADUATE FACULTY

#### SOCIOLOGY CORE FACULTY

LEON ANDERSON, PhD, University of Texas. Social Inequality, Crime and Deviance, Homelessness, Qualitative Research Methods

E. HELEN BERRY, PhD, The Ohio State University. Demography, Human Ecology, Urban Sociology

GABRIELLE CICIURKAITE, PhD, University of Kentucky. Medical Sociology, Research Methods, Aging and the Life Course, Mental Health

STEVE DANIELS, PhD, Duke. Rural and Natural Resource Community Development, Collaborative Learning and Conflict Mediation, Natural Resource Policy

COURTNEY FLINT, PhD, Pennsylvania State University. Natural Resource, Community and Rural Sociology, Interdisciplinarity, Mixed-Methods Research

JENNIFER GIVENS, PhD, University of Utah. Environmental Sociology, Comparative International Sociology, Political Economy

CHRISTY GLASS, PhD, Yale. Work and Inequality, Organizations, Gender, Race/Ethnicity

ERIN HOFMANN, PhD, University of Texas. Demography, Migration, Gender, Russia and Eurasia

JASON LEIKER, PhD, Southern Illinois University. Criminology and Deviance, Teaching

SO JUNG LIM, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Demography, Health, Work and Inequality, East Asia

GUADALUPE MARQUEZ-VELARDE, PhD, Texas A&M University. Race, Ethnicity, Demography

MARISELA MARTINEZ-COLA, PhD, Emory University. Race, Ethnicity, Qualitative, Historical

PEGGY PETRZELKA, PhD, Iowa State University. Environmental Sociology, Community and Rural Sociology, Qualitative Methods

ERIC REITHER, PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Demography, Health Disparities, Determinants and Consequences of Obesity, Social Epidemiology, Research Methods and Statistics

MEHMET SOYER, PhD, Texas Women's University. Social Stratification, Social Movements, Social Theory, Environmental Sociology

STEPHEN VANGEEM, PhD, University of South Florida. Mental Health, Criminology

EMILY (BETH) WILSON, PhD, Utah State University. Demography, Health

#### **IV. GRADUATE PROGRAM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Graduate Program Executive Committee (GPEC) is comprised of four members: the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS; who serves as chair), and one member of the graduate faculty selected to represent each of the three PhD program specialization areas. The GPEC is responsible for making major admissions and funding decisions, and developing, amending, and enforcing specific graduate program rules and requirements (in consultation with the full sociology graduate faculty as appropriate). The GPEC oversees the work of the DGS and can authorize the DGS to make day-to-day decisions relating to graduate program operations. Some specific responsibilities of the GPEC are described in other sections of this handbook.

#### **V. SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION**

All matriculated graduate students in the Sociology Program are eligible for voluntary membership in the Sociology Graduate Students Association. In addition to fostering friendships with fellow graduate students, the SGSA elects representatives to several decision making bodies. Also, the SGSA can be asked to send representatives to participate in ad hoc departmental committees. The SGSA often provides input into revisions of sociology graduate program rules, department policies and procedures, faculty hiring decisions, and graduate student funding policy.

## **VI. ADMISSION AND FINANCIAL AID**

### **A. Introduction**

We consider the screening and selection of graduate students and the decisions regarding financial support for their studies as critically important tasks. Our success in attracting the most qualified students will have long range implications for the effectiveness of our program, the quality of our research and our impact on the profession. The constantly changing budgetary position of the Department as well as the changing job market for our graduates demand a flexible yet efficient set of procedures by which these critical decisions are made. The following procedures constitute Departmental and Sociology Program policy regarding admissions and financial awards for graduate students.

### **B. Admissions and Awards Committee**

The Graduate Program Executive Committee of the Sociology Program functions as the Admissions and Awards committee, with the Director of Graduate Studies serving as chair. The responsibilities of this committee are as follows:

1. To make recommendations to the School of Graduate Studies regarding the admission of all incoming graduate students and prepare a ranking of students for the awarding of financial aid to both incoming and currently enrolled graduate students.
2. To establish a target number of new graduate students to be admitted to the MS and PhD programs each academic year (typically 3-4 MS and 3-5 doctoral students/year).
3. To assist in the recruitment of graduate students.
4. To review the annual funding plan for incoming and continuing students prepared by the Director of Graduate Studies.

### **C. Admissions: General Policies**

1. New graduate students will normally be admitted for Fall Semester only. First preference will be given to students completing their application file on or before February 1.
2. No waivers of the required application fee are available. Neither the Department nor the USU School of Graduate Studies has access to funds that can be used for this purpose. Files submitted without the required application fee will not be reviewed.
3. Graduate students entering the PhD program with a master's degree from another institution will be required to complete a minimum of 51 graduate-level credits at USU. Those who have completed the MS degree in the USU sociology program must complete a minimum of 48 additional graduate-level credits. Students completing a master's

degree in the USU Sociology program who desire to pursue a PhD in the Sociology Program must make formal application to the PhD program.

Applicants who have not completed the MS degree at Utah State should arrange to have all application materials (including the on-line application form, a letter of intent/statement of interest, three letters of reference, official transcripts for prior university-level work, official GRE scores, official TOEFL or IELTS scores for most international applicants, and an example of written work) submitted via the School of Graduate Studies on-line application system by February 1 to be considered for financial assistance for the coming year.

Students who have completed or will complete the Sociology MS degree program at USU and who wish to be considered for continuation in the PhD program should submit a letter of intent and arrange to have three letters of recommendation forwarded directly to the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies, by no later than February 1. Note: The School of Graduate Studies will not process files until all "incompletes" and master's committee forms have been completed.

4. In most instances students who have completed only an undergraduate degree will be considered for admission to the MS program. Students initially admitted to the MS program may subsequently apply for admission to the PhD program when masters-level degree requirements are nearing completion or have been completed.

Exceptionally well-qualified applicants who have completed an undergraduate degree in Sociology or a closely-related social science discipline and who demonstrate outstanding potential for success in the pursuit of doctoral-level training may be considered for admission directly into the PhD program. Admission into the PhD program rather than the Master's program at the time of entry will occur only for those applicants who specifically request such consideration, who can demonstrate a record of consistently excellent performance in undergraduate coursework overall and sociology coursework specifically, and who have strong GRE test scores. If admitted to the PhD program at the time of entry, students will be required to complete a minimum of 69 graduate-level credits. Continuation in the PhD program past the second year of study is conditional upon successful completion of a second-year project that is approved by the student's PhD supervisory committee, and a positive recommendation by that committee regarding the student's qualification for continuation of studies leading to the PhD. Students not approved for continuation in the PhD program may pursue completion of the MS degree, if approved by the Graduate Executive Committee.

5. The decision to grant admission to an applicant will normally be made only on the basis of a complete file. Files lacking key information such as test scores, transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc. will not be reviewed until all required information has been received or explicitly waived.

6. Criteria for Admission Evaluation:

- (a) Grades achieved in previous work, with more weight assigned to the last two years of undergraduate work and to any existing graduate work. Particular emphasis is placed on grades in Sociology and other social science courses.
- (b) Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with the applicant's accomplishments and potential for success in graduate school.
- (c) A 40th percentile or higher score on both the verbal and quantitative sections of the Graduate Record Examination is preferred.
- (d) Evidence of strong writing ability, as evidenced by a submitted example of the applicant's written work.
- (e) TOEFL or IELTS scores are required for candidates from abroad, with a minimum TOEFL score of 100 (internet-based test) or a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (and minimum score of 5 on each subscale) deemed acceptable by the Program. Students with TOEFL or IELTS scores that fall below these levels may under some circumstances be approved for entrance into the program, but may be required to participate in Intensive English courses to improve their English language skills. International students with a prior degree from an English-speaking university in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or Europe are exempted from the TOEFL or IELTS exam.
- (f) Evidence of commitment to, and a clear rationale for pursuing, a graduate degree with a focus consistent with the Program's areas of specialization, as reflected in the candidate's statement of educational objectives and career plans.
- (g) Ability of the Program to provide training in the areas in which the student has expressed interest.

All of these criteria are examined carefully in evaluating a student's acceptability for admission to the program. No single criterion is used as the primary determinant of the admission decision; in some cases students who show exceptional promise according to some of the criteria listed above may be recommended for admission even if they may fall short on one or more of the other criteria.

7. On the basis of a thorough evaluation of the application with respect to the above criteria the Program will recommend to the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies whether an applicant should be: (a) admitted as a matriculated student; or (b) rejected. USU does not offer a "provisional" or "non-matriculated" admission option.

8. Official decisions on admission are made by the School of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Head typically send out the notice of acceptance decisions after approval of the School of Graduate Studies. Applications submitted for fall semester admission consideration received by the February 1 application deadline are generally reviewed as a group in early March, with admission decisions announced before the end of March. Files submitted at other times of the year are reviewed as they are received.

#### **D. Financial Support: Introduction**

The Sociology Program offers an array of research and teaching assistantships as well as a limited number of fellowships.

New applicants wishing to be fully considered for financial support should have their application files completed by February 1. Applications received after the above deadline can only be considered as funds become available.

All currently enrolled graduate students should also file their annual progress reports with the Director of Graduate Studies by April 15<sup>th</sup> in order to be considered for financial aid from the department and university for the following year.

#### **E. Financial Aid: General Policies**

1. Funding Types
  - a. Teaching and Research Assistantships

The Department Head will provide funds for allocation by the Director of Graduate Studies to support graduate student teaching assistantships, and in some instances research assistantships. These assistantships will generally come with a specific work obligation. A full-time assistantship is considered to be a 20 hour/week assignment. Fractional appointments are also possible.

The total amount of monies designated for teaching will be determined by the annual Department budget. Teaching funds may be used for either graduate teaching assistant (TA) or course instructor appointments. MS program students are not assigned independent responsibility for course instruction, but may be appointed as graduate teaching assistants. Teaching assistants usually will be assigned to work with specific faculty and provide assistance with undergraduate courses they are teaching. The Department also will seek to provide a diverse array of course instructor opportunities to help doctoral students develop a good portfolio of teaching experiences to enhance their employability on the job market. As a general rule, graduate TAs should not be assigned to doctoral students who are working as course instructors.

The total amount of funds available for research assistantships will be determined primarily by individual faculty research contracts and grants (including internal USU grants, external grants, and allotments for Utah Agricultural Experiment Station projects). The Director of Graduate Studies will consult with each individual faculty member to determine the faculty member's desired allocation of their research funds to provide support for research assistantship appointments.

When possible, the department will endeavor to provide a mix of both teaching and research opportunities for funded graduate students in both the MS and PhD programs.

b. Scholarships and Fellowships

The Director of Graduate Studies will nominate and encourage formal applications from exceptional students for any University Fellowships and Scholarships for which they qualify.

The Department also administers a set of specific fellowships and scholarships that can be awarded depending on availability of funds, student qualifications for specific awards, and other indicators of student performance.

c. Tuition Awards

Tuition awards for up to 9 credits of resident and/or nonresident per semester can be provided to graduate students who meet minimum qualifications. As per USU policy, to qualify for either resident or nonresident tuition awards, students must

- i. Register as a full-time student
- ii. Maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0
- iii. Be making acceptable progress toward their graduate degree
- iv. Receive an assistantship stipend worth a minimum of \$5,400 per academic year (\$675/month) with an 0.5 FTE appointment for the entire semester in which they receive the award
- v. All domestic students must become Utah residents within one year of admission

Tuition awards can only be given for credits that count directly toward the sociology graduate degree and that appear on the student's program of study.

Non-resident tuition awards are generally provided for no more than one year for U.S. citizens, after which point students must apply for and be granted Utah residency. International students may be offered nonresident tuition awards for up to 2 years for MS students, and 4-5 years for PhD students if the student can demonstrate need and as long as tuition award funds are available.

The pool of available tuition award dollars will be determined by the School of Graduate Studies and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences each year, and the Director of Graduate Studies will make recommendations for allocating available Departmental and Program resident and nonresident tuition awards to eligible MS and PhD students based on (a) the need to recruit top applicants, (b) the need to meet prior commitments to students for funding; and (c) the desire to reward continuing students for exceptional performance. Generally speaking, doctoral students will have higher priority for tuition awards than master's students.

## 2. New Students

- a. As soon as the annual Department budget is approved by the University the Department Head will inform the Director of Graduate Studies of the approximate amount of funding available to support new graduate students.
- b. The Graduate Program Executive Committee, as part of its review of applications, will establish a priority ranking of all admitted graduate student applicants according to their qualifications for the receipt of financial aid. Available teaching assistantships or instructor assignments will be assigned to the highest ranking applicants. Research assistants will be selected by individual faculty with responsibilities for directing funded research projects, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. Exceptional applicants will be nominated by the Program for University fellowships and other scholarships, as appropriate.
- c. Students selected for the receipt of financial support will whenever possible be notified of the Department's financial commitment to them before March 31. These students will be asked to accept or reject the offer of financial support by no later than April 15. A non-response will be taken as indication of refusal of the award. Assistantships made available through rejections and through non-responses will be offered to other incoming students who have been approved for admission (with a two-week reply deadline), or retained for the support of currently enrolled graduate students.
- d. Applicants who have been admitted but not given a commitment for financial aid will be notified as soon as possible of their position on the priority ranking and provided any other information which may assist them in estimating the likelihood of their receiving support (e.g., number of awards available in previous year).
- e. Criteria for granting of assistantships and fellowships are the same as for admission (see Section VI-C).

### 3. Currently Enrolled Students

- a. As soon as the annual Department budget is approved by the University the Department Head will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the approximate amount of funding available to support currently enrolled graduate students.
- b. All currently enrolled graduate students will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of their desire to be considered for future financial support as part of their annual progress report (due April 15).
- c. As soon after April 15 as possible, the Director of Graduate Studies will develop a funding plan for the next academic year to identify priority rankings for funding and to outline an initial approach to allocate available funds to both incoming and currently enrolled graduate students. Criteria for granting of financial aid will include classroom performance, performance on prior assistantships, and evidence of normal progress toward degree completion consistent with the program of study. See Section F (2) below for definition of normal progress. Available teaching assistantship awards will be assigned to the highest ranking applicants. Research assistants are selected by faculty responsible for directing funded research projects in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.
- d. Students selected for financial support will be notified of the Department's commitment by approximately June 30. These students will be asked to accept or reject the offer of funding within two weeks following receipt of the funding offer.
- e. Students not given a commitment for financial support will be notified by approximately June 30 of their position on the priority ranking and provided any other information which may assist them in estimating the likelihood of support.
- f. If a master's-level student is admitted to the PhD program with funding and he or she has not completed the requirements for the master's degree by the start of the first semester of doctoral study, the student will receive funding at the master's level until he or she has the thesis approved and signed by the committee. The student will have one semester in which to have the thesis approved and signed by his or her committee. If the student does not meet this condition, then his or her funding is subject to reallocation at the discretion of the GPEC. These conditions apply to students admitted to the PhD program from a master's program inside or outside the department.
- g. Students who are admitted directly to the PhD program after completion of an undergraduate degree and who receive funding upon admission must complete the required second-year project by the end of the fourth semester of study. In addition, a positive recommendation for continuation in the PhD program must be

submitted by the student's supervisory committee to the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks following the end of the fourth semester of study. If the student does not meet these conditions allocation of funding and continuation in the Sociology graduate program may be suspended at the discretion of the GPEC. Students who fail to receive a positive recommendation for continuation may with approval of the GPEC have the opportunity to complete a Plan A thesis and any other requirements to earn the Master of Science degree.

4. The Awarding of Financial Aid to New and Current Students after June 30.
  - a. The Department Head and faculty members will immediately notify the Director of Graduate Studies of any graduate student funding which may become available after June 30. The Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the GPEC and individual faculty will make recommendations regarding the disposition of these funds.

#### **F. Limitations on Receipt of Funding**

1. Unless the department is confronted with severe funding shortfalls, Master's students who are awarded full funding from departmental sources (e.g., departmental assistantships and/or fellowships) at the time of admission will normally be awarded continued funding for 2 academic years. PhD students who enter the program with a master's degree will normally be awarded continued funding for 4 academic years; those who enter the PhD program with a bachelor's degree will generally receive funding for 5 years. In all cases these funding assurances are contingent upon continued evidence that the student is making acceptable progress toward degree completion. Extensions of funding beyond these time periods may be granted to students who are deemed to be making good progress toward completion of their degrees, contingent on the availability of funds for departmental allocation.
2. *Acceptable progress* means:
  - a. On the first day of class of fall semester, the student does not have more than 2 incompletes in non-thesis courses remaining from the previous year or years coursework;
  - b. The student has maintained a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in courses completed;
  - c. The student is taking a minimum of 6 credits of approved non-thesis/non-dissertation coursework per semester until substantive coursework listed on the program of study is completed;
  - d. Selection of supervisory committee within established time frames.

- e. Student progress is reviewed annually (in the spring) by the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who are identified as having difficulty in the program or who are not making acceptable progress will be provided with specific guidelines on areas of improvement that need to occur and a time frame for doing so. Continued failure to make acceptable progress will result in termination of funding support and/or termination from the program.
  - 3. The above time limitations for funding receipt pertain to both teaching assistantships and research assistantships supported by USU Agricultural Experiment Station and other USU derived funds. They do not apply to funding obtained under consulting arrangements or external grants.
- G. A Summary of Deadlines for Graduate Admission and Awards is contained in APPENDIX I.**

## VII. THE ADVISORY SYSTEM

When you enter the Sociology Graduate Program, the Director of Graduate Studies will be your temporary advisor. He or she will discuss with you your plans for graduate work, USU School of Graduate Studies and Program requirements, the graduate program's advisory system, course offerings and any other academic matters you may wish to have clarified. The Director of Graduate Studies will also assist you in becoming acquainted with other faculty and their field, preparatory to the selection of a permanent advisor and a Supervisory Committee.

***All new students must attend a graduate program orientation seminar during Fall Semester of their first year.*** The seminar, which is designed to provide new students with exposure to departmental policies and procedures as well as to the research interests of individual faculty, does not have a course number, and does not carry credit toward the degree. This seminar, coursework, informal contacts, and your own interests, provide the foundation for selecting a permanent advisor. In some instances the advisor (e.g., chair of the thesis or dissertation committee) is identified at the time of admission, based on a student's acceptance of a research assistantship or fellowship appointment tied to a funded project involving that faculty member. For those who enter the program without an appointed major advisor, your preference for a particular advisor will usually be honored. It is important to select as your advisor a faculty member who has a research interest in the area in which you plan to do your thesis or dissertation.

The selection of a supervisory committee is a critical decision for students because of its role in helping to design a program of study that is consistent with student needs and interests and Program and University requirements. The permanent advisor (major professor) will chair the Supervisory Committee. In this capacity the major professor typically assists the student in selecting the remaining members of that committee to facilitate the inclusion of individuals with areas of expertise consistent with the student's research interests. Information concerning the composition and role of this committee is available in the University Catalog.

***Masters students are expected to have their MS supervisory committee appointed and approved by the third week of their second semester in the program.*** The committee must include at least three faculty members, with one member representing an area of emphasis other than that which is the focus of the student's program of study and thesis. One or more members may be from outside of the sociology program, but outside representation is not required.

***Doctoral students are expected to have their PhD supervisory committee appointed and approved before the start of the third semester of study.*** The PhD committee must include at least 5 faculty members, one of whom must be from outside of the sociology program.

Committee appointment forms are reviewed and approved by the Department Head and the Director of Graduate Studies. Upon recommendation of the Department Head and the Director of Graduate Studies, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies will officially appoint the Supervisory Committee. A Supervisory Committee Approval Form is available on the USU

School of Graduate Studies website.

The chairperson of the Supervisory Committee, in close collaboration with other members of the committee, will guide and direct the program of study as specified in the USU Graduate Catalog until the program is completed. Students should meet with their supervisory committee at least once annually to discuss their progress in the graduate program.

Any subsequent change in committee membership requires the approval of the Department Head and the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Dean. Changes in committee membership are not allowed within six weeks of the thesis/dissertation defense. In circumstances where a faculty member is unable to fulfill obligations, that person may be replaced on the committee at the recommendation of the major professor and Department Head after reasonable efforts have been made to solicit that person's participation.

## VIII. TRANSFER AND RESIDENCY CREDITS

The Graduate Program in Sociology has a general policy not to accept transfer credits for incoming students to meet requirements of our graduate degrees. When appropriate, courses taken at other universities may be considered to meet substantive course requirements in methods and theory, but must be approved by the advisory committee and the Director of Graduate Studies. Other requests to use transfer credits will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

School of Graduate Studies Policies on Transfer Credits  
(Excerpted from USU 2016/17 Online General Catalog)

### Transfer Credits

Provided USU residency requirements (see specific credit requirements under each degree) will be met, a student's supervisory committee may recommend transfer of graduate credits earned at another accredited institution, including credits with earned P grades. The credits must not have been used for another degree.

No more than 12 semester credits taken at USU or another institution prior to matriculation at USU may be used in a program of study for a graduate program at USU. Credits with P grades may be transferred only with committee approval. Transfer credits cannot replace required residency credits. Transfer credits are subject to approval of the supervisory committee and the dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and are subject to the same time limit as USU course credits. Transfer credits will be shown on official USU transcripts upon completion of the degree.

## IX. TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

- A. The Sociology graduate program is committed to the development of its graduate students as effective teachers and researchers. Assistantships give students opportunities to develop those teaching and research skills.
- B. Teaching Assistantships and Lectureships
  - i. All graduate students are required to successfully complete the Teaching Assistant (TA) Training course (USU 7920) sponsored by the School of Graduate Studies. International students must also complete an additional workshop (IELI 7920). These training courses are typically conducted just prior to the start of or during the Fall semester. There is no cost to students, and credits earned for participation cannot be counted on a graduate Program of Study.
  - ii. Teaching assistantship assignments will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies no less than 2 weeks prior to the start of each semester. Factors that guide TA assignments will include:
    - a. The student's knowledge of the subject matter;
    - b. The student's prior TA experiences;
    - c. The size and administrative demands of the course;
    - d. Coordination with the undergraduate teaching fellows program; and
    - e. A student's good standing in the graduate program.
  - iii. Doctoral students may be selected to teach an undergraduate course as a graduate instructor. To allow adequate time for preparation, doctoral students should whenever possible be informed about instructorship appointments at least 3 months in advance of the first day of classes. The selection criteria for assigning instructorship opportunities to doctoral students include:
    - a. Most importantly, knowledge of subject matter;
    - b. Successful completion of the TA workshop
    - c. Completion of additional teacher training if required by the Director of Graduate Studies;
    - d. Prior successful experience teaching one's own course;
    - e. Adequate interpersonal and communication skills; and
    - f. Good standing in the graduate program.
  - iv. When a student is selected to teach his or her own course, a faculty mentor will be assigned to help the student enhance his or her teaching ability. The faculty mentor will offer assistance on syllabus construction, course content, assignments, grading criteria and procedures, teaching methods, as well as other topics. In addition, the faculty mentor will in most cases observe the student teaching and provide information to aid the student to develop teaching skills.

- v. Graduate TAs and/or Undergraduate Teaching Fellows can be assigned to doctoral students who are working as a lecturer. However, we typically seek to avoid situations where a doctoral student is supervising the work of another doctoral student.

C. Research Assistantships

- i. All graduate students in sociology are required to successfully complete the Research Integrity course (USU 6900) offered by the School of Graduate Studies in conjunction with new graduate student orientation activities, immediately prior to the start of fall semester. All students must also complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online human subjects research course provided by the USU Institutional Review Board.
- ii. Research assistantship opportunities are normally provided by individual faculty through internal and externally funded research grants. Faculty are expected to notify the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the availability of research assistantship funding opportunities and their plans to employ particular students as RAs.
- iii. Decisions about which students will receive RA positions will be the responsibility of the faculty member who oversees the particular source of research funding, often through consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.
- iv. In cases where departmental funds are made available for research assistantship positions, the DGS will be in charge of allocating these funds. The selection criteria for assigning departmental RA opportunities will include:
  - a. Ability to do the work required of the RA;
  - b. Successful completion of the USU Responsible Conduct of Research Workshop and the CITI training course;
  - c. Successful completion of graduate program research methods courses;
  - d. Benefits to the student from acquiring additional research experience; and
  - e. Good standing in the graduate program.

- D. Teaching and research assistantship responsibilities must be taken seriously. Students in these positions must adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics and responsibilities. Effective performance of these responsibilities not only provides important learning and professional socialization experiences, but also provides a basis for faculty to provide positive letters of recommendation for students seeking employment or applying for admission to other graduate programs. Conversely, failure to effectively carry out assistantship responsibilities negatively affects prospects for positive recommendations, and if continued will lead to a withdrawal of assistantship support.

## X. CREDIT LOADS AND PERFORMANCE

- A. The following minimum and maximum credit loads are full time enrollment:
- 6 to 10 credits for all students on 20 hour per week assistantships (or 3 credits if all formal coursework on the program of study has been completed).
  - 9 to 13 credits for all students on less than 20 hour per week assistantships.
  - 9 to 13 credits for all students not on assistantships.
- B. Students on assistantship assignments cannot be required to work more hours than they have been contracted or paid to work. Normally this will not exceed an average of 20 hours a week for students on a full assistantship. For graduate students who are teaching their own course, teaching two courses a year will be counted as a full graduate assistantship work assignment. No other work is to be accepted during terms in which a graduate student is teaching without prior approval from the Director of Graduate Studies. No more than two classes will be assigned during any given year, except under exceptional circumstances. Stipends for teaching will be at the level of a full graduate assistantship, at the rate applicable to the student's status at the time of assignment.
- C. All international students are reminded that the U.S. government requires full-time student status to be maintained to retain your visa. According to the Immigration Service this means that international graduate students must in most instances enroll for 9 or more credits, not including duties associated with assistantships. Some exceptions can be allowed in the following cases:
1. The student is serving as a lecturer for the department.
  2. The student is at the end of coursework and needs only a few hours for graduation.
  3. The student is ill and has a doctor's statement of verification.
- These circumstances should be cleared in advance with the Office of International Students and Scholars at Utah State to avoid any legal status problems. A form is available from the OISS to request a reduction in course load.
- E. All students should discuss their plans for course registration with their advisors prior to registering for courses and prior to dropping or adding any courses. If a student has not selected a permanent advisor, approval should be secured from the Director of Graduate Studies. Students are responsible for adding and dropping courses by the appropriate deadlines, and will assume the cost of any fees and tuition waiver penalties associated with late registration or changes.
- F. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0. A supervisory committee can approve no more than two courses with a grade below B towards the total number of credits required for any of the Program's graduate degrees.

**Continuous Graduate Registration Rules  
(From 2016/17 USU Online Graduate Catalog)**

Graduate students using University facilities or faculty time must be registered for a minimum of 3 graduate credits every semester until completion of all degree requirements, except, in some cases, the semester of final thesis or dissertation approval (see below). Students employed as graduate assistants or graduate instructors during all semesters, except for summer semester, must be registered as full-time matriculated students. More than 3 credits of continuous registration may be required by a department.

Continuous registration may be met with courses, seminars, independent study, research credit, or 6990 or 7990 (Continuing Graduate Advisement). The continuous registration requirement goes into effect the semester a student matriculates in the School of Graduate Studies.

A graduate student who is not using University facilities or faculty time may meet the continuous registration requirement by paying the Continuous Registration Fee of \$100 per semester (not necessary for summer semester). This alternative requires completion of the Application for Leave of Absence or Continuous Registration form, which includes verification that the student is not using University facilities and/or faculty time. International students usually do not qualify to pay the Continuous Registration Fee because of immigration regulations.

The semester a student defends (or re-defends) a thesis, Plan B paper, or dissertation or takes final oral examinations, the student must be registered for at least 3 credits. Doctoral and master's Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C students will be given until the last day of the next semester (spring, summer, or fall, known as a "grace" semester) following the defense to finish degree requirements. If a student has not completed all degree requirements by the end of the grace semester, the student must pay a \$100 Late Completion Fee for each semester following the grace semester. If working with faculty involves more than routine submission of the thesis or dissertation to the assistant dean, registration for 3 or more credits is required. After one year, re-defense may be required. If all degree requirements are not complete within two years of a successful defense then the major professor must submit to the graduate dean a letter, signed by all members of the supervisory committee, justifying why the student should not be required to re-defend the thesis, Plan B paper, or dissertation.

USU 7777 is a new course that will allow international students to have a semester similar to the "grace semester" available to domestic students (certain stipulations apply—see department or School of Graduate Studies for complete course details; registration is done at the School of Graduate Studies). The purpose of the course is to maintain the "in-status" classification with ICE without paying tuition. Therefore, because the course is not associated with any credits, students who enroll are ineligible for graduate assistantships or subsidized health insurance. If international students need to use University facilities during the "grace semester" course, they can pay the fees associated with the 5-credit tuition amount at the Registrar's Office. If more time is required after the grace semester, then the student will need to enroll for 3 credit hours and pay the full tuition amount. After one year, re-defense may be required.

Because of SEVIS regulations, a student holding an F-1 or J-1 visa is not eligible to pay the \$100 fee to complete the degree, but must be registered as a full-time student through the semester of completion.

## **XI. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

Arrangements can be made for coursework to be taken at other accredited graduate schools in the United States and abroad. The student's thesis or dissertation committee is responsible for reviewing and approving or disapproving requests to include such coursework in the student's program of study.

## **XII. INTERNSHIP CREDIT**

Under limited circumstances students who pursue outside training and educational experiences through work in applied settings can receive graduate credit for such activity. Allocation of credit for internship programs and approval of that credit for inclusion in the student's program of study is the responsibility of the student's thesis or dissertation committee. A *maximum* of 6 credits of internship program activity can be counted toward degree requirements.

### XIII. GRADUATE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. The MS Degree in Sociology

##### 1. Program of Study Approval

Students should select and meet with their Supervisory Committee to review degree requirements and gain approval of the **Program of Study** form before the last day of their second semester in the graduate program.

##### 2. Curriculum

- a) The *minimum* credit requirement for MS degree is 30 credit hours, which can include 6-9 hours for the thesis (normally thesis credits will be approved). Ordinarily no more than 3 credit hours of independent readings (Soc 6900) will be granted towards the 30-credit minimum. If the undergraduate major was in a field other than Sociology, an evaluation of this work will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the GPEC at the time of admission. Any deficiencies must be made up before beginning graduate studies or during the first year of residency.
- b) Students are responsible for the recommended programs of study outlined below. Individual students can petition in writing for an exception to the specified curricular requirements. Such a petition should be directed to the supervisory committee, if one has been formed. Otherwise, it should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies. If a committee approves an exception to established curriculum requirements it must inform the Director of Graduate Studies of that recommendation in writing.

- (1) THEORY (3 credit hours)

**Soc 6010** (3) - Development of Sociological Theory

- (2) METHODS (6 credit hours)

**Soc 6100** (3) - Advanced Methods of Social Research

**Soc 6150** (3) - Social Statistics II

Prerequisite for Soc 6150 is completion of acceptable undergraduate statistical coursework and demonstrated ability to utilize a statistical data analysis package.

(3) ELECTIVES (minimum 12 credit hours)

- a. Electives will normally be taken in Sociology, but with approval by the Supervisory Committee may also include courses in other programs outside the Department. A minimum of 6 credits hours of substantive graduate seminars in Sociology must be taken as part of the MS degree. The Supervisory Committee will assist in selecting electives most appropriate to the student's interests and career objectives.
- b. Electives chosen within the Sociology Program must be 6000 level or higher. Ordinarily, no more than 3 credits of independent readings will be counted toward the MS degree. No more than six credits of 3000-5999 level classes from other programs may be applied toward an advanced degree; and approval of the Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Dean is required.
- c. Students need to keep in mind that nearly all sociology program graduate courses are taught on an alternate year schedule. Therefore, it is important to register for courses that need to be included in your program of study as they are offered, since in some cases they may not be offered again prior to the time when your degree program should be completed.

(4) THESIS (6-9 credit hours)

**Masters students must take a minimum of 6 (and no more than 9) credits of Thesis Research (Sociology 6970).** While these credits can be taken at any time, it is important for students to actively work on thesis preparation, research, analysis or writing during the time they take these credits. After the 30 credit degree requirements are met, MS students still enrolled in the program may take up to 10 additional credits of Sociology 6990 (Continuing Graduate Advisement) as they continue to work toward degree completion.

### **3. Prerequisites**

Students who enter the master's program without strong undergraduate training in social theory, methods, or disciplinary sociology may be required as a condition of admission to demonstrate familiarity with the following subjects. Familiarity may be demonstrated by taking additional coursework prior to enrolling in the sociology graduate program, or by taking prerequisite courses/equivalents during their first semester (with the consent of the Director of Graduate Studies). Courses taken to meet master's program prerequisites will not count toward graduate program degree requirements.

#### **a) THEORY**

One course in contemporary sociological theory, equivalent to Soc 4010. Students entering without this background will be expected to gain proficiency in sociological theory; this may involve taking Soc 4010 without graduate credit.

#### **b) METHODS AND STATISTICS**

One course each in research methods and social statistics. Students entering without this background will be required to gain proficiency in methods and/or statistics; this may involve taking Soc 3110 and/or Soc 3120 without graduate credit.

#### **c) SUBSTANTIVE SOCIOLOGY**

One or two courses in substantive areas of the discipline of sociology, ideally exposing students to work in both macro- and micro-level sociological content. Students entering without an appropriate coursework background will be required to gain proficiency in these or similar areas; this may involve completion of an undergraduate course in each of the above areas without graduate credit.

### **4. Thesis**

- a) Students must complete and satisfactorily defend a thesis for which 6 to 9 credits may be given. The thesis must be a contribution to the field of knowledge. It can be based either upon the student's own research or on a treatment and presentation of known subject matter from a new point of view.
- b) Students will present their thesis proposal at a meeting of their Supervisory Committee. Copies of the proposal should be given to Supervisory Committee members no later than two weeks prior to the date of the proposal hearing.
- c) The chairperson of the Supervisory Committee will chair the proposal hearing. At the conclusion of the proposal presentation the Supervisory Committee will evaluate the proposal and indicate approval or disapproval by majority vote.
- d) The completed thesis will be presented at a formal thesis defense seminar when the thesis has been reviewed by the Supervisory Committee and determined to be sufficiently

complete to merit a defense hearing. The thesis presentation is open to the public and should be publicly announced within the Department at least one week prior to its occurrence. The supervisory committee will be responsible for determining whether persons other than the student and committee members are permitted to remain during the remainder of the examination process. An oral examination will be conducted by the candidate's Supervisory Committee after the completion of the thesis presentation. This examination will be largely focused on the thesis, but may include questions concerning the general field of sociology. Copies of the thesis should be given to members of the Supervisory Committee no later than two weeks prior to the date when forms for scheduling the defense are to be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies. Forms required for scheduling of the defense must be signed by all committee members and turned in to the School of Graduate Studies no later than ten working days prior to the desired defense date.

- e) At the conclusion of the examination the Supervisory Committee will vote. Majority vote will prevail. If approved with minor revisions, any recommended revisions will be accomplished under the direction of the chairperson of the Supervisory Committee.
- f) The results of the examination are recorded on the form Record of Examination Completion with any additions or changes required on the thesis noted. This form is submitted by a member of the Supervisory Committee to the School of Graduate Studies office immediately after the defense.

## **B. Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**

### **1. Program of Study Approval**

Doctoral students should select an advisor and meet with their Supervisory Committee before the start of their third semester to determine the specific courses that will be taken in preparation for the student's comprehensive examinations and to meet sociology program and university degree requirements. A completed Program of Study must be approved by the student's Supervisory Committee and filed with the School of Graduate Studies prior to the beginning of the third semester.

### **2. Curriculum – General Policies**

Students take general coursework in sociological theory and methods, and in major and minor specialty areas. Established doctoral specialty areas in sociology include Demography, Environment & Community, and Social Inequality. However, the program is sufficiently flexible to permit students with a strong interest in an area other than the

above to elect that area as their minor specialty area with approval of the Supervisory Committee and the Department Head or his or her delegated representative (normally the Director of Graduate Studies). In this case the student would select a series of courses in that area in consultation with their supervisory committee. In those cases where a course overlaps a student's two specialty areas, students are permitted to count the course toward the minimum credit requirements of only one of their two specialty areas.

### **3. Doctoral Degree Requirements – For Students Entering with a Master’s Degree**

- a) The minimum credits beyond the Master's degree for the doctoral degree are:
  1. **51 credits** if a student receives their master’s degree from a different graduate program.
  2. **48 credits** if the student receives their MS in Sociology from our graduate program.
- b) If the Master's degree was earned in a field other than Sociology, an evaluation of prerequisite requirements will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the GPEC at the time of admission. Any deficiencies must be made up during the first year of residency.
- c) Students who complete a MS degree in Sociology at USU and who are admitted into the Sociology PhD degree program will be able to petition their supervisory committee to reduce up to 9 credits of graduate substantive coursework that normally would be required of PhD students to meet the requirements of their degree (although a total of 48 post-MS credits are still required to receive the doctoral degree, which may allow taking electives or additional dissertation credits). However, as per USU policy, specific classes cannot be counted toward both the Masters and PhD degrees to meet minimum degree or credit requirements. Petitions to waive up to 9 credits of required PhD coursework for continuing MS students are designed to facilitate the efficient completion of the PhD degree and to recognize that continuing MS/PhD students have often had exposure to PhD coursework prior to finishing their MS degrees. Petitions should be granted as long as the supervisory committee is satisfied that the student has been exposed to sufficient theory, methods, and substantive literature in their areas of specialization.
- d) Students are responsible for the recommended programs of study outlined below. Individual students can petition in writing for an exception to the specified curricular requirements. Such a petition should be directed to the supervisory committee, if one has been formed. Otherwise, it should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies.
- e) Students need to keep in mind that nearly all graduate courses in sociology are taught on an alternate year schedule. Therefore, it is important to register for courses that need to

be included in your program of study as they are offered, since in some cases they may not be offered again prior to the time when your degree program should be completed.

## Curriculum – Specific Requirements

a) THEORY (6 credit hours)<sup>a</sup>

**Soc 6760** (3) – Theory and Research in Inequality

**Three additional coursework credits** involving a designated “theory intensive” graduate-level sociology course, to be selected from the following list:

SOC 6270 (3) – Global Migration

SOC 6310 (3) – Sociology of Work & Occupations

SOC 6460 (3) – Sociology of Health and Medicine

SOC 6620 (3) – Environment, Technology and Social Change

SOC 7720 (3) – Community Theory and Research

b) METHODS (9 credit hours)

**Soc 7100** (3) – Advanced Survey Techniques

**Soc 7110** (3) – Advanced Quantitative Analysis

**Soc 7150** (3) – Advanced Qualitative Methods in Sociology

c) ELECTIVES (minimum 21 credit hours)

In addition to the theory and methods courses listed above, doctoral students are required to take substantive graduate courses to prepare for their comprehensive examinations and dissertation research. As discussed below, doctoral students will take courses and successfully complete a written comprehensive examination in one MAJOR specialization area. They will also be required to take graduate courses in a second approved MINOR specialization area. Doctoral students should develop a list of electives in consultation with their advisor and supervisory committee to prepare for both Major and Minor specializations. All courses used to meet requirements for the doctoral degree must appear on an approved program of study. Minimum elective course requirements for the doctoral degree are:

1) MAJOR SPECIALIZATION AREA (minimum 12 credit hours)

At least 12 credits of substantive seminars are required prior to a student taking a comprehensive examination in their major area. At least 9 of these credits must be in substantive seminar courses taken in the Sociology graduate program (and

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<sup>a</sup> SOC 6750 (Theory and Research in Social Change), taught for the last time during the 2016-17 academic year, can also be used to fulfill this requirement by students enrolled in the program at that time.

ordinarily no more than 3 of these may be from independent readings courses).

2) MINOR SPECIALIZATION AREA (minimum 9 credit hours)

Doctoral students are required to take at least 9 credits of substantive seminars to meet the coursework requirements for their minor specialization major area. At least 6 of these credits must be in substantive seminar courses taken in the Sociology graduate program (and ordinarily no more than 3 of these may be from independent readings courses).

d) DISSERTATION CREDITS (12-21<sup>b</sup> credit hours)

**Doctoral students must take a minimum of 12 and no more than 21<sup>b</sup> credits of Dissertation Research (Sociology 7970).** While these credits can be taken at any time, it is important for students to actively work on dissertation preparation, research, analysis or writing during the time they take these credits. After the 51 (or 48) credit degree requirements are met, doctoral students still enrolled in the program may take up to 10 additional credits of Sociology 7990 (Continuing Graduate Advisement).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Once doctoral students have completed all theory, methods, and substantive courses required for their program of study, they are encouraged to register for no more than 3 to 6 credits of dissertation research (7970) credits per semester until they reach the 48 (or 51) total post-MS credits required for the PhD degree. After this point, they should register for only 3 credits per semester of 7990 until they defend their dissertation. Note that all graduate students must be registered for 3 credits during the semester in which they defend to satisfy “full time” enrollment requirements and maintain eligibility for funding. Otherwise, students may be registered for only 1 credit in the semester when the dissertation defense takes place..

#### 4. Doctoral Degree Requirements – For Students Entering with a Bachelor’s Degree

A **minimum of 69 credits** beyond the Bachelor’s degree are required for the doctoral degree for students who enter the program without first completing a master’s degree. Students are responsible for the recommended programs of study outlined below. Individual students can petition in writing for an exception to the specified curricular requirements. Such a petition should be directed to the supervisory committee, if one has been formed. Otherwise, it should be directed to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students need to keep in mind that nearly all graduate courses in sociology are taught on an alternate year schedule. Therefore, it is important to register for courses that need to be included

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<sup>b</sup> Normally, doctoral students will take no more than 12 credits of SOC 7970. However, in the special case of a USU Sociology MS student who moves into the PhD program, it may be possible to take as much as 21 credits of dissertation research credits assuming that up to 9 credits of seminar coursework taken at the MS level can be used to satisfy the requirements of the Major or Minor specializations.

in your program of study as they are offered, since in some cases they may not be offered again prior to the time when your degree program should be completed.

### Curriculum – Specific Requirements

a) THEORY (9 credit hours)<sup>c</sup>

**Soc 6010** (3) – Development of Social Theory

**Soc 6760** (3) – Theory and Research in Inequality

**Three additional coursework credits** involving a designated “theory intensive” graduate-level sociology course, to be selected from the following list:

SOC 6270 (3) – Global Migration

SOC 6310 (3) – Sociology of Work and Occupations

SOC 6460 (3) – Sociology of Health and Medicine

SOC 6620 (3) – Environment, Technology and Social Change

SOC 6800 (3) – Population and Health

SOC 7720 (3) – Community Theory and Research

b) METHODS (15 credit hours)

**Soc 6100** (3) – Advanced Methods of Social Research

**Soc 6150** (3) – Social Statistics II

**Soc 7100** (3) – Advanced Survey Techniques

**Soc 7110** (3) – Advanced Quantitative Analysis

**Soc 7150** (3) – Advanced Qualitative Methods in Sociology

c) SECOND YEAR PROJECT (**SOC 7910**, 3 credits; Pass/fail grading)

With the guidance of the five-member supervisory committee, prior to the end of the fourth semester of study the student will prepare and submit for evaluation ONE of the following types of research products. *Successful completion of this project requirement is a condition for continuation into the third year of PhD study.*

(1). Preparation of an **in-depth research proposal for an empirical study**, suitable for submission to a potential external (non-USU) funding source. The proposal will include an Introduction, Review of Literature, Statement of Research Questions/Project Objectives, Detailed Presentation of Research Procedures, Project Timeline, and Proposed Project Budget. The proposal must be completed and submitted for review and evaluation by the student’s supervisory committee prior to the end of the fourth semester

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<sup>c</sup> SOC 6750 (Theory and Research in Social Change), taught for the last time during the 2016-17 academic year, can also be used to fulfill this requirement by students enrolled in the program at that time.

(normally spring semester in the second year of study). Successful completion will be indicated by assignment of a grade of “Pass”, as reported to the Director of Graduate Studies by the major professor.

(2). Preparation of a **publication-quality research paper**, on a topic approved by the student’s Supervisory committee. This paper may under some circumstances be a work on which the student is a co-author, but only if the committee determines that the student has made a substantial intellectual contribution to conceptualization, analysis, and interpretation of findings. The paper must be completed and submitted for review and assignment of a grade by the supervisory committee prior to the end of the fourth semester (normally spring semester in the second year of study), and must also be submitted for presentation at a professional conference or submitted for publication consideration by a peer-reviewed journal prior to the start of the third year of PhD study. Successful completion will be indicated by a grade of “Pass”, as reported to the Director of Graduate Studies by the major professor.

**The supervisory committee will evaluate the second-year project and, by also considering overall academic performance and progress, make an overall recommendation regarding the student’s qualification for advancement into the third year of doctoral study and continuation in the PhD program.** That recommendation must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks following the end of the student’s fourth semester of study. In the event that a student does not receive a positive committee recommendation for continuation in the PhD program, he or she may choose to request approval to continue in the Sociology graduate program and complete any remaining requirements (including a Plan A thesis) necessary to earn the Master of Science degree. Decisions regarding the approval of such requests will be determined by vote of the Sociology Graduate Executive Committee.

d) ELECTIVES (minimum 30 credit hours)

In addition to the theory and methods courses listed above, doctoral students are required to take substantive graduate courses to prepare for their comprehensive examinations and dissertation research. As discussed below, doctoral students will take courses and successfully complete a written comprehensive examination in one MAJOR area of specialization. They will also be required to take graduate courses in a second approved MINOR specialization area. Doctoral students should develop a list of electives in consultation with their advisor and supervisory committee to prepare for both Major and Minor specializations. All courses used to meet requirements for the doctoral degree must appear on an approved program of study. Minimum elective course requirements for the doctoral degree are:

1) MAJOR SPECIALIZATION AREA (minimum 12 credits)

At least 12 credits of substantive seminars are required prior to a student taking a

comprehensive examination in their major area. At least 9 of these credits must be in substantive seminar courses taken in the Sociology graduate program (and ordinarily no more than 3 of these may be from independent readings courses).

2) MINOR SPECIALIZATION AREA (minimum 9 credits)

Doctoral students are required to take at least 9 credits of substantive seminars to meet the coursework requirements for their minor specialization major area. At least 6 of these credits must be in substantive seminar courses taken in the Sociology graduate program (and ordinarily no more than 3 of these may be from independent readings courses).

e) DISSERTATION CREDITS (12-21<sup>d</sup> credit hours)

**Doctoral students who enter the program with a bachelor's degree background must take a minimum of 12 and no more than 21 credits of Dissertation Research (Sociology 7970).** While these credits can be taken at any time, it is important for students to actively work on dissertation preparation, research, analysis or writing during the time they take these credits. After the 69 credit-hour degree requirements are met, doctoral students still enrolled in the program may take up to 10 additional credits of Sociology 7990 (Continuing Graduate Advisement).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Once doctoral students who enter the program without previously completing a Master's degree have completed all theory, methods, and substantive courses required for their program of study, they are encouraged to register for no more than 3-6 credits of dissertation research (SOC 7970) per semester until they have passed comprehensive examinations. After this point they should register for only 3-6 credits per semester of SOC 7970 until they have reached the 69 post-bachelor's degree credits required for the PhD degree. If continued enrollment needs to occur after this point, they should register for only 3 credits per semester of SOC 7990 until they defend their dissertation. Note that all graduate students must be registered for 3 credits during the semester in which they defend to satisfy "full time" enrollment requirements and maintain eligibility for funding. Otherwise, students may be registered for only 1 credit in the semester when the dissertation defense takes place.

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<sup>d</sup> Normally, doctoral students will take no more than 12 credits of SOC 7970.

## 5. DESIGNATED SPECIALIZATION AREA COURSES

As mentioned above, the doctoral program in Sociology has three main specialty areas: Demography, Environment & Community, and Social Inequality.

Faculty members affiliated with each specialty area have identified a set of graduate courses in Sociology that are regularly offered and which can be assumed to meet the minimum course credit requirements associated with major and minor specializations. In addition, the program maintains a list of selected courses in allied departments that have been frequently used by Sociology graduate students to complement their Sociology training. Doctoral students should use the following course lists as a guide when selecting courses to place on their program of study. Ultimately, the advice and consent of each student's Supervisory Committee is required to determine the exact courses that can be used to meet doctoral degree requirements.

### I. Demography

- Soc 6120 – Population and Health
- Soc 6200 – Social Demography
- Soc 6230 – Techniques of Demographic Analysis
- Soc 6270 – Global Migration
- Soc 6460 – Sociology of Health and Medicine

### II. Environmental and Community

- Soc 6620 – Environment, Technology and Social Change
- Soc 6630 – Natural Resources and Social Development
- Soc 5640 – Managing Community Conflict
- Soc 6800 – Topical Seminar in Environment & Community
- Soc 7620 – Sociology of Environmental Hazards and Risks
- Soc 7660 – Public Sociology: Ecological & Community Justice
- Soc 7720 – Community Theory and Research

### III. Social Inequality<sup>e</sup>

- Soc 6760 – Theory and Research in Inequality
- Soc 6310 – Sociology of Work and Labor Markets
- Soc 6350 – Political Sociology
- Soc 6800 – Topical Seminar in States and Markets
- Soc 6630 – Natural Resources & Social Development
- Soc 6760 – Social Policy and Inequality
- Soc 7660 – Public Sociology: Ecological & Community Justice

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<sup>e</sup> SOC 6750 (Theory and Research in Social Change), taught for the last time during the 2016-17 academic year, can also be applied toward the credit hour requirement for this specialization area by students enrolled in the program at that time.

## **6. Qualifying Review**

- a) All doctoral students in Sociology must complete the core PhD theory and methods courses outlined above with a combined grade point average of no less than 3.50.
- b) Each supervisory committee will be required to confirm that their doctoral student has met this minimum GPA requirement before scheduling a student for their major specialization area comprehensive examination (see section below).
- c) If a student does not attain a 3.50 GPA in these core theory and methods courses, the student will normally not be allowed to continue in the doctoral program. Students have the right to appeal the termination decision to the full Graduate Program Executive Committee.

## **7. Major Specialization Area Comprehensive Examination**

- a) An important part of graduate study is development as an independent scholar who is familiar with the breadth of the chosen discipline, able to synthesize and communicate knowledge in specialized areas, and develop and execute their own research inquiries. Recipients of the PhD degree should also demonstrate a professional competency in advanced sociological theory and research methods. As a result, before being admitted to candidacy, doctoral students must pass a written comprehensive examination in their major area of specialization.
- b) Comprehensive examinations are tests of a student's command of both general and specialized areas of knowledge. While comprehensive examinations may be based in part on material covered in coursework, they also reflect the need for students to supplement course work with considerable personal study. The exams are designed to assess a candidate's mastery of a substantially broader range of theoretical and research literature in their chosen areas of emphasis than can be covered in just a few courses. Therefore, students who expect to do well on the exams will find it necessary to devote significant effort to in-depth study and independent preparation in the months prior to taking these exams.
- c) The written comprehensive exam will be developed, administered, and evaluated by all sociology faculty on the candidate's supervisory committee. Non-sociology members of the committee may participate if appropriate. The Supervisory Committee may solicit input and recommendations from other faculty when such input is necessary and appropriate. In this event, participating non-committee faculty members will not have an official vote on the outcome of an examination but will serve in an advisory capacity.
- d) The Supervisory committee will incorporate questions addressing elements of general sociological theory and research methods into the specialty area written examination.

- e) Timing of examinations will be determined in the normal course of student advisement by the supervisory committee subject to the following conditions:
1. Comprehensive examinations will be offered only during three specified time periods during each academic year:
    - First week of the Fall semester
    - First week of the Spring semester
    - The 12<sup>th</sup> week of the Spring semester (not counting spring break week)
  2. The student should normally have completed all theory and methods coursework requirements as well as all other coursework in the specific specialty area approved by his or her Supervisory Committee in their Program of Study prior to taking their comprehensive examinations.
  3. Students petition the Chairperson of their Supervisory Committee to schedule their comprehensive examination no later than the second week of May (for a fall exam), the 5<sup>th</sup> week of classes in the fall semester (for a spring exam), or the 5<sup>th</sup> week of classes in the spring semester (for a late spring semester exam). This will allow adequate time for student consultation with supervisory committee members regarding format and content expectations and for development of the examination.
  4. Students have the right to be informed in writing by the Chair of their Supervisory Committee shortly after receiving approval to schedule the exam regarding details of the examination process such as timing, length, format, grading, and notification time. Supervisory Committee members will have the responsibility to determine exam content and format details. The full Supervisory Committee will meet with students to review expectations regarding comprehensive exam content and format.
  5. Students are expected to take exams as scheduled. Unless there are extenuating circumstances involving medical problems or other documented emergencies, students who schedule an examination and then withdraw prior to taking it less than 4 weeks of the scheduled exam date will be required to take that examination in the next regularly scheduled examination period.
- f) The development of the comprehensive examination questions is a Supervisory Committee process. It is the responsibility of the chair to oversee this process. The format of the exam will be determined by the committee prior to the solicitation of exam questions by the committee chair. The chair should make every effort to solicit questions from each committee member well in advance (at least 2-3 weeks) of the time an exam period is scheduled. The committee members should respond to the call for questions from the chair in a timely fashion (within approximately one week).

- g) The chair will circulate a final exam draft for final approval no less than 2 days before the scheduled exam. Committee members should respond to the chair's request for final approval immediately. If there are disagreements concerning an exam question or format of the exam that cannot be resolved informally through discussion, the chair will convene the committee as soon as possible prior to the administration of the exam to discuss the concerns, propose solutions, and work for consensus. Majority vote for exam format and content will prevail in cases of disagreement when consensus cannot be reached. In the event of a tie, the chair can make the final determination for exam format and content.
- h) The administration and evaluation of examinations shall be the responsibility of the examination committee subject to the following conditions:
1. Each member of the Supervisory Committee shall read and evaluate the examination independently. The evaluation options for the written examinations will be:
    - Pass with distinction
    - Pass
    - Conditional Pass (see (h) (3) below)
    - Fail
  2. The chairperson of the Supervisory Committee will convene or poll the committee to vote on the grade for the examination(s) within two weeks of the examination date. Majority vote is required to award a passing grade. Supervisory Committee examination decisions are final.
  3. In the event of a conditional pass in the written examination the options may include an oral examination, remedial coursework, a written paper, review of special readings, some combination of the above, or other work as specified by the committee. With the exception of remedial coursework, this work must be completed and evaluated within 12 weeks of the date that it is assigned. The committee can require the student to retake the examination if his/her work is not completed within the required time frame.
  4. The chairperson of the committee will notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the outcome of the comprehensive examination(s) and any subsequent work associated with a conditional pass. The Director of Graduate Studies will, in turn, provide official notification of the results to the student, Department Head and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies. Debriefing of students is the responsibility of the examination committee.
  5. If a student wishes to clarify the reasons for a decision on their written comprehensive examination, they may request a meeting of the full Supervisory Committee.

6. Students will be permitted one retake of their major comprehensive examination. Retake examinations must be completed within one year of a failed exam.
7. If a student fails a retake exam, within 2 weeks the Director of Graduate Studies will make a recommendation to the Graduate Program Executive Committee regarding whether (a) the student failing the retake examination in any area should be dropped from the program, (b) the student will be allowed to continue, but must pass a comprehensive examination in a new area, or (c) another resolution or outcome. The GPEC will make a final decision. The Department Head or delegated representative will notify the student of the final decision regarding such recommendations.

## **8. Minor Specialization Area**

- a) In addition to passing a written comprehensive examination in their major area of specialization, doctoral students are required to declare a second minor area of specialization and to complete 9 credit hours of graduate coursework designed to provide in-depth training in this minor specialization area.
- b) Minor specialization areas may be selected from the list of official specializations offered by the program or a student can petition their supervisory committee to approve a custom minor specialization area.
- c) Courses used to support the minor specialization cannot be used to meet course requirements associated with the major specialization. A minimum of 6 credits of Sociology program graduate coursework must be completed to meet the minor specialization requirements.

## **9. Dissertation Proposal**

- a) Following successful completion of all course and comprehensive examination requirements, a doctoral student is required to develop and formally present his or her dissertation proposal to their Supervisory Committee for approval.
- b) This proposal presentation will be made at a Departmental colloquium convened by the chairperson of the candidate's Supervisory Committee, attended by all members of the Supervisory Committee, and open to the public. The colloquium will be chaired by the chairperson of the candidate's Supervisory Committee.
- c) The candidate is responsible for supplying members of the Supervisory Committee with copies of the dissertation proposal no later than one week prior to the date of the colloquium. An additional copy of the proposal should be placed on file with the Departmental Secretary for public perusal.

- d) At the conclusion of the colloquium, the Supervisory Committee will evaluate the proposal and indicate approval or disapproval. Majority vote will prevail.
- e) A copy of the approved dissertation proposal, signed by the Supervisory Committee, must be submitted to the Sociology Director of Graduate Studies.
- f) If their research involves human subjects, each doctoral student and their committee chair will submit the appropriate application for research approval to the USU Institutional Review Board along with a copy of the approved dissertation proposal.

## **10. Admission to Candidacy**

After successful completion of all required substantive coursework, the written comprehensive examination, certification of the minor specialization requirements, and approval of a dissertation proposal by their Supervisory Committee, doctoral students should complete the Application for Candidacy-Doctoral Degree form and submit it to the School of Graduate Studies. If approved by the SGS, candidates may list themselves as being 'ABD' on their curriculum vitae. At this point, doctoral students will not be required by the department to take additional coursework and are expected to devote their energies toward work on their dissertation project.

## **11. Dissertation Defense**

- a) Students must complete and satisfactorily defend a dissertation for which 12 to 21 credits in dissertation research courses (Soc 7970) may be given.
- b) Once a dissertation proposal is approved, doctoral students will conduct the appropriate research activities and write a dissertation that meets the appropriate professional and institutional standards for doctoral degrees in sociology.
- c) Students should submit a copy of the dissertation to all members of the Supervisory Committee two weeks prior to the date when the forms for scheduling the defense are to be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies; those forms must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies a minimum of 10 working days prior to the proposed defense date. The scheduling of the final dissertation defense should be publicly announced by the chairperson of the Supervisory Committee at least one week prior to the date of the defense.
- d) The Supervisory Committee will conduct the final examination and will be the only voting members. The examination will be chaired by the outside member of the Supervisory Committee (as designated by the School of Graduate Studies).
- e) The student's presentation of the dissertation findings will be open to the public. The

supervisory committee will be responsible for determining whether persons other than the student and committee members are permitted to remain during the remainder of the examination process. Guidelines for doctoral dissertation examinations include:

1. The examination will be primarily focused on the dissertation and that portion of the candidate's field of specialization in which the dissertation falls. However, other substantive, theoretical or methodological areas in the general field of Sociology may be covered.
2. At the conclusion of the examination the Supervisory Committee will vote. Majority vote will prevail. If a grade of pass is awarded, any recommended minor revisions will be completed under the direction of the chairperson of the Supervisory Committee.
3. The results of the examination are recorded on the Record of Examination Completion form, with any additions or changes required on the dissertation noted. This form is submitted to the USU School of Graduate Studies.
4. After all content revisions are completed and the cover page is signed by all members of the supervisory committee, doctoral candidates are required to submit to the Director of Graduate Studies or designated departmental thesis format reviewer for format review a final copy of their dissertation, formatted to comply with all USU School of Graduate requirements.
5. The candidate is responsible for meeting all other graduation requirements and deadlines established by the School of Graduate Studies.

#### **XIV. PETITIONING PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENT WAIVERS**

- A. Should a student be unable to meet any of the requirements established by the Supervisory Committee or by the USU Sociology Program Graduate Student Handbook, the student may petition the Supervisory Committee for an exception. This also pertains to those instances where the student requests approval of a program that deviates from the normal program requirements as outlined in this Handbook.
- B. If an exception is not granted, or if the student wishes to appeal a decision of the Supervisory Committee, the student may petition the Director of Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies will have the right to convene a Grievance Committee.
- C. The Graduate Program Executive Committee will function as the Grievance Committee. It is anticipated that members of the student's Supervisory Committee who also sit on the GPEC will excuse themselves from the Grievance Committee. If requested by the Grievance Committee, or by the student and/or the chair of the student's Supervisory Committee, the student or the Supervisory Committee representative may appear before the Grievance Committee.
- D. Procedures for the Grievance shall be designated by the Grievance Committee. Appeal of decisions by the Grievance Committee shall be heard by the Department Head. Appeal of decisions by the Department Head shall be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

#### **XV. GRANDPARENTING CLAUSE**

Students who were enrolled in the Sociology Graduate Program prior to the 2017-18 academic year, and whose Program of Study was approved prior to January 1, 2017, may choose to complete their program under either the old program guidelines (as set forth in the November, 2013 version of the Graduate Student Handbook, with periodic updates through July 2016) or the guidelines set forth in this handbook.

## **APPENDIX I: Summary of Deadlines for Graduate Admission and Awards**

### **A. Incoming Graduate Students**

- February 1 - All application materials must be on file with the School of Graduate Studies, in order to receive full consideration for admission and for potential assistantship and fellowship awards.
- March 30 - Initial commitments for assistantship or fellowship awards made by the Department. Accepted applicants not receiving commitment of financial support will be notified of their position on priority ranking of applicants.
- April 15 - Final date for notification of acceptance of financial aid made by the student to the department.

### **B. Currently Enrolled Graduate Students**

- April 1 - Department notifies currently enrolled graduate students of the opportunity to submit an annual progress report and request financial aid for the following academic year.
- April 15 - Final date for currently enrolled graduate students to submit the annual progress report and request financial aid.
- June 30 - Department notifies currently enrolled graduate students of commitments to provide financial aid or their position on a priority ranking of graduate students who have applied for funding, but have not received a commitment. (note: this date is approximate, and will depend on the timing of USU budget allocation announcements).