

Graduate Handbook



Department of Sociology
Mather Memorial Building
Case Western Reserve University

Graduate Regulations
Effective Fall Semester 2006

Graduate Requirements in Sociology

This document is effective for all students entering in the Fall of 2006 and thereafter. The regulations covered in this document relate specifically to the Department of Sociology. It is the **responsibility of the student** also to be **aware of all regulations, policies, and procedures** set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies at Case. These may be found in the General Bulletin of the University.

Please note that in many instances, the requirements of the department surpass the minimum degree requirements set forth by the Office of Graduate Studies.

Objectives

The graduate program in Sociology prepares Ph.D. students for careers as researchers and teachers in academic settings as well as public and private organizations. The Department emphasizes the *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course* and *Medical Sociology*.

Admission to the Graduate Program

All graduate students (except undergraduate students participating in the *Integrated Graduate Studies*, or *IGS*, program) are admitted to the Ph.D. program, and should expect to spend approximately 2 1/2 years (5 semesters) in coursework and at least two years completing their dissertation project. Ph.D. students may petition for an M.A. upon completion of those requirements (outlined later in this document). *IGS* students must all meet these same requirements for their M.A. degree.

Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

To receive the Ph.D., students must fulfill all program requirements pertaining to (1) coursework, (2) comprehensive examinations, and (3) the dissertation.

1. Completion of 63 hours of coursework, including 18 hours of SOCI 701 dissertation hours, as specified below.

These core requirements set forth the Department's view that the specialization in the *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course* and *Medical Sociology* must build upon competence in both sociological theory and research methods. In addition, elective courses from other substantive areas of sociology are included in the curriculum.

Sociological Theory (6 credits)

SOCI 400: Development of Sociological Theory (3)

SOCI 401: Contemporary Sociological Theory (3)

Research Methods (12 credits)

SOCI 406: Sociological Research Methods I (3)

SOCI 407: Sociological Research Methods II (3)

Plus TWO of the following or courses approved by the Graduate Committee:

SOCI 414: Qualitative Research Methods (3)

SOCI 473: Methods of Life-Course Research (3)

SOCI 509: Problems in Data Analysis (3)

Medical Sociology (9 credits)

SOCI 443: Medical Sociology (3)

Plus TWO electives in Medical Sociology (these may include the following or others approved by the department graduate committee):

SOCI 411: Health and Social Behavior

SOCI 419: Sociology of Institutional Care (3)

SOCI 413: Sociology of Stress and Coping (3)

SOCI 465: Health Care Delivery (3)

Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (9 credits)

SOCI 469: Aging in American Society (3)

Plus TWO electives in the Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (these may include the following or others approved by the department graduate committee):

SOCI 413: Sociology of Stress and Coping (3)

SOCI 419: Sociology of Institutional Care (3)

SOCI 461: Sociology of the Life Course (3)

SOCI 496: Aging and Public Policy (3)

Electives in other Areas of Sociology (9 credits)

THREE electives in Sociology, (these may include, among others):

SOCI 410: The Individual in Society (3)

SOCI 449: Social Inequality (3)

SOCI 460: Sociology of Law (3)

SOCI 461: The Life Course (3)

SOCI 470: Sociology of the Family (3)

SOCI 472: Work and Family: U.S. and Abroad (3)

SOCI 500: Advanced Social Theory (3)

Dissertation Hours (18 credits)

SOCI 701: Dissertation Ph.D.

Note: A limited number of elective courses may be taken outside of the Sociology Department with the prior approval of the department graduate committee. Generally, these courses must be taught by an individual holding the Ph.D. in Sociology or an individual with a secondary faculty appointment in the Department of Sociology. Petitions for these courses must include the description of the course from the General Bulletin, the name of the instructor and syllabus.

Concentrations

Students must concentrate in the following areas:

- 1) Sociology of Aging and Life Course
- 2) Medical Sociology

Concentrations for Sociology of Aging and Life Course and Medical Sociology consist of completing the required and elective courses as specified in Part One (1) of this document and the completion of a comprehensive exam in that area.

Other important notes related to coursework

Independent “Readings and Research” courses (601) are allowed as elective courses on a limited basis. Students must petition for these arrangements, and have the prior approval of both the faculty member and the department graduate committee.

All 601 and 701 courses must have a faculty sponsor. A meeting with the faculty sponsor must occur prior to the start of the term, and a schedule of readings, meetings, and course “products” should be developed at that time. A one-page description of the projects must also be submitted to the department graduate committee by the beginning of the semester. That description will be included in the student’s file. To receive a pass at the end of the term, the student must satisfactorily meet all requirements set forth in that plan.

Those students who enter the program with an M.A. degree in Sociology may petition to use up to 9 credits (3 courses) of previous Sociology coursework to satisfy Ph.D. degree requirements. This is possible because the total number of courses taken during Ph.D. study in Sociology will exceed the minimum number as set by the School of Graduate Studies. As such, it is not possible to receive an M.A. and Ph.D. in Sociology from Case if you have received approval to use 9 hours of prior work toward the M.A., unless additional course work is taken. The department will not provide tuition credit for such course work.

Course Incompletes

Taking a grade as an incomplete is a serious matter. It should only be done for reasons of serious health or personal problems. To receive an incomplete, students must provide the faculty member of record for that course with a written request. This is to be submitted along with the Office of Graduate Studies Arrangement to Resolve an Incomplete Form. This form requires that an explicated date of completion be noted and all requirements necessary for its resolution be met at that time. Incompletes that are not resolved by that date result in the grade of “F” on the students permanent record.

2. Two Comprehensive Examination.

Students will complete comprehensive exams in each of the areas of department specialization, *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course* and *Medical Sociology*.

These two comprehensive exams are “reading list” based, meaning that in addition to the required and relevant course work, the student is expected to have mastered the materials provided in the respective reading lists, which include, but are not limited to the syllabi for the required and recommended elective courses in that concentration. Students are also expected to have reviewed the recent literature in the field (past 2-3 years) as represented by the major journals in the respective areas. Students wishing to make rapid progress through the doctoral program may begin taking exams before all course work is completed, if the student has completed the required and elective course work in that specialization area.

These exams are offered only as 4-hour “in-department” exams and are administered as “closed book” exams. Typically, computers are provided for the examination period.

Occasionally, the exam committee may decide that an exam requires remediation in order to be recorded as a pass. In these instances, the student must complete the remediation prior to attempting another exam. Failure to remediate the exam in the time frame specified by the committee (typically prior to the next semester) will result in the exam being recorded as a failure.

In order to remain in good standing, students must begin taking these exams no later than the semester after the completion of course work (typically the second semester of the third year of the program), and must take (or re-take, in the case of a failed exam) at least one exam each semester until both exams are completed. A failed exam must be retaken before another exam is attempted.

The exams will be given by an Examination Committee of three faculty members with expertise in the area. The chair of the examination committee and at least one other faculty must be a core member of the department. The examinations will be offered no more than once a semester and twice a year. Exams are NOT given during the summer session.

Students should indicate their intent to take an examination by memo to the graduate advisor by the first Friday of the semester in which the examination will occur.

Students who twice fail to pass a comprehensive examination in a single concentration will be recommended to the graduate school for academic separation.

3. Original dissertation defended successfully. (A minimum of 18 credit hours must be successfully completed.)

The Dissertation Committee shall consist of at least four Case Western Reserve University faculty members, including one whose primary appointment is completely outside the Department of Sociology.

Each student shall select a chair of this committee. The student, together with the chair, shall then select the other three members. The chair of the committee and at least one other member must be tenure track members of the Department of Sociology.

The **dissertation committee** is approved by the dean of graduate studies on the recommendation of the chair of the Department of Sociology. However, students may initiate a request for a change in the composition of the committee by petitioning the graduate director anytime prior to applying to the Graduate School to schedule the dissertation defense.

The dissertation process begins with the completion of a **prospectus**. The prospectus for the dissertation should be discussed in a private meeting (or series of meetings) between the students and his or her committee members. The committee must have the complete prospectus at least **two weeks** in advance of what is viewed as a final private meeting. Once the committee deems the students ready for a **public hearing**, a date for the public hearing may be set. In order to ensure maximum opportunity for all students and faculty to attend the defense exam, they are normally not scheduled during the first or last weeks of the semester, nor during the final exam period. They are also **not typically scheduled during either the fall or the spring break periods**. Exceptions will be made only to accommodate faculty schedules.

Once the public prospectus date has been set, the student must distribute a 2-3 page **summary** of the prospectus to all faculty and graduate students **one week prior** to the defense. An **announcement** of the prospectus defense must also be **posted and circulated** to all faculty and students at **least one week** in advance of the hearing. **The posting of these notices is the student's responsibility.**

The **dissertation defense** needs to be scheduled with the prior approval of the department chair, graduate director and all committee members. This approval must be obtained prior to submitting forms to the graduate school (the Graduate School requires that all forms be turned in 3 weeks prior to the defense). All defenses must occur during the academic year as established by the university. In order to ensure maximum opportunity for all students and faculty to attend the defense exam, **they are normally not scheduled during the first or last weeks of the semester, during the final exam period or during fall or spring break**. Exceptions will be made only to accommodate faculty schedules.

The **defense of the complete dissertation** can be scheduled only after final approval by the dissertation committee of a **complete draft** of the dissertation. The "defense" draft of the **complete dissertation** must be available for review by the dissertation committee **at least one month** prior to the planned date of the defense.

Once the public defense date has been set, the student must distribute a 2-3 page **summary** of the dissertation to all faculty and graduate students **one week prior** to the defense. A complete copy of the dissertation must also be provided to the main office at that time. An **announcement** of the dissertation defense must also be **posted and circulated** to all faculty and students at **least one week** in advance of the hearing. **The posting of these notices is the student's responsibility.**

On the day of the final defense, **the student is responsible** for providing the committee members with the official signature forms from the Office of Graduate Studies. It is also the students responsibility that these forms are submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the designated deadline.

Prior to graduation, the student is **required to submit a professionally bound and labeled copy of the dissertation to the Department** to be housed in the Sociology Library. Failure to provide this copy will result in a hold on letters of reference and formal transcripts.

Members of the faculty are on 9-month contracts, and students should therefore be sensitive to this in making work-related requests that fall outside of the academic year. **Formal committee meetings, prospectus hearings, and final dissertation defenses will not be scheduled during the summer months.**

Other issues related to doctoral study:

It is the **student's responsibility to schedule** a meeting with one of the graduate advisors each semester. These meetings should be held late fall and late spring, when the schedule of classes has been released. In these meetings, coursework, examinations, the dissertation and other requirements necessary to finish the Ph.D. degree will be discussed.

At the beginning of the fall term, all first-year students must submit an official **planned program of study** form to the graduate advisor. The graduate advisor will assist the student with this form.

Students must file for **pre-candidacy** after the completion of all course work in order to be able to enroll in 701 hours.

A student is advanced to candidacy once she or he has completed all coursework and both comprehensive exams. (The prospectus defense is no longer a requirement for candidacy.) A **revised planned program of study** is submitted at the time of **advancement to candidacy** or application for the MA degree.

While the department is committed to funding students to the greatest degree possible, renewal of support will depend upon academic performance and progress. Annual reviews assess performance and progress and determine whether or not a student is in *good standing*. Reasons for being "not in good standing" include, but are not limited to, having one or more grades of "incomplete" that have extended for more than one semester, failure to attempt comprehensive exams as outlined earlier or failure to remediate comprehensive exam by the deadline. Under university guidelines, all incomplete grades must be converted by the following semester or they run the risk of becoming "fail." **Students who are not in good standing as of the end of the academic year, will NOT be considered for tuition or stipend support for the next academic year.**

Course work taken during the period a student is not in good standing will NOT count toward degree requirements. A student may return to *good standing* by satisfying the incompletes or taking/remediating the required examinations. However, funding for tuition or stipend may not be available until the following fall.

All students who receive NIA funding must pursue dissertation topics that are in line with the stated missions of that grant (Health Research and Aging).

We recognize the need for flexibility in requirements for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. A student may petition for a change in the application of one or another of the requirements by detailing the reasons for the requested change. The petitions should be directed to the department's graduate director who will consult with the departments Graduate Committee.

Ph.D. students enrolled Fall 2005 and earlier have the option of completing the degree requirements in effect when they entered the program or the current program. Students entering Fall 2006 will be required to meet the current requirements.

Requirements for the M.A. Degree

As noted under the Ph.D. requirements, students are normally not admitted for the M.A. degree. However, students may apply for the M.A. under the *Integrated Graduate Studies (IGS)* program, and Ph.D. students may wish to apply for the M.A. after completing the requirements listed below.

To receive the MA, students must fulfill the following program requirement pertaining to (1) coursework, and (2) a comprehensive examination.

Minimum of 27 hours of coursework, as specified below:

Sociological Theory and Research Methods (9 credits)

SOCI 400: Development of Sociological Theory (3)

SOCI 406: Sociological Research Methods I (3)

And either:

SOCI 401: Contemporary Sociological Theory (3)

~OR~

SOCI 407: Sociological Research Methods II (3)

Sociology of Aging and the Life Course (3 credits)

SOCI 469: Aging in American Society (3)

Medical Sociology (3 credits)

SOCI 443: Medical Sociology (3)

Electives in Sociology (12 credits)

Two of the elective courses must be in the areas of either *Sociology of Aging and the Life Course* or *Medical Sociology*, and the remaining two elective courses must NOT be in these areas. Information on which specific courses meet these criteria can be obtained from the graduate director or graduate advisor(s).

NOTE: For those not having taken a course in statistics and probability in their previous work, STAT 201 or PSCL 282 (or its equivalent) is required. However, these do not count toward the 27 hours needed for the M.A.

No more than 9 semester hours at the 300 course level may be included in the requirements for the M.A. degree.

One Comprehensive Exam in either Aging and the Life Course or Medical Sociology

Students pursuing the Ph.D. may apply for the M.A. degree after completing the course work listed above and after having passed a comprehensive exam in one of the concentrations listed above. This requirement also applies to *IGS* students.

Planned Program of Study

Course Number	Course Name	Hrs.
SOCI 400	Development of Sociological Theory	3
SOCI 401	Contemporary Sociological Theory	3
SOCI 406	Sociological Research Methods 1	3
SOCI 407	Sociological Research Methods 2	3
SOCI 469	Aging in American Society	3
SOCI 443	Medical Sociology	3
<i>Methods Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>Medical Sociology Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>Sociology of Aging and the Life Course Electives (6 hours)</i>		
<i>General Electives (9 hours)</i>		