Department of Sociology Graduate Program Handbook

Welcome

UNLV Sociology faculty and students combine innovative research with teaching and community service to address questions of social change, diversity, social justice, and sustainability in urban environments. UNLV Sociology enjoys an international research reputation in interpretive sociology, gender/sexuality, environment and urban sociology. Our award-winning research and teaching and our emphasis on public sociology and civic engagement provide students with skills necessary for personal intellectual growth, active citizenship, and professional success.

> *"UNLV has achieved the rare feat of combining research into local issues - gambling, the environment, and tourism to mention just three areas - with the*

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in the Sociology Department, visit the Graduate Faculty status web page.

Program Information

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology (Ph.D.)

- Post- Bachelor's Track
- Post- Master's Track

Sociology Department website

Department Chair

Dr. Michael Borer
CBC B-232 702-895-3322
Michael.Borer@unlv.edu

Graduate Coordinator

Dr. Elizabeth Lawrence
CBC B-204 702-895-5219
michael.borer@unlv.edu

Department Main Office

CBC B-227
702-895-3322 office
702-895-4800 fax
lauren.markey@unlv.edu

Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding admission, coursework and culminating experience are found in the Graduate Catalog.

Advisory Committee Guidelines

The student's Advisory Committee is responsible for guiding students through the graduate program, assisting the student with her/his professional paper, thesis, or dissertation, and administering comprehensive exams, and oral defenses. All departmental members of the committee should have expertise in the student's research area. The Advisory Committee consists of at least four graduate faculty members: three from the student's department and one professor who has appropriate graduate faculty status from another department to serve as the Graduate College representative. Further information regarding advisory committee members can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

At the time of admission into the graduate program the Graduate Coordinator will serve as a student's informal advisor. During the first year, students should choose a Faculty Advisor from the Sociology Department's Graduate Faculty. The Faculty Advisor assists students in shaping their intellectual project and course of study. In consultation with the Faculty Advisor, students then select two additional departmental members and one outside committee member to constitute the Advisory Committee. Students may use the Graduate Faculty status web page to find an outside committee member. These members should have expertise in the student's research area.

By the end of the second semester of enrollment, students should submit an *Appointment of Advisory Committee* form and a *Master/Doctoral Proposed Degree*

Degree Program Benchmarks

Thesis/Pro-Paper Defense

BA-PhD students must author and defend an original piece of research or theory that is then approved by committee members and submitted for peer-review to a reputable sociology journal. The paper need not be accepted for publicatio

and the areas of specialization that these satisfy.

Students are only eligible to take their first AOS exam after they have successfully completed all of their required coursework (except SOC 708) and two courses in the area of specialization in which they want to take the comprehensive exam. Students may enroll in the second course in the area of specialization during the same semester in which they will take the exam.

Students generally complete both AOS exams during the third year of graduate study. Students who do not complete both comprehensive exams by the end of their fourth year of study may be placed on probation. Students can take only one comprehensive exam per semester.

Students who fail an AOS comprehensive exam on their first attempt will be placed on probation via the Graduate College process and must retake the exam the following semester. Students failing an AOS comprehensive exam on the second attempt will be separated from the PhD program.

Students receiving funding from the Sociology Department who fail a comprehensive exam, or who are placed on probation, may lose funding. The Graduate Studies Committee use performance on comprehensive exams as *one* criterion when making funding decisions.

Probation

If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the Probation and Separation section of the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Process for Declaring Areas of Specialization, Preparing for, and Completing Exams

Students are expected to prepare for AOS exams by enrolling in and passing two courses or directed studies with faculty members who have expertise in the area of specialization. AOS exams are designed, administered, and evaluated by students' Advisory Committees, with at least one committee member, though preferably more, listed as an expert in the AOS.

In order to declare an AOS and set up an AOS comprehensive examination, students must complete the following sequence for EACH of their areas of specialization:

1. The students' Advisory Committee (see above for committee guidelines) functions as the evaluating body of for each AOS. Students should select appropriate faculty members who are experts in one or both of their Areas of Specialization to be on the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee must remain intact throughout the exam process. That is, students who fail an exam cannot switch the members of their committee for their second attempt at that exam, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances (i.e. serious injury, illness, or other such incapacitation of a faculty member presently serving on the Advisory Committee). In such cases, students must submit a petition to change committee members to the Graduate Studies Committee. Students who fail their AOS exam on the first attempt are permitted to change Advisory committee members after they successfully pass the AOS exam on the second attempt. This policy applies to the exam process for both Areas of Specialization.

   While students cannot declare an AOS until after they have completed all required coursework, they should start thinking about the AOS and the composition of their committee during their first and second years of study.
2. Obtain approval for the AOS by completing the *Area of Specialization Exam* form at least 30 days prior to the comprehensive exam date. Students must also obtain approval from the chairperson of their Advisory Committee and the Graduate Program Coordinator.
3. Prepare a plan of study that includes coursework and independent study in the AOS. With the help of the approved Advisory Committee, students must develop an extended reading list in the AOS. Each AOS will have a master list of core readings created by the faculty area

specialists (~50 readings). AOS reading lists consist of articles, book chapters, books, and other media. All lists will be organized into categories denoting required core texts and more specialized topics. Students are expected to add about 50 readings of special interest to them that will assist them in preparing their dissertation. The student's Advisory Committee Chair must approve added readings. As a guideline, well-developed reading lists generally include about 100 items. Students should begin working on and through their AOS reading list well before the semester in which they plan to take the AOS comp exam. Students must have their final reading list approved by their Advisory committee at least 30 days prior to the comprehensive exam date.

Complete the AOS Exam as described below:

(1) Written Examination.

Using only their reading list and previously prepared notes, students will complete an eight-hour in- class Written Exam (prepared by their Advisory Committee and Graduate College representative). Exams will be administered in a designated computer lab. Students may bring a binder of prepared notes and any necessary personal items. Students may NOT bring portable storage devices, books, or articles into the examination room. Students may not access their email while in the examination room. Students requiring accommodations should go through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students should start this process as early as possible.

There will be four total questions; two in theory and two in methods. Students will choose one theory and one methods question to answer. Exams will be administered once or twice per semester as designated by the Graduate Studies Committee. Exams are scheduled on a Friday around the 9th week of the Fall semester, and the 3rd and 11th weeks of the Spring semester (depending on holidays, events, or other scheduling considerations). Exams will begin at 8:00 am and end at 5:00 pm with a mandatory one hour break from 12:00 pm -1:00 pm. Students will submit their exam (in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format) to a designated Department official on a flash drive provided by the department.

The exam is designed to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of key issues and debates as well as the broad, conceptual history of the AOS. Students are expected to know the central arguments of the articles and books included on the core AOS reading list and their supplemental sections. The answer to each question on the exam should be about 10-15 typed pages, for a total of about 20-30 typed pages.

Committee chairs or students should submit comprehensive exams (including revisions) to iThenticate and generate a similarity report that will be taken into account when determining the outcome of the defense (or revisions). Committees will interpret the results with consideration to any time constraints and assuming good faith efforts on the part of students.

(2) Oral Defense.

The Advisory Committee will conduct an Oral Defense within approximately two weeks after the student has taken the Written Exam. The student's Graduate College representative should attend the Oral Defense. The Oral Defense affords students an opportunity to clarify specific questions the committee has about the Written Exam. While it will also involve questions about expanded and peripheral ideas, its main goal is to ensure that students can adequately address the committee's questions and concerns about the exam.

Prior to the Oral Defense, students should review their exam to identify areas for additional clarification and to anticipate questions the committee may ask during the Oral Defense. Students should prepare comments on their Written Exam to provide at the Oral Defense. Students' performance in the Oral Defense will be used as one of the criteria in determining the overall grade on the Comprehensive Exam. The Advisory Committee will not give students any comments about the Written Exam prior to the Oral Defense.

Evaluation

After students have completed the Oral Defense, the student's Advisory committee will recommend a grade. This grade will be one of the following: Pass with distinction, pass, conditional pass, major revision, and fail.

Sample Program Timeline Continuous Enrollment and Time Limits

Coursework	BA to PhD goals	MA to PhD goals
Year 1 Fall		
x SOC 701 Logic of Social inquiry, x SOC 702 Quantitative Methods x SOC 707 Proseminar I x Elective (AOS 1)	x Develop ideas for pro paper in consultation with various faculty members x Identify faculty advisor x Investigated any desired graduate certificate programs	x Develop ideas for dissertation in consultation with various faculty members x Identify faculty advisor x Investigated any desired graduate certificate programs
Year 1 Spring		

x

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the Graduate Catalog. The American Sociological Association Code of Ethics (http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm) outlines the principles and ethical standards that underlie the sociologist's professional responsibilities and conduct.

All graduate students are encouraged to be active participants in the University and Department culture.

For conflicts, problems, or concerns about any matter related to the graduate program or the Sociology Department, please contact the Graduate Coordinator immediately.

Annual Review Procedures

Each spring term, graduate students are required to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan form. This online form will be sent by the Graduate College to the student's Rebelmail account. The mandatory review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

Students will meet with their Faculty Advisor to review the information, discuss progress, make comments, and the signed form will be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and placed in the students file.

Students who have not made satisfactory progress during the academic year will be placed on academic probation. Failure to meet the terms of probation will result in separation from the Graduate College.

Professional Development

Taking advantage of professional development opportunities outside of regular coursework is a critical component of graduate education. Students should participate in as many sociological activities as possible to improve their knowledge and expand their network of friends and acquaintances within the profession. Professional development opportunities may include:

- Attending Sociology Department and University events. These include retreats, trainings, brown bag lunches, special seminars, special presentations by visiting scholars and job candidates, graduate student conferences and practice paper presentations.
- Joining regional and national sociological or specialty associations. These give access to many professional activities and help the development of a professional library because subscriptions to professional journals are included in many memberships as part of the dues.
- Conference attendance and presentations. Graduate students should attend and present papers at as many conferences as possible, both regional (for example, the Pacific Sociological Association, the Southwest Social Science Association) and national conferences (for example, the American Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, the Society for the Study of Social Problem). Conferences expose students to ideas that may not yet have appeared in print and allow students to interact with professionals with shared interests. These help improve research as well as increase job opportunities. Collaborating with faculty is another good way to get experience.
- Grants and Awards. More and more jobs require grant-writing experience. There are plenty of opportunities to fund graduate student research. Common sources of funding are internal0000912 0 612 792 reW*nBT/F1 9.96

colleagues and faculty. Students can also take advantage of less formal writing to develop ideas, such as writing for blogs and op eds.

- Professional and ommunity service.Sharing research and academic skills is critical to the profession, and our department values public sociology. Students should become active in departmental, university and professional organizations and committees, and find ways to share research with public audiences that are most important to the stud ŕ td ɒ

Graduate Assistants are strongly encouraged to participate in Sociology Department activities including Department retreats/trainings, brown bag lunches, special seminars, Department committees, special presentations by visiting scholars and job candidates, graduate student conferences and practice paper presentations.

Department Conference Travel Policy

Graduate Students who are presenting a paper at a professional conference and are listed in the conference program may apply for Department travel support, when funds are available. A *Department Travel Request* form must be completed and returned to the Sociologv.82 TmT/F1 9..57 636.82 T bQl1yitronative-2(th)7(e)-4( )]TJETQ

through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational