

SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE GUIDE
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SOCIOLOGY GRADUATE GUIDE

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

I. UNDERSTANDING THESE GUIDELINES

This guide describes the policies of the Sociology Department's graduate program. Part 1 provides a brief overview of the guidelines and the program. Part 2 discusses academic policies. Part 3 describes the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Graduate programs at Notre Dame are bound by rules determined by the Graduate School. These rules are described in the "Academic Regulations" section of the Graduate School Bulletin of Information, which can be found on their web site. To ensure that this guide is fully up to date, we refer the reader to Graduate Guide for those policies and regulations (see sections shaded in gray). The Graduate School gives each department a good deal of discretion in organizing and running its program. The policies in this guide describe policies specific to our department and program. If there is a conflict, the rules in the Graduate School Bulletin supersede the rules of the department. The Bulletin also contains important information that is not covered in this Guide. Students are responsible for knowing the requirements and expectations in the Bulletin.

Questions about the applicability of particular regulations to any individual case should be addressed to the student's adviser (see "Advisers and Dissertation Directors," below). In all cases, the Committee for Graduate Studies (see "Administration of the Program," below) furnishes authoritative interpretations of academic rules, often after direct consultation with administrators of the Graduate School.

Ordinarily, changes in the Department's graduate program are not imposed retroactively. Students who enter the program under a given set of regulations have the option of completing their work under them. However, students may also be allowed to elect, as a complete set, the provisions of any program updates that are put in place during their enrollment.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

The chief administrator of academic affairs in the Department of Sociology is the Chairperson. However, supervision of the graduate program is the specific responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies.

The Director is a faculty member who is appointed by the Chairperson and assisted by the members of the Graduate Studies Committee. This committee is composed of the Director of Graduate Studies (who serves as its Chair), four additional faculty members in sociology (who are chosen by the Department's Chairperson), and two student representatives (who are elected each fall by the group of graduate students in

residence). The student representatives participate in all deliberations of the Committee, except those relating to individual students in the program.

III. SPECIAL UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

Students in our program should become familiar with following Centers, Institutes, and facilities:

- * The Center for Research on Educational Opportunities (CREO), located on the tenth floor of Flanner Hall, focuses its research on basic and applied educational topics.
- * The Institute of Latino Studies aims to promote greater understanding of the U.S. Latino experience through research, teaching, and community outreach.
- * The Center for the Study of Social Movements and Social Change provides an interdisciplinary emphasis on the study of collective political challenges expressed via protest, collective violence, and other extra-institutional collective
- * The Center for the Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) located on the eighth floor of Flanner Hall, is dedicated to advancing social scientific understanding of religion in society through scholarly research, training, and publications.
- * The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies promotes research, teaching, and public education in the areas of war prevention, conflict resolution, human rights, and social justice.
- * The Kaneb Center for Excellence in Teaching provides information, training, awards, and other support for instruction and learning to graduate students and faculty members.
- * The Kellogg Institute for International Studies supports research in international studies, with a special (but not exclusive) emphasis on the nations of Latin America.
- * Facilities of the Office of Instructional Technology (OIT) are open to all graduate students. The staff of OIT regularly teaches short courses on techniques for the use of computers in social science research.

More information about these organizations is available on the Notre Dame and sociology departmental web sites.

PART 2: ACADEMIC POLICIES

I. ENROLLMENT

I.A. Continuous Enrollment

I.B. Leave of Absence

I.C. Withdrawal from the Program

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

II. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

II.A. Full-time and Part-time Status

Full-time students in the Sociology department fall into two categories. First, students who have not finished their required coursework (see Part 3, section 1.A) must register for AT LEAST nine credit hours per semester in the fall and spring to remain full-time. Students may register for up to twelve credits; overloads require permission from the DGS. When students near their required number of credits, the department and graduate school may allow students to remain full-time while taking fewer than nine credits. Second, students who have completed the credit hour requirements for a degree must register for a minimum of one credit hour per semester (not including summer) to remain full-time. This second category includes both resident and nonresident students.

A part-time student is any enrolled graduate student who does not fall within either of the preceding categories. The Department of Sociology will not accept part-time students unless special arrangements are formally approved the DGS and Graduate School.

II.B. Maximal Registration

II.C. Changes in Student Class Schedule

II.D. Course Numbers

II.E. Graduate Grades

II.F. Examinations

II.G. Academic Good Standing

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

II.H. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES REGARDING GOOD STANDING

An adequate G.P.A. is **only one factor** taken into consideration in determining a student's qualifications for an advanced degree. At the end of each year, the full faculty will meet to evaluate the progress of every student in the program. As part of the process, the DGS will gather information from a variety of sources regarding each student's progress in the program. Information collected typically includes: grades earned in formal courses, performance on area examinations, progress on the thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, work on research projects and publications, teaching experiences, and assessments conveyed in comments (both written and oral) from members of the faculty with whom the student has had contact.

The faculty will identify both exemplary and problematic cases that require further discussion and evaluation. For each student, the faculty may pursue one of the following five options: (1) commend the student for his/her outstanding performance; (2) indicate that the student is doing satisfactory work; (3) issue a formal warning that better performance is expected, along with a description of potential future consequences and suggestions for improvement; (4) withdrawal of funding for the coming academic year (see "Financial Support" below); or (5) terminate the student from the program.

A student must be in academic good standing to be eligible for new or continued financial support. Students who have lost funding may receive funding again in the future if they, in the judgment of the faculty, have performed satisfactorily in the program.

Students making satisfactory progress should have completed the following steps in the time frames noted:

- a. completed the Master's degree by May of the second year,
- b. finished all required coursework by May of the third year,
- c. passed one area exam by May of the third year,
- d. passed both area exams by December of the fourth year,
- e. passed the oral candidacy exam by May of the fourth year.
- f. finished all requirements for the PhD by May of the sixth year.

A student who does not complete all requirements for the Ph.D. by the eighth year of study will be terminated from the program. Students may apply for a single two-year extension of degree eligibility in their eighth year, if they anticipate that they will not earn their Ph.D. by the end of that academic year. This request must be approved first by the student's advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, and finally by the Graduate School.

III. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Full-time, degree-seeking graduate students in good academic standing may be eligible for financial support supplied by the University. Financial support allotted by the Graduate School for distribution by the department includes: academic year tuition

scholarships, graduate assistantships, departmental fellowships, and research fellowships for the summer session. A tuition scholarship entitles the recipient to the remission of tuition charges for a fixed number of credit hours in a given semester. An assistantship carries a cash stipend that is paid to the student in return for his or her service (not to exceed 17.5 hours per week) in the research of faculty members or in the instructional activities of the Department. Some fellowships do not obligate their bearers to perform work as assistants. (Please consult the Director of Graduate Studies for details.) In these cases, it is strongly recommended that students voluntarily become involved with a faculty member's on-going research. In all cases, students are encouraged to develop a close working relationship with faculty members in the Department, because these relationships are vital for students' acquisition of research and teaching skills.

Work assignments for students with graduate assistantships are determined before the start of each academic year by the Director of Graduate Studies. While every effort is made to match students to tasks in their own areas of interest, an exact correspondence cannot be guaranteed. Although some shifts in assignments may be permitted during the course of the year, it is customary for students to hold the same job for two semesters at a time. Assistants and fellows who receive a full stipend cannot be employed elsewhere on campus without approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

Most of the awards are renewable annually, but renewal is contingent upon the diligent performance of work obligations and/or acceptable academic progress. Priority for all forms of aid is given to full-time students who are enrolled in the first through the fourth years of study. A limited number of dissertation year fellowships are available each year on a competitive basis to support students in their fifth or sixth year of residency. All students are strongly encouraged to apply for grants and fellowships from funding sources outside of the University in order to secure financial support after the fourth year of study.

To be eligible for any form of financial support from the Graduate School for the fifth academic year in the program, a student must pass his or her oral candidacy exam no later than August 15th after the fourth academic year. A graduate student ordinarily cannot receive more than six years of financial support from the Graduate School or from funds allotted by the Graduate School to departments.

Summer research stipends may be available from the Department, and also from other sources on campus or elsewhere. Graduate students are encouraged to apply for such opportunities, in accordance with published eligibility requirements. To be eligible for summer funding from the Graduate School after the fourth academic year in the program, a student must have passed his or her oral candidacy examination by May first of their 4th year.

IV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE BULLETIN)

All students in our department are expected to be cognizant of the detailed regulations and procedures for maintaining academic integrity that are specified in the Graduate School's Bulletin.

V. POLICIES ON HARASSMENT AND OTHER ASPECTS OF STUDENT LIFE

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BULLETIN)

VI. GRIEVANCE AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

If a student has a grievance with respect to academic issues (e.g., departmental decisions that terminate or impede progress toward the degree) the student should first notify the Director of Graduate Studies of the circumstances. If the matter cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the Director of Graduate Studies will inform the Chair of the Department, who will impanel an ad hoc Grievance Committee of faculty to adjudicate the case.

(PLEASE SEE THE GRADUATE BULLETIN FOR MORE INFORMATION)

PART 3: DEGREE PROGRAMS

The Department of Sociology offers training leading to the conferral of two graduate degrees: the Master of Arts (M.A.) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Students seeking a terminal M.A. degree are not typically allowed to enter the program. Preference in admission is given to applicants whose goal is the doctorate.

Our goal is to train students in sociological theory and methods and foster a competence as professionals in specific subfields within sociology. We hope that our students will have a strong foundation in the core areas of sociology, as well as specialized knowledge and skill in their specific subfield.

I. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

I.A. Course Work Requirement Credit Hours

A total of 54 credit hours in specified courses are required for completion of the Ph.D. Students should earn these credit hours by the end of their third year in the graduate program. When students have earned the 54 credit hours (as stipulated below), they

must enroll for one credit hour of Dissertation Research (or a 1-credit training seminar) each subsequent semester to retain their full-time status.

The Curriculum: Required Courses

The following courses are required of all students who enter with our program. Students with prior graduate level coursework may only bypass these requirements by transfer credits or requesting a waiver (see below).

- A. One semester of classical sociological theory, for three credit hours.
- B. One-semester of sociological research methods, for three credit hours.
- C. One semester of advanced social statistics (SOC 63993, “Stats II”) for three credit hours. “Stats I” (SOC 63992, or equivalent coursework) is a pre-requisite for Stats II, but it is optional.
- D. A Proseminar, for a total of two credit hours. This seminar provides a general introduction to faculty and facilities at the University and develops professional skills.
- E. One credit of the Master’s Research Practicum, taken in the spring semester of the first year, is **required**. This course will provide students with important skills needed to undertake their MA project. These include: finding a topic; doing a literature review; finding a research question; designing a study; etc. Students may take a two credit continuation of the Master’s Research Practicum in the fall of their second year. This class is **optional**, and it will be offered in a “workshop” format, where students will pose problems related to their own research projects, present their research to faculty and other students, and get feedback on their projects.
- F. One advanced seminar in sociological theory, for three credit hours.
- G. One advanced seminar in sociological methods or social statistics, for three credit hours.
- H. Six graduate level sociology seminars in a variety of substantive areas of the discipline, for a total of eighteen credit hours.

Each semester, the DGS will consult with the area exam committees and decide which courses being offered will meet requirements F and G (advanced theory and advanced methods and statistics).

The above courses constitute 36 of the required 54 credit hours for completion of the doctoral program. Students can earn the remaining 18 credits required for their degree by enrolling in any combination of the following course offerings:

- * Master's thesis research credits (a maximum of 6 credits can be applied toward the required total of 54)
- * Statistics I (SOC 63993)
- * Master's Research Practicum II (Optional Two Credits)
- * Dissertation research credits (a maximum of 12 credits can be applied toward the required total of 54)
- * Graduate seminars offered by the Sociology Department above and beyond the required courses
- * 1-credit training seminars offered by the Sociology Department
- * Graduate courses offered by other Notre Dame departments
- * Advanced undergraduate Sociology courses at the 40000 level (not to exceed 10 credit hours)
- * Directed Readings (not to exceed three credit hours per semester and six credit hours total)

Directed Readings should be confined to reading and research on highly specialized topics that are immediately relevant to the student's interests but are not covered by the departments regular course offerings. These courses are **not** to be employed as substitutes for readily accessible forms of classroom training. To schedule a Directed Readings course, the student should obtain the permission of the cooperating faculty member and complete the appropriate form, copies of which are available in the departmental office. On this form, the student must explain the reasons for this unusual arrangement as well as list the materials to be explored. Forms signed by the cooperating faculty member are to be returned to the departmental office, where they are retained in the student's personal file.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- i. *First Year Progress Report on the MA Thesis:* Students are required to submit a brief progress report on their M.A. thesis at the end of their first year in the program. (A template for the report is available on the departmental web page.) The report requires students to describe their progress on the project for the year. Students are asked to meet with their advisor to discuss the progress report, and the advisor will be asked to briefly report back to the DGS on the students' progress.
- ii. *M.A. Proposal Hearing:* In the fall of their second year in the program, students should hold an "M.A. Proposal Hearing" with their advisor and committee members. The student will write a brief proposal (10-15 double-spaced pages)

that: describes prior research on the topic; states the research questions; describes the data to be collected and/or analyzed; discusses methodological techniques for analyses; presents preliminary results (optional); and discusses potential implications of the research project. The “M.A. Proposal Hearing” will give the committee an opportunity to meet with the candidate for sixty to ninety minutes and provide feedback to help the candidate improve their project.

- iii. *Course-Work Audit:* When students have completed their required course work, they must perform a “course-work audit.” The form is available on the department web site. Students are encouraged to use this form to plan their course work, and also help clarify that they have completed the department’s required coursework. Students must fill this form out and have it approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Transfer Credits

Students may request that prior graduate level course work be counted towards department’s degree requirements. Before requesting a transfer of credits, students should consult the Graduate School Bulletin for the official guidelines and requirements for transferring credits. What follows is a summary of the most salient issues to be aware of:

Eligible Coursework: A student may transfer credits earned at another accredited university only if: 1) the student is in degree status at Notre Dame; 2) the courses taken are graduate courses appropriate to the Notre Dame graduate program and the student had graduate student status when he or she took these courses; 3) the courses were completed within a five-year period prior to admission to a graduate degree program at Notre Dame or while enrolled in a graduate degree program at Notre Dame; 4) grades of “B” (3.0 on 4.0 scale) or better were achieved; and 5) the transfer is recommended by the Department Chair and approved by the Graduate School.

Timing: The University will only consider requests for credit transfer after the student has been completed one semester in the program. Credit transfers must occur one semester prior to graduation in order to count toward that degree.

Transfer Limits:

- Unfinished MA: **Six** credit maximum
- Completed MA or Ph.D. program: **Nine** credit maximum toward an MA; **Twenty-four** credit maximum towards a Ph.D.
- Coursework completed at another University while enrolled as a Notre Dame student: **Twenty-four** credit maximum towards a Ph.D.

Grades: Grades from transferred courses are not counted toward the students’ official Grade Point Average.

Students must understand that transfers are handled on a case by case basis. In some cases, students are not always well-served by getting the maximum credits transferred. By taking classes our courses, students can build important relationships with our faculty and their fellow students. Also, many of classes also offer valuable opportunities to initiate and/or become involved in research projects that lead to publications. In addition, students who are new to the field of sociology are often well-served transferring fewer credits and taking more coursework in the department. Thus, there are many good reasons that the DGS may decide approve fewer transfer credits than the maximum.

Waivers of Requirements

All sociology graduate students are expected to complete the required coursework. However, either by virtue of extenuating circumstances, or prior training and experience, a waiver of certain requirements is sometimes appropriate. It is the responsibility of the student to initiate the process.

Petitions for a waiver of requirements must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. The petition should indicate precisely which requirement(s) the student wishes to have waived in his or her case, and the reasons why such action is necessary and appropriate. Copies of any supporting documentation in the student's possession (such as transcripts of previous coursework) should accompany the petition.

Petitions for waivers are evaluated periodically by the faculty members of the Committee for Graduate Studies. The Director of Graduate Studies may render decisions about requested waivers at his/her discretion. Students will be notified by e-mail or letter.

I.B. Foreign Language Requirement

Neither the Department nor the Graduate School requires that students demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language. However, there are certain cases when learning a new language is beneficial (or even essential) for students' research. Students should consult their academic advisors in these cases.

I.C. Residency

The minimum residency requirement for the Ph.D. degree is full-time status for four consecutive semesters (including the summer session).

I.D. Master's Thesis

All students are required to complete an M.A. thesis as part of their doctoral training. Students may ask to have this requirement waived if they have completed an M.A. thesis in another program. The M.A. thesis need not be in sociology, but it must satisfy the requirement described below. The Director of Graduate Studies will decide or consult with faculty members of the Committee for Graduate Studies to assess whether the M.A. requirement may be waived on the basis of prior work.

Six hours of graduate credit may be earned for work on a master's thesis. These six hours of credit are beyond the required and optional Master's Research Practicum (see above). The definition of a thesis provided below is intended to guide students and their advisers in their efforts to meet this requirement.

A master's thesis ordinarily resembles (in terms of length, quality, and scope) a manuscript that would be submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal. The thesis will always be:

- a) integrated (i.e., a paper or a collection of papers focused on a particular topic, or set of explicitly related topics);
- b) social scientific (although not necessarily sociological, if completed before admission to the graduate program in sociology at Notre Dame);
- c) evaluated by a committee of three or more faculty members who are chosen because of their qualifications to judge the content of the manuscript.

The Master of Arts (M.A.) degree will be awarded to students who:

- A. Have completed requirements A through E in the section above labeled "The Curriculum: Required and Optional Courses" (Classical Social Theory; Sociological Research Methods; Advanced Social Statistics; Proseminar; Master's Research Practicum I).
- B. Have 30 or more hours of coursework within the program
- C. Have held a "M.A. Proposal Hearing" with their committee members
- D. Successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination administered by the thesis director and two readers
- E. Make final corrections to thesis and submit the final version to the Graduate School.

Please consult the Graduate School Bulletin for additional information about the MA thesis.

I.E. Degree Eligibility

The student must fulfill all doctoral requirements, including the dissertation and its defense, within eight years from the time of matriculation. Failure to complete any of the Graduate School or Departmental requirements within the prescribed period results in forfeiture of degree eligibility.

I.F. Advisers and Dissertation Directors

Forming a strong mentoring relationship with a faculty advisor is an extremely important part of a students' intellectual and professional development. All incoming students are expected to find an advisor **by the end of their first semester in the program**. Ideally, the person who is selected should be someone with compatible research interests, for the adviser might later function as a thesis or dissertation director. Students are always free to change advisers if there is another faculty member who is willing to serve in that capacity.

Once officially selected, the adviser's job is to: (1) regularly review grades and other indicators of progress for each student under his or her direction, (2) assist students in planning work toward the completion of their goals in the program, and (3) insure that students' written examinations are in broad, recognizable areas of the discipline (both to avoid overspecialization and to prepare students for future teaching responsibilities). Advisers and dissertation directors are chosen from the regular teaching and research faculty of the student's department. Although a student's dissertation director is typically their advisor, this need not be the case. Students may also choose to have member of the faculty serve as co-director of their dissertation. A co-director may be chosen from the faculty outside the student's department, but such arrangements must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

I.G. Candidacy Examination

The candidacy examination consists of two parts: a written component and an oral component.

Sociology graduate students must take and pass two written area exams. The oral component entails a defense of the student's dissertation proposal. Both components are discussed below.

Written Area Examinations

Written, in-class examinations, between six and eight hours in duration, must be completed in two areas of Sociology chosen by the student and approved by the faculty membership of the Committee for Graduate Studies.

Please consult the “Guide to Area Exams” (Appendix I in this document) for information about exam objectives, procedures, and all other relevant issues.

Dissertation Proposal and the Oral Candidacy Examination

After passing their written area examinations, all students are expected to prepare a dissertation proposal. This proposal should outline the major theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues that will be addressed in the student’s dissertation. Students should work closely with their adviser and other faculty members when preparing their proposal. All students must then pass an oral candidacy examination which includes, but is not limited to, a defense of the dissertation proposal. This examination and defense of the dissertation proposal must occur no later than the end of the second semester of a student’s fourth year. No student may sit for such an examination until he or she has satisfied all prior Departmental requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to seek out faculty members who will consent to serve as examiners in each instance. The composition of the committees for these events should be reported to the Director of Graduate Studies at least one month in advance of the date proposed for the session, in order for the roster to gain the approval of the Committee for Graduate Studies. No last-minute requests will be processed. (See Appendix Two for more information about scheduling the Ph.D Proposal Defense.)

Please consult the Graduate School Bulletin for additional information on:

I.H. Admission to Doctoral Candidacy

I.I. The Doctoral Dissertation

I.J. Defense of Dissertation

The defense typically begins with the doctoral candidate presenting a brief summary of his or her work. The Director and readers will then each have ten minutes to question the candidate. A second round of questions, of up to five minutes per committee member, will follow. The chair of the committee can also ask questions if he or she so wishes.

At the end of the exam, the chair will call for vote. On committees of four, three “pass” votes are needed to pass. On committees of five, four “pass” votes are needed to pass.

I.K. Submitting the Dissertation

Please consult the Graduate School Bulletin for information on this topic.



APPENDIX ONE: GUIDE TO AREA EXAMS

GUIDE TO AREA EXAMS

Department of Sociology
University of Notre Dame

EXAM OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the area exam is to provide the opportunity and basis for the student to develop a broad expertise in a subfield of sociology, and to recognize that expertise. Having passed the exam, the student will have demonstrated familiarity with the subfield, including a basic knowledge and understanding of its core issues, important literature, and key questions. This demonstration will involve not only the basic knowledge necessary for a literature review, but also the mastery of an independent voice within the subfield.

Three specific goals provide indicators of this mastery. The student's performance in preparation for the exam and upon completion of the exam should demonstrate:

- the ability to interact with professional peers on the basis of shared knowledge and understanding;
- the ability to teach in the field and to organize a new syllabus;
- the ability to develop original research questions.

While the exam should help students prepare for conceiving and writing their dissertation, the exam should stretch the student to go well beyond this narrow (albeit important) objective.

EXAM PREPARATION

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Area Exam committee in their chosen area. Students should schedule a meeting with the Area Exam chair to discuss procedures and expectations regarding preparations for the area exam, since they vary by area (and also change from year to year). The department will also compile and make available a brief description of the basic procedures and requirements for each area.

Selection and Formation of Area Exam Committees

Standing area exam committees will be selected by the department chair at the end of each academic year. Each committee will consist of three faculty members, two of whom must be from the sociology department. Committees will be formed in areas for

which there is the greatest student demand and faculty expertise. A list of area exam committees will be published at the beginning of each academic year.

The formation of examination committees in other areas may be initiated by student petition to the Director of Graduate Studies. The petition must include information indicating: the title of the area, the examinee's name, and the composition of the committee (including the designation of a Chair), all of whom have agreed to serve. The committee must be approved by the DGS before students may proceed with any exam preparations.

After the exam committees are formed, the committee chair will be responsible for reviewing and (if necessary) revising a document that explains procedures specific to their particular area. This document will be submitted to the DGS, and posted on the department web site for interested students.

Reading Lists

Exam committees will choose whether or not to have a standard, publicized reading list for students. If lists are used, such lists can vary from simple starting points for students or a nearly exhaustive list for students to read. However, the purpose of the list should be made clear to students before they begin actively reading for an exam.

Expectations

Whether or not there is a list, each exam committee will create a short introduction to their area's exam outlining the main foci or guiding principle of the area, how the area is organized, and expectations for both the process and the outcome of the exam. The information will be available on the sociology department's web site.

Here's an example of such an introduction from Arizona's Social Psychology reading list:

INTRODUCTION

The attached reading list covers the broad field of sociological social psychology. As defined by the leading sociological journal of social psychology, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, the field includes "the study of the relations of individuals to one another, to groups, collectivities and institutions. . .and the study of intra-individual processes insofar as they substantially influence, or are influenced by, social structure and process."

The reading list is divided into sections to help organize your study. The first section contains general readings that cover the history and systematics of the field and several orienting strategies (or metatheoretical perspectives) that have shaped sociological social psychology. This first section corresponds to the morning portion of the exam, which consists of a set of questions that cover the general readings from which the student chooses two questions to answer. The next section is subdivided into two parts, which correspond to the two afternoon portions of the exam: Social Relations, Groups and Networks; and Role, Self, Identity and Emotion. Each subarea includes a mix of theoretical and empirical papers. The afternoon portion of the exam gives the student a choice of two or three questions in each part, from which the student must choose one question per part to answer. Students are responsible for all readings on this list.

Some readings on this list are drawn from courses offered regularly by faculty members who specialize in sociological social psychology. The remainder have been chosen because they are important to understanding general issues in social psychology or are critical for in-depth understanding of specialized areas covered in our program. Students are encouraged to obtain current syllabi from social psychology faculty for all relevant courses; these syllabi will give a more comprehensive treatment of how each faculty member organizes his or her view of the sub-field, and may point the student to supplemental materials that will aid in interpretation of the readings on this list.

The field of social psychology is characterized by competing orienting strategies and theoretical perspectives, a multiplicity of theories that address similar issues, and empirical research relevant to theoretical formulations. The faculty expects students to demonstrate (1) a firm grasp of meta-theoretical and theoretical issues, (2) the capacity to discuss those issues critically, (3) to demonstrate familiarity with recent research in the field and (4) to assess research evidence with respect to its fit with existing theory and hypotheses.

WRITING AND ACCESS TO AREA EXAM QUESTIONS

It is acceptable and desirable for faculty to have a great deal of discretion in authoring area exam questions. Possible formats include: long essays, short essays, author and/or term identifications, etc. Exam questions may be written either by faculty or students. Faculty may also choose to re-use questions from prior exams on future exams.

However, it should be emphasized that the area exam should NOT be an exercise in memorization and recall. Thus, exams should be constructed in a way that ensures that students go beyond “cramming and purging” material for the majority of the exam.

Area exams from five years prior will be made available to all students in the sociology office. Limiting the availability of past exams to a five year window will give exam committees more latitude in selecting topics and writing questions, while also helping students focus their attention on more recent directions in the field. Exam answers will **not** be made available to students. Students may only gain access to exam answers if they get permission DIRECTLY from the student. Thus, if I share my exam answers with student A, s/he should not give my answers to student B; rather, student B should ask my permission directly.

Exam Scheduling

The student is responsible for scheduling the date of the exam in coordination with the exam committee chair. Both the committee chair and the student must consult with other members of the exam committee to ensure that the scheduled date is feasible for other members and that it does not conflict with other commitments (i.e. travel, other teaching responsibilities). Under the current system, exams may be scheduled at any time of the year, as long as the area committee members agree and make themselves available. Specific area committees may also decide to set aside specific weeks of the school year as “blocks” in which students are allowed to take the exam. Under this

arrangement, students would be allowed to schedule exams **only** within the designated time blocks. The student must make sure to ascertain the preferred scheduling system for that area committee. Choice of specific scheduling procedure is at the discretion of the committee not the student.

Exam CONDITIONS

As a matter of fairness to all students, the exam conditions and format should be fairly similar across all areas in the department. All students will be asked to complete the exam under three conditions:

1. There will be **no access** to books, articles or any printed or electronic material that has not been authored by the student during the examination. This means that the exam will be of a “closed book” format. The above includes *all* material that is written by the student prior to taking the exam, such as notes taken after reading the assigned material. This means that student-written notes will *not be allowed* into the examination room. Bringing student-authored notes into the exam will be considered a violation of the code of conduct. However, students may use reading lists provided by area exam committees as a reference to help remember names, years, of articles/books during the examination.
2. The exam will take place in a “neutral” computer in a setting designated by the Sociology Department. The computer will be disconnected from the internet and will not contain any extraneous material in the hard drive (the computer can only be used as a “word processor”). The place where the exam will be taken will be designated before-hand by the Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the various area-exam chairs. Examinations may not be administered in student offices, or in non-designated faculty offices. This means that “take-home” exams, in which the student is given the questions and is allowed to complete them outside of the department **do not correspond** to the expected exam format. Also, this means that exams for **all areas** will take place in a similar setting under similar circumstances as outlined above.
3. The student will have a total of eight (8) hours to complete the exam. The exam will take place in **two days**, with the student being allotted four (4) hours to complete two of the exam questions for that day. A designated person will be in charge of collecting the answers for the student. The answers will be stored in an electronic disk **and** printed in hard copy and passed to the designated person. After the end of the each time period, the student may no longer have access to those answers and the student is **not allowed** to further edit and revise those answers.

Guidelines regarding citations, plagiarism

Students taking any area exam are expected to abide by the University's Graduate Student Academic Integrity code of conduct in its entirety.¹ For the purposes of preliminary examinations, the most relevant section of this academic integrity code is:

Violations of academic integrity may occur in classroom work and related academic functions or in research/scholarship endeavors. Classroom-type misconduct includes the use of information obtained from another student's paper during an examination, plagiarism, submission of work written by someone else, falsification of data, etc. Violation of integrity in research/scholarship is deliberate fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reporting research or other deliberate misrepresentation in proposing, conducting, reporting, or reviewing research. Misconduct does not include errors of judgment, errors in recording, selection, or analysis of data, differences in opinions involving interpretation, or conduct unrelated to the research process. Misconduct includes practices that materially and adversely affect the integrity of scholarship and research.

This means that all material included in answer to an area exam question must be original work by the student. The student's answer may not contain any passages or material not written by the student on site and may also not contain any third party material which is not given proper credit using expected citation standards in sociology. The chair of each exam committee must make explicit to each student what those citation standards are. **Inclusion of any outside material not directly authored by the student without any indication that this material has been written by somebody else will be considered plagiarism and may result in severe penalties including exam failure and possibly expulsion from the graduate program.**

Expectations regarding the thoroughness of citations will vary by areas, and students should consult the area exam chair for clear guidelines on this topic.

EXAM RESULTS

Time for Decision

Students should expect to get the results of their exam no more than two weeks after their exam date. The area exam chair should check with committee members to be sure that this time frame is feasible before scheduling exams.

Exam Results

Faculty can assign three grades to exams: pass with distinction, pass, and fail. "Pass with re-writes" and "conditional passes" are strongly discouraged because the revision/re-writing process does not match the original exam conditions and format. It also becomes rather difficult to adjudicate how much revision is acceptable to fall into

¹ Available at: http://graduateschool.nd.edu/html/policies/#academic_integrity

this gray area between passing and failing. If a student did poorly on the exam, s/he should fail and be asked to re-take it because that is in his/her best interest. It also ensures that the department maintains high standards and communicates these expectations to our students. If the committee was unhappy with part of the exam, but ultimately thinks that the exam is a “pass,” they may ask him/her to rewrite an answer. However, this should be optional, and not connected to the decision to pass or fail the student.

Consequences of Failures

If a student fails two area exams, s/he will be terminated from the program. Students who fail exams will not get preferential treatment in re-scheduling exams; they will have to wait until the next semester to re-take the exam, along with other students in that area.

Feedback for Students

Students are entitled to receive detailed feedback on their performance. Area exam committee chairs should schedule a brief meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s exam answers. Preferably, students should receive some general feedback on the strength of their writing and thinking, as well as specific feedback on the quality of particular questions. All committee members should provide feedback either directly to each student (in writing or in a meeting) or to the area exam chair.

APPENDIX TWO: PROCEDURES FOR FORMING COMMITTEES AND SCHEDULING DEFENSES

This section describes the timing/scheduling defenses for MA theses and Ph.D. defenses. In general, it is a good idea to double-check with our office staff well ahead of time to be sure that proper procedures are followed and the necessary paperwork is completed.

MA Proposal Hearing

This hearing should occur during the fall semester of the second year. It is an informal meeting that includes the student, thesis director, and the other two committee members. After the hearing, the thesis director must sign a form that indicates that the exam took place and the student has met the requirement.

MA Thesis Defense

Your committee should get a FINAL draft of your MA thesis at least two weeks before the scheduled defense date. There is no outside chair for this defense, so that is all that is required. (You may of course circulate preliminary drafts to committee members well before the defense -- but that is up to you, your advisor, and your committee members.) You must have three faculty members from the department on your MA committee.

Ph.D. Proposal Defense

You must have a minimum of four faculty members on your committee. You may petition to the DGS to include a faculty person outside the department or University as member of your committee. Your request should describe the specific skills and expertise that this person will provide, and explain your reason for including him/her on the committee. This request should be discussed and approved by the dissertation director before it is sent to the DGS. The Graduate School requires that we have an outside chair for all Ph.D proposal defenses. (The outside chair is an ND faculty person outside the dept. who oversees the exam to be sure that it is conducted in accordance with grad school policies.) If the department submits the paperwork for the defense (including the title of the proposal and the committee members) 10 working days prior to the scheduled defense date, the Graduate school will find an outside chair for you. If you fail to provide the grad school with ten working days, you will have to find your own outside chair before holding the exam on the scheduled date. Committee members should receive a final draft of the Ph.D. proposal at least two weeks before the scheduled defense date.

Ph.D. Defense

When you are ready to defend your dissertation, you must send your committee members a final draft of your dissertation at least FOUR weeks before the anticipated defense date. Each committee member has two weeks to read the dissertation draft

and submit a "reader's report" to the grad school. This report requires each committee member to affirm that the dissertation submitted by the student is defensible. If the readers' report and related paperwork are submitted to the grad school ten working days prior to the scheduled defense date, the Graduate School will find an outside chair for the defense. If not, the student may still proceed with the scheduled defense, but s/he is responsible for finding their own outside chair.

There are some additional rules and procedures to keep in mind:

** For all three types of exams, only ONE committee member may be "long distance" (i.e., teleconferencing). The department will not pay any expenses related to travel for committee members outside Notre Dame to travel to defenses. They are welcome to do so, but only at their own expense.

** Be sure to check Graduate School deadlines for graduation for the MA and Ph.D defenses before scheduling your exam.

** Due to scheduling conflicts, pressing deadlines, and/or other intangible factors, some faculty members may need more than two weeks to read your MA/Ph.D proposal/dissertation draft. Please check with them ahead of time to be sure that two weeks is enough time to read the document and complete the necessary paperwork. This is especially important for dissertations, and for defenses that take place during the summer.