

# **Department of Sociology**

## **Graduate Student Handbook**

*2014-2015 Academic Year*

Department of Sociology  
Sam Houston State University  
Box 2446  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2446

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## **PART I: DEPARTMENTAL POLICY**

### **Program Orientation**

The Master of Arts in Sociology at Sam Houston State University is an entirely online program designed to provide students with advanced instruction in quantitative and qualitative techniques of sociological research, statistics, and theory. Students will develop the professional skills necessary to analyze social issues in applied settings. These skills include grant writing, program evaluation, impact assessment, and community-based research.

Our award-winning faculty is committed to providing high quality instruction through active participation in ongoing scholarly and applied research. Faculty research interests include:

- Community Development
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Health and Medical Sociology
- Rural Sociology
- Disasters
- Food and Agriculture
- Social Stratification and Inequality
- Culture and Institutions
- Theory
- Economy and Society
- Migration

Target students for the Masters program include:

- Students who plan to pursue doctoral studies in Sociology and are interested in research and instructional positions at a college or university.
- Practicing professionals who wish to enhance their analytical and applied research skills.
- Individuals seeking employment in government or private social service agencies.

Graduates from the Sociology MA program have found careers in all levels of government, non-profit organizations, and industry. Convenient online classes provide quality instruction that fits within your personal and professional schedule. In addition, the flexible degree plan allows students the opportunity to take courses in diverse areas of interest.

There are two degree plans available to Sociology graduate students at SHSU. The first is the traditional thesis degree plan, designed for students who seek to perform original sociological research with the intent on eventually pursuing a doctoral degree in Sociology or a related field, or for students whose professional interests require enhanced analytical skills. The second is the Comprehensive Exam degree plan, designed for those wishing to pursue advance study in Sociology in order to advance their professional goals and opportunities by developing their applied analytical skills.

**NOTE:** Requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies at Sam Houston State University as stated in the *Graduate Catalog* (<http://www.shsu.edu/graduate-catalog/>) apply to all operating procedures of the Department.

## Admission Requirements

Students are admitted to the graduate program biannually for the Fall and Spring semesters. There are no Summer admissions. The application deadline for Spring enrollment is December 1<sup>st</sup>; the application deadline for Fall enrollment is August 1<sup>st</sup>. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

The following are required for admissions consideration:

1. *Graduate Studies Application:* The Graduate Studies Application is an institutional application required by SHSU. Students must provide biographical and educational information and information relevant to determining State of Texas residency. To apply, go to <http://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply-texas.html>.
2. *Application fee:* An application fee is required for all applications to graduate programs at SHSU.
3. *Official transcript from the baccalaureate degree granting institution:* Official transcripts from the degree granting institution are required. Students must contact their previous institution and arrange to have that college or university send transcripts directly to graduate admissions at SHSU. Transcripts will be reviewed by the graduate committee and used as a factor in deciding whether the applicant gains entry into the program.
4. *Official GRE Scores:* GRE scores are required for all applicants to the program. However, in some instances this requirement can be waived. GRE waivers are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and require the applying student to submit a formal petition to the Director of Graduate Studies. GRE scores will be reviewed by the graduate committee and used as a factor in deciding whether the applicant gains entry into the program.
5. *Minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0:* The department requires students applying to the graduate program to have earned a minimum GPA of 3.0 from their degree granting institution. Each applicant's undergraduate GPA will be used as a factor in deciding whether the applicant gains entry into the program. Applicants seeking to enter the program who already have a graduate degree but do not have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher can submit a formal petition to the Director of Graduate Studies to request that this requirement be waived.
6. *Letter of Intent:* The Letter of Intent is the students' opportunity to discuss their fit with the program offered at Sam Houston State University. While students have a significant amount of freedom to discuss anything they would like in their letter of intent, they may want to address their short-term and long-term academic/professional goals, why they would like to attend our program, and how their interests fit with our program. The letter should not exceed 750 words. The letter will be reviewed by the graduate committee and will be used as a factor in deciding whether the applicant gains entry into the program.
7. *Letters of Recommendation:* Two letters of recommendation are required for each applicant. Letters should be submitted by someone who is able to evaluate the applicant's academic and professional potential.

All application materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions who will forward completed applications to the Director of Graduate Studies.

## Performance Standards and Scholastic Expectations

The criteria for earning a M.A. degree include completion of the 36 credit hour requirement and successful defense of the thesis or successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination. In addition to these criteria, students are expected to maintain high performance standards throughout their residence in the program and remain in “academic good standing” at Sam Houston State University.

In order to achieve and remain in academic good standing at Sam Houston State University, a graduate student must maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate coursework attempted. All grades earned in courses taken for graduate credit will be utilized in computing the grade point average. A grade earned at another institution may not be used to remove a grade deficiency earned in residence at Sam Houston State University. Semester hours of credit earned at another institution are not utilized in computing the student’s Sam Houston State University overall grade point average. A 3.0 overall grade point average is the absolute minimum required for graduation.

### *Grading System:*

Four grades are given in graduate courses at the University:

#### **Grade Denotation**

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A	Academic Excellence
B	Acceptable Performance
C	Passing, yet Insufficient Performance
F	Failure

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The mark “IP” denotes “in progress” and is given in thesis and other courses which cannot be completed within one semester. The mark “CR” denotes “credit.” The mark of “W” denotes “withdrew” and is given for resignations. The mark “X” denotes “incomplete.” If the student meets the prescribed requirements of the course before the end of the next academic semester after the “X” is given, the student will receive the grade earned; otherwise, the mark “X” will be automatically changed to an “F.” The mark of “Q” is assigned to courses dropped after the thirteenth class day, for a fall or spring semester, or from the fifth class day, for a summer session, but by the last date to drop courses or labs with a “Q” as indicated in the SHSU Academic Calendar. Courses with the mark of “Q” will not be counted as courses attempted and will not be included in determining grade point averages. However, be aware that SHSU students are allowed no more than five “Q” drops during the course of their career at SHSU.

A graduate student who elects to drop all courses, i.e., to resign from the University, must notify the Registrar’s Office and process a Resignation Request (see [Resignations](#)).

### *Academic Probation and Suspension:*

A graduate student who falls below a 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of any semester during which one or more semester credit hours are attempted will be placed on probation. If an enrolled student on probation fails to achieve a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average at the close of the next semester or summer school following the starting of the probation, the student will be suspended.

The Graduate Committee will review the graduate status for any student earning two grades of “C” in any combination of graduate courses. The committee will consider the advisability of the student’s continued enrollment in the graduate program. A student who earns three grades of “C” or one grade of “F” will be terminated from graduate studies. A student who earns a third grade of “C” or a grade of “F” during the semester or summer of the anticipated graduation will be terminated from graduate studies and will not be

eligible to graduate. The Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences may place on probation, retain on probation, or suspend any student deficient in grade points without regard to the regulations previously stated.

*Academic Honesty:*

The Graduate Faculty of Sam Houston State University and the Department of Sociology expect students to conduct academic work with integrity and honesty. Acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and can result in the failure of a course and dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit), the abuse of resource materials, and misrepresentation of credentials or accomplishments. The University's policy on academic honesty and appeal procedures can be found in the *Student Guidelines*, distributed by the Division of Student Services (<http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/>). It is the student's responsibility to read and understand all relevant policies related to academic honesty.

Additional academic policy and student guidelines provide specific information about the SHSU educational mission and student conduct can be accessed in the Academic Policy Manual (<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>).

*Resignations:*

To resign (officially withdraw) from the University, a student must notify the Registrar's Office and process a Resignation Request. The Resignation Request must be in writing and becomes effective on the date received by the Registrar's Office. The effective date of the Resignation Request, as received by the Registrar's Office, is the date used for determining any refund as authorized in the State Refund Policy (see [Tuition and Fees Refund Policy](#)). The student is responsible for clearing all debts owed to the University. A student who wishes to drop all courses must officially resign.

A student who discontinues attending class and fails to officially resign from the University will receive the grade of "F" in each enrolled course. A student who resigns after the 12th class day of a regular semester or after the 4th class day of a summer session will receive a mark of "W" for each enrolled course. A student who resigns from the University while enrolled in a course whose duration is less than a normal term will receive a mark of "W" if the resignation occurs after one-half of that course time has been completed.

## **Program Governance**

### *Director of Graduate Studies:*

The Director of Graduate Studies is appointed by the Department Chair. His or her duties include:

- Supervision of the Graduate Program in Sociology
- Graduate Student Advisement
- Coordination of recruitment of students and advertisement of the Graduate Program

### *Supervision of the Graduate Program in Sociology:*

The Director is in charge of implementing and enforcing the rules of the graduate program in Sociology at SHSU. He or she must be familiar with the University and Departmental rules concerning enrollment in the program, academic requirements, academic specializations and other aspects of the SHSU graduate career in Sociology.

### *Graduate Student Advisement:*

The Director of Graduate Studies is the advisor for all incoming graduate students. It is the duty of the Director to advise students of required coursework and curriculum objectives relevant to students' needs. The student, in consultation with the Director, will determine which academic degree plan (thesis/non-thesis) is appropriate for the student's intellectual, academic, and career goals. Students who opt for the thesis degree plan will establish a permanent advisor from the graduate faculty who will serve as their thesis chairperson.

### *Coordination of Recruitment and Advertisement:*

The Director supervises and promotes the production and distribution of material advertising the Graduate Program in Sociology at SHSU.

### *The Graduate Committee:*

The Graduate Committee is appointed by the Sociology Department Chair in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Committee is the main body of governance for the graduate program curriculum standards and policies regarding the operation of the graduate program. The graduate committee assists the Director of Graduate Studies in implementing graduate student admission, formulating the graduate program policy and advising the Department of Sociology on Graduate Program policy issues.

### *Department of Sociology Graduate Faculty:*

The Department of Sociology Graduate Faculty consists of regular and adjunct department faculty members who have maintained high academic standards in research, teaching, and service at SHSU. All Graduate Faculty possess a terminal Ph.D. degree in sociology or related field to sociology and are qualified to teach core and area-specific curriculum at the graduate level. Only Department of Sociology Graduate Faculty may serve as a chairperson of a thesis committee.

## **Petition Policies**

Students who are seeking admission to the Sociology Graduate Program, or those who have already been admitted, may find that their unique situations may preclude the application of certain departmental policies. In such cases, students may submit a formal request for exemption from the relevant policy. Common petitions are listed below.

1. *GRE Waiver:*  
The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Committee offer a GRE waiver for graduate admission in some circumstances. Applicants may submit a formal appeal to the Director for a waiver of the GRE application requirement. Students who are considering applying for a waiver should first contact the Director of Graduate Studies to determine whether a GRE waiver is appropriate.
2. *Undergraduate Statistics and/or Research Methods Waiver:*  
Sociology graduate students deficient in undergraduate research methods and/or statistics must complete SOCI 3443 (Social Statistics) and SOCI 4340 (Research Methods) in Sociology prior to enrolling in graduate courses at SHSU. This requirement is in addition to the 36 credit hours required for the M.A. and will be waived if these courses or their equivalents have been completed (with a grade of A or B) at a different institution. To receive a waiver, students must submit a formal request to the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. *Undergraduate GPA waiver:*  
Students who are seeking admission to the graduate program but did not earn a 3.0 GPA during their undergraduate studies may request a waiver of this requirement. In these cases, students must demonstrate a high potential for success in the graduate program in spite of their GPA deficiency. Students must submit a formal written request to the Director of Graduate Studies explaining their individual circumstances relevant to the need for relief from this policy.
4. *Request for transfer credit:*  
In accordance with SHSU Academic Policy Statement 801007, graduate courses completed at other accredited colleges or universities may be applied toward the graduate degree in Sociology at SHSU. Up to six credit hours from outside the sociology program may be used to complete the 36 credit hour requirement for the M.A. Only those transferred courses from accredited institutions in which a grade of "A" or "B" was earned and which are accepted toward an official degree program will be considered for transfer. Transfer credit is not guaranteed. Students must submit a formal written request to the Director of Graduate Studies in order to have their transfer credits considered viable for the degree program. The Director may request supporting documentation when considering transfer credits, including, but not limited to syllabi, course catalog descriptions, formal letters from previous professors, etc.
5. *Termination of Graduate Status:*  
Any appeal for a review of the termination of graduate status should be directed in writing through the Director of Graduate Studies, to the Chair of the Department, to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and finally to the Dean of Graduate Studies for final approval or denial.
6. *SHSU Student Grievance Procedures:*  
The Department abides by the university policy with respect to student grievances. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [http://www.shsu.edu/-vaf\\_www/aps/documents/900823\\_001.pdf](http://www.shsu.edu/-vaf_www/aps/documents/900823_001.pdf)



## **Students with Disabilities**

The University and students with disabilities have certain rights and responsibilities related to receiving, providing, and determining reasonable accommodations, the purpose of which is to provide students with disabilities equal access to educational and student support services offered by the University. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic program or activity. Additional information for students with disabilities can be found at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>.

## **Religious Freedom and Observance of Religious Holidays**

The Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. “Religious Holy Day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Tax Code. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding any missed classes due to “Religious Holy Days.”

## **PART II: THE MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY**

### **General Curriculum Requirements<sup>1</sup>**

A minimum of 36 credit hours beyond the Bachelor's degree must be completed for the Master of Arts in Sociology. The following requirements also apply:

- Thirty credit hours must be completed in the Department of Sociology at Sam Houston State University.
- Sociology graduate students deficient in undergraduate research methods and/or statistics must complete SOCI 3443 (Social Statistics) and SOCI 4340 (Research Methods) in Sociology prior to enrolling in graduate courses at SHSU. This requirement is in addition to the 36 credit hours required for the M.A. and will be waived if these courses or their equivalents have been completed at a different institution.
- All M.A. students must take SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research, and SOCI 5314: Social Statistics.
- All M.A. students must take one Applied Core Elective: SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods, SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods, SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Science, or SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment & Program Evaluation.
- All M.A. students must select one of the two degree plans: 1) Thesis Degree Plan; or the 2) Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan. There are different curriculum requirements for each degree plan.

### **Curriculum Description**

Graduate students in Sociology are required to take three types of courses to complete their degree: 1) Core Required Courses, 2) Applied Core Electives, and 3) Elective Courses.

#### *Core Required Courses:*

Core Required Courses are offered each Fall and Spring semester and provide foundational study in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics. Ideally, SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research, and SOCI 5314: Social Statistics should be completed in the first year of study. For those utilizing the thesis degree plan, Core Required Courses include two additional courses to facilitate the thesis proposal and defense—SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum and SOCI 6099: Thesis. Students must complete 24 hours of graduate coursework, including SOCI 5310, SOCI 5312 and SOCI 5314 and one of the Applied Core Electives, prior to enrolling in SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum and students must successfully complete SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum prior to enrolling in SOCI 6099: Thesis.

#### *Applied Core Electives:*

Every student must complete at least one Applied Core Elective course. Applied Core Electives are designed to instruct students in techniques of data collection and analysis in applied settings. Ideally students should complete their Applied Core Elective course during their first year of study. Students may opt to take additional Applied Core Elective courses. In this situation, course credit hours will apply to the Elective Course Requirements.

#### *Elective Courses:*

Elective Courses provide students with the opportunity to explore substantive areas relevant to graduate faculty expertise. Students are free to select courses relevant to their own academic interests.

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<sup>1</sup> For students enrolled prior to Fall 2014, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies for degree requirements.

## **Thesis Degree Plan**

### ***Thesis Degree Plan Coursework Requirements: 36 credit hours***

#### *Background Courses:*

These undergraduate courses (or acceptable equivalents) are required for Masters students, but do **not** count toward the minimum credit requirements.

SOCI 3443: Social Statistics (3 credit hours)

SOCI 4340: Research Methods (3 credit hours)

#### *Core Required Courses (15 credit hours)*

These courses are required for all students. Students may not register for SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum until they have completed 24 credit hours of graduate coursework, including SOCI 5310, SOCI 5312 and SOCI 5314 and one of the Applied Core Electives. Students may only register for SOCI 6099: Thesis after they have completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum.

SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory

SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum

SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research

SOCI 6099: Thesis

SOCI 5314: Social Statistics

#### *Applied Core Elective Courses (3 credit hours)*

Each student must select one of the following courses. Additional course selections from this list may be used to satisfy Elective Course Requirements.

SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods

SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods

SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal  
Writing in the Social Sciences

SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and  
Program Evaluation

#### *Elective Courses (18 credit hours)*

Each student must select six of the following courses. Students may use up to 6 credits from graduate courses outside of the Sociology department to fulfill this requirement. Additional Core Electives beyond the requisite 3 credit hours may be applied to satisfy Elective Course requirements.

SOCI 5099: Graduate Readings in Sociology

SOCI 5337: Gender and Society

SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community

SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster

SOCI 5322: Seminar in Medical Sociology

SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology

SOCI 5324: Seminar in Social Change and  
Development

SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies

SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality

SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family

SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging

SOCI 5333: Sociology of Religion

SOCI 6360: Seminar in Sociology

## ***Thesis Degree Plan Details***

The Thesis degree plan is designed for students who anticipate further graduate study in Sociology or a related discipline. Graduate students who select the Master of Arts Thesis degree plan are required to write a master's thesis. The thesis is an original research work that demonstrates the candidate's theoretical, methodological and substantive skills in the discipline. This degree plan is designed for students who plan to continue graduate education or whose professional interests require enhanced analytical skills.

### *The Thesis Committee*

Students selecting the thesis degree plan will form a thesis committee from the graduate faculty prior to enrollment in the first thesis course (SOC 6098: Thesis Practicum). The committee must be composed of a thesis chair and at least two sociology faculty members, all of whom have appropriate graduate faculty status. External members can also be included in the committee as additional members. With the approval of the committee chair, the department chair, the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dean of Graduate Studies the committee may include one member who is not employed by SHSU per Academic Policy Statement 950601. Selection of the chair depends on student preference and faculty availability and expertise. After a faculty member agrees to serve as chair, the student will select the other committee members with guidance from the chair. The committee must then be approved by the chair of the department and the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Any change in the composition of the thesis or dissertation committee will be approved in the same manner.

### *The Thesis Prospectus*

Once students have selected a thesis committee chair, and after completing a minimum of 24 credit hours, including the three core required courses (SOC 5310, SOC 5312, and SOC 5314) and one of the applied core elective courses (SOC 5313, SOC 5376, SOC 5378, or SOC 5380), the student may enroll in SOC 6098: Thesis Practicum. Note that all students must receive approval from their thesis chair before registering for SOC 6098: Thesis Practicum. As coursework in SOC 6098: Thesis Practicum, and in consultation with the thesis chair, the student will select a subject of investigation and determine the availability of the required sources, facilities, materials, and equipment for the research and the writing of the thesis. The student will prepare a prospectus which will specify the topic, detail the purpose of the proposed investigation, describe the proposed method(s) of investigation, indicate the relationship of study to relevant research and findings of scholars in the student's area of concentration, and provide a commentary on source materials and/or facilities available for the successful completion of the research. The prospectus must be approved by the thesis committee by the end of the semester for which the student is registered for SOC 6098. Upon committee approval, the signed prospectus is submitted to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for final approval. Any subsequent changes in topic or the proposed method of investigation must be approved in writing by the committee and submitted for approval to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

### *The Thesis*

Upon approval of the thesis proposal, students may enroll in SOC 6099: Thesis. Masters candidates should be in regular contact with committee members throughout the thesis process. Candidates should allow the committee ample time to review draft versions of the thesis. The candidate should submit the completed thesis to the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Students must complete their thesis and pass the formal oral defense by the deadlines scheduled in the SHSU Academic Calendar and the SHSU Thesis/Dissertation guidelines. Guides for preparation of the thesis are available from the library at <http://library.shsu.edu/research/guides/thesis>.

### ***SHSU Graduation Procedures for the Thesis Degree Plan***

In addition to the curriculum requirements, SHSU has created a set of guidelines in order to complete the Thesis degree plan. The following steps must be completed, most in the graduating semester. A list of semester specific dates may be accessed from <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-studies/thesis-dissertation-timelines.html>.

1. The candidate shall submit at least one full draft chapter of the thesis to the Library for format and style review at least ten weeks prior to graduation.
2. The chair of the committee or the graduate advisor establishes a time and location for administering a verbal defense of the thesis. The defense must be held at least six weeks prior to graduation. Attendance at the defense is open to the entire university community.
3. The thesis chair will submit a signed *Report of the Outcome of the Thesis/Dissertation Defense* to the appropriate academic dean.
4. Upon successful completion of the defense, the candidate should obtain signatures from the thesis committee on the title page and abstract of the thesis and signature of thesis chair on the route sheet. No later than four and one-half weeks prior to the end of the anticipated semester of graduation, the candidate should submit the route sheet (see PART IV: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS in this handbook for the route sheet) and have a complete, defended and signed thesis to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences office.
5. Upon receipt of approval from the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the original and the required number of acceptable copies of the thesis are taken to the Newton Gresham Library by the candidate no later than four weeks prior to the end of the anticipated semester of graduation. Reproduction of the thesis and binding costs are the responsibility of the candidate. The original copy will remain in the library collection.
6. After receiving the Library's approval, the candidate should take the signed route sheet to the Office of Graduate Studies no later than three weeks prior to the end of the anticipated semester of graduation. The Office of Graduate Studies will forward the signed route sheet to the Office of the Registrar.

SHSU theses guidelines must be followed. For a detailed overview of these guidelines and tools that will assist students in their authorship of a thesis, access the library's SHSU Thesis Guidelines and Tools website: <http://library.shsu.edu/research/guides/thesis/>.

## **Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

### ***Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan Coursework Requirements: 36 credit hours***

#### *Background Courses:*

These undergraduate courses (or acceptable equivalents) are required for Masters students, but do **not** count toward the minimum credit requirements.

SOCI 3443: Social Statistics (3 credit hours)

SOCI 4340: Research Methods (3 credit hours)

#### *Core Required Courses (9 credit hours)*

These courses are required for all students.

SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory

SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research

SOCI 5314: Social Statistics

#### *Applied Core Elective Courses (3 credit hours)*

Each student must select at least one of the following courses. Additional course selections from this list may be used to satisfy Elective Course Requirements.

SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods

SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods

SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal  
Writing in the Social Sciences

SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and  
Program Evaluation

#### *Elective Courses (24 credit hours)*

Each student must select eight of the following courses. Students may use up to 6 credits from graduate courses outside of the Sociology department to fulfill this requirement. Additional Core Electives beyond the requisite 3 credit hours may be applied to satisfy Elective Course requirements.

SOCI 5099: Graduate Readings in Sociology

SOCI 5337: Gender and Society

SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community

SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster

SOCI 5322: Seminar in Medical Sociology

SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology

SOCI 5324: Seminar in Social Change and  
Development

SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies

SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family

SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality

SOCI 5333: Sociology of Religion

SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging

SOCI 5099: Graduate Readings in Sociology

SOCI 6360: Seminar in Sociology

SOCI 5337: Gender and Society

## ***Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan Details***

This degree plan does not require a thesis and is designed for students who wish to concentrate on the development of their applied professional skills. Graduate students who opt for the Comprehensive Exam degree plan are required to pass a comprehensive exam prior to graduation. This requirement is in addition to the 36 credit hours coursework requirements. The comprehensive exam for the Master's Degree in Sociology is divided into three parts: Theory; Methods and Statistics; and the Sociological Essay.

### *Comprehensive Exam Scheduling*

After completing a minimum of 24 credit hours, including the three core required courses (SOC 5310, SOC 5312, and SOC 5314) and one of the applied core elective courses (SOC 5313, SOC 5376, SOC 5378, or SOC 5380), students are allowed to take the Comprehensive Examination. Exams are offered twice each academic year, once during the Fall semester and once during the Spring semester. They are offered during a two-week-period determined by the Director of Graduate Studies. The Comprehensive Exam is NOT offered during the summer semesters.

Students will be asked to declare their intent to take the Comprehensive Exam to the Director of Graduate Studies by the indicated date each semester.

### *Exam Administration*

Students will have a two-week period to complete the exam: students must submit their answers for Part 1 (Theory) and Part 2 (Research Methods and Statistics) by the end of the first week, and for Part 3 (The Sociological Essay) by the end of the second week. Students may be asked for oral clarification regarding their submitted answers.

In each part of the exam, students should be aware that ASA in-text citations and bibliographic references are required. All written work will be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software. It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism, and the penalty for violating SHSU and the Department of Sociology's [academic integrity policy](#).

The comprehensive exam will be governed by the Comprehensive Examination Committee, which is composed of the Graduate Committee and Exam Ad Hoc Committee. At least two committee members will grade each part of the exam. Students will be informed of their results approximately two weeks after the completion of the exam.

There are three possible outcomes for each part of the exam: (1) high pass; (2) pass; and (3) fail. Students who fail one or more parts of the exam may retake them one time, but must complete any re-examination within one academic calendar year of the original exam date. Failure on the retake will result in removal from the program.

*Preparation Guidelines and Performance Expectations for the Comprehensive Exam*

The Comprehensive Exam will require substantial preparation for students prior to the exam. Students also need to pace themselves and effectively manage their time during the 2-week exam period. Students should review previously used exam questions and familiarize themselves with the format and content requirements for Comprehensive Exam answers. Previously used questions and grading rubrics are available in the appendix of this handbook.

–Part 1: Theory

Students should be able to demonstrate competency of both classical and contemporary theories. For preparation of the theory part of the exam, students are strongly encouraged to review the textbooks and course materials of SOCI 5310.

–Part 2: Research Methods and Statistics

Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts, methodologies, and statistical procedures in social research and their application to practical research situation. For preparation of the methods and statistics part of the exam, students are strongly encouraged to review the textbooks and course materials of SOCI 5312 and SOCI 5314.

–Part 3: Sociological Essay

The Sociological Essay is designed to assess a student's ability to formulate a sociologically informed analysis of social phenomena. Students will be given a prompt that asks them to examine a contemporary social issue. In answering the question, students must demonstrate the development and application of an analytical sociological framework to examine the issue. Students do not need to offer a comprehensive review of the literature in their essay, but should strategically account for literature and empirical evidence that are most relevant to their analysis.

Since the Sociological Essay is aimed at assessing student's applied analytical skills, there is little in the way of "studying" that can be undertaken to prepare them for the exam. However, there are several things that students can do ahead of time to:

1. Make sure you are familiar with SHSU's journal access system as you will need journal articles to support your analysis. Google Scholar also works well, but not all literature will be available to you in time if you need to use Interlibrary Loan.
2. Have an ASA style guide handy. The Academic Success Center for Reading and Writing has a link to this guide (<http://www.shsu.edu/centers/academic-success-center/writing/handouts.html>).
3. Try writing about topics they are unfamiliar with. And utilize previous exam questions to evaluate their own skill in providing a sociological analysis of novel material.



## ***SHSU Graduation Procedures for the Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan***

In addition to the curriculum requirements, SHSU has created a set of guidelines in order to complete the Comprehensive Exam degree plan. The following steps are the graduation procedure:

### *Declaring Intent to Participate in the Exam Process*

Each Fall and Spring semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will solicit students who are eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam to indicate whether they will be taking the exam that semester. Students who intend on taking the exam are expected to formally declare to the Director of Graduate Studies their intent to participate in the examination process. Students may only declare their intent to participate in the exam process once they have successfully completed the Core Required Courses: SOCI 5310, SOCI 5312, and SCOI 5314. Students who do not communicate their intent to take the comprehensive exam will not be allowed to take the exam.

### *Facilitating the Comprehensive Exam*

Following their declaration of intent, participating students will be enrolled in an online Comprehensive Exam section on Blackboard. Students will acquire the exam questions and submit their responses via the Blackboard interface. Students will have a two-week period to complete the exams and will receive the results of their exam attempt approximately two weeks following the exam deadline.

### *Graduation*

Students who receive a passing grade on each of the three sections of the exam will have their results submitted to the CHSS Dean's office by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Those students who have successfully completed the exam become eligible to graduate once they have complete the required coursework as detailed in the Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan Coursework Requirements. Students who are eligible to graduate must formally apply to the graduate school for graduation at <http://www.shsu.edu/graduate-catalog/2013-2015/graduation.html>.

## **Graduate Course Descriptions**

### *SOCI 5099 Graduate Readings in Sociology*

Independent study of subjects not covered in the regular graduate curricula, including independent study of particular value to students needing to pursue a special subject related to thesis. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of instructor. Credit 1-3.

### *SOCI 5310 Seminar in Sociological Theory*

The course is a historical survey of the most significant 19th and 20th century developments in sociology with emphasis placed on the relevance of classic sociological theory in the formation and development of contemporary sociological theory. The characteristics and origins of major sociological schools are explored including the study of the works and ideas of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber. Additionally, illustrations of the basic assumptions of Neo-Marxism, Critical Theory, Interactionism, Functionalism and Postmodernism are provided. Accounts of these paradigms are presented together with their theoretical ramifications. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

### *SOCI 5312 Seminar in Sociological Research*

This course includes the advanced study of logic, principles, and procedures involving techniques of design data collection and organization, analyses and interpretation for qualitative and quantitative sociological research. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and undergraduate research methods. Credit 3.

### *SOCI 5313 Qualitative Research Methods*

This course will introduce students to a wide range of qualitative sociological methods. The course is designed to give students practical skills collecting, analyzing, and writing qualitative research. Students will learn the basics of scientific interviewing, participant observation, and content analysis. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

### *SOCI 5314 Social Statistics*

This course focuses upon various statistical techniques used to analyze survey data including descriptive and inferential statistics, cross tabulation, ANOVA, correlation and regression. Lectures, assigned readings and projects are used to describe and illustrate the logic, interpretation, and assumptions of each statistical model. Emphasis is placed upon understanding of the techniques and their assumptions as well as applications. Prerequisites: Graduate standing, undergraduate statistics. Credit 3.

### *SOCI 5320 Sociology of Community*

This course is an advanced study of the organization, structures, groups and interaction pertaining to communities. Attention is given to social forces within communities, patterns of change and the relationship with society. Alternative theoretical perspectives analyzing community are presented along with views on the current conditions and future perspectives of communities in the United States and in other regions of the world. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

### *SOCI 5322 Seminar in Medical Sociology*

This course provides graduate students with the conceptual and substantive knowledge of the field of medical sociology. The course focuses on salient sociological issues in health and medicine, such as the social construction of health and illness, social inequalities in health and health care, medicalization, the health profession, the health care system, and bioethics. Special attention is paid to the roles of social, cultural, and institutional factors in understanding health and health care issues in the United States and in other countries. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5324 Seminar in Social Change and Development*

A graduate seminar which investigates the origins and modern accounts of the major theories of social change and development. Beginning with the classic works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, contemporary theories of economic and social development are investigated. Emphasis is placed on various understandings of the concept of development and analyses of the evolution of social change and relations under capitalism. The course will explore Neo-Marxist theories of Dependence, World Systems and Articulation of Modes of Production along with Neo-Weberian and Modernization theories. Additionally, a review of post-modern critiques of capitalist development is presented. The Seminar will conclude with some observations on the emerging globalization of society and its implications on social and economic institutions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5331 Sociology of the Family*

This course consists of the study of the family as a social institution. It begins with a traditional functional analysis of the institution and follows with critical and interactionist interpretations of the family. Current changes in the institution using historical and global perspectives constitute the bulk of the course. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5333 Sociology of Religion*

This course is a study of religion as it operates in society. It examines religious beliefs, religious rituals, group religious experience, and the religious community. Using a cross-cultural perspective, the course investigates the roots of religion in non-industrial societies and follows with an analysis of religion in industrial societies. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5337 Gender and Society*

The course focuses on the social construction of gender and provides students a framework for critical thinking concerning gender roles in contemporary U.S. society. The course uses a socio-historical approach to investigate the concept of gender and its relationship to sexuality. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5338 Sociology of Disaster*

This course is designed to apply sociological analyses to the investigation of disasters. Disasters will be examined in terms of their origins and social impacts. The course will also explore the social dynamics that create risk of, and vulnerability to, disasters. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5351 Seminar in Environmental Sociology*

This course is designed to provide graduate students a thorough background in the major theoretical perspectives regarding environmental sociology. This background will enable students to view environmental issues from alternative positions and to formulate possible solutions to contemporary environmental problems. The course focuses on the social construction of the environment and on environmental problems and solutions. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5353 Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies*

In-depth examination and critique of important monographs and journal literature dealing with the social life of American minorities. Designed to promote mature scholarship in the study of literature drawing from influences, ideologies, structural forces and changes characteristic of the social life of comparative minority groups. Students will be responsible for identifying sociological propositions reflected in the discerned patterns of interaction occurring in selected institutions in contemporary American society. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5355 Seminar in Social Inequality*

This course studies contemporary class, status and power hierarchies with emphasis on empirical research pertaining to placement in these hierarchies on the basis of birth-achieved statuses such as sex, race, and class origin. Consideration is also given to contemporary and classical sociological theories of social inequality. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5376 Applied Research Methods*

This course studies specialized research methods including evaluation research and social needs assessments for sociology and related social sciences. These methods vary from the more common survey techniques by the nature of the unit of analysis (most often a case study), the types of data collection (interviews, focus groups, and existing data), and the analytical techniques used (more qualitative). Generally, these techniques are applied to the solution of community problems. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5378 Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences*

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a critical understanding of the principal technical and theoretical skills necessary for the development of research projects in the social sciences. Furthermore, it investigates the primary assumptions of qualitative and quantitative research stressing their scopes and limits. Through an examination of the epistemological characteristics of major paradigms in the social sciences, the course illustrates various analytical techniques necessary for the preparation of research proposals. This activity includes techniques for the identification of research questions, the development of justifications, the integration of theories and methods, and the development of analytic designs. This is a course specifically designed for students who would like to be involved in research grant writing and in conducting research. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5380 Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation*

This course is designed to provide an overview of the field of social impact assessment and program evaluation. This course explores basic knowledge, as well as technical skills, related to conducting a social impact assessment and program evaluation. Attention is also given to hands-on experience in the form of a group activity or an individual project covering a practical case study in the field. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 5386 Sociology of Aging*

This course explores sociological theories of aging and old age from historical, demographic, comparative, social psychological and structural perspectives. It also focuses on current gerontology issues. Particular attention is given to investigating the similarities and differences among aging ethnic groups, as well as those with different social and human capital. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 3.

*SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum*

Students are encouraged to initiate planning and formulation of approved problems in conjunction with course work in Methods and Theory. Prerequisites: 24 graduate credits and consent of advisor. Credit 1-3.

*SOCI 6099 Thesis*

The completion and accepted defense of Thesis. The student must be registered in SOC 6099 the semester in which the master's degree is to be completed. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of advisor. Credit 1-3.

*SOCI 6360 Seminar in Sociology*

This seminar is designed to provide an examination and study of substantive areas and/or sociological significant issues not covered in other departmental offerings. Particular attention is on current literature presented in the context of papers and discussion. May be repeated. Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of instructor. Credit 3.

## **PART III: GRADUATE STUDENT RESOURCES**

### **Graduate Assistantships**

The Department of Sociology offers a limited number of graduate assistantships to students who have been admitted to the Graduate Program. Assistantships pay a 9-month stipend for in-state students and are awarded based on qualifications. Out-of-state assistantships are available in some cases. Graduate assistants work closely with professors in teaching and/or research activity and are appointed on a semester-by-semester basis. Students may receive department assistantships for a maximum of 2 years.

Students seeking assistantships must submit a formal application for each semester. Application forms are available on the Sociology Department web site and in the Part IV of this handbook. Deadlines to apply for assistantships generally occur during the first week of December for the following Spring semester and the first week in August for the following Fall semester. Potential applicants should review the departmental web site for specific deadline dates.

#### *Assistantship Obligations*

Graduate assistantships provide the opportunity for students to work with faculty members. Graduate students receiving departmental support are expected to actively engage in departmental research and/or perform services assisting professors' instruction. Assistantships require that the student be enrolled 6-9 credit hours per semester. Audited courses do not count toward assistantship credit hour levels.

Each semester (Fall and Spring), all half-time assistants are expected to be available and perform services related to teaching and/or research for an average of 20 hours per week; and 10 hours per week for students on a quarter time assistantship. A graduate assistant may accept concurrent employment outside the University only with permission from the Director of Graduate Studies.

**NOTE:** Faculty with grant funds may support summer assistantships or wage payroll positions for graduate students.

#### *Termination of Assistantships*

A student's assistantship may be terminated for a variety of reasons, some of which are beyond the control of the student. Teaching and research assistants are expected to maintain academic standing of GPA of 3.5 or above, obtain grades of A or B in each class they take, possess high levels of academic integrity, and perform their assistantship duties responsibly. Failure to meet these criteria may be considered grounds for assistantship termination. Assistantships may also be terminated due to financial and/or bureaucratic exigencies of the Department and/or the University.

## Scholarships

A number of scholarships are available for graduate students. Scholarships are awarded annually each Spring, and are distributed over two semesters (Fall and Spring) contingent upon full-time enrollment (for Graduate students a minimum of 6 hours) and excellent academic standing. To apply, students should send a letter of application explaining their background, specific sociological areas of interest, and the characteristics that make them a good candidate for scholarship support, a current résumé or curriculum vitae, an unofficial SHSU transcript, and two letters of recommendation to the Chair of the Scholarship Committee. Contact information for the Chair of the Scholarship Committee is available on the Sociology Graduate Program web site. Note that applicants need to submit on one set of application materials to be considered for all scholarships. Applications for scholarships are due each spring by the third Friday of March. Award amounts for all scholarships vary from year to year.

Available scholarships:

1. *The Ramsey Woods Scholarship:*

Available to full-time graduate students in Sociology. Preference is given to students with interests in Rural Sociology or Inequality. Awarded annually (for Fall and Spring semesters) on the basis of academic accomplishments and interest.

2. *The Ruth A. De Blanc Scholarship:*

Available to full-time graduate students in Sociology. Awarded annually (for Fall and Spring semesters) on the basis of financial needs and academic accomplishments.

3. *Dan and Donna Beto Sociology Scholarship:*

Awarded to full-time undergraduate or graduate student (with preference to graduate students) majoring in Sociology. Student must be in good standing with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Preference is given to students with an interest in areas of Social Control, Deviance, or Inequality. Financial need may be a consideration, but not a determining factor.

4. *Prince Sociology Scholarship:*

Awarded to a full-time undergraduate or graduate student majoring in Sociology. The student must be in good standing with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Financial need may be a consideration, but not a determining factor.

5. *Walter & Minnie Bennett Scholarship:*

Awarded to full-time undergraduate or graduate student majoring in Sociology. Preference is given to students with interests in marriage & the family or community. Student must be in good standing with a minimum GPA of 3.0 and have completed 9 credit hours in Sociology at SHSU. Financial need may be a consideration, but not a determining factor.

6. *Other Scholarships:*

University and Graduate School scholarships are also available. Students should explore these options by contacting the Office of Financial Aid. Application deadlines for University and Graduate School scholarships vary.

## **SHSU Academic Resources**

### *The Academic Success Center*

The Sam Houston Academic Success Center for Reading and Writing serves all members of the SHSU academic community. The center provides one-on-one instruction for reading and writing and assists students of all level in composition of their written work. The center assists students in: constructing arguments, organizing papers, identifying and correcting grammatical errors, teaching proofreading techniques, and generally improving their writing style. The writing center also provides ASA style guides and online tutoring.

All sociology graduate students at SHSU are encouraged to utilize the Academic Success Center to enhance their writing capacities. The Academic Success Center can be contacted at <http://www.shsu.edu/centers/academic-success-center/>.

### *Newton Gresham Library*

Newton Gresham Library faculty and staff envision a library that supports and enhances the development of critically thinking, educated and informed lifelong learners. The Library is integral to the University's learning and research mission and endeavors to create physical and virtual environments that promote discovery of new knowledge and the transfer of existing knowledge. The Library fulfills this mission by providing organized access to a diverse array of quality print, electronic, and other resources and by continuously improving the effectiveness of its bibliographic, instructional, and reference services.

The library offers a comprehensive inventory of physical and electronic media that graduate students are required to access during the course of their academic studies. The library offers a number of resources for distance learning students. These include the Interlibrary Loan services, electronic journal access, TexShare, and access to electronic databases. A full inventory of library resources for distance is available at <http://library.shsu.edu/services/distance/>.

### *SHSU Online*

SHSU online offers a variety of resources for student enrolled in online classes. These include technical support for problems with online videos, course tools or features, issues with Internet browsers and other problems associated with an online learning environment. The SHSU Online support desk is available via email at [blackboard@shsu.edu](mailto:blackboard@shsu.edu) or via phone at (877)759-2232. For more information regarding resources available to online students visit SHSU Student Resources at <http://distance.shsu.edu/current-students/resources.html>.

### *Students with Disabilities*

The University and Students with Disabilities have certain rights and responsibilities related to receiving, providing, and determining reasonable accommodations, the purpose of which is to provide students with disabilities equal access to educational and student support services offered by the University. Students with disabilities should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>.

**PART IV: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS**

**Sociology Graduate Program Application Check Sheet**

	Sent	Received
Graduate Studies Application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Studies Application Fee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official Baccalaureate Transcripts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Official Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Scores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters of Recommendation		
Letter 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter of Intent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





## Graduate Assistantship (GA) Application Form

All application materials should be submitted to the Director Graduate Studies, Dr. Jin Young Choi.  
Please specify which type of position and semester for which you are applying.

Virtual GA

In-person/resident GA

Spring

Fall

Name: _____	SHSU ID Number: _____
SHSU Email Address: _____	Cell/Contact Number: (    ) _____
Mailing Address: _____	
<small>Address</small>	
_____	_____
<small>City</small>	<small>State</small>
	<small>Zip Code</small>

1. Summarize your qualifications to work as a Graduate Assistant. Briefly describe your teaching and/or research experiences. Additionally, highlight your distance technology expertise and your skills to assist in an online environment.

2. Briefly describe your specific sociological interest. i.e., theory, research methods, statistics, and/or other substantive areas.

3. Indicate whether you took the graduate theory, research methods, and statistics in Sociology at SHSU and report grade.

Theory	Yes	No	Grade:
Research Methods	Yes	No	Grade:
Statistics	Yes	No	Grade:

4. Provide a list of two references.

Name	Email	Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Appointment of Thesis/Dissertation Committee

## College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

The following members of the department listed above are appointed to serve as members of a Thesis Committee:

Title (Ex. "Thesis Director")	Name
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

*\* Please notify the Dean's office if the Thesis/Dissertation Committee changes for any reason by processing another "Appointment of Thesis/Dissertation Committee" form.*

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Sam ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Approvals:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Advisor Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Humanities & Social Sciences Date

**Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus**  
**College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Candidate is seeking: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Topic: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus as required by your department. Please see department instructions for preparation of your prospectus.

Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval:

Printed Name	Signature
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Advisor                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair                                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences                      Date

## ROUTE SHEET FOR THESIS

This Route Sheet, when completely filled out and properly signed, will be handed to the Registrar by the Office of Graduate Studies as evidence that the dissertation has been completed as required for the <Degree> degree for the anticipated graduation date of <Month>, <Year>.

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Major Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Minor Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Thesis \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Director – (Type Name) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Co-Director (if applicable) – (Type Name) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Advisor/Director (if required) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of College - <College Dean> Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Librarian – Ann Holder Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of Graduate Studies – Kandi Tayebi Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar – Teresa Ringo Date

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehensive Exam Committee Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of the Exam: \_\_\_\_\_

**(A) HIGH PASS** | A grade of High Pass is awarded to a student response that:

- (1) offers a skillful and polished answer to the question or questions presented and follows the guidelines provided by the Comprehensive Exam Committee;
- (2) demonstrates an exceptional knowledge of the relevant sociological theories/research methods/statistics/sociological analysis of social phenomena with reference to literature and empirical evidence that are most relevant to their analysis;
- (3) demonstrates an outstanding understanding of the sociological issues in the field, while also comparing and/or contrasting specific analytical sociological frameworks;
- (4) demonstrates an ability to make significant and sophisticated arguments about the sociological subject, while also presenting those arguments in a clear, logical, and concise manner.

**(B) PASS** | A grade of Pass is awarded to a student response that:

- (1) offers a direct and proficient answer to the question or questions presented, and follows the guidelines provided by the Comprehensive Exam Committee;
- (2) demonstrates an adequate knowledge of the relevant sociological theories/research methods/statistics/sociological analysis of social phenomena with reference to literature and empirical evidence that are most relevant to their analysis;
- (3) demonstrates a competent understanding of the sociological issues in the field, while also comparing and/or contrasting analytical sociological frameworks;
- (4) demonstrates an ability to make general arguments about the sociological subject, while also presenting those arguments in a logical manner.

**(C) FAIL** | A grade of Fail is given to a student response that:

- (1) fails to adequately address the question or questions presented or follow the guidelines provided by the Comprehensive Exam Committee;
- (2) fails to demonstrate graduate-level knowledge of relevant sociological theories/research methods/statistics/sociological analysis of social phenomena with reference to literature and empirical evidence that are most relevant to their analysis;
- (3) fails to demonstrate a competent understanding of the sociological issues in the field, or makes no mention of analytical sociological frameworks;
- (4) is incoherent, poorly organized, or fraught with construction, grammar, and usage problems.

A student who fails an area or areas is allowed one opportunity to retake the examination in the failed section(s).

**Overall Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

# Report of Comprehensive Examination

## College of Humanities and Social Sciences

4-12-05

Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Test Type (Oral-Written): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SamID: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas (If applicable)	Marks
1) _____	_____
2) _____	_____
3) _____	_____

Date Exam Administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Is a re-examination necessary? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, please list what areas must be re-administered and the date the exam is to be re-administered:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Examination Committee

Printed Name

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Graduate Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX A: PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM QUESTIONS**

### **Comprehensive Exam Questions**

The questions below have been used on previous comprehensive examinations. Students can expect similar questions for the three sections of the exam: Theory, Methods & Statistics, and the Sociological Essay.

#### **Part 1: Theory**

Select a major topic of contemporary theoretical concern (e.g., religion, stratification, power, etc.) and outline the key contributions made by Marx, Durkheim, and Weber to our current understanding of this domain. Clearly identify the topical area you select and the insights provided by each of these authors to contemporary analysis. Note areas of disagreement and agreement among the three authors in the perspectives on this topic. Do Marx, Durkheim, and Weber provide sufficient theoretical guidance in understanding this topical area or are their key gaps which remain to be filled?

Classical theorists like Durkheim and Marx have been faulted for failing to take account of non-class dimensions, such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Have contemporary theories/theorists overcome this failing? How do contemporary sociological theories incorporate non-class dimensions (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, able-bodiedness) into their analyses?

In social theory, there has been a long-standing divide between “macro” and micro” theories as to which approach best captures the way the world works. On the one hand, macro approaches place greater emphasis on social structures and institutions, and understand humans as having limited agency. On the other hand, micro approaches focus on the agency of individuals, interactions, and the construction of meaning. Write an essay that: (1) compares macro and micro approaches, noting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and (2) develops an argument as to which approach (or both) is most appropriate for theorizing social reality.

## Part 2: Research Methods and Statistics

You are a research scientist employed in the Department of Sociology at Sam Houston State University. You have received a grant to study the students' quality of life at your university for the next 5 years. To do so, you will collect data on the social indicators of the quality of life among students every year. Please choose one of the following research designs that involve a time dimension: cross-sectional; trend; cohort; or, panel study. Provide justification for your choice with a detailed discussion of the specific design and the research plan relevant to the specific research design (including sampling design and analysis). You should follow the stages of social research (p.109 in Singleton's book). In your answer, you must address all the followings:

- A. State (a) research purpose(s), (a) specific research question(s), and (a) research hypothesis(es) of the project.
- B. Discuss your Research Design.
  - i. Specify your choice of time-dimension research design (cross-sectional; trend; cohort; or, panel study) to conduct this specific research project and provide justifications of your choice.
  - ii. Then, discuss your choice of research design (you may want to choose one from survey, field research, experiment, and secondary data) and explain why this specific research design is appropriate.
- C. Discuss your measurements and variables.
  - i. Indicate your independent and dependent variables.
  - ii. Provide conceptual definitions and operational definitions of key concepts (independent and dependent variables) in your project.
  - iii. Based on your operational definitions, provide the measurements of "quality of life" variable (elaborate possible dimensions and indicators), and other relevant variables (provide actual examples). In this step, you need to outline the indicators that you use in order to develop the quality of life measures. Be specific. Explain why you selected these indicators. Based on those indicators, you should create the composite measure of the quality of life.  
\*\*\*To answer for question C, you need to search some articles on quality of life among college students. The literature will provide ideas about conceptual definitions, operational definitions, and measurements. You should include appropriate citations and references of the literature that you use.
- D. Discuss your sampling.
  - i. Discuss the relevant sampling design that you are going to employ (indicate your choice of specific sampling design) with justification.
  - ii. You must elaborate actual procedure of your sampling. When you discuss your sampling design, you want to define target population, sampling frame, and sample.
- E. Discuss your choice of data collection method(s) with justification.
- F. Discuss specific analytical plan considering the levels of your measurements.
- G. Discuss the potential limitations of your research in terms of research design, sample, measurement, etc.



### **Part 3: Sociological Essay**

Recently several countries in the Middle East have experienced unprecedented levels of social unrest. Use the concept of social inequality to frame an analysis of the conflicts in the region. You may choose to explore specific events such as the war in Iraq, ISIS in Syria or discuss a regional phenomenon such as the Arab Spring. Students are free to explore various elements of these conflicts such as majority-minority relations, religious and cultural collisions, economic and political segregation, and the local-global development issues specific to the region.

You are expected to demonstrate a mature ability to perform a comprehensive sociological analysis, and to be able to clearly and concisely communicate it in writing. Although brief, responses should be theoretically grounded, supported by empirical evidence, and complemented with the reflection upon the sociological paradigm(s) you are employing in your essay.

At the top of the page mention your name in bold type. Number the pages starting with page 2 (the title - first - page does not need a number.) At the end, list the references. The length of the essay should be within the range of 1,000 – 1,500 words. Use single spacing, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman. Use ASA format, include appropriate in-text citations and bibliographic format.