

# **Department of Sociology**

## **Graduate Student Handbook**

***2015-2016 Academic Year***

Department of Sociology  
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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.
- Students who plan to teach lower-level Sociology courses and a community college or university.

Graduates from the Sociology MA program have found careers in all levels of government, non-profit organizations, academia, 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 of 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 for all undergraduate and graduate work:* The undergraduate transcript must show proof of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. Students must contact their previous institutions 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 (except CR) 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 Passing, yet Insufficient
C	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" 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 his or her 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 the 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 chairpersons 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. <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/9edd8433-cad5-40d1b4bf-6a91b08f90e4.pdf>

### **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." <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>

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## **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 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 prior to enrolling in SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum, and students must successfully complete SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum prior to enrolling in SOCI 6099: Thesis.

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

### *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 by the end of the third semester 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.

## **Thesis Degree Plan**

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

### *Background Courses:*

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

SOCI 3443: Social Statistics (4 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. 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	SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Proposal Writing in the Social Program Evaluation Sciences

### *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 5333: Sociology of Religion
SOCI 5319: Sociological Entrepreneurship	SOCI 5337: Gender and Society
SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community	SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster
SOCI 5321: Cultural Sociology	SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology
SOCI 5322: Medical Sociology	SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies
SOCI 5324: Social Change and Development	SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality
SOCI 5325: Sociology of Food and Society	SOCI 6360: Seminar in Sociology
SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family	SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging

### ***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.

### **Thesis Approval (Applied to Students Beginning Spring 2016)**

To select the thesis track option students need to fulfill the criteria listed below and be approved by the Graduate Committee. Students who are not approved to conduct a thesis must complete their Masters of Arts degree in Sociology via the comprehensive exam track. Approval must be received before students can enroll in SOCI: 6098 Thesis Practicum.

#### Criteria:

1. Student must have a 3.75 cumulative GPA in their graduate classes at Sam Houston State University.
2. Student must have received no more than one "B" in the three core classes of SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research, and SOCI 5314: Social Statistics.
3. Student must have completed or be in the process of taking relevant courses related to his or her thesis.
4. The Graduate Committee must approve the student's thesis pre-proposal. The proposal should address the following:

- a. Topic
- b. Identification of relevant bodies of literature
- c. Research question(s) and/or hypothesis
- d. Variables and data set (if proposing a quantitative analysis) or data source (if proposing a qualitative analysis)
- e. Theoretical framework
- f. Methods
- g. Timetable
- h. Suggest at least two possible committee chairs

The proposal should be 2-4 single-spaced pages. The proposal needs to be submitted to the Director of the Graduate Studies four weeks prior to the last day of class of the semester prior to the semester the student takes SOCI 6098 Thesis Practicum. The Director of Graduate Studies will inform students of the status of their proposal by email within two weeks of receiving it.

#### *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 (SOCI 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 a student has selected a thesis committee chair, and after completing a minimum of 24 credit hours, including the three core required courses (SOCI 5310, SOCI 5312, and SOCI 5314) and one of the applied core elective courses (SOCI 5313, SOCI 5376, SOCI 5378, or SOCI 5380), the student may enroll in SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum. Note that all students must receive approval from their thesis chairs before registering for SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum. As coursework in SOCI 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 SOCI 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 SOCI 6099: Thesis. Master's 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 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/>.

### **Satisfactory Progress: Thesis Degree Plan**

Standards are cumulative: Meeting the standard for any semester requires having satisfied any unmet criteria from previous semesters. Semester counts do not include summer. Students who earn a failing grade of F in any courses while in residence will be terminated from graduate studies.

### **Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

1. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

### **End of first semester**

1. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 6 credit hours that count toward M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

### **End of second semester**

1. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 12 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses



4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

#### **End of third semester**

1. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
  - a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
  - b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences
  - d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
2. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

#### **End of fourth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.
3. Selected a thesis chair and formed a thesis committee
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

#### **End of the fifth semester**

1. Successfully completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum
2. Completed a minimum of 30 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

#### **End of sixth semester**

1. Successfully completed SOCI 6099: Thesis
2. Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

### **Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

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

##### *Background Courses:*

These undergraduate courses (or acceptable equivalents) are required for Master's 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 SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Proposal  
Writing in the Social Program Evaluation  
Sciences

*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 5333: Sociology of Religion

SOCI 5319: Sociological Entrepreneurship SOCI 5337: Gender and Society SOCI

SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community 5338: Sociology of Disaster

SOCI 5321: Cultural Sociology SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental  
Sociology

SOCI 5322: Medical Sociology SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies

SOCI 5324: Social Change and Development SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality

SOCI 5325: Sociology of Food and Society SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging SOCI

SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family 6360: Seminar in Sociology

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

The Comprehensive 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 (SOCI 5310, SOCI 5312, and SOCI 5314) and one of the applied core elective courses (SOCI 5313, SOCI 5376, SOCI 5378, or SOCI 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 antiplagiarism 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*

The Comprehensive Exam requires 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, SOCI 5313 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 students' applied analytical skills, there is little in the way of "studying" that can be undertaken to prepare you for the exam. However, there are several things that you can do ahead of time to prepare:

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-successcenter/writing/handouts.html>).
3. Try writing about topics you are unfamiliar with. And utilize previous exam questions to evaluate your 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 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 completed 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/graduatecatalog/2013-2015/graduation.html>.

### **Satisfactory Progress: Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

Standards are cumulative: Meeting the standard for any semester requires having satisfied any unmet criteria from previous semesters. Semester counts do not include summer. Students who earn a failing grade of F in any courses while in residence will be terminated from graduate studies.

#### **Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

1. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

#### **End of first semester**

1. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 6 credit hours that count toward M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

**End of second semester**

1. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 12 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

**End of third semester**

1. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
  - a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
  - b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences
  - d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
2. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses
4. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

**End of fourth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.
3. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

**End of the fifth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 30 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.
3. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU

**End of sixth semester**

1. Successfully completed comprehensive exams.
  2. Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
  3. Has earned no more than 1 grade of C in all graduate courses at SHSU
- 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 5319 Sociological Entrepreneurship*

This course examines the role of the entrepreneur in modern society, and how modern society influences entrepreneurship in communities, regions, and nations. In this course, students challenge and debate the role of the entrepreneur, and will seek to understand how a variety of social and psychological forces shape not only entrepreneurial action, but also how society acts to enhance or inhibit entrepreneurship. Students become familiar with topics including entrepreneurial risk, opportunity, innovation, and social entrepreneurship, and critically examine how entrepreneurial behavior changes across social boundaries like race, gender, and culture. Students emerge from the course having learned a variety of techniques for supporting entrepreneurs and stimulating entrepreneurial action in the public sphere. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. 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 5321 Cultural Sociology*

This course examines culture from the sociological perspective, forms and modifications of culture, its elements and the hierarchy, events and artifacts in their relation to the social structure and social change. The course takes students through the classic and modern theories of culture, introduces them to major sociological methods of cultural analysis, and helps them learn to apply the theories and to analyze a variety of socio-cultural phenomena, such as inequality, social emotion, gender, and health. Prerequisite: 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 NeoMarxist 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 5325 Sociology of Food and Society*

This course sociologically examines the production, distribution, and consumption of food. In particular, the focus is on the analysis of the contemporary food system. Through this class, students learn to critically analyze issues surrounding food and society through a sociological lens. Prerequisite: 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 crosscultural 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.

### **Matriculation Timelines:**

#### **2-Year Matriculation Timeline: Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

The following guidelines reflect optimal scheduling of coursework for students wishing to graduate in two academic years (4 semesters) under the Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan. Students should utilize these guidelines under the advisement of the Director of Graduate Studies. Note that this timeline does not include summer instruction. Summer coursework will reduce semester course loads specified in this timeline.

#### **Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

2. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

#### **End of first semester**

5. Completed at least two of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
6. Completed a minimum of 9 credit hours that count toward M.A.

#### **End of second semester**

5. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
6. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
  - a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
  - b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences

- d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
- 7. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of third semester**

- 1. Completed a minimum of 27 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of fourth semester**

- 4. Successfully completed comprehensive exams.\*
- 5. Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

\*Students may take comprehensive exams once they have completed 24 credit hours, including all Core Required and Applied Core Elective courses

**2-Year Matriculation Timeline: Thesis Degree Plan**

The following guidelines reflect optimal scheduling of coursework for students wishing to graduate in three academic years (4 semesters) under the Thesis Degree Plan. Students should utilize these guidelines under the advisement of the Director of Graduate Studies. Note that this timeline does not include summer instruction. Summer coursework will reduce semester course loads specified in this timeline.

**Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

- 1. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

**End of first semester**

- 1. Completed at least two of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
- 2. Completed a minimum of 12 credit hours that count toward M.A.

**End of second semester**

- 1. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
- 2. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
  - a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods

- b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences
  - d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
3. Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of third semester**

- 1. Successfully completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum
- 2. Completed a minimum of 30 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of fourth semester**

- 1. Successfully completed SOCI 6099: Thesis
- Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**3-Year Matriculation Timeline: Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

The following guidelines reflect optimal scheduling of coursework for students wishing to graduate in three academic years (6 semesters) under the Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan. Students should utilize these guidelines under the advisement of the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

- 3. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

**End of first semester**

- 7. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
- 8. Completed a minimum of 9 credit hours that count toward M.A.

**End of second semester**

- 8. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
- 9. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of third semester**

5. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
  - a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
  - b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences
  - d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
6. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

#### **End of fourth semester**

4. Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

#### **End of the fifth semester**

4. Completed a minimum of 30 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

#### **End of sixth semester**

6. Successfully completed comprehensive exams.\*
7. Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

\*Students may take comprehensive exams once they have completed 24 credit hours, including all Core Required and Applied Core Elective courses

### **3-Year Matriculation Timeline: Thesis Degree Plan**

The following guidelines reflect optimal scheduling of coursework for students wishing to graduate in three academic years (6 semesters) under the Thesis Degree Plan. Students should utilize these guidelines under the advisement of the Director of Graduate Studies.

#### **Prior to Enrollment in Graduate Courses at SHSU:**

2. Completed SOCI 3443: Social Statistics and SOCI 4340: Research Methods (or equivalent) with a grade of B or better.

#### **End of first semester**

3. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
4. Completed a minimum of 6 credit hours that count toward M.A.

#### **End of second semester**

4. Completed all of the following Core Required courses:

- a. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - b. SOCI 5313: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - c. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
5. Completed a minimum of 12 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of third semester**

2. Completed one of the following Applied Core Elective courses:
- a. SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
  - b. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
  - c. SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences
  - d. SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation
3. Completed a minimum of 18 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of fourth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 24 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of the fifth semester**

3. Successfully completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum
4. Completed a minimum of 30 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of sixth semester**

2. Successfully completed SOCI 6099: Thesis
3. Completed a minimum of 36 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

## **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 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 in a minimum of 6 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.

### **Standards of Professional Conduct for Graduate Assistants**

As employees of Sam Houston State University and the State of Texas, and as representatives of the Department of Sociology, graduate assistants must comply with the rules of professional conduct and ethical behavior to which all other faculty and staff are bound, including FERPA and Title IX regulations. While the Chair of the Department of Sociology and the immediate supervisors of graduate assistants try to make reasonable accommodations for GAs, graduate assistants are employees who, like all other Sociology faculty and staff, must comply with assignment schedules.



### *Grounds for Dismissal:*

Gross violation of University policy, criminal violation of Texas state and United States federal laws, and or failure to comply with workload expectations will result in dismissal from the graduate assistantship, either by non-renewal of the assistantship appointment at the end of the semester or immediate dismissal.

Dismissible offenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Clear violations of ethical conduct, including violations of confidentiality
- Failure to fulfill teaching duties, tutoring obligations, and research assignments
- Unwillingness and/or failure to respond to supervision or remediation
- Misrepresentation of credentials
- Conviction for academic dishonesty in classwork
- Failure to maintain academic good standing

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 because of financial and/or bureaucratic exigencies of the Department and/or the University.

### **Student Employee Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Obligations**

As employees of Sam Houston State University, Sociology graduate assistants must observe all regulations mandated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. For more information about this act, see the following link: [FERPA](#).

Security and confidentiality are matters of concern to all offices and all persons who have access to office facilities. The Office of the Registrar is the official repository for student academic records, folders, and other files for Sam Houston State University. As a student employer, many offices are able to extend job opportunities and work experience to supplement students' finances and education. In so doing, the student employee is placed in a unique position of trust since a major responsibility of offices is the security and confidentiality of student records and files. Since conduct either on or off the job could affect or threaten the security and confidentiality of this information, each student employee is expected to adhere to the following:

- No one may make or permit unauthorized use of any information in files maintained, stored, or processed by the office in which they are employed.

- No one is permitted to seek personal benefit or to allow others to benefit personally by knowledge of any confidential information which has come to them by virtue of their work assignment.
- No one is to exhibit or divulge the contents of any record or report to any person except in the conduct of their work assignment and in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- No one may knowingly include, or cause to be included, in any record or report a false, inaccurate, or misleading entry. No one may knowingly expunge, or cause to be expunged, in any record or report a data entry.
- No official record or report, or copy thereof, may be removed from the office where it is maintained except in the performance of a person's duties.
- No one is to aid, abet, or act in conspiracy with another to violate any part of this code.
- Any knowledge of a violation must be immediately reported to the person's supervisor.

## **Title IX**

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. Sam Houston State University complies with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. Sexual misconduct, as defined in the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy, constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and Title VII. For complete information, go to <http://www.shsu.edu/titleix/>.

## **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 (a minimum of 6 hours per semester) 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 only 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.

6. 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. The ScholarX Program automatically matches students with scholarships for which they qualify. For information on the ScholarX Program, see the Office of Financial Aid scholarship page.

## **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

Submit all application materials to the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Douglas H. Constance.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address

City

State

Zip Code

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: \_\_\_\_\_ Sa mID: \_\_\_\_\_

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

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Graduate Advisor

Date

Chair

Date

Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date

## APPENDIX A: PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM QUESTIONS

**Sample 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. An example of comprehensive examination Methods & Statistics questions and pass answers is also provided.

### Part 1: Theory

Example #1: 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, ablebodiedness) 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.

Example #2: In sociology, good social theory is defined in terms of “statements that accurately reflect reality.” That is, good theory must contain claims that are validated through empirical observations. Dwelling on this definition, compare and contrast Marx’s theory of Historical Materialism with Durkheim’s theory of Social Facts. In particular, analyze the manner in which these two classical thinkers employ the concept of empirical observations into the construction of their theories. In the illustration of your position, you may use one of more examples to support your argument.

Example #3: A long running debate in sociology is between the relative importance of structure and agency. On the one hand, there are various theoretical schools that argue social structure is the most important sociological variable and has the most influence over people’s lives. On the other hand, there are theoretical traditions that prioritize human

agency and understand society as an outcome of human actions. Please review the arguments of these two general theoretical positions and leading theories within each. Additionally, please discuss the limitations of each approach. Lastly, discuss which theoretical framework is more useful for understanding society, or are both necessary?

## **Part 2: Research Methods and Statistics**

Research Methods Example #1: 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 hypothesi(e)s 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.

#### Research Methods and Statistics Example #2 with Pass Answers:

Research Methods Question: The Mayor of Huntsville, Texas has approached you with an important research task! It appears that a number of small businesses have been leaving the community to set up shop in nearby Conroe. This is totally unacceptable, but the Mayor honestly cannot understand why so many small businesses want to move there – especially when rents and costs of doing business are so much lower in Huntsville. In particular, the Mayor would like to know 1) What is motivating these small businesses to leave? 2) What are the characteristics of small business owners that are leaving, versus those that are staying? And 3) What might be some good strategies for retaining small businesses in the area? You will need to select some type of experimental or quasi-experimental design, and follow the stages of social research found on page 109 of your Singleton & Straits research methods book. In your answer, you must address all of the following:

- A. State (a) research purpose(s), (a) specific research question(s), and (a) research hypothesi(e)s of the project.
- B. Discuss your Research Design.
  - a. Specify the type of experimental or quasi-experimental approach you will chose and provide justifications of your choice. What will the experimental and control groups be? Is there a time dimension involved?
  - b. Then, discuss your choice of research design (you may want to use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods to analyze this problem) and explain why this specific research design is appropriate.
- C. Discuss your measurements and variables.
  - a. Indicate your independent and dependent variables. Are there any possible intervening variables?
  - b. Given the scope of the research, which control variables might you want to include for later examination (i.e., what extraneous variables might impact the responses given by participants)?
  - b. Provide conceptual definitions and operational definitions of key concepts (independent and dependent variables) in your project.
  - c. Based on your operational definitions, provide the measurements of both *innovative problem solving skills* and *empowerment*. In this step, you need to outline the indicators that

you use in order to develop these measures. Be specific in explaining why you selected these indicators.

\*\*\*To answer for question C, you need to search some articles about motivations for locating a small business in a particular place. The literature will provide ideas about conceptual definitions, operational definitions, and measurements. You should include appropriate citations and references of any literature that you use. D. Discuss your sampling.

- a. Discuss the relevant sampling design that you are going to employ (indicate your choice of specific sampling design) with justification.
- b. You must elaborate actual procedure of your sampling. When you discuss your sampling design, you want to define target population, sampling frame, and sample. How will you incentivize individuals to remain in the study (i.e., prevent *attrition*)?
- 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.

#### Research Methods Answer:

The small businesses of Huntsville, Texas are the backbone of the community. These businesses provide entrepreneurial and employment opportunities to citizens and are critical to strengthening the local community. Recently, Huntsville has experienced a large number of small businesses leaving its community in favor of Conroe, Texas. The purpose of this mixed methods study is to explore why small businesses are leaving Huntsville in favor of Conroe. This study will examine what is motivating small business owners to leave. This study also seeks to determine the differences in characteristics between the small business owners that are leaving and those that are staying in Huntsville and to develop a strategy the community of Huntsville can employ in order to retain small businesses in the community. Quantitative data will be used to identify any trends in the small businesses leaving Huntsville. Tax breaks, network of suppliers and consumers, access to transportation, and any positive incentives given to businesses will be analyzed to help explain the loss of small businesses. To develop a more complete understanding of what is causing small business owners to move their business I will administer surveys to owners who have chosen to stay in Huntsville and owners who have moved. From the answers received I hope to explain the motivations of business owners and use this information to develop a cohesive strategy to retain small business owners in the community of Huntsville.

During the course of this study I will answer the following research questions. What community characteristics of Conroe attract small business owners? What are the top three similar characteristics and the top three different characteristics of small business owners



who have chosen to stay in Huntsville and those who have left for Conroe? What steps can Huntsville take to retain small businesses? Based on a literature review of small business startup locations I have constructed the following hypotheses. The lower the city's business property tax rates on small businesses, the greater the number of small businesses. The greater the total number of manufacturing hours in the community, the greater the number of small businesses in the community. The greater the miles of available highway and railroad in the community, the greater the number of small businesses in the community.

I have chosen a mixed methods research design and will use available data and a survey to complete the study. My research project involves studying businesses and business owners in two communities. I have chosen a mixed methods design because a combination of quantitative and qualitative data is required to help explain why small business owners are leaving Huntsville for Conroe. The quantitative data component is necessary to measure the independent and dependent variables. However, a qualitative component is necessary to explain the motivations of small business owners and develop a strategy to retain small businesses in Huntsville.

Using available data will enable me to research large volumes of information regarding small business development, business property tax rates, network of suppliers and consumers, and adequate transportation. An advantage of using available data is that it helps prevent reactive measurement error because there is no reasonable way to connect the researcher's intended use of the material and the producer's knowledge of such use (Singleton and Straits 2010). Collecting available data will help me gain a longitudinal perspective of when small businesses started moving out of Huntsville which then may be associated to a specific event that took place in Huntsville. Use of available data may also help explain social changes that have taken place in the past explaining why small business owners favor Conroe. Anticipating a small budget and minimal personnel from the mayor's office the use of available data will greatly reduce research costs and the time required to complete the research. Finally, using available data from public records, the media, and archives increases the available sample size. A large sample size of business owners and businesses will increase the level of confidence in the results and increase reliability.

However, the use of available data will not provide me with a complete analysis of the problem plaguing Huntsville. A telephone survey will be used to identify personal and behavior characteristics of small business owners. It will also be used to explain future intentions and past decisions and motivations of owners. I will utilize a cross-sectional design in order to gather the necessary data in a short period of time and start working with the mayor to attract small businesses to the community. Telephone surveys will require less funding and manpower than conducting face-to-face interviews with all the possible small business owners in Huntsville and Conroe. Telephone interviewing may cause owners to answer in the direction of social desirability by not wanting to offend the residents of the town of Huntsville. Telephone interviews will help minimize coverage error but high nonresponse bias is a concern. Interviewers will have to work to ensure the interview is not overly lengthy and also build rapport with the respondent (Singleton and Straits 2010). In summary, using available data and surveys allows me to efficiently and cost-effectively obtain reliable results from a large sample size located in geographically separated communities.

After a review of literature regarding small business startups I determined the three independent variables I will focus on to explain my dependent variable are a city's business property tax rates, network of suppliers and consumers, and adequate transportation. The dependent variable is number of small businesses. A city's business property tax rate is conceptualized as the compulsory payment to one's local government for business property (Bartik 1985). A city's business property tax rate is operationalized as the tax rate paid by the small business owner in 2013 and 2014 (if the data is available) to the local governments of either Huntsville or Conroe (Bartik 1985). Network of suppliers and consumers is conceptualized as existing manufacturing activity (Bartik 1985). It is operationalized as the total manufacturing hours in each city per square mile (Bartik 1985). It is important to understand the existing manufacturing in each city because businesses are attracted to locations with established potential consumers and suppliers as well as businesses in similar industries (Bartik 1985). Adequate transportation to move goods and services is also important in determining where a business may startup. Adequate transportation is conceptualized as the amount of highways, railroad, and air modes of transportation to move goods and services. Adequate transportation is operationalized as the total miles of highway and railroads per square mile of each city (Bartik 1985).

The dependent variable is number of small businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) definition of a small business will be utilized for this study. The SBA defines a small business as a business independently owned and operated for a profit. Below are listed the seven separate sectors of small businesses based on type of industry and size that the SBA recognizes (SBA's Definition of a Small Business). 1) Manufacturing-depending on type of product manufactured the maximum number of employees is 500 to 1500. 2) Wholesaling-depending on the type of product being provided the maximum number of employees is 100 to 500. 3) Services-depending on service being provided annual receipts may not exceed \$2.5 to \$21.5 million. 4) Retailing-depending on the services being provided annual receipts may not exceed \$5.0 to \$21.0 million. 5) General and Heavy Construction-depending on the type of construction annual receipts may not exceed \$13.5 to \$17 million. 6) Special trade construction-annual receipts may not exceed \$7.0 million. 7) Agriculture-depending on the type of product produced annual receipts may not exceed \$0.5 to \$9.0 million (SBA's Definition of a Small Business). Small businesses are conceptualized as the number of small businesses that began operations in Huntsville or Conroe during the most recent eight quarters the mayor has been in office (Gabe 2007). By analyzing the most recent eight quarters we will have two years' worth of data to use without overwhelming the small research team.

In this study it is important to identify any possible intervening variables that could impact the results. An intervening variable is evident when it is the effect of the independent variable and the cause of the dependent variable. Two possible intervening variables related to business tax rates is public infrastructure and public services (i.e. fire response services, etc.). If a city charges high business tax rates which are then used to fund an increase in a city's infrastructure and public services it may attract small businesses. Another possible intervening variable is population growth. If a city has adequate transportation and various modes of transportation it may attract new residents who will then start and/or support local businesses, increase the labor force, and increase the demand for products and services thus attracting small businesses.

During this research study several extraneous variables will be held constant in order to help simplify this complex issue. The following variables may help explain the reason small businesses are leaving Huntsville for Conroe but due to the time, monetary, and manpower limitations in this study they will be studied later. Control variables include construction costs, business permit costs, land and building purchase costs, rent costs, energy costs, labor costs, business climate, loan availability, and gender or veteran business owned incentives (Bartik 1985; Bartik 1989). It is important to acknowledge that the explanatory power of the regression model may be decreased due to the exclusion of these independent variables.

For this study the target population will be small businesses and the respective business owner in Huntsville and Conroe, Texas. Small businesses are those businesses falling in line with the definition provided by the SBA. The sampling frame will be all the small businesses in Huntsville and Conroe registered with their local business licensing office. The chamber of commerce for each city will have the required information. When sampling small business owners I will attempt to obtain a sample that is representative of the population. I will employ probability stratified random sampling for this study. The target population will be divided into the seven strata set forth by the SBA. Once the strata are identified a random sample will be selected. To determine sample size it is important to consider heterogeneity of the population, desired precision, type of sampling design, available resources, cost, and the number of breakdowns planned in the analysis (Singleton and Straits 2010). A larger sample size will have a smaller standard error and high confidence interval with a desired confidence level of 95% or greater. I will attempt to collect as many responses as possible from each stratum but hope to collect at least 30 responses from each.

The levels of measurement I will utilize in answering why business owners are leaving Huntsville in favor of Conroe are outlined in this section. Ratio measurements will be used to measure business property tax rates, total manufacturing hours, total miles of highway and railway, and number of businesses started. Data regarding property tax rates and number of small businesses started will be gathered from the respective county clerks' office and the local licensing office. The Department of Transportation (DOT) will have valuable information concerning the total number of highway and railroad miles per square mile of each city. Total manufacturing hours in each city will be garnered from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To identify the similar and different characteristics between small business owners who have stayed in Huntsville and those who have moved to Conroe I will utilize an ordinal scale in the survey. This ordinal scale will contain several indicators to determine an owner's unique characteristics. Because this scale is administered by telephone it will be paramount to keep response choices short and easy to remember (Singleton and Straits 2010). Shortness of survey will need to be balanced with the number of indicators required to increase the reliability of the survey. When using a scale it will be necessary to use adjectival labeling for each response category which will lead to less ambiguity with the respondent (Singleton and Straits 2010). A weakness of using an ordinal response scale is not all important factors can be captured and other indicators important to explaining a respondent's characteristics may be excluded. However, through the use of the telephone interview there will be an opportunity for open-ended questions so the respondent may explain any other motivations for moving to

Conroe that were not previously captured. The administration of telephone interviews also introduces the possibility of systematic error and reactive measurement error.

Some potential limitations to this research design are time, funding, and manpower. Depending on the mayor's deadline I may have limited time available to conduct my research and present my results and strategy to retain small businesses. If this research design is not constrained by time, funding, or manpower the use of face-to-face interviews and studying a longer time period may be considered. The telephone interview though will be adequate to eliminate coverage error. All businesses have published phone numbers and a way to contact the owner; however, nonresponse error or interview termination is a possible weakness. As previously stated, I will attempt to contact all small business owners in Huntsville and Conroe. This large sample size will hopefully minimize standard error and sampling error. A large sample and use of the stratified random sampling technique will result in greater precision and a higher confidence interval. To increase reliability preliminary interviews should be conducted with small business owners to understand some of the fundamental reasons they chose to relocate their business. Additionally, a preliminary interview allows for a better understanding of the characteristics of the small business owners remaining in Huntsville and those who have moved. A final limitation of this model is its validity. While the operational definitions appear to have high face validity there is a concern with the content validity primarily when measuring the concept of available transportation. In this study I am only considering total highway and railroad miles. I have intentionally excluded availability to air and sea transportation of goods and services which may be indicators that influence the location of a small business. To increase the construct validity of this study I will examine the relation of the dependent variable to several independent variables. Also, when analyzing the characteristics of business owners I will have multiple indicators to assess their characteristics. I will not base any conclusions off of one predictor. Construct validity will be verified by empirical data supporting the claim that an operational definition measures the desired concept (Singleton and Straits 2010).

After completing this mixed-methods study I will present the mayor with empirically supported evidence with high precision and a high confidence level of why business owners are leaving Huntsville for Conroe. After completion of the telephone interviews and analysis of the results I will be able to identify the top three similar and top three different characteristics between business owners who have stayed in Huntsville and those who have left. Based on all of the results I will then work with the mayor to develop a cohesive strategy to retain small businesses in the Huntsville community and promote economic stability and long term growth.

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**Statistics Question:**

**Answer all of the following questions.**

1. Your aunt is running for mayor and hires you to question a random sample of 500 voters about their concerns in local politics. In particular, for each voter, she wants to know if there are relationships between socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender and total family income, and whether they favor or oppose a bond referendum.

- a) What type of research design was used in this study? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What is the dependent variable? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What is the level of measurement for the dependent variable? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) What is the unit of the analysis in this study? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) What type of analytical/statistical technique is appropriate for this study?  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. A researcher suspects that total family income, number of children, age, educational level and gender (female=1, male=0) may also affect number of hours worked last week. The researcher fits the data with a multiple regression model and results are presented below.

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.255 <sup>a</sup>	.065	.061	13.365

a. Predictors: (Constant), RESPONDENTS SEX, AGE OF RESPONDENT, HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, TOTAL FAMILY INCOME, NUMBER OF CHILDREN

b. Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16144.641	5	3228.928	18.078	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	232374.301	1301	178.612		
	Total	248518.943	1306			

a. Predictors: (Constant), RESPONDENTS SEX, AGE OF RESPONDENT, HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, TOTAL FAMILY INCOME, NUMBER OF CHILDREN

b. Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	36.255	2.200		16.479	.000		
	TOTAL FAMILY INCOME	.346	.077	.131	4.471	.000	.837	1.195
	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	-.080	.281	-.009	-.285	.776	.782	1.278
	AGE OF RESPONDENT	-.051	.032	-.047	-1.572	.116	.813	1.230
	HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED	.312	.133	.070	2.346	.019	.811	1.233
	RESPONDENTS SEX	-5.027	.746	-.182	-6.741	.000	.984	1.016

a. Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

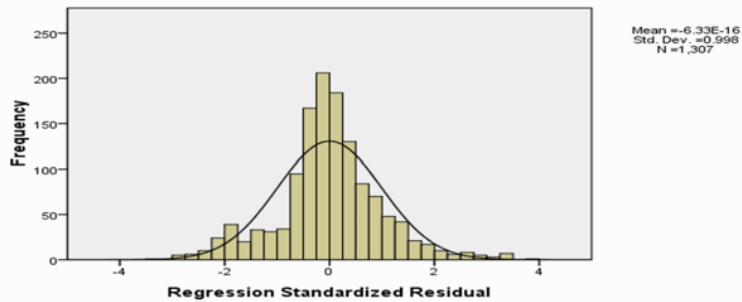
Casewise Diagnostics<sup>a</sup>

Case Number	Std. Residual	NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK	Predicted Value	Residual
258	3.497	89	42.26	46.737
358	-3.497	1	47.74	-46.737
525	3.136	84	42.09	41.914
856	3.414	89	43.37	45.626
861	3.291	89	45.02	43.977
1229	3.158	89	46.79	42.206
1708	3.276	89	45.21	43.789
1712	3.166	89	46.69	42.306
1862	3.277	82	38.21	43.791
1910	3.811	89	38.07	50.929
2076	3.311	88	43.74	44.256
2247	3.475	80	33.56	46.443

a. Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

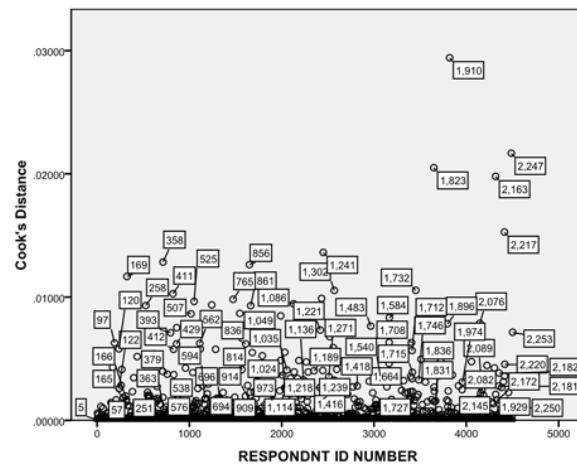
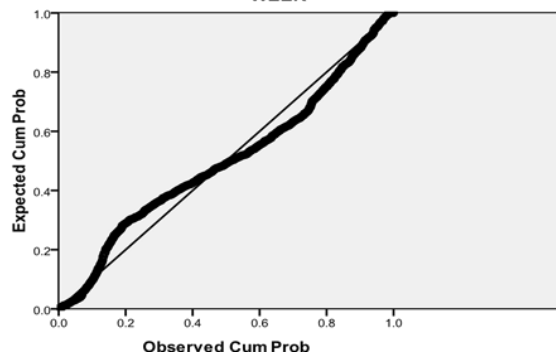
Histogram

Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

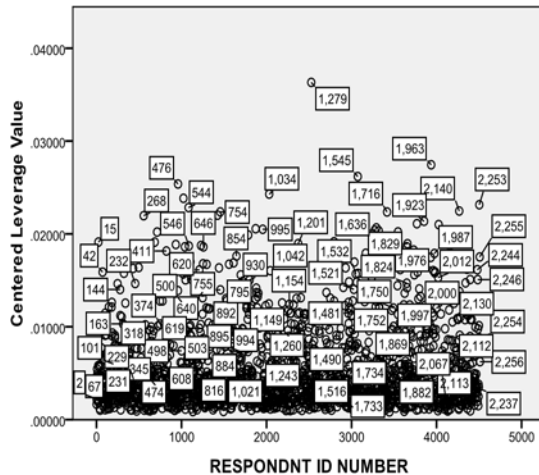


Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

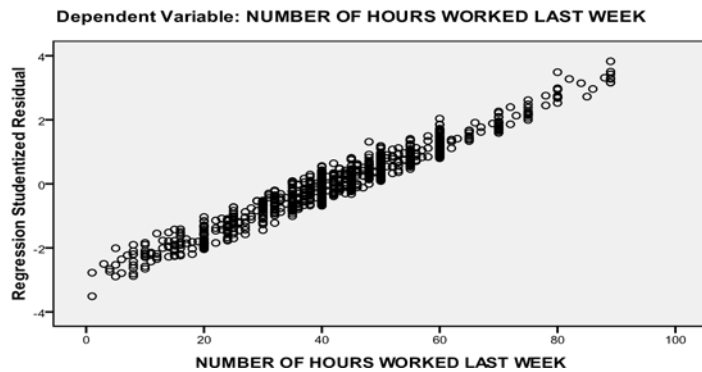
Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK







Scatterplot



- Write the prediction equation.
- What proportion of variance is explained by the model? Is the fitted regression line (prediction equation) good for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variables? Test the hypothesis  $H_0: R^2=0$  (set  $\alpha=.05$  level).
- Are the independent variables important in predicting the dependent variable?
- Interpret the standardized regression coefficients. What do they tell you about the relative effects of the independent variables in the equation?
- Check any violation of assumptions (i.e., normality, constant variance, outliers, and multicollinearity).

- f) Based on results presented by your final model, write an essay about your findings. The essay should include, but not limited to: the effect (strength and direction) of each significant variable on the dependent variable and possible limitations of the findings.

Statistics Answers:

1. A) What type of research design was used in this study?

Answer: Descriptive Study using Survey Research Design with a CrossSectional time dimension

- B) What is the dependent variable?

Answer: Whether the individual favors or opposes a bond referendum

- C) What is the level of measurement for the dependent variable?

Answer: Nominal. The possible answers are classified into two categories (i.e. favor or oppose). No mathematical relationship exists between these two possible outcomes and they cannot be rank ordered against each other.

- D) What is the unit of analysis in this study?

Answer: The individual person

- E) What type of analytical/statistical technique is appropriate for this study?

Answer: Survey/Questionnaire

2. A) Prediction equation:  $Y_1 = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$

$$Y_1 = 36.255 + 0.346X_1 - 0.080X_2 - 0.051X_3 + 0.312X_4 - 5.027X_5$$

- B) What portion of the variance is explained by the model? Is the fitted regression line (prediction equation) good for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variables? Test the hypothesis  $H_0: R^2=0$  (set  $\alpha=.05$  level).

In this example “n” is large but because we have multiple independent variables we will use adjusted  $R^2$  to determine how well the variance is explained. Adjusted  $R^2$  helps determine if the independent variables improve the model rather than just increase  $R^2$  because additional predictors are added to the model.  $R^2$  ranges from 0 to 1. A value of 0 indicates there is no explanatory power between the independent variables and the dependent variable signifying important independent variables were excluded from the model. A value of 1 means the model is a perfect fit and the independent variables explain all the variance in the dependent variable. Put another way,  $R^2$  measures the combined effects of all the independent variables on the dependent variable in the regression model.

Adjusted  $R^2$  equals a value of .061; therefore, 6.1% of the variation in the dependent variable, number of hours worked last week, can be explained by the independent variables of family income, number of children, age, educational level, and gender. The model can be generalized to the population but it is not a strong correlation and is fairly close to 0 which is

an indicator of no prediction. This prediction equation is not a very good model for predicting the dependent variable based on the independent variables. This leads me to believe other important independent variables needed to explain number of hours worked last week were excluded. From the ANOVA table we see the observed significance level is 0.00 and is less than 0.05; therefore, we reject  $H_0$  and accept  $H_a : R^2 \neq 0$ . The regression model is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

C) Are the independent variables important in predicting the dependent variable?

Answer:  $H_0: \beta_{y1.2345} = 0$ ;  $H_a: \beta_{y1.2345} \neq 0$

$H_0: \beta_{y2.1345} = 0$ ;  $H_a: \beta_{y2.1345} \neq 0$

$H_0: \beta_{y3.1245} = 0$ ;  $H_a: \beta_{y3.1245} \neq 0$

$H_0: \beta_{y4.1235} = 0$ ;  $H_a: \beta_{y4.1235} \neq 0$

$H_0: \beta_{y5.1234} = 0$ ;  $H_a: \beta_{y5.1234} \neq 0$

The significance levels of  $X_1$  (total family income),  $X_4$  (highest year of school completed), and  $X_5$  (respondent's sex) are 0.000, 0.019, and 0.000 respectively. The significance levels of the independent variables are derived from the Coefficients Table. These independent variables are significant at the 0.05 level and I will reject  $H_0$  and accept  $H_a$  for each. These three independent variables are important in predicting the dependent variable.

The significance levels of  $X_2$  (number of children) and  $X_3$  (age of respondent) are 0.776 and 0.116 respectively and are not significant at the 0.05 level. I will accept  $H_0$  for these two independent variables and know they are not important in predicting the dependent variable.

D) Interpret the standardized regression coefficients. What do they tell you about the relative effects of the independent variables in the equation?

The standardized regression coefficient is used to tell us the level of effect each independent variable has on the dependent variable. Regardless of whether the independent variable has a positive or negative sign the independent variable with the largest absolute value has the largest effect on the dependent variable. After analyzing the standardized regression coefficient, located in the Coefficients Table, for each independent variable, it appears the respondent's sex (Beta equals -0.182) has the largest impact on the number of hours worked last week. The second independent variable with the largest impact on number of hours worked last week is total family income (Beta equals 0.131) followed by highest year of school completed (Beta equals 0.070). Age of respondent (Beta equals -0.047) followed by number of children (Beta equals -0.009) are the two independent variables with the smallest effect on number of hours worked last week.

E) Check any violation of assumptions (i.e., normality, constant variance, outliers, and multicollinearity).

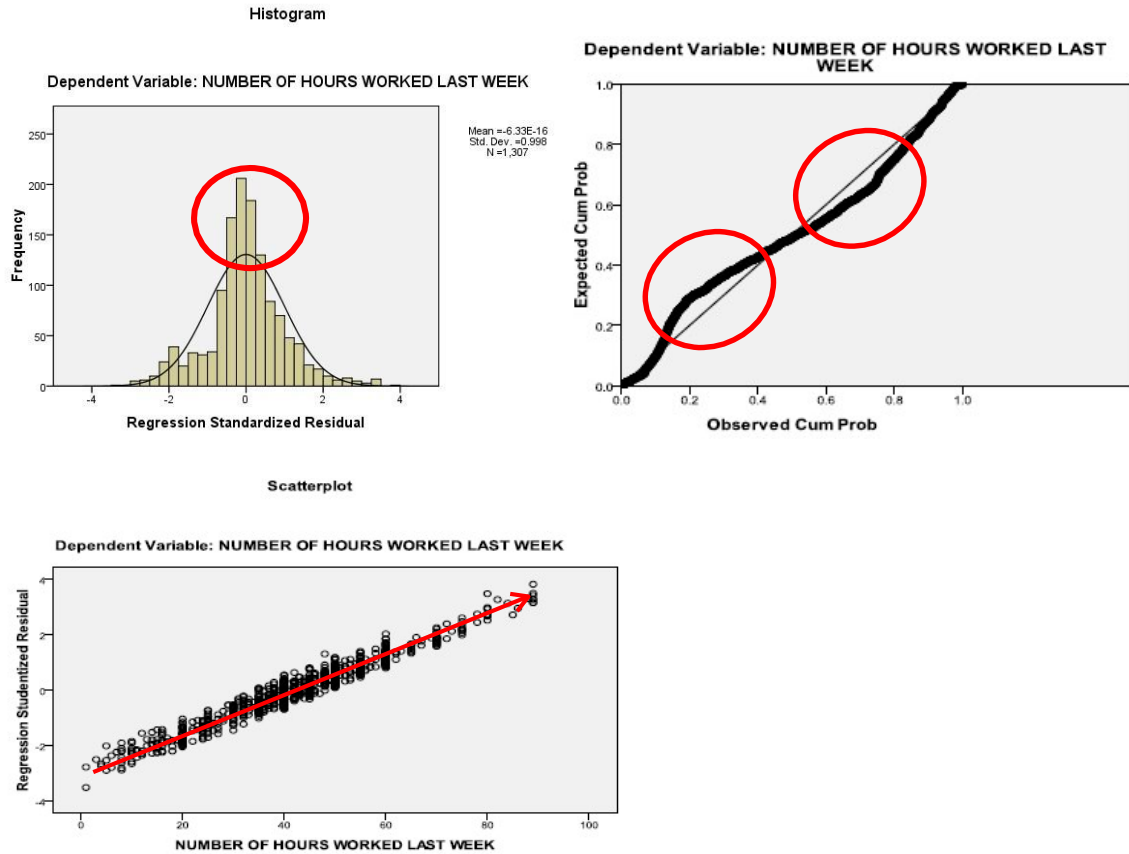
To check if the normality assumption has been violated we will analyze the histogram and P-Plot created from the data. The histogram shows several outliers exist which indicate

the normality assumption has been violated. However, this is not too serious because it will only affect the intercept, not any estimation. By analyzing the P-Plot one can see the data does not follow the linear line and shows distribution is not normal indicating the normality assumption is violated. Next I will analyze the residual scatter plot to determine if there is a strong correlation between  $e_i$  (regression studentized residual) and  $Y_i$  (number of hours worked last week) which would indicate important independent variables have been excluded. Based on the scatter plot it is evident that important independent variables are excluded from the model. This is further supported by the small adjusted  $R^2$  value that was calculated. To improve the model the researcher needs to conduct a thorough literature review and determine which independent variables were excluded.

To check for outliers I will analyze the provided histogram, Casewise Diagnostic, Cook's Distance, and Centered Leverage Value charts. It is important to account for outliers because a few large outliers can have a large effect on the estimated coefficients. If this is found to be the case the researcher may want to delete the outliers and rerun his analysis. As previously stated, the histogram shows possible outliers which are circled. Looking at the Cook's Distance Chart respondents 1910, 1823, 2247, 2163, and 2217 look like possible outliers. However, because the Cook's Distance ( $D_i$ ) is less than 1.0 I am not too concerned about them. Another widely excepted cut-off point for  $D_i$  is  $4/n$  where  $n$  is the number of observations or respondents. If this cut-off point is used for this data then any respondent who's  $D_i$  is greater than 0.0031 may be highly influential. If this cut-off is used a significant number of outliers are identified. I will keep an eye on them and if they appear as outliers in the Centered Leverage and Casewise Diagnostics test I would suggest the researcher remove those respondents and rerun his data. From the Centered Leverage Value Chart any respondent whose value is greater than  $2k+2/n$ , where  $k$  is number of parameters and  $n$  is number of respondents, will signify an outlier.  $(2(5)+2)/1307=0.0092$ ; therefore, any value greater than 0.0092 will be considered an outlier. From the provided Centered Leverage Value Chart there are numerous outliers that need to be identified and deleted before refitting this model. When analyzing the studentized residuals in the Casewise Diagnostics one should pay special attention to any cases that are greater than three standard deviations from the mean. Cases greater than three standard deviations from the mean represent the 1% of cases which are extreme outliers and may inaccurately affect the results. 12 cases have been identified as extreme outliers. The researcher should compare these 12 cases with the outliers identified in the Cook's Distance and Centered Leverage Value Charts. If the 12 cases appear multiple times the researcher should delete these cases and rerun the data.

To examine multicollinearity one can use the correlation coefficient, variation inflation factor (VIF), and tolerance values. The correlation coefficient is not provided in this scenario so VIF and tolerance will be used. The tolerance value is not less than 0.1 and the VIF value is small (typically looking for  $VIF < 3.0$ ) therefore multicollinearity is not suspected.

To check for violations of the constant variance assumption it would be helpful to have the studentized residual plots for the five independent variables.



F) Based on results presented by your final model, write an essay about your findings. The essay should include, but not limited to: the effect (strength and direction) of each significant variable on the dependent variable and possible limitations of the findings.

Assuming the results provided are my final model I can determine the regression model may be generalized to the population and is significant at the 0.05 level. However, with an adjusted  $R^2$  value of just 6.1% only 6.1% of the variation in number of hours worked last week can be explained by the five independent variables. A serious limitation of this model is the fact several important independent variables have been excluded. The correspondent's sex, total family income, and highest year of school completed are significant in predicting the number of hours worked last week. The positive relationship between total family income and highest year of school completed and number of hours worked last week indicate respondents with higher total family income and year of school completed work more hours than those with low family income and lower level of education completed. The negative coefficient of respondent's sex suggests men worked more hours than women last week. The independent variables, number of children and age were not significant in predicting number of hours worked last week. After checking for violation of assumptions it can be determined the normality assumption was violated and there are multiple outliers. The multicollinearity assumption was not violated which means the independent variables are not highly correlated. Another limitation to this model is the fact it is weak and two assumptions were clearly

violated. While it can be generalized to the population multiple important independent variables were excluded and numerous outliers are likely to have affected the results.

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

Example #1: 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 1,500 – 2,000 words. Use single spacing, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman. Use ASA format, include appropriate in-text citations and bibliographic format.

Example #2: In the past decade or so, America's religious landscape has become increasingly diverse. Compose an essay that offers sociological analysis of the current religious composition in American society. Within the essay, please explore at least three reasons why America is more diverse religiously now than in the past. Address the changes in the size and demographics of various denominations or religious groups and the shifts in the role of religion in contemporary society. Cited factors can include (but are not limited to) historical events, demographic trends, or public policy that has affected changes in the religious landscape.

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 existing scholarly literature on the topic, and complemented with the reflection upon the sociological paradigm(s) you are employing.

Example #3: Your task is to write a sociological essay on the topic of social inequality, the central substantive topic of the discipline of Sociology. Your essay must be divided into FIVE sections, using these headings. In Section One you will gather and summarize gray literature (popular press) data and provide an overview of the trends in global economic inequality (be sure to use correct in-text and Reference citations). In Section Two the ghosts of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber are having dinner in New Orleans on this past Fat Tuesday and discussing the issue of inequality in the world today. In conversation style, you have each theorist present

his original ideas on the reasons inequality exists, finishing with why inequality persists today. In Section Three you have each man critique the position of the other two men (Durkheim critiques Marx and Weber, Marx critiques Durkheim and Weber, Weber critiques Durkheim and Marx). In Section Four, after hearing their entire conversation from a nearby table, you join them at their table and express your evaluation of each of their positions (Durkheim, Marx, or Weber), including who you think best explains the reasons for and the implications of inequality today. Section Five is the References where you provide the gray literature sources in ASA style.