

# Department of Sociology

## Graduate Student Handbook

*2021-2022 Academic Year*

Applies to all Students  
beginning Fall 2021 or later

Department of Sociology  
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## PART I: DEPARTMENTAL POLICY

### Program Orientation

The graduate programs in Sociology at Sam Houston State University are entirely online and designed to provide students with advanced instruction in methodological techniques, theoretical perspectives, and empirical evidence in substantive areas that guide sociological inquiry. Given our faculty's varying research agendas, our program emphasizes *Public Sociology* as its theme. On completion of our program, students cultivate skills that bring sociology to the public sphere through foci such as grant writing, program evaluation, impact assessment, social justice, 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:

#### *Social Inequality*

- Race/ethnicity
- Class
- Gender
- Migration

#### *Health and Well-Being*

- Health and Medical Sociology
- Family and Social Demography
- Aging

#### *Community, Food, and the Environment*

- Community Development
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Rural Sociology
- Disasters
- Food and Agriculture

Target students for the graduate programs in Sociology include

- Individuals 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.
- Individuals who plan to teach lower-level sociology courses and a community college or university.

Graduates from our program have found careers in 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 three graduate programs housed in Sociology at Sam Houston State University (i.e., Masters in Arts of Sociology, Graduate Certificate in Sociology, and Graduate Certificate in Community Development).

NOTE: Requirements of the Office of Graduate Studies at Sam Houston State University as stated in the *Graduate Catalog* (<http://catalog.shsu.edu/graduate/>) 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; the application deadline for Fall enrollment is August 1. 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:* Required for all applications to graduate programs at SHSU.
3. *Transcripts documenting all prior degrees.* Applicants may submit unofficial transcripts for review by the admissions committee. However, under university policy, admission decisions are contingent upon receipt of official transcripts.
4. *Minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0:* Applicants who do not possess a graduate degree from an accredited institution are expected to have earned a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 from the accredited institution granting the undergraduate degree. Applicants who do not possess a graduate degree and have an undergraduate GPA below 3.0 are encouraged to provide an explanation for the applicant's low GPA and why the GPA is not indicative of the applicant's academic and professional potential in the Letter of Intent.
5. *Letter of Intent:* The Letter of Intent is your opportunity to discuss your fit with the program offered at Sam Houston State University. While you have a significant amount of freedom to discuss anything you would like in your letter of intent, you may want to address your short-term and long-term academic/professional goals, why you would like to attend our program, and why your interests fit with our program.
6. *Writing Sample (MA only):* Writing sample to highlight the applicant's ability to think critically, apply a sociological perspective, and clearly communicate original ideas in writing.
7. *Letters of Recommendation:* Two letters of recommendation are required for each

applicant. Letters should discuss the applicant's suitability for graduate study.

All application materials are submitted to the Office of Graduate Admissions through the electronic submission system (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/transition.html>).

### **Performance Standards and Scholastic Expectations**

The curriculum requirements for each program vary slightly (and are detailed in subsequent sections in this handbook). In addition to completing relevant program 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.

#### *Grading System*

Four grades are given in graduate courses at the University:

#### **Grade Denotation**

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|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| A | Academic Excellence                   |
| B | Acceptable Performance                |
| C | Passing, yet Insufficient Performance |
| F | Performance 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.

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.

#### *Academic Probation and Suspension:*

A 3.0 overall grade point average is the absolute minimum required for graduation. 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 following the starting of the probation, the student will be terminated.

A student who earns a grade of "C" in any course (repeated or distinct course) within the academic program may have his/her graduate status reviewed by a committee comprised of the department or college's graduate faculty. The committee will recommend an appropriate remediation for the student. A student who earns two grades of "C" in distinct or repeated courses within their academic program will be terminated from graduate studies. A graduate student who earns a grade of "F" in any graduate course will be terminated from graduate studies. The grade of "NC" is treated as a grade of "C" for the purpose of determining Academic Standing, but is considered an insufficient grade to meet degree course requirements. Those students who earn a second or subsequent grade of "C" or "NC" or a grade of "F" in any combination of courses within their academic program during the semester or summer session of their anticipated graduation will be terminated from graduate studies and will not be eligible to graduate in that term. The appropriate academic dean may place on probation, retain on probation, or terminate any student deficient in grade points without regard to the regulations previously stated.

Any appeal for a review of the termination of graduate status should be directed in writing through the graduate advisor of the program, then to the chair of the department, then to the academic dean of the college, and finally to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Refer to [Academic Policy 910312](#) for further information.

If a student wishes to pursue a different program after being terminated from the original program, the student must complete the admissions process and be accepted into the new program. A student must be in Academic Good Standing in order to change to a new program **or** receive a release from the academic program, academic dean of the college, and Dean of The Graduate School. Once accepted to the new program, the previous program must release the termination block in the Registrar's Office before the student can register in the new program.

#### *Resignations:*

To resign (officially withdraw) from the University in a given semester, 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.

*Academic Honesty:*

The Graduate Faculty of Sam Houston State University expects 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. Students should check with their academic colleges and departments for potentially stricter policies than those listed in the Graduate Catalog.

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 (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/policies.html>).

**Transfer of Credit**

In accordance with [Academic Policy Statement 801007](#), graduate courses completed at other accredited colleges and universities may be applied as transfer credit toward a graduate degree at Sam Houston State University at the discretion of each graduate program and the college in which it is housed. Transfer credit is not automatically conferred and must be requested by the graduate advisor. Only courses with an earned grade of “B” or better may be used as transfer credit. Transferred courses must adhere to the six-year time frame for Master's degrees and the eight year time frame for doctoral degrees. If courses are older than the allowed time frame, written justification must be provided by the graduate advisor with approval by the academic dean and the Dean of The Graduate School for courses to be transferred.

The maximum number of hours that may be transferred into a graduate program are as follows:  
6 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 30 hours;  
9 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 31 to 36 hours;  
12 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 37 to 48 hours;  
15 hours of transfer credit toward a degree of 49 or more hours.  
Transfer or credit does not apply to graduate certificates at SHSU.

Students are encouraged to contact the graduate advisor concerning transfer credit.

## **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 Programs in Sociology
- Graduate Student Advisement
- Curriculum Management and Development

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

The Director is in charge of implementing and enforcing the rules of the graduate programs 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 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 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.

### *Curriculum Management and Development:*

The Director of Graduate Studies is in charge of overseeing the sociology graduate curriculum. This includes overseeing student learning outcomes and the development of new courses and programs.

### *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 Programs, 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. *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.

2. *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. The maximum number of credit hours that can be transferred differs based on the number of credit hours per degree. 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.

3. *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.

4. *SHSU Student Grievance Procedure:*

The Department abides by the university policy with respect to student grievances. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>.

## **Students with Disabilities**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be

subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

For more information on Sam Houston State's policy on students with disabilities, please see <https://www.shsu.edu/dept/disability/>

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

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

## **Part II: The Master of Arts in Sociology**

### **General Curriculum Requirements**

A minimum of 37-credit hours beyond the Bachelor's degree must be completed for the Master of Arts in Sociology. The following requirements also apply:

- Thirty-one credit hours must be completed in the Department of Sociology at Sam Houston State University.
- All M.A. students must take the following core courses: SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology, SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research, SOCI 5314: Social Statistics, and SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods.
- All M.A. students must select one of the two degree plans: 1) Thesis Degree Plan or 2) Capstone Project. There are different curriculum requirements for each degree plan.

### **Curriculum Description**

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

### *Core Required Courses:*

Core Required Courses provide foundational study in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics.

Core courses are *typically* offered as follows:

- Fall Semester: SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology, SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, and SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research
- Spring Semester: SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
- Fall and Spring Semesters: SOCI 5314: Social Statistics

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.

### *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: 37 credit hours***

#### *Core Required Courses (19 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 5100: Proseminar in Sociology  
SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory  
SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research  
SOCI 5314: Social Statistics  
SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods  
SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum  
SOCI 6099: Thesis

#### *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 5313: Qualitative Research Methods

SOCI 5333: Sociology of Religion  
SOCI 5319: Sociological Entrepreneurship  
SOCI 5337: Gender and Society  
SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community  
SOCI 5321: Cultural Sociology  
SOCI 5322: Medical Sociology  
SOCI 5324: Social Change and Development  
SOCI 5325: Sociology of Food and Society  
SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family  
SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster  
SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology  
SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies  
SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality  
SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation  
SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging  
SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences  
SOCI 6360: Seminar in Sociology SOCI

### *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 Eligibility*

Students must have successfully (1) completed core course requirements (with a B or higher), (2) finished a minimum of 25 credit hours (four elective courses in addition to core) prior to beginning the thesis process. On meeting these requirements, students must schedule an appointment with the Director of Graduate studies to articulate their plans for the thesis and propose at least one potential thesis advisor. After ensuring the student has outlined a sociological topic, that may be overseen by a faculty member with aligning interest, the Director of Graduate studies will facilitate communication between the student and the proposed, eligible faculty advisor. Once the graduate faculty member has agreed to serve as an advisor, the student will be enrolled in thesis coursework.

### *The Thesis Committee*

Students selecting the Thesis Degree Plan will form a thesis committee from the graduate faculty on the completion of their first thesis course (SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum). The committee must be composed of a thesis advisor (selected prior to enrolling in SOCI 6098) 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. 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 must 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 core required courses, 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 Graduate Director, Chair of Sociology, and 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 Graduate Director, Chair of Sociology, and 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 their advisor throughout the thesis process. Candidates should consult with their advisor regarding review of their thesis by committee members. 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 [https://shsulibraryguides.org/thesisguide/checklist\\_and\\_deadlines](https://shsulibraryguides.org/thesisguide/checklist_and_deadlines)

In accordance with university deadlines:

1. The candidate shall submit at least one full draft chapter of the thesis to the Library for format and style review.
2. The chair of the committee or the graduate advisor establishes a time and location for administering a verbal defense of the thesis. 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 will begin the electronic routing process using the [Vireo Electronic Submittal System](#).

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 or two Cs in any courses will be terminated from graduate studies.

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

1. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - d. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 6 credit hours that count toward M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 in graduate courses

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

1. Completed at least four of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research
  - d. SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
  - e. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
2. Completed a minimum of 13 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 in graduate courses

**End of third semester**

1. Completed all of the Core Classes
2. Completed a minimum of 19 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 in graduate courses

**End of fourth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 25 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 in graduate courses.
3. Selected a thesis chair and formed a thesis committee

**End of the fifth semester**

1. Successfully completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum
2. Completed a minimum of 31 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.75 in graduate courses.

**End of sixth semester**

1. Successfully completed SOCI 6099: Thesis
2. Completed a minimum of 37 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**Capstone Project Degree Plan**

*Capstone Project Degree Plan Coursework Requirements: 37 credit hours*

*Capstone Project Degree Plan Details*

1. Capstone project: Students must produce a polished, formal paper that satisfies the specific requirements of one of two options (briefly summarized below) and is approved by their faculty mentor and two graduate faculty reviewers in their substantive area.
  - a. Systematic review of scholarship (in one of three identified substantive areas)
  - b. Teaching portfolio (emphasis on *Introduction to Sociology* and an elective in one of three identified substantive areas).
2. Professional presentation [for systematic review of research]: Students must present their capstone project at either:
  - a. A regional or national professional conference (poster sessions do not satisfy this requirement) or
  - b. The SHSU SOCI Graduate Student conference (held each fall/spring semester with both face-to-face and virtual options for attendance).
3. Teaching demonstration [for teaching portfolio]: Students must partner with either their faculty mentor or the Director of Graduate Studies to schedule a teaching demonstration (e.g., either in person or online) that:
  - a. Corresponds to a relevant course for one of their two syllabi and

- b. Involves at least 20 minutes of formal, instruction content

*Substantive Areas for Capstone Project (for systematic review of research):*

1. Social Inequality
2. Health and Well-Being
3. Community, Food, and the Environment

### *Capstone Project Eligibility*

Students must have successfully (1) completed core course requirements (with a B or higher), (2) finished a minimum of 25 credit hours (four elective courses in addition to core), and (3) identified and articulated preferences for a capstone project and substantive area of specialization (in order to be paired with a faculty mentor).

***Students are responsible to initiate their involvement with the capstone project on their satisfying the eligibility requirements noted above. To initiate this process, they must email the Director of Graduate Studies to articulate (1) their preference for either the Systematic Review of Scholarship or the Teaching Portfolio (both requirements are discussed in detail below) and (2) their substantive area of interest (i.e., "Social Inequality", "Health and Well-Being", or "Community, Food, and the Environment") if they intend to complete a systematic review of research.***

***On receiving this email, the Director of Graduate Studies will begin the process of identifying an eligible mentor to guide the student through the Capstone Project Requirements.***

*Core Required Courses (13 credit hours)* These courses are required for all students.

- SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology
- SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
- SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research
- SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
- SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods

### *Elective Courses (24 hours)*

Each student must select eight of the elective courses (listed below). Students may use up to 6 credits from graduate courses outside of the Sociology department to fulfill this requirement

- SOCI 5099: Graduate Readings in Sociology
- SOCI 5313: Qualitative Research Methods
- SOCI 5333: Sociology of Religion
- SOCI 5319: Sociological Entrepreneurship
- SOCI 5337: Gender and Society

SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community  
SOCI 5321: Cultural Sociology  
SOCI 5322: Medical Sociology  
SOCI 5324: Social Change and Development  
SOCI 5325: Sociology of Food and Society  
SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family  
SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster  
SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology  
SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies  
SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality  
SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation  
SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging  
SOCI 5378: Techniques of Research Proposal Writing in the Social Sciences  
SOCI 6360: Seminar in Sociology SOCI

### *Systematic Review of Scholarship*

A successful systematic review must meet each of these criteria:

1. Identify a reasonable, sociological topic of interest (falling within one of the three substantive areas).
2. Develop and defend systematic search criteria for selection of relevant, peer-reviewed papers.
3. Construct a thematic review of at least 40 recent peer-reviewed publications (primarily from sociological journals) satisfying the search criteria.
4. The written paper should *at minimum* be 25 double-spaced pages (excluding title page, summary tables (if appropriate), and works cited pages):
  - a. Thematic review of key findings in substantive area
  - b. Brief summary of notable, recent developments
  - c. Critical evaluation of research and knowledge in the substantive area
  - d. Call for future research to address noteworthy gaps in research
  - e. Implications for policy and practice

### *Teaching Portfolio*

A successful teaching portfolio must meet each of these criteria:

1. Written reflection that discusses recent developments in scholarship on teaching and learning in sociology (at least 20 citations) and uses these citations to articulate one's teaching style and overarching approach to instruction. This document should be 8-10 pages double-spaced (excluding title and works cited page).
2. Formal, polished teaching philosophy (one page, single-spaced).
3. Complete course syllabi for Introduction to Sociology and an elective sociology course of the student's preference. Syllabi must (at minimum) include: (1) course goals, (2) learning objectives, (3) required text/readings, (4) assignments/assessments, (5) grading criteria, and (6) a tentative schedule (based on SHSU's academic calendar for given Fall/Spring semester).

4. Written discussion of 15 foundational scholarly pieces in the area of research that corresponds to their substantive elective course. The discussion must demonstrate how these pieces informed the course design. This document should be 8-10 pages double-spaced (excluding title and works cited page).
5. Develop at least four assignments or in-class exercises. Each assignment/exercise should include: (1) detailed instructions to be presented to students, (2) stated learning outcomes, and (3) a technical approach (and defense) for formal evaluation. Create at least two active learning opportunities to reinforce course content (*at least* one for each course). Student must present a written rationale for the selection of the activity and document specific learning outcomes for each activity.
6. Create a detailed lesson plan for one 75-minute class in each course. It should be specific enough that another instructor could use it to teach the class.
7. Give a 20-30 minute, virtual teaching demonstration based on one of the lesson plans created.

*Satisfactory Progress: Capstone Project 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.

**End of first semester**

1. Completed at least one of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.
  - SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 6 credit hours that count toward M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.00 in graduate courses

**End of second semester**

1. Completed at least four of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.
  - SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
  - e. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
2. Completed a minimum of 13 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.00 in graduate courses

**End of third semester**

1. Completed all of the core classes.
2. Completed a minimum of 19 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
3. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses

**End of fourth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 25 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
  - a. Reach out to the Director of Graduate Studies to initiate the Capstone Project.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.

**End of the fifth semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 31 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Achieved a minimum GPA of 3.0 in graduate courses.

**End of sixth semester**

1. Successfully completed Capstone Project.
2. Successfully completed capstone project presentation.
3. Completed a minimum of 37 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**Graduate Course Descriptions***SOCI 5100. Proseminar in Sociology*

Students prepare for graduate studies in sociology and are provided with the tools and resources to be successful graduate students. Prerequisites: Graduate standing. Credit 1.

*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 and Graduate Director. 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. 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. 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: Capstone Project Degree Plan**

The following guidelines reflect optimal scheduling of coursework for students wishing to graduate in two academic years (4 semesters) under the Capstone Project 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.

### **End of first semester**

1. Completed at least two of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.  
SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 9 credit hours that count toward M.A.

### **End of second semester**

1. Completed at least four of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.  
SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
  - e. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
2. Completed a minimum of 19 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

### **End of third semester**

1. Completed a minimum of 28 credit hours that count toward the M.A.
2. Successfully begun the Capstone Project requirement.

### **End of fourth semester**

1. Successfully completed Capstone Project requirement.
2. Completed the presentation component of the Capstone Requirement.
3. Completed a minimum of 37 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

## **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.

### **End of first semester**

1. Completed at least two of the following Core Required courses:
  - a. SOCI 5310: Proseminar in Sociology

- b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.  
SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
2. Completed a minimum of 9 credit hours that count toward M.A.

**End of second semester**

1. Completed at least four of the following Core Required courses:
- a. SOCI 5310: Proseminar in Sociology
  - b. SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
  - c. SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research d.  
SOCI 5314: Social Statistics
  - e. SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
2. Completed a minimum of 19 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of third semester**

- 1. Successfully completed SOCI 6098: Thesis Practicum
- 2. Completed a minimum of 31 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

**End of fourth semester**

- 1. Successfully completed SOCI 6099: Thesis
- 2. Completed a minimum of 37 credit hours that count toward the M.A.

## Part III: Graduate Certificate Programs in Sociology

In addition to the traditional M.A. in Sociology, the department houses two graduate certificate programs. These certificate programs only require the successful completion of specified curriculum (noted below) while remaining in good academic standing.

*Graduate Certificate in Sociology (18 credit hours)*

Students must complete 9 hours of core coursework:

- SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory
- SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research
- SOCI 5355: Seminar in Social Inequality

In addition to the core requirements, students must select three of the following electives:

- SOCI 5319: Sociological Entrepreneurship
- SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community
- SOCI 5322: Medical Sociology
- SOCI 5324: Social Change and Development
- SOCI 5325: Sociology of Food and Society
- SOCI 5331: Sociology of the Family

SOCI 5333: Sociology of Religion  
SOCI 5337: Gender and Society  
SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disaster  
SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology  
SOCI 5353: Seminar in Race and Ethnic Studies  
SOCI 5386: Sociology of Aging

*Graduate Certificate in Community Development (15 credit hours)*

Students must complete 9 hours of core coursework:

SOCI 5320: Sociology of Community

*Either* SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods *or* SOCI 5378: Techniques-Research Proposal Writing

SOCI 5380: Social Impact Assessment and Program Evaluation

In addition to the core requirements, students must select two of the following electives:

SOCI 5319: Sociology of Entrepreneurship

SOCI 5322: Seminar in Medical Sociology

SOCI 5338: Sociology of Disasters

SOCI 5351: Seminar in Environmental Sociology

SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods

SOCI 5378: Techniques-Research Proposal Writing

## Part IV: 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 semester stipend for 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 seeking assistantships must submit a formal application for each semester. The Director of Graduate Studies will email a formal call for (1) Fall graduate assistants in July and (2) Spring graduate assistant positions in December of every year. That email will include the application [form](#) and instructions for submitting the completed application.

#### *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.

Students responsibilities may include assisting faculty with teaching and/or research tasks. Teaching tasks may include grading, roster management, data entry, providing student feedback, research, note-taking, PowerPoint development, and facilitating discussion. Research responsibilities may include literature reviews, data gathering, analysis, and presentation and article writing.

Graduate assistantships are prohibited from concluding personal tasks for faculty members.

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.

If graduate assistants are any issues with their appointment or assigned tasks, contact the Director of Graduate Studies.

#### *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 3.0 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 9 hours per semester) and excellent academic standing. Please see the department website and Sociology Graduate Program Webpage for application information. All students must have a profile in [Scholarship4Kats](#) to be eligible for scholarships.

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.

University and Graduate School scholarships are also available.

## **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 an 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 V: FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

### 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

# Thesis/Dissertation Defense

## College of Humanities and Social Sciences

4-10-14

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

SamID: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduating Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

A Thesis/Dissertation Defense was administered on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at  
\_\_\_\_\_ . Time \_\_\_\_\_ Date

The examining committee consisted of the following members: Printed

| Name  | Signature |
|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____     |
| _____ | _____     |
| _____ | _____     |
| _____ | _____     |
| _____ | _____     |

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Grading on Thesis/Dissertation Defense: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please list results of Thesis/Dissertation Defense: Pass/Fail)

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

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

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

The following chart lists important deadlines and requirements relating to the submission of theses and dissertations as shown on the [Academic Calendar](#), and includes explanations of what you need to accomplish by those dates.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>See <a href="#">Academic Calendar</a> for date.</p> | <p>1st draft review</p> <p>Last Day to Submit Draft Thesis/Dissertation to Library for First Format and Style Review.</p> | <p>What this means for you:</p> <p>By this date, Email a draft of your document to <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a> so that we may look over it for any formatting or copyright issues.</p> <p>Please provide the following information when submitting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone and email contact info.</li> <li>• Name of the style guide you're using.</li> <li>• If you are working on a <a href="#">Journal Model</a> manuscript, provide:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a copy of the journal's instructions for the author</li> <li>○ 3 recently published articles from that journal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>See <a href="#">Journal Model</a> instructions to make sure you really are creating a Journal Model document. If your document does not meet the journal-ready criteria, then you should use one of the <a href="#">SHSU approved style manuals</a>.</p> <p>Using the <a href="#">Document Checklist</a> will help make the review process faster and easier.</p> |
| <p>See <a href="#">Academic Calendar</a> for date.</p> | <p><b>Defense</b></p> <p>Last Day to Complete a Public Defense of the Thesis/Dissertation.</p>                            | <p><b>What this means for you:</b></p> <p>You should defend in front of your committee no later than this date.</p> <p>Once your committee has signed off on your document, submit an <a href="#">Electronic Route Sheet</a>. Once submitted, the route sheet automatically forwards to the next person whose approval is required.</p>   |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p>Last Day to Submit Letter Requesting A Permanent Embargo to the Dean of Graduate Studies.</p>   | <p>➤ <b>A note on embargoes:</b> “Embargo” means that a publisher waits a certain amount of time before actually publishing a work. For instance, a 1-year embargo means that a publisher will wait one year before publishing something.</p> <p>SHSU is offering a Permanent Embargo for those rare students whose work cannot be published within two years’ time. For instance, students who are writing books that may get published by large publishers. Since it takes years for these items to get published, we will allow them to permanently embargo their thesis or dissertation, thereby providing ample opportunity to successfully publish with a large and profitable company.</p> <p>This also applies to students who are seeking patents or whose research is funded by outside entities who do not want the work published.</p> <p>Talk to your Advisor, and if any of these scenarios applies to you, then refer to the document entitled <b>Steps for Permanent Embargo</b> found on the <b>Faculty Resources</b> tab of the Thesis &amp; Dissertation web site: <a href="http://www.shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/faculty">http://www.shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/faculty</a></p> |
| <p>See <a href="#">Academic Calendar</a> for date.</p> | <p><b>2nd Draft Review</b></p> <p>Last Day to Submit Defended and Approved Thesis/Dissertation to Library for Second Format and Style Review</p> | <p><b>What this means for you:</b></p> <p>By this date, you need to <b>email</b> the committee-approved document back to <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a> for a second format review.</p> <p><b>All parts of the document should be complete, and contain all approved edits as requested by your committee and Advisor.</b></p> <p>We will again look over it for formatting issues that may have occurred during the post-defense editing process. At this point, our goal is to finalize the document and get it published into the SHSU Institutional Repository through the Vireo system.</p> <p><b>No more edits may be made to the document</b> once it has been approved by a reviewer and submitted to Vireo for publication.</p>  |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  |   | <p>Using the <a href="#">Document Checklist</a> will help make the review process faster and easier.</p> <p><b>Committee signatures on the Approval page:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical signatures are not required in the published document; HOWEVER, some Departments do require that students acquire signatures as part of their departmental procedures. CHECK WITH YOUR COLLEGE DEPARTMENT ON THEIR PROCEDURES.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>See <a href="#">Academic Calendar</a> for date.</p> | <p><b>Publication &amp; Route Sheet</b></p> <p>Last Day to Complete Publication of Thesis/Dissertation Through Vireo (or in Print for Permanent Embargo Students).</p> <p>Last Day to Submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Director of the Library.</p> | <p><b>What this means for you:</b></p> <p>By this date, your document should have completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> format review and be submitted for publication through the Vireo system.</p> <p>Once submitted into the Vireo system, the following occurs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Thesis Clerk checks the submission for technical errors.</li> <li>➤ Student’s Advisor is required to approve both the student’s submission and their embargo choices. Vireo Faculty Instructions can be found here: <a href="http://www.shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/faculty">http://www.shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/faculty</a></li> </ul> <p>As soon as the submission is approved by both the Thesis Clerk and the student’s Advisor, then the document’s status is updated to Pending Publication. At the same time, the Library Director will approve the Electronic Route Sheet, sending it on to the Office of Graduate Studies.</p> <p>All theses and dissertations are officially published at the end of the semester.</p> <p><b>Printing and Binding:</b></p> <p>The Newton Gresham Library is no longer involved in the printing and binding of theses and dissertations (except for Permanent Embargo students). Students should contact their departments and committee members to find out if copies are required.</p> <p>Use the following link for a list of companies that will print and bind your document if needed: <a href="http://shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/printing_binding">http://shslibraryguides.org/thesisguide/printing_binding</a></p> |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   |   | Permanent Embargo students should have contacted the university's Press and made arrangements for printing physical copies of their manuscripts. These copies should be at the Library by this date.  |
| See <a href="#">Academic Calendar</a> for date. | <b>Binding</b><br><br>Last Day to Submit Electronic Route Sheet to the Dean of Graduate Studies (Thesis/Dissertation) | <b>What this means for you:</b><br><br>Before this date, your thesis/dissertation should have been published through Vireo and the Route Sheet signed off on by the Library Director.<br><br>This is the last day that the Dean of Graduate Studies will sign off on Route Sheets for graduation. |

## Appendix A

### Evaluation for Systematic Review of Scholarship

| Student Name:<br>Reviewer Name:                       | Exceeds<br>Expectations | Meets<br>Expectations | Does not meet<br>Expectations |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Selection and presentation of search criteria         |                         |                       |                               |
| Summary of literature                                 |                         |                       |                               |
| Thematic organization of literature                   |                         |                       |                               |
| Critical evaluation of scholarly developments         |                         |                       |                               |
| Call for future research on existing gaps in research |                         |                       |                               |
| Implications for policy and practice                  |                         |                       |                               |
| Quality of writing (grammar, style, and organization) |                         |                       |                               |

To successfully complete the capstone project, the majority of reviewers (including the mentor's evaluation) must agree that the student *at minimum* "meets expectations" on each item provided in the rubric above.

### Evaluation of Teaching Portfolio

| Student Name:<br>Reviewer Name:  | Exceeds<br>Expectations | Meets<br>Expectations | Does not meet<br>Expectations |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Reflection on developments in sociological scholarship on teaching and learning                              |                         |                       |                               |
| Presentation of peer-reviewed research and specific course learning objectives (informed by recent research) |                         |                       |                               |
| Formal teaching philosophy   |                         |                       |                               |
| Syllabus for Introduction to Sociology   |                         |                       |                               |
| Two assignments for SOCI 101   |                         |                       |                               |
| One active learning exercise for SOCI 101  |                         |                       |                               |
| Lesson plan for 75-minute class in SOCI 101  |                         |                       |                               |
| Syllabus for substantive elective  |                         |                       |                               |
| Two assignments for substantive elective   |                         |                       |                               |
| One active learning exercise for substantive elective  |                         |                       |                               |
| Lesson plan for 75-minute class in substantive elective  |                         |                       |                               |
| Quality of writing (grammar, style, and organization)  |                         |                       |                               |

To successfully complete the capstone project, the majority of reviewers (including the mentor's evaluation) must agree that the student *at minimum* "meets expectations" on each item provided in the rubric above.