

# **Department of Sociology**

## **Graduate Student Handbook**

*2018-2019 Academic Year*

Applies to all Students  
beginning Fall 2018 or later

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
- Family and Marriage
- 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 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://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:* 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. *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.
5. *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.
6. *Writing Sample:* The writing sample should demonstrate the student's writing capabilities and use of sociological theories and concepts.
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 through the electronic submission system (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/sociology/>).

## Performance Standards and Scholastic Expectations

The criteria for earning a M.A. degree include completion of the 37-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
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.

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 one grade 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 second 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.

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.

#### *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/guidelines/StudentGuidelines2010-2012.pdf>). 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/documents/aps/students/810213%20Procedures%20in%20Cases%20of%20Academic%20Dishonesty-180504.pdf>).

#### *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 (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/registrar/students/registration/resignations-refunds-drops.html>). 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
- 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 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 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/comprehensive exam) 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 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. *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: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/900823%20Academic%20Grievance%20Procedures%20for%20Students-180504.pdf>.

## **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 <http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/9edd8433-cad5-40d1-b4bf-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." See the policy at [https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001%20Student%20Absences%20on%20Religious%20Holy%20Days\\_2017.pdf](https://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001%20Student%20Absences%20on%20Religious%20Holy%20Days_2017.pdf).

## **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) Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan. 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 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 Approval**

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 core classes of SOCI 5100: Proseminar in Sociology SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory, SOCI 5312: Seminar in Sociological Research, and SOCI 5314: Social Statistics, and SOCI 5376: Applied Research Methods
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 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 [http://www.shsulibraryguides.org/thesisguide/checklist\\_and\\_deadlines#s-lg-box-11313914](http://www.shsulibraryguides.org/thesisguide/checklist_and_deadlines#s-lg-box-11313914)

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.

## **Comprehensive Exam Degree Plan**

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

#### *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

**Students must receive a B or higher in the core courses in all core courses in order to take the comprehensive exam.**

#### *Elective Courses (24 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.

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

## ***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 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 37 credit hours coursework requirements. The comprehensive exam for the Master's Degree in Sociology is divided into three parts: Methods, Statistics, and the Sociological Essay.

### ***Comprehensive Exam Scheduling***

After completing a minimum of 24 credit hours, including all core required courses with a grade of "B" or better, 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***

The comprehensive exam is a three-part exam: (1) Research Methods, (2) Statistics, and (3) Sociological Essay. Students will have a two-week period to complete the exam: students must submit their answers for Part 1 (Research Methods) and Part 2 (Statistics) by the end of the first week, and for Part 3 (Sociological Essay) by the end of the second week.

In each part of the exam, American Sociological Association (ASA) formatting, 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 members of the Sociology Graduate Faculty. Three committee members will grade each part of the exam. Exams will be graded using a blind-review process. Exams will be graded using the Sociology Department Comprehensive Rubrics (See Appendix). Students will be informed of their results approximately two weeks after the completion of the exam by the Director of Graduate Studies.

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. A third examination may be permitted only with the approval of the appropriate academic dean and the department. Failure to pass the exam will result in termination from the program.

### *Preparation Guidelines and Performance Expectations*

The Comprehensive Exam requires substantial preparation for students prior to the exam. Students need to review both class materials and relevant materials from outside of class (i.e., journal articles and books). Students should review previously used exam questions and familiarize themselves with the format and content requirements for Comprehensive Exam answers. Previously used questions and the grading rubrics are available in the appendix of this handbook.

#### *Part 1: Research Methods*

Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts and methodologies in social research and their application to a practical research situation. For preparation of the methods part of the exam, students are strongly encouraged to review the textbooks and course materials of SOCI 5312, SOCI 5376 and other methods courses.

#### *Part 2: Statistics*

Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of key statistical concepts and methodologies and their application to a practical research situation. For preparation of the statistics part of the exam, students are strongly encouraged to review the textbooks and course materials of 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. Students will have a selection of at least three questions to choose from. Students will need to answer one question. In answering the question, students must demonstrate their ability to develop a sociological research question, and identify and apply relevant sociological frameworks to the social phenomenon that they are examining. Answers should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words.

In answering, students must follow the general structure of a sociological journal article. Specifically, this includes:

1. Introduction
  - a. In the introduction, students must introduce the social phenomenon they are examining, develop a sociological research question or hypothesis, introduce the relevant bodies of sociological literature they are using, and provide a brief overview of the paper.
2. Literature Review
  - a. In the literature review, students must provide comprehensive reviews of at least two bodies of literature, and identify the theoretical framework(s) and concepts that they will use in the analysis/discussion section. The two bodies of literature can be theoretical approaches (e.g., symbolic interaction and Marxist), area literatures (e.g., family and political economy), and/or competing approaches within a topical area (e.g., competing environmental sociology or feminist theories).

3. Analysis/Discussion
  - a. In the analysis/discussion section, students must apply the theoretical framework and concepts to their research question or hypothesis and demonstrate the capability to sociological analyze a contemporary social issue.
4. Conclusion
  - a. In the conclusion section, students must summarize their analysis. In addition, students must identify and/or assess implications of their analysis for future research or for society more generally.

To prepare for the Sociological Essay portion of the exam, we recommend reviewing your materials from SOCI 5310: Seminar in Sociological Theory and relevant theoretical frameworks and concepts from your elective classes. Please note that students are expected to go beyond class materials in their literature review and analysis/discussion.

### ***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 graduate.

## **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.

### **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.
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 comprehensive exams.
2. 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: 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.

#### **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.

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

1. Successfully completed comprehensive exams.\*
2. Completed a minimum of 37 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.

### **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 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 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 in Part IV of this handbook. Deadlines to apply for assistantships generally occur during the first week of November for the following Spring semester and the second week of April 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.

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 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/>.



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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

# 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>➤ <b>A note on embargoes:</b> “Embargo” means that a publisher waits a certain amount of time before actually</p>

	<p>Last Day to Submit Letter Requesting A Permanent Embargo to the Dean of Graduate Studies.</p>	<p>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> <p>Permanent Embargo students should have contacted the university’s Press and made arrangements for printing</p>

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



4	Research Approach: Qualitative vs. Quantitative &  Specific Method	Does not show understanding of which approach is appropriate.  Does not show understanding of difference between approaches.	Shows understanding of the basic differences in the approaches.  Limited understanding of the different methods within the qualitative or quantitative approaches.  Correct pairing of question to method, but weak rationale.	Excellent fit between question and method.  Demonstrates thorough understanding of qualitative vs. quantitative approaches.  Clear understanding of the different methods within the qualitative or quantitative approaches.
5	Data Collection Procedures	Not outlined or does not fit the question.  No consideration of sampling.  No understanding of data collection procedures.	General understanding of appropriate sampling and data collection procedures.  Shows basic understanding of the strengths and limitations of the chosen sampling and data collection procedure.	Sampling and data collection procedures are clearly delineated.  Thorough understanding of sampling and data collection procedures.
6	Strategy of Analysis	Completely fails to outline strategy of analysis.	Strategy of analysis of discussed but not elaborated.	Clearly outlines appropriate strategy of analysis.
7	Limitations	Study limitations not discussed.	Limitations discussed, but superficial, vague, and/or not relevant.	Discussion of limitations is relevant and thoroughly elaborated.

Pass: Six out of seven indicators must be scored a pass or high pass.

High Pass: Six out of seven indicators must be scored a high pass. There are no indicators scored a fail.

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

Comments:

## Statistics Comprehensive Rubric

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

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

		<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>High Pass</b>
1	General Statistical Knowledge and Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer less than 70% of statistical questions correctly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer at least 70% of the statistical questions correctly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer 100% of the statistical questions correctly.</li> </ul>
2	Hypothesis Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fail to describe the null and alternative hypotheses.</li> <li>No or limited description on the process of how all relevant significance tests are performed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide correct description for null and alternative hypotheses.</li> <li>Provide moderate description on the process of how all relevant significance tests are performed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide correct description of null and alternative hypotheses.</li> <li>Provide complete description on the process of how all relevant significance tests are performed.</li> </ul>
3	Interpretation of the Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No or limited description of the overall interpretation of the findings.</li> <li>No or limited description of the magnitude or direction between variables to answer research question based on given data.</li> <li>Fails to address the limitations of the findings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides moderate description of the overall interpretation of the findings.</li> <li>Provide moderate description of the magnitude or direction between variables to answer research question based on given data.</li> <li>Partially addresses the limitations of findings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides complete description of the overall interpretation of the findings.</li> <li>Provide complete description of the magnitude or direction between variables to answer research question based on given data.</li> <li>Adequately addresses the limitations of findings.</li> </ul>
4	Overall Understanding the Data Analysis Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to demonstrate general understanding of the various aspects of data analysis procedures with the given data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates general understanding of the various aspects of data analysis procedures with the given data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly demonstrates a full understanding of the various aspects of data analysis procedures with the given data.</li> </ul>

Pass: All four indicators must be scored a pass or higher.

High Pass: All four indicators must be scored a high pass.

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

Comments:

## Sociological Essay Comprehensive Rubric

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

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

		<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>High Pass</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Topic or issue</b>	Does not identify the topic or issue.	Identifies the topic or issue; Nuances and details are missing or inadequately identified.	Clearly identifies the topic or issue and subsidiary, embedded, or implicit aspects of the topic or issue. Identifies integral relationships essential to analyzing the topic or issue.
2	Key literature in substantive area	Does not identify or review relevant sociological literature.	Identifies and adequately reviews relevant sociological literature.	Identifies relevant sociological literature. Review of the literature is thorough.
3	Theoretical terminology and concepts	Uses no or few concepts and terminologies. Use of concepts and terminologies is consistently used incorrectly.	Uses concepts and terminologies correctly, with minimal inconsistencies and errors.	Uses concepts and terminologies accurately. Demonstrates high aptitude of terminology and concepts.
4	Analysis: Can effectively apply theory and concepts to contemporary sociological issues.	Inability to apply theory and concepts to contemporary issues. Serious and frequent errors in application	Demonstrates ability to apply theory and concepts to contemporary issues. Minimal inconsistencies or errors	Effectively applies theory and concepts to contemporary issues. No errors or inconsistencies in application.
5	Critical thinking: can analyze a topic or issue and make pertinent substantive and theoretical connections.	Does not demonstrate the ability to analyze a topic or issue and make substantive and theoretical connections.	Demonstrates clear ability to analyze a topic or issue and make substantive and theoretical connections.	Demonstrates effective ability to analyze a topic or issue and make substantive and theoretical connections. Demonstrates originality in substantive and theoretical connections.

6	Identifies and assesses <b>conclusions, implications and consequences.</b>	Fails to identify conclusions and implications. Conclusion is a simplistic summary.	Identifies and discusses conclusions and implications. Conclusions and implications build on and extend analysis of paper.	Identifies, discusses and extends conclusions, implications and consequences considering context, assumptions, data and evidence. Qualifies own assertions with balance. Implications are clearly developed, including consideration of uncertainty and ambiguity.
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Pass: Five out of six indicators must be scored a pass or high pass.

High Pass: Five out of six indicators must be scored a high pass. There are no indicators scored a fail.

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

Comments:

## Comprehensive Exam Writing Rubric

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

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

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

**Fail**

**Pass**

**High Pass**

		<b>Fail</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>High Pass</b>
1	Organization and Flow	Organization and structure are not clear or logical. Major points are not consistently set off by paragraphs and are not consistently signaled by transitions. Points are not logically connected. Introduction and conclusion are ineffective or lacking.	Organization and structure are mostly clear and logical. Major points are consistently separated into paragraphs and signaled by transitions. Points are logically connected. Only a few minor digressions but no major ones. Introduction and conclusion are clear and somewhat effective.	Organization and structure are clear and logical. Major points consistently divided into paragraphs and signaled by use of transitions. Each paragraph has a topic sentence; sentences w/in each paragraph relate to each other and are subordinate to the topic. Introduction and conclusion are effective.
2	Sentence Structure	Significant errors in sentence structure, usage and mechanics. Sentence structure errors interferes with ability of reader to understand paper. No or little sentence structure variety; wording predictable; few synonym alternatives used.	Occasional errors in sentence structure, usage and mechanics. Sentence structure errors do not interfere with ability of reader to understand paper. Somewhat varied sentence structure and word choice.	No errors in sentence structure, usage and mechanics. Full variety of sentence structures used correctly. Word choice interesting, accurate, and diverse.
3	Grammar	There are numerous major and minor errors. Sentence construction is below mastery and displays a pattern of errors in usage and mechanics.	There are some common errors (major and minor) in mechanics but the writer generally demonstrates correct sentence construction, usage, and grammar.	No major errors. Few if any minor errors in sentence construction, usage, grammar.
4	Sources	Source material incorporated in ways that inappropriate or unclear. Citations and references are incorrect.	Source material incorporated adequately. Citations and references contain minimal errors.	Source material incorporated logically & insightfully. Citations and references are correct.

Pass: All four indicators must be scored a pass or high pass.

High Pass: Three out of four indicators are scored a high pass. There are no indicators scored a fail.

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

Comments:

## 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: Methods, Statistics, and the Sociological Essay.

### Part 1: Research Methods

#### *Answer the question below*

Demonstrate your mastery of research methods by developing a research proposal (that is either quantitative or qualitative) in response to the following scenario:

You are a research consultant employed by the Urban Institute – a think tank that seeks to use innovative social science research to improve the well-being of people and places in the United States. You are preparing a grant application to better understand economic insecurity among vulnerable populations. As a research consultant, your role is to design a study that collects information on a specific vulnerable population’s experiences with economic insecurity. In your response, be sure to: (1) state why your selected population is a vulnerable population (and note relevant ethical challenges for the selected population if applicable), (2) provide justification for your methodological approach with a detailed discussion of the specific research design (e.g., survey, focus groups, individual interviews, participation/observation, etc.) and (3) the research plan relevant to the specific research design (including sampling design and analysis). Your answer should be sufficiently detailed and should address the following elements:

- A. State (a) research purpose(s) and (a) specific research question(s) for the project. Also state relevant research hypothesi(e)s if applicable for the proposed project.
  - I. In order to successfully complete this component of the question, *students must draw on at least 5 scholarly sources* to: (1) justify the research purpose, (2) demonstrate how research questions address a shortcoming of existing research, and (3) develop theoretically motivated hypothesi(e)s if applicable.
- B. Discuss your Research Approach and Design.
  - I. Specify your methodological approach (quantitative or qualitative) and provide an *adequately* detailed justification of your approach, that demonstrates mastery of: (1) unique strengths associated *with each approach*, (2) unique weaknesses associated *with each approach*, and (3) appropriate types of questions (e.g., how, what, why, etc.) for *your selected approach*.
  - II. Discuss your choice of a specific research design (e.g., survey, field research, experiment, secondary data, content analyses, focus groups, individual interviews, participation/observation, etc.) and provide an *adequately* detailed explain for why the selected, specific research design is most appropriate by demonstrating mastery of unique research design strategies within either quantitative or qualitative approaches.

C. Discuss your measurements and variables.

- I. Indicate the variables that you are interested in for your research. Identify independent and dependent variables (if applicable).
- II. Provide conceptual definitions and operational definitions of “economic insecurity,” “vulnerable population,” and other key variables in your project.
- III. Based on your operational definitions, provide the measurements of “economic insecurity,” “vulnerable population,” and other key variables (provide actual examples). For qualitative approaches, please elaborate coding schemes, whereas quantitative approaches should detail dimensions and indicators used as well as the level of measurement. Be specific in your discussion and explain why and how you selected them.

\*\*\*To answer C, you need to search some articles economic insecurity,” “vulnerable population,” and other key variables. Existing research should inform the conceptual and operational definitions you select. You should include appropriate citations and references of the literature that you use.

D. Discuss your sampling.

- i. Discuss the specific sampling design that you are going to employ with justification based on your research question(s).
- ii. Elaborate on the actual procedure of your sample selection. When you discuss your sampling design, please identify and differentiate between the target population, sampling frame, and sample.

E. Discuss your choice of data collection method(s) with justification.

F. Discuss a specific analytical plan with justification.

- i. If quantitative, specific (and appropriate statistical tests) should be identified based on the levels of measurement of variables.
- ii. If qualitative, your response should have a sufficiently detailed discussion of: (1) the reiterative research process, (2) guiding codes and emergence, and (3) how saturation will be assessed.

G. Discuss the potential limitations of your research in terms of research design, sample, measurement, etc.

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***It is expected student responses will be written at the appropriate graduate level. Please be sure to carefully organize your response, cite sources appropriately, and proofread the submission to ensure writing errors to not negatively affect the review of your response.***

**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>a</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

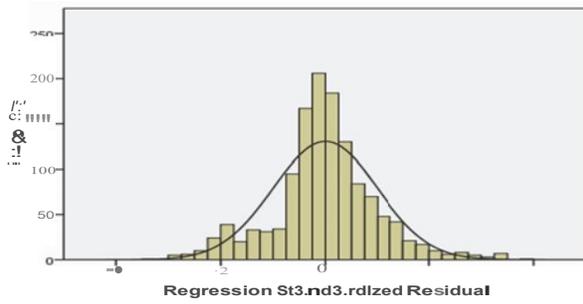
Casewise Diagnostics<

Case Number	Std. Residual	NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK	Predicted Value	Residual
258	3.497	89	4226	46.737
358	-3.497		47.74	-46.737
525	3.136	84	420.9	41.914
856	3.414	89	4337	45.626
861	3.291	89	450.2	43.977
1229	3.158	89	46.79	42.206
1708	3.276	89	4521	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

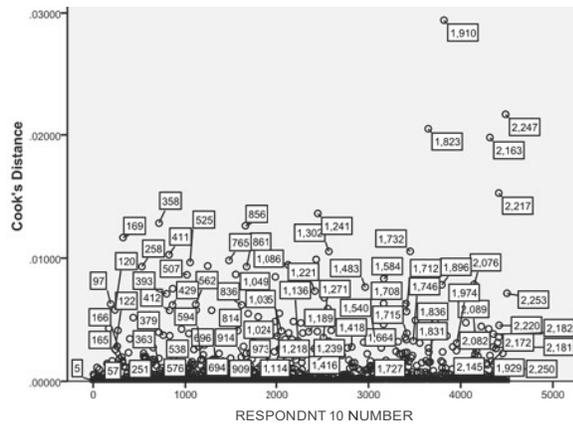
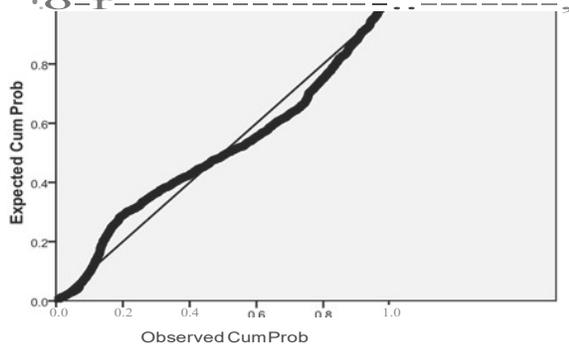
Dependent Variable: NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK

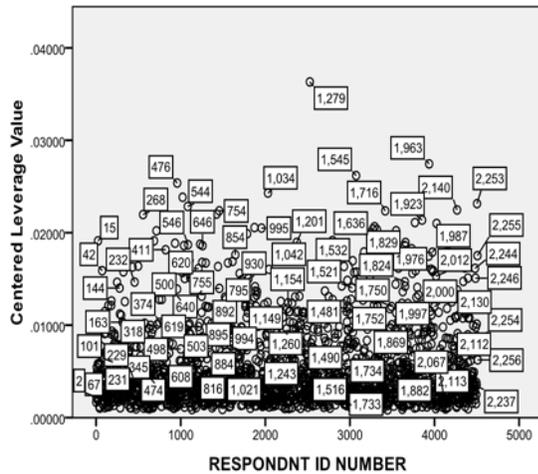


Mean = -6.33E-16  
Std. Dev. = 0.998  
N = 1307

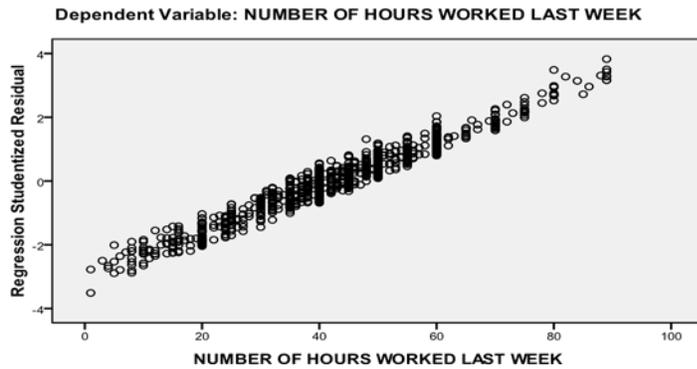
Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

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).
- 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.

### **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.

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.