

The Guide to Graduate Study

(The Blue Book)

**Department of Sociology
Boston College**

**Regulations
And
Requirements
For the Master's
and Doctoral
Degrees**

Revised

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Sociology has two graduate programs: a Master's and a Ph.D. program. The Master's program exists to educate students for whom the M.A. will be the final degree, as well as to train students who will subsequently go on to doctoral work. The Ph.D. program is designed for students who intend to devote themselves to teaching, research, and practice in sociology. It should be emphasized that the M.A. and Ph.D. programs are distinct from each other. Admission to the former does not automatically imply admission to the latter.

The following is a summary of the various rules, regulations, and policies which define these programs. The time requirements for completion of courses and qualifying examinations apply to those with no prior graduate training. Adjustments in expectations and requirements will be made when advanced credit is obtained for courses taken elsewhere. Individual cases which may warrant waiving the rules can be discussed and will be handled as flexibly as possible.

ADMISSION TO GRADUATE STUDY

The Department encourages superior students, regardless of their undergraduate area of specialization, to apply for admission. Application for admission is made directly to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), following the instructions on the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences website at <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/admissions.html>.

The deadline for application to the Sociology Graduate Program is January 2. Students who wish to do non-degree coursework as “special students” may file applications until August 15th for Fall admissions and until December 15th for Spring admissions.

THE FACULTY ADVISOR

Each student must have a faculty advisor at all times. Incoming students will initially be assigned to the Director of Graduate Studies as their faculty advisor, and will subsequently select a permanent advisor in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. As their interests change, students should feel free to change advisors. However, students must notify the Director of Graduate Studies and the Administrative Staff, so that they can update the records and inform the previous advisor of the change.

Students should consult with their advisors at least once during each term concerning their progress to date and their plans for the coming term. A faculty meeting to review the progress of graduate students and to make recommendations will be held annually.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The sociology department has two full-time Administrative Staff: the Administrative Assistant and the Staff Assistant, both found in McGuinn 426.

INCOMPLETE COURSE GRADES

Graduate students who are unable to complete course requirements by the end of the semester may request a grade of “Incomplete” from the professor. No additional work can be submitted after the date the university system automatically converts the “Incomplete” grade into an “F” (after 2 ½ months). After that, the student may ask the instructor to change the grade (if warranted) based on credit for work done in the course prior to that time.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: MASTER OF ARTS

The Master's degree is completed by passing ten courses (30 credit hours) and completing a Master's Examination, including a Master's Thesis or Paper. The specific features of these two dimensions of the program are as follows:

Thirty Hours in Approved Courses

Among the ten courses needed for completion of the M.A. degree, five are required. The core required courses are:

- A two-semester sequence in sociological theory (SC715, SC716)
- A one-semester course, Survey of Research Methods (SC710)
- A two-semester sequence in statistics (SC702, SC703)

All students are strongly recommended to take Research Methods (SC710) the second semester of their first year, in preparation for their Master's Thesis or Paper. Students who can demonstrate adequate prior preparation in statistics may be exempted from SC702. Other regulations regarding coursework include these:

- Seven courses (21 credit hours), including the five required courses, must be regular classroom courses (i.e., not Readings and Research, Second-Year Writing Seminar, etc.). Occasionally, a special course which is listed for administrative reasons as Readings and Research may be run on a classroom basis and thus is considered to be a classroom course.
- Up to three courses (9 credit hours) may be taken in an approved minor field or fields outside Sociology. Exceptions to this rule will be made on a case by case basis.
- Up to two courses (six credit hours) of graduate work from another institution taken prior to enrollment at BC can be accepted as credit toward the M.A. degree. Approval for transfer of such credit is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies. Students should apply for transfer credit during their first semester at BC rather than waiting until they are ready to graduate.
- See section below on "Taking Courses Outside Boston College Sociology."

The Master's Examination

The Master's Examination includes two components, a written component and an oral component. The written component is satisfied by the completion of a Master's Thesis or a Master's Paper as described below. Whether the product is designated as a Master's Thesis or Master's Paper is the student's choice. Both should aim toward a standard of sufficiently high quality so as to be accepted for presentation at a professional conference or meeting. The oral component takes the form of a one-hour oral presentation and discussion of the Master's Paper or the Master's Thesis. The oral component will address issues of theory, methodology, policy, and substance raised by the Thesis or Paper.

Master's Thesis or Paper

A **Master's Thesis or Master's Paper** may assume any of the following forms:

- An empirical study involving the analysis of quantitative or qualitative data.
- An original analytic contribution to theoretical literature in sociology.
- A policy analysis pertaining a particular social "issue" or "problem."

Requirements for **both** the Thesis and the Paper:

- Establish an examination committee to include a Thesis/Paper Advisor as Committee Chair, and one other faculty member as a Committee member, selected by the Committee Chair in consultation with the student and approved by the Graduate Program Director.
- Develop the analysis in consultation with the committee members and submit the final draft to the committee.
- Conduct an oral defense involving a presentation or discussion with the committee, and including others as appropriate. The final grade for the M.A. Thesis/Paper can be Fail, Pass, or Pass with Distinction. A student must receive a passing grade to receive an M.A..

Additional requirements for Master's Thesis **only**:

- Meet formatting criteria established by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, to be found at <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/academics/thesis-guide.html>. See also related forms and the Thesis checklist at <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/studentforms.html>.
- Submit completed copy of Thesis to GSAS, following the guidelines referenced above, by the due date (see end of M.A. section).

The advantage of completing a Master's Paper rather than a Master's Thesis is that there are no special formatting requirements, and that a copy need not be turned into GSAS. The advantage of completing a Master's Thesis is that it is filed in the library, and thus has a more official status as a public document; M.A. students intending to apply to Ph.D. programs may elect to complete a Thesis for this reason. A Thesis is also eligible for competition for external awards for M.A. Theses. Other than these procedural differences, there is no substantive distinction between an M.A. Thesis and an M.A. Paper.

To assist students in producing Master's Theses or Papers, the department offers a faculty-led seminar (SC761 Second Year Graduate Writing Seminar) that is open to all Master's students and second year Ph.D. students. The seminar supports students in all aspects of writing M.A. Theses/Papers. Participation in the seminar is strongly encouraged, but not required. Students are also encouraged to solidify a close advising relation for the execution of the Master's Thesis or Paper, and to take additional Readings and Research courses with committee members, as needed, to work on their Thesis or Paper.

Final Steps for Completing Master's Examination

- The Committee Chair should email the Administrative Staff, copying the Director of Graduate Studies, with the following information:
 - Title of the work
 - A brief abstract
 - Date of completion
 - Committee members
 - Whether the student completed a Master's Thesis or Master's Paper
- The student will fill out the Master's Comprehensive Form (available in 426), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and distribute as indicated on the bottom of the form.
- Students completing a **Master's Thesis** should submit the final copy to GSAS as specified above under Additional Master's Thesis requirements, by the relevant due date (see below).

Final Steps for Completing M.A.

These steps are required for graduating M.A. students only:

- Students should verify that Student Services has their correct graduation date on Agora Portal by clicking on "Graduation Information – View/Update." If the student plans on graduating sooner than the date given in Agora, the student should email the responsible person at GSAS (currently Associate Dean Hetzner at hetzner@bc.edu) and request a date change. If the graduation date is later than the date given on Agora, the student should fill out a Petition for Extension form (found on <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/studentforms.html>), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and take it to GSAS.

These steps are required for all students obtaining an M.A. (both Ph.D. and M.A. students):

- The Graduate Director checks the student transcripts on line, with the assistance of the Administrative Staff, to determine that all course requirements have been met.
- The student completes the Master's Degree Option form. The form is available in both 426 McGuinn and on line at <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/studentforms.html>. Students who have successfully completed their M.A. requirements should have it signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, make a copy for themselves and for the Administrative Staff in 426, and take the original to the GSAS office.

University Due Dates

All graduation-related paperwork—the Master's Comprehensive Exam report, Master's Degree Option form, and the formatted Thesis, if appropriate—should be submitted to GSAS by December 1 in Fall, by August 1 in Summer, and by the date posted on the Academic Calendar (<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/current/calendar/>) in Spring.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

The Doctoral degree is completed by:

- Obtaining a Master's degree in the department, including the completion of ten courses, the completion of a Master's thesis or paper, and passing an oral defense (see M.A. degree requirements above).
- Taking an additional eight courses beyond the equivalent of the Master's degree in Sociology, including a second graduate-level Research Methods course.
- Meeting a one year full-time residency requirement. (Full-time residency is a three course load for two consecutive semesters, exclusive of the Summer session.)
- Passing a Comprehensive Examination, consisting of two area examinations and an approved Doctoral Dissertation proposal.
- Completing a doctoral Dissertation and passing an oral defense.

Course Requirements

Among the 18 courses needed for completion of the Ph.D. degree, six are required. The required courses are:

- A two-semester sequence in sociological theory (SC715, SC716)
- A one-semester course, Survey of Research Methods (SC710)
- A two-semester sequence in statistics (SC702, SC703)
- An additional graduate research methods class (for example, in field research, feminist methodology, advanced quantitative techniques, workshop in historical sociology).

All Ph.D. students are strongly urged to take Research Methods (SC710) during the second semester of their first year, in preparation for their second-year Master's Thesis or Paper. All students are required to take SC702, 703, and 710 by the end of their fourth semester of residence.

Second-Year Master's Thesis or Master's Paper

In order to assure that Ph.D. students complete high quality research aimed at professional conference paper presentation and publications early in their graduate careers, all Ph.D. students are required to complete and defend a Master's thesis or paper by the end of their fourth semester of graduate studies (See rules for Master's Thesis or Paper above) The administrative guidelines above must be followed to ensure that the M.A. degree is awarded by the university and recorded by the department.

A revised (if necessary) version of the completed Thesis or Paper may be submitted as a component of one of the two Specialty Area Examinations required of all Ph.D. students. (See rules for "Publishable Paper Option" for Specialty Area Examinations).

All Ph.D. students are expected to have completed and defended their M.A. Thesis or Paper by June 1 of their second year. The only students exempted from this rule are those whose prior M.A. theses from other graduate programs have been officially accepted as substituting for the BC M.A. Thesis/Paper by the Director of Graduate Studies (see “Transfer from Other Programs” section below)

If a student does not complete and defend the Thesis/Paper by June 1 of the second year, both the student and the advisor will receive a notice of the student's impending transfer from funded Ph.D. to unfunded M.A. student status in the Spring semester of their third year. If the student defends the Thesis/Paper by September 30 of their third year, this student's advisor may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to allow the student to remain in the Ph.D. program.

Transfer from Other Programs

Ph.D. students who have already completed an M.A. or taken relevant courses at another university may receive credit for this in a variety of ways. The Director of Graduate Studies evaluates and approves all transfers of credit.

- Ph.D. students with relatively recent M.A. degrees in sociology may receive credit for some or all prior coursework, as determined by the Director of Graduate Studies. They may also receive credit for their M.A. degree, as determined by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Ph.D. students who have completed an M.A. at another university without doing a Master's Thesis or Paper as part of the degree will be required to complete this work at Boston College.
- Ph.D. students with relatively recent M.A. degrees in fields other than sociology, including interdisciplinary degrees, may receive credit for some prior coursework if they can demonstrate the sociological character of the courses in question. They may also receive credit for their M.A. degree if they can demonstrate the sociological character of the thesis in question. Whether prior coursework and/or the prior M.A. can be applied to the student's BC degree will be evaluated by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- Although a Ph.D. student with an M.A. degree in another field may be waived out of the M.A. requirement, such a student is nevertheless strongly encouraged to acquire a BC sociology M.A. Such a degree may benefit this student when they are looking for sociology teaching positions. The courses required for the BC sociology M.A. are also required for the Ph.D.—getting an M.A. thus involves no additional coursework. Moreover, if the student elects to submit an article to a journal to fulfill one of their area exams (see section on Comprehensive Examinations below), a preliminary draft of this article can be used to satisfy the M.A. paper requirement, as long as the student subsequently meets with the two readers to get feedback on that paper. In short, acquiring a sociology M.A. involves almost no additional work, provided the student chooses the journal article option for one of their area exams.

Comprehensive Examinations

The Comprehensive Examination consists of three parts: two examinations in specialty areas of the student's choice, and a doctoral Dissertation proposal. Each component is worth 1/3 of the student's total grade. Grades to be assigned for each component are Pass, Pass with Distinction, or Fail. A student must obtain a grade of at least Pass on each component of the examination.

Specialty Area Examinations

Ph.D. Students are expected to pass two specialty area examinations by the end of their sixth semester of study (end of the third year). Specialty area examination may include the following options:

- An approved reading list and take-home examination in an approved area of specialization (for one or both area examinations).
- A paper of publishable quality submitted to a refereed scholarly journal. This option can be used to fulfill only one of the two area exams.
- A specialty area exam in quantitative methods, involving an oral exam based on a series of brief reports submitted in advance of the oral examination and designed to demonstrate competence in a variety of advanced statistical methods. This option can be used to fulfill only one of the two area exams.

For each specialty area examination, students must have a committee consisting of two members. The membership of the two committees should not overlap. Members include:

- A Chair who is selected by the student (with that faculty member's consent). The Chair must be a member of the Sociology Department.
- A second member, who is selected by the committee chair in consultation with the student. The second member may be any faculty member with a Ph.D., in the Sociology Department, Boston College, or another college or university.

The Graduate Studies Director must approve the suggested areas (for oral and take-home examination options) and committee members (for all examination options). Normally, s/he will follow the student's suggestions but, in some cases, s/he might suggest alternatives for the areas or for the committee's second member. The student may petition the Graduate Studies Director for permission to have a single faculty member serve on both committees if s/he absolutely cannot find anyone else with the necessary expertise, but the norm is to work with a total of four faculty members on the two committees. Please note: the two specialty area examination committees should be established well ahead of the completion of the exam.

Students are encouraged to take Readings and Research courses with committee members to prepare for their area examinations. In lieu of a final paper, students may request that the examination be used to determine the final grade.

1. Take-Home Examination Option

Take-home specialty area exams are three-day, take-home exams in one of the approved areas of specialization listed below; if a student wishes to define a special area in some other way, s/he should discuss this with the Chair of Graduate Studies. The area so defined must have a breadth comparable to those listed, and cannot be a narrowly-defined specialty within one of those areas (e.g., on “Gerontology/Aging,” but not on “Retirement” or “The Social Psychology of Aging”). In picking two areas, the student should avoid picking areas where there is so much overlap that they might be seen as a single specialty.

The reading list that serves as the basis for a take-home examination should be approximately comparable to 2 graduate course syllabi, and is developed by the student in consultation with the two committee members. Based on the reading list, the student and committee members develop a list of 5-8 study questions, from which the final two questions will be drawn.

The questions are generally e-mailed to the student by the Chair of the specialty area exam committee or by the Administrative Staff at 9:00 a.m. on an agreed-upon day. The answers should be returned electronically to the person who sent out the original exam by 9 a.m. three days later (e.g., the student receives the exam on Friday morning and returns it by Monday morning). If there is a need to deviate from this time schedule, approval from the Director of Graduate Studies is necessary. For example, students for whom English is not a native language may be granted extra time. Students are allowed no technical (library assistance, etc.) or intellectual assistance in the writing of their specialty area exams. The written product of the take-home exam should ordinarily be approximately 20 pages, double-spaced (i.e., 2 essays of approximately 10 pages each, not including bibliography).

The Specialty Area Exam Committee will normally grade the area exam within two weeks, and in any event, by a date not more than 30 days from its completion. Upon the grading of the exam, the student and their committee members should schedule a one-hour feedback meeting to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the exam. The final grade will be determined after that meeting, and will be one of the following: Pass, Pass with Distinction, Revise and Resubmit, or Fail. A grade of at least Pass is required by both readers.

In the event that the student receives a Revise and Resubmit, they will have two weeks to provide a revised version of the exam based on the comments of the Specialty Area Exam Committee on the original version. The Revise and Resubmit version will be given a grade of Pass, Pass with Distinction, or Fail. Upon passing the exam, the student should follow the “Final Steps” instructions below.

2. Publishable Paper Option

To fulfill one of the specialty area examinations, a student may prepare a paper to be submitted for publication to a refereed sociology journal. Students may also petition the Graduate Program Director to permit a submission to a journal outside the discipline if they can demonstrate the sociological character of their work. The paper to be submitted should be single-authored. However, with the approval of the student’s two-member examination committee, a co-authored

paper may be submitted for review, on the condition that the student has had primary responsibility for the research and writing and is listed as first author on the version of the paper being submitted.

Students who opt for the Area Exam paper option may use the second year Master's Thesis or Paper as its basis. If the committee agrees that it is already of publishable quality, it could on rare occasions be submitted as is. However, in most cases the second year paper will require further revision before being submitted for publication.

Following a judgment by the two members of the examination committee that the paper is of sufficiently high quality to be submitted for publication to a refereed journal, a one-hour oral examination will be scheduled to discuss both the paper and the general specialty area within which the paper is situated. Following the oral examination on the paper and specialty area, the student will be awarded a grade of Pass, Pass with Distinction, or Fail. The examination concludes when, following the successful completion of the oral examination, the paper is submitted for publication to the referred journal selected by the student and approved by the examining committee, at which point the student should follow the "Final Steps" instructions below.

3. Quantitative Methods Option

In the Quantitative Methods examination, students review a variety of different statistical methods and prepare brief reports on each method. The goal is to demonstrate that they understand how to interpret the results of their analysis and understand the relevant statistics. The set of reports generally requires a few months to prepare. The amount of material covered is to be equivalent to two statistics courses beyond the level of SC703. (Some possibilities include SC704 Topics in Multivariate Statistics, SC705 Advanced Statistics, and SC706 Longitudinal Analysis.) Students can decide in consultation with the faculty members teaching graduate statistics courses whether they need to attend particular courses or already have sufficient background to use the methods without additional formal instruction. The general practice is to get a written agreement with the two committee members in advance concerning which statistical methods will be covered. Students are urged to consult with the faculty members teaching graduate statistics courses for help in the selection of the appropriate methods to be included. A one hour oral examination will also be given that will be based on the analysis presented in these reports. Following the oral examination, the committee will award the student with a grade of Pass, Pass with Distinction, or Fail. Upon passing the exam, the student should follow the "Final Steps" instructions below.

Final Steps for Specialty Area Examinations

Upon receiving a passing grade for each specialty area exam, the student should complete an "Acceptance of Specialty Area Examination" form (see Appendix) and deliver it to the Administrative Staff. The Committee Chair should also email the Administrative Staff after each successful conclusion with the student's name, the title of the work, the committee members, the grade, and the completion date.

Approved Specialty Areas

Action Research
Advanced Quantitative Methods
Anthropology
Applied Social Research/Evaluation Research
in Sociological Practice
Area Studies:
 Africa
 Asia
 Europe
 Latin America
Art and Literature
Biosociology
Community
Comparative Sociology/Macrosociology
Complex Organization – Formal Organizations
Cultural Sociology
Demography/Population/Migrations
Deviance and Social Control
Criminology/Delinquency/Penology
Economic Sociology
Education
Environmental Sociology/Human Ecology
Ethnomethodology
Feminist Sociology
Gender
Gerontology/Aging
Industrial Sociology/Industrial Relations
Labor Education
Labor Movements
Law and Society
Marriage and the Family
Mass Communications/Public Opinion
Medical Sociology
Military Sociology
Occupational Health
Occupations/Professions
Organizational Democracy
Political Economy
Political Sociology
Qualitative Methods
Queer Theory
Race and Ethnic Relations
Religion
Rural Sociology
Sociology of Sexuality
Small Groups
Social Change/Modernization – Development
Social Economy
Social Justice
Social Linguistics
Social Movements/Collective Behavior
Social Psychology/Emotions
Social Theory/History of Social Thought
Socialization
Sociology of Knowledge
Sociology of Organizations
Sociology of Science
Sociology of Sport
Sociology of Technology
Sociology of Work
Stratification
Urban Sociology
Voluntary Associations/Leisure

Doctoral Dissertation Proposal

As part of the Comprehensive Examination, students must complete a Dissertation proposal, and have that proposal approved by a Dissertation committee. To meet this requirement, students must present their proposal in a public presentation open to all members of the department. When committee members agree the proposal is ready for approval, it should be made available to the department, and a presentation date scheduled for two weeks later. At the presentation, the student will discuss his or her topic, describing the theoretical framework and proposed methods. The student will then respond to questions from committee members. The Dissertation proposal should be completed, presented, and graded by the student's committee members by the end of the fourth year. Possible grades for the proposal will be Pass, Fail, and Pass with Distinction.

The composition of the Dissertation committee is subject to the following guidelines:

- The Committee will consist of at least three faculty members, one of whom will be its Chair.
- The Chair, and at least one other member of the Committee, must be full-time faculty members in the Boston College Department of Sociology.
- Three members must be full-time Boston College faculty.
- Additional members from outside Boston College may be added by mutual consent.
- The composition of each Committee must be approved by the Director of Graduate studies. S/he will also review any requests for departures from the above rules.

Dissertation Formats

The traditional sociology dissertation is written in the monograph style, with a single overall argument carried throughout the entire document. However, some students may choose to write their dissertations in the "three-article" style popular in economics and other disciplines. The rules for such dissertations are as follows:

- The three-article format of the PhD dissertation requires that a student produce three manuscripts prepared as journal articles as well as introduction and conclusion chapters framing these articles for a total of at least five chapters.
- To utilize this format, as a first step, the student must get the dissertation committee to agree to the three-article format. The student's committee will decide whether or not a three-article format is suitable for the proposed dissertation and acceptable to all members of the committee. There may be many research topics, research questions, and types of data for which this model will not be considered appropriate by the student's committee.
- Next, the student will need to get a dissertation proposal approved just as for a dissertation in the traditional monograph format. Such a proposal should introduce and outline each of the three articles. If, for some reason, at a subsequent point the student decides that the traditional monograph format is more desirable for her or his dissertation, the student can petition the dissertation committee requesting a shift to the traditional monograph format, a request that will be routinely granted.
- In general, the articles should fit the following set of criteria to qualify for inclusion:

- The three articles must all be in the same subarea of sociology. The student's committee will make the determination as to how closely linked the articles can be or must be.
- No articles written prior to entry into our graduate program can be counted.
- The three articles must fit the criterion of being based primarily on original quantitative or qualitative empirical research. However, with the permission of the dissertation committee, the student may be allowed to include one article that does not fit this criterion as it may not call for original data collection or preparation. Some examples include, but are not limited to: theoretical articles, policy essays, and methodology articles.
- Students should be urged to submit their articles for publication as early as possible. If an article has been published prior to the defense of the dissertation, the student must obtain the copyright permission from the copyright holder in order to include the article in the dissertation.
- Overall, the corpus of five chapters (which includes the three articles) must be approved by the student's committee as representing a contribution to the field at least comparable to that of a typical monograph style dissertation in our department. The final determination of dissertation acceptance will be based on the quality of the research and the importance of the overall contribution of the work as reflected by the articles as a set.

Final Steps for Dissertation Proposal

Upon receiving a grade for the Dissertation proposal, the student should fill out an "Acceptance of Dissertation Proposal" form (see Appendix), have it signed by their Committee, and give a copy to the Administrative Staff. The Committee Chair should also email the Administrative Staff with the Student's name, the title of the work, the grade, and the date of its completion.

Final Steps for Comprehensive Examination

Once the area examinations and the dissertation proposal have been completed, the student should fill out the Doctoral Comprehensive Examination Report, available in 426, get the appropriate signatures, make a copy of the Administrative Staff, and distribute as indicated at the bottom of the form.

Doctoral Dissertation

No more than eight consecutive years may pass between the beginning of doctoral studies and the awarding of the degree. Within this limit, no more than five years may pass between the completion of the Ph.D. Comprehensives and the oral defense of the Dissertation.

The Dissertation Proposal

The student must gather a Dissertation committee and secure this Committee's approval of the Dissertation proposal as indicated above. Grading of the proposal by the student's committee members and the department-wide presentation of the proposal should normally be completed by the end of the fourth year.

Completing the Dissertation

The Dissertation committee and the student will determine a mutually understood procedure and timetable for reviewing the Dissertation in progress.

- The student and the Dissertation committee will meet periodically to review the Dissertation in progress.
- In no instance will the student be permitted to submit a completed version of the thesis before the Dissertation committee has had ample time for review of significant segments (as specified in the timetable).
- The student must submit what s/he believes to be a completed version of the thesis to the Dissertation committee at least eight weeks prior to the expected date of the oral defense. The expected date of the defense will be decided upon by the student and the Committee.
- The Dissertation committee may request revisions, which could delay the expected date of the oral defense. Such requests for revisions must be made in writing within four weeks after the date of receipt of the draft. When all members of the Committee approve the thesis version, the date of the oral defense may be established.
- **A formal Oral Defense Committee of at least five members will be established,** consisting of **at least two** additional readers who have not served on the student's Dissertation committee, **at least one** of whom must be a member of the BC Sociology Department. The additional readers will be appointed in consultation with the Dissertation Committee Chair, and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- The oral defense is considered a public meeting to which the Department faculty, students, and any other interested members of the academic community are invited.
- Passing will be determined by a majority vote of the final Oral Committee.
- In order to pass the oral defense, the student may be required to make certain revisions before the final version of the Dissertation is filed with the Graduate Office.

Administrative Deadlines

In addition to the academic requirements above, there are also significant administrative requirements that must be met in order to complete the dissertation and receive the Ph.D. Students are responsible for meeting the following administrative deadlines:

- 9 months in advance of anticipated graduation date: Students must be registered and enrolled (generally in either SC999 Doctoral Continuation or SC781 Dissertation Seminar) in order to graduate. This registration and enrollment should be confirmed well before the beginning of the anticipated graduation term.
- 4 months in advance: Students should verify that Student Services has their correct graduation date on Agora, by clicking on “Graduation Information - View/Update.” If the student plans on graduating sooner than the date given in Agora, the student should email the responsible person at GSAS (currently Associate Dean Hetzner at hetzner@bc.edu) and request a date change. If the graduation date is later than the date given on Agora, the student should fill out a Petition for Extension form (found on <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/studentforms.html>), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and take it to GSAS.
- 3 months in advance: Students should check the GSAS website (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/academics/disser-guid/disser-cklist.html>) for instructions on completing and submitting the dissertation. Please note that students are now encouraged to submit their dissertations electronically, although they still have the option of submitting them as hard copies. In either case, original signature pages must be submitted to GSAS
- 2 weeks in advance:
 - Provide one copy of the abstract and upon request a dissertation to the Department’s Administrative Staff for interested persons.
 - Circulate a copy of the Dissertation abstract to all faculty with an announcement of the date, time and place of the oral defense.
 - Speak with Administrative Staff about reserving a room for the defense.
 - Ask Administrative Staff to reserve any equipment (LDC projector, etc.) that will be used during the defense, or to make arrangements for a speaker phone if one needed.
 - Begin filling out necessary forms (available on <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/studentforms.html>, or from Administrative Staff), and print out on bond paper.

Final Steps

To help students through this final stage, the responsibilities of the Student, Dissertation Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Administrative Staff are listed below.

Candidate:

- [To satisfy](#) the administrative deadlines outlined above, keeping in mind university due dates (see below).
- To make sure that the Administrative Staff has signed copies of both the Signature Page form submitted to GSAS, and the ‘Final Examination and Public Defense of Doctoral Dissertation’ form.
- To complete a wonderful Dissertation with a stimulating discussion in the oral defense.
- To complete any administrative requirements outlined by GSAS on their web page (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/academics/disser-guid/disser-cklist.html#dissertation>).

Dissertation Chair:

- To ensure that two copies of each of the “Final Examination and Public Defense of Doctoral Dissertation” form (found in the appendix of this document) and the Signature Page (available from the Administrative Staff or on the GSAS website) are brought to the dissertation defense. The Signature Page should be printed on bond paper.
- To certify on both of these forms that the Dissertation has been approved and that the candidate passed the oral defense, and to ensure that all relevant committee members have signed the documents. In addition, the Dissertation Chair should email the Administrative Staff with the student’s name, the title of the dissertation, the final grade, and the date of completion.
- To preside over this rite de passage.

Administrative Staff:

- To maintain the records in the student file and departmental database verifying that the various requirements for graduation have been met.
- To review the student’s electronic transcript with the Dissertation Chair or Director of Graduate Studies
- To arrange a place for the scheduled orals to take place and post public announcements.
- To provide forms on request.
- To announce the completed graduation to the department.

Graduate Studies Director:

- To confirm that all requirements for the Ph.D. have been met.

University Due Dates

The formatted dissertation and the signed Signature Page should be submitted by December 1 in Fall, by August 1 in Summer, and by the date posted on the Academic Calendar (<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/current/calendar>) in Spring.

TA ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Priority will be given for TAs to be assigned to the following classes/professors in the following order:

1. Classes with a minimum projected enrollment of 60, or Undergraduate Statistics (SC200) or Graduate Statistics (SC702 and SC703), who will have priority for one TA.
2. Classes with a minimum projected enrollment of 80, who will have priority for two TAs.
3. Faculty members whose combined enrollments (two courses) are largest, or who are teaching Undergraduate Research Methods (SC210), Graduate Research Methods (SC710) or Undergraduate Social Theory (SC215).
4. Depending on availability, the Department Chair may be assigned an RA.

Under university policy, TAs are supposed to work a maximum average of 20 hours per week. Our departmental norm, however, is for TAs to work an average of approximately 15 hours per week, with some variation around this average. TAs whose primary responsibilities include only grading midterm and final exams might expect to work approximately 12 hours per week. TAs who are responsible for discussion sections (or for taking on other teaching responsibilities) might expect to work closer to 17 hours. Over the course of three years of TA duties, these differences in workloads should average out to about 15 hours per week for any given student. Although leading discussion sections typically requires more time, students may choose such TA assignments because they provide valuable teaching experience, while first-year students may prefer teaching assignments with a lighter workload.

Prior to agreeing to a particular TA assignment, it is the faculty member's responsibility to let the student know about the duties that will be expected of them. It is the student's responsibility to let the faculty member know if he/she is unable perform any of these duties for any reason (e.g., a time conflict with a course the student is taking). Such potential conflicts need to be communicated to the Director of Graduate Studies *at least* one month before the beginning of the class in question in case alternative arrangements need to be made.

Faculty members are urged to do a significant portion of their own grading, even if their course has one or more TAs.

A TIMETABLE FOR COMPLETING PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

The following timetable for meeting the Ph.D. requirements is intended to provide students with “progress benchmarks” for each of their years of study within the Department. If possible, students are encouraged to complete these requirements earlier than indicated here.

<p>FIRST YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete SC710. • Complete a minimum of three of the other four required core courses (SC702, SC703, SC715, and SC716). 	<p>SECOND YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all five required core courses completed by the end of the Spring Semester. • Complete or plan to complete the residency requirement. • Enroll in SC761 Second Year Writing Seminar. • Complete Second Year Master’s Thesis or Paper by end of Spring Semester.
<p>THIRD YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 18 courses by end of Spring Semester. • Complete Specialty Area Exams by the end of the summer. • Start applying for Dissertation Fellowships. • Constitute Doctoral Dissertation committee. • Join the Dissertation Seminar. 	<p>FOURTH YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete public presentation of Doctoral Dissertation Proposal by end of Spring Semester. • Continue in dissertation seminar.
<p>FIFTH/SIXTH YEAR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Doctoral Dissertation. • Complete Oral Defense of the Dissertation. 	

Students should be in **ongoing communication with their academic advisors** concerning their progress in meeting these benchmarks, and will be **evaluated annually** on this basis.

TAKING COURSES OUTSIDE BOSTON COLLEGE SOCIOLOGY

The Department encourages M.A. and Ph.D. students to take courses within other departments at Boston College, provided that they are approved by the student's faculty advisor. There is no limit on the number of courses students may take in other departments. However, only graduate-level courses can be counted toward a student's graduate degree.

The Department also encourages M.A. and Ph.D. students to take graduate-level courses at the other universities listed below. There is no limit on the total number of such courses a student may take, provided that they are approved by the student's faculty advisor.

- Boston College is a member of a consortium that includes Boston University, Brandeis, and Tufts. To register for courses through the consortium, students must complete a "Petition for Cross-Registration" form, which can be obtained at Lyons Hall, and bring the completed form to be signed by the instructor of the course. Courses taken within the consortium count as Boston College courses. Students may take only one course per semester at any one consortium school. Summer courses are not eligible for consortium cross-registration.
- Boston College is also a member of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (formerly Radcliffe). Students interested in taking such courses should contact GCWS directly at <http://mit.edu/gcws>.

For further information on cross-registration, see <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/grad/consortium.html>.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE B.A./M.A. PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

The Department of Sociology and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provide qualified students with the opportunity to earn a Master's Degree in Sociology along with a Bachelor's Degree in a combined five-year program. The B.A. degree is awarded with the student's class. The M.A. degree is ordinarily conferred one year later.

Admissions

Application normally takes place very early in the second semester of the junior year. (The usual deadline each year is January 2.) The applicant must submit the same admissions materials as are required of all graduate degree applicants; these are obtained either from the Sociology office (426 McGuinn) or from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (221 McGuinn).

Undergraduates must understand that the admissions requirements are strict. Normally, a student must have an overall GPA, after 5 semesters, of at least 3.50, with at least a 3.50 GPA in Sociology courses.

Requirements

For the BA, the student must complete the usual 38 courses required for the Bachelor's degree, including ten SC courses for the major. Also, usually in the senior year, the student *must* take the following courses: (1) Multivariate Statistics (SC703) [note that 703 has as a prerequisite SC200 or SC702]; (2) Advanced Research Methods (SC710) or, if the student has already taken SC210, one other graduate methods course; and (3) a Theory Proseminar (SC715 or 716). The Theory Proseminar must be taken whether or not the student has taken SC215. Thus, the curriculum for the "undergraduate" part of the program—that is, courses taken in the first four years—might look like the following:

- Introductory Sociology: SC001
- Statistics: SC703 (NOTE: There is a pre-requisite course, SC200 *or* SC702)
- Methods: SC210 *and* a graduate Methods course; **OR** SC710
- Theory: SC715 **OR** 716
- Three (3) electives numbered 299 or higher
- Additional SC electives to complete the ten-course requirement

For the MA, eight additional (above the 38 undergraduate degree courses) graduate courses must be taken, including the required theory, methods, and statistics classes, beginning in the fourth year. Two of these graduate courses may be non-classroom courses, such as the Second-Year Writing Seminar or Readings and Research. Thus, for the combined program, a student might have as few as eighteen sociology courses.

The student must write a Master's Paper or Thesis; this may be credited as one or two of the courses taken in the fifth year. All other MA degree requirements are applicable.

TRAINING FOR TEACHING SOCIOLOGY

The Department normally funds first, second, and third year doctoral students through Teaching Assistantships, and fourth and fifth year doctoral students through Teaching Fellowships. Whereas TAs are assigned to a professor's course to help with grading and other tasks, TFs are responsible for preparing and teaching their own courses. (TAs assist with one course per semester; TFs generally teach two courses per academic year.) The Graduate Director is responsible for making TA assignments; the Chair for assigning TFs. While the curriculum needs may require that students assist in or teach courses that are not their first choice, both the Graduate Director and Department Chair try to accommodate student preferences in making these assignments.

The following resources are available to help TAs and TFs with their teaching responsibilities:

Web Pages

- The Sociology Department has pages on the website with information that may be helpful to instructors. The Smart Guide (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/grad/handbook.html>) has a section on Preparing for Teaching; the Syllabus section (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/faculty/syllabi.html>) has syllabi for departmental courses going back to Fall of 2005; and the Faculty Resources page (<http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/faculty/resources.html>) gives nuts and bolts information about how to view courses, order books, email your class, grant overrides, create course websites, etc.
- The Connors Family Learning Center (part of the BC Library system) provides extensive support to faculty, TFs and TAs. These services, listed on one of their web pages (<http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring/teachingsupport.html>), include an online handbook for new teachers, a collection of links to resource pages on grading, an online handbook specifically designed for TAs/TFs, and several others.
- There are also many useful Internet resources providing more general ideas, on how to prepare a syllabus, for example http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/P2_1.php, and on how to behave on the first day of class: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/resources/guides/quick/index.html>.

Seminars

- **Spring:** A day-long Teaching Seminar, sponsored by the Sociology Department, is usually held at the end of the Spring semester. This seminar is primarily intended for students who will be serving as Teaching Fellows for the first time the following Fall semester, but it is also a forum for other students and faculty to discuss teaching issues and share experiences.
- **Fall:** Just before classes begin each fall, the University offers a Workshop on Teaching and Learning for all TAs and TFs. This workshop offers a series of panels and lectures—organized by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) and The Connors Family Learning Center—and addresses many of the typical concerns of beginning college teachers. The schedule is emailed to graduate students before the academic year begins.

- **During the Academic Year:** In addition to the fall workshop, TAs, TFs, and any other graduate students interested in college teaching are invited to lunchtime seminars on teaching, learning, and academic life throughout the year. Approximately six of these seminars are held each semester in The Connors Family Learning Center. The Connors Center and GSAS organize these events, and provide participants with lunch. Information on the seminars is sent to all graduate students' campus mail boxes throughout the year and the schedule is posted on the Connors website (the list can be accessed from <http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring/teachingsupport.html>).

Publications

The Department has publications stored in 410 that may be helpful to instructors. These include a manual called “Tricks of the Teaching Trade,” based on the online publications offered by the Connors Center and supplemented with materials from the day-long seminar held by the Department in Spring. There are also several ASA publications, including books of collected syllabi and instructional material for Introductory Sociology, Deviance, Social Networks, Social Problems, Ethnic Relations, Sociology of Sport, etc.

The ASA has additional collections of faculty syllabi for various kinds of courses, available for purchase at reasonable prices (see <http://www.e-noah.net/asa/asashoponlineservice/productslist.aspx?CategoryID=ASASS&selection=10>).

Instruction/Advisement

- SC902 Teaching Sociology is seminar style course providing a substantial foundation in such diverse issues as classroom styles, syllabus preparation, grading, relating to students, ethical issues, and more. It has not been held recently because of low enrollments, but can be scheduled if there is enough demand.
- SC900 Teaching Apprenticeships are designed as educational experiences for the apprentice and involve the student in as many of the above issues as possible. Apprenticeships often combine readings with practical experience; the exact terms are negotiated between student and professor. Teaching apprenticeships may incorporate TA assignments for Ph.D. students, and can provide teaching experience for interested MA students.
- The Connors Center professional staff and the three Graduate Fellows are also available to talk with instructors individually about teaching issues, to do a confidential mid-semester evaluation, or to lend out books or articles on teaching. (For more information on any of the Connors teaching resources, call 552-0835 or stop in the center at the 2nd floor of O’Neill.)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

An academic community is built on trust and cheating occurs very seldom in the Department; thus, in terms of frequency, it does not constitute a problem. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to have a policy with regard to handling accusations of cheating, so that in the rare instances when they are made they can be handled according to some known procedure. Cheating is defined to include the following:

Plagiarism. (a) Verbatim copying of material without stating sources; (b) blatant paraphrasing in major portions of a paper or other written work (e.g., Dissertation, book) without identifying sources; (c) having someone else write the work (either on a paid or unpaid basis).

Cheating on examinations. (a) use of any source (e.g., notebooks, crib notes, etc.) which is prohibited in that particular examination; (b) copying from another person's examination.

Falsifying data. Blatant falsifying of data, such as inventing data or misrepresenting sample size.

Opinions differ among various faculty members regarding the propriety of the same or similar paper (or parts of the same paper) being submitted to more than one course. Graduate students must consult the faculty members involved prior to the submission of such papers.

In the unlikely event that a faculty member accuses a student of cheating, the following review process will take place:

- The individual professor or individual student who is making a formal accusation of cheating will bring the case to the attention of the Graduate School which will have responsibility for adjudicating the case. The Department Chair and Director of Graduate Studies would also be notified.
- In adjudicating the process, the Graduate School will normally involve the student's principal advisor and other Sociology Department representatives as appropriate.
- The Graduate School has a grievance procedure available if the student feels s/he has been unfairly treated.

For further information on Boston College's policies regarding academic integrity, go to <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity.html>.

HARASSMENT

Students should familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Discriminatory Harassment, both with regard to their roles as student and as teacher. For further information, go to <http://www.bc.edu/offices/diversity/compliance/harassment.html>.

FUNDING ISSUES

Tuition Remission and Stipends

Ordinarily, entering Ph.D. students receive five years of university support, provided they remain in good academic standing. The typical five year package includes tuition remission and a stipend for the first three academic years. For those three years, the students are ordinarily asked to serve as a Teaching Assistant for one course per semester. **Teaching Assistant duties should be limited to work related to the course to which they have been assigned.** For the fourth and fifth year funding is typically linked to serving as a Teaching Fellow (i.e., teaching his or her own course) for two courses over the course of a year. **Except in cases of students with Diversity Fellowships, or those who are fully funded from external sources, graduate students are expected to complete five years of service to the department in return for their university support.** All Ph.D. students are also encouraged to seek financial support and fellowships from external funding sources, such as educational foundations and various governmental agencies. In addition to sometimes providing a larger amount of financial assistance, being awarded fellowships and research grants may add to the prestige of one's scholarship and help secure employment at the time of graduation. For further information on applying for fellowships and grants, go to <http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/sociology/grad/funding.html>.

Students who enter with advanced standing due to graduate work completed elsewhere will normally be offered support for fewer than five years. For example, an entering doctoral student with the equivalent of a Master's degree in Sociology from Boston College (30 credits) would usually be offered support for 4 as opposed to 5 years. This would typically include a stipend for serving as a Teaching Assistant for two years followed by two years of support for serving as a Teaching Fellow. If qualified and with the permission of the Department Chair, such students may shift from being TA's to being TF's during their second year.

Diversity Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis by the graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Students with Diversity Fellowships are not required to work as Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, or Research Assistants. They may serve in these positions if they would like the experience, but they receive no additional funding for doing so. Diversity Fellows are eligible for additional support if they are able to secure summer research positions.

Dissertation Fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis by the graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Students awarded a Dissertation Fellowship are not eligible for additional BC funding for serving as a TA, TF, or RA (during the academic year) while holding this fellowship.

Conference/Travel Expenses

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provides partial funding for graduate students to travel to **one conference per year** with the authorization of the GSAS Dean. Details and forms are available on line at <http://www.bc.edu/schools/gsas/currentstudents/conference.html>.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students who wish to take a leave of absence from the graduate program (i.e., to remain in the program without being registered) should in writing request a leave of absence from the Director of Graduate Studies detailing their reasons for taking a leave and when they intend to return. Once the Director has consented, the students should fill out a Leave of Absence form (<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/meta-elements/pdf/withdrawal.pdf>), have it signed by the Director of Graduate Studies, and submit it to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. A leave of absence will be granted for one year only. If the leave needs to extend beyond that, the student must request permission from the Graduate Director and resubmit the form for each additional year.

Students with approved leaves of absence will remain in the graduate program, although neither enrolled in courses nor registered for doctoral continuation credits. Students who remain unregistered for more than one year without an approved extension of their leave by the Director of Graduate Studies will be removed from the program, and may reapply in the event that they wish to continue their graduate studies. All applications for readmission to the Ph.D. program should be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies, and will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee.

APPENDIX: FORMS

The following forms should be filled out and filed with the Administrative Staff to certify that students have met the requirements within the graduate program.

Acceptance of Specialty Area Examination*

Student Name:

Committee Chair Name:

Member Name:

Area within Sociology (if exam):

Working Title (if paper):

Journal to which Submitted (if paper):

Grade (Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction)

Signature of Committee Chair

Today's Date:

*A completed and signed copy of this form must be delivered to the Administrative Staff to be placed in the student's files.

Acceptance of Dissertation Proposal*

Student Name:

Committee Chair Name:

Member Name:

Member Name:

Member Name:

Member Name:

Working Title:

Date of Public Presentation:

Dissertation Proposal Grade
(Pass/Fail/Pass with Distinction)

Signature of Committee Chair

Today's Date:

*A completed and signed copy of this form must be delivered to the Administrative Staff to be placed in the student's files.

**Final Examination and Public Defense of
Doctoral Dissertation***

Sociology Department

Date _____

Name of Candidate: _____

Title of Dissertation: _____

Board of Examiners:

Chair of
Dissertation Committee:

Please indicate: Pass or Fail

Vote _____

Members:

Vote _____

Vote _____

Vote _____

Vote _____

Vote _____

Vote _____

Vote _____

Final Vote: Pass _____ Fail _____

Note: In order to qualify, the candidate must receive a passing vote from a majority of the official examiners present.

*Immediately upon the conclusion of this examination, the Chair of the Dissertation Committee will record the vote of each official examiner. The Chair will then deliver this form to the Administrative Staff so it may be placed in the student's file.