Ph.D. Major in Sociology or Rural Sociology

Department of Sociology, Iowa State University

(Revised 10/29/2015)

Students seeking the Ph.D. degree typically anticipate a career that involves teaching, research, administration, planning, or consulting in either the public or private sectors. Departmental requirements for the Ph.D. degree emphasize general competence in sociology as well as special expertise within an area of concentration. Ph.D. students develop the capacity for original and creative research. Students engage in either independent or group research under the direction of faculty members. In addition to formal class work and conducting research, students work toward intellectual independence while developing an integrated grasp of the field. The integration of materials from courses and research activities is a primary goal of the Ph.D. dissertation. The Department and the student’s Program of Study (POS) Committee share responsibility in guiding the student toward the graduate degree.

Ph.D. Major Requirements

Although responsibility for determining the student's course work resides with the POS committee, the Sociology Department has core courses that must be taken by all students. A graduate course taken elsewhere may be substituted for the Ph.D. core requirements with approval by the Director of Graduate Education (DOGE) in consultation with the faculty.

Required Courses for the Ph.D. Degree

Theory (6 cr)

- Soc 506 (3 cr) Classical Sociological Theory
- Soc 607 (3 cr) Contemporary Sociological Theory

Methods (12 cr)

- Stat 404 (3 credits) Regression for Social and Behavioral Research.
- Soc 511 (3 credits) Research Methodology for the Social Sciences
- Soc 512 (3 credits) Applied Multivariate Statistics
- Soc 513 (3 credits) Qualitative Research Methods

**Dissertation and Other Required (12 cr)**
- Soc 591 (1 cr) Orientation to Sociology
- Soc 534 (3 cr) Race, Class, and Gender Inequality
- Soc 699 (8 cr minimum) Dissertation Research
- Sociology graduate faculty member as Major Professor
- Preliminary and final oral exams must test for sociology major
- A dissertation that reflects the student’s sociological competence

**Electives (42 cr)**
- 14 courses as specified on POS
- Up to 36 elective credits can be from courses completed for the Master’s degree (cannot be 599s)
- No more than 9 credits earned in non-degree status as a graduate student may be used toward a graduate degree

**TOTAL (72 cr)**
- A minimum of 72 semester credits is required for graduation.
- No more than 12 credits of 590 (special topics) may be applied toward the Ph.D. degree requirements
- A required course may be waived for students who have taken a similar course at the graduate level at ISU or elsewhere. Decisions about waiving a required course will be made on a case-by-case basis. Students must submit the syllabus for the course for review by the DOGE and faculty in that research area.

**Graduate College Policy on Undergraduate Courses on Program of Study**
- With POS committee approval, graduate students will be permitted to use undergraduate classes from both within and outside of their majors on POS forms.
• No 100- or 200-level classes may be used, but all 300- and 400-level classes at Iowa State (not undergraduate classes from other institutions) will be eligible.

• Up to 15 credits from 300- and 400-level courses may be used on a POSC form, with a maximum of 6 credits at the 300 level.

• For graduate students who enter degree programs in spring semester of 2018 and thereafter, a limit of 9 credits at the undergraduate level will be in effect, with a limit of 3 credits at the 300 level.

• If a 300-level class is used, it must be from outside of the student’s major (psych, econ, etc.).

Ph.D. Examinations and Progress

*English Examination*

To ensure competence in written English, all graduate students must take English exams that are required by the Graduate College. In addition, non-native speakers of English who will have teaching responsibilities are required to take the SPEAK/TEACH tests.

*First Year Evaluation*

All graduate students in sociology will be reviewed yearly (spring semester) by the faculty. After the review, the student will receive a letter as to whether his or her progress and performance in the program is satisfactory or not. If not, the student will receive specific information from the faculty as to how to remediate the issue(s). If a problem is not rectified in accordance with the faculty’s recommendation, the student may be dismissed from the program.

*Ph.D. Preliminary Examinations*

Ph.D. candidates must successfully complete the written and oral preliminary examinations. These examinations are described in the “Guidelines for the Written and Oral Ph.D. Examinations” document.

*The Dissertation*

A written proposal for the dissertation must be accepted by the POS committee before the candidate begins his or her research work. The alternative dissertation format is allowed by the Graduate
College with an approval of the POS committee. The guidelines are found in the Graduate College Dissertation Manual.

*Time Limitations for Completion of Degrees*

A student beginning a Ph.D. degree program at ISU with a master's degree is expected to complete the program within five years, while a student beginning a Ph.D. degree program without the master's degree is expected to complete the program within seven years. If warranted, the POS Committee may request by letter that the Dean of the Graduate College extend these time limits.

*Petitioning Procedures*

Students may request a waiver of any of the procedures, rules, and regulations described in this document and appeal decisions based on these procedures, rules, and regulations. Such requests are to be submitted to the DOGE and Department Chair and should take the form of a written document that presents the student's rationale for requesting the waiver or appealing a decision, accompanied by an evaluation of the request by the student's advisor or major professor. The DOGE and Chair will examine the issue, seek advice from departmental committees as necessary, and make the final decision. These petitions will be approved only under highly extenuating circumstances.

*Committees and Forms*

*P.O.S. Committee*

The POS committee for a doctoral program consists of five members of the graduate faculty. It must include at least three members, including the major professor, from within the student's major or program. At least one member of the Ph.D. POS committee must be outside the student's major or department. Only Graduate Faculty currently employed by Iowa State University can serve as major professor. The major professor must be a member of the graduate faculty in the student's declared major. See Graduate College Handbook for detailed information on committee makeup.

The Graduate College recommends that the committee be formed as early as the second semester of graduate study. In no case can the committee be formed later than the term before the final oral examination or preliminary oral examination.
Required Forms

The Graduate College maintains a list of current forms and worksheets, which can be found at:

http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/student_forms.php