

**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 distia2TQq0.000008(n)3(o)-19()-19(g)

## **ADMISSION TO GRADUATE STUDY**

## **THE FACULTY ADVISOR**

Each student must have a faculty advisor at all times. The Graduate Admissions Director and the Graduate Program Director will assign advisors to all incoming students, both M.A. and Ph.D.,

## **DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL RESEARCH**

The Master's degree is particularly suitable for students planning to subsequently apply to Ph.D. programs in order to prepare for scholarly careers in teaching at colleges and research universities, although it can also be useful for students interested in practicing sociology in an applied setting (e.g., academic administration or policy research). The Master's degree is completed by passing ten courses (30 credit hours), including five required courses. Students also have an option to complete a Master's Examination, including a Master's Thesis or Paper, but it is not required for degree completion.

### **Required Courses**

The core required courses for the M.A. degree are:

One course in sociological theory (either SOCY7715 or SOCY7716).

Two graduate-level courses in statistics (some options include SOCY7702, SOCY7703, SOCY7704, SOCY7705, SOCY7706, SOCY7708, SOCY7709).

A one-semester course, Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710): Students should take the Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710) the first semester of their first year; note that this seminar also requires students to attend the first-year proseminar which meets weekly in conjunction with the departmental seminar.

One additional methods course:

- Those planning to write a Master's paper/thesis (which should include all students obtaining their M.A. as part of their Ph.D. training) should meet this requirement by attending the Empirical Research Seminar (SOCY7711) in the Spring semester of their first year; this seminar will help students develop and refine their M.A. paper/thesis projects. Note that this seminar also requires students to attend the first-year proseminar which meets weekly in conjunction with the departmental seminar.
- Those who do not plan to write a Master's paper/thesis will select the additional methods course in consultation with the Graduate Program Director. This course can be on either qualitative or quantitative methods. With permission of the Graduate Program Director, the student may use SOCY5540 Internship in Sociology or an applied course aimed at building career skills (such as a course in writing grant proposals) to fulfill this requirement.
- If a student originally planned to write a Master's paper/thesis but ultimately decided to graduate without taking an advantage of that opportunity, SOCY7711 can still be used to meet the second methods course requirement for that student.

## **Overall Requirements for M.A. Coursework**

Seven courses (21 credit hours) must be regular classroom courses (i.e., not independent study courses such as Readings and Research or Research Practicum). 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 (6 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 Graduate Program Director. Students should apply for transfer credit during their first semester at BC rather than waiting until they are ready to graduate.

**Second-**

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.



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.

To assist students in producing Master's Theses or Papers, the department offers two faculty-led seminars: SOCY7711 Empirical Research Seminar, to be taken in the Spring semester of the first year in the program, and SOCY7761 Second Year Graduate Writing Seminar, a biweekly year-long three credit course typically taken during the second year in the program (students officially register for it in the Spring of their second year; in the Fall of their second year, students working on their Theses/Papers are expected to register for an R&R with their thesis advisors). Both seminars are open to all Master's students who received an approval from the Graduate Program Director for their request to write a Master's thesis or paper as well as to all Ph.D. students. These seminars support students in all aspects of research and writing M.A. Theses/Papers. Participation in these seminars is required for everyone working on an M.A. Thesis or Paper. 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

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## **Final Steps for Completing M.A.**

M.A. students who will leave the program after graduating with their Master's degree 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 MGSAS (currently Associate Dean Hetzner at [hetzner@bc.edu](mailto: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 <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Petition%20For%20Extension%20of%20Time.pdf>), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and take it to MGSAS.

Ph.D. students completing an MA must submit a Master's Degree Option form, <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/mcas/gsas/pdf/Master%20Degree%20Option.pdf>, signed by the Graduate Director, to MGSAS (please complete at least 3 months before intended graduation date).

The Graduate Director must complete the MGSAS Clearance form, indicating whether the student has completed the required coursework, and noting whether the student has completed

## **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 Master's degree requirements above). While a Master's thesis or paper is optional for those pursuing a terminal M.A. degree from our program, it is a requirement for Ph.D. students).

Taking an additional eight courses, or the equivalent credits of independent research, beyond the Master's degree in Sociology, including a third graduate-level Research Methods course. The 54 credits (classes plus independent research) needed for completion of the Ph.D. degree include eight required courses (see below).

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.

Some of these requirements may be waived by the Graduate Program Director if the student completed an MA at another university (see "Transfer from Other Programs" below).

### **Course Requirements**

Among the 54 credits (classes plus independent research) needed for completion of the Ph.D. degree, there are eight required courses:

A two-semester, 6-credit sequence in sociological theory (SOCY7715, SOCY7716). These should be completed by the end of the fourth semester.

A three-course, 9-credit sequence in research methods: Social Inquiry Research Seminar (SOCY7710) is taken during the first semester of study, Empirical Research Seminar (SOCY7711) is taken during the second semester of study, and the Second Year Graduate Writing Seminar (SOCY7761), a year-



Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee may also request course syllabi for review, if needed. The Committee will inform the student how many credits will be transferred, whether the prior Master's thesis/paper is considered as sufficient for fulfilling BC Master's thesis/paper requirement, and how this will affect the expected timeline for completing the remaining requirements.

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 have the BC M.A. Thesis/Paper requirement waived if they can demonstrate the sociological character of their prior thesis. Whether prior coursework and/or the prior M.A. thesis can be applied to the student's BC Ph.D. degree will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee, as detailed above.

In addition to considering how many credits to transfer towards a student's Ph.D. and evaluating prior theses, the Graduate Study Committee will also decide which required courses can be waived, based on the courses listed in the student's transcript. The committee may also request course syllabi, if needed. Required courses in both the statistics sequence (for students who demonstrated proficiency at the level of SOCY7704 or above) and the theory sequence (for students who have both classical and contemporary theory courses in their transcripts) can be waived. Courses in the research methods sequence are usually not waived, except in special circumstances.

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.<sup>1</sup> All students waived out of the M.A. requirement, however, are expected to follow the same timeline (see more details below) regardless of whether they decide to also acquire a BC sociology M.A.

## **Research and Scholarship Integrity Program**

In the first year, students are required by the university to complete must complete the Research and Scholarship Integrity Program: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/research/sites/vice-provost-for-research/integrity-and-compliance/research---scholarship-integrity-program.html>.

## **Comprehensive Examinations**

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<sup>1</sup> Such a degree may benefit a



## **Faculty Clusters**

Faculty clusters are groups of faculty members with common areas of expertise who agree to serve on area examinations on a regular basis. A current list of sociology faculty clusters is maintained on the departmental website. The guidelines for faculty clusters are as follows:rs is

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 Graduate Program Director 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.



which the paper is situated. Following the oral examination on the paper and specialty area, the



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-

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. Students have the option of appointing, in consultation with the Dissertation Committee Chair, additional readers who have not served on the student's Dissertation committee. 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 SOCY9999 Doctoral Continuation or SOCY9981 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 MGSAS (currently Associate Dean Hetzner at [hetzner@bc.edu](mailto: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 <https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/forms.html>), get the appropriate signatures, make a copy for the Administrative Staff, and take it to MGSAS.

3 months in advance: Students should check the MGSAS website (<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate.html>) for instructions on completing and submitting the dissertation. Petitions should be submitted to MGSAS at least 90 days in advance. When all BT/FF the original signature pages must be submitted to MGSAS

2 weeks in advance:

- Provide one copy of the f# co# a e% \$ dua h

- 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 <https://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/forms.html>, or from Administrative Staff), and print out.

### **Final Steps**

To help students through this final stage, the responsibilities of the Student, Dissertation Chair, the Graduate Program Director, 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 MGSAS, 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 MGSAS on their web page (<https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/graduate/current-students/dissertation-checklist.html>).
- The formatted dissertation and the signed Signature Page should be submitted by December 1 in Fall, by

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## **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





## **CERTIFICATE IN ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE METHODS**

The Certificate in Advanced Quantitative Methods is designed to provide formal recognition of a sociology M.A. or Ph.D. student's quantitative methods skills. The certificate appears on the M.A. or Ph.D. students' transcript upon graduation. The certificate is only available to graduate students within the BC Sociology Department.

Students interested in the certificate should contact the Director of Graduate Studies. To meet the requirements to receive the certificate, the student must complete five approved advanced quantitative courses beyond the level of Introductory Statistics (SOCY7702).

Eligible courses include:

- SOCY5516 Survey Methodology
- SOCY7703 Multivariate Statistics
- SOCY7704 Regression Models for Categorical Data
- SOCY7706 Longitudinal Data Analysis
- SOCY7708 Hierarchical Linear Modeling
- SOCY7709 Quantitative Data Management
- SOCY7713 Structural Equation Modeling
- SOCY7717 Event History Analysis and Sequence Analysis

Courses from other departments within BC and within the Graduate Consortium may be counted toward the certificate with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.

A student may also count one semester of "Topics in Advanced Quantitative Methods" (SOCY7103) to work individually on quantitative methodological skills and research.

## **TA ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**



Student teachers are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of departmental and university resources for teaching support, including those offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence. Review and Approval of Syllabi

The following syllabi must be submitted to the Undergraduate Studies Director for review and approval by July 1 (for fall courses) and December 1 (for spring courses):

Draft syllabi for all courses to be taught by first-year Teaching Fellows.

Draft syllabi for existing Core courses to be taught by Teaching Fellows who have not taught them before (e.g., Introduction to Sociology). All Core courses must conform to the mission for the social science Core outlined below.

All new Core courses (i.e., new course number and title) must be submitted to the University Core Renewal Committee for review much farther in advance. The application can be found on the Core Curriculum ebsite: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/mcas/undergraduate/core-curriculum/faculty-resources.html>.

### **Mission for Core Social Science Classes**

The social sciences help us better understand the social worlds in which we live. The social science Core requirement explores the influences on the way people think, feel, and behave in those social worlds by considering the nature of the individual, institutions, and social interactions. Although the social science disciplines have different approaches, they share a common methodology—a theory-driven empirical analysis of data that has relevance to real-world issues. The majority of complex problems that we face in today’s world have economic, political, psychological, and sociological dimensions. The social sciences help students to develop skills to grasp the complexity of the world and to understand themselves and their place in the world.

Core syllabi should illustrate how the course engages with any number of the following learning goals that are relevant to their course:

Demonstrate the critical, mathematical, informational, analytic, expressive, and creative skills that are essential tools of the educated person well-prepared for a meaningful life and vocation.

Understand the major ideas and methods of inquiry of the scholarly disciplines that comprise the university and be able to use those methods of inquiry as beginning practitioners to address complex contemporary problems.

Be able to identify and articulate the strengths and limitations of the disciplines and the relationship of the disciplines to one another, and demonstrate an understanding of the breadth and diversity of human knowledge as well as its openness to integration in more comprehensive wholes.

Be conversant with and able to discuss intelligently enduring questions and issues that are fundamental to human inquiry and that have shaped the traditions from which the university has emerged.

Demonstrate the ability to apply more than one disciplinary perspective to the same enduring question or complex contemporary problem.

Be familiar with the scholarly exploration of religious faith and understand how faith and reason are related in the search for truth.

Demonstrate the ability to examine their values and experiences and integrate what they learn with the principles that guide their lives.

Be prepared and disposed to use their talents and education as engaged global citizens and responsible leaders in service of the common good.

## **FUNDING ISSUES FOR PH.D. STUDENTS**

### **Tuition Remission and Stipends**

## **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

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The sociology department upholds the Boston College policy on academic integrity (see <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html>). The following are examples of violations of academic integrity:

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 a violation of academic integrity,



## **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>.

## **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,” which occurs on August 1 (for the spring semester) and March 1 (for the fall semester). 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.

**GRG**

## **ANNUAL EVALUATION**

The academic performance of all graduate students in the sociology department, including GPA, Incomplete course grades, and overall progress in the program, will be reviewed each year by May 15. In anticipation of this, each Ph.D. student in his or her third year and above will be required to submit an Annual Evaluation Fact Sheet to the department for review. Students in the MA program are not required to submit an annual evaluation fact sheet.



## **GOOD STANDING POLICY FOR PH.D. STUDENTS**