



GRADUATE HANDBOOK

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Department of Sociology & Anthropology
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1. ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology at WVU offers a Master of Arts and a Ph.D. in sociology. Both programs emphasize foundational coursework in sociology, including theory, methods and statistics, as well as courses and independent research in an area related to the department's specializations in crime, community and culture. Each of these specializations are comprised of a several subfields and we encourage students to focus on the subfield that is most related to their career goals.

The master's program typically serves as a foundation for students who wish to either 1) pursue doctoral studies in sociology or a related discipline, or 2) seek research-oriented jobs in universities, government, community agencies and private industry. The Ph.D. program is designed for students who are interested in working as professional sociologists in teaching and research.

The department is strongly committed to teaching, mentoring, and collaborative research with students. Members of the faculty have received major research grants, won national teaching and research awards, published several books and numerous academic articles, and served as the editor or editorial board members of prestigious journals. In many cases, students have worked as research collaborators with faculty and co-authored publications.

2. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Applying for admission

Applications for admission must include official transcripts from all colleges and universities previously attended, references from at least three people familiar with the student's academic record and potential for graduate study, a writing sample, a personal statement, a non-refundable application fee, and an official statement of the Graduate Record Examination scores. The GRE should be taken within two years of the application submission.

The application process is online. Applicants must submit a University Graduate Application at: https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=vvugrad.

Foreign students for whom English is not a native language are required by the University to submit the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). WVU accepts either the TOEFL or the IELTS for this purpose. Please see [Office of Admissions – English Language Proficiency](#) for more information.

2.2 Deadlines for graduate applications

The application deadline is February 1. Most materials will need to be received by January 15th to be uploaded for evaluation by the February 1st deadline. Initial offers to students will occur on March 15. We do not accept students at mid-year.

2.3 Regular graduate admission

Regular graduate students are degree-seeking students who meet all the criteria for regular admission to a program of their choice. The student must have earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, must have had a grade point average of at least a 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, and must be under no requirements to make up deficiencies.

2.4 Provisional graduate admission

A student may be admitted as a provisional graduate student when the student has earned a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, but does not meet the criteria for regular admission. The student may have incomplete credentials, deficiencies to make up, or an undergraduate scholastic record that shows promise but is below the 3.0 grade point average required for regular admission. In the case of provisional admission, the letter of admission from the graduate program will specify the requirements that must be met for the graduate student to be re-classified as a regular graduate student.

2.5 Residency requirements

2.5.1 Residency as part of the doctoral degree requirements

Doctoral education involves many learning experiences that take place outside the formal classroom setting. These involve observing and participating in activities conducted by the graduate faculty, using departmental and University libraries, attending lectures presented by visiting scholars, informally debating other students, and similar activities. To insure that graduate students experience this kind of informal learning, doctoral programs at WVU require at least two semesters in residence on campus.

2.5.2 Residency classification

The residency policy is established by the WV Higher Education Policy Commission Series 25, which is posted at admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/residency/hep-25. The WVU Office of Admissions assigns students a residency classification for admission, tuition, and fee purposes. Students who are legal residents of West Virginia pay “resident” tuition and fees at WVU; students who are residents of other states and nations pay “non-resident” tuition and fees. Further information on residency classification is at admissions.wvu.edu/admissions/residency.

3. TIME LIMITS

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within five calendar years, beginning with the date the student commences courses carrying graduate credit applicable to the degree program. In order for students to maintain funding they are expected to complete all requirements for the master's degree before the end of the fourth semester of enrollment.

Doctoral students are allowed a maximum of ten calendar years from admission to the doctoral program to complete all requirements of the PhD degree. In order to maintain funding students

are expected to be admitted to candidacy by the end of the tenth semester of enrollment (for those entering without a master's degree) or by the end of the eighth semester of enrollment (for those entering with a master's degree). Students become doctoral candidates once they have successfully completed their comprehensive examination. Doctoral candidates are allowed no more than five years in which to complete the remaining requirements of their program after being admitted to doctoral candidacy.

4 GRADUATE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Required courses

All students are required to take the nine courses in the graduate program's core curriculum. No student will be granted a graduate degree without having a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher in these courses. The required courses include:

SOCA 610 – Advanced General Sociology	3 credits
SOCA 615 – Sociological Data Analysis & Interpretation I	3 credits
SOCA 616 – Sociological Data Analysis & Interpretation II	3 credits
Methods I (SOCA 620 – Sociological Research Methods)	3 credits
Methods II (SOCA 720 or 721)	3 credits
Methods III (SOCA 725, 726, 727, 728, 729 or GEOG 550)	3 credits
SOCA 630 – Classical Social Thought	3 credits
SOCA 600 – Professional Development Pro-seminar	1 credit
SOCA 601 – Research and Writing Pro-seminar	1 credit

4.1.1 Students entering the program with a BA/BS

Students who enter the graduate program with a BA/BS degree are required to complete the M.A. degree as part of their progress toward the Ph.D. Students will receive the M.A. degree in sociology upon completing the core courses, three elective courses, six thesis credit hours, and the completion of a master's thesis. The six thesis credits must be split over at least two semesters. Students will be dually enrolled in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs until they complete the M.A. requirements. Students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour during the semester of graduation.

4.1.2 Students entering the program with a MA degree

Students are accepted into the doctoral program upon their entry into the department. Students do not need to complete the M.A. thesis provided they have completed a thesis requirement at their previous institution, and the thesis meets the standards of the graduate committee.

Doctoral students are required to take two additional core courses, five courses in an area of specialization, and nine hours of dissertation credits. Doctoral students must also pass comprehensive examinations and successfully defend of a dissertation.

The two additional required core courses include:

SOCA 730 – Sociological Explanation	3 credits
SOCA 700 – Job Market Pro-seminar	1 credit

The doctoral program requires students to complete 57-66 credit hours. Up to 9 credit hours from coursework at the master's level from another university may be counted towards the total hours (see section 11 below for more information about course waivers).

4.2 Areas of Specialization

Doctoral students will take five courses in one of the department's three areas of specialization: Crime, Community and Culture. A description of each area follows.

Crime -- Social Control and Violence

The study of crime, social control, and violence has become arguably the fastest growing subfield within sociology. At its heart, the study of social control and violence speaks to what it means to have society and community, as many of our most basic human relations are shaped by notions of right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. Sociology faculty within the crime subfield at West Virginia University bring a great diversity of theoretical orientations and methodological innovations to the study of social control and violence. Current faculty research includes studies of domestic violence, self-defense, crime and inequality, corrections institutions, substance abuse treatment programs, hate crimes, neighborhood inequalities, victimization, fear of crime, suicide, violent conflict among inmates, police reconstruction, neighborhood dynamics, and state control. Proposed graduate course offerings reflect this great diversity. After taking a required criminological theory course, students may take electives in theories of violence, sociology of violence, victimology, violence against women, gender and crime, police culture and socialization, rural criminology, community, crime, and disorder, race, crime, and community, the sociology of conflict, and cultural criminology.

The objective of this area of specialization is to not only leave students with a broad understanding of influential classics and cutting-edge research in the field of sociological criminology, but also to stimulate student thought about the intersection of science, public policy, and social action, with an emphasis on producing high-quality scientific research that is able to impact important public debates on crime and justice.

The required course in the crime specialization is SOCA 740 – Sociological Theories of Crime and Deviance.

The elective courses in the crime specialization include:

- SOCA 741 – Theories of Violence
- SOCA 742 – Sociology of Violence
- SOCA 743 – Victimology
- SOCA 744 – Violence Against Women
- SOCA 745 – Gender and Crime

- SOCA 746 – Police Culture and Socialization
- SOCA 747 – Rural Criminology
- SOCA 748 – Community, Crime, and Disorder
- SOCA 749 – Race, Crime, and Community
- SOCA 750 – Cultural Criminology
- SOCA 761 – The Sociology of Conflict

Community -- Health, Environment and Place

Studies of community have been the core of sociology from the beginning of the discipline. Sociology faculty in Community at West Virginia University bring this tradition into the modern era by using innovative research methods and theories to study important sociological problems in urban, rural, and suburban places. Current faculty research includes studies of the causes and consequences of neighborhood change, community crime, disorder and social control, rural and urban culture, college community problems, the effects of welfare reform in economically disadvantaged communities, access to affordable housing, factors that affect population family and health outcomes within communities, environmental injustice, racial and ethnic groups in cities, and residents perceptions of neighborhood quality of life. Graduate student training will reflect these diverse faculty interests. Students will take a required course on space, place, and community along with specialized seminars on current issues affecting communities, such as community development, global communities, health in society, environmental sociology, urban sociology, rural sociology, environmental justice, group processes, rural criminology, community, crime, and disorder, race, crime, and community, and the sociology of conflict.

The area of community is broadly construed and considers the structure and function of communities within the larger society. Within this area, our doctoral program specifically focuses on health, the environment and place. We are examining communities as a context within which individuals are influenced. The objectives of this specialization are to develop knowledge in community sociology drawing on theories of urban and rural sociology, as well as spatial analyses of place (e.g., ecology and spatial demography). Students who study community sociology will be well-versed in theories and research methods associated with contextual patterns. Key methods on contextual analyses—both qualitative and quantitative—are also important components of this area.

The required course in the community specialization is SOCA 760 – Space, Place, and Community.

The elective courses in the community specialization include:

- SOCA 761 – The Sociology of Conflict
- SOCA 762 – Community Development
- SOCA 763 – Global Communities
- SOCA 764 – Health in Society
- SOCA 765 – Environmental Sociology
- SOCA 766 – Urban Sociology
- SOCA 767 – Rural Sociology
- SOCA 768 – Environmental Justice

- SOCA 781 – Group Processes
- SOCA 747 – Rural Criminology
- SOCA 748 – Community, Crime, and Disorder
- SOCA 749 – Race, Crime, and Community

Culture -- Social Psychology and Media

The specialization in culture includes three overlapping areas of inquiry: culture, social psychology and media. The underlying goal that unites these areas of inquiry is to examine micro-macro linkages and discover the relationships between society and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of individuals. The first area, culture, involves the study of how systems of ideas shape other social structures. Drawing on cultural theory, students and faculty examine concepts and methods that reveal the cultural aspects of social life at the individual and group levels. The second area focuses on theories and research in social psychology. It emphasizes both individual and group processes (e.g., cognition, emotion, perception, attitude formation) and interactive processes (e.g., communication, socialization, identity construction) from a sociological perspective. The third area of specialization includes a focused investigation of media. The central aim is to understand the relationships between social forces (e.g., culture, economy, politics) and the content of media and communication (e.g., news, television, social media). Another goal is to investigate the relation of media content to human consciousness and behavior. The key methods of media research, content analysis in particular, are also emphasized.

Current faculty research includes studies of social psychology, group processes, experimental methods, symbolic interactionism, constructing social problems, social and psychological responses to perceived threats, and the role and impact of the media on attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Proposed graduate course offerings reflect this diversity. After taking a required course on the Individual and Society, students may take electives in sociology of culture, social psychology, symbolic interactionism, situational social psychology, media and society, cultural criminology, environmental justice, and group processes.

The required course in the culture specialization is SOCA 780 – Individual and Society.

The elective courses in the culture specialization include:

- SOCA 781 – Group Processes
- SOCA 782 – Sociology of Culture
- SOCA 783 – Social Psychology
- SOCA 784 – Symbolic Interactionism
- SOCA 785 – Situational Social Psychology
- SOCA 786 – Media and Society
- SOCA 750 – Cultural Criminology
- SOCA 768 – Environmental Justice
- SOCA 746 – Police Culture and Socialization

4.3 Elective courses

In addition to required courses, students take three elective courses. Students can take elective courses in any of the three areas of specialization—crime, community, or culture. The student should consult with his or her advisory committee to choose the classes that are most relevant to his or her area of specialization. The goal of the three elective courses is to provide students with a well-rounded perspective on crime, community and culture. If the student’s area of specialization is crime, the student should take classes in culture and community as his/her elective courses.

Alternatively, if a student chooses to transfer elective course credits from a previous institution, the course credits will count toward these electives. If students enrolled in the doctoral program choose to pursue a certificate of study outside of the department (e.g. Women and Gender Studies or University Teaching), these classes will also count toward the elective hours.

4.3.1 Special Courses

Special Course Request Procedure is as follows. Special courses include any class that must be added to the schedule after the schedule is set. Typically, these are sections for single students to work with a faculty member in a focused and special regard.

For graduate special courses (e.g., research hours, independent studies and teaching practicums but not thesis or dissertation hours), the draft syllabus should be sent to the DGS and copied to the Department Chair for their review and approval. Once the syllabus is fine-tuned and approved (if changes are requested), the DGS will let the SLI Coordinator know to add the class to the schedule, without requiring restrictions. Completed contracts must be placed on file

4.4 Thesis and Dissertation

Throughout the first two semesters of the M.A. program and the first four semesters of the doctoral program, students should be actively considering potential topics for a research project. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss their interests with several faculty members to help clarify their ideas and research objectives. Selecting and clarifying a research topic early on will help the student focus their coursework and other program activities on a “doable” research project, as well as assemble an appropriate faculty committee. The research topic is always decided by the student, but close research collaborations between students and faculty are encouraged, as they often result in research publications and timely graduation.

Another key step in selecting a research topic is to consider the availability of data. Students may wish to focus their research on a topic that can be addressed through the use of *secondary* data. Students may also consider collecting *primary* data, but should remain aware of time limitations. If human research subjects are to be used in primary data collection, students will need to apply for approval through WVU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning their data collection. IRB approval is needed for secondary data analysis only when identifiers, such as subjects’ names or addresses, are included in the dataset. In all other cases, secondary data analysis does not require IRB approval. Students should consult their committee chair about this

matter, and learn more about the IRB process online at:
http://oric.research.wvu.edu/human_subjects_research_and_the_irb.

4.4.1 Prospectus

The thesis and dissertation models allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the program's key learning objectives. With these common aims in mind, all prospectus should include (though to varying degrees) the following elements:

- A statement of the research problem and why it's important. What is it you seek to learn, by whom will the findings be valued, and why? Empirical research is addressed to a particular set of scholars, professionals or citizens. Besides the members of your thesis or dissertation committee, who is your intended audience? What is the sociological relevance of your research idea?
- Citation of relevant literature. Drawing on your training in the program, you must show your ability to integrate empirical literature to form a cohesive argument. Whether you are preparing a theory-driven journal article that tests hypotheses or a traditional length dissertation, you must demonstrate that you know how to search for, find, and properly use related empirical studies. Using the literature "properly" requires a clear understanding of the purpose of your research and its intended audience. Demonstrating your preliminary knowledge of the literature and outlining a clear plan for using it represent a key step in developing a thesis proposal.
- Discussion of methods, data and measurement. What kind of study design is being proposed (survey, experiment, quasi-experiment, interviews, field research, content analysis)? How did you choose your proposed method? Why is your method appropriate for producing the kind of evidence your problem requires? If it is to be a survey, describe the population, sample design, the length, form and content of the questionnaire to be used. If it is to be a participant observation study, indicate the nature of the site, how often you will visit, over what period of time, and what kinds of things you will do while there. If based on secondary data, explain how and for what purposes the original data were collected, by whom, and in what form they will now be used.
- Plans for analyzing and presenting evidence. Offer a concrete discussion of the specific strategies and techniques for analyzing and presenting the evidence. How will you convert the raw data (e.g., completed questionnaires, field notes, interview transcripts, etc.) into specific findings and how will you present such findings to the reader (e.g., tables, charts, field notes or interview excerpts, etc.)? Will you operationalize your dependent variable by creating an index? Will you use qualitative analytical software to code interviews? What statistics, if any, will be used in your analysis? The content of this material will of course vary widely depending on the given method being proposed. The purpose of this section is for you to visualize your thesis in its completed form, and notify your thesis or dissertation committee what they can expect to see in the final draft.

- A project timeline. All proposals should include a detailed timeline that indicates when the student will complete each phase in the research and writing process.

After completing and distributing the research proposal to members of the advisory committee, students should schedule a meeting with all their members. Once the proposal has been accepted, it must be signed by all committee members and the student. One copy of the proposal is entrusted to the committee chair, one to the student, and one is placed in the student's academic file.

The prospectus constitutes a working agreement binding on both the committee and the student. If the student carries out the research outlined in the proposal, the requirements for the study will have been fulfilled, regardless of the findings. If the research requires a change in direction, the proposal can be revised by the mutual consent of the student and his or her committee.

The writing and defense of a prospectus is intended to save students from investing in research whose objectives are unclear or that lack the approval of their committee. Final approval might require several drafts of the proposal. However, the graduate committee strongly believes that time spent in conceptualizing and planning the research will save even more time later.

M.A. Program Requirement. M.A. students must receive acceptance of their thesis proposal by no later than **November 20 in the third semester** of the M.A. program. Missing the November 20 deadline indicates a failure to make adequate progress in the program and may result in the loss of a student's graduate teaching assistantship or continued admission in the graduate program.

4.4.2 Thesis and Dissertation Guidelines

Master's thesis. The master's thesis should follow the *journal article model* -- a research report intended for publication in a peer-reviewed academic journal and presentation at a professional sociology conference. The length of this product varies across journals. As a rough guide, however, 30-50 typed pages, not including references and tables, is a good length for the body of the text. The general format for many journal articles includes a brief introduction outlining the purpose and sociological relevance of the study, a review of literature or a theoretical framework to contextualize research questions or hypotheses, a discussion of the study's design and methods, an analysis of findings, followed by a summary and conclusion. Students are encouraged to identify a specific academic journal (along with exemplar articles within it) that may be appropriate for their research, consult their committee chair about the journal, and follow the selected journal's submission guidelines as they write their thesis. Although this model may be useful to the careers of all students, it is especially appropriate for students who wish to pursue doctoral studies after graduation.

Dissertation. The dissertation requirement ensures that students have the ability to carry out a major independent research project. Students can choose from two dissertation models. They can follow the traditional model, which takes the form and substance of a scholarly monograph, or the manuscript model, which consists of three interrelated papers on a single topic. The quality and contribution of each paper should reach the level of articles published in peer-reviewed

scholarly journals. The manuscript model must also include an introductory chapter that clarifies the dissertation theme and situates the work as a whole in the sociological literature, as well as a concluding chapter that synthesizes and integrates the three papers.

The student prepares the doctoral dissertation in close consultation with the chair of their dissertation committee. The student, in consultation with the committee chair, should choose a dissertation topic and prepare a research proposal. Copies of the proposal must be made available to all members of the committee and a meeting scheduled for committee input. Students should not continue working on their dissertations without approval from all members of their advisory committees. Students cannot defend their dissertation proposal and their dissertation in the same semester.

4.4.3 Oral Defense

When the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is accepted by the student's advisory committee, the oral examination of the research project may be scheduled. Ideally, the candidate should provide copies of the final draft to all committee members two weeks in advance of the defense date to give committee members adequate time to review the draft. The oral examination is primarily a defense of the thesis or dissertation. If the defense is judged inadequate, the committee will decide about reexamination.

4.4.4 Other Research Guidelines

It is imperative that advisory committee members respond to draft submissions by the student with explicit commentary within roughly one week. The Chair, in consultation with his/her colleagues, indicates when he/she considers a public presentation appropriate.

In order for a completed thesis or dissertation to receive final approval, it must be signed by all members of the committee after a successful, public presentation by the student. Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must refer to requirements detailed in the WVU Graduate Catalog (p. 40): "Theses and dissertations should be presented to the student's graduate advisor or committee chairperson **at least one month** before the end of the enrollment period in which completion of all requirements is expected."

Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must follow the form and general guidelines proscribed under the WVU Graduate School "Regulations Governing the Preparation of Theses," available from the Graduate Records Office, 103 Woodburn Hall (293-2505). The chair of the student's research committee is to assist the student in applying these general requirements to styles appropriate in the field of sociology.

Students preparing a thesis or dissertation must consult with the Eberly College of Arts & Sciences Graduate Records Office, 103 Woodburn Hall (293-2505) for regulations on deadlines and dates for submission of final copies of the thesis or dissertation. Contact the Library Business Office, Wise Library for any questions regarding Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD).

All WVU Graduate School rules and regulations must be observed. All students are welcome to consult the chairperson of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology about any of the above matters at any time.

4.5 Comprehensive exams

The comprehensive exams are intended to assess students' broad competencies in a specialized area of sociology with specific focus on understanding sociological theory and methods as they relate to the student's chosen specialization. The exams also test students' writing skills and their ability to think creatively and carry out independent research.

Comprehensive exams should take place in the last semester of coursework or the first semester following the completion of coursework. It is not ideal for students to take comprehensive exams if they are enrolled in a full load of courses (9 credit hours). Students might complete comprehensive exams and a dissertation proposal defense in the same semester, provided they complete the comprehensive exam process by mid-semester.

4.5.1 Preparing for exams

Students begin the exam preparation process by planning a meeting with their committee chair to discuss, define, and decide on an area of specialization. Developing a comprehensive exam is the responsibility of the student and his or her chair and advisory committee, but the end product should follow two departmental requirements.

First, the area of specialization should fall within one of the department's three concentrations – crime, community or culture – even though it is understood that these concentrations contain a number of large and growing subfields that may be more appropriate for some students. The chosen area should not be too broad (e.g., inequality), and it should not be too narrow (e.g., sociology of pigeon racing in nineteenth-century London). The American Sociological Association includes more than fifty sections; consulting these sections may help students define their specializations.

The second department requirement is that a comprehensive exam should evaluate a student's knowledge of both theory and methods in a specialization area, as well as test the student's canonical understanding of the related literature. To this end, all comprehensive exams should consist of three or four questions: one focused on theory, one on methods, and one or two on the nature of the specialization itself that will allow the student to demonstrate mastery of the area.

Students should prepare a brief statement that defines the area of specialization, roughly describes the essential scholarship that pertains to each type of question, lists the readings that will serve as the basis for each question, and offers suggestions for possible exam questions. Comprehensive exam statements should be developed through a close collaboration between the student and the chair of the advisory committee. Statements may review deficits in the literature, classify research trends, and/or identify key theoretical and methodological issues and debates in the specialization area. The purposes of the statements are to clearly define the student's area of specialization, give a rationale for the types of literature on the reading list, and develop mutual

expectations about how the student will be tested. Although there is no specific requirement for the number of academic books and journal articles on the reading list, 100 pieces of literature may serve as a rough guideline.

4.5.2 Written exam procedures

A student must formally notify the Director of Graduate Studies that they wish to sit for the comprehensive exam by the second week of a given semester. If the student plans to sit for the exam at the beginning of a semester, they must notify the DGS by the mid-semester point of the previous semester. At that time, they should schedule their written exam as well as their oral defense with the department liaison.

After the student's chair approves the student's comprehensive exam statement (i.e., the narrative, reading list and suggested questions), the chair distributes the statements to all members of the advisory committee. The advisory committee may amend a statement, add readings to the list, and/or comment on the student's suggested questions. Generally, students will not be asked exam questions outside of the reading lists. Students should be given at least two questions to choose from for each of the question types. Students will answer one of two theory questions, one of two methods questions and one or two of three general mastery questions.

Once the student receives approval from the advisory committee, the advisory committee chair submits the student's statement to the department's graduate committee for final approval, along with a final draft of the advisory committee's written exam questions. The graduate committee has 10 working days to approve the exam questions or submit concerns to the student's committee. The exam needs to be finalized six weeks prior to the exam date. If the student wishes to take the comprehensive exam at the beginning of the semester, the process outlined above must be initiated in the previous semester. For example, if a student plans to take the exam at the beginning of the fall semester, the process to approve exam questions needs to be completed by the end of the spring semester.

Once a student has requested to sit for the exam and both the advisory committee and the graduate committee have approved the exam questions, they must complete the exam that semester. Failure to take the examination at this point will constitute a failure on all questions of the exam and the student will only have one more opportunity to pass.

The chair of the advisory committee is responsible for submitting the final examination to the department liaison. The department liaison is responsible for distributing the exam to the student and collecting answers at the designated times, and then distributing the answers back to the members of the chair of the advisory committee. Students will have a total of six consecutive days to spend writing answers to three or four questions on the exam. If a student must retake part of the exam, they will have two days to work on each of the questions that demand a retake.

There is no required page length, but 15-20 double-spaced pages (not including references) for each answer may serve as a rough guideline.

4.5.3 Oral exam procedures

The written part of the comprehensive exams will be graded within 10 business days of the regular semester. The oral exam needs to be scheduled after the written portion has been graded. The oral defense should be scheduled when the written examination is scheduled. The defense is open to all faculty and students in the department. Students should work with their chairs and committees to prepare for the oral defense. In most cases, the student will be asked to give a brief summary of their written comprehensive exam work, but the primary emphasis is on a question and answer session.

4.5.4 Grading

Evaluating the student's answers is the responsibility of the advisory committee. Before taking the exam, students should communicate with their committees about their specific expectations. However, some general evaluation standards exist. Criteria for grading exams may pertain to the following:

- 1) Substance: Is the student knowledgeable and fully informed about the subject of the question? Are the student's contrasts and comparisons about the literature accurate? Did the student successfully synthesize or integrate different areas of the research or different perspectives within it? Does the student understand the scope of the literature? Did he or she demonstrate an ability to critically analyze empirical studies? Has the student shown that he or she can work alone and carry out independent scholarship?
- 2) Writing quality: Are the student's answers clear and concise, logical and well organized? Is the writing free from redundancy, wordiness and awkward phrases? Is the work stylistically elegant and persuasive?
- 3) Creativity: Is the student's work original and interesting? Do the answers convincingly direct us toward new thinking about an issue? Did the student identify an interesting problem in the literature or a special need for research?

Each exam question will receive one of three grades:

- 1) Pass with distinction: the answer is exceptional, engaging and unique.
- 2) Pass: the answer is satisfactory and requires no further work.
- 3) Fail: the answer is deficient and must be redone. Students may fail part or all of the exam. In the case of a failing grade, the chair of the student's advisory committee must give directions for retaking part or the entire exam. Students must retake the exam within one academic year. They may only retake the exam once, after which termination procedures begin.

All members of the committee must play a role in the grading process. Each committee member must read the answers and write an evaluation of each of them. If a majority of the members vote to pass an answer, it is automatically considered a pass. However, in the case of a difference of

opinions, the committee members should meet, discuss their views, and attempt to reconcile their differences before voting on the given answer.

5 ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Students are in charge of selecting and managing the composition of their advisory committees. Students may request a temporary advisor prior to their first semester in the program. By the end of the second semester, M.A. students should have identified a faculty member willing to serve as the chair of their advisory committee. Doctoral students should identify a chair by the end of the fourth semester. The chair must be a member of the graduate faculty who is appropriately qualified and authorized by the Graduate School to advise graduate students. The chair should always be the first point of contact for the student on matters of degree requirements, funding, protocols and matters of professional behavior.

In consultation with the chair, students must secure the willingness of additional graduate faculty to serve on the advisory committee. Early selection of an advisory committee can provide the student with guidance especially suited to her/his interests and assures that an appropriate plan of study is developed and followed. The advisory committee is expected to be available for student program planning, discussion of professional development, and consultation and direction on thesis and dissertation research, as well as comprehensive exams. Committee members are expected to be well acquainted with the student's progress at all times after the committee's formation. A student should be certain to keep the committee members fully informed of progress toward the degree.

The majority of the members of any advisory committee must be *regular* members of the graduate faculty, including the chair of the committee. No more than one person may be a nonmember of the graduate faculty. An outside faculty member cannot serve as chair of a committee. No family member may serve on the committee of his or her relative. All advisory committees are subject to the approval of the chairperson or designee of the department/division and the dean or designee of the college or school.

Once an advisory committee has been officially established, it will not be necessary to alter it if the graduate faculty status of a member of the committee is downgraded. Though rare, substitution of committee members or the chair may occur at the request of either the student or faculty. Any changes in the membership of a committee require approval of the department chair. Depending on circumstances and the judgment of the department chair, replacement of the chair of an advisory committee may require that activities already completed (such as a prospectus approval meeting) be repeated.

5.1 Master's Thesis Committees

Master's thesis committees consist of no fewer than three members. One member of the committee may be from outside the student's department.

5.2 Doctoral Dissertation Committees

Doctoral dissertation committees consist of no fewer than four members. At least one member of the committee must be from a department other than the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

5.3 Comprehensive Exams Committees

Comprehensive exams committees usually include the same three members as the master's thesis committees. Substitution of members is allowed, but the committee must have three members, and only one member may be from outside the student's department.

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE GRADUATE FACULTY

6.1 Regular memberships

Individuals who hold appointments at West Virginia University in tenure-track faculty positions or in full-time non-tenure-track faculty or faculty-equivalent positions and who are engaged in scholarly research or creative activity may be considered for regular membership. Regular members must present evidence of continuing scholarly research or creative activity. Criteria include one or more of the following: publication in major peer-reviewed journals, publication of books and book chapters, invited and/or competitively selected presentations of scholarly work at national and international meetings, and presentations and performance of artistic work at professionally recognized events.

6.2 Associate memberships

Individuals with ongoing involvement in graduate education at WVU may be considered for associate membership. These individuals may include WVU faculty members who do not meet the criteria for regular membership, non-faculty professionals with terminal degrees or equivalent expertise, and faculty members at other institutions. Associate members must present evidence of continuing scholarly or creative expertise or involvement in graduate education. Criteria usually include one or more of the following: research activity, scholarly publications, artistic performances or presentations, graduate-level teaching, and service on graduate committees.

6.3 Exceptions

Graduate faculty members who leave WVU may continue to serve on student committees with their same graduate faculty status established prior to their departure. Normally, no candidate for a degree at WVU may be a regular or associate member of the graduate faculty. Emeritus faculty members may remain on the graduate faculty. New faculty members may be appointed as regular or associate graduate faculty members. Individual exceptions to membership criteria may be approved by the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs.

6.4 Functions of Graduate Faculty Members

Regular graduate faculty members may serve on and chair students' thesis and dissertation committees. Associate graduate faculty members may serve on students' thesis and dissertation committees, but may not chair them.

7 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

7.1 Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs)

A graduate assistantship is part of your professional career whether the focus of that career is research, teaching, or public service. Accordingly, time management, focus on faculty and your studies should be your top priorities. Your assistantship is set up to assist you in these areas. It is a job. Your supervisor in this position is the Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. In addition, when you have problems or concerns, you may discuss these matters with the Associate Department Chair or the Director of Graduate Studies.

Overall your duties include grading exams, maintaining grade books, assisting with audio/visual resources, keeping attendance records, exam proctoring (including the SOCA computer testing lab in the Clark Hall research annex), and meeting the needs of the course instructors. You may be called up to present a class lecture or tutor students. You should review the course syllabi of all faculty you are assigned to. In this way you will be familiar with the class and know when important dates are approaching (exams) and be able to answer student questions, as needed.

7.1.1 Faculty Assignments

The purpose of faculty assignments is to give faculty a "point of contact" with respect to their teaching needs. It is your responsibility to contact your assigned faculty the first week of the semester. In some cases there are faculty who will have specific needs and will work out a working schedule with you. In other cases, the needs will be minimal and some may even prefer to rely on the GTA pool.

7.1.2 Make-up Exams

According to university policy "Students absent from regularly scheduled examinations because of authorized University activities will have the opportunity to take them at an alternate time. Such make-up exams should be of comparable difficulty to the original examination." GTAs will assist in the department's make-up exam procedures.

7.1.3 Grades

As part of your GTA assignment, you will be asked to handle grades. Typically faculty use eCampus for posting grades and will likely require you to calculate grades using Excel software. Always consult with instructors on their preferences. If you are required to provide grades to students outside of the classroom, never give out grades over the phone and always ask for ID in person.

7.1.4 Stipend and Tuition Waivers

For your assistantship, you receive a stipend and tuition waiver. To receive your stipend, you must report to WVU Human Resources to complete hiring forms. Once on payroll (direct deposit required), pay statements will be received in the middle and at the end of each month. Staff can provide exact dates as it may differ each month. Your 9-month assistantship begins August 16 and ends May 15.

GTA Tuition waivers are submitted prior to each semester. GTA tuition waivers are in effect during Fall and Spring unless you resign or lose your assistantship. GTAs who had tuition waivers for Fall and Spring are eligible for Summer tuition waivers. You need to contact the graduate liaison in the main office, if you are interested, and you must register for 6 credit hours.

7.1.5 Rights and grievances

Continuation of your graduate assistantship is contingent on the quality of your work, your reliability and evaluations. Faculty and staff members for whom you complete tasks have the option of formally evaluating your work. If this is done, you have a right to see these evaluations during your spring evaluation.

If you should experience difficulties with your assignment, discuss the situation with the person assigning the task. Ask that particular person to establish his/her expectations for tasks and responsibilities, request syllabi and establish deadlines. If necessary ask for assignments in writing. Should the situation remain unresolved, graduate assistants should speak to the graduate director. After working with both the assigning person and the graduate director unsuccessfully, students should file a written complaint with the department chair. In the event that the chairperson is unable to resolve the situation then the Dean of Graduate Education may be contacted.

7.1.6 Miscellaneous GTA issues and responsibilities

You may be asked to make photocopies on the office copier or risograph. You need to make yourself familiar with this equipment. Office staff are available to assist you.

Most faculty use Scantron exam forms. The Scantron grading machine is located in the GTA office (SB17 Knapp). Instructions for its use are located with the machine.

The telephone extension for the GTA office is 293-8845. This is a shared telephone that has voicemail access. Voicemail is to be checked daily and is to be done during each “pool” session. Press *Messages*, enter your password - 2935801, and follow the prompt.

Mail boxes are provided in the student lounge located on the first floor.

E-mail: WVU provides all students with a MIX e-mail account. It is your responsibility to activate this account and you are expected to use it. You may forward your MIX e-mail to your

personal account, if you prefer. All department correspondence will be sent to you through your MIX account.

You have access to a computer lab located in B5 Knapp Hall. This lab is shared with Social Work and Public Administration.

Graduate students are collectively responsible for the security of the GTA offices, their contents and in helping keep them clean and trash free. When exiting the building, be sure equipment is off, windows closed and doors shut. In case of an emergency dial 911 or for campus security dial 3-help.

When a fire alarm is sounded, use the nearest exit or stairway to evacuate immediately. DO NOT use the elevators. Report to the parking area on the North side of Knapp Hall and proceed to the designated parking lot numbers corresponding with the department (#3). Do not stand under the building overhang. Do not reenter the building until notified by the building supervisor.

7.2 Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)

Graduate Research Assistantships are usually generated out of research grants secured by individual faculty members. Graduate Assistants are expected to work 20 hours a week. Applicants for GRA positions must apply directly to the faculty member actually doing the research. GRAs are typically hired because they have a particular skill (e.g., statistical analysis, data management, archival research skills) or they evidence the potential to provide important assistance to an ongoing research project.

7.3 Merit graduate tuition waivers

Merit graduate tuition waivers are provided on a competitive and limited basis. These waivers are distributed by the College in cooperation with the WVU Office of Graduate Education and Life to enhance the academic reputation and effectiveness of graduate programs in terms of recruiting and retaining high quality graduate students.

Merit graduate tuition waivers are granted only to degree seeking students making adequate progress toward degree completion. These waivers may be used only for coursework required for the degree program in which the student is enrolled. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology receives a limited number of merit graduate tuition waiver credits and distributes them based on the strategic goals of the program and department. The waivers awarded to students may constitute a partial or full tuition scholarship. Merit graduate tuition waivers do not cover the cost of associated fees.

Students who are interested in applying for this award should contact the graduate liaison, receive information about application deadlines, and fill out a graduate merit tuition waiver form. To access the form, see the Links section of the Table of Contents.

7.4 Research and travel funding

Financial support for research and research-related travel is available through the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences (<http://eberly.wvu.edu/students/graduate/graduate-and-doctoral-travel-and-research-programs>), the Office of Graduate Education and Life (<http://grad.wvu.edu/>), WVU's chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta (a sociology honors society; <https://sites.google.com/site/alphakappadeltainternational/Home>), and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at WVU (for information about this funding, contact the DGS).

8 CRITERIA FOR SATISFACTORY PROGRESS

Below is a brief summary of key program objectives and general deadlines for accomplishing them. It is recognized that no absolute criteria for evaluating progress toward degree are appropriate. However, the following criteria may be used for assessing progress during diagnostic reviews, decisions concerning offering or continuing assistantships, and establishing priorities for other types of departmental support, such as part-time instructorships. ***The progression of requirements applies to both Master's and doctoral students who enter the program with a baccalaureate degree.*** See section 11 ("Course Transfers and Waivers") for the abbreviated requirements for students who enter the program with a Master's degree.

Year 1

First semester:

1. Orientation. Students learn about the program and get acquainted with the faculty, staff, and fellow students. Students with Graduate Teaching Assistantships receive information about office procedures, job responsibilities and rights.
2. Search for chair of advisory committee. During the first semester, students should review possible areas of concentration for their Master's thesis and begin locating relevant faculty advisors. In the process, they may consult the descriptions of faculty on the department's website (http://soca.wvu.edu/faculty_staff) and the Faculty Interest Document (FID) to solicit advice from specific professors. The FID can be found in Appendix A. By the end of the first semester, students should be thinking seriously about their selection of an advisory committee chair who will serve as the main advisor on their master's thesis, and may also direct their comprehensive exams and dissertation.

Year 1

Second semester:

1. Select chair of advisory committee. By mid semester students should select a thesis advisor who will serve as the chair the advisory committee.
2. Design thesis proposal. Students are strongly encouraged to meet regularly with their chair to finish assembling their three-member advisory committee and begin designing a master's thesis proposal.

3. Complete plan of study. The “Plan of Study” document must be completed, signed and submitted to Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Records Office by the end of the second semester. The document includes the student’s plan for coursework, a working title of the M.A. thesis, and requires the signature of all three members of the advisory committee.
4. Spring evaluation. At the end of the second semester, all students will meet with the Graduate Committee to discuss their progress and address any problems they may have.

Year 2

Third semester:

1. Defend master’s thesis proposal. All students must write and defend their master’s thesis proposal by mid semester. The deadline is November 20. After a successful defense, students must complete a “graduate prospectus defense” form, have it signed by all three members of the advisory committee and submit the form in the main office to have it placed in the student’s file.
2. Apply for graduation. An application for graduation is due to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Graduate Records Office. An application for graduation will not be accepted for May graduation unless an approved thesis proposal is in the academic file. Although the College determines the final due date, the department requires that all applications for graduation be turned in by the end of the fall semester.

Year 2

Fourth semester:

1. Defend master’s thesis. All students must give a public presentation of their master’s thesis.
2. Meet graduation deadlines. Students should consult closely with the graduate liaison to meet departmental and college expectations and graduation deadlines. Graduation deadlines are determined by the College and are subject to change (see the Graduation Timeline in the Links section of the Table of Contents). All forms must reach the department liaison 24 hours prior to the College deadlines to allow time for review and processing of documents. Two weeks prior to a scheduled defense an [Eberly College Thesis and Dissertation Defense Date Declaration Form](#) is due. For the purpose of the defense, students must bring a [Eberly College Thesis and Dissertation Oral Defense Form](#) and have it filled out and signed by all committee members after the defense. This form must be submitted to the department liaison immediately after the defense. Students should also bring an [EDT](#) Signature Form to the defense. The students’ thesis committee may elect to withhold signatures on this form until revisions are complete. This form must be signed before submission to the library.

3. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD). Master's theses are required to be submitted electronically. ETD technical assistance is offered by the Office of Information Technology. The ETD is submitted in Adobe Acrobat format.
4. Apply for readmission to the PhD program. Students wishing to continue in the PhD program must fill out an application for readmission form and attach a copy of the master's thesis. All students seeking readmission to the PhD program, and students funded by the department as teaching assistants should successfully complete all MA program requirements in time for May commencement in the second year. Meeting this deadline for completing MA requirements is particularly critical for MA students who want to remain eligible for TA funding in the subsequent year. A passing grade on the requirements for the MA degree does not automatically guarantee admission into the PhD program.

Year 3

1. Update plan of study. Students who move on to the PhD program should meet with the chair of their advisory committee and plan the five courses to be taken in one of the department's three areas of specializations, as well as three additional elective courses. They should also begin planning for the two remaining requirements of the PhD program: comprehensive exams and the dissertation requirements. Students should complete the plan of study document and submit a signed copy to the department liaison. The plan of study can be revised later as the student clarifies his or her research and learning objectives.
2. Prepare to teach. Before students are allowed to teach their own course they must first take the 3-credit elective course Teaching Sociology. Students who wish to move on to the PhD program should take the teaching course during the fourth semester.

Year 4

1. Comprehensive exams. Working with the advisory committee, students prepare and carry out comprehensive examinations. See section 5.3 above for more information.

Year 5

1. Defend dissertation proposal. Students should defend their dissertation proposal by the end of the fourth year or beginning of the fifth year in the program. After a successful defense, students must complete a "dissertation defense" form, have it signed by all five members of the advisory committee and submit the form in the main office to have it placed in the student's file.
2. Defend dissertation. All students must give a public presentation of their dissertation.

3. Meet graduation deadlines. Students should consult closely with the graduate liaison to meet departmental and college expectations and graduation deadlines. For more information, see the graduation deadlines for the master's thesis discussed above.
4. Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD). Dissertations are required to be submitted electronically. ETD technical assistance is offered by the Office of Information Technology. The ETD is submitted in Adobe Acrobat format.

9 GUIDELINES FOR TERMINATING STUDENTS FROM THE PROGRAM

A proposed termination of a student from the graduate program must come from the department chair. The chair of a student's advisory committee may ask the department chair to make such a recommendation. Reasons for terminating a student include: a persistent failure to keep course grades above the required level for receiving the degree, failing twice to defend the master's thesis, twice failing comprehensive exams, failing to make satisfactory progress towards completing a degree. Students may file an appeal if they feel that they have been terminated unfairly.

10 CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION POLICY

In any term during which a graduate student is using University libraries or research facilities, consulting with graduate committee members, or completing a thesis or dissertation (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the ETD), the student must enroll for at least one hour of graduate credit. Students who take courses intermittently may be excused from such continuous enrollment if they are not using University facilities or consulting with faculty while they are not enrolled. However, students formally admitted to candidacy for graduate degrees are required to register for at least one credit hour each fall and spring term as a condition of their continued candidacy. Individual programs may also require summer enrollment. By pursuing a degree, such persons by definition are utilizing University services, facilities, and other resources, including faculty expertise; this situation continues in cases where students have completed all required coursework and are working on a thesis or dissertation. Candidates for graduate degrees who fail to maintain continuity of enrollment may be dropped from candidacy.

Students who have completed all requirements for a degree (including the thesis or dissertation defense and submission of the ETD) prior to the beginning of the term of graduation do not need to enroll during that term.

11 COURSE TRANSFERS, WAIVERS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

11.1 Waiver of course credits

Doctoral programs that allow students to earn a master's degree in the same discipline may count the courses earned in the master's degree program toward the doctoral program. Up to three courses from prior training can be used by a student to waive the department's elective course requirements. To be considered for waiver, courses must have been completed within the previous five years from the student's admission date.

11.2 Waiver of Master's thesis requirement

Students entering the graduate program in sociology can request to have the thesis requirement waived if they have written a master's thesis in sociology or in a related field. The thesis will be evaluated by all members of the graduate committee, who will read the thesis and provide letters to the Graduate Director asserting that the thesis meets the expectations of the Department. Students who have written their thesis in a language other than English must also provide an English translation of their work to the Department of Sociology. This translation will be evaluated according to the criteria and procedures described above.

11.3 Deferred enrollment

If students are accepted to the program but experience unforeseen circumstances that do not allow them to attend, students can defer their enrollment for one year. Students need to request deferment from the Director of Graduate Studies in writing. Students who are accepted into the program who do not officially request a deferred enrollment must reapply to the program if they wish to be considered for enrollment the following term.

12 RESEARCH ON HUMAN SUBJECTS

If human research subjects are to be used in primary data collection, students may need to apply for approval through WVU's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before beginning their data collection. IRB approval is needed for secondary data analysis only when identifiers, such as subjects' names or addresses, are included in the dataset. In all other cases, secondary data analysis does not require IRB approval. Students should consult their committee chair about this matter, and learn more about the IRB process online at: http://oric.research.wvu.edu/human_subjects_research_and_the_irb.

13 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND MISCONDUCT

Students of West Virginia University are citizens of a broader academic community. As such, the University expects that every member of its academic community share its historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. To meet these standards, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students should review of the University's Graduate Catalogue to review the definitions and consequences of academic dishonesty and misconduct.

14 HANDBOOK ALTERATION POLICY

All substantive changes to the Graduate Handbook must be submitted for the consideration of the faculty two weeks prior to a full-faculty meeting.