THE DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Know basic theories in the discipline of sociology and theories relevant to particular subfields.
2. Be able to apply relevant theoretical concepts to frame a research problem and to interpret the theoretical implications of a research project.
3. Know basic quantitative and qualitative methods of conducting research in sociology.
4. Be able to apply relevant quantitative or qualitative methods (including statistics) to a particular research problem, analyze the results, and report research findings appropriately using the conventions of these methods.
5. Be able to write a formal research proposal according to the conventions of the discipline.
6. Be able to write a publishable academic journal article to report research results, following the conventions of the discipline.
7. Be able to present research findings orally following the conventions of the discipline, and to respond to questions from the audience.
8. Acquire a professional level of knowledge in selected subfields of sociology in order to be equipped to teach a course on the subject or to develop a research proposal that will advance the field in this particular area.
9. Be able to carry out a research project that will contribute new knowledge to the field, using appropriate methods to conduct the research and analyze the results.
10. Be able to write up a well-organized and persuasive account of the research project for a professional audience, using the conventions of the discipline to present the research problem in context, articulate the reasons for the methods chosen and how they were implemented, present relevant data and analyze it appropriately, and articulate the significance and implications of the research for the advancement of the field.

Curriculum Map

Note: the department will update the curriculum map because it has recently modified its outcomes. Below is the alignment of requirements to the previous outcomes. The program uses a combination of formal coursework and a sequence of writing requirements under the guidance of the student’s committee to develop the learning outcomes in students.

a. High level of understanding of a brand range of sociological theories: Core courses Sociology 611* and 612* cover general theories, and Sociology 613, 615, 616, 631, 632, 638, 661, 706, 711, 715, 716, 720, 721, 722, 723, 725, 730, 735, 741, 750, 751, 752, 753, and 754 cover the middle range theories and research findings of various subfields of the discipline. Sociology 476/L, 605/L* and 705 cover introductory and advanced statistics. Sociology 604, 606*, 608, 609, 691, and 701 offer various research methods. (Asterisked courses are required core courses). Ability to apply theory and methods to specific sociological problem is developed through seminars and research papers, and is evaluated in the Qualifying Review.

b. Mastery of at least two specific subfields: Obtained through seminars, research papers, and preparation for comprehensive examinations in two subfields. These areas of knowledge and skills and tested through written and oral comprehensive exams.
c. Design a feasible research project: Developed through all methods and subfield seminars, through the Qualifying Review requirement, the Research Paper requirement, and the Dissertation Prospectus. Qualifying Review requires submission of two papers that will demonstrate student’s ability to utilize sociological theory and methods to specific problems. Papers are first evaluated by the student’s own guidance committee and then submitted to the departmental QR panel convened each semester. For the Qualifying Review, Research Paper Requirement, and Dissertation Prospectus, students must develop their own research projects under committee guidance.

d. Understanding of the principles of protection of human subjects: All students receive full investigator training in human subjects protection in Soc. 606. They must apply to the Committee on Human Studies for their dissertation research if it involves human subjects, but are encouraged also to apply for approval or exemption for any original research projects they carry out for the Qualifying Review and Research Paper Requirement, since the results of these projects may later be submitted for publication.

e. Carry out independent research: Developed through independent work in seminars and through research to fulfill the Qualifying Review, Research Paper Requirement, and Dissertation. Such research is developed and carried out under the careful guidance of the student’s committee.

f. Interpret research results: Developed as in e., through independent work in seminars and through writing up research to fulfill the Qualifying Review, Research Paper Requirement, and Dissertation under the guidance of the student’s committee.

g. Present research results in professional venues: Because students produce original research papers through the Qualifying Review and Research Paper process, they frequently present these papers at professional conferences and then go on to publish some of them. The Research Paper Requirement is to produce a research paper in the form of a publishable quality professional journal article and to present it publicly. The process teaches students how to write in professional journal style and ensures that they also learn to present their work in a professional venue even before they get to the dissertation stage. Each year several students have their papers accepted at national professional conferences, and about a third of our doctoral students publish professionally before they complete the program.