



WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY

*FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES*

Department of Sociology

Sociology MA Program Graduate Student Handbook

Revised August 2021

Table of Contents

Graduate Faculty and Areas of Specialization.....	4
Full-Time Faculty.....	4
Full-Time Teaching Faculty.....	5
Part-time Lecturers	5
Other Affiliated Faculty	5
Application Process.....	6
Graduate School Application and Requirements:	6
Department of Sociology Graduate Admission Requirements:	6
Graduate Degree Options and Requirements:	7
Dismissal and Transfer to Non-Degree Status:	8
Required Coursework	8
Course Sequencing.....	10
Academic Integrity.....	11
Thesis Structure and Requirements.....	11
Guidelines for Quantitative Thesis Options	12
Guidelines for Qualitative Thesis Options.....	13
Thesis Completion Timeline.....	15
Thesis Tips for Students and Advisors.....	16
Formatting Your Thesis	16
Guidelines for Non-Thesis Options	17
Option 1: Directed Project	17
Option 2: Sociological Practice Internship	19
Option 3: Combined Research and Internship	20
Guidelines for Completing the Portfolio Requirement.....	21
Timeline for Completing the Non-Thesis Requirements.....	22
Important Links from Graduate School.....	23
Graduate Assistantships:.....	24
GTA Application Process and Terms of Re-Appointment:	24
Duties and Responsibilities.....	24
Hours.....	25
Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)	25

Welcome from the Graduate Coordinator

On behalf of my colleagues in the Department of Sociology, I would like to welcome you to the Master of Arts program. We are grateful that you have chosen to pursue your graduate education with us, and we are excited about having the opportunity to work closely with you over the next two years as you make progress toward your master's degree.

As the department's graduate coordinator, I will be in close contact with you throughout your time in the program. The coordinator's job includes recruiting students and overseeing admission into the program, providing academic advising to students, assigning Graduate Assistantships, matching students with faculty advisors, and teaching the department's required proseminar course. More generally, I am here to serve as your primary contact in the department, to resolve any problems that you encounter, and to help you make progress toward your degree. My door is always open to you, so please feel free to contact me at any time.

This handbook contains information for current students about the structure, content, and expectations of our multiple graduate degree paths, as well as details for prospective students about criteria for admission. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this book, however, you may contact me and I will find the information you need as soon as possible.

Our Sociology MA program offers a structured two-year series of courses that provide a strong foundation in sociological theory, research methods, and statistics. The Department of Sociology emphasizes a social justice perspective. Toward that end, working closely with faculty, our students develop insights about the effects of social structures on individual lives and communities. In their own research, our faculty members focus on issues such as workplace inequalities, teen dating violence, sexual minority well-being, gentrification, education policy, and caregiving in later life. Our program prepares graduates for employment in a number of different fields. Some of our graduates are now teaching sociology or related disciplines at colleges and universities. Others have gone on to pursue careers in research in institutions of higher education, private companies, and government agencies. We also have previous students employed in the non-profit sector and social services, both locally and internationally. Finally, many of our students go on to enroll in Ph.D. programs at competitive universities across the nation.

The Department of Sociology offers multiple paths toward the Master of Arts degree, including both thesis and non-thesis options. You will find information about all of these degree paths in this handbook. Thank you again for your interest in sociology, and welcome to our department.

Sincerely,

Chase M. Billingham, Ph.D.
Graduate Coordinator

Graduate Faculty and Areas of Specialization

Full-Time Faculty

Chase M. Billingham (Ph.D., Northeastern University). Graduate Coordinator and Associate Professor. *Urban Sociology, Education, Racial Stratification, Public Policy.*

Contact: chase.billingham@wichita.edu, (316) 978-7144

Jodie L. Hertzog (Ph.D., Purdue University). Associate Professor. *Family & Intimate Relationships, Gender, Intimate Partner Violence Prevention, Work-Family Interfaces.*

Contact: jodie.hertzog@wichita.edu, (316) 978-7148

Twyla J. Hill (Ph.D., University of California-Irvine). Professor. *Sociology of Aging, Sociology of Families, Sociology of Law, Research Methods.*

Contact: twyla.hill@wichita.edu, (316) 978-7151

Charles S. Koeber (Ph.D., State University of New York, Binghamton). Department Chair and Associate Professor. *Job Loss, Work, Labor Process, Labor Markets, Stratification/Inequality, Consumption.*

Contact: chuck.koeber@wichita.edu, (316) 978-7155

Jennifer Pearson (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin). Professor. *Gender and Sexualities, Education, Adolescence and the Transition to Adulthood.*

Contact: jennifer.pearson@wichita.edu, (316) 978-7145

Full-Time Teaching Faculty

Jodie Simon (MA, Wichita State University). Undergraduate Coordinator and Associate Teaching Educator. *Media Studies, Feminist Theory, Sociology of Gender*.

Contact: jodie.simon@wichita.edu.

Shirlene Small (MA, Wichita State University). Associate Teaching Educator. *Social Inequalities, Health Care Disparities, Social Epidemiology, Social Problems*.

Contact: shirlene.small@wichita.edu.

Part-time Lecturers

Deborah Beat (MA, Wichita State University).

Eunita Jackson (MA, Emporia State University).

Tisha Whitehead (MA, Wichita State University).

Other Affiliated Faculty

Ronald R. Matson (Ph.D., University of Colorado). Associate Professor of Sociology Emeritus. Gender Studies, Masculinity, Intimate Relationships, Parenting.

Kathleen M. O'Flaherty Perez (Ph.D., Purdue University). Associate Professor of Sociology Emerita. Research Methods, Urban Sociology, Demography.

Mark Vermillion (Ph.D. Oklahoma State University). Interim Associate Dean, College of Applied Studies, Professor and Chair of the Department of Sports Management. Sociology of Sport, Coaching, Collegiate Athletics.

David W. Wright (Ph.D., Purdue University). Associate Vice President for Academic Data Systems and Strategic Planning and Professor of Sociology. Stratification and Class Analysis, Marxism, Employment and Income, Theory, Graduate Data Management and Statistics.

Application Process

Graduate School Application and Requirements:

Students who wish to pursue graduate education in the Department of Sociology must first apply to the WSU Graduate School [online](#). This application is then forwarded to and screened by the graduate coordinator in the Department of Sociology. Each applicant must submit official transcripts of all previous academic work, including credits earned at community colleges or work transferred to another institution. Instructions for how to submit official transcripts are provided in the [Admission](#) section of the WSU Online Graduate Catalog.

The minimum Graduate School requirements are:

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or a recognized institution in another country whose requirements for the bachelor's degree are substantially equivalent to a U.S. bachelor's degree.
- Grade point average of at least 2.750, including any post-bachelor's graduate work.
- No more than 9 credit hours of background deficiencies in the desired field of graduate study.
- Proof of English proficiency may be required for U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are non-native English speakers. The International Applicants section of the [Graduate Catalog](#) provides more information about these requirements.

The Graduate School offers two admission statuses, degree and nondegree, to accommodate qualified students desiring to pursue graduate degrees as well as those simply desiring to earn graduate credit for personal and professional reasons. See the [Admission Requirements](#) section of the WSU Online Graduate Catalog for more complete information on the above requirements and the degree level options.

Department of Sociology Graduate Admission Requirements:

In addition to the Graduate School requirements for admission, the Department of Sociology requires:

- Overall grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.00.
- One college algebra course.
- At least 12 hours in social science courses including:
 - an introductory sociology course
 - one social statistics course
 - one research methods course, and
 - one theory course.

Students without these required courses in social statistics and/or theory may be admitted provisionally, but deficiencies must be removed in the first year of graduate study.

- Three letters of reference from professors who are familiar with the student's academic course work.
- A typed, double-spaced statement of purpose (approximately 500 words) articulating the student's area of research interests and academic/career goals.

Graduate Degree Options and Requirements:

The department offers both thesis and non-thesis options. Unique among most graduate programs, the thesis and non-thesis options in the Department of Sociology are similar in required course work, level of difficulty, content, and structure. All paths toward graduation require the completion of an individual project and submission of a final document, though the specific expectations differ between the various thesis and non-thesis options available (see expectations and requirements on pp. 13-22). The primary difference between the options is that the thesis options require you to form a thesis committee (two members from the Sociology Department and one outside member from another WSU department), pass an oral defense, and produce a document that meets Graduate School format requirements. The non-thesis options require a more applied experience, either through completion of an internship or a directed project.

Thesis Option: Students in the thesis program must complete a total of 32 credit hours, including:

SOC 860	Proseminar	3
SOC 811	Advanced Research: Quantitative Methods	3
SOC 812	Advanced Research: Qualitative Methods	3
SOC 845	Seminar in Sociological Theory	3
SOC 875/876	Thesis Hours	6
	800-level seminar	3
	Electives (or prerequisites if required) 500-level or above	11
Total		32

Non-Thesis Option: The non-thesis program allows more flexibility in required coursework (with Graduate Coordinator approval) but with a total of 32 credit hours. Expectations for this coursework include:

SOC 860	Proseminar	3
SOC 811	Advanced Research: Quantitative Methods	3
SOC 812	Advanced Research: Qualitative Methods	3
SOC 845	Seminar in Sociological Theory	3
SOC 851/SOC 781N	Project Hours or Internship Hours	6
	One 800-level seminar	3
	Electives (or prerequisites if required) 500-level or above	11
Total		32

Dismissal and Transfer to Non-Degree Status:

A Sociology graduate student may be dismissed from the program for any of the following reasons:

- Student's GPA drops below 2.00
- Student does not make satisfactory progress toward degree completion
- Student enters the program on probationary status and fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after nine hours of course work
- Student is placed on probation and fails to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.00 after nine hours of course work
- Student violates the [Student Code of Conduct](#) as outlined in the WSU Policies and Procedures Manual.

A Sociology graduate student in full-standing may be transferred to non-degree status for any of the following reasons:

- Student does not enroll in any sociology course work for more than 12 months
- Student fails to enroll within 12 months after admission into the program
- Student fails to receive consent of the instructor for any Independent/Directed Study course
- Student fails to receive their advisor's expressed approval for course enrollment
- Student does not exhibit satisfactory progress in their program as evidenced by low GPA (under 3.00), excessive incompletes, insufficient class attendance, and/or failure to meet the six-year completion limit.

Required Coursework

The core courses of the Sociology graduate curriculum should generally be taken in the following order:

SOC 860. Proseminar - Sociology (3). Examines the academic roles of sociologists, the fields of study and types of research. Usually offered fall semester only. Fulfills the university's professional and scholarly integrity training requirement covering research misconduct, publication practices and responsible authorship, conflict of interest and commitment, ethical issues in data acquisition, management, sharing and ownership. Prerequisite: departmental consent.

SOC 812. Advanced Research: Qualitative Methods (3). Graduate students deepen their understanding of the research process as they are introduced to qualitative methods, methodology and analysis. Students learn to address methodological issues by developing a pilot project requiring them to apply their understanding of qualitative methods, sampling and coding. Through this process, students are prepared to compare the strengths and limitations of quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches while becoming critical consumers of qualitative research. Prerequisite: SOC 512 or departmental consent.

SOC 845. Seminar in Sociological Theory (3). A comprehensive survey of contemporary sociological theories and their classical roots. Emphasis on theories applicable to students' thesis and nonthesis projects. Generally offered spring semester only. Prerequisite: departmental consent.

SOC 811. Advanced Research: Quantitative Methods (3). Seminar course designed to provide graduate students with the conceptual tools and methodological skills needed to conduct quantitative sociological research. Students are introduced to sampling, measurement and data management issues. In addition, students gain experience with statistical software packages using large-scale data sets. Prerequisite: departmental consent.

Students will take one of the following in their 3rd semester:

SOC 875. Thesis (1-3). Thesis preparation.

Or

SOC 851. Directed Project (1-3). A project conducted under the supervision of an academic adviser for the nonthesis option. Requires the completion of a written report and an oral presentation of the research to the faculty. Prerequisite: consent of academic adviser.

Or

SOC 781N. Sociological Practice Internship (1-3). Integrates academic theory with planned professional experience providing students with practical skills training under academic supervision to complement the student's academic program. Individualized programs must be formulated in consultation with, and approved by, appropriate faculty sponsors as well as the Career Development Center. Repeatable for credit. Graded Cr/NCr.

Students will take one of the following in their 4th semester:

SOC 876. Thesis (1-3). Thesis preparation.

Or

SOC 851. Directed Project (1-3). A project conducted under the supervision of an academic adviser for the nonthesis option. Requires the completion of a written report and an oral presentation of the research to the faculty. Prerequisite: consent of academic adviser.

Or

SOC 781N. Sociological Practice Internship (1-3). Integrates academic theory with planned professional experience providing students with practical skills training under academic supervision to complement the student's academic program. Individualized programs must be formulated in consultation with, and approved by, appropriate faculty sponsors as well as the Career Development Center. Repeatable for credit. Graded Cr/NCr.

Course Sequencing

Below is the typical sequencing of courses. 60% of hours must be 700 or above. Full time enrollment is 9 credit hours per semester.

Fall Year 1 (1st semester) <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Proseminar (860) - 3 creditii. Qualitative Methods course (812) - 3 creditiii. Elective Or (if necessary) Statistics (consult with grad director for available statistics courses)	Spring Year 1 (2nd semester) <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Theory (845) - 3 creditii. Quantitative Methods course (811) - 3 creditiii. Electiveiv. (if necessary) Theory (844) - 1 credit
Fall Year 2 (3rd semester) <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Thesis hours (875) - 3 credit Or Directed research (851) - 3 credit Or Sociological Internship (781N) <ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. Electiveiii. Elective	Spring Year 2 (4th semester) <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Thesis hours (876) - 3 credit Or Directed research (851) - 3 credit Or Sociological Internship (781N) <ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. 1 or more Electives

Academic Integrity

The Department of Sociology takes issues of academic integrity very seriously. It is imperative that all graduate students maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity throughout their time in the program. Any alleged violation of the university's academic integrity standards by a graduate student will be handled by department faculty according to the process pertaining to the reporting and resolution of alleged violations outlined in [Section 2.17 of the University Policies and Procedures](#). All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the university's [Academic Integrity Handbook](#). Lack of familiarity with University Policy is not a defense to a violation of this policy.

Thesis Structure and Requirements

All students pursuing a thesis option will be required to hold a research planning meeting with all members of their thesis committee in order to outline the research plan with members, seek guidance and potential design expectations, and obtain committee approval prior to submitting IRB materials and engaging in the research process. Students should schedule this research planning toward the beginning of the semester they first enroll in thesis hours (usually in the Fall semester of their second year).

The final thesis should include an extensive literature review justifying the project and situating it within the larger body of relevant research, as well as a comprehensive discussion of methods, results, limitations, implications, and conclusions.

Below are some general guidelines for quantitative and qualitative thesis projects.

Guidelines for Quantitative Thesis Options

Basic Research

For students conducting basic research, the student and their major advisor should review and agree upon a research plan including central research questions, preliminary hypotheses, the dataset to be used, and appropriate statistical techniques. This research plan will then be presented to the student's thesis committee for approval before submitting IRB materials and engaging in the research process.

Students will use secondary data to facilitate timely completion of their thesis project and MA degree. Datasets should come from widely accepted social science sources (such as ICPSR or IPUMS) and should have large samples, such as those that would be publishable in peer-reviewed academic journals. An alternative approach may be combining data from multiple sources into a unique dataset.

Variables selected will be guided by a review of the relevant literature as well as data limitations, and analyses will include appropriate univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical techniques. The quality of analysis and presentation of findings should be similar to a typical social science journal article.

Evaluation/Applied Research

For students conducting evaluation or applied research, the student and their major advisor should review and agree upon a research plan including central research questions, preliminary hypotheses, the data to be used, and appropriate statistical techniques. These projects may use already existing data from an agency or program, or quantitative data may be collected or compiled by the student. Given that these projects may have more variation in substance and form than basic research, research plans may need more input from other thesis committee members and/or agencies or programs associated with the data. This research plan will then be presented to the student's thesis committee for approval before submitting IRB materials and engaging in the research process.

The amount of data should be appropriate to the project. The selection of variables should be driven by the goals of the project as well as a review of the relevant literature, and analyses will include appropriate univariate and bivariate statistical tests. Multivariate analyses also may be suitable, depending on the project. For these types of projects, an executive summary, recommendations for implementation, and other documents appropriate for policy papers may be expected as well.

Guidelines for Qualitative Thesis Options

Interviews & Focus Group-Based Research

For students conducting interview-based research (individual or group), the department recommends no fewer than ten semi-structured, one-hour, in-depth interviews to provide for sufficient diversity and recognition of essential patterns in the data. There should be a systematic analytical process delineating the coding methodology. While we acknowledge different methods of uncovering emergent themes, we encourage the use of formalized data management software. Common Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) options include software such as Excel, Dedoose, N-Vivo, or Atlas-ti for managing and examining the reliability of the coding schema. In order to demonstrate a thorough grasp of the data, interviews should be transcribed by the graduate student with faculty advisor oversight. An interview protocol should be included as an appendix to the thesis along with coding examples rather than a complete transcripts of the interviews.

For students conducting focus groups or other forms of group interviews, the student will be expected to complete at least two semi-structured one-hour focus groups with no fewer than five persons per session. All of the guidelines state above for interview-based research apply to focus group-based research, with the exception that an abridged version of the transcript may excise tangential discussion not linked to the research question and make it easier for analysis.

Ethnographic Research

For students conducting ethnographic research, the student's thesis committee should review and agree upon a somewhat focused research plan including information regarding central research questions, research location(s) and protocol, length of time in the field, and plans for ensuring the safety of the student.

While the final research plan will be developed and agreed upon by the student and the committee, it is expected that students engaging in ethnographic research will spend no fewer than 20 hours in the field conducting direct observation. This does not include the time dedicated to writing, organizing, collating, and analyzing field notes. The main source of data for an ethnographic thesis will be the student's fieldnotes and any other existing documents that may be relevant to the research study.

Final requirements will be established by the committee, but it is expected that the student will produce roughly 100 double-spaced pages of fieldnotes, which will be submitted as an appendix to the thesis. Though it is not required, students may choose to supplement ethnographic observation data with other types of data, such as multivariate quantitative analysis, content analysis of relevant documents, or in-depth interviews.

Case Study

For students utilizing a case study methodology, the student's thesis committee should review and agree upon a somewhat focused research plan including information regarding central

research questions, research location(s) and protocol, the boundaries of “the case,” and the different types of data to be collected (observation, survey administration, key informant interviews, document analysis, etc.) along with related protocols.

While the final research plan will be developed and agreed upon by the student and the committee, it is expected that students engaging in case study research will spend no fewer than 20 hours immersed in data collection related to the case. This does not include the time dedicated to writing, organizing, collating, and analyzing data.

While we acknowledge different methods of uncovering emergent themes across this mixed method design, we encourage the use of some form of formalized data management software. Common Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) options include software such as Excel, Dedoose, N-Vivo, or Atlas-ti for managing and examining, and triangulating the coding schema. Depending on the types of data collection methods utilized, surveys, interview or observation protocols, and/or codebooks developed should be included as an appendix to the thesis along with coding examples and any other appropriate means of visualizing the data collected.

Content Analysis

For students engaging in a content analysis, the student’s thesis committee should review and agree upon central research questions, the available data source(s) and level of analysis, as well as an appropriate sample size given the level of analysis and types of analytic procedures decided upon (for example: 5 feature films, a single 100 page policy, 12 transcribed YouTube videos, 15 transcribed episodes of a TV show, 35 song lyrics, 20 news articles and comments, etc.). Larger samples are appropriate when the material is brief (i.e., news articles) and the coding less detailed; smaller samples are appropriate when the material is long and the coding more detailed.

While the final research plan will be developed and agreed upon by the student and the committee, it is expected that students engaging in content analytic research will spend no fewer than 30 hours immersed in identifying the source material, collecting the items, preparing them for analysis (including any potential transcription work), developing a coding schema (which may emphasize qualitative and/or quantitative aspects), and then applying the codebook to the data. This expectation does not include the time dedicated to general thesis writing.

For students conducting content analysis, we encourage the use of some kind of formalized data management software such as Excel, Dedoose, N-Vivo, or Atlas-ti in order to aid in analysis and faculty oversight. The appendix to the thesis should include a copy of the codebook outlining procedures, codes, operationalized definitions, and coded data excerpts/examples along with any other appropriate means of visualizing the data. If the project includes multiple coders of the material, a description of how the coders were trained and how any differences in coding were resolved must be included. Additionally, all source material must be appropriately cited and/or referenced so that an independent reviewer might easily find the data.

Thesis Completion Timeline

- FALL semester, Year 1
 - Define area of research interest, begin to develop topic for project
- SPRING semester, Year 1
 - Commit to an area of research interest and identify appropriate methodology
 - Determine major advisor and committee members
- SUMMER semester
 - Compile sources for literature review
 - Complete a draft of the literature review
- FALL semester, Year 2
 - Prepare and analyze data for thesis or non-thesis project
 - Complete literature review and data/methods sections of thesis document
 - Review policies and procedures for thesis documents and defense
- SPRING semester, Year 2
 - Complete data analysis for project
 - Complete remaining sections of thesis document (results and discussion sections)
 - Submit application for degree (see Graduate School deadlines)
 - Schedule and complete Oral Defense (see Graduate School deadlines)
 - Submit revised written document to the graduate school (see Graduate School deadlines)

Thesis Tips for Students and Advisors

Choosing an advisor

- Read through the Sociology faculty CVs and familiarize yourself with their areas of interest so that you can select someone who has experience researching your area of interest.
- Look at the specific datasets each faculty member has worked with and check if that may be a dataset that could work with your project.
- Get to know the faculty during Proseminar. Consider the personality and work habits of each faculty member and whether you would be a good fit.

Working with your advisor

- Once you know who your advisor will be, email them right away to set up an initial meeting to talk through expectations.
- Establish the best method of communication (email, text, phone calls, etc.).
- Schedule weekly meetings, preferably in person, to discuss your progress, obtain feedback, and get guidance on next steps.
- Set deadlines for thesis component drafts. Breaking the thesis into smaller tasks can make it more manageable and reduce anxiety.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. The thesis can seem overwhelming, but your advisor is there to guide you.

Formatting Your Thesis

The [Graduate School Guide to the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations](#) provides all formatting requirements for your thesis. It is strongly recommended that you review the formatting guide and submit all drafts of your thesis document following the Graduate School guidelines.

Guidelines for Non-Thesis Options

Students who choose to follow the applied (non-thesis) track must complete 6 hours of directed project or sociological practice internship in addition to the required coursework. Additionally, non-thesis track students must submit a portfolio as an additional requirement for graduation, which must be approved by a committee. Guidelines and requirements for directed projects, sociological practice internships, and the portfolio follow.

Option 1: Directed Project

Students may choose to undertake a non-thesis directed research project. The structure of this research project will resemble a thesis in many ways, but unlike the thesis option, directed research projects do not require an oral defense. All students pursuing a research non-thesis option will be required to hold a research planning meeting with their research advisor in order to outline the research plan and seek guidance and expectations prior to submitting IRB materials and engaging in the research process. Students should schedule this research planning toward the beginning of the semester they first enroll in project hours (SOC 851) (usually in the Fall semester of their second year). The final document should include a literature review justifying the project and situating it within the larger body of relevant research, as well as a discussion of methods, results, limitations, implications, and conclusions.

Basic Quantitative Research

For students conducting basic research, the student and their advisor should review and agree upon a research plan including central research questions, preliminary hypotheses, the dataset to be used, and appropriate statistical techniques. The student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. Students will use secondary data to facilitate timely completion of their project and MA degree. Datasets should come from widely accepted social science sources (such as ICPSR or IPUMS) and should have fairly large samples unless alternative arrangements have been made with the advisor. An alternative approach may be combining data from multiple sources into a unique dataset. Variables selected will be guided by a review of the relevant literature as well as data limitations, and analyses will include appropriate univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistical techniques.

Basic Qualitative Research

The faculty encourage the use of formalized data management software when appropriate. Common Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) options include software such as Excel, Dedoose, N-Vivo, or Atlas-ti for managing and analyzing qualitative data.

Interviews & Focus Group-Based Research

For students conducting interview based research (individual or group), the student and their advisor should review and agree upon a research plan including central research questions, preliminary hypotheses, and the number and structure of the interviews or focus groups. The

student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. There should be enough interviews or focus groups to provide for sufficient diversity and recognition of essential patterns in the data. Also, there should be a systematic analytical process which delineates the coding methodology. In order to demonstrate a thorough grasp of the data, interviews should be transcribed by the graduate student with faculty advisor oversight. An interview or focus group protocol would be included as an appendix to the project document along with coding examples rather than complete transcripts of the interviews.

Ethnographic Research

For students conducting ethnographic research, the student and their advisor should review and agree upon a somewhat focused research plan including information regarding central research questions, research location(s) and protocol, length of time in the field, and plans for ensuring the safety of the student. The student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. The main source of data for an ethnographic project will be the student's fieldnotes and any other existing documents that may be relevant to the research study. Though it is not required, students may choose to supplement ethnographic observation data with other types of data, such as quantitative analysis, content analysis of relevant documents, or in-depth interviews.

Case Study

For students utilizing a case study methodology, the student and their advisor should review and agree upon a somewhat focused research plan including information regarding central research questions, research location(s) and protocol, the boundaries of "the case," and the different types of data to be collected (observation, survey administration, key informant interviews, document analysis, etc.) along with related protocols. The student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. Depending on the types of data collection methods utilized, surveys, interview or observation protocols, and/or codebooks developed would be included as an appendix to the project document along with coding examples and any other appropriate means of visualizing the data collected.

Content Analysis

For students engaging in a content analysis, the student and their advisor should review and agree upon central research questions, the available data source(s) and level of analysis, as well as an appropriate sample size given the level of analysis and types of analytic procedures decided upon. If appropriate, the student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. Larger samples are appropriate when the material is brief (i.e., news articles) and the coding less detailed; smaller samples are appropriate when the material is long and the coding more detailed. The appendix to the project document should include a copy of the codebook outlining procedures, codes, operationalized definitions, and coded data excerpts/examples along with any other appropriate means of visualizing the data. (If the project includes multiple coders of the material, a description of how the coders were trained and how any differences in coding were resolved must be included.) Additionally, all source material must be appropriately cited and/or referenced so that an independent reviewer might easily find the data.

Evaluation/Applied Research

For students conducting evaluation or applied research for an agency or program, the student, their advisor, and the agency/program staff-person should review and agree upon a research plan including central research questions, preliminary hypotheses, the data to be used, and appropriate methodological and analytical techniques. These projects may use already existing data from an agency or program, or data may be collected or compiled by the student. Given that these projects are expected to be conducted for the purposes of the agency or program, the research plans are expected to have more input from the agencies or programs associated with the data than thesis projects. The student will then submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. The amount of data should be appropriate to the project, as determined by the student through consultation with the faculty advisor and agency contact person. Techniques and variables selected should be driven by the goals of the project as well as a review of the relevant literature, and analyses may be qualitative or quantitative. For these types of projects, an executive summary, recommendations for implementation, and other documents appropriate for policy papers may be expected as well.

Option 2: Sociological Practice Internship

The Sociological Practice Internship integrates academic theory with planned professional experience, providing students with practical skills training under academic supervision to complement the student's academic program. Individualized programs must be formulated in consultation with and approved by appropriate faculty sponsors as well as the Career Development Center.

Students using the internship option will complete 6 hours of internship credit (SOC 781N) under the direction of one faculty advisor (6 credit hours equals 270 hours of work, according to university guidelines). In order to enroll in Internship hours, faculty advisor consent and registration with the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Cooperative Education/Career Development Center representative are required. These hours may be with one agency, program, or business, or may be at a combination of agencies, programs, or businesses. Each credit hour for the Sociological Practice Internship (SOC 781N) is defined as at least 45 hours of supervised work each semester.

Internship Paper

Learning objectives will be developed collaboratively with the internship/work supervisor and Sociology faculty advisor. As part of the final requirements, the student will compile and submit a paper documenting what they have learned and projects they have completed during the 6 hours. While the specific requirements and format of this paper will be decided upon with the advisor, the paper should include the following:

- **Description of the Agency/Organization:** Describe the nature or purpose of the agency or organization as well as its relevant history or background.

- **Description of the Internship Experience:** Describe your role as an intern, including tasks or activities performed and key characteristics of your internship site. Explain how the internship experience (and/or research project) is situated within the agency or organization. What is the relation of your work as an intern to the program goals? How did your role shape your observations or research efforts within the agency or organization?
- **Sociological Analysis:** What is the sociological significance of your experience and observations within this agency or organization? Identify sociological perspectives, theories, or concepts that are relevant for understanding the agency/organization, its role or relationship to the surrounding community, and your role within it. Your analysis may have to do with interpersonal, group, organization, community, national, and/or global relationships, and you may want to demonstrate the relationships between these levels (for example, how community dynamics are shaped by national policies). *This is the most important part of the paper.*
- **Critique:** Identify problem areas that you experienced or observed in your internship. This may also include a self-evaluation of work performed.
- **Conclusion and Recommendations:** Identify how problem areas may be addressed or how dynamics or outcomes within the agency or organization may be improved. Recommendations should be grounded in sociological perspectives, theories, and research. Finally, identify how the internship experience developed skills or professional goals.

If a student completes two 3-hour internships at separate agencies or organizations, they will complete an Internship paper for each of those experiences.

Option 3: Combined Research and Internship

Under the direction and with the approval of their faculty advisor, a student may design a program that meets sociological and educational goals by combining an internship experience with a research project. This student would take 3 research project hours (SOC 851) and 3 hours of internship credit (SOC 781N) under the direction of one faculty advisor. If appropriate, the student will submit IRB materials before engaging in the research process. Guidelines outlined above for directed projects and internship options should be followed for each 3-hour experience.

Guidelines for Completing the Portfolio Requirement

For completion of the non-thesis MA degree, students must compile and submit an extensive portfolio documenting what they have learned and projects they have completed during the 6 hours.

Format

Portfolios can also be organized in paper format or electronic format, using WordPress or other appropriate electronic applications. Specific format requirements will be decided upon with the advisor. A final electronic copy of the portfolio should be sent to the graduate coordinator once approved.

Contents

The portfolio should include the following items:

- Cover page
- Table of Contents
- CV or Resume
- Program Reflection Statement
 - This statement should include the following:*
 - Reflect on your career goals
 - Identify specific skills or knowledge developed during program
 - Connect your work or research experiences with your knowledge
 - Describe your intellectual and personal growth
- Papers from directed project or internship
 - Internship papers from each internship
 - One final directed project document (unless 2 separate projects, then report for each)
- Beyond these required elements, you may include additional pieces as suggested by your chair:
 - Presentations (slides)
 - Reports or articles
 - Materials developed (teaching materials, reports, brochures)
 - Evaluations from internship supervisors

Timeline for Completing the Non-Thesis Requirements

Students will form a portfolio committee toward the beginning of the semester they first enroll in project hours (SOC 851) or sociological practice internship (SOC 781N) (usually in the Fall semester of their second year). The committee should include a chair (ideally the advisor for the directed project or internship) and a reader (another graduate faculty member from the Sociology Department or a graduate faculty member from another department with relative expertise). Students should schedule regular meetings with their committee chair in order to ensure progress is being made on the portfolio and expectations are clear.

Complete portfolios should be submitted no less than two weeks before the last day of classes in that semester to the committee to review and approve. This allows time for revisions if necessary. A final version of the portfolio must be approved by the end of the semester in order to meet requirements for graduation.

Important Links from Graduate School

Make sure to familiarize yourself with Graduate School policies and deadlines.

- The Graduate School website can be found [here](#).
- The Graduate Catalog can be found [here](#).
- The graduation deadlines can be found [here](#).
- The complete guide for thesis formatting can be found [here](#).

Graduate Assistantships:

The department offers a limited number of Graduate Assistantships (GA) each year on a competitive basis. These awards are made through funding provided by the Graduate School and the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. These positions serve as apprenticeships for teaching and/or research in sociology. Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are provided a monthly stipend and a partial tuition waiver of up to 75% and a 10% discount on books purchased for classes. Each GTA is assigned to one or more faculty members and given office space and other university privileges. Throughout their tenure as a GTA, each person can be assigned to various faculty members to assist in their teaching and research. This is meant to give exposure to various faculty styles of teaching and research activities. Depending on the courses taught and the interest of the GTA, faculty members are encouraged to allow their GTA to give one or more guest lectures. Faculty members are also encouraged to monitor student lectures and grading and to provide constructive feedback to the student.

GTA Application Process and Terms of Re-Appointment:

Students who wish to apply for a GTA must submit an application to the Graduate Coordinator by the priority deadline (March 1st). This application may be found on the Graduate School [website](#). The number of GTA positions offered depends on available funding. The selection process is competitive and award decisions are made by the Sociology Graduate Admissions Committee each spring for the following academic year. The following criteria are utilized for the awarding of GTA positions:

- GPA (undergraduate or current graduate coursework)
- Background and coursework in Sociology
- Strength of recommendation letters
- Ability to perform the duties of a GTA and meet the needs of faculty in the areas of teaching and research

Review of other admission application materials (such as the personal statement)

Graduate Students who have been awarded a GTA position may re-apply when the term of their current GTA position expires by submitting an [application](#) by March 1st. (NOTE: There is a four-semester limit on GTA positions per student). The following criteria are utilized for awarding GTA positions to current students:

- GPA of 3.00 or higher
 - Satisfactory progress toward degree completion
 - Satisfactory recommendations from supervising faculty
- Continuing ability to perform the duties of a GTA and meet the needs of faculty in the areas of teaching and research

Duties and Responsibilities

Duties and responsibilities will vary depending on the faculty members to whom the GTA is assigned. In general, GTAs are expected to become familiar with the Sociology Department and its resources in order to assist students and faculty with research and academic functions. GTAs

also are expected to rotate with other GTAs in coverage of the department office if necessary throughout the semester. The duties and responsibilities that GTAs may be expected to perform include, but are not limited to:

- Attending lectures of the faculty member they are assisting
- Designing, administering, and grading exams and homework assignments
- Preparing and presenting classroom lectures
- Holding office hours to meet with students regarding lecture/exam information
- Developing bibliographies for faculty or office resources
- Assisting faculty through campus library research for classes, presentations, and research
- Assisting in curriculum development and evaluation
- Providing support to the department (office coverage, tabling at events, etc.)
- Assisting with departmental projects (such as developing recruitment materials or assembling information regarding the job market, Ph.D. programs, etc.)

GTAs are prohibited from grading coursework of their graduate student peers.

General information about graduate assistantships and Graduate School policies will be covered in a mandatory GTA workshop each year. Please see the Graduate School's [University Assistantship Policies](#) for more information.

Hours

GTAs are expected to work a set number of hours per week (e.g., 10, 15, or 20) for the entire semester. The number of hours to be worked will be outlined in the contract for employment. In general, GTAs will find that in some weeks you will put in all your assigned hours, while in other weeks you will put in less. The Graduate School forbids GTAs from putting in more hours than they are assigned. All GTAs are expected to keep a ledger of their hours and duties to be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator on a weekly basis.

Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs)

Under certain circumstances, faculty members who have access to grant funding available may be able to offer Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) to qualified students. Students who are interested in GRAs should consult with faculty members to determine the availability of these awards.