

Degree Requirements for the Public Policy & Sociology PhD Program

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*** Note that some requirements may change after the time of publication. Similarly, it is likely that not all courses described below are offered each semester. It is the responsibility of the student to verify information about degree requirements with the directors of graduate studies in public policy and sociology.*

Sociology Department Requirements

Orientation Seminar

SOC 500

Theories and Practice of Sociology

SOC 505 and SOC 506

Logic and Strategy of Sociological Research Inquiry

SOC 507

Statistics

SOC 510 and SOC 610 (*for more detailed information please refer to the [Sociology Handbook](#)*)

Research/Methods Practicum

Students must complete one semester of a research practicum that provides the full range of practical experiences with a research strategy. Students must complete at least one of the following courses:

Qualitative Research Methods: SOC 522 (523 optional)

Comparative and Historical Methods: SOC 532 (533 optional)

Quantitative Practicum: SOC 542 (543 optional)

Survey Methodology: SURMETH 600 (672, 673 optional)

Elective Courses

Students must take a minimum of two substantive, topical courses within Sociology.

Preliminary Examination

Preliminary examinations must be successfully completed in two of the seven established program areas as a condition for being advanced to candidacy. These areas are:

Culture and Knowledge
Economic Sociology and
Organizations
Gender and Sexuality

Health and Healthcare
Power, History, and Social Change
Race, Ethnicity, and Immigration
Social Demography

Some students may choose to take both exams in the summer after their first year. Others choose to take an examination in one area during the first summer and a second exam in another area the following summer. Students also may choose to take both exams during the second summer.

Failure to complete the required two preliminary exams by the beginning of the third year (fifth semester) – either due to failure to pass or failure to take the exams – will result in being placed on academic probation, as students will not be likely to advance to candidacy at the end of the fifth semester on schedule. Failure to successfully complete two preliminary examinations by the beginning of the fourth year puts the student at risk of being dismissed from the sociology program.

Public Policy Specific Course Requirements

- 1 course in policy institutions (3 credits) – typically students take a 600 level Political Science course, but students may petition the PhD Program Director to allow another course to count toward this requirement. See [this document](#) for a list of previously accepted courses that have counted for this requirement in the past.
- 1 course in microeconomics (3 credits) – Students typically take PUBPOL 555: Microeconomics A or PUBPOL 559: Accelerated Microeconomics. Students may petition the PhD Program Director to allow another course to count toward this requirement. See [this document](#) for a list of previously accepted courses that have counted for this requirement in the past.
- 1 course in program evaluation (3 credits) – typically Joint Sociology & Public Policy students take Public Policy 639, Econ 675 or Public Policy 821. Students may petition the PhD Program Director to allow another course to count toward this requirement. See [this document](#) for a list of previously accepted courses that have counted for this requirement in the past.
- 2 courses in a substantive policy area (6 credits total) – at least one of these courses must be taken outside the student's home social science department, and both courses must be approved by the PhD program director. See [this document](#) for a list of previously accepted courses that have counted for this requirement in the past.
- Policy seminar (4 semesters, 1 credit per semester) – Public Policy 810 – This seminar meets bi-weekly and students are required to enroll in this course during their first two years in the PhD program.

Third-Year Sociology Paper & Third-Year Public Policy Paper

The joint program with Public Policy and Sociology requires students to write a third year original research paper on a policy-related topic under the supervision of one faculty member from Sociology and one Ford School faculty member. This paper may be related to papers written for doctoral courses and may (but does not need to) lead into the dissertation proposal. The goal is a paper that would eventually be suitable for publication. Students in the joint doctoral program need only fulfill the third-

year paper requirements specific to the joint program. For example, joint students do not have to “defend” their third-year paper like students in the stand-alone Sociology doctoral program. And, unlike students in the Sociology department alone, joint students can submit a co-authored paper to fulfill this third year paper requirement as long as their advisors determine the student has been a substantial enough contributor to the paper.

Annual Student Evaluation

Reviews for students in the joint Public Policy and Sociology program will follow the general timeline and structure of reviews for doctoral students in Sociology, with an important difference being that reviews for joint students will incorporate feedback from advisors in both the Ford School and the Sociology department, and the feedback will be provided jointly by the director of the graduate studies in Sociology and the director of doctoral programs at the Ford School.

In the Sociology Department, completion of the Annual Review is required of all students except first year students and students who are filing their dissertations in the winter or spring/summer semesters. First-year students’ transcripts are reviewed by the director of graduate studies in sociology at the end of the winter term. For joint students, the director of doctoral programs in the Ford School will also review the student’s transcript.

Third Semester Review

In order to ensure that all students are well-integrated into graduate school, a comprehensive review will be done in the third semester, early in the fall of the second year of graduate school. At the time of this review, students will be expected to identify a primary advisor in both Sociology and the Ford School. These individuals might be the first year advisor or someone else. Students will fill out an online self-assessment, responding to prompts about key milestones, accomplishments, any problems they face, and will lay out a specific plan that will put them on track to advance to candidacy by the end of their fifth semester in the program, about a year later. This self-assessment form will be generated by both the Ford School and the department of Sociology to capture all relevant milestones in each program. Each advisor will read the student’s materials and meet with the student, discussing their progress, any issues, and their plan to advance to candidacy.

After meeting with the student, each faculty advisor will complete a companion online assessment form that addresses milestones, issues, and the agreed-upon plan for advancement to candidacy. There will also be space for the advisor to make confidential comments for use during the annual review process. This evaluation of the student’s progress and the student’s self-assessment will be sent to the DGS in Sociology and the DGS in the Ford School. The Committee on Academic and Graduate Affairs (CAGA) and DGS in Sociology will review the student and faculty reports, along with other relevant material provided by the Ford School and the Sociology Department, such as course grades, preliminary exam results and any other relevant information.

After this meeting of CAGA and the DGS in Sociology, the directors of graduate studies in the Ford School and the Sociology Department will then meet to discuss the results of this review. They will then prepare a joint letter providing the student with a detailed assessment of his or her progress and any recommendations. The student’s self-assessment and faculty advisors’ responses (except for any

confidential comments) will be attached to the letter sent to each student, and each advisor will also be sent a copy of the letter and these documents.

Fifth Semester Review

Students are reviewed again in the fifth semester of their program, early in the fall of the year three. Students in the joint program in Public Policy and Sociology are expected to advance to candidacy by the end of their third year in the doctoral program. The student's progress toward this goal will be a primary focus of this review.

In its content and process, the fifth semester review closely resembles the third semester review. The student is required to complete a self-assessment, and identify a primary advisor in both the Ford School and the Sociology Department. Each advisor will read the student's materials, meet with the student, and complete a companion online assessment form that will be sent to the DGS in Sociology and the DGS in the Ford School.

The Committee on Academic and Graduate Affairs (CAGA) and DGS in Sociology will review the student and faculty reports, along with other relevant material. The directors of graduate studies in the Ford School and the Sociology Department will then meet to discuss the results of this review. They will then prepare a joint letter providing the student with a detailed assessment of his or her progress and any recommendations. The student's self-assessment and faculty advisors' responses (except for any confidential comments) will be attached to the letter sent to each student, and each advisor will also be sent a copy of the letter and these documents.

Annual Reviews after Candidacy

After a student achieves candidacy, he or she is typically evaluated once per year at the end of the winter semester.

The process is identical to that described above, including student self-assessment, meeting with advisors, an assessment by the advisors and a review by the CAGA and the DGS in Sociology. The directors of graduate studies in the Ford School and the Sociology Department will then meet to discuss the results of this review. They will then prepare a joint letter providing the student with a detailed assessment of his or her progress and any recommendations. The student's self-assessment and faculty advisors' responses (except for any confidential comments) will be attached to the letter sent to each student, and each advisor will also be sent a copy of the letter and these documents.

Students who are meeting milestones and making good progress will receive a letter indicating that they are in good standing. This letter may also include substantive comments or recommendations to facilitate their progress toward the degree.

In cases of poor progress or for a student who is not in good standing, the directors will provide the student with additional feedback and guidance to help him or her get back on track. This plan will be outlined in writing, typically with a series of deadlines.

Prospectus Defense

A student's prospectus defense typically occurs in the 4th or 5th year, although the timing of prospectus varies somewhat with the student's discipline; joint students should follow the norms of their disciplinary department. During this time, a doctoral candidate lays out his/her intended dissertation research to their committee members. The prospectus defense is done in person with as many members present as possible. If necessary, some members are able to call-in. All committee members must approve the prospectus defense.

Prospectus committee members are assumed to be the same as a student's final dissertation committee (please refer to [Rackham's guidelines](#) for the composition rules). We request prospectus committees to consist of at least four faculty members, three of whom are members of the Graduate Faculty, and two of whom are from the doctoral candidate's home program. Furthermore, each joint doctoral program committee must have one committee member from each department (Ford School and Sociology).

Typical Plan for Public Policy & Sociology Students

Year 1		
Fall	SOC 500	Sociology Orientation Seminar
	SOC 505	Theories & Practice I
	SOC 510	Statistics
	PUBPOL 810	Policy Seminar
	Sociology Elective #1*	
Winter	SOC 506	Theories & Practice II
	SOC 610	Statistical Methods
	PUBPOL 810	Policy Seminar
	Sociology Elective #2*	
Summer	PRELIM EXAM	Field #1
Year 2		
Fall	SOC 993	GSI Training Course
	SOC 507	Logics & Strategies of Social Research
	<u>Practicum/Methods Requirement: **</u> SOC 522 OR SURVMETH 600	Qualitative Research Methods Fundamental Survey Methods
	PUBPOL 810	Policy Seminar
	PUBPOL 639	Program Evaluation
	Third Semester Review	
Winter	PUBPOL 810	Policy Seminar
	Finish Elective Courses in Sociology*	
Summer	PRELIM EXAM	Field #2
Year 3		
Fall	PUBPOL 555	Microeconomics
	<u>Substantive Policy Course #1</u>	See here for course options
	<u>Policy Institutions Course:</u>	See here for course options
	<u>Third Year Paper Course:</u> PUBPOL 830	Immersion in Research
	Fifth Semester Review	
Winter	<u>Substantive Policy Course #2</u>	See here for course options
	<u>Third Year Paper Course:</u> PUBPOL 830	Immersion in Research
Year 4		
	PUBPOL 995 or SOC 995	Dissertation Candidate
Year 5		
	PUBPOL 995 or SOC 995	Dissertation Candidate

* These courses will vary by student concentration. See Sociology Department Advisor.

Sociology Research Practicum/Social Science Methods requirement – Other courses accepted include: SOC 523: Comparative Historical Sociology; **or SOC 542: Quantitative Methods but may not be offered every semester/year. Follow-on courses SOC523, SOC533, SOC543, SOC672 and SOC673 are optional, as is SURMETH672, SURMETH673.