



Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook

Brown University

2020

Department of Sociology
Brown University
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<https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/>



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This handbook is intended to give you an overview of the Sociology Program at Brown University and to answer some of the commonly raised questions about policies and procedures. However, the authoritative source for Graduate School policies is the Brown Graduate School Handbook which can be found on the Graduate School [website](#).

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DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

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GRADUATE SCHOOL DEANS

Contact the Graduate School Deans at Graduate_School@Brown.edu

- ◆ Andrew Campbell, Dean of the Graduate School, Professor of Medical Science
Email Graduate_School@brown.edu to schedule an appointment.

- ◆ [Thomas Lewis](#), Co-Deputy Dean, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Professor of Religious Studies
Meetings by appointment.
Responsibilities: Academic issues, exchange programs, leaves of absence

- ◆ [Vanessa Ryan](#), Co-Deputy Dean, Associate Dean of Student Development
Office Hours Tuesdays 2-4pm or through online self-scheduling (see the Grad School's [website](#) for the link)
Responsibilities: Student development programming and policy, distinctive opportunities, professional development and liaison to CareerLAB and Sheridan Center, liaison to the Office of the Dean of the College

- ◆ [Marlina Duncan](#), Associate Dean of Diversity Initiatives, Assistant Vice President of Academic Diversity, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity
Meetings by appointment.
Responsibilities: Develops initiatives to foster positive and supportive climate and community, liaison to programs and offices to support positive student experience and retention, liaison to programs on recruitment planning and outreach

- ◆ [Shayna Kessel](#), Associate Dean of Master's Education, Interim Associate Dean for International Graduate Students
Meetings by appointment; to arrange one, email Shayna_Kessel@brown.edu.
Responsibilities: Mentors and advises master's students, liaison to master's programs, oversees master's admission, coordinates with University offices to support students and programs, including the Registrar's Office, Addresses questions about deposit fees and tuition and coordinates with Bursar's Office

- ◆ [Maria Suarez](#), Associate Dean of Student Support, Deputy Title IX Coordinator
Meetings times available through [online self-scheduling](#), and by appointment.
Responsibilities: Support practices and policies, support for individual students, medical and personal leave, coordinates with Office of Institutional Diversity, liaison to the Office of Campus Life and Student Services, including Student and Employee Accessibility Services, as well as to Counseling and Psychological Services

- ◆ [Barbara Bennett](#), Academic Affairs Manager
Liaison to Registrar and Bursar, processing of Master's theses and PhD dissertations, processing of leaves, withdrawals, and exchanges

Doctoral Program in Sociology at a Glance

The goals of the doctoral course of study are to enable students to:(a) master the fundamentals of the discipline and develop a thorough command of advanced scholarship in at least two sociological subfields; (b) form a sophisticated intellectual agenda in at least two areas of specialization; (c) design and carry out a challenging program of original research; (d) successfully pursue external research funding; and (e) provide thoughtful, creative, and compelling instruction in the discipline.

The Ph.D. in sociology requires successful completion of the following:

1. 24-credit units of coursework (16 for those entering the program with an approved master's in which all 8 courses have been reviewed and approved). This coursework must include:
 - Six first-year required courses – SOC 2010: Multivariate Statistical Methods I; SOC 2020: Multivariate Statistical Methods II; SOC 2040: Classical Sociological Theory; SOC 2050: Contemporary Sociology; SOC 2210: Qualitative Methods; SOC 2430: Fields and Methods of Social Research
 - Four (non-R&R and non-required) graduate-level sociology courses for all entering students.
 - Two additional graduate-level courses (from sociology or another department) for students who enter without a previous master's degree.
 - One full year (two semesters) of teaching assistance. (Students who are unable to TA due to receiving multi-year fellowships that prohibit teaching, must enroll in a 1-unit [1 course credit] teaching practicum with a sponsoring faculty member. This requirement should be completed by the end of the third year of study.
2. Completion of the master's thesis by the end of the fourth semester of graduate study (unless student receives a waiver for a previous master's thesis).
3. Two preliminary exams in the standing areas offered by the department.
4. Dissertation proposal presentation in front of the department and approval of the written dissertation proposal by the committee.
5. Defense and completion of the dissertation.

The faculty in sociology also strongly recommend:

- One writing course (either SOC 2460: Sociology Paper Writing Seminar or a similar course approved by the graduate committee)

The Requirements for the Ph.D.

Coursework

The required coursework, normally taken in the first year of graduate study, focuses on theories and methods of sociological research. The required coursework includes a two-semester sequence on theory (SOC 2040: Classical Sociological Theory; SOC 2050: Contemporary Sociology), a course on the logic of inquiry (SOC 2430: Fields and Methods of Social Research), a qualitative methods course (SOC 2210: Qualitative Methods), and a two-semester sequence covering basic applied statistics (SOC 2010: Multivariate Statistical Methods I; SOC 2020: Multivariate Statistical Methods II).

In addition to the required courses, students take advanced courses in theory, research methods (e.g., survey methods, qualitative methods, advanced statistics), and areas of substantive specialization. The goal of these courses is to master foundational knowledge in two or more areas of specialization within sociology, and to acquire the empirical research skills to complete the dissertation. The additional coursework is normally selected from graduate courses numbered over 2000. Selected courses should include seminars covering the department's preliminary exam areas, other advanced courses in sociology and other advanced courses in appropriate departments. 1870- level seminars and courses between 1000 and 1860 may count toward the 24- credit requirement with DGS approval.

The residence requirement for the Ph.D. is the equivalent of three years of full-time study past the bachelor's degree (i.e., 24 enrollment/tuition credits). At least two semesters beyond the master's degree must be spent exclusively in full-time study at Brown University. Students who have completed graduate work while in graduate residence at another institution and who have not completed the required number of courses in fulfillment of the Ph.D. degree may, when judged to be sufficiently related to the student's current program of study by the DGS, and with approval of the Registrar, transfer credits equivalent to eight (8) course credits in partial fulfillment of both the residency requirement at Brown and the department's 24 course credit requirement. After completing all course requirements students must be registered in at least one course in order to remain an active student. Please see below for the listing of the two zero course credit options available.

Preliminary Examination Preparation (SOC 2970)

This zero-credit course is for students who would like to stay enrolled as an active student after completing the course requirements and who are preparing for preliminary examinations.

Dissertation Preparation (SOC 2990)

This zero-credit course is for students who have completed all course requirements. Students use this course to remain an actively enrolled student.

Reading and Research (Fall SOC 2980 / Spring 2981)

This one credit graduate level independent study is for students who work alongside a faculty member through the semester. Students who want to work with a specific faculty member must use their assigned section number. We do not encourage students to register for R&R's during their first year of study.

Course Credits Earned vs Enrollment Units

Enrollment units are strictly for internal billing reference. Students should refer to the Course Credits Earned on the Internal Academic Record to verify their completed course work. The courses for which students are a teaching assistant do not appear on the Internal Academic Record; however, course credits for teaching assistantships will be reflected within the Course Credits Earned.

Entering the Program with Prior Graduate Coursework or a Master's Degree

Graduate Course Transfer Credit Process

Students who enter the program with a master's thesis in sociology or related field from another institution may transfer up to eight course credits pending DGS approval. A maximum of eight credits counts toward the 24 credit residency requirement. Students' previous graduate coursework is examined to determine which courses can be counted toward the program at Brown. Courses taken from multiple institutions will be accepted, however each institution requires a separate transfer credit form. Additional transfer credits/revisions to previously submitted forms must include a note about the addition/revision. The form for graduate transfer credit must be submitted to the student affairs coordinator and can be found on the link below:

[Application for Graduate Transfer Credit](#)

Course Waiver

Specific course requirements may be waived by the Graduate Committee in consultation with the current instructor of the course for which the waiver is sought. To request a course waiver, please send an email to the DGS and cc the student affairs coordinator stating the reason for the waiver. In addition, please include syllabi and any coursework.

Teaching Assistantship

Teaching experience is both a fundamental aspect of scholarly development and a valuable signal on the job market. To provide all students with this experience, the program requires one full year (two semesters) of a teaching assistant assignment. Students who have been unable to TA by the penultimate year (due to receiving multiple fellowships that prohibit teaching) should enroll in a 1-unit teaching practicum [(SOC 2500 (fall) / SOC 2510 (spring): Teaching Practicum in Sociology)] with a sponsoring faculty. TA assignments include regular attendance at class, class lecturing or leading discussion sections, and some responsibility for course activities and grading. In addition, we strongly encourage students to complete the Sheridan Center (Level One) teaching certification program early in their time at Brown.

Teaching Assistant Appointments

Students are not required to register for the course in which they are a teaching assistant. Once the teaching assistant schedule is finalized the department will assign teaching assistants accordingly so that the one credit is granted. *The following are departmental policies for instructors and TAs. Above all, it is important to create open communication channels between instructors and TAs and work to maintain good communication practices throughout the semester.*

- Teaching is an integral part of the doctoral student experience at Brown. The program requires that graduate student's TA for one full year (two semesters) unless they have extended external funding.
- Students with extended external funding may fulfill their teaching requirement by enrolling in a 1-unit teaching practicum [SOC 2500 (fall) / SOC 2510 (spring): Teaching Practicum in Sociology] with a sponsoring faculty. The practicum should be completed by the end of the third

year of study. In conversation with the sponsoring faculty member, students should provide a brief 2-3 paragraph proposal to the DGS outlining the elements of the practicum, which should include several normal pedagogical experiences (e.g. guest lectures, office hours, syllabus, grading, etc.).

- Graduate students are not required to register for the course they are assigned to TA. Students receive one credit for each TA assignment.
- TA assignments extend through December 31st for Fall assignments and May 31st for Spring assignments. Faculty should not expect TAs to do work in courses that have formally concluded.
- TA course assignments are contingent upon department needs and course enrollment. Graduate students are expected to perform teaching duties in a variety of subfields, including those outside their areas of expertise. Instructors should not assume TAs have prior knowledge of the course.
- The responsibilities of TAs vary and depend on each instructor. They may include attending class, leading a discussion section, holding office hours, grading, occasional lecturing, or other activities that support teaching and learning in the course.
- Per Brown's Graduate School Handbook, TA work hours are not to exceed 20 hours per week. Importantly, the Graduate School interprets this rule in relative terms to mean that average workload should not exceed 20 hours per week. This interpretation recognizes variations during the semester in which there may be more or fewer responsibilities for TAs. In all cases, TAs and faculty should discuss workloads. In some instances, it may be appropriate to consider whether changes to the syllabus or work schedule might better ensure that undergraduate students' pedagogical needs are successfully met. Such changes might include changing exam formats, changing distribution of grading responsibilities, or extending the time-period for grading completion.

Research Assistantship & Proctorships

Research Assistantships (RAs) and Proctorships are credit bearing. Students will earn 1 credit per semester for these appointments.

Summer Mentored Research

When funding allows, the Department of Sociology will offer students in years 1-4 the opportunity to work alongside a faculty member on faculty-based research. The duration for these appointments are 10-12 hours per week for a 10 week period, anytime between June 1 through August 31. Faculty and students are required to meet regularly. These appointments will be entered as research assistantship appointments which are considered taxable income. The student affairs coordinator will reach out to eligible students in mid-January to gather interest. Students are expected to reach out to faculty with whom they are interested in working.

The Master's Thesis

The master's thesis is designed to provide a structured research experience of limited scope that covers the main elements of research, including selecting a research problem, reviewing current knowledge in the field, generating hypotheses or key points that require exploration, examining these hypotheses or key points with

evidence, and drawing conclusions. The scope, structure, quality, and tone of a master's thesis should resemble a published paper in a major sociology journal. However, the master's thesis usually contains a more extensive literature review and a more detailed discussion of methodology than would a typical journal article (typically 30-35 pages of text, along with a modest number of tables, figures, and references). For some areas of research, the paper may need to be longer but ordinarily should not exceed 50-60 pages of text. The department's preferred citation style for master's papers is the [American Sociological Association Style Citations](#).

The master's thesis must be approved by a committee that consists of two faculty members in the Department of Sociology selected by the student, one of whom serves as the supervisor of the paper and the second as the reader. With prior permission from the Graduate Committee, the second reader may have a faculty appointment in another department at Brown. The primary thesis advisor must be selected by the end of the second semester of graduate study, with the reader chosen by the beginning of the fourth semester (end of January of the second year) at the latest. A final draft of the paper must be submitted to the thesis committee by the end of February in semester four of graduate study (the second year). By April 15, a final approved PDF version that includes the scanned signature page from the thesis advisor must be submitted to the student affairs coordinator. April 15 is a hard internal deadline, and failure to meet these deadlines may jeopardize consideration for good standing. If

the April 15 falls during a Saturday or Sunday, the final approved copy will be due the following Monday. The departmental copy due on April 15 must be identical to the copy turned into the Graduate School on May 1.

By May 1 students must submit the electronic file, including the signature page, through Brown's electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) system.

For more information on the Graduate School thesis guidelines visit: [Master's Thesis Guidelines](#)

Master's Thesis Waiver

All previously completed master theses are evaluated by one or two faculty members in the Department of Sociology. A student whose master's thesis is determined to be of suitable quality is exempt from the master's thesis requirement and should work with her/his advisor to develop an appropriate use of their time during the second year in the program, when the thesis is normally completed. For a possible Master's Thesis Waiver, students should submit their previous completed thesis to the student affairs coordinator who, along with the DGS, will send the thesis out for faculty review. The student affairs coordinator will communicate if the waiver has been approved.

Preliminary Exams

Mastery of sociology as a discipline requires in-depth study of specific areas of interest and broad coverage of the major themes of sociological inquiry. Sociology as a field has a large number of specializations and the faculty in the department at Brown cover many of these areas. The areas of specialization selected as preliminary exam areas normally represent the areas in which the student plans to teach and carry out research for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

Students specialize in two areas of sociology selected from a standing list of areas offered by the department. The standing list includes the following eleven areas: Cultural Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Health and Illness in Social Context, Organizational and Economic Sociology, Political Economy of Development and

Globalization, Political Sociology, Social Demography, Social Inequality, Sociological Theory, Sociology of Race, Ethnicity, and International Migration, and Urban Sociology.

The exams for each area draw on a standard bibliography of the field, compiled and maintained by the standing faculty committees who are the examiners in each area. Each exam is written by two members of the standing faculty committee in the relevant area. Each area is approximately the breadth of a section of the American Sociological Association, or a recognized subfield within sociology. Students are also advised to complete the relevant advanced seminar(s), SOC 2980 (fall) / SOC 2981 (spring): Reading and Research before taking the exam. Familiarity with the topics on the reading list, combined with relevant coursework, provide the necessary base for exam preparation. Reading beyond the reading list is strongly encouraged. In exceptional cases, students may propose an alternative exam approximately equivalent in breadth to the existing areas (i.e., an ASA section) in an area not regularly offered. The graduate committee will consider these alternatives only if two faculty members have agreed to be examiners. Completion of the two preliminary examinations should take place before the beginning of the 4th year of study. Students should, however, begin planning their areas of specialization through consulting with their advisor early in their graduate study. Normally, students' complete preliminary exams beginning at the end of the second year, and during the third year. With DGS approval, in exceptional cases completion of one exam at the end of the first year or in the middle of the second year may be sensible.

Students officially indicate their intention to take an exam in a designated area six weeks before the exam will be given by signing up with the student affairs coordinator. Each exam involves a three-day take-home exam. Students who wish to take their two exams at the same cycle may do so and receive seven days to complete the two exams. Preliminary exams are given twice a year: January and June. The January exam begins on Monday morning of the week prior to the start of the spring semester. The June exam begins the first week in June. Specific exam dates will be communicated toward the end of the previous spring semester to give students time to plan. Students receive the exam questions via email at 9 am from the student affairs coordinator at the beginning of the exam period. The January preliminary offerings will run Monday – Wednesday if taking one exam or Monday – Sunday if taking two exams. The June preliminary offerings will run Monday – Wednesday if taking one exam or Monday – Sunday if taking two exams. For semester start and end dates, please reference the [Academic Calendar](#). The exams should be returned via email by 5 pm to the student affairs coordinator on the last scheduled exam date specified in the email instructions.

Exams are open-book and open-notes. Students may consult any written materials, but not any other person. Evidence of collaboration is grounds for failure. If students receive the preliminary exam questions and then decide to withdraw, this will result in an automatic fail.

Preliminary exams results will be returned to students within three weeks of their completion of the exam. Exam results are recorded as pass or fail. In rare cases, for unusually exceptional work, pass with distinction may be awarded. Students who fail the first exam must retake the same exam at the next preliminary exam offering. Failure to pass the second exam results in program dismissal.

The Dissertation

The Ph.D. dissertation is an original contribution to the field of sociology. Its completion has two stages: (1) the preparation and oral defense of a dissertation proposal presentation, and (2) the completion and oral defense of the dissertation itself. The dissertation is supervised by at least three committee members, one of whom is

the chair, two of whom are members of the dissertation committee. All three committee members must be regular faculty members in the Department of Sociology. Students may add a fourth committee member from inside or outside the department if desired. Students choose their committee before starting the proposal, and while this committee may be changed, the Graduate Committee must be notified of changes.

The preparation and defense of a Ph.D. dissertation proposal presentation should occur following the successful completion of the second preliminary examination. The proposal describes the unique contribution to the sociological literature to be made by the dissertation, reviews relevant research, and addresses methods and feasibility for the proposed research. Proposals should be presented at a Dissertation Proposal Presentation before the end of reading period in the fourth year (eighth semester). No later than two weeks prior to the date of the proposal presentation, students must send the student affairs coordinator a dissertation title, an abstract, as well as a list of all committee members. The dissertation committee, including the chair and at least one other member, must be present at the Dissertation Proposal Presentation. The purpose of this oral presentation is to encourage careful, preliminary investigation of the dissertation topic and to obtain critical advice from faculty and other graduate students. After the Dissertation Proposal Presentation, the student works with the dissertation committee to revise the proposal, address questions, suggestions, and comments raised at the Dissertation Proposal Presentation. Completion of the dissertation proposal occurs when the committee has signed its approval of the revised dissertation proposal. The final draft of the dissertation proposal must be submitted to the full committee by August 1. The signed form must be returned to the student affairs coordinator no later than August 31 for the student to advance to candidacy.

Failure to present the dissertation proposal by the end of the eighth semester will result in a status of academic warning for the ninth semester. This will not disqualify students from receiving the fifth year dissertation fellowship. However, students in this situation who do not defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the ninth semester run the risk of termination from the program in the spring semester.

After completing the research and writing of the dissertation, the student must successfully defend the written dissertation at a closed oral examination with the dissertation committee. Members of the dissertation committee should be physically present at the defense. With permission from the director of graduate studies, only one committee member can participate remotely. The dissertation committee must receive copies of the dissertation (a complete dissertation in the form required by the Graduate School except for acknowledgments) at least two weeks before the defense date. In addition, no later than two weeks prior to the date of the defense, students must send the student affairs coordinator a dissertation title page, an abstract, as well as a list of all committee members. Dissertation defenses should occur during the academic year (not to include reading period). Summer defenses are not allowed. Students who wish to attend Commencement in May must defend and file their dissertation by the Graduate School deadline of May 1st.

The oral defense is “passed” if the dissertation committee unanimously votes approval. After the successful oral defense of the dissertation, the student prepares a final version of the dissertation, taking into account the comments and suggestions of the committee. After the final changes to the dissertation are approved, and the dissertation cover page is signed signaling this approval, the dissertation should be submitted to the Graduate School. More information about Graduate School dissertation formatting guidelines can be found here:

[Dissertation Guidelines](#)

The Graduate School requires that a graduate student complete the dissertation within five years after passing

the preliminary examinations. The five-year period is not extended when a student takes a leave of absence. Requests for extensions are granted only when there is evidence of substantial progress on the dissertation during the previous year and evidence that the candidate is current in his or her chosen fields of specialization.

Certificate of Completion

If all academic requirements for the degree and all financial obligations are met before April 1, the Office of the Registrar will issue a certificate of completion within three weeks of the candidate's request.

Program Evaluation and Completion

By virtue of our size, students are closely mentored from the first weeks in the program through the program's final stages, including job search processes. Upon starting the program, students are assigned a preliminary faculty advisor. By the end of the first-year, students decide on an advisor for their master's thesis. After the master's thesis, students decide on an advisor who will guide them through the dissertation stages. Students may switch advisors at any time, but should inform old and new advisors, the student affairs coordinator, and the Graduate Committee of their decisions.

Students are evaluated at several points. In addition to being notified of successful completion of program benchmarks (i.e., master's, prelims, Dissertation Proposal Presentation), students are formally evaluated by the graduate program at the end of each year, with special attention devoted to the first-year evaluation. The Department of Sociology uses the graduate school categories for classifying academic standing: good, satisfactory, warning, or termination. The [Graduate School Handbook](#) has more information about these categories. These evaluations focus on timely completion of program requirements as well as overall progress and professional development. Specifically, the committee considers the development of each student's conceptual and analytical thinking skills, including: the ability to make theoretical abstractions, link theoretical material to empirical methods, and critique conceptual arguments and empirical approaches. Additionally, the committee considers a student's demonstrated potential to execute an independently crafted research project that can make a contribution to the discipline. Lastly, the committee also considers a student's overall awareness of professional behaviors. Students who fail to meet program benchmarks in a timely manner, or who do not fulfill the terms of their appointment, are typically placed on warning status and may be terminated if they do not resolve deficiencies by the appropriate deadline.

Funding

The Department of Sociology through the Graduate School offers incoming doctoral students [five years of guaranteed support](#), including a stipend and health and dental insurance subsidies, through mechanisms including teaching and research assistantships, fellowships, and traineeships. Students in good standing normally receive a fellowship in the first year of study and for one year after advancing to doctoral candidacy. The course of study for the sociology PhD is [designed to be completed in five years](#) and students are encouraged to do so. Students who need additional time and extend their course of study beyond five years must remain in good standing and will be encouraged to secure external funding.

All students entering the Graduate School with any form of financial support are required to complete an Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9). This form must be completed in person at the [Brown](#)

[Business Center](#) in Page-Robinson Hall on the second floor. Stipend payments will not be disbursed until an I-9 form has been completed, so it is imperative students comply as soon as they arrive on campus.

ASA Memberships

The Department of Sociology provides ASA memberships to all first-year students, which includes one journal subscription. It is the responsibility of the student to pay for any additional journal subscriptions. After registering, students must bring receipts to the student affairs coordinator for reimbursement processing.

Feinberg Award Funds

The Department of Sociology is fortunate to receive support from the Feinberg family for the purpose of graduate research. The funds can be used for dissertation research-related expenses (e.g., travel to conduct research, purchase data sets, add modules to existing surveys, conduct exploratory fieldwork, travel to archives otherwise unavailable). Funds can also be used for attendance at special training programs. Calls for proposals are sent in September and award notification is in October. Award funds must be used by May 31. Students who are awarded must submit a summary of how the funds were used by May 31.

Department Travel Funds

The Department of Sociology provides up to \$350 per year for travel funds to actively enrolled students in years 1-5 to present at a conference. No application/pre-approval is required. In order to seek reimbursement, proof of presentation is required. All receipts must show proof of payment. These funds are available from July 1-June 30 and only one travel reimbursement will be processed per year. The funds do not carry over from year to year.

Graduate School Travel Funds

The Graduate School has travel funds that can be used per year. For a list of funds, please see here:

[Conference Travel](#)
[International Travel Fund](#)

Teaching Fellowships

The Department of Sociology offers a competitive opportunity for up to two graduate students per year to create and teach an advanced undergraduate seminar on a topic of their choosing in the fall or spring semester. Candidates should demonstrate expertise in the topic, either by passing the appropriate preliminary exam in that substantive area or by taking advanced courses in the area. Applicants submit a proposal with a tentative course syllabus for an upper level undergraduate seminar. The syllabus should include a short description of the course, course outline, sample weekly readings, and an evaluation plan. Applicants should identify a faculty mentor who agrees to supervise course design and teaching. Students should provide the mentor's name, a brief summary of how the faculty mentor will support the student, and a plan for the practicum. This mentor provides guidance and feedback to the Teaching Fellow and should therefore be familiar with the topic. Eligibility requirements for this appointment include: 1) completion of preliminary exams; 2) completion of the Dissertation Proposal Presentation (by May 15 for fall courses and December 15 for spring courses); 3) status as a sixth year or below student in the coming year; and 4) timely progression toward the PhD. Preference will be given to topics that are likely to generate strong undergraduate interest, enrollment and engagement, and to applicants who have teaching experience and/or training.

The Ph.D., Year by Year

First Year of Graduate Study

In the first year, graduate students normally take eight courses, six of which are the required courses described in the handbook, and two of which are other substantive courses based on the student's areas of interest. We recommend completion of the Sheridan Center (Level One) teaching certification during this year. All students receive a mid-year evaluation from the DGS. The faculty advisor assigned upon entering the program will serve as the students' advisor until the student notifies the student affairs coordinator of his or her chosen MA thesis advisor. During the summer after the first year of study, students build on their coursework and pursue a research project. The project normally forms the basis of the MA thesis.

Second Year of Graduate Study

In the second year students take additional seminars in theory and advanced methodology courses, along with courses in areas of substantive specialization. Students write their MA thesis in the second year, in consultation with their MA advisor, and submit the thesis to the committee during the fourth semester of graduate study. After successful completion of the MA thesis, students are strongly encouraged to submit the thesis to an academic journal for peer-review and present the work at professional conferences. During the second-year students continue refining their planned areas of specialization for the preliminary exam, taking courses in the areas of their intended exams. Students also often complete their two semester teaching requirement by the end of their second year.

Third Year of Graduate Study

In the third year students take additional coursework, prepare and complete preliminary exams, continue the work of publishing the master's thesis, and begin to develop dissertation topics. Completion of these preliminary examinations should be before the beginning of the fourth year of graduate study. All coursework (24 course credits earned), and all teaching requirements (two semesters of TAship or a 1-semester teaching practicum) should be completed by the end of the third year of study.

Subsequent Years

By the fourth year, students will have completed the MA thesis, coursework, and preliminary examinations. Their fourth year is normally devoted to dissertation proposal preparation and presentation. During their fifth year, students work to complete and defend their dissertation. Preparation for applying for teaching and research positions, the job interview process, and related issues typically occur in the final year.

APPENDIX GUIDELINES FOR SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTORS AND GRADUATE TAS

- Ongoing open communication among instructors and TAs is key to successful courses. Upon notification of the course assignment, instructors and TAs should meet to discuss the course, preferably before the semester begins but no later than the first week of the semester. During this initial meeting, the instructor and TAs should discuss expectations and responsibilities for the semester. It is recommended to develop a regular meeting schedule throughout the semester.
- TAs are strongly encouraged to complete the Sheridan Center (Level One) teaching certification program early in their time at Brown. At the start of each academic year, the DGS and the TA Rep will aim to organize 1-2 sessions for first-time TAs to discuss teaching techniques and provide additional resources.
- TAs are not required to purchase textbooks for the course; it is the responsibility of the course instructor to provide them. Instructors can provide book order information to the department staff, better to ensure that desk copies are available for all members of the instructional team.
- When a course includes discussion sections, it is highly recommended that instructors provide TAs with general goals for each section, key concepts that should be included, and/or materials used in previous years. Instructors can use Canvas or Google Drive to share these materials.
- It is highly recommended that instructors provide general grading guidelines, such as rubrics and answer keys, to facilitate consistency of grading among TAs.
- If TAs encounter unresolved communication issues with their instructor, they are encouraged to speak with the DGS.