

## **Master's Program**

### **Master of Arts with Major in Sociology**

The Master of Arts degree in Sociology is designed to prepare students for doctoral study in sociology and related programs. Additionally, the M.A. in Sociology would prepare students for professional careers and teaching. There are two tracks in the program: Generalist track and Specialist track. The generalist track offers students a broad graduate education in sociology that can serve as the basis for a wide array of professional careers in the public and private sector. The specialist track is designed for students who would pursue a doctoral degree in Sociology. This track offers the students the opportunity to design and carry out a research project in a particular area of sociological research under the direct mentorship of a faculty member. Students may apply to be admitted to the specialist track after completing nine credit hours in the program.

**Track One: Generalist Track (M.A.)** All students admitted to the M.A. program area are admitted into the generalist track. It is designed to provide students with broad sociological training across an array of subfields and methods. With the guidance of a faculty mentor, students in this track will develop and pursue a plan of study consistent with their disciplinary interests and professional aspirations. The academic progression in this track will typically consist of completing 36 hours of graduate work. For the full-time student, the academic progression in this track typically will consist of:

#### **Semester One:**

- Successfully complete three sociological foundation classes as approved by the graduate director
- Submit tentative plan of study to graduate director; submit proposal for semester two's seminars to the graduate director.

#### **Semester Two:**

- Successfully complete three sociological foundation classes
- Identify a faculty member to serve as the faculty mentor; consult with faculty about their availability to serve as a mentor. In consultation with the faculty member, make a final decision about the mentorship. The faculty member confirms the mentorship position with the department chair before the end of the term.
- Work with the faculty mentor to develop a Plan of Study that is tailored to his or her professional aspirations and academic background and interests.
- Revise and resubmit Plan of Study. The Plan of Study must be filed with the Graduate College *before* the completion of 18 credits of graduate coursework.

#### **Semester Three:**

- Successfully complete nine credits of graduate coursework as approved by the faculty mentor and specified in the Plan of Study
- If revisions to the Plan of Study are necessary, submit a Revision to an Existing Plan of Study. This must be submitted *prior* to the semester in which you plan to graduate.
- Submit a graduation application to the department three weeks before the end of the semester.

#### **Semester Four:**

- Successfully complete nine credits of graduate coursework as approved by the faculty mentor and specified in the Plan of Study.

## **Required courses for the generalist track:**

Students must take 36 credits to receive their degrees, including:

An approved research methods	3 credits
An approved theory course	3 credits

Note: graduate teaching assistants are required to take a three-credit teaching practicum course, preferably in the beginning of their second year.

**Track Two: Specialist track (M.A.)** This track is designed for students who wish to pursue a doctoral degree in sociology or a closely related field. The specialist is intended for students who have superior writing, communication, and analytical skills necessary for intensive training in sociological research and requires the student to write and successfully defend a Master's thesis as part of the process of developing the knowledge and skills required for admission into Ph.D. programs. Students may apply for admission to the specialist track as early as after their first nine credits but must apply prior to completing 18 credits of graduate study.

For the full-time student, the academic progression in this track typically consists of:

### **Semester One:**

- Successfully complete three sociological foundation classes
- Submit a tentative plan of study
- Submit proposal for semester two's seminars to the graduate director

### **Semester Two:**

- Successfully complete three sociological foundation classes
- Submit initial application for the specialist track to the department chair during the first month of the second semester. The chair will convene a meeting of faculty who have worked with the student during his or her first nine credits and in any other academic capacities; if the committee supports the student's application, the student will be admitted to the specialist track.
- Find a faculty mentor who has a scholarly background in the area of the thesis topic and is willing to supervise the thesis. The faculty member confirms this responsibility for thesis supervision with the department chair.
- Work with the thesis chair to choose members of the thesis committee
- Under the supervision of the thesis chair, write a thesis proposal
- Defend the thesis proposal before the thesis committee. The defense should occur before the end of the second semester of study or, for part-time students, before the completion of 18 credits of graduate study; the defense requires: a thesis proposal; a thesis writing plan that includes a detailed table of contents for the thesis and a suggested time line for the completion of each chapter or part of thesis; a preliminary bibliography.
- Submit final application for admission to the specialist track after a successful thesis defense.
- Submit formal Plan of Study to graduate director after consultation with thesis chair. A Plan of Study must be filed with the Graduate College before the completion of 18 credits of graduate coursework.

### **Semester Three:**

- Successfully complete 3-6 credits of Master's Thesis

- Successfully complete 3-6 credits of approved graduate coursework. The coursework should complement the thesis research and must be approved in advance by the chair of the thesis committee.
- Submit a final thesis writing plan to the thesis committee no later than the end of the semester.
- Submit a final plan of study and graduation application to the department three weeks before the end of the semester.

**Semester Four:**

- Successfully complete 3-6 credits of Master’s Thesis and complete the thesis
- Defend the thesis at an oral exam by the committee
- Submit the final copy of the thesis to the department by March 15 if graduating in May and by October 20 if graduating in December.
- Successfully complete 3-6 credits of graduate coursework

**Required courses for the specialist track:**

Students must take 36 credits to receive their Master’s degrees, including:

An approved research methods course	3 credits
An approved theory course	3 credit
SYA 6971 Master’s Thesis	6 credits

Note: Not more than six credits of Master’s Thesis can be counted toward the M.A. degree. Graduate teaching assistants are required to take a three-credit teaching practicum course, preferably in the beginning of their second year.

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Ben Low, Chair, Graduate Program Committee, College of Arts and Letters

**FROM:** Farshad Araghi, Chair, Department of Sociology *F.A.A*

**DATE:** February 16, 2009

**RE:** Proposed changes to the graduate sociology program

I am submitting the proposed changes by the department of Sociology's graduate faculty. The proposal contains three changes to the current program:

1. The thesis-and the non-thesis tracks be renamed the Specialist and the Generalist tracks, respectively. The department would like to pay special attention to the specialist (thesis) track, which is designed to prepare the students for PhD programs. The department has had noticeable success in placing its MA graduates in nationally recognized PhD programs and would like to make this the main purpose of the program. At the same time, the department receives many applications from students who, for various reasons, do not wish to pursue a doctoral degree. For these students, the department will offer the generalist track.
2. Because the specialist (thesis) track would require much departmental scholarly effort, the department needs to have more substantive input into the process of admitting the students to this track. For this reason, all students who are admitted to the program will begin in the generalist track. By the end of their first semester, the students who would like to be placed in the specialist track will apply for admission into the specialist track. Importantly, these students will need the recommendation of a faculty committee consisted of faculty members with whom the students will complete their classes in their first semester.
3. Currently the thesis (specialist) track requires the completion of 30 credit hours. The department thinks that all graduate students should take at least 36 hours of graduate coursework.

I am fully supportive of this proposal as it will better clarify the nature and the objectives of the Sociology graduate program.