

**New Mexico State University**

**Department of Sociology**



**Graduate Program Handbook**

**2016-2017**

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## Department of Sociology Overview

The Department of Sociology at New Mexico State University has a mission to serve the University, state, United States/Mexico border region, and beyond through: 1) courses and curricula based on a core value of theoretical and social diversity, 2) scholarship and creative activity that advances knowledge and promotes a more just society, 3) service to the university, the discipline, and the community, and 4) outreach activities focused on social, economic, and cultural issues of concern to people locally, nationally, and globally.

The department offers a diverse curriculum covering a wide range of topics, and all graduate students receive a thorough grounding in theoretical and methodological aspects of sociology. NMSU's unique location attracts faculty and students who are interested in peoples of the southwest, particularly Hispanics/Latinos and American Indians. In addition, the University's proximity to the U.S./Mexico border provides an ideal context for the examination of such issues as globalization, transnational migration, and the consequences of border development. Faculty routinely examine the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality in both research and teaching. Based on current course offerings, research endeavors, and faculty specializations, the department has three main areas of focus:

- Inequality
- Environment/Development
- Institutions and Organizations

The Graduate Program in Sociology offers a terminal Master's Degree that can be pursued either in an on-campus context or an online format. There are two tracks possible for the on-campus program: thesis or comprehensive exam. Online students are only able to participate in the comprehensive exam track at this time. The Department has about 60 total graduate students enrolled in the on-campus or online program. There are currently ten full-time, tenure-track or college-track faculty, as well as several emeritus and adjunct faculty who together work with students to foster a high level of interaction, learning, and mentoring. The graduate program's goal is to prepare students both professionally and personally to pursue further study in a doctoral program or a future career using sociological tools. We have a low student-to-faculty ratio, which allows for maximum student-faculty interaction, smaller seminar classes, and quality mentorship for those students who wish to complete a Master's Thesis.

The Department also offers a Graduate Minor in Sociology for on campus students currently enrolled in other graduate programs at NMSU.

Sociology graduate students are valued, active participants in intellectual discussions and research pursuits. We have had students work as research assistants on faculty grants, collaborate with faculty members to co-author publications, and present papers at professional meetings.

The department awards 5-6 Graduate Assistantships (GAs) each year to new and current students. Graduate Assistants can be funded for up to four semesters, and are usually employed for 10 hours a week. Graduate Assistants are assigned an office within the Department, and have access to computers equipped with MS Office, Internet, SPSS, and printers. General graduate students are also invited to use graduate student-designated office space, and also have access to computers and printers.

*Several resources were adapted in the creation of this handbook of graduate program guidelines, namely from Ohio University, the University of Oklahoma, and the Departments of Psychology and Anthropology at NMSU.*

# Department of Sociology and NMSU Guidelines

## **I. POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND DEGREE REQUIREMENTS**

The Master of Arts degree in sociology is a 36-credit hour program designed through tracks that require students to work toward either a thesis or a written comprehensive exam. Further, the MA program is structured through two different options: an on-campus MA cohort or an entirely online MA cohort. On-campus MA students may choose from either the thesis track or comprehensive exam track. The thesis track is typically selected by students who intend to pursue a doctoral degree, while the comprehensive exam track is commonly pursued by students desiring immediate employment. Online MA students are only able to pursue the comprehensive exam track at this time.

Both the thesis and comprehensive exam tracks require core courses (SOC 501, SOC 551, SOC 552, SOC 553) that must be taken within the first 27 hours of graduate credit. A grade of B or better is required to receive credit for each core course.

The thesis track also has six required master's thesis credits (SOC 599) that should be taken after successful defense of the master's thesis proposal. A student may take more than six thesis credits, however only six may be used to satisfy departmental graduation requirements.

Both the thesis and comprehensive exam tracks require additional 500 level Sociology courses (18 credits for on-campus thesis track; 24 credits for on-campus comprehensive exam track; 24 credits for online comprehensive exam track) for completion of the degree. Within Sociology, courses at the 400 level are considered undergraduate courses and do not count toward your elective requirements.

Thesis track students must successfully defend a master's thesis in their final semester in the program. Comprehensive exam track students must successfully pass a final master's written examination on required coursework once all core classes have been completed with a grade of B- or better earned in each course.

### **On-Campus Program vs. Online Program**

The on-campus and online MA programs are distinct, and have separate cohorts that begin in the fall of each academic year. Once a student is admitted into the on-campus or online program, the student is expected to remain in that program through degree completion. Students cannot switch between programs; if a student wishes to switch, the student must reapply to the desired program in order to be considered for admission. Online courses are usually reserved for online program students, and on-campus courses are intended for on-campus students. On occasion, online students may wish to take an on-campus course, or on-campus students may wish to take an online course. The student must make a formal request, in writing, to enroll in such course to the Director of Graduate Studies AND the instructor teaching the class.

### **Graduate Coursework**

A typical graduate student course load is 9-credit hours (usually three 3-credit courses). On occasion, students may wish to enroll in more credit hours, however the academic and personal demands of graduate school can often be overwhelming if students take more than three classes in a semester. The department has a typical plan of study, which is noted on the following page, for on-campus students. Online students are urged to follow a similar plan of study so

that degree requirements can be fulfilled in a timely manner. Full-time students are expected to complete all degree requirements by the end of the fourth semester of study.

It is not unusual, however, for students to take fewer than 9 credits per semester. These students often choose to take 6 credits a semester for one or more of the following reasons 1. 9 credits hours is excessive for individuals who have significant employment and/or family responsibilities 2. NMSU charges non-New Mexico residents in-state tuition rates if 6 or fewer credits are taken 3. Six credits is usually the minimum number of credits needed to qualify for financial aid (consult with the financial aid office for your particular circumstances) 3. 6 credit hours a semester results in a reasonable time to degree (6 semesters).

**Master's Degree Plan of Study**

The following plan of study is based on 36 credits required for both on-campus and online students pursuing the Master's Degree in sociology. Students are welcome to take summer courses, however core required courses are usually not offered in the summer (only elective courses are offered, and only as university funding allows).

Fall Semester I	Spring Semester I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Perspectives on Sociology (501)*</li> <li>➤ Classical Sociological Theory (552)*</li> <li>➤ Sociological Research (553)*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Quantitative Analysis (551)*</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> </ul>
<i>9 total credit hours</i>	<i>9 total credit hours</i>

Fall Semester II	Spring Semester II
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sociology Elective**</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sociology Elective**</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> <li>➤ Sociology Elective</li> </ul>
<i>9 total credit hours</i>	<i>9 total credit hours</i>

*\*Denotes required courses (12 credits total) that must be taken within the first 27 hours of Graduate credit. A grade of B- or better is required to receive credit for each core course.*

*\*\*Denotes thesis hours (6 credits total) required for the Thesis Track*

**Graduate Courses in Sociology**

The department offers the following graduate-level courses (as faculty allow) either in an on-campus or online format. All required core courses are offered both online and on-campus. Course descriptions can be found in the NMSU Graduate Catalogue.

<p><b>Required Core Courses</b></p> <p>SOC 501 Perspectives on Sociology          SOC 551 Quantitative Analysis          SOC 552 Classical Sociological Theory          SOC 553 Sociological Research</p>	<p><b>Customized Courses</b></p> <p>SOC 548 Special Topics (varies)          SOC 549 Special Research Problems          SOC 596 Internship          SOC 599 Master's Thesis</p>
<p><b>Inequality</b></p> <p>SOC 559 Sex and Gender          SOC 570 Sociology of Latinos/as in the U.S.          SOC 571 Race and Ethnic Relations          SOC 579 Perspectives on U.S.-Mexico Border          SOC 575 Social Stratification          SOC 581 Social Deviance          SOC 587 International Migration</p>	<p><b>Environment and Development</b></p> <p>SOC 509 Community Development          SOC 564 Human Society and the Environment          SOC 565 Environmental Sociology          SOC 578 Sociology of Development and World System          SOC 589 Advanced Issues in Globalization</p>
<p><b>Institutions/Organizations</b></p> <p>SOC 530 Social Movement Theory          SOC 558 Sociology of the Family          SOC 560 Sociology of Religion          SOC 574 Sociology of Organizations          SOC 577 Sociology of Education          SOC 580 Diversity in Alternative Families          SOC 586 Power and Politics in the U.S.</p>	

## **General Graduate Student Responsibilities**

The Department of Sociology admits a select number of competitive students each academic year for the graduate program. It is important to note that the department has clear expectations for all graduate students, in addition to making adequate progress toward (and eventually completing) the Master's Degree. The following are general graduate student responsibilities:

- Attend classes and be in contact with professors regularly
- Complete all assignments, papers, and exams for classes
- Resolve incompletes within two semesters
- Choose a thesis or comprehensive track (and stick to it!)
- Be available for NMSU and departmental communication
- Use NMSU email addresses at all times
- Be respectful with fellow students, faculty, and staff
- Follow up with any outstanding assignments in a timely manner
- Participate in departmental opportunities and events
- File all necessary paperwork for theses, exams, and graduation
- Practice professional communication at all times
- Complete a departmental progress report each semester
- Problematize, contextualize, synthesize, analyze, articulate, dialogue, critique, and argue in all academic efforts
- Report issues and concerns directly to the Department Head
- Be the best graduate student possible

All graduate students can use one of the offices designated for graduate student use as a quiet space to study, prepare for class, use computers, or print assignments. Check with the Director of Graduate Studies for which offices are available, and please be respectful of fellow students and faculty in close proximity.

## **Departmental Graduate Student Evaluation and Progress Reports**

Graduate students (both on-campus and online) are evaluated annually on their academic progress, performance, and professional potential. Graduate students are therefore responsible for submitting a "Graduate Student Progress Report" at the end of each semester. The progress report requires students to document progress in completing core course requirements and additional coursework, progress in either the thesis track or comprehensive exam track, completion of GA duties for the semester (if applicable), and documents any engagement in professional activities. Failure to submit a progress report by the designated semester deadline may result in a hold being placed on course registration or delay the filing of graduation. Progress reports are not needed for summer sessions.

Progress reports and general feedback solicited from Sociology faculty are reviewed by the student's faculty advisor and brought to the attention of the Director of Graduate Studies if there are any problems. A student may receive a warning or dismissal evaluation due to a number of factors, such as academic misconduct, plagiarism, receiving failing course grades, inadequate progress toward thesis completion, failing the comprehensive exam in two subsequent semesters, having more than three outstanding incompletes in sociology graduate courses, or engaging in inappropriate/unprofessional interpersonal communication. Annual progress reports and any departmental student evaluations will be kept in the student's administrative file.

## **Graduate Assistant Evaluations and Assistantship Renewal**

At the end of each academic year, the graduate committee will meet to formally evaluate each graduate assistant in terms of overall performance in coursework, progress toward degree completion, timely development of thesis requirements or progress toward completion of comprehensive exam, handling departmental responsibilities, maintaining positive working relationships with fellow students and faculty, fulfillment of Graduate Assistant responsibilities, engaging in professional communication with others, and growth as a professional. The committee will consider the student's performance in each area as exceptional, adequate, problematic, or not applicable. The committee will also discuss the graduate assistant's progress reports, faculty insights, and any additional formally documented information in recommending either renewal or nonrenewal of the Graduate Assistantship. The Director of Graduate Studies will forward the recommendations to the Department Head for further consideration.

## **Sociology Graduate Student Organization**

The Sociology Graduate Student Organization (SGSO) is a university-sanctioned organization for sociology graduate students. The SGSO is a great way to meet and socialize with fellow colleagues, participate in university/local service, and obtain funding for research and academic conferences. The SGSO usually meets twice a month, and has both organizational and social meetings. Officers are elected each semester, and the SGSO is open to both on-campus and online students who wish to attend.

## **Advisement**

All incoming graduate students will be assigned an initial advisor (the Director of Graduate Studies). Toward the beginning of the first semester, students will be assigned a permanent advisor who is also a member of the graduate committee. Advisors correspond with their advisees regarding registration, programmatic questions, departmental policies/procedures, progress toward degree completion, and graduation requirements. Thesis-track students usually have their thesis chair also serve as their advisor. Students who wish to change their permanent advisors should complete the "Change of Advisor" form and file it with the department.

## **Incompletes**

The department requires that a student should have no more than three incompletes in sociology graduate courses upon graduation. Per NMSU policy, incompletes must be resolved within one year and should be initiated by the student to complete the course requirements.

## **Provisional Acceptance**

In certain cases, graduate students who do not meet the admission requirements of the department may still be accepted provisionally. The student is accepted for a probation period of one semester wherein the student must earn at least an A- in each sociology graduate course taken. Subsequently, written documentation must be submitted from each course instructor demonstrating support of the student being permanently accepted into the program. Students admitted with an undergraduate GPA below 3.0 are automatically assigned provisional status by the graduate school.

## **Professional Communication Expectations**

The department expects all graduate students to behave professionally in the classroom (on-campus and virtual), around departmental offices, and at department and university-sponsored events. Thanks to a technologically savvy, social media-centered culture, students should also be aware that they are representatives of NMSU and the Department of Sociology even when they are not in classes, on university property, or engaging in graduate program duties. Online photos, discussions, comments, and the like reflect on both the student as well as the university. Students should actively engage in professional communication on the telephone, in person, and over email between faculty, staff, and fellow students. Graduate students are advised to report any issues, concerns, conflicts, experiences with hostility, harassment, or inappropriate interactions within the department directly to the Department Head.

## **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

All students shall uphold the New Mexico State University's Student Code of Conduct, "Students at NMSU have an obligation to uphold the laws of the larger community of which they are a part." Therefore, incidences of academic dishonesty, collusion, and plagiarism in the thesis will not be tolerated. Plagiarism refers to appropriating excerpts from websites, books, journal articles, etc. without proper in-text citation referring to the original source of the material. For further clarification on what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to NMSU's library website: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

Students are held to the NMSU Graduate Catalogue's policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and plagiarism. When violations of academic honesty occur in sociology graduate courses, thesis proposals, defenses, and comprehensive exams, the sociology graduate committee shall review such cases in tandem with the Department Head. Faculty are strongly encouraged to write a memo to the graduate committee documenting violations of academic dishonesty in any sociology graduate courses at NMSU.

## **Ethical Research Conduct**

Graduate students who conduct empirical research while at NMSU shall uphold the New Mexico State University's standards for responsible research. Therefore, incidences of unethical or dishonest behavior while designing or engaging in research will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the program. Students are responsible for obtaining Responsible Conduct on Research Education training (<http://research.nmsu.edu/rcr>) and must comply with research regulation monitored by the Research Office of Compliance. Students are also responsible for obtaining approval from NMSU's Institutional Review Board for involvement in any original or collaborative research projects.

Graduate students in the Department of Sociology are ultimately responsible for upholding specific ethical standards as established through the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics: maintaining professional competence; behaving with integrity in research, teaching, practice, and service; upholding professional and scientific responsibility; maintaining respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity; and engaging in application and service with regard to social responsibility.

## **Graduate Minor**

The Sociology MA program, with the permission of the graduate advisor, allows for an approved graduate minor. A minimum of 9 credits of graduate work is necessary for a minor at the master's level. Please access the most current graduate catalogue for a list of approved minors and consult with the minor department for specific requirements. To record a minor on a student's permanent record, the minor must be listed on the "Application for Admission to Candidacy" and this form must be signed by the head of the department offering the minor program. For sociology graduate students pursuing a thesis, either the Dean's Representative or additional committee member must come from the minor department in forming the thesis committee. Minors are suggested only for those students who demonstrate a clear academic and/or career need that can be met with a particular minor.

## **NMSU General Policies for Graduate Students**

The NMSU Graduate Catalogue has detailed policies regarding adding/dropping courses, auditing courses, substitutions and waivers, challenging graduate courses, changes in registration, residency requirements, leaves of absence, appeals, student behavior, and general requirements for all graduate students enrolled at New Mexico State University. Please access the most current graduate catalogue for general policies on graduate students online at: <http://catalog.nmsu.edu/>.

## **Leave of Absence / Readmission Policy**

The Graduate School has specific policies regarding leaves of absence and readmission. Usually, students who have extenuating circumstances are able to apply for up to one year of absence, provided the student requests the leave of absence in writing. A graduate student who fails to register for one calendar year without obtaining a leave of absence from the Graduate School will be considered withdrawn from the university.

The Department of Sociology requires that any student who wishes to remain in the program but who does not intend on registering for classes for one or more semesters must write a formal letter (email will not be accepted) to the Director of Graduate Studies or Department Head requesting a leave of absence from a beginning date to an anticipated end date, and include the reasons for the period of absence. Departmental policy allows for leaves of absence up to two consecutive semesters. After two semesters, the student must formally reapply to the program based on current application procedures and deadlines.

Students who have not formally requested a leave of absence but have not been registered in classes for over two semesters must reapply to both the Graduate School as well as the Department of Sociology. Readmission into the Graduate School does not guarantee readmission into the Department of Sociology. If more than two semesters have passed since a student has enrolled in sociology courses, the student must reapply to the sociology graduate program based on current departmental application procedures and deadlines.

The graduate program leading to the master's degree must be completed within seven years (or eight successive summers) including completion of the master's thesis or comprehensive exam. Any coursework more than seven years old at the time of the thesis defense or comprehensive exam will not be used toward the degree.

## **Graduate Student Forms**

All Graduate School forms (*Application for Degree, Examination Fee Form, Request for Transfer of Credit, Thesis/Dissertation Intake, Degree Audit Exception, Course Exception, STAR Degree Audit*) are available on the Graduate School website: <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/graduate-forms/>.

All Department of Sociology forms (*Graduate Student Progress Report, Comprehensive Exam Registration Form, Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form, Graduate Assistant Application Form, Graduate Assistant/Faculty Contract Agreement, Change of Advisor Form*) are available in the department's administrative office, through the Director of Graduate Studies, and on the Department of Sociology Graduate Program website.

## **Transfer of Credit**

A student may transfer up to 9 total graduate credits taken at NMSU and/or graduate credits from another university to New Mexico State University (which the Department of Sociology recognizes), provided the credits were earned on the campus of an accredited institution and not used to obtain another degree. Up to 6 credits earned from a second master's degree at NMSU may count toward the Sociology degree if the credits fulfill a 500-level sociology elective. Students may not transfer any credits to be used to fulfill the core course requirements for the program (SOC 501, 551, 552, 553) as these courses are the basis for the comprehensive exam structure at NMSU. "Request for Transfer of Credit" forms are available from the NMSU Graduate School.

## **Funding Opportunities**

The Graduate School offers awards, assistantships, and fellowships to qualified graduate students. All awards require faculty nominations. For more information, please visit the Graduate School website:

<http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/gradschool/announcements.html> The College of Arts and Sciences offers travel funds for graduate student research, conferences, etc. For more information, please visit the College of Arts and Sciences website: <http://artsci.nmsu.edu>

## **Graduate Assistantships**

The Department awards 5-6 Graduate Assistantships (GAs) each year to new and current on-campus students. Graduate Assistants can be funded for up to four semesters, and are usually employed for 10-hours a week. Certain fellowships and tuition waivers are available through the Graduate School that are associated with GAships in the department. Please access the Graduate School webpage for a detailed list of opportunities. These applications are due in early March during the admission process. If you believe you are eligible please notify the Director of Graduate Studies.

Prospective students interested in a GAship should fill out a "Graduate Assistant Application Form" when applying to the Department of Sociology for admission. While current Graduate Assistants do not need to reapply for future GAships, please note that renewal of a GAship is not guaranteed.

The Department considers a number of factors in awarding and renewing GAships, such as a graduate student's overall GPA, graduate coursework, professional conduct, progress toward degree completion, faculty evaluations of GA work and effort, number of outstanding incompletes, thesis proposal approval, and comprehensive exam timeline.

The Director of Graduate Studies works with the Department Head to award GAships, allocate hours, and assign GAs to faculty within the department each semester. GA assignments may stay the same from semester to semester, or they may change based on the needs of the department, faculty, or GA.

## **Graduate Assistantship Responsibilities and Duties**

NMSU requires that all Graduate Assistants complete a university-wide orientation, which is usually administered online by the Graduate School. The Department of Sociology also requires all Graduate Assistants participate in a departmental GA training session, held by the Director of Graduate Studies. Failure to participate in both these orientation training sessions may result in a student losing a GAship.

Graduate Assistantships start the week before classes and end when final grades are turned in (usually the Tuesday after finals week). GAs must be geographically present to begin the semester as of the official faculty/GA report date,

and are responsible for contacting the faculty member to initiate a meeting before classes begin. GAs must also be geographically present at the end of the semester until grades are turned in and the faculty member no longer needs the GA to complete course duties.

Graduate Assistants are required to complete a "Faculty/Graduate Assistant Contract" with their assigned faculty member at the start of each new semester. This will allow both the student and the faculty member to exchange contact information, clarify expectations, and resolve any issues before classes begin. Contracts must be turned in to the Director of Graduate Studies by the end of the second week of classes.

The norms for each GA are different since the expectations and needs of each faculty are different. The faculty to whom the GA is assigned should discuss the requirements of the position while completing the faculty/graduate assistant contract. All GAs in the Department of Sociology are expected to:

- Provide instructional support for faculty
- Grade assignments, exams, and papers
- Hold at least 1 office hour per week
- Be present in class/lecture (as requested)
- Tutor students
- Proctor exams (as requested)
- Serve as a conduit between students and the professor
- Attend to bureaucratic responsibilities in a timely manner
- Set a positive example for others
- Complete contracts with assigned faculty
- Experience an evaluation process each semester
- Be the best graduate student possible

# REQUIREMENTS FOR MA SOCIOLOGY STUDENTS

## On-Campus Thesis Track

**Required Core Coursework:**

SOC 501: Perspectives on Sociology (3 cr.)  
SOC 551: Quantitative Analysis (3 cr.)  
SOC 552: Classical Sociological Theory (3 cr.)  
SOC 553: Sociological Research (3 cr.)

**Required Thesis Credits:**

SOC 599: Master's Thesis (6 cr.)

**Elective Credits:**

18 credits in 500 level sociology courses

**M.A. Completion Requirements:**

Successful defense of an acceptable master's thesis.

## On-Campus Comprehensive Exam Track

**Required Core Coursework:**

SOC 501: Perspectives on Sociology (3 cr.)  
SOC 551: Quantitative Analysis (3 cr.)  
SOC 552: Classical Sociological Theory (3 cr.)  
SOC 553: Sociological Research (3 cr.)

**Elective Credits:**

24 credits in 500 level sociology courses

**M.A. Completion Requirements:**

Successful passing of a final master's written examination on required coursework.

## Online Comprehensive Exam Track

**Required Core Coursework:**

SOC 501: Perspectives on Sociology (3 cr.)  
SOC 551: Quantitative Analysis (3 cr.)  
SOC 552: Classical Sociological Theory (3 cr.)  
SOC 553: Sociological Research (3 cr.)

**Elective Credits:**

24 credits in 500 level sociology courses

**M.A. Completion Requirements:**

Successful passing of a final master's written examination on required coursework.

## Important Deadlines for Master's Students

Below is a list of important departmental and university deadlines. These deadlines are the responsibility of the student, and should be discussed with the student's advisor and/or thesis chair when necessary. Specific university dates and deadlines are updated annually and can be found on the Graduate School website.

### THESIS TRACK DEADLINES (all forms are indicated in *bold italics*)

- 1) File the ***Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form*** by October 31st to be considered for Spring/Summer thesis defense, or by April 30<sup>th</sup> to be considered for Fall thesis defense. This form is completed during the Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Meeting and filed with the Department of Sociology.
- 2) File for graduation using the ***Application for Degree*** with the registrar's office (myNMSU) within one week of starting the final semester of study.
- 3) File the ***Master's Final Examination Form*** at least 10 working days before the thesis defense with Graduate Student Services. Verify thesis defense deadlines by semester/academic year with the Graduate School.
- 4) Hold the thesis defense by the deadline established through the Graduate School.
- 5) Complete the ***Thesis Intake Form*** to submit with the thesis for review to the Graduate School.
- 6) Submit three required copies of the thesis to the Branson Library by the deadline set through the Graduate School.
- 7) Submit one required copy of the thesis to the Department of Sociology by the last day of finals in the graduating semester.
- 8) Complete a ***STAR Degree Audit*** verifying that all departmental and university requirements have been satisfied.

### COMPREHENSIVE EXAM TRACK DEADLINES (all forms are indicated in *bold italics*)

- 1) File the ***Comprehensive Exam Registration Form*** at the beginning of the exam semester, and no later than one month prior to the exam date. This form is filed with the Department of Sociology. The Master's Final Examination Form is not needed for the Comprehensive Written Exam.
- 2) If not enrolled in at least 1 credit during the exam semester, file the ***Examination Fee Form*** and pay the fee no later than one month prior to the exam date with Graduate Student Services.
- 3) Complete a ***STAR Degree Audit*** verifying that all departmental and university requirements have been satisfied.

## **II. MASTER'S THESIS TRACK PROCEDURES**

The master's thesis is an original research project conducted under the supervision of a faculty committee. In most cases, a master's thesis is equivalent to an article published in a scholarly journal. Thesis track students may benefit from accessing the department's Sociology Reading List as a first step in thinking about key sociological inquiries.

There are several steps involved with the Thesis Track. First, a student secures a thesis chair, and then works with the chair to form a thesis committee. Next, the student works with the chair and committee to write a thesis proposal, which involves a rationale for conducting the proposed research and details the intended research design. Third, the student holds a "Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Meeting" to obtain committee approval for conducting the research. Finally, the student completes the research and writing of the thesis, and subsequently holds a "Master's Thesis Defense" to finalize the thesis and complete the requirements for the Master's Degree in Sociology through the department and the university.

### **Master's Thesis Chair and Committee**

A student should ideally choose a thesis chair by the end of the first semester of study. The thesis chair must be considered graduate faculty through the university, as well as be tenure-track faculty in the Department of Sociology. In some cases, a student may have co-chairs, but only as necessitated by the research or mitigating circumstance. The master's degree committee must consist of a minimum of three members. The thesis chair serves as the committee chair, and the second committee member must also be graduate faculty but can either be tenure-track or college-track faculty in the Department of Sociology. A third member serves as the Graduate School Dean's Representative, and must be from a different department. The Dean's Representative ensures that the Graduate School policies and procedures are followed throughout the thesis process. Although the Dean's Representative is not required to participate in the thesis proposal meeting, if feasible, it is recommended. If the student has an approved graduate minor, either the Dean's Representative or an additional committee member must come from the minor department. A student may elect to have more than (but not fewer than) three thesis committee members.

The thesis chair works with a graduate student toward proposal approval and thesis defense. A thesis chair ultimately directs the student's research activities, such as: choosing a topic, initial research design, suggestions for further reading, developing a theoretical foundation, completing the IRB process, providing critical feedback on emerging analysis and scholarly writing, and guiding both the proposal and defense process. A student is responsible for initiating a timeline with the thesis chair, and the chair should work with the student as much as possible to adhere to the timeline. Thesis chairs are not responsible for writing a graduate student's thesis, proofreading, or investing more time and energy into the thesis than does the student. Thesis chairs are not responsible for student work during the summer months, therefore it is important to plan for any defense meetings, writing progress, and mentorship to occur during the academic year.

It is important to recognize that faculty do have different mentorship styles; therefore it is the student's responsibility to choose a thesis chair who will provide the ideal context for thesis completion based on compatible working/mentorship styles. Students should also be aware of a faculty member's plans for sabbatical leave in choosing a thesis chair.

### **Master's Thesis Proposal**

The purpose of a thesis proposal is to provide a clear and concise formal description of the proposed study, as well as indicate the study's scholarly and sociological significance. A proposal serves as a "contract" between the student and committee members regarding the nature and scope of the study. Proposals usually take two to four months to write, and range in length (although the average final proposal document is about 15-20 pages). The proposal usually

develops through several drafts, with guidance from the thesis chair and committee members. The student is responsible for giving the final proposal draft to the committee at least 14 days before the proposal approval meeting. The student is also responsible for obtaining the “Master’s Thesis Proposal Approval Form” from the Department of Sociology, completing the student information, and bringing the form to the thesis proposal approval meeting.

The thesis proposal must be successfully approved at least one semester before the actual thesis is defended. The Department has established an internal proposal approval deadline of October 31<sup>st</sup> in order for the student to be considered for Spring/Summer thesis defense, or by April 30<sup>th</sup> to be considered for Fall thesis defense. If a student does not meet the deadline to hold a thesis proposal approval meeting, the student may 1) risk jeopardizing the renewal of a GAship the following semester, and/or 2) be forced to take the written comprehensive exam instead of completing a thesis, as per the department’s expectations of a student making adequate progress toward degree completion. In some cases, a student may petition in writing the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Department Head for special consideration should the thesis proposal approval deadline not be met.

During the thesis proposal approval meeting, the student will present a formal 10-15 minute talk on the proposed research. The committee will then discuss the proposal through questions and comments before making a committee decision to either: *approve the thesis proposal*, *approve the thesis proposal contingent on recommended modifications*, or *not approve the thesis proposal*. If a student’s thesis proposal is approved, the student can then begin the thesis research. If a student’s thesis proposal is approved contingent on recommended modifications, the student’s thesis chair will summarize the required modifications and set a date with the student to finish the modifications and obtain approval before commencing the thesis research. If a student’s thesis proposal is not approved, the student will work with the committee to find resolution in rewriting the proposal or consider the comprehensive exam in lieu of writing a thesis. Thesis proposal meetings usually last between 1-2 hours, and are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

The thesis proposal must be approved before an application is submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval of research using human subjects. The student must have approval from IRB before engaging in any data collection or data analysis with human subjects. There are rarely IRB exceptions for sociological research, and the student is responsible for ensuring the thesis research receives IRB approval and notifying the thesis chair that IRB approval has been obtained.

### **Thesis Proposal Structure**

The structure for the thesis proposal may vary in format and organization, depending on the student’s research questions, hypotheses, theoretical/research orientations, and overall intent. Some theses chairs have additional, specific requirements for what is included in a thesis proposal document. However, the department expects that the following elements be present in all proposals. It is customary to utilize section headings throughout the actual thesis proposal (with the exception of the title page):

#### ***Title Page (1 page)***

The title page should have an appropriate title for the master’s thesis that reflects the specific nature of the proposed study. It should also have the student’s contact information, as well as the names of the committee members.

#### ***Introduction (2-3 pages)***

The overall goal of a thesis proposal is to describe a specific, interesting, and feasible research problem, and then explain how the research problem will be addressed through the student’s efforts. In the introduction, the general topic is presented and its sociological relevance noted. Introduce the specific scope of the research, and address the overall research question, actual research questions, and/or hypotheses. Also note what data will be used to address the research questions/hypotheses. Conceptual definitions of key terms could be presented in this section. The introduction

sometimes includes a discussion of the theoretical perspective(s) that will be taken (if it will not be addressed in the literature review). Briefly introduce the research methods and provide a sort of map of the thesis proposal...what will come first, second, third, etc.

### ***Literature Review*** (5-7 pages)

This section should be a well-organized overview of the research most closely related to the thesis. This may include dominant debates, theoretical approaches, a history of previous research on the problem/issue, and methodological research designs used by others. If the theoretical perspective(s) that will be taken in the thesis are not discussed in the introduction, include them in this section. Address the existing sociological research on the proposed topic or question, noting how the thesis will contribute to the literature. This section should demonstrate the student's familiarity with what research has already been done in the area and it should be constructed in a way that draws on sociological language and context. Literature reviews are often divided into sections or subsections based on the thesis research questions and/or hypotheses, or relevant themes/debates in the literature. Make sure to explicitly tie the literature to the research problem the thesis intends to address.

### ***The Research Problem / Research Questions / Hypotheses*** (1-2 pages)

This section may be included in some capacity throughout the literature review, or may stand on its own in presenting in detail the overall research problem, followed by the study's research questions, hypotheses, and/or study's purpose/aim/rationale. This section may also include the main argument of the proposed thesis. It is important to have research questions/hypotheses that are framed sociologically and can be addressed in the course of a one-year research project.

### ***Methodology*** (5-7 pages)

Although this section may vary depending on overall research design, it is probably the most important component of the thesis proposal. The goal is to specify the proposed methodological approach for addressing **how** the study will address the research questions and/or hypotheses. Using future tense, explain in detail (step by step) the research process from inception to finish. How will the data be gathered? Who is the sample, and how will it be obtained? How will access to the sample be gained? How will research sites be chosen? What incentives will be used, and how will consent be obtained? Use appropriate terminology to describe the sampling process. How many surveys will be administered or interviews conducted? What kinds of questions will be asked during the interview or on the survey? How will the interviews be recorded and transcribed? How will the data be coded? What kind of statistical program will be used to analyze the data? Be very specific, thorough, and detailed in the description of the methodology. Make sure to also include the limitations of the proposed study. All research has some sort of limitations; it is better to acknowledge them and explain why the study is still important to complete. Also, include any ethical concerns. How will voluntary participation be ensured? How will informed consent be obtained and how will the confidentiality and safety of the research subjects be ensured? How will the data be stored? When will IRB be obtained? Acknowledge the budget (if applicable) and required resources in this section. Also, it may be appropriate in the section (depending on the research) to acknowledge one's positionality; especially when employing feminist methodologies.

### ***Timeline*** (1-page)

Provide a reasonable timeline with key deadlines for data collection, analysis, and completion of writing the thesis. This may also be provided as a figure, table, or chart. Consider the departmental and university deadlines for thesis filing, defense, and completion, as well as graduation deadlines from the Graduate School. Be realistic about the timeline!

### ***Preliminary Results/Discussion or Expected Findings*** (1-3 pages)

This section may be relevant if there is a pilot study associated with the thesis, or preliminary data has already been collected. Use this section to present the preliminary data/results, and discuss how the thesis will build up, extend, rectify, or engage the preliminary results.

### **Conclusion** (1-2 pages)

Briefly recap the thesis proposal (the research problem, research questions/hypotheses, proposed methodology) and reference the research's sociological and general significance. Articulate again the proposed argument of the thesis, if applicable, and address any expectations with the data. Acknowledge expected findings and how the thesis will contribute to sociology as a discipline.

### **Works Cited** (2-4 pages)

List all sources that are cited throughout the thesis proposal. Follow the guidelines of the American Sociological Association in formatting the works cited. The reference list for the thesis proposal usually ranges from 25-50 sources.

### **Appendix** (1+ pages)

Include all research tools, such as surveys, interview guides, consent forms, coding categories, and other details about data sources. Include any additional tables, graphs, or charts referred to in the proposal. In some cases, the timeline for the thesis research is included in the appendix and referred to in the body of the proposal.

### **General Considerations in Writing the Thesis Proposal**

Proposals should be typed with an appropriate font, double-spaced, and use 1" margins. In writing every sentence and paragraph, consider both its relevance to the overall research problem as well as what purpose it serves in the proposal. Make sure each section is clearly written, uses future tense, and successfully serves its purpose. Also, consider how what is written fits into the overall proposal's argument and development. Provide roadmaps throughout each section, as well as write transitions between sections. First person language is perfectly acceptable, especially in the methods section.

### **Master's Thesis Defense**

A student will work with the thesis chair and committee to determine when the thesis is ready for defense. The student must demonstrate at the thesis defense that the research project approved at the proposal stage has been successfully completed to the satisfaction of the thesis chair and committee members. The thesis defense should ideally be pro forma, in that the thesis committee will have all seen and had the opportunity to comment on drafts of the thesis before the defense. The student may be asked to make revisions to the thesis at the defense, which are normally minor changes, before submitting final copies of the thesis to the department and university. Students are responsible for giving the final thesis draft to the committee at least 14 days before the thesis defense.

The thesis proposal serves as the overall format for writing the actual master's thesis. All components of the proposal should be represented in some capacity in the actual thesis. There are also specific formatting guidelines established through the Graduate School. Students should access examples of other students' theses, work with the thesis chair and committee to formulate an appropriate thesis structure, and recognize that the average thesis is roughly 60-80 pages.

When the thesis is ready to defend, the student will file the "Master's Final Examination Form" with Graduate Student Services at least 10 working days before the intended defense date. The student will report the name and email address of the Dean's Representative on the final examination form. The Dean's Representative will then receive the necessary paperwork and will bring it to the defense. Keep in mind that the Graduate School has deadlines for when students can defend throughout the academic year. Make sure to consult with the Graduate School concerning these deadlines. On occasion, students who plan on completing the thesis in spring semester may opt for a summer completion date in order to have a few more weeks to finalize the defense and perform edits to the thesis.

During the thesis defense, the student will present a formal 15-30 minute talk on the thesis research. The committee will then discuss the thesis through questions and comments before making a committee decision to either: *approve the*

*thesis, approve the thesis contingent on recommended modifications, or not approve the thesis.* If a student's thesis is approved, the student can finalize the process for graduation. If a student's thesis is approved contingent on recommended modifications, the student's thesis chair will summarize the required modifications and set a date with the student to finish the modifications before finalizing the process for graduation. If a student's thesis is not approved, the student will work with the committee to find resolution in rewriting the thesis or consider the comprehensive exam in lieu of the thesis. Thesis defenses usually last between 1-2 hours, and are open to anyone who wishes to attend.

When the thesis is finalized, the student will complete the "Thesis Intake Form" and submit it with a copy of the thesis for review to the Graduate School. The student is also responsible for submitting three required copies of the thesis to the Branson Library by the deadline set through the Graduate School, as well as submitting one required copy of the thesis to the Department of Sociology by the last day of finals in the graduating semester. It is customary for a graduate student to present a bound copy of the thesis to the thesis chair upon successful completion of the degree.

The Department of Sociology may hold a colloquium at the end of fall or spring semester for those students who are in the process of defending their theses. If a colloquium is held, students are requested to present a conference-style talk on their thesis research for the department.

### **Policies on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism for the Master's Thesis**

The department encourages graduate students to develop and implement an original research project for the Master's Thesis. In doing so, the department insists that all students uphold the New Mexico State University's Student Code of Conduct, "Students at NMSU have an obligation to uphold the laws of the larger community of which they are a part." Therefore, incidences of academic dishonesty, collusion, and plagiarism in the thesis will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism refers to appropriating excerpts from websites, books, journal articles, etc. without proper in-text citation referring to the original source of the material. For further clarification on what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to NMSU's library website: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

Further, a student should not represent another faculty's or fellow student's work or ideas without appropriate citation in the thesis proposal, research design, or actual thesis document. If a student's thesis proposal or final Master's Thesis contains plagiarized material, the student may be removed from the program without the option to complete the degree.

### **III. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM TRACK PROCEDURES**

The comprehensive exam is intended for those on-campus students who are not completing a thesis, as well as all online students. The exam is intended for students to demonstrate successful synthesis of all coursework, knowledge and skills gained throughout the program. The comprehensive exam focuses on assessing student learning in three core areas: sociological theory, research methods, and quantitative analysis (statistics). The comprehensive exam is held twice per academic year; in October during fall semester and in March during spring semester. The exam is not offered during summer. The general process for the comprehensive exam involves a student completing the required core courses with a B- or better, completing all readings on the required reading list, registering for the exam through the department, and finally taking the exam.

#### **Comprehensive Exam Basis**

Once a student has successfully (a grade of B- or better earned) completed the core courses (SOC 501, SOC 551, SOC 552, SOC 553), the student is able to register for the comprehensive exam. Please note that students must complete all core courses with NMSU in order to be eligible to take the comprehensive exam. This may or may not be the last semester of the program.

#### **Characteristics of the Exam**

The exam is held over a four day period (usually Thursday through Sunday) and is executed entirely online for all students (both on-campus and online) in the comprehensive exam track. The dates for the comprehensive exam vary depending on the semester. Exams are usually held the third weekend in October for fall semester, and the first weekend in March for the spring semester. At the beginning of each semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will email all graduate students announcing the Comprehensive Exam dates and registration window. It is vital that students use NMSU email as this is the only method of communication the department uses to announce department particulars, such as for the comprehensive exam. This is especially important for students in the online program.

Once the exams have been announced, students who plan to take the exam will file a "Comprehensive Exam Registration Form" with the Director of Graduate Studies no later than one month prior to the exam date. The registration form can be found in the department or on the department's graduate student website. Note that this is a departmental form. There is NOT an official form necessary for the Graduate School or Graduate Student Services in order to take the comprehensive exam.

A student must be registered and enrolled for at least 1 credit hour during the exam semester. If not enrolled, the student must file an "Examination Fee Form" and pay the fee no later than one month prior to the exam date with Graduate Student Services.

#### **Comprehensive Exam Details**

The Director of Graduate Studies will email the exam questions in the form of a single Word document at 8:00am (mst) on the Thursday of exam week. Students will reply to the email that they have received the exam questions. Students then have four consecutive days to complete their responses to the questions, and must email their exams back to the Director of Graduate Studies by 8:00pm (mst) on the Sunday of exam week. The exam is not considered complete until the student receives email confirmation that the exam responses have been received.

Each student will receive guidelines on what is expected in order to answer all exam questions. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the guidelines in order to pass the exam. While the exam is administered in a four-day block, each set of questions should really take no more than 3-5 hours to complete. Students have flexibility in terms of when they can complete the questions throughout the four-day block, as personal/professional responsibilities may arise. However, all exams must be completed and emailed to the Exam Administrator by the deadline.

### **Preparing for the Comprehensive Exam**

While individual faculty may, at times, assist in preparing for the exam, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to prepare for the exam. Preparation requires responsible and dedicated independent study; it is the student's interest to retain syllabi, lecture notes, assignments, and readings from the core classes and electives completed within the department. These generally provide valuable reference material in preparing for the comprehensive exam. Students are encouraged to form study groups and work with fellow graduate students to prepare for the exam. This can happen between all students, regardless of on campus or online program status.

Students who have registered for the exam will receive a study guide via email at least one month before the exam is scheduled to begin. The study guide is meant to give the student direction on the type of questions asked on the exam, and is not meant to be an exhaustive list of actual exam questions. Further, the study guide is not meant to limit the student's preparation to only the questions/examples/information provided.

### **Comprehensive Exam Grading Procedures**

There are three sections to the comprehensive exam: sociological theory, research methods, quantitative analysis (statistics). Each student must write a passing response to all questions for each of the three sections. Each section of the exam is graded as either: *pass with distinction*, *pass*, or *not pass*.

The Director of Graduate Studies works with specific faculty to grade the exams over a two-week period. Exams are blind-graded by two Sociology faculty for each section of the exam. Students must receive a passing grade for each exam section from both faculty.

Students will be notified individually via email within a two-week period after completing the exam whether the exam has been passed with distinction, passed, or not passed. In the event that a student receives a "not pass" grade on any section of the exam, the student will be given a one-time option to rewrite the exam section. The student will be notified by the Exam Administrator what section(s) have not been passed, and will arrange a 48-hour timeframe for the student to rewrite the section(s) of the exam. If the student does not receive a passing grade for the rewrite, the student must take a new exam for the section(s) during the next regularly scheduled comprehensive exam. If the student receives a "not pass" grade once again, the student will be required to retake the relevant core course(s) before retaking the section(s) of the comprehensive exam not passed. There are several reasons for receiving a "not pass" grade: failure to directly address the question(s) asked, failure to answer each part of the question(s), incorrect use of terms and concepts, failure to illustrate depth or comprehension in formulating a response, inadequate use of materials and/or sources.

If a student does not attempt to answer a section of the comprehensive exam (theory, methods, statistics), the section is considered not passed. Per grading procedures, the student will be given a one-time option to rewrite the exam section during the next regularly scheduled comprehensive exam. If a student does not attempt a second time to answer a section of the comprehensive exam, the section is considered not passed and the student may be removed from the program without degree completion.

The Director of Graduate Studies will notify the registrar's office when a student has passed the comprehensive exam. This serves as the official notification process for the university that the student has completed the final exam requirement for the Master's Degree in sociology. The student's final obligation is to run a STAR degree report to verify that all remaining requirements have been completed in order to graduate.

### **Policies on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism for the Comprehensive Exam**

The department encourages students to refer to and utilize course materials, notes, and readings accrued during the completion of relevant coursework in formulating responses to the comprehensive exam questions. Further, preparation for the exam may occur in tandem with other students, such as with study groups. However, the department insists that all students uphold the New Mexico State University's Student Code of Conduct, "Students at NMSU have an obligation to uphold the laws of the larger community of which they are a part." Therefore, incidences of academic dishonesty, collusion, and plagiarism on the comprehensive exam will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism refers to appropriating excerpts from websites, books, journal articles, etc. without proper in-text citation referring to the original source of the material. For further clarification on what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to NMSU's library website: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

Further, a student should not represent another student's work as a valid response for any exam question. Additional resources used to answer any exam question are strongly discouraged as the comprehensive exam is directly related to the core courses and sociology reading list from the NMSU Department of Sociology. If a student's response contains plagiarized material, or if a student has collaborated with another student in any way during the four-day exam period, the student(s) will fail the entire exam and may be removed from the program without the option to complete the degree. It is expected that students taking the exam will consult with NO ONE, either professors or fellow graduate students, on any questions or issues relevant to exam content during the four-day examination period. Further, clarification of exam questions should be directed via email to the Exam Administrator.

## GRADUATE MINOR IN SOCIOLOGY

### **Sociology Graduate Minor (Sociology Non-Majors)**

The Department of Sociology offers a Graduate Minor in Sociology to graduate students in other departments on campus at NMSU. For the minor in Sociology, students are required to complete 9 credits (3 courses) of graduate-level Sociology coursework. One course must be a core graduate Sociology course (Sociology 551, 552, 553), and the remaining two courses must be elective Sociology courses (Sociology 530, 548, 550, 554, 555, 556, 558, 559, 560, 565, 569, 570, 571, 572, 574, 575, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 589). To record a minor on a student's permanent record, the minor must be listed on the "Application for Admission to Candidacy" and this form must be signed by the Department of Sociology Head.

At this time, the Sociology Graduate Minor is only offered to on campus students enrolled at NMSU.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Complete one course (3 credits) from the following:**

- SOC 551: Research Analysis (Statistics)
- SOC 552: Sociological Theory
- SOC 553: Sociological Research (Methods)

#### **Complete two courses (6 credits) from the following:**

- SOC 530: Social Movement Theory
- SOC 548: Special Topics (varies)
- SOC 550: Qualitative Research Methods
- SOC 554: Multiple Research Methods
- SOC 555: Applied Evaluation
- SOC 556: Survey Research Methods
- SOC 558: Sociology of the Family
- SOC 559: Sex and Gender
- SOC 560: Sociology of Religion
- SOC 565: Environmental Sociology
- SOC 569: Issues in Sexualities
- SOC 570: Sociology of Latinos/as in the U.S.
- SOC 571: Race and Ethnic Relations
- SOC 572: Issues in Medical Sociology
- SOC 574: Sociology of Organizations
- SOC 575: Social Stratification
- SOC 577: Sociology of Education
- SOC 578: Sociology of Development and World System
- SOC 579: Perspectives on U.S.-Mexico Border
- SOC 580: Diversity in Alternative Families
- SOC 581: Social Deviance
- SOC 582: Individual and Society
- SOC 589: Issues in Globalization

## CHECKLIST FOR SOCIOLOGY MA STUDENTS: THESIS TRACK

### Complete by the end of the first or second semester of study:

- Select a Thesis Chair
- Select a Thesis Committee
- Finalize a thesis topic

### Complete by the end of the second or third semester of study:

- Write the Master's Thesis Proposal
- Hold the Master's Thesis Approval Meeting (Departmental deadline: October 31<sup>st</sup> or April 30<sup>th</sup>)
- File the **Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form** after the approval meeting (Department requirement)

### Complete by the end of the fourth semester of study:

- Implement and complete data collection, analysis, and all writing for the thesis
- Complete all required core courses (SOC 501, 551, 552, 553)
- Complete 6 credits of SOC 599
- Complete 18 credits of additional graduate electives

### Complete in the final semester of study:

- Verify that all transfers of credit, course substitutions, and waivers have been applied to the degree audit
- Verify that a minor has been filed and all requirements have been satisfied for the graduate minor (if applicable)
- File the **Application for Degree** with the registrar's office (myNMSU) within one week of starting the final semester of study (Graduate School requirement)
- Complete all components of the thesis and arrange with the thesis chair and committee for a defense
- File the **Master's Final Examination Form** at least 10 working days before the thesis defense with Graduate Student Services (verify defense deadlines by semester/academic year) (Graduate School requirement)
- Hold the Thesis Defense by the Graduate School deadline
- Complete the **Thesis Intake Form** to submit with the thesis for review (Graduate School requirement)
- Submit 3 thesis copies to the Branson Library by the deadline set through the Graduate School
- Submit 1 thesis copy to the Department of Sociology by the last day of finals (Department requirement)
- Submit 1 bound thesis copy to the Thesis Chair before leaving NMSU (Departmental requirement)
- Complete a **STAR Degree Audit** verifying all departmental and university requirements have been met
- Return all NMSU issued keys, property, and resources to the Department of Sociology

## CHECKLIST FOR SOCIOLOGY MA STUDENTS: COMPREHENSIVE EXAM TRACK

### Complete by the end of the first semester of study:

- Secure an advisor and verify with the Director of Graduate Studies

### Complete by the end of the third semester (full time) or fourth semester (part-time) of study:

- Complete all required core courses (SOC 501, 551, 552, 553)
- Decide when the comprehensive exam will be taken (Fall semester in October or Spring semester in March)

### Complete in the exam semester (not necessarily the final semester) of study:

- File the **Comprehensive Exam Registration Form** at the beginning of the exam semester, and no later than one month prior to the exam date (Departmental requirement)
- Be enrolled in at least 1 credit hour, or pay an exam fee and file the **Examination Fee Form** no later than one month prior to the exam date with the Graduate School (Graduate School requirement)
- Take the comprehensive exam and pass all sections

### Complete by the final semester of study:

- Complete 24 credits of additional graduate electives
- Verify that all transfers of credit, course substitutions, and waivers have been applied to the degree audit
- Verify that a minor has been filed and all requirements have been satisfied for the graduate minor (if applicable)
- Complete a **STAR Degree Audit** verifying all departmental and university requirements have been met
- Return all NMSU issued keys, property, and resources to the Department of Sociology

## GRADUATE STUDENT FORMS

These are the typical forms used for the Department of Sociology and NMSU's Graduate School for graduate students.

PLEASE NOTE: The Department of Sociology and Graduate School websites and offices will have the most recent versions of required forms. It is the student's responsibility to obtain correct, up to date forms as needed. Not all forms are needed for each graduate student, and it is the student's responsibility to ensure all forms are appropriate, up to date, and correctly filed for completion of the Master's Degree.

### **Department of Sociology Forms:**

- Graduate Student Progress Report
- Comprehensive Exam Registration Form
- Master's Thesis Proposal Approval Form
- Graduate Assistant/Faculty Contract Agreement
- Faculty Evaluation of GA Service Form
- Change of Advisor Form

### **NMSU Graduate School Forms:**

- Application for Degree (must complete through online system)
- Examination Fee Form
- Request for Transfer of Credit Form
- Program of Study (only used to indicate minor area of study)
- Thesis/Dissertation Intake Form
- Degree Audit Exception Form
- Course Exception Form
- Master's Final Examination Form
- STAR Degree Audit (must complete through online system)