

GUIDE TO GRADUATE STUDY

INTERDEPARTMENTAL GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND AUBURN UNIVERSITY AT MONTGOMERY

Overview

The Masters degree in Sociology is offered as an Interdepartmental Program between the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work (College of Liberal Arts, AU), the Department of Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology (College of Agriculture, AU), and the Department of Sociology (AUM). The Program is administered by three Co-Directors, one from each Department.

Admissions Requirements

The Graduate School at Auburn University and our Interdepartmental Program in Sociology welcomes applications from serious students. Auburn University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer/equal opportunity educational institution.

Admission to our Program involves two steps: (1) application to the Graduate School, and (2) review of the application by the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee. Application information and forms may be downloaded or obtained directly from the:

Graduate School
Hargis Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849-5122
Phone: (334) 844-4700
Web: <http://www.grad.auburn.edu>

The Graduate School requires that applicants take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and provide all transcripts from all college or university work. These should be sent directly to the Graduate School. Three letters of recommendation from references who can comment on your likely success as a graduate student in our program.

Note: The GRE test has been changed in 2011 and a new scoring system is being developed. It will take some months before we are able to calibrate the new GRE scores to reflect the standards shown below. This document will be updated when that recalibration is completed.

Using the old system of GRE scores, the department has used the following formula to evaluate applications:

$$\frac{1.2V + 1.0Q + 1500(GPA-1)}{10} = 400 \text{ or } \frac{1.0V + 1.2Q + 1500(GPA-1)}{10} = 400$$

We used whichever of the above formulas was highest. A score of 400 or above on one of these formulas was required for admission consideration. GPA stands for the undergraduate grade point average, the V stands for the verbal portion of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), and the Q stands for the quantitative

portion of the GRE.

In addition, we consider the written portion of the GRE. Students admitted into our program with a score of 3.5 or less on the written portion of the GRE will be required to take an undergraduate writing course to strengthen their writing skills. Such skills are important because of the number of research papers (and of course the thesis) that will be written as a graduate student. International students will be asked to take and pass INTL 1800 (Writing Proficiency in English for International Student). All other students will be asked to take and earn at least a grade of B in ENGL 4000 (Advanced Composition).

Once a completed application has been received by the Graduate School, the application is forwarded to the Program Co-Directors who review the application. The Co-Directors will inform the Graduate School of their recommendation regarding admission to our Program. The final decision on admission to the Graduate School is made by the Dean of the Graduate School.

In some cases, students applying to the Interdepartmental Program have had limited undergraduate course work in Sociology. Where this is so, students may be required to take certain undergraduate courses. The Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Sociology is particularly concerned that students have appropriate grounding in our three core areas: Statistics, Methods of Social Research, and Social Theory. If a prospective student has not had one or more of these courses as an undergraduate (or appropriate equivalents as determined by the Co-Chairs of the Interdepartmental Program) they will be required to pass corresponding undergraduate course work with a grade of at least a B before being allowed to take graduate courses in any core area.

Thesis and Non-Thesis Options

Thesis Option

1. Graduate students pursuing the thesis option are required to earn a minimum of 30 graduate-level semester hours, up to 6 of which may be thesis credits. Most graduate courses are 3 semester hours, meaning that the minimum credit requirement usually can be met by taking a total of 8 courses.
2. There are three required core courses for all graduate students in the Interdepartmental Program: SOCY 7000 (Advanced Sociological Theory), RSOC 7700 (Research Methods in Sociology), and an approved graduate course in statistics. Currently the following courses will meet the statistics requirement: STAT 7000 (Experimental Statistics), ERMA 7300 (Design and analysis in Education), or ERMA 7310 (Design and Analysis in Education II). The remaining course work is selected by the individual student in consultation with the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.
3. A grade of B or better must be earned in each of the core courses listed above.
4. Undergraduate back-up courses in the three core areas do not count for graduate course credit.
5. No more than 6 credit hours of directed readings, including SOCY 7900 (Independent Study) and RSOC 7800 (Special Problems in Rural Sociology), or comparable courses in other departments, will be accepted to meet the required minimum of course hours earned.
6. Graduate students are required to develop a research proposal for their thesis research and to present this to their Advisory Committee for review and counsel. Research proposals typically include a statement of the problem, a set of clear research objectives, a preliminary review of the

relevant literature, and a discussion of the proposed research methodology. Only when the proposal has been approved by the Advisory Committee will the graduate student be considered ready to begin thesis research.

7. Graduate students are encouraged to present their proposals as part of periodically scheduled program colloquia where several students discuss their proposed research projects.

8. Once the thesis is complete and Committee members have had an opportunity to review and comment on its contents, a thesis defense is scheduled which is open to any interested person. After passing the thesis defense, final changes required by the Committee are made and the thesis is turned into the Graduate School. It is the responsibility of graduate students to meet format and other requirements of the Graduate School with regard to the final version of the thesis.
9. Graduate students pursuing the thesis option are guided through their program by an advisory Committee consisting of at least four faculty members. Selection of this Committee, including the Committee Chair, is the student's responsibility. Students are strongly encouraged to form Committees which have faculty representation from at least two of the three participating departments.
10. Graduate students pursuing the thesis option are strongly encouraged to form their Advisory Committee and identify a plan of study for course work by the end of their first semester of course work. Revisions to the plan of study and/or to the composition of the Advisory Committee are possible should the need arise.

Non-Thesis Option

1. Graduate students pursuing the non-thesis option are required to earn a minimum of 36 graduate-level semester hours. Most graduate courses are 3 semester hours, meaning that the minimum credit requirement usually can be met by taking a total of 12 courses.
2. Students following the non-thesis option are required to take the same core graduate courses as thesis option students (see above). The remaining course work is selected by the individual student in consultation with the student's Graduate Advisory Committee.
3. A grade of B or better must be earned in each of the core courses referred to above.
4. Undergraduate back-up courses in the three core areas do not count for graduate course credit.
5. No more than 6 credit hours of directed readings, including SOCY 7900 (Independent Study) and RSOC 7800 (Special Problems in Rural Sociology), or comparable courses in other departments, will be accepted to meet the required minimum of course hours earned.
6. Graduate students pursuing the non-thesis option are guided through their program by a member of the graduate faculty selected by the student who will serve as the student's faculty advisor. An initial advisor will be assigned at time of admission. Students may select a different advisor at any time during the first year.
7. At any time after completion of the three core courses, students pursuing the non-thesis option will be examined by a three member examination committee made up of graduate faculty from at least two of the three departments that make up the Interdepartmental Program. The examining committee will be selected by the student's faculty advisor.
8. Graduate students pursuing the non-thesis option are strongly encouraged to identify a plan of study for course work by the end of their first year. Revisions to the plan of study are possible should the need arise.

Financial Assistance

A variable number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs) are available on a competitive basis to support graduate students in the Interdepartmental Graduate Program in Sociology. Strong preference is given to funding students pursuing the thesis option.

Admission to our program is done collectively by the co-Directors of the program (see below) but funding decisions are made by individual departments. To be considered for funding, please send three letters of reference to the co-Director in the appropriate department.

Most GTA and GRA positions involve the commitment of 13-15 hours of work per week. Given these responsibilities, graduate students holding GTA and GRA positions are expected to take no more than 9 hours of graduate credit course work per semester. Experience indicates that a heavier course load leads to an erosion of performance both on the job and in the course work.

GTA positions are associated primarily with the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work (College of Liberal Arts) and involve working with faculty teaching in the undergraduate core curriculum. Students seeking funding in the form of a GTA are to have a completed application by March 1st to be included in the review process regarding funding decisions for the following academic year. However, occasionally, funds for GTA positions may become available later in the year and applications are then reviewed accordingly.

GRA positions are associated primarily with the Department of Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology (College of Agriculture) and involve working with faculty conducting research on a variety of topics dealing with rural development. Funding from grants becomes available at different times of the year. There are some limited funds available for GRA positions through the Department, and these awards generally are made in February or March. Please contact the co-Director for Rural Sociology for further information on funding.

For additional information, please contact

Dr. Janice Clifford
Department of Sociology, Anthropology &
Social Work
Haley Center
Auburn University, AL 36849
Phone: (334) 844.5080
Fax: (334) 844.2482
Email: cliffje@auburn.edu

Conner Bailey
Department of Agricultural Economics &
Rural Sociology
Comer Hall
Auburn University, AL 36849
Phone: (334) 844.5632
Fax: (334) 844.5639
Email: cbailey@ag.auburn.edu

Dr. Kim Brackett
Department of Sociology
P.O. Box 244023
Auburn University at Montgomery
Montgomery, AL 36124-4023
Phone: (334) 244-3943
Fax: (334) 244-3740
Email: kbrackett@aum.edu