

University of Nevada, Reno

**Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program**

**Program Handbook:**

**Policies and Procedures for Graduate Students**

September 13, 2018

<http://www.unr.edu/social-psychology>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>II. Program Overview.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. Program Features.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Interdisciplinary Focus.....</i>	6
<i>Mentoring.....</i>	7
<i>Financial Commitment to Students.....</i>	7
<i>Encouragement of Professional Involvement and Achievement.....</i>	8
<i>Optional Master of Arts Degree in Social Psychology.....</i>	8
<i>WRGP/WICHE Program Member.....</i>	8
<i>Unique Research Opportunities.....</i>	8
<i>Research Infrastructure .....</i>	9
<i>Nevada Research Opportunities .....</i>	9
<b>IV. History of Social Psychology and Presence at UNR.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>The Discipline .....</i>	9
<i>History of the Program at UNR.....</i>	10
<b>V. Program Requirements .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>A. Core Theory (6 credits).....</i>	11
<i>B. Methodology (9 + 9 = 18 credits).....</i>	11
<i>C. Qualifying Examination (1 credit).....</i>	12
<i>D. Academic Advisor .....</i>	14
<i>E. Research Paper Requirement (6-9 credits).....</i>	15
<i>F. Advanced Seminars (9-12 credits) .....</i>	15
<i>G. Flex Credits (6 credits).....</i>	15
<i>H. Optional External Research Methods (3 credits) .....</i>	16
<i>I. Dissertation .....</i>	17
<i>J. Graduation .....</i>	17
<i>K. Deficit Coursework .....</i>	17

<b>VI. Research Paper Requirement (Second-year project)</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>VII. Dissertation</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<i>Choosing a dissertation topic</i> .....	20
<i>Formation of a Dissertation Committee</i> .....	21
<i>Program of Study form</i> .....	22
<i>First Dissertation Committee Meeting</i> .....	22
<i>Comprehensive Examination</i> .....	23
<i>Dissertation Prospectus Meeting</i> .....	24
<i>Dissertation Research &amp; Writeup</i> .....	25
<i>Dissertation Defense</i> .....	25
<i>Timeline for Committee Formation through Dissertation Completion</i> .....	26
<b>VIII. Optional Master’s Degree in Social Psychology</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>IX. Benchmarks for Timely Program Completion</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<i>Benchmark #1: Research Paper Requirement (“Second-Year Project”)</i> .....	28
<i>Benchmark #2: Comprehensive Exam</i> .....	29
<i>Benchmark #3: Dissertation Prospectus</i> .....	29
<i>Benchmark #4: “Out of Status” Courses</i> .....	30
<i>Benchmark #5: Ten-year Limit</i> .....	30
<i>Transition periods</i> .....	31
<b>X. Standard Schedule for Ph.D. without M.A.</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>XI. Standard Schedule for Ph.D. with M.A.</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>XII. Academic Standards</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<i>Graduate School Standards – Criteria for Academic Probation</i> .....	35
<i>Standards Specific to the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program</i> .....	36
<i>Appeals</i> .....	36
<i>Normal Progress</i> .....	36
<b>XIII. Program Themes</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<i>SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND HEALTH</i> .....	36
<i>SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS</i> .....	37
<i>SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW/JUSTICE</i> .....	37

<i>SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ORGANIZATIONS</i> .....	37
<b>XIV. Additional Policies</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<i>Social Psychology Policy on Overloads</i> .....	38
<i>Important Information Concerning Additional On-Campus Employment</i> .....	39
<i>Financial Considerations Concerning Summer Funding/Employment</i> .....	40
<i>Off-Campus Employment</i> .....	41
<i>University Residency Requirement for Doctoral Students</i> .....	41
<i>University Time to Degree Completion</i> .....	41
<i>Program Policy on Deficits</i> .....	41
<b>XV. Social Psychology Faculty Members</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<i>Core Faculty</i> .....	42
<i>Emeritus/a Faculty</i> .....	43
<i>Affiliate Faculty</i> .....	43

## I. Mission Statement

The Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program is founded on a vision of social psychology as the core discipline of human affairs. It represents an integration of psychological and sociological scholarship with a bio-psycho-social foundation, grounded in culture and gender, to form an interdisciplinary, contextualized perspective for the investigation of personal and social life. Our scholarship integrates the study of individuals, the small groups in which they interact, and the context of larger systems and organizations within which they exist. The mission of our doctoral program is to advance scientific knowledge of social psychological structures and processes. We do so through scholarly study, training of Ph.D. students, and dissemination of our knowledge in both scientific and applied communities. We are deeply committed to the guidance and instruction of graduate students as both junior colleagues and advanced students.

## II. Program Overview

The Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program has existed at the University of Nevada, Reno since the early 1960s, with the first degree being awarded in 1967. Originally created as a joint program between the Psychology department and the Sociology department, the structure and curriculum of the Program were thoroughly revised in the early 1990s. The result was an updated curriculum and an expansion of its faculty to include members from a variety of departments and colleges. The Program and its requirements has been continuously modified to better serve its students.

The Program is administered by an interdisciplinary committee comprised of faculty members who award a Regents-approved Ph.D. degree in Social Psychology. All of the currently 18 core faculty members have a background and expertise in social psychology, though they come from the Departments of [Psychology](#), [Sociology](#), [Human Development and Family Studies](#), [Criminal Justice](#), [Managerial Sciences](#), the [School of Community Health Sciences](#) and the [University of Nevada Cooperative Extension](#). Similar to other interdisciplinary graduate programs at the University of Nevada, Reno, the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program is an autonomous unit. It exists as an entity independent from the departments of its faculty members, and it reports directly to the [Graduate School](#). Core faculty members are eligible to serve as academic advisors, dissertation committee members, and dissertation committee chairs.

The Program also includes affiliate faculty members who are social psychologists with doctoral degrees. Affiliate faculty are eligible to supervise second-year research projects and serve as members or co-chairs of dissertation committees, though they cannot chair dissertation committees. Affiliate faculty work in research positions at universities and organizations such as the [Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies](#), [Washoe County School District](#), the [Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology](#), the [Nevada Center for Surveys, Evaluation, and Statistics](#), and the University's [Office of Student Persistence Research](#), or they are part of private

companies. Emeritus/a professors from Psychology, Sociology and Managerial Sciences also contribute to the Program.

The Program director is elected by majority vote from among the members of the core faculty and serves for a three-year term (renewable). The Program director is responsible for all Program operations, implementation of Program policies, management of Program finances, and convening regular faculty meetings. S/he reports directly to the Dean of the Graduate School. The Program director also appoints an advisory committee, which includes three senior faculty members of the Program, who advise him/her on important issues facing the Program.

The Program has [almost 40 students](#) actively pursuing their Ph.D. degrees. Since its inception in 1967, it has awarded over 135 degrees. (For information on some of our recent alumni and their careers see the [alumni page on the Program website](#)). Time to completion of the degree varies, and typically ranges between 4 and 7 years depending on the student's circumstances and goals. Program completion within 6 years is considered "on time," though earlier graduation is encouraged. To ensure timely completion of Program requirements, the Program uses a benchmark policy which details when specific requirement ought to be met. This Program policy complements the Graduate School requirement that all coursework toward attainment of the Ph.D. needs to be completed by the end of students' 8<sup>th</sup> year before it is considered "out of status" and must be repeated.

The Program curriculum encompasses core classes in theory, methods, and statistics as well as a variety of substantive seminars. It emphasizes early involvement in research through several mechanisms, including first-year research proposal development and a second-year research project. Entering students are required to have a background in psychology, sociology, and research methods/statistics. Students who start the Program without sufficient background in psychology or sociology (students who deferred this admissions requirement) are required to take a graduate-level class in this area as determined by the student's advisor and the Program director. Details of the curriculum are given in Section V subsection K of this Handbook.

Research interests of the faculty range widely, from social cognition, interpersonal relationships and intergroup attitudes to the study of law, culture, politics and social movements. Areas of specialization by the Program faculty include Social Psychology and Health, Social Psychology and Organizations, Social Psychology and Law/Justice, and Social and Personal Relationships (see Section XIII). Many students and faculty have interests at the intersections of these areas, such as health and justice, though a number of also pursue interests that are not captured by the above four areas. Areas of interest for all faculty members and graduate students can be found on the Program website.

Program faculty are also active in the broader discipline of social psychology, serving on the editorial boards of a variety of international scholarly journals and in leadership roles within professional organizations. They also maintain an active engagement with national and international colleagues.

On the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno, the Program is enhanced by the presence of the [National Judicial College](#) and the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#). Additional research facilitation is provided by the [Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies](#), the [Sanford Center for Aging](#), and the [Nevada Center for Surveys, Evaluation, and Statistics](#) in the Division of Health Sciences. The Program operates a computer lab and has its own experimental and survey research laboratories on site.

Graduates of the Program are employed in a variety of capacities. Roughly one third of our graduates enter academia where they are professors (typically tenure-track) who teach and conduct research at research universities or liberal arts colleges. Roughly another third enter full-time research positions in the public or non-profit sector, where they work in state government, school districts or large foundations. The last third of our graduates, roughly, enter the private sector where they work for social media and technology companies, consulting firms, or run their own consulting businesses. In short, there are many career possibilities to choose from with advanced graduate training in interdisciplinary social psychology. Information on our alumni and their employment sites can be found on the [Program website](#).

### **III. Program Features**

#### **Interdisciplinary Focus**

As one of the oldest social psychology programs in the country, the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program at the University of Nevada is the oldest interdisciplinary Ph.D. program of its kind. The Program is unique in providing students with a wide range of perspectives in the field of social psychology. The Program integrates psychological social psychology and sociological social psychology to form an interdisciplinary, contextualized perspective. Students are exposed to quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research, helping them choose the appropriate methods for their own research endeavors. In addition, there are opportunities to develop skills in a range of statistical programs (e.g., R, SPSS, Stata, and Mplus) and research-relevant software packages. This comprehensive approach prepares students to successfully conduct meaningful research and to have engaging careers in both academic and applied settings. Our major areas of specialization are: Social psychology and health; Personal and social relationships; Social psychology and law; and Organizational behavior (see Section XIII). Within these areas, social psychological scholarship is considered with attention to the contexts of gender and culture. Students can choose an area of specialization, focus on scholarship that integrates two or more of the specializations, or work in other social psychological domains. A unique aspect of the Program is an additional emphasis on the integration of the social psychology of health and law/justice. Students also work on research in other topics for which faculty hold expertise.

## Mentoring

The faculty of the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program are dedicated to the training and mentoring of graduate students. The Program ensures that students have a chance to collaborate with faculty who share their interests. Students enter the Program with a faculty advisor in their area of interest who, together with the Program director, guides the student through the Program as they progress toward their degree. The faculty advisor can be the student's research supervisor for the second-year research project and later dissertation, but need not be. Faculty advisors can be changed. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the Program and student research interests, students have opportunities to work on a range of projects in conjunction with one or more faculty members. All students have a primary research supervisor who chairs the dissertation and provides guidance.

## Financial Commitment to Students

The Program places a high priority and commitment to seeking and maintaining support for students whenever possible and has been successful in those endeavors. The Program actively supports its graduate students by helping them to secure full-time (20 hours/week) assistantship funding. Through research assistantships, teaching assistantships and fellowships the Program has been successful in funding all first-year students. Students in their second year have maintained funding throughout completion of the degree. For decades, all Ph.D. students who have needed financial support and tuition assistance have received it.

State and national economic conditions, however, can impact the availability of funding for graduate education. We will continue to assist students in their pursuit of assistantships, fellowships, grants, and other support for the pursuit of their doctoral education. Should there be a shortage of graduate assistantships, highest priority will be given to those students who are making adequate progress in terms of our benchmark policy (Section IX) and who will be in their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year in the Program at the time of their assistantship. Students who will be in their 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> year of the Program at the time of the assistantship will take a lower priority in funding decisions. If funding students in their 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> year of the Program interferes with the Program's ability to support incoming students, preference will be given to incoming students. The Program does not commit to supporting students past their 8<sup>th</sup> year.

As of July 1, 2018, the University's [minimum monthly stipend for assistantships](#) of social psychology Ph.D. students is \$1,850. Along with a full-time assistantship (20 hours per week), students also receive tuition benefits. In the academic year 2018/19, graduate students on a full-time assistantship pay \$63.33 per credit instead of the \$274.75 per credit in-state tuition rate. This amounts to a savings of \$3,805.56 per year, assuming two semesters at 9 credits, totaling 18 credits. Aside from these in-state rates, for graduate assistants any out-of-state tuition is waived—in 2018/19 a cost savings of over \$14,000 per year. The most current breakdown of fees for graduate assistants can be found at the [Graduate School's website](#). Graduate assistantships also provide health insurance coverage.

The Program's financial commitment to students applies primarily to the Fall and Winter semesters (10 months; August to May of each academic year). Whenever funds and opportunities are available, the Program seeks to provide funding for its students during the two summer months (June and July). However, because available resources may vary, when funding is available, students cannot expect to receive funding at the same level during summer as during the regular semesters.

### **Encouragement of Professional Involvement and Achievement**

Students are encouraged to engage in scholarly research to present research at professional meetings, and to publish in peer-reviewed journals and scholarly volumes. These activities typically occur in collaboration with faculty. The Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program and the University's [Graduate Student Association](#) facilitate professional development through financial support of student travel and research. Similarly, the Program offers each student some financial support every year to attend conferences and professional meetings. Students are encouraged to seek other support as well, such as research assistance and/or conference travel assistance provided by professional organizations.

### **Optional Master of Arts Degree in Social Psychology**

Students who have been admitted to the Ph.D. program may opt to graduate with an M.A. in Social Psychology upon completion of a prescribed 32 credits in the doctoral program (see Section VIII). Most of these credits (24) may also be applied to the Ph.D. This degree is solely available to students accepted into the doctoral program *en route* to their Ph.D. No students are admitted for a Master's degree only. Paperwork for completion of the M.A. *en route* is typically completed during the student's second year in the Program.

### **WRGP/WICHE Program Member**

The Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program at the University of Nevada, Reno is the only social psychology doctoral program that has been chosen as a member of the Western Regional Graduate Program/Western Interstate Commission of Higher Education. Students admitted to the Program from the 14 participating western states are eligible for enrollment under the WRGP/WICHE program. To find out more about WRGP, its associated benefits, and a list of participating states visit their website at: <http://wiche.edu/sep/wrgp/>

### **Unique Research Opportunities**

Students who have obtained strong research methodological and statistical skills may have opportunities to hold graduate research assistantship positions with research centers and institutions with close working relationships with the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program. In addition to scholarly activity with their advisor they may be mentored in these assistantships by social psychologists working in applied research areas. These positions provide additional research skill development in areas such as data management and analysis of "big

data,” telephone and Internet survey methods, program evaluation, focus groups, scale construction and analysis, grant proposal writing and budget development, publication and report writing, as well as opportunities to develop skills in providing statistical consulting. Such opportunities are currently available with the [Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies](#), [Nevada Center for Surveys, Evaluation, and Statistics](#), [Sanford Center for Aging](#), [University of Nevada Cooperative Extension](#), Washoe County School District [Office of Accountability, Research and Evaluation](#), and [Office of School Performance](#), and the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#).

The presence of the [National Judicial College](#) and the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) provides opportunities for students to conduct research with sitting judges. A functioning courtroom on campus allows for the observation of court activity, as well as providing a real-world environment for creating and filming courtroom scenarios.

### **Research Infrastructure**

In addition to experiences with our participating departments, Program faculty provide research opportunities for students through collaborative research projects with colleagues in the University’s medical school, nursing, engineering, and computer science, as well as on national research projects. The computer lab includes a range of software for conducting surveys, experiments, bio-feedback studies, qualitative analyses, and computing analyses. Students utilize online survey research programs such as Qualtrics. Social Psychology also operates an interdisciplinary subject recruitment pool through its online [SONA system](#) that is available to instructors and researchers from a wide range of departments on campus.

### **Nevada Research Opportunities**

Nevada provides unique opportunities for social psychological research. The state is primarily urban but covers a vast geographic area, thus including isolated rural communities as well as 24-hour work environments in the entertaining, gaming and warehouse industries. Northern Nevada is home to many technology and social media firms; and there is much research development going on concerning self-driving vehicles, and unmanned aircraft systems (drones). At a cultural level, the state is home to several Native American tribes and reservations, and it includes a large Hispanic/Latino population. Reno’s proximity to San Francisco and Sacramento results in a sizeable undergraduate student body from Northern California as well as Nevada.

## **IV. History of Social Psychology and Presence at UNR**

### **The Discipline**

Social Psychology is a core discipline of social existence. It places human existence within a comprehensive framework, examining the nature and influence of societal, cultural and situational contexts on the actions, feelings and thoughts of people. The discipline focuses on

patterns of interaction between people, and on the thoughts, feelings and actions of individuals as they are affected by and affect the social world.

As a discipline, Social Psychology had its formal beginning in the United States, but rapidly spread after World War II to Western Europe, and it now is as active and established around the world as it is in the U.S.

Social Psychology is an empirical science. Social psychologists have generated a wide range of investigative procedures and empirical findings that since have been incorporated in other areas of the social sciences. Over the years, the discipline has experienced a significant increase in the sophistication of experimental design and methodologies relied upon in research.

Practical applications have long been a part of social psychological research endeavors, ranging from changing dietary habits during World War II, to the post-war bombing survey, to understanding the social processes of industrial production, and more recently including very active expansion into medicine (psychoneuroimmunology; behavioral medicine, social inequalities in health) and other health areas, environmental protection, political processes, terrorism, and the judicial system.

Adequate understanding of social psychological structures and processes requires thorough training in both psychology and sociology, as well as in a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the understanding of human processes that emerges is neither psychological nor sociological; it is truly social psychological--a unique and emergent conception.

## **History of the Program at UNR**

Although the first student was admitted to doctoral study in social psychology as early as 1962, the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program was established in 1963-64 by Professor Carl Backman (chair of the Dept. of Sociology), Professor Paul Secord (chair of the Dept. of Psychology) and Professor Gerald Ginsburg. It was modeled after a famous interdisciplinary social psychology program at the University of Michigan, where Dr. Ginsburg had been trained. As a result, the Program was explicitly interdisciplinary from its inception, and continues to be so to the present day. The first Ph.D.'s were awarded to four students in 1967, the year in which the Board of Regents formally authorized the Program. Since then, the Program has awarded 138 Ph.D. degrees (as of August 2018). Many of our graduates hold faculty positions in the U.S. and elsewhere. Based on the last ten years, roughly one third of our graduates pursued careers in academia; one third joined the public or non-profit sector, and roughly one third entered the private sector. Typically, our graduates are hired into non-academic positions because of their comprehensive research skills.

Program faculty have ties with colleagues and institutions elsewhere around the world, including Australia, Germany, Japan, Russia, Scotland, Spain and Turkey. This, too, has produced considerable collaborative research. The international ties and experience of Program faculty provide an important perspective in the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program.

Similarly, the Program has had Ph.D. students from all over the world, including Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Russia and Turkey.

## V. Program Requirements

The curriculum of the Program extends over a minimum of four years and includes multiple requirements that fall in the following order:

- A. Core theory component
- B. Methodology component
- C. Qualifying exam
- D. Selection of a research advisor
- E. Research paper requirement (see also Section VI)
- F. Advanced seminars
- G. Flex credits
- H. Optional External Research Methods
- I. Dissertation (see also Section VII)
- J. Applying for graduation
- K. Deficit Coursework

### A. Core Theory (6 credits)

The **Core Theory** component, SOC 739 and 740, Advanced Social Psychology I and II, is a two-semester sequence required of all first-year students. It is team-taught by the social psychology faculty and typically includes the following topics:

Attitudes	Health psychology	Religion
Attributions	Language and discourse	Self and identity
Collective behavior	Law and justice studies	Small groups
Culture	Legitimation of social inequality	Social cognition
Decision processes	Organizational behavior	Social networks and power
Deviance and social control	Personal relationships	Social support
Emotion	Personality	Socialization
Gender	Psychology and Law	

Among other things, SOC 740 serves the preparation of students for the Qualifying Exam (see Section V subsection C below).

### B. Methodology (9 + 9 = 18 credits)

The Program's methodology component consists of six courses (3 methods courses and 3 statistics courses). The first course in the methods area addresses such topics as philosophy of science, psychometrics and scaling (PSY 724 Applied Research Methodology II) taken during the Fall semester of the first year. In the spring of their first-year all first-year students take a

one-semester team-taught overview of the major methods of the discipline (SOC 718 Research Methods in Social Psychology). The third is a pro-seminar in Survey Research Methods (SOC 737 of CHS 745), normally taken in the second or third year dependent upon when it is offered. In addition, students are required to take three semesters of graduate statistics. The first statistics class (PSY 706, Intermediate Statistics I) is offered in the Fall semester of the first year; and the second course which focuses on regression, structural equations, and linear models (PSY 707, Intermediate Statistics II) is typically taken during Spring of the first year. Students may select their third statistics course from among advanced statistics courses offered by the Program. Choices include SOC 731 (Advanced Design & Data Analysis), SPSY 764 (Special Topics in Social Psychology: Structural Equation Modeling), or other courses that are announced by the Program director. In the case of a course not being available, the Program director will inform students as to the specific course in which they can enroll. Although three statistics or research methods courses are required for the Ph.D., students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of other offerings within the Program and at the University. This includes courses taught in qualitative research methods. Though not necessarily, methodological training helps students prepare for careers in either academia or applied research settings. Depending on their career goals, students may work with their advisors to identify other appropriate coursework.

### **C. Qualifying Examination (1 credit)**

The Qualifying Examination is given at the end of the first year within one month of the end of the spring semester. The qualifying exam serves two purposes. As the name implies, it is an evaluative measure of qualification for continuation into the more advanced coursework and research demands of the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program. To that effect, it assumes that the student can demonstrate evidence of ability to master the theory, methods, and major concepts of an interdisciplinary social psychological approach. In addition, the committee views the exam as a diagnostic tool. In cases where students have demonstrated an acceptable level of overall exam performance to continue in the Ph.D. program, the committee will share information with students on specific areas where they may need additional work in order to meet Program expectations. As part of this diagnostic function exam results are used to establish a second year plan for mastering skills or substantive areas in need of improvement for students who will continue in the Program. This may occur via targeted areas of second year coursework and/or the second year research project. The Program director may establish this prescribed plan of action in consultation with the student's advisor and second year teaching faculty.

Students must have completed all of the first-year Program requirements satisfactorily before taking the qualifying exam:

- they must have passed all of their first-year courses with a grade of B- or better; and
- they must hold an overall GPA of 3.0 or better.

Students who do not meet these requirements may not sit the exam. If students repeat coursework and then meet all requirements they may take the exam at its next offering, but they should

be aware that the exam will be based on what was taught in courses during the current academic year and that this content may differ from course content of previous years. (Section XII further discusses situations in which student have not met the Graduate School's minimum required GPA for continuing in a graduate program.)

Students taking the exam are expected to enroll in SPSY 794 for one (1) credit for the second summer session or the following Fall semester.

In this written exam students are expected to synthesize and integrate the materials presented in three first-year courses: SOC 718, 739 and 740. The qualifying exam is offered only once to each student. It is necessary to pass this exam in order to move into the second year of the Program.

The qualifying exam is take-home, and is typically administered over a period of two to four days in early June, following the end of students' first year in the Program. The exam is designed and evaluated by the Qualifying Examination Committee (QEC). The QEC comprises three core faculty members, of whom at least one must have taught SOC 718, SOC 739 and SOC 740 at some point in the past. Membership on the committee will rotate from year to year. When designing the qualifying exam, the QEC may consult with first-year instructors to ensure the fairness and appropriateness of the exam. The qualifying exam is administered by the Program Director such that the identity of student responses is concealed to the QEC. This allows all members of the QEC to read and evaluate student responses anonymously. The QEC provides written feedback (e.g. a report) on each student's exam performance to the Program director. In this feedback, the QEC identifies strengths and weaknesses of the (anonymous) exam performance and provides a pass/fail recommendation to the Program director. The report to the Program director also includes the committee's vote on the exam performance.

The final decision concerning the outcome of the qualifying exam are made by the Program Director based on the following information, in decreasing order of importance:

- (1) QEC report and vote count;
- (2) reports from the student's advisor(s) on the student's performance;
- (3) reports from first-year instructors on the student's performance;
- (4) Program director's evaluation of the student's performance in the Program.

The Director's decision reflects the Program's evaluation of a student's potential to be successful in the Ph.D. Program, and must be closely based on this information. The Program director's decision is expected to be commensurate with the QEC report (1), but the Program director may choose to ignore the QEC recommendation if sufficient and unambiguous evidence can be found based on (2), (3) and (4) suggesting a different decision from that recommended by the QEC.

Specifically, the Program director makes one of three decisions:

- A **"Ph.D. Pass"** is awarded to a student who meets the level of mastery required to continue in the Ph.D. program. In the event that a student with notable weaknesses still receives a "Ph.D. Pass," the Program director and the student's advisor will discuss strategies to help the student succeed in the Program.

- A **“M.A. Pass”** is awarded for a lower level of performance, deemed sufficient for successful work at the Master’s degree level, but insufficient for the Ph.D. The M.A. Pass allows the student to move into a track for completing a terminal Masters of Arts degree in Social Psychology. Students in the terminal M.A. degree track may not sit the qualifying exam a second time. Students in a terminal M.A. degree track are not eligible to return to the Ph.D. Students in the M.A. degree track may become a lower priority in terms of the Program assisting with securing continued assistantship funding. As a result, students in the M.A. degree track may experience funding differences compared to students in the Ph.D. track.
- A **“Fail”** indicates that the student’s performance did not demonstrate the mastery needed to complete either the Ph.D. or M.A. degree. Students with an exam in the “Fail” category may not continue in the Program. During the individual meeting the Program director will discuss the exam result and the course of action available to each student.

Once a decision has been reached, the Program director meets individually with each student to discuss the outcome and their progress in the Program. No part of the qualifying exam may be taken a second time. The Program director’s decision is final; there is no process for appealing this decision.

If students experience extenuating circumstances or require, accommodation, it is imperative that they discuss the issues with the Program director at least five days before the exam begins. Circumstances that arise less than five days before the exam or during the exam need to be reported to the Program director immediately. Extenuating circumstances reported at the end of the exam, or later, cannot be considered. Each student receives additional written information on the process of the qualifying exam before the exam takes place. Opportunities are provided for discussion and clarification of process.

Any clarifications or modifications that the faculty makes to the Qualifying Exam policy will be announced to students and added to this Handbook.

#### **D. Academic Advisor**

It is the Program’s goal to provide a research advisor to each incoming student. However, because students may change advisor, all students must select have selected an academic advisor from the Program faculty prior to the Fall semester of their second year of study. The academic advisor must agree to serve as the student’s primary advisor for the second-year project and potential dissertation committee chair. However, students are encouraged to select their academic advisor during their first year in the Program. Doing so allows students to use their SOC 718 coursework to develop the proposal for the research project that they subsequently carry out as their research paper requirement/second-year project.

### **E. Research Paper Requirement (6-9 credits)**

The Research Paper Requirement (“second-year project”) entails two consecutive semesters of supervised research, typically at the start of students’ second year, during which students complete an empirical research paper under faculty supervision (see Section VI). Students enroll for two semesters of three (3) credits of SPSY 702 under their advisor’s section number (or equivalent course numbers in their advisor’s home department). If the project cannot be completed within one year (two semesters), students may enroll for a third semester.

If a student is interested in conducting a study using secondary data only, they may do so for either the second-year project or the dissertation but not both (assuming that either project would exclusively use secondary data). In either the second-year project or the dissertation the student is expected to engage in all phases of a research project, from conceptualization and data gathering through analysis and write-up. This requirement is designed to prepare students with the skills needed in their careers. Students are not required to use secondary data analysis for either the second-year project or the dissertation, or they may use it for other projects conducted during their doctoral program.

To fulfill the research paper requirement, a student must submit or present a deliverable product, such as a manuscript submitted to a journal or a conference presentation. Students are also expected to present some aspect of their second-year research at the Program’s brownbag series. See also Section VI.

### **F. Advanced Seminars (9-12 credits)**

Students also are required to take either one or two **Advanced Seminars** per term during their second and third years, as offered by Social Psychology Program faculty. Among the seminars taken must be SOC 722 (Attitudes), and SOC 737 (Survey Methods)/CHS 745 (Advanced Survey Methods in Public Health).<sup>1</sup> All 600- or 700-level courses taught by social psychology core faculty will count as social-psychology advanced seminars, unless announced otherwise, or unless the content of the class is not social-psychological in nature.<sup>2</sup> (Note, because of the interdisciplinary nature of the Program, some faculty teach courses that are not social-psychological in content). If in doubt, students should ask the Program director.

### **G. Flex Credits (6 credits)**

Consistent with the interdisciplinary nature of the Program, each student has the opportunity to take courses outside of the social psychology content area. The goal is for these courses to help students prepare students for their dissertation or career path. However, taking courses outside of

---

<sup>1</sup> SOC 737 and CHS 745 are equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> Per the Graduate School, the number of 600-level credits that can be applied to the Ph.D. are limited.

social psychology is not mandatory. There are multiple ways in which students can satisfy the “flex credit” requirement:

(a) Students can satisfy this requirement by taking up to two 700-level courses (6 credits) outside of the social psychology program. The courses should be relevant to their dissertation and/or professional development, and must be approved by the student’s advisor and the Program Director. Students may choose to take only one outside course (3 credits) to satisfy part of this requirement.

(b) To satisfy part of the requirement, students may take up to three 700-level credits of directed reading (e.g. SPSY 701). See below (Section V subsection H) for one particular option for directed reading credits.

(c) To satisfy the flex credit requirement students may choose to take up to two regular 700-level courses (6 credits) in social psychology.

The flex credit requirement can be satisfied using either method (a) or (c), or using a mix of (a), (b) and (c). Students are encouraged to decide in consultation with their advisor how to satisfy this requirement.

If a student decides to satisfy all or part of the “flex credit” requirement by using outside courses (method [a]), the student’s advisor must send an email to the Program director in which he or she identifies the course(s) and provides a brief justification.

## **H. Optional External Research Methods (3 credits)**

Based on student request, the Program offers an opportunity in which voluntary and typically self-funded attendance of a summer workshop at another institution can contribute to their progress toward the Ph.D. in the context of this Program. This is an additional, optional way in which the flex credit requirement (see above) can be completed.

Some students choose to attend a summer workshop or seminar devoted to research methods or statistics at another institution, because relevant techniques and skills are not currently being taught at the University of Nevada, Reno. Examples of such summer workshops and seminars include the summer institute of the Inter-University Consortium of Social and Political Research (ICPSR), or the statistical trainings offered by the University of Kansas, Michigan State University, University of Connecticut or Stanford University. Students choose to attend these workshops based on their own initiative and without any tuition assistance from the University or the Program, although they may choose to apply the Program’s travel support for their trip to this workshop.

Students can arrange for this experience to count as part of their flex credits by registering for up to 3 credits of SPSY 701 (Directed Reading) at the University of Nevada, Reno. In general, to receive 3 credits of SPSY 701 the hours of attendance and product development must be consistent with that of a 3-credit course at the University. Specifically, these are the requirements:

- The experience must be approved by the student’s academic advisor;

- In order to be worth 3 credits, the experience must include roughly 45 hours of course/lecture/workshop attendance plus 90 hours of out of class time in product development, or some combination of these two areas;
- The majority of out-of-class time must be spent at the University of Nevada, Reno;
- Students must generate a product (typically a research paper) that reflects the techniques and skills acquired during the external workshop/training. The quality of the product must be evaluated based on the standards typically applied to a 700-level social psychology seminar.

## **I. Dissertation**

The dissertation is the core element of any Ph.D. program. In this Program the dissertation includes a number of different requirements and steps, such that it is best to call it the “dissertation process.” This process includes, first, choosing a dissertation topic and forming a dissertation committee. At the first dissertation committee meeting, all members sign the students Program of Study (PoS) form, which officially creates the dissertation committee. At this initial meeting, the committee also discusses the content of the comprehensive exam, which is specifically tailored to the student’s anticipated dissertation project. Following successful completion of comprehensive exam, the dissertation committee meets when students present and defend their dissertation prospectus. The prospectus outlines a plan for the students’ dissertation research. Once the dissertation research has been conducted, and the student has written the thesis, the dissertation committee assembles again when the student defends thesis.

Details of the dissertation process are addressed in Section VII of this Handbook.

## **J. Graduation**

Students must formally apply to graduate and must do so very early in the semester that they intend to graduate. Typically, the last day to apply for graduation coincides with the last day of late registration for the semester. See the Graduate School website for the [specific deadline](#).

## **K. Deficit Coursework**

The Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program requires that all entering students have a background in psychology, sociology, and research methods/statistics. Some students enter the Program with a background in both sociology and psychology courses, but some enter with a background in one field, but an insufficient background in the other field. If a student has not taken the equivalent of at least 6 credits as an undergraduate in one of the two fields, we refer to this as a “deficit.” The determination of whether a student is subject to a deficit is made by the Program Director prior to the student’s first semester in the Program. The Program Director may accept coursework from departments other than psychology or sociology as satisfying the psychology or sociology requirement. The criterion is whether, based on an evaluation of the syllabus, readings and assignments, a course could have been taught in a psychology or sociology department.

If admitted with a deficit in psychology or sociology, a student must complete one graduate-level course theory or background course (3 credits) in order to fill this deficit. The deficit may be completed before the student enters the Program, or during their first three years in the Program. Students with a psychology deficit take one graduate-level course in psychology, generally PSY 635 *Personality* or other theory course. Students admitted with a sociology deficit take one graduate-level course in Sociology, generally SOC 710 *Classical Sociological Theory* or SOC 711 *Contemporary Sociological Theory*. Courses are chosen in conjunction with the student's advisor and the Program Director. It is recommended that the student take this course during their second year in the Program.

Any graduate-level deficit coursework satisfies a deferred admission requirement and cannot be applied to the Ph.D. degree. It is not included in the Ph.D. Program of Study, and it does not count toward the 48 credits of required doctoral coursework. If students decide to obtain the optional M.A. degree *en route* to the Ph.D., they may use graduate deficit coursework to meet the requirements for the M.A. The Graduate School allows up to 24 credits of the 32 credits in the *en route* M.A. to count toward the Ph.D. Deficit coursework used in the M.A. degree would be among the 8 credits in the M.A. that are not counted toward the Ph.D. (see Section VIII).

## **VI. Research Paper Requirement (Second-year project)**

The research paper requirement (also known as second-year project) is intended to get students actively engaged in the research process from their early days in the Program. The goal is to create a pattern of scholarly activity that continues throughout their time in the Program, and results in substantial research productivity. The second-year project provides an opportunity to develop and hone skills needed for a career in research. Students who enter the Program with a Master's degree and who previously completed a master-level thesis will benefit from having multiple research experiences of increasing difficulty. They must not substitute their Master's thesis for the second-year project.

Students are admitted to the Program with an initial adviser in the general area of the student's research interest. Students may continue to work with that faculty member on their second-year project or work with another faculty member. By the end of the spring semester of the first year in the Program, each student must choose a faculty member who agrees to serve as their general advisor, as well as to serve as the supervisor of their research paper. The student works closely with this faculty member during the duration of the second-year research project. Students are encouraged to establish this research relationship earlier, that is, during their first semester. This allows them to begin development of the second-year research project as the proposal that they develop in SOC 718 (Spring of the first year).

The research paper may derive from the faculty's ongoing research program or be freely negotiated between faculty and student. The work is expected to be collaborative. That is, the student should play a major role in the negotiated project that includes preparation of a written

proposal, initiative in securing/collecting data, and responsibility for analyzing the data and drafting a report. These activities are expected to be under the supervision of the faculty advisor. Students who choose to analyze existing datasets (secondary data analysis) may do so for either their second-year research project or their dissertation, but not for both projects, unless students use multiple types of data for either the second-year project and the dissertation.

The research paper requirement includes a presentation of the results of the project by the student to an appropriate audience. Ideally the project will result in a presentation at a professional meeting and/or a publication. Students are also encouraged to practice any presentation of their work at a professional meeting by sharing their findings at one of the brown bag luncheons sponsored by the Program. The order of authorship should be discussed in advance of the project. All publications and presentations resulting from this project should follow APA guidelines of authorship, with the student and faculty member receiving appropriate authorship and reflecting the relative contribution of the student and advisor.

Students typically complete their research papers under the supervision of their research advisor via three continuous semesters of supervised research, beginning in either spring of their first year or the Fall of their second year. Thus, they should typically complete their research paper no later than the end of the fall semester of their third year, but it is preferred if students finish by the end of the second year. Exceptions may be made to their deadline but must be approved by the student's advisor and the Program Director.

### **Suggested Timeline for Research Paper Requirement**

*Spring of 1<sup>st</sup> year:* When possible, students should consider using the research proposal requirement for SOC 718 to develop an initial proposal for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year research project. The student's faculty research advisor should be included in conversations regarding the development of the proposal.

*Fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> year:* Prepare IRB application; Collect or secure data and begin data analysis.

*Spring of 2<sup>nd</sup> year:* Complete data analysis, write paper.

*Fall of 3<sup>rd</sup> year:* Submit for presentation at a professional meeting or for publication. Present an aspect of the project at the Program's brownbag research series

Up to 9 credits of 2<sup>nd</sup> year research project (SPSY 702 Graduate Research) may be counted toward the 48 credits of coursework needed for the Ph.D.

### **Enrolling in 6 or 9 Credits**

Students typically enroll in SPSY 702 under their advisor's call number (3 credits) for the Fall and Spring semester of their second year in the Program. Contact [Kathie Stanfield](#) (admin assistant) to obtain permission to enrolling in the course via [MyNevada](#). Students must ensure that their advisor is informed about the fact that they are enrolling under their call number.

### **The second-year project if completing the M.A. *en route***

Students who are completing the M.A. along the way to the Ph.D. may enroll in a total of 7 credits of SPSY 702 (graduate research) for their research paper requirement/second year project (4 credits in Fall, and 3 credits in Spring). This additional credit is to enable the M.A. students to arrive at exactly the necessary total of 32 credits for the M.A. degree. To reach the exact number of 32 credits, the M.A. program of study form should report: 24 credits of coursework (8 classes at 3 credits each), 1 credit of SPSY 794 (Qualifying exam), and 7 credits of SPSY 702. This assumes that students obtain their M.A degree in the Spring of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the Program.<sup>3</sup>

## **VII. Dissertation**

The dissertation is the core element of any Ph.D. program. In this Program the dissertation includes a number of different requirements and steps, such that it is best to call it the “dissertation process.” This process includes choosing a dissertation topic

### **Choosing a dissertation topic**

As they progress through the Program, students should start thinking about a topic for their dissertation. Typically, discussions with their academic advisor help students determine whether a particular research question or project is suitable for a dissertation. The choice of a dissertation should be based on a number of considerations including, but not limited to, students’ career goals, their skills and experience, the expertise of the advisor, the feasibility of the research, and the overall time and funding required. Students should be prepared that the specifics of their project might be subject to change as they proceed in their dissertation process.

***Use of secondary data.*** If students are interested in conducting a dissertation study based on secondary data, they may do so for either the second-year project or the dissertation but not both. In either the second-year research project or the dissertation students are expected to engage in all phases of a research project, from conceptualization and data collection through analysis and write-up. This requirement is designed to best prepare students with the skills needed in their careers. Students are not required to use secondary data analysis for either the second-year project or the dissertation, and they may use secondary data for other research conducted during their doctoral program. No restrictions apply if students use secondary data *in addition* to originally generated data for either their dissertation research or their second-year project.

---

<sup>3</sup> If students wish to receive the M.A. degree at a later point, it may not be necessary and financially disadvantageous for them to take 4 credits of SPSY 702 during one of the semesters of their second year. Rather, if they enroll for 1 credit of SPSY 702 during the summer following their 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the Program, they can apply this credit to an August or December graduation.

## Formation of a Dissertation Committee

Students should secure the participation of five faculty members on their dissertation committee during their third year of study. When inviting faculty to serve on their dissertation committees, students must clearly explain that the faculty role on the committee also includes participation in the development, administration, and assessment of the student's comprehensive exam (see below). It is advisable that students provide prospective committee members with a brief summary of their research interest and potential ideas for their dissertation. Typically, this "pre-proposal" is 2 to 6 pages in length but may differ in format depending on the adviser's expectations.

The dissertation committee must consist of at least five members, of whom a minimum of three are Program faculty, including the dissertation chair. Social Psychology Affiliate Faculty may serve as dissertation committee members from the Program or as a co-chair of the dissertation, but they may not serve as the sole chair of the dissertation committee. All dissertation committee members must have Graduate Faculty status ([see the UNR Graduate School website for details on committee composition and a list of current graduate faculty](#)). Up to two committee members may be faculty members from a department in a field related to the dissertation topic, who have Graduate Faculty status, but who may or may not be faculty members of the Program. The inclusion of any "outside members" (i.e. non-Program faculty) is not required. However, the inclusion of non-Program faculty members is encouraged if their contribution is likely to ensure a high quality of the dissertation project.

One of the dissertation committee members must serve as the "Graduate School representative." His or her official role is to serve as a representative of the University's Graduate School and to assure compliance with Graduate School regulations and procedures. The person designated to be the Graduate School representative cannot be from the same academic department as the dissertation committee chair.

Students may request the appointment of a committee member from the faculty of another university or from a relevant discipline or profession, provided that the prospective member has achieved a record of distinction. Faculty from another university may not serve in the "Graduate School representative" role. To consider having a committee member from another university, students need to work closely with their advisor, the Program director, and the University's Graduate School. For further information on the role of the committee members, please see the [University catalog](#) or the [Graduate School website](#).

Students may choose to have a dissertation committee that comprises more than five members. However, a larger number of committee members may make it more difficult to schedule committee meetings.

The committee should meet during the student's third year to complete the student's Program of Study form and to begin planning for the student's comprehensive examination (see below).

If there is a change in committee membership, a [Change in Advisory Committee form](#) is available from the Graduate School website.

### **Program of Study form**

As the student embarks on the dissertation process, the University's Graduate School requires that all doctoral students file a [Program of Study \(PoS\) form](#). This document lists all the courses and other credits that the student has taken and plans to take to satisfy the requirements of the Ph.D. degree. (Note that so-called deficit courses are not included on the Program of Study form for the Ph.D.). The form also includes the names of the dissertation committee members and a tentative title for the dissertation. The PoS form can be modified before a student completes the actual program of study for the degree. Nonetheless, it is necessary to complete the paperwork to be in compliance with Graduate School requirements, to demonstrate timely progress toward attainment of the degree, to plan ahead, and be well prepared. Only the PoS form officially establishes a student's dissertation committee in the Graduate School's records. The PoS form can be downloaded from the [Graduate School's forms webpage](#).

The form needs to include 48 credits of coursework (and that 48 credits includes up to 9 credits of SPSY 702), 1 credit of comprehensive examination (SPSY 794), 1 credit of comprehensive examination (SPSY 795), and 24 credits of dissertation (SPSY 799, with dissertation credits listed on a single line with a lump sum of 24, rather than broken out by each semester). In some cases, it is not possible to know what courses will be offered in future semesters. Nonetheless, students should make educated projections and fill out their form in a manner that reflects how they plan to complete their Ph.D. degree, including their dissertation credits. If there is a change in the courses proposed on the original program of study form, a [Change in Program of Study form](#) is also available from the Graduate School website. Deficit courses are never included on the Program of Study form. Instead, they are reported by the student's advisor in an email to the Program director.

### **First Dissertation Committee Meeting**

Students should plan to meet with their dissertation committee during their third of year of study, ideally during the Fall semester, to develop a plan for the design of and preparation for the comprehensive exam. The student should bring a completed Program of Study form to this meeting and obtain the signatures of all dissertation committee members. Prior to the committee meeting they may disseminate to the committee members a brief summary of their research interest, specifically as related to the forthcoming dissertation. Typically, this pre-proposal is 2 to 6 pages in length but may differ in format depending on the adviser's expectations. The student should also disseminate a draft of a reading list of materials proposed for the comprehensive examination, with readings grouped under subheadings of substantive, theory and method topics. Committee members may add or subtract materials from that list both before and during the first committee meeting or arrange to share additional references with the student following the meeting.

## Comprehensive Examination

### Purpose

The purpose of the comprehensive exam is to test whether or not a student is prepared to complete a dissertation, as well as to help students prepare for their dissertation. The comprehensive exam exposes students to a range of theories and methods related to their area(s) of interest that prepares them to select appropriate theories and methods for their dissertation. It tests students' capacity to succeed in each stage of their dissertation research by demonstrating the ability to (a) have a firm grasp on the literature as it pertains to their dissertation; (b) understand and apply relevant theories; (c) derive research questions based on existing literature and theory, and (d) select appropriate research methods and execute them successfully. The oral component of the comprehensive exam tests students' ability to listen, understand, and respond thoughtfully to questions regarding their written exam in a professional manner.

### Mode of Administration

The written portion of comprehensive examinations is an open-book, open-note, take-home exam. It is to be administered over the course of five (5) days. Typically, the written portion will consist of five questions (one per day), though some variability is possible (e.g., a four-question test with one two-day question). The written portion of the exam should be no more than 50 pages in total, though it can be less. Page limit recommendations range from 5-8 to 6-10 pages per question for a five-question exam. The oral exam should occur within two (2) weeks after the submission of the written portion of the exam with allowances for faculty constraints on scheduling.

Students must bring a prepared **Doctoral Degree Admission to Candidacy/Comprehensive Examination Report form** to the oral examination to be completed by the dissertation committee, once the student has passed the exam. This form may be downloaded from the [Graduate School webpage](#). Once this document has been filed with the Graduate School, students officially advance to candidacy status.

### Policies

*Committee decision making.* At the conclusion of the initial written and oral exams, the committee must determine if a student's performance warrants a "pass" or a "partial retake" of just the portions that were found insufficient, or a "full retake."

Upon a completion of a retake, the committee must determine if the student's performance on the retaken section(s) warrants a "pass" and in the context of the sections(s) already passed, whether the overall performance across all sections of the test warrants a "pass" or a "fail" of the comprehensive exam as a whole. Students who do not pass the comprehensive exam when they retake it will be dismissed from the Program.

The standard for determining if a student has passed any portion of the test is if the student has demonstrated sufficient grasp of the essential competencies delimited by the committee in each

section of the comprehensive exam across the written and oral responses in each topic area to move forward with the dissertation phase of training. An area may be deemed sufficient by the committee if the student demonstrates enough grasp of the basics that the committee is confident that during the course of preparing and defining a dissertation proposal any gaps would be remediated. When a student passes the exam, it represents the committee's belief that the student is prepared to proceed to planning their dissertation proposal and successfully carrying out their dissertation. When a student does not pass the comprehensive exam, it indicates that the committee believes that the student has not fully demonstrated their preparedness to move on to the next stage of the dissertation process.

During the first comprehensive exam meeting, any committee decision making must be based on consensus. If there is a retake, then consensus remains the desired method of determining pass/fail. If consensus cannot be achieved in the second comprehensive exam meeting, then members of the dissertation committee must vote. To pass the comprehensive examination the committee must have no more than one negative vote. If two negative votes are cast – regardless of the total number of committee members– the student fails the exam.

*“Retake” Policies.* For those sections of the written and oral exam for which the committee has decided that a retake is necessary, then only the portions not passed will be retaken (except of course where a “full retake” has been required by the committee, in which case the whole test will be retaken). Retaken sections do not have to be the identical question but within the same topic area of the portion requiring further demonstration of ability. Committee members may include additional reading as long as the additional readings remain within the domain the original question and are limited in scope. Retakes have to be completed by the end of the subsequent semester. The mode of administration remains the same for retakes as in the original exam with up to five days given by the committee for the completion of the retaken portions of the exam in case of a full retake. In case of a partial retake, the time will be adjusted in order to provide the same amount of time per retaken question as was available during the first attempt.

The decision for a retake can range from not passing one of the written questions or not passing the oral exam to not passing all of the written questions and the oral exam. Regardless of amount of the exam that the student did not pass, each student is entitled to one (1) retake of the portion(s) of the exam which they did not pass. Please note that a retake does not constitute a “conditional pass” as passing is contingent on the students’ performance during the retake.

*Changes in committee membership.* Changes in the composition of the dissertation committee between a first and second attempt at passing the comprehensive exam are strongly discouraged, although they may occur if a committee member is unable (or prefers not) to continue to serve, or if the dissertation advisor determines that a committee change is warranted.

## **Dissertation Prospectus Meeting**

Candidates arrange with the dissertation committee and advisor a time to review and evaluate their dissertation proposal for discussion and ultimately, for the approval of the committee. More

than one meeting may be required to obtain committee approval of the proposal. The first meeting to discuss the dissertation proposal should occur no later than during the Fall semester of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, following the comprehensive examination.

Unless the dissertation committee has decided otherwise, candidates should submit their proposal draft to all members of the dissertation committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled dissertation prospectus meeting.

## **Dissertation Research & Writeup**

Following the approval of their dissertation prospectus candidates conduct the research outlined in this document. Should changes and adjustments be necessary, for instance, because data have become unavailable or recruitment of participants has been unsuccessful, following consultation with his or her advisor, a candidate might wish to contact the dissertation committee. In the case of major changes to the research as originally proposed, the dissertation committee might decide to reconvene and/or request revisions to the dissertation prospectus.

Candidates write a comprehensive document that covers all parts of this project (the dissertation proper). Once approved by the advisor/dissertation committee chair, the candidate schedules the dissertation defense. A complete version of the dissertation must be disseminated to the dissertation committee at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled dissertation defense.

## **Dissertation Defense**

All candidates are required to defend their dissertations in an oral examination before their dissertation committee. As a matter of professional courtesy, committee members should receive the final version of the dissertation at least two weeks before the date of the dissertation defense. Dissemination of the dissertation document to the committee members should only take place after the draft has been approved by the dissertation chair.

Candidates must meet with their dissertation committee for a period of at least two hours to defend the draft of their dissertation previously approved by the dissertation chair. Candidates must bring to this meeting a prepared Doctoral Degree Notice of Completion, which may be downloaded from the [Graduate School webpage](#). Before the committee members sign the Doctoral Degree Notice of Completion they may ask the student to make changes in the final draft. Once signatures are obtained, the candidate must return the completed form to the Graduate School. Candidates must file the final copy of their dissertation with the Graduate School approximately one week before the end of the semester in which they plan to graduate. The candidate must also ensure that the advisor submits a final review approval form, which can be downloaded from the [Graduate School webpage](#) as well. Candidates must check with the Graduate School for the [exact deadlines](#). Instructions for the [necessary format of a dissertation and other required steps](#) in the submission process are available on the Graduate School website. Following Graduate School submission policy is the responsibility of the candidate.

## Timeline for Committee Formation through Dissertation Completion

The following timeline is based on Graduate School and Program expectations. Students should seek to adhere to this timetable as closely as possible, although many students need a little more time to complete all degree requirements. Faculty members recognize that extenuating circumstances may result in delays, but they encourage students to keep delays to a minimum. Students should be aware that substantial delays in progress reduce their appeal to some prospective employers. See also Section IX Benchmarks For Timely Program Completion.

Recommended Timeline	
3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Fall	Secure dissertation committee
3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Fall	Complete Program of Study form Confirm with advisor Secure committee signatures (students may ask the Program Director to review form for accuracy before committee signs)
3 <sup>rd</sup> year, Fall or Spring	Write pre-proposal 1 <sup>st</sup> committee meeting
Between Spring of 3 <sup>rd</sup> year and Fall of 4 <sup>th</sup> year	Complete written and oral comprehensive exam
4 <sup>th</sup> year Fall	Dissertation prospectus meeting
Between Spring of 4 <sup>th</sup> year and Spring of 5 <sup>th</sup> year	Dissertation defense

## VIII. Optional Master's Degree in Social Psychology

Students are not admitted to the Program if their goal is to only earn a Master's degree. However, students in the Ph.D. program have the option of earning a Master's degree in Social Psychology *en route* as non-terminal degree. The Master's degree is only terminal for students whose qualifying exam score is a "M.A. Pass" (see above).

### Requirements for the M.A. in Social Psychology

There are a total of 32 credits required for the M.A. degree. These include: 27 credits of regular coursework (9 courses à 3 credits each); 1 credit of qualifying exam (SPSY 794), and 4 credits of Graduate Research (e.g., SPSY 702). Note that students who plan on earning the M.A. degree should sign up for 1 additional credit of Graduate Research (e.g., SPSY 702).

Only 24 credits of these degrees can be applied toward your Ph.D. This means, graduate students who wish to earn a M.A. degree *en route*, will need to complete 8 more credits than graduate students who not wish to do so.

- Total number of credits required for the M.A.: 32
- Total number of credits that may be applied toward the Ph.D.: 24

## Timeline

### First Year (18 credits)

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Spring</u>
<b>SOC 739</b> Advanced Social Psychology I (3 credits)	<b>SOC 740</b> Advanced Social Psychology II (3 credits)
<b>PSY 724</b> Applied Research Methodology II (3 credits)	<b>SOC 718</b> Research Methods in Social Psychology (3 credits)
<b>PSY 706</b> Intermediate Statistics (3 credits)	<b>PSY 707</b> Intermediate Statistics II (3 credits)

Qualifying Exam (1 credit). Please note that although students take the exam in June, they should register for one credit (SPSY 794) during the *second Summer term*. If they do not enroll during the second Summer term, they should enroll during the *following Fall semester*. Students may be enrolled in a total of 10 credits during the Fall of your second year.

### Second Year (20 credits)

A total of 14 credits from the 18 credits taken this year apply to the M.A. (The remainder applies to the Ph.D.) The following order of seminars and supervised research is suggested but not mandatory.

Fall	Spring <sup>5</sup>
<b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research <sup>4</sup> (3 credits)	<b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research (4 credits)
<b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)	<b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)
<b>SOC 731</b> Advanced Design and Data Analysis <sup>4</sup> (3 credits)	<b>SOC 737/CHS 745</b> Survey Research Methods <sup>6</sup> (3 credits)
<b>SPSY 794</b> Qualifying examination (1 credit)	

Courses you should transfer from the M.A. into the Ph.D. (24 credits):

- All the first year courses (18 credits): SOC 718, SOC 739, SOC 740, PSY 706, PSY 707, PSY 724
- Two (2) 700-level courses at 3 credits each (including SOC 731 and SOC 737/CHS 745)
- 3 credits of graduate research (SPSY 702)

All of these courses (24 credits) are required for the Ph.D. degree.

<sup>4</sup> The Program recognizes corresponding courses in Supervised Research/Graduate Research in students' advisor's home departments: SOC 702, PSY 752, HDFS 752, CRJ 702, or CHS 792.

<sup>5</sup> Students who earn a M.A. degree *en route* should enroll for 10 credits if they plan on receiving their M.A. degree by May of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year (see Section VIII). Those who plan on receiving their degree by August or later can enroll for 1 credit during the summer. Students who do not earn an M.A. degree should be enrolled for 9 credits only.

<sup>6</sup> If SOC 731 or SOC 737/CHS 745 are not offered in students' second year, students can substitute alternative courses. Keep in mind that SOC 722 Attitudes is a required course as well, which might be offered during students' 2<sup>nd</sup> year. SOC 722, 731 and 737 are each offered either in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of students' time in the Program.

Students who are subject to the deficit and who wish to receive the Master's degree *en route* are advised to take this 3-credit deficit course during their second year in the Program. They are able to include this deficit course in their Master's degree, and count it as part of the 8 credits that they cannot transfer to the Ph.D.

### Formalities

In order to graduate with the M.A.:

- (a) Check for [deadlines on the Graduate School website](#). There is an
  - application for graduation deadline, and a
  - form submission deadline.
- (b) Complete Application for Graduation via [MyNevada](#). Typically, the [deadline](#) is the last day of late registration for the semester.
- (c) Complete the M.A. [Program of Study form](#). Keep in mind:
  - You only list the 32 credits used for the M.A. on this program of study. List: SOC 718, SOC 739, SOC 740, PSY 706, PSY 707, PSY 724, SPSY 702 (7 credits), two 3-credit courses (e.g., PSY 635, SOC 710, SOC 711, SOC 731, or SOC737/CHS 745), and SPSY 794 (1 credit).
  - Only list 32 credits, not a single credit more!
  - *Do not* list the other courses you are taking in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year including those that will be later used in the Ph.D. program of study.
  - *Do* list any 700-level courses which you may have taken to make up for a deficit (see Section V subsection K).
- (d) Complete and submit a Master's Degree Notice of Completion form, which is [available on the Graduate School website](#).

An instructional email is sent by the Program Director during mid-Fall of the second-year detailing how to complete the M.A. Program of Study form.

## IX. Benchmarks for Timely Program Completion

Following the unanimous vote of the Program faculty in May 2017, the Program uses a number of benchmarks to ensure timely Program completion. As discussed in Section V, VI and VII, the Program has clear expectations when certain requirements ought to be accomplished to ensure that students graduate in a reasonable time (6 years or less). The benchmark policy specifies interventions intended to ensure that students who fall behind will be able to get back on track.

### **Benchmark #1: Research Paper Requirement (“Second-Year Project”)**

The Program expects students to complete their research paper requirement (“second-year project”) within three semesters (end of the Fall semester of their 3<sup>rd</sup> year), though completion by

the end of their 2<sup>nd</sup> year is considered ideal. If the research paper requirement has not been completed by the end of the Fall semester of a student's 3<sup>rd</sup> year,

1. there will be a meeting between student, advisor and the director (or his/her designee<sup>7</sup>) to develop a detailed plan of how the research paper requirement can be completed during the Spring semester of the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the Program. The plan should take the specific circumstances of the student into consideration and provide encouragement and, where needed, active support in advancing the student.
2. The advisor will not approve any overloads until the research paper requirement has been completed.
3. Should the student be unable to complete the research paper requirement by the end of the Fall semester of their 4<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, the student will be automatically put on academic probation. This makes the student ineligible for any graduate assistantships. Students will be re-instated/the probationary status ends in the semester following the successful completion of their research paper requirement.

## **Benchmark #2: Comprehensive Exam**

The Program expects students to take their comprehensive exam in late spring of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study, but no later than September of the 4<sup>th</sup> year. If the comprehensive exam has not been completed by **the end of the Fall semester of a student's 4<sup>th</sup> year**,

1. there will be a meeting between student, advisor and the director (or his/her designee), which includes developing a detailed plan to help guide the student toward the comprehensive exam. The plan should take the specific circumstances of the student into consideration and provide encouragement and, where needed, active support in advancing the student to the comprehensive exam. This may include support in selecting a dissertation committee. The director (or his/her designee) will regularly communicate with student and the advisor to ensure that the student is on track.
2. The advisor will not approve any overloads until the student has completed the comprehensive exam.
3. Should the student be unable to complete the comprehensive exam by the end of the Fall semester of their 5<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, the student will be put on academic probation. This makes the student ineligible for any graduate assistantships. Students will be re-instated/the probationary status ends in the semester following the successful passing of their comprehensive exam.

## **Benchmark #3: Dissertation Prospectus**

The Program expect students to defended their dissertation prospectus end of the Fall semester of

---

<sup>7</sup> If the student is an advisee of the Program Director's, the Program Director must designate another experienced member of the Program faculty to take on this role. However, there may be other circumstances for the director not to exercise this role himself/herself, with another member of the Program taking on this role.

a student's 4<sup>th</sup> year in the Program. If the dissertation prospectus has not been defended by the **end of the Fall semester of a student's 5<sup>th</sup> year** in the Program,

1. there will be a meeting between student, advisor and the director (or his/her designee), which includes developing a detailed plan for the completion of the dissertation prospectus. The plan should take the specific circumstances of the student into consideration and provide encouragement and, where needed, active support in advancing the student to the dissertation prospectus. The director will regularly communicate with student and the advisor to ensure that the student is on track.
2. Should the student be unable to complete and defend the prospectus by the end of the Spring semester of their 5<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, there will be another meeting and a new plan.
3. Should the student be unable to complete and defend the prospectus by the end of the Fall semester of their 6<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, the student will be automatically put on academic probation. This makes the student ineligible for any graduate assistantships. Students will be re-instated/the probationary status ends in the semester following the successful defense of the dissertation prospectus.
4. The advisor will not approve any overloads until the student has completed and defended the dissertation prospectus.

#### **Benchmark #4: "Out of Status" Courses**

A student who does not graduate before the **end their 8<sup>th</sup> year** in the Program faces the Graduate School's deadline for courses being "out of status." This requires students to retake these courses if they are to count toward the Ph.D. degree. To avoid this, the Graduate School allows advisors to write a memo asking for an exception, which avoids the "out of status" designation.

1. Exceptions are never automatic. They will only be granted after the student develops a satisfactory plan as to how they will complete the dissertation. Both the advisor and the Program Director (or his/her designee) must sign off on this plan in order for any exception to be requested from the Graduate School.
2. If the student does not make sufficient progress, or if the advisor or the Program Director (or his/her designee) deem the student's knowledge and skills insufficient to proceed, the advisor or the graduate director (or his/her designee) may withhold their signature, and the student will be required to re-take the "out of status" courses.
3. Exceptions can only be granted twice, i.e. at the end of the students 8<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, and at the end of the first semester of students' 9<sup>th</sup> year in the Program.
4. If the dissertation has not been completed by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, students will have to re-take courses to avoid them being "out of status."

#### **Benchmark #5: Ten-year Limit**

A student who does not graduate by the **end of their 10<sup>th</sup> year in the Program** faces dismissal from the Program.

1. The student's case can be brought before the Program faculty at the last faculty meeting of the academic year. There will be a secret vote as to whether to retain the student in the Program or whether to grant *one additional semester*. More than half of the Program faculty must vote (in person or by proxy) in favor of retaining the student in the Program in order for the student to avoid dismissal from the Program.
2. If the Program faculty granted the one-semester extension, but the dissertation has not been completed by the end of the Fall semester of the student's 11<sup>th</sup> year in the Program, the student faces automatic dismissal from the Program.

Students who feel that they cannot meet any of the benchmarks may consider a leave of absence. Any leave of absence does suspend their "clock" in the Program for the purposes of this benchmark policy; that is, any "on leave" semesters will not be counted toward a student's time in the Program. Note, however, that this does not apply to the Graduate School's "out of status" policy. Per Graduate School rules, students will be required to retake courses in the 9<sup>th</sup> year following initial enrollment in the Program.

### **Transition periods**

These benchmarks and associated measures applies to all students who entered their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year in the Fall semester 2017, and to all students entering the Program in subsequent years, unless this policy is revoked or altered by the Program faculty.

Students who entered their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> year in the Fall semester of 2017 have two (2) years until the benchmarks and associated measures apply to them. Students who are members of this group will be treated based on this policy starting with the Fall semester of 2019.

Students who were in their 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> year in the Fall semester of 2017 have one (1) additional year until the benchmarks and associated measures apply to them. Students who are members of this group are treated based on this policy starting with the Fall semester of 2018.

Students who were in their 11<sup>th</sup> year or higher in the Fall semester of 2017 are treated effectively as 10<sup>th</sup> year students; that is, they have one (1) additional year until the benchmarks and associated measures apply to them. Students who are members of this group will have one (1) additional year to complete their dissertation before facing the threat of dismissal from the Program. Students who are members of this group will be treated based on this policy starting with the Fall semester of 2018.

*Note:* Under this policy, students who are in their 11<sup>th</sup> year or higher in Fall 2018 are set to be automatically be dismissed from the Program. However, because the policy did not yet apply to them in Spring 2018, they do not have any chance to petition the faculty to remain in the Program during the Fall semester of 2018. As a one-time exception, this extension of one semester (VIII E 1.) will be automatically extended to all students who in Fall 2017 are in their 10<sup>th</sup> year or higher. That is, students who are in their 11<sup>th</sup> year or higher in Fall 2018, but who have not completed all requirements of the degree by the end of the Fall semester 2018, will be dismissed from the Program.

## X. Standard Schedule for Ph.D. without M.A.

The following schedule is intended for student who wish to complete the Ph.D. program within four (4) years and who enter the Program without a deficit. Completion of the Ph.D. program within four years while also obtaining a M.A. degree *en route* is not realistic for most students.

### Credits to graduate with a Ph.D.: 74 (minimum)

**48** credits of graduate coursework, 30 credits of which must be 700-level or above. Nine credits of coursework may be the 9 credits of graduate research (SPSY 702) taken to fulfill the research paper requirement/2<sup>nd</sup> year project;

**24** credits of dissertation research (SPSY 799). Students may take more than 24 but only 24 can be counted toward the degree);

**2** credits of exams: 1 for the qualifying exam (SPSY 794) and 1 for the comprehensive exam (SPSY 795).

### First Year (18 credits)

Fall <b>SOC 739</b> Advanced Social Psychology I (3 credits) <b>PSY 724</b> Applied Research Methodology II (3 credits) <b>PSY 706</b> Intermediate Statistics (3 credits)	Spring <b>SOC 740</b> Advanced Social Psychology II (3 credits) <b>SOC 718</b> Research Methods in Social Psychology (3 credits) <b>PSY 707</b> Intermediate Statistics II (3 credits)
---	---

**Qualifying Exam (1 credit).** Although students take the exam in June, they register for the one credit (SPSY 794) either during *the second summer term* or *the following Fall semester*.

Therefore, you may be enrolled in a total of 10 credits during the Fall of your second year.

### Second Year (19 credits)

The following order of seminars and supervised research is suggested and may vary by course offerings.

Fall <b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research <sup>8</sup> (3 credits) <b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) <b>SOC 731</b> Advanced Design and Data Analysis <sup>9</sup> (3 credits) <b>SPSY 794</b> Qualifying examination (1 credit)	Spring <b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research (3 credits) <b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)
--	---

<sup>8</sup> Students have the option of enrolling under the corresponding course in Supervised Research/Graduate Research in their advisor's home department: SOC 702, PSY 752, HDFS 752, CRJ 702, or CHS 792.

<sup>9</sup> If SOC 731 or 737 are not offered in your second year, substitute an alternative course. SOC 722 Attitudes is a required course as well, which might be offered during your second year. SOC 722, 731 and 737 are each offered either in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of students' time in the Program.

	<b>SOC 737</b> or <b>CHS 745</b> Survey Research Methods <sup>10</sup> (3 credits)
--	--

**Third Year (18 credits)**

Fall <b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) <b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) <b>SOC 722</b> Attitudes (3 credits)	Spring <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (Prospectus planning) (6 credits) <b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) Comprehensive Exam at the end of semester/during summer
--	---

**Fourth Year (19 credits)**

Fall <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (9 credits) <sup>11</sup> <b>SPSY 795</b> Comprehensive examination (1 credit)	Spring <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (9 credits)
--	--

**Additional coursework**

*Deficit:* If students were admitted with a deficit, they have to take an additional graduate course in either sociology or psychology. This course does not count toward the 74 credits, which are required for the Ph.D. (see Section V subsection K).

**XI. Standard Schedule for Ph.D. with M.A.**

The following schedule is intended for student who wish to complete the Ph.D. program within five (5) years and who may or may not enter the Program with a deficit.

**Credits to graduate with a Ph.D.: 82 (minimum)**

**32** credits of graduate coursework for the M.A., 24 credits of which may transfer to the Ph.D. (see specific requirements for the M.A. degree, Section VIII);

**24** credits of additional graduate coursework; at least 30 credits of the combined coursework credit must be 700-level or above. Nine credits of coursework may be the 9 credits of graduate research (SPSY 702) taken to fulfill the research paper requirement/2<sup>nd</sup> year project;

**24** credits of dissertation research (e.g. SPSY 799). Students may take more than 24 but only 24 can be counted toward the degree);

<sup>10</sup> SOC 722 Attitudes is a required course as well, which might be offered during your 2<sup>nd</sup> year. SOC 722, 731 and 737 are each offered either in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of students' time in the Program.

<sup>11</sup> Students have the option of enrolling under the corresponding course in their advisor's home department: SOC 799, PSY 799, HDFL 799, CRJ 799 or CHS 799.

2 credits of exams: 1 for the qualifying exam (SPSY 794) and 1 for the comprehensive exam (e.g., SPSY 795).

### First Year (18 credits)

<p>Fall</p> <p><b>SOC 739</b> Advanced Social Psychology I (3 credits)</p> <p><b>PSY 724</b> Applied Research Methodology II (3 credits)</p> <p><b>PSY 706</b> Intermediate Statistics (3 credits)</p>	<p>Spring</p> <p><b>SOC 740</b> Advanced Social Psychology II (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOC 718</b> Research Methods in Social Psychology (3 credits)</p> <p><b>PSY 707</b> Intermediate Statistics II (3 credits)</p>
--	--

**Qualifying Exam (1 credit).** Although you take the exam in June, you register for the one credit (SPSY 794) either during *the second summer term* or *the following Fall semester*. Therefore, you may be enrolled in a total of 10 credits during the Fall of your second year.

### Second Year (20 credits)

The following order of seminars and supervised research is suggested, and may vary by course offerings.

<p>Fall</p> <p><b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research<sup>12</sup> (3 credits)</p> <p><b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOC 731</b> Advanced Design and Data Analysis<sup>13</sup> (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SPSY 794</b> Qualifying examination (1 credit)</p>	<p>Spring</p> <p><b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research (4 credits)</p> <p><b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOC 737</b> or <b>CHS 745</b> Survey Research Methods<sup>14</sup> (3 credits)</p>
---	---

### Third Year (18 credits)

<p>Fall</p> <p><b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) [flex]</p> <p><b>600- or 700-level</b> course (3 credits)</p> <p><b>SOC 722</b> Attitudes (3 credits)</p>	<p>Spring</p> <p><b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits) [flex]</p> <p><b>600- or 700-level</b> course (3 credits)</p> <p><b>700-level</b> seminar (3 credits)</p> <p>Comprehensive Exam taken near end of semester</p>
---	--

<sup>12</sup> See Footnote 8.

<sup>13</sup> See Footnote 9.

<sup>14</sup> See Footnote 10.

**Fourth Year (14 credits)**

Fall <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (6 credits) <b>SPSY 795</b> Comprehensive examination (1 credit)	Spring <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (6 credits) <b>SPSY 702</b> Graduate Research (1 credit) [summer]
--	---

**Fifth Year (12 credits)**

Fall <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (6 credits)	Spring <b>SPSY 799</b> Dissertation (6 credits)
--	--

**Additional coursework**

*Deficit:* If students were admitted with a deficit, they have to take an additional graduate course, typically in either sociology or psychology. This course *can* count toward the 82 credits, which are required for the Ph.D. with M.A. *en route*, as long as any credits from the 700-level deficit course are being applied to the M.A. degree. Credits from a 700-level course to make for a psychology or sociology deficit are never applicable to the Ph.D. degree (see Section V subsection K).

**XII. Academic Standards****Graduate School Standards – Criteria for Academic Probation**

The Graduate School requires that students meet specific [academic standards](#). Students whose overall GPA drops below 3.0 are placed on probation. Graduate students placed on probation are not eligible for appointments as [teaching or research assistants](#). Students have one semester to raise their GPA to 3.0 and avoid losing graduate standing. If a graduate student's overall graduate GPA remains below 3.0 for two consecutive semesters, that student is dropped from graduate standing. Such a student may take courses under the category "Graduate Special" but they are no longer considered graduate students in the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program. In order to be reconsidered as Ph.D. students in social psychology, they must raise their graduate GPA to 3.0 using their "Graduate Special" courses and then may re-apply to the Program at the next January 1<sup>st</sup> application deadline. Only 9 credits of graduate special coursework may be transferred toward the Ph.D., degree, subject to approval by the Program director. Students should consult with the Program Director for advice when signing up for courses if they are interested in potentially transferring those courses for credit toward Program requirements.

## **Standards Specific to the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program**

The standards set by the Graduate School are considered minimum standards. The Program reserves the right to set higher standards for Ph.D. students. For core classes (PSY/SOC 706, 707, 718, 739, 740, 724, 722, 737) a grade below “B-” indicates that the student must take the class again. The student must receive a grade of B- or above to meet Program requirements.

### **Appeals**

Students may formally appeal a decision made by the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program regarding their academic status. A student must write a letter to the committee outlining their position within 10 days of a challenged decision. The Graduate School provides an appeal process that the student may follow. All decisions on appeals are final.

### **Normal Progress**

Students should recognize that it is their responsibility to complete the coursework, exams and other requirements of the Program in a timely manner. To ensure student progress, the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program has implemented Benchmark Policy (see Section IX) For general information, students may also refer to the [Graduate School section of the University Catalog](#) for further clarification of requirements for completion of the Ph.D.

For additional information on issues beyond those addressed in this Handbook, please check the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Program website.

## **XIII. Program Themes**

The Program faculty contribute to four thematic areas as discussed below. Students may choose research projects that utilize one or more of these themes, or they may engage in social psychological scholarship in other aspects of the discipline.<sup>15</sup>

### **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND HEALTH**

Faculty of the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program are actively engaged in research that assesses human health and well-being from a social-psychological perspective. Their areas of interest span a broad range, including the influence of psychological and social processes on physiology, doctor/patient interaction, stigma and health, violence against women, religious participation and health, grief surrounding mass tragedies, and the social-psychological processes behind social inequalities in health.

---

<sup>15</sup> For the most current information on faculty research interests see [faculty webpages](#) via the program website.

## **SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

One of the research foci of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Social Psychology Program is Social Psychology and Relationships. Faculty research interests in this area of emphasis focus on research issues related to the development, maintenance and dissolution of human relationships. Topics span a broad range of issues looking at relationships within friendship, communication, dating, intimacies, social networks, sexualities, marriage, and family contexts as well as different life stages. Specific issues of concern include: the interface among gender, socialization and relationships; adolescent relationship perceptions; marital or relationship commitment; relationships and health; and cultural differences in relationship formation and dynamics.

## **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND LAW/JUSTICE**

The social psychology and law specialization consists of advanced courses, seminars, directed research, and opportunities for practica in justice system settings. These courses build on the core courses and advanced seminars that comprise the Ph.D. program in social psychology. Social Psychology and law Program faculty offer a seminar that covers the area of scholarship in social psychology, and law, usually taken by students in their second or third year of study. Advanced seminars are offered on jury behavior and other specialized topics in areas of law, social justice, and criminal justice. Appropriate courses in related departments are also taken by our students, such as constitutional law and jurisprudence, which are offered by the political science department.

The Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies, a research center on the campus, directed by a social psychology faculty member, affords students an opportunity for assistantships and research on justice issues. Projects at the Center have included studies of grand jurors; decisions by district attorneys to seek the death penalty in eligible cases; program evaluation research in justice-related settings; the use of scientific evidence in court; and other areas. Faculty and graduate students in the specialization attend colloquia and lectures at the Center presented by University faculty and visiting scholars, and also find resources at the Center for their individual research.

The [National Judicial College](#) and the [National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges](#) are located on the campus of the University of Nevada, Reno. These unique justice establishments afford research opportunities for graduate students in the Social Psychology and Law specialization.

## **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Some members of the Social Psychology Ph.D. faculty study human behavior in organizations and related applied settings, such as management consulting. This work is simultaneously research-oriented and theory-driven. The theory is rooted in social psychology, but is informed as well by other social sciences such as economics, government policy-making, and legal processes. Broad areas of investigation include current issues in industrial/organizational

psychology, organizational behavior and theory, organizational consulting, leadership, social psychology and educational institutions, and human resource management. Courses recently made available to Program students include organizational behavior, and topics such as ethical behavior in organizations, organization development and consulting, women and organizations, job stress and coping, and technological diffusion and development.

## **XIV. Additional Policies**

### **Social Psychology Policy on Overloads**

The Graduate School defines a full workload for students as .50 FTE. FTE stands for “Full Time Equivalent.” A .50 FTE is half of a full time (40 hours per week) equivalent position (1.0 FTE). Any on-campus employment resulting in a total FTE of greater than .5 is considered an overload employment. The maximum overload the university allows students to hold during Fall and Spring semester is .25 FTE, resulting in an overall maximum of .75 FTE.

The faculty of the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program support efforts that enable students to make adequate timely progress toward their degree. They also encourage students to obtain the range of knowledge, skills and experiences necessary for their professional development (e.g., developing research, grant-writing, teaching, publishing and presenting their research). Consistent with these goals the faculty values the availability of .50 FTE (20 hours per week) graduate assistantships or fellowships whenever possible. The faculty recognize that additional assistantships or Letter-of-Appointment (LOA) teaching positions provide opportunity for further development. However, overloads can also slow down a student’s progress toward degree completion. The amount of progress toward degree completion lost, compared to the amount of additional development gained, generally declines substantially for students who utilize overloads across a large number of semesters. Therefore, the Program’s benchmark policy (Section IX in this Handbook) prohibits overloads whenever students are not meeting Program benchmarks.

All overload employment requires the approval of the Program director, the student’s advisor, and the student’s current employers (i.e. of the .50 FTE graduate assistantships) or funders (in the case of fellowships). It is the policy of the Program faculty to scrutinize overload requests closely, particularly for students beginning their fifth year or above, before determining whether they warrant approval. First-year students are not eligible for any overloads. Second year students are not eligible for overloads *except* under rare and extraordinary circumstances. Requests for overload must be made in writing by a student’s advisor (with support from the students’ current employers or funder) to the Program Director. Each overload request must make a case and provide adequate justification for why the overload request should be granted. The Program Director will then make a determination based on that all of the following apply:

- (1) the student is in compliance with the benchmark policy;

- (2) the overload will not unduly hinder the student's academic progress (productivity and progress toward degree completion);
- (3) the overload will provide essential elements of professional development that do not already sufficiently exist (e.g., the first or second opportunity to teach a course);
- (4) the student is distinctly qualified and therefore essential to the position; the position cannot be taken by another graduate student who does not have a .50 FTE assistantship;
- (5) it is not possible to offset the overload activity by reallocating an equivalent portion of the student's existing position to another graduate student who does not have a .50 FTE assistantship.

In cases where an overload is granted, the University's overload request form along with a memorandum detailing the nature of the additional employment must be submitted to the Graduate School. These documents must be signed and approved by the advisor, current employers, employer of the overload, and the Program Director (as evidenced by their signatures). The Graduate School's Policy and a sample overload request form can be downloaded [here](#); this information also provided in the [Graduate Assistantship Handbook](#).

## **Important Information Concerning Additional On-Campus Employment**

### **Employment during Summer, Winter, or Spring Break**

Per the University's [Graduate Assistantship Handbook](#), all students (including international students) can work up to 40 hours during summer, winter, and spring breaks. The University's overload form is not required for summer break. If students take on additional employment during winter or spring break, submitting an overload form is strongly encouraged. It clarifies that any additional employment during these periods is separate from the student's usual semester-based employment commitment. Social psychology students who are considering working more than 20 hours per week during these periods are expected to discuss such plans, in advance, with their advisor and all employers so as to ascertain its impact on academic progress.

### **Combining a Graduate Assistantship and a Letter-of-Appointment (LOA) Position**

Students who wish to accept an LOA position in addition to an existing graduate assistantship position are subject to the Program's overload policy (see above).

If students hold only a 10-hour assistantship (.25 FTE) and also wish to teach a 3-credit course as an LOA (part-time faculty), an overload form is not necessary. Teaching a course as an LOA is equivalent to .1875 FTE, and an overload memo is only required when students exceed .50 FTE.

If students who hold only a 10-hour assistantship (.25 FTE) and also teach a two (2) 3-credit courses as an LOA (part-time faculty), an overload form is necessary. With teaching each course as an LOA being equivalent to .1875 FTE, students' total FTE exceeds .50 (.625 FTE total), and an overload form is required.

UNR policy indicates part-time faculty (LOAs) who teach a course are entitled to a university fee waiver for the same number of total credits they are teaching. Students must contact the department in which they are teaching to determine how to obtain this waiver.

### **International Students**

International students are limited to a 20-hour assistantship position (.50 FTE) during the semester. They are never allowed to hold overloads during the semester. International students are eligible to work up to 40 hours per week (1.0 FTE) during the summer, spring and winter breaks.

### **Financial Considerations Concerning Summer Funding/Employment**

Typically, under federal laws U.S. employees must make contribute to Social Security and Medicare (the so-called Federal Insurance Contribution Act [FICA] tax). This tax is automatically withheld from employees' payroll. Some entities, such as the Nevada System of Higher Education, use a plan that is an alternative to, but otherwise equivalent to the FICA tax. NSHE employees make mandatory contributions to an investment firm called VOYA, which invests employees' contributions on their behalf. This implies that the money plus investment proceeds belongs to employees. If employees retire, they receive VOYA payments, and if employees leave NSHE, they can have these funds paid out to them.

Under federal law, all currently-enrolled students are exempted from making VOYA contributions. However, most students are not enrolled during the two summer months, June and July. If students are employed during the summer, and they are not enrolled during either the first or second summer term, they are subject to making VOYA contributions.

When students graduate or otherwise leave the University, and they have made VOYA contributions, they can contact the University's payroll office of to have their VOYA contributions paid back to them.

There is simply way to be employed during the summer, but avoid having to make mandatory VOYA contributions. Students have to be enrolled for at least one (1) credit during the first or second summer term (miniterm does not count).

Unless their summer employer (e.g., a department, University center) is willing to provide tuition assistance, students have to pay for this one credit themselves. If their employer does provide tuition assistance, students' own share in paying for this credit is the same as for any other credit taken during the regular semester. Note that there are one-time fees associated with enrollment, and typically these fees do not vary by the number of credits for which a student enrolls. Therefore, students should carefully consider all financial costs when making a decision to enroll for one credit during the summer or not. Recall that students who make mandatory contributions to VOYA can receive this money back when they leave the University.

Students who were teaching assistant during the Spring semester immediately preceding the summer term do enjoy automatic tuition assistance for any credits taken during the summer

terms. This applies also to some research assistants. The critical element is whether their assistantship stipends were paid out of a “state account” (money allocated to a department or program to fulfill its educational mission). For all assistantships paid out of a state account, a assistantship employment during the Spring semester provides tuition assistantship during summer. To find out if you were paid out of a state account, please contact your on-campus employer.

To get access to this benefit, students must enroll in any summer credits (first or second summer term) by early June. Students must inform their on-campus employer that they require tuition assistance during the summer. The employer must then file some paperwork to ensure that the tuition assistance is provided for the summer. This must occur by early June, prior to the beginning of the first summer term.

### **Off-Campus Employment**

The Graduate School and the faculty of the Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program are concerned about any additional off-campus employment by students who are already on a .50 FTE assistantship. If social psychology doctoral students who hold graduate assistantships seek additional employment at another employment site, they are expected to discuss the matter with their advisor and Program director. The goal is to determine the impact of additional employment on their progress toward degree completion and ultimate career goals.

### **University Residency Requirement for Doctoral Students**

Doctoral students at the University of Nevada, Reno, are required to fulfill a residency requirement (see [Program of Study Requirements/Instructions form](#)). This consists of two (2) consecutive semesters (Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall) of at least nine (9) graduate credits each. However, students on 20 hour per week (.50 FTE) graduate assistantships are required to only complete 2 consecutive semesters of six (6) credits each semester (Fall/Spring or Spring/Fall) if they are completing the residency requirement while they are employed in those assistantships.

### **University Time to Degree Completion**

All requirements for any doctoral program at the University of Nevada, Reno, excluding prerequisite graduate coursework or Master’s degrees, must be completed within a period of eight (8) years immediately preceding the granting of the degree (see [Program of Study Requirements/Instructions form](#)). See Section IX of this Handbook for the Program’s benchmark policy, which complements the University policy.

### **Program Policy on Deficits**

Students who were admitted to the Program with a deficit (typically in either sociology or psychology) must make up this deficit by taking a graduate level course, typically 700-level (see Section V subsection K for details). These courses do not count toward the completion of the

Ph.D. and cannot be included in the Program of Study for the Ph.D. However, they may be included in the Program of Study for the M.A. degree *en route*.

## **XV. Social Psychology Faculty Members**

### **Core Faculty**

[Emily Berthelot](#). Assistant Professor, Dept. of Criminal Justice (Ph. D., Louisiana State University)

[Melissa Burnham](#). Associate Professor, Human Development and Family Studies (Ph. D., University of California, Davis)

[Daniel Cook](#). Associate Professor, School of Community Health Sciences (Ph.D., City University of New York)

[Deborah Davis](#). Professor, Dept. of Psychology (Ph.D., The Ohio State University)

[Paul Devereux](#). Associate Professor, School of Community Health Sciences (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Marta Elliott](#). Professor, Dept. of Sociology (Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University)

[Mariah Evans](#). Professor, Dept. of Sociology (Ph.D., University of Chicago)

[William Evans](#). Professor, Human Development and Family Studies; Adolescent Development State Specialist, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles)

[Dan Jones](#). Assistant Professor, Managerial Sciences (Ph.D., University of British Columbia)

[Markus Kemmelmeier](#). Professor, Dept. of Sociology and Director, Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program (Ph.D., University of Michigan)

[Matthew Leone](#). Associate Professor, Dept. of Criminal Justice (Ph.D., University of California, Irvine)

[Shawn Marsh](#). Director of Judicial Studies, Associate Professor, Communication Studies and Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program, (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Monica Miller](#). Professor, Dept. of Criminal Justice and Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program (J.D., University of Nebraska College of Law; Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln)

[Colleen Murray](#). Professor, Dept. of Sociology (Ph.D., The Ohio State University)

[Anthony Papa](#). Associate Professor, Dept. of Psychology (Ph.D., Columbia University)

[Clayton Peoples](#). Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology (Ph.D., The Ohio State University)

[Yvonne Stedham](#). Professor, Dept. of Management (Ph.D., University of Kansas, Lawrence)

[Judith Sugar](#). Associate Professor, School of Public Health (Ph.D., York University, Toronto, Canada)

[Daniel Weigel](#). Professor, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Human Development and Family Studies (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Yueran Yang](#). Assistant Professor, Dept. of Psychology (Ph.D., Iowa State University)

## **Emeritus/a Faculty**

Emeritus/a faculty have officially retired from active service, but they may still continue to participate in the life of the Program. They are eligible to serve on dissertation committees, though they do not generally take on new students.

†Carl Backman. Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Sociology (Ph.D., Indiana University)

[Deborah Ballard-Reisch](#). Emerita Professor, School of Public Health (Ph.D., Bowling Green University)

[Ronald Dillehay](#). Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Psychology and Past Director, Grant Sawyer Center for Justice Studies (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley)

[Gerald Ginsburg](#). Emeritus Professor of Social Psychology and Dept. of Psychology (Ph.D., University of Michigan)

[Laurie Larwood](#). Emerita Professor, Dept. of Managerial Sciences (Ph.D., Tulane University)

[James Richardson](#). Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Sociology; Director of the Judicial Studies Program; (J.D., Nevada School of Law, Old College; Ph.D., Washington State University)

[Mary White Stewart](#). Emerita Professor, Dept. of Sociology; Director, School of Social Research and Justice Studies (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

## **Affiliate Faculty**

Affiliate faculty are eligible to supervise second year research projects and serve on dissertations as either a Program committee member or co-chair, but they cannot serve as sole dissertation committee chair.

[Veronica Dahir](#). Director, Research Services Grants and Projects Analyst, College of Liberal Arts, University of Nevada, Reno (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Sophia Gatowski](#). Director, Systems Change Solutions, Inc. (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Joyce Hartje](#). Project Manager, Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technology, University of Nevada, Reno (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

---

†Deceased

[Paul LaMarca](#). Chief Ombudsman & Strategies officer, Washoe County School District (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Jennifer Lowman](#). Director, Office of Student Persistence Research, University of Nevada, Reno (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Mara Merlino](#). Associate Professor of Psychology and Sociology, Kentucky State University (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)

[Alicia Summers](#), Director, Data Savvy Consulting, LLC (Ph.D., University of Nevada, Reno)