

Sociology

Guiding Policy for Honors Theses

(Submitted Spring 2002)

Scope of the Project

An Honors thesis in sociology will typically entail a fairly rigorous reading and review of literature that presents sociological perspectives on a chosen topic, along with a carefully designed research project that generates the student's own data for interpretation.

Components of the Project

An Honors thesis in Sociology will include the following components:

- An extensive literature review consisting of at least 15-20 works cited (most of which should be from sociological journals or landmark works) presented in a bibliography using ASA style (see departmental style reference book) documentation.
- A summary and discussion of research collected by the student which may be qualitative or quantitative in nature, depending on the student's interests and the advising professor's suggestions.
- 20-30 pages of double-spaced text and however many additional documents (i.e. copy of measurement instrument, graphs, tables, charts, or illustrations) are necessary to offer a comprehensive record of the project.
- A formal oral presentation of the project presented to sociology faculty, peers and other invited guests.

Timeline

The student will meet with her thesis director during the pre-registration period of the semester immediately preceding the one in which the project is to be completed. In this conference they will explore and begin to refine project ideas. It is strongly encouraged that she begin her literature review before the end of that semester. No later than the end of the first week of the semester in which she is registered for the thesis, the student will present a thesis proposal for review and will make necessary revisions. As soon as the project has been approved, the student and thesis director will develop a timeline for the project that will present guidelines for each project component, allowing time for revisions at each stage.

Grading

The grade is 100 percent determined by the paper. While meeting deadlines and giving an effective and clear oral presentation are important elements of the Honors thesis, the grade depends ultimately on the quality of the final product. The expectation is that the thesis will exceed standards imposed on the thesis requirements for the sociology major who is not classified as Honors. Clear excellence in research and writing will be required.

Final Words of Advice to non-Sociology majors

Sociological thinking is not easily attached to an interesting topic. It requires knowledge, practice and cultivation. Where Honors students in the past have stumbled, it has most often been due to their expectation that their chosen topic was "sociological" without adequate understanding of how sociologists approach a topic. This distinction should be fully explored and understood before a final decision is made to complete an Honors thesis in sociology.