Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Sociology
Acadia University
2019-2020

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Important Dates for Sociology Graduate Students 2019-2020

Fall Term

RGS Orientation September 3

SOCI 5123 Sociological Methodology, Wednesday 8:30-11:30 AM, PAT 213

SOCI 5003 X1 Graduate Seminar, Monday 8:30-11:30am, BAC 424/ See schedule

End of September	Identify a supervisor
October-November	The University REB meets the 4th of every month. Students should have their research ethics proposal to the REB no later than January 24. Ethics must be approved by a supervisor before it goes the the REB.

Winter Term

5113 X2 SOCI Sociological Theory, Tuesday 8:30-11:30 PM, BAC 359

February 7/ TBA	Presentation of research proposal to the department*
April	Discuss external reader with supervisor
May 1	Research component of the thesis should be complete
June 20	Complete first draft submitted to supervisor to ensure graduation for fall convocation
July 31	Revised thesis submitted to supervisor; with their approval, it will be sent out for external review (4 weeks required).
August 2020	Apply to graduate by August 28, 2020.
September 2020	Defence is scheduled; final thesis must be received by RGS by September 25th

*At this point the student should have completed a first draft of the following chapters: literature review, theory and methodology

Program Requirements

Courses

Students will meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator during the orientation period to register for their courses and discuss potential supervisors. Each student is required to take the following courses:

- One research methods course (SOCI 5123 X1 Sociological Methodology)
- One theory course (5113 X2 SOCI Sociological Theory)
- One professional development seminar (SOCI 5003 X1 Graduate Seminar)
- Two three-hour elective courses (one per term); may include one independent reading course as well as courses offered by other graduate programs (e.g. *CODE 5033 Community Development Seminar CODE 5033 Community Development Seminar*)
- Every student will be enrolled in the thesis course (SOCI 5960 Thesis) as part of their ongoing, independent thesis research throughout their degree

*Individual research activities should not conflict with course attendance. Students who miss more than two classes run the risk of failing the course.
*Students are expected to meet with the Graduate Program Coordinator once per semester to discuss their progress.

Research Proposal Presentations

Students will present their thesis proposals to the department at the end of January. Students must circulate their proposals to all members of the department one week before the presentation date. For the presentation, students should prepare a 10 minute talk about their research plans, after which point they will respond to questions and feedback. This is a mandatory requirement of the Graduate Seminar.

This proposal should provide the following (Max. 3000 words):
1. A clearly worded description of the topic under investigation.
2. The purpose of the proposed research.
3. The relation of the proposed research to traditions of scholarship. How does this research contribute to or diverge from these traditions?
4. The theoretical framework and methodological approach of the proposed research.
5. Where appropriate, research ethics, language, travel and any special requirements.
6. The original contribution to knowledge that the proposed research makes.
7. A brief chapter-by-chapter outline of the thesis.
 8. A time frame for completing the thesis.

Thesis Preparation Guidelines

Students must prepare their thesis according to the guidelines established by Research and Graduate Studies. They will not accept the final version of your thesis

if it is not prepared accordingly. We recommend that students follow the template from the onset. For detailed information on the guidelines, please see: http://gradstudies.acadiau.ca/PresentationPrepareThesis.html

Students are required to follow the ASA style guide. An abbreviated version can be found on the American Sociological Association website at:
http://www.asanet.org/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf
There is a more comprehensive guide available on the sociology web site at:
http://sociology.acadiau.ca/tl_files/sites/sociology/resources/pdf%20documents/asa_style_guide.pdf
All students will be trained in Zotero, a software tool that helps you organize your citations and references.

Defence Guidelines
Students must submit one hard copy and one electronic copy of their thesis to Research and Graduate Studies a **minimum of four week**s prior to the anticipated oral defence date. Your supervisor will indicate when the work is ready to sent out to the internal and external reviewer. You must include with this a signed copy of the Request for Oral Examination form. Please see the following link for all forms and information regarding the thesis defence:
https://gradstudies.acadiau.ca/Forms.html

Teaching and Research Assistants in Sociology

Responsibilities of a Teaching Assistant (TA)
RGS offers a limited amount of money to the department to fund graduate student teaching assistantships. Normally, the amount of the TA salary is stipulated in the offer of admission. These positions are for eight hours a week (unless otherwise specified) for 13 weeks during the semester.

Duties might include:
- teaching preparation support (research; photocopying)
- marking support
- teaching a class once a term
- holding office hours
- holding tutorials

Responsibilities of a Research Assistant (RA)
Students may be hired by individual faculty members to provide research support. Exact hours and duties will depend on the research program of the faculty member, but responsibilities might include:
- conducting a literature review
- creating a research bibliography
- transcription

- analyzing data

RGS Policies on Graduate Thesis Supervision

The section below has been been written by Research and Graduate Studies. Please read these carefully.

Responsibilities of faculty, students, and administrators

NOTE: The responsibilities and dispute resolution processes outlined in this document apply to students in the 13 masters programs at Acadia within the Faculties of Arts, Professional Studies, and Pure and Applied Science, as well as to students in the PhD program in Educational Studies.

This document is intended to provide clear and succinct guidelines for graduate students, faculty supervisors, and administrators on issues related to the supervision of graduate theses and research projects. This is an area of critical importance to the University. Undertaking research is an essential component of graduate study. A good supervisory relationship creates a healthy and supportive environment in which students can accomplish their research and scholarly goals. It also creates a positive and productive environment for faculty supervisors. For many faculty members, the research done by their graduate students not only contributes to their personal research programs; it is frequently an indispensable component of it.

This document has been prepared by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, with the support and assistance of the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies. It was undertaken with a view to establishing University-wide policy to guide the supervision of graduate-level research. The policies and guidelines contained in this document are intended to bring clarity to the expectations and responsibilities of graduate students and supervisors, and to outline procedures for dealing with conflict and otherwise problematic circumstances in the supervision of graduate research.

Joint responsibilities of supervisors and students:

Respect. Every student and faculty supervisor has a right to be treated respectfully. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Maintaining appointments, except in cases of extenuating circumstances. If cancellation is necessary, provide as much advanced notice as possible.
- Coming to meetings having read or prepared whatever was agreed upon prior to the appointment.
- Allowing for disagreements, but recognizing that it is the supervisor's responsibility to guide the direction of, and approach to, the study; no research project will proceed to a public defense without the agreement and written

consent of the supervisor, the student, and the head/director of the department/school. If disagreements or disputes arise in the relationship, faculty and students are expected to treat each other in ways that are not hurtful or otherwise disrespectful.

- Maintaining confidentiality. While not all aspects of a supervisory relationship are confidential, areas that have been identified by one or the other as being such must be respected.
- Constructing a joint relationship that is free of stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudicial behaviour.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

- Topic Development. Supervisors are expected to provide guidance for students in the development of thesis/project topics. This includes offering ideas and generally assisting students in identifying areas within a disciplinary realm that are suitable for investigation. In instances where a student enters the relationship with a well-developed idea for a research study, the faculty supervisor can assist in refining the research focus and delimiting the study.
- Proposal Development. Every thesis-based research project at Acadia begins with the development of a formal research proposal by the student. While the length and substance will vary among departments and schools, a proposal serves as a basis for the development of a research project that will meet academic standards. Once the proposal is at the stage where the supervisor feels the study is ready to be launched, he or she will sign a proposal acceptance form and file it, along with a copy of the proposal, in the departmental or school office. A copy will be provided for the student. Departments and schools may require a proposal meeting in order to provide feedback from the examining/proposal committee.

  Signing a formal research proposal does not preclude the possibility that research studies can change due to unforeseen circumstances, creating a situation where the purpose of the study as originally stated is not achievable. Where this happens, changes must be jointly agreed upon by the supervisor and the student, and must adhere to departmental or school policy. Substantial changes in focus may require the preparation and submission of a new proposal.
- Reasonable Access. Faculty members who have agreed to supervise graduate students are expected to be reasonably accessible for thesis consultation, occasionally on short notice. To whatever extent possible, supervisors should plan with students around likely completion dates in order to avoid interruptions and delays. In cases of leaves of absence or sabbaticals, the supervisor, in consultation with the graduate coordinator, may arrange for a replacement supervisor.
- Length of Study (timelines). It is the responsibility of the faculty supervisor to assist a graduate student in designing a study that is achievable in a reasonable period of time.

- Constructive and Timely Feedback. A central component of the research process for graduate students is constructive and timely feedback from supervisors. This is crucial in allowing a student to maintain consistent progress. What constitutes timely feedback is to be negotiated in each supervisory relationship, and perhaps by standards established within departments and schools. Under normal circumstances, students should not expect feedback to be "immediate," but neither should they expect it to be in excess of two (2) weeks.
- Constructive and timely feedback is equally crucial in instances where students are not meeting academic expectations. While these conversations can be difficult, it serves no one's interest to prolong a study if success is unlikely.
- Professional Growth. Supervisors are expected to support students' professional development by encouraging participation in discipline-specific professional gatherings (e.g., conferences, symposia). Where appropriate, supervisors should encourage the publication (jointly or otherwise) of a student's work.
- Thesis quality. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to advise the student as to the quality of the thesis (i.e., that it meets or exceeds the standards of graduate level work at Acadia) and to judge whether it is ready for submission.

Responsibilities of Students

- Commitment to Research. Graduate research takes time and commitment on behalf of students. In discussion with faculty supervisors, students need to plan for sufficient time to complete a thesis or project of substantial scholarly merit. This includes: (i) time needed to gain sufficient background and skills in the research area before initiating the study, (ii) time required to undertake the fieldwork/analysis in a comprehensive and rigorous manner, and (iii) time to produce a thesis manuscript that is thorough, well organized, and lucidly written.
- Research Proposal. Each thesis student is required to write and submit a research proposal in consultation with their supervisor that meets the standards established by their department or school.
- Communication. Students are expected to maintain regular contact with supervisors to inform them of progress and make them aware of factors that may cause problems or interruptions. It may be helpful if students and supervisors agree upon a schedule of meetings and event horizons, although this may not always be possible. It is important for students to recognize that faculty members have other responsibilities which can delay access on short notice.
- Ethical Behaviour. All students are expected to adhere to high ethical standards in undertaking research that involves humans or other animals. This includes close familiarity with the protocols established by the Research Ethics Board or the Animal Care Committee, in addition to appropriate discipline-specific codes of ethics. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all written work in the thesis is either his or her own work, or, where appropriate, has been attributed to the actual authors.

Dispute Resolution

At times conflict arises in a supervisory relationship. As uncomfortable as this may be, it is imperative that troubling issues be addressed at an early stage before they lead to a deterioration of the working relationship. Resolution at an early stage should be between the student and the supervisor, without the necessity of involving others. However, given the power imbalance in a supervisor relationship, if students are uncomfortable approaching their supervisors on issues of conflict, or if the supervisory relationship has deteriorated to the point where the likelihood of resolution at this informal stage is remote, the following procedures are to be employed:

- Graduate Coordinator. All departments and schools offering graduate programs select a faculty member to serve as their graduate program coordinator. This individual is normally responsible for providing academic counselling for graduate students. However, in cases of conflict in the supervisory relationship, the coordinator serves as the first external point of contact for the student and/or supervisor in seeking resolution. In instances where the graduate coordinator is the supervisor, recourse will be directly to the head or director.
- Head or Director. In instances where the graduate coordinator is unable to construct an acceptable solution to the conflict, the head of the department or director of the school will be engaged through the graduate coordinator. In some cases, it may be in the best interest of the student to have a new supervisor appointed. This is done by the head/director and coordinator, in consultation with the student. Appointing a new supervisor will be done without penalty or disadvantage to the graduate student. In instances where the head or director is the supervisor, recourse will be directly to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.
- A dispute involving a student in Social and Political Thought will skip this step and proceed directly to the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies.
- Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. If the dispute is unable to be resolved within the unit, the graduate coordinator or head/director will bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. Where appropriate, the Dean will meet with the student or faculty member to seek a resolution. As Acadia does not have a faculty of graduate studies, in instances that directly involve faculty, the Dean of Research and Graduate Studies may request the involvement of the relevant program dean. When necessary, the Dean of RGS will bring the matter to the attention of the Vice President Academic.

Situations that cannot be resolved through these procedures can proceed to the stage of formal appeal as outlined in the University Calendar.

About the Faculty

ABRAMSON, Zelda (Professor Emerita)
Research methodology, family, diasporic studies, health and health care, aging, women and work.

AUGER, Jeanette (Professor Emerita)
Aging, Death and Dying.

BONNER, Claudine, BSc., M.Ed., PhD. (Western) (On Sabbatical 2019-2020)
African Diaspora studies, ethnic & race relations, sociology of education, equity and social justice, African Canadian history, migration.

BRITTAIN, James, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (University of New Brunswick)
Class (Consciousness), Disposable Populations, Escape, Political Economy, Social Theory

CARLSON, Jesse, B.A., M.A., PhD. (York)
Sociological theory, cultural sociology, morality, friendship

CASEY, Rebecca, B.A., M.A., PhD. (McMaster)
Aging, Disability, Work and Employment, Sociology of Health and Illness, Research Methods, Social Inequality, Public Policy.

DAHRINGER, Heather A., B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (Carleton)
Addiction studies, gender, crime and deviance, qualitative methodologies and research ethics.

FRANK, Lesley, B.A., M.A., PhD. (UNB) Sociology of food, family poverty, sociology of health, research methods, public policy.

LOOKER, Dianne (Professor Emerita)
Sociology of youth, rural issues, gender, and survey research/quantitative analyses.

MASOUMI, Azar, B.A., M.A., PhD- ABD (York University)
Critical Race Theory, Anti-racist Feminism, Gender and Queer Studies, Migration and Refugee Systems

RONDINELLI, Elisabeth, B.A., M.A., PhD. (ABD, York)
Cultural sociology, gender and sexuality, education, cross-cultural interactions, ethnography, digital sociology, qualitative research methods

RUDRUM, Sarah, B.A, M.A., PhD. (UBC)

Health & healthcare, health inequalities, gender and health; sex & sexuality; family & intimacy; transnational 'development' especially in Africa. Qualitative methods with both people (human subjects) and texts/media.

THOMSON, Anthony (Professor Emeritus)
Social and political thought.There are also a number of adjunct faculty members who may be available to supervisor students. Please discuss with the Graduate Coordinator for more information.