

**Department of Sociology  
Graduate Student Handbook  
Effective August 2016**

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## **1. Introduction**

This handbook is a guide for students pursuing graduate degrees in Sociology at Brandeis University. It contains essential information on the PhD (including the joint doctorate with the Heller School) and MA programs (in Sociology and in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies).

The handbook first describes graduate student advising and the Sociology Graduate Committee where graduate policies are made, monitored, and implemented. The handbook next presents rules and courses of study for completing degree work in Sociology. It then reviews Departmental and Graduate School policies on evaluating students, transferring credit, incomplete courses, and leaves of absence. Finally, it presents resources and facilities available to graduate students, University policies regarding financial aid and funding opportunities, and Brandeis policies and resources pertaining to students with disabilities. For additional resources and information you can go to the graduate sections of the [Brandeis Department of Sociology Web page](#) and the shared Sociology Graduate Student Latte site to which all graduate students and faculty in the department are subscribed.

We hope that you will use the handbook well. The Chair and Members of the Graduate Committee and the Departmental staff are available to answer questions.

## **2. People and Committees**

### ***Advising***

At the beginning of a student's first semester in residence, he or she will be assigned a faculty advisor, who will be responsible for guiding the student. At the end of the PhD student's first year, he or she must formally select an advisor. The student should submit a petition to notify the Graduate Committee and Graduate Administrator of her or his choice. At the time when the student chooses a chair for his or her QPD, that faculty member becomes the student's advisor. The same applies at the point of choosing a Dissertation Committee chair.

### ***Director of Graduate Studies***

The Sociology Department Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) is Laura Miller. The DGS is the faculty member responsible for chairing the Graduate Committee and supervising the implementation of graduate policies. The DGS represents the department to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

### ***Graduate Administrator***

The Administrator for the Graduate Program in Sociology is Cheryl Hansen. The Graduate Administrator is the department staff person who oversees administrative matters and maintains department records on graduate students.

### ***The Graduate Committee***

The Graduate Committee is comprised of appointed members of the Sociology department faculty, plus one graduate student representative elected from the graduate student body in residence. The process for selecting a student representative to the Graduate Committee involves PhD students in the first five cohorts, including joint PhDs, voting to select a representative to the Graduate Committee for the academic year. The Committee deals with policy issues affecting graduate students, and reviews the programs of individual students.

All matters of departmental graduate student policy come before the Graduate Committee prior to any final decision by the department faculty as a whole. Any faculty member or graduate student may bring a problem or suggestion concerning policy to the Graduate Committee. When a proposal or recommendation is submitted to the faculty by the Graduate Committee, it will be discussed by the faculty as soon as possible. Student members of the committee may request to attend, or may be invited to attend, discussion by the faculty at large of issues or proposals brought to the faculty by the Graduate Committee.

The department itself or its subcommittees retain the following powers:

- Admission to the department
- Approval of transfer credit
- Approval of the faculty composition of QPD committees
- Approval of dissertation prospectuses
- Approval of dissertation review committees
- Conduct of oral examinations on dissertations
- Individual student programs

The Graduate Committee also rules on petitions from individual students. Students should submit a [“Petition to the Graduate Committee”](#) with all petition requests. The Petition is an online form which can be accessed via

the Brandeis Department of Sociology Graduate Programs Web page and the shared Graduate Student Latte site.

The Graduate Committee's approval is necessary in the following matters:

- Student petition to change advisors (after the first year and beyond)
- Student petition to transfer academic credit from another university
- Student petition to establish or change the QPD Committee
- Student petition to establish or change the Dissertation Prospectus Committee and Dissertation Review Committee (including adding the outside reader)
- Student petition to receive graduate credit for an undergraduate course
- Student petition to take a leave of absence

Petitions must be submitted at least 48 hours before a scheduled Graduate Committee meeting. All additional supporting materials should be submitted electronically to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Administrator with one paper copy to the Director of Graduate Studies.

### ***Other Departmental Bodies***

Each of the following standing Sociology Department bodies has a graduate student representative:

- The Graduate Committee
- The department faculty meetings
- The Colloquium Committee

Other temporary committees may also be established with graduate student representation. These representatives are elected by the Sociology graduate students, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, to serve for one year.

### 3. The PhD in Sociology

The PhD in Sociology is a program designed to last six years. It consists of three years of course work and another semester for accreditation (qualifying portfolio and defense) prior to the dissertation. The minimum residence for the PhD is three years. Apprenticeship in teaching is an integral part of the program and funded doctoral students normally serve as Teaching Fellows (TFs). There is no foreign language requirement for the PhD.

#### *Courses*

Students entering the PhD program in sociology are expected to complete six semesters of the program's Approaches to Sociological Research pro-seminar (SOC 300a), as well as fourteen additional full-credit courses. At least six of these fourteen courses must be formal graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) taken in the Brandeis Sociology Department. One of those six seminars must be in social theory and one must be in research methods. Four additional courses must be completed within the Brandeis Sociology Department, either as graduate seminars, independent readings (SOC 230a/b), advanced joint undergraduate/graduate seminars, or upper-division (numbered 100-199) courses. The four remaining courses can be taken as the student chooses, including graduate courses at other Boston-area universities, in consultation with her or his advisor.

Of the six required formal graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) that must be taken in the Brandeis Sociology Department, a minimum of four must be graduate seminars offered as formal seminars by the Sociology Department at Brandeis. Two of the six may be transferred in, with the approval of the Graduate Committee, based on Master's level coursework completed before matriculating at Brandeis. One of the six may be completed as a joint seminar at Brandeis *if, and only if*, a student has not completed Master's level courses, prior to matriculating at Brandeis, which she or he wishes to transfer for credit at Brandeis. In no cases may a student complete fewer than four graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) offered by the Sociology Department at Brandeis and receive a Brandeis PhD.

The Approaches to Sociological Research pro-seminar (SOC 300a) is a two-credit course designed to help students transition from being consumers to producers of sociological knowledge with the support of peers and faculty. It includes guidance on researching and writing papers for publication. Credit for the sixth semester of the pro-seminar is dependent on a student writing a single-authored publishable research paper, and submitting it to a peer-reviewed academic journal. This requirement can be completed any time before the end of the student's sixth semester in the program.

A student's initial program of study is arranged in consultation with the graduate student's advisor. Consideration will be given to graduate work done elsewhere, but formal transfer credit is assigned only after the successful completion of the first year of study. More information about requesting transfer credit is below.

#### *Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD)*

The Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD) is the Brandeis Sociology Department's equivalent of qualifying/comprehensive examinations. The system encourages doctoral students to design their own programs of study, supervised by three different Brandeis Sociology Department faculty members. The purposes of the QPD system are:

- To guide students toward demonstrated competence in three different areas in sociology, as defined by the American Sociological Association (ASA) (see Appendix 4). These areas should not have substantial overlap with one another.

- To certify (accredit) student competence, as determined during a defense meeting of the student and all three committee members.
- To encourage students to develop ideas for the dissertation. Successful completion of the QPD process precedes the drafting and defense of a dissertation proposal.

### *Step 1: Preparing for the QPD*

QPD work often builds upon courses that students have taken in the department, so students might consider potential QPD areas as they make decisions about courses in their first years of the program. Once students have identified a potential qualifying area, they are encouraged to take related courses (if they have not done so already). If related courses are not available, students may take one or more independent reading courses to gain an introduction to or conduct more focused study in the area of interest. Readings done for a regular or independent study course frequently become part of the QPD reading list. When putting together a reading list, students are encouraged to consult subject area lists available on the Shared Graduate Student Latte site, syllabi sets from Brandeis or other universities, and other sources.

### *Step 2: Formation of the QPD Committee*

Forming a QPD Committee is the student's responsibility. The student identifies three areas of study, and for each one, asks a Sociology Department faculty member to supervise it. Students should approach those faculty members whom students believe can best advance their work in a given area. The possibility of serving on a student's QPD Committee can be broached by visiting a faculty member during office hours and having a conversation about the student's academic interests and prior work in the area. Once a faculty member agrees to be on the Committee, the student and Committee member should negotiate a plan, or contract, which typically includes an agreed upon set of reading and writing assignments.

A student may form a QPD Committee at any time before April 1 of the second year of his or her residency. By then, two areas must be defined, and two corresponding faculty members must have agreed to serve. The student must designate one as chair, who then becomes the student's principal advisor. The third area and corresponding faculty member must be designated by December 1 of the student's third year of residency. At both points, the student submits a petition to the Graduate Committee, which lists the names of designated faculty members and areas of study for approval. With this petition, the chair of the QPD Committee becomes the student's formal advisor. Thereafter, both students and faculty members may request justifiable changes in the composition of the QPD Committee by written petition to the Graduate Committee. That petition must be approved by the Graduate Committee before a Qualifying Defense meeting can be scheduled.

### *Step 3: The Qualifying Portfolio*

The Qualifying Portfolio consists of a dossier in each area of specialization, assembled by the student, and with contents jointly determined by the student and supervising faculty member. Dossiers typically include some combination of the following: reading lists, annotated bibliographies, reviews of the literature, research papers, research proposals, citation analyses, response papers, course syllabi, and statements synthesizing the three areas of specialization. The Portfolio may include any other materials the QPD Committee deems significant.

### *Step 4: The Defense Meeting*

The Qualifying Portfolio Defense meeting should be completed by December 1 of the student's fourth year, at the latest, by which point all course requirements must have been fulfilled. When QPD committee members have determined that the student has satisfactorily completed the pre-approved program, the Chair convenes a

defense meeting. The student must provide all three committee members with a complete portfolio at least two weeks before the meeting, which is publicly announced by the Department Administrator. The defense meeting is an oral qualifying examination with primary emphasis on the student's three areas of specialization. Meetings typically begin with the student giving a short (10 minute) presentation on his or her work before answering questions from the faculty. Committee members meet first with the student and then convene privately to determine the outcome. The student shall receive one of three grades - No Pass, Conditional Pass (meaning that specified further work is needed), or Pass. This grade will be noted on the QPD Completion Form, available on the Shared Latte site, which must be signed by all committee members and deposited with the Department Graduate Administrator immediately after the defense. The final accreditation recommendation should be made known to the student, who has the right to appeal directly to the Graduate Committee should this recommendation be unfavorable.

Please note: Students in the joint PhD in Social Policy and Sociology program are subject to slightly different rules, as reviewed elsewhere in the handbook.

### ***From QPD to Dissertation***

After accreditation by a student's Qualifying Portfolio and Defense Committee, three formal steps remain: (1) approval of the dissertation prospectus, (2) approval of the dissertation, and (3) successful defense of the dissertation.

#### ***Step 1: Approval of the Dissertation Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy***

Following the Qualifying Portfolio Defense meeting and by May 1 in the student's fourth year, a Dissertation Prospectus Committee must be approved by the Graduate Committee and the dissertation prospectus must be completed and approved. The Dissertation Prospectus Committee guides the student in preparing the prospectus. The committee should include three currently active members of the Sociology Department faculty, one designated by the student as chair, who becomes the student's official advisor. Each student is responsible for forming a Dissertation Prospectus Committee--that is, securing agreement from each member and then petitioning the Graduate Committee for approval. The committee then determines when the prospectus is ready to be defended.

The dissertation prospectus elaborates a student's dissertation topic and explains the research the student plans to undertake. It should clearly state the research question, situate this question in a review of relevant literature, and describe the methods that will be used to answer the question. The prospectus should also provide a tentative timeline for completing the project. It should be no longer than 15 to 20 pages, including references. If the proposed research involves data collection with human subjects, the student must also seek approval from the Brandeis Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (BCPHS) by the date of the scheduled defense. Examples of dissertation proposals are available on the shared Graduate Student Latte site.

When the Committee determines that the proposal is ready, a dissertation prospectus defense is scheduled. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department, by which point the student must post a copy of the prospectus on the section of the shared Latte site titled, Dissertation Prospectus for Defense. The proposal defense meeting typically begins with the student giving a short (10 minute) presentation on his or her work before answering questions from the faculty. After the defense, the Dissertation Prospectus Committee meets in private to decide on one of three grades - No Pass, Conditional Pass (meaning that specified further work is needed), or Pass. This grade will be noted on the Dissertation Prospectus Defense Report (available on the shared Latte site), which must be signed by all

Committee members and deposited with the department Graduate Administrator. After a student's prospectus has been passed, a completed PhD Degree Audit Checklist Update Form must be submitted to the Registrar. At this point, the student has advanced to candidacy.

### *Step 2: Approval of the Dissertation*

After approval of the prospectus, the Dissertation Prospectus Committee automatically becomes the student's Dissertation Committee with the chair as the student's official advisor. Thereafter, the student may petition the Graduate Committee to change the membership of the Dissertation Committee, although approval is not usually granted when the dissertation is close to completion. Between approval of the prospectus and submission of a completed dissertation, the official link between the Department and student will be the chair of the Dissertation Committee, who serves as the student's dissertation advisor and provides periodic reports of progress to the Graduate Committee in addition to the student's annual end of year evaluation.

Final composition of the Dissertation Committee must include three members of the Sociology Department faculty and an outside reader, chosen with the advice of the Dissertation Committee members and approved by the Graduate Committee and the Dean of the Graduate School. Approval must be secured before a defense can be scheduled. To obtain approval for an outsider reader, the student submits a petition to the Graduate Committee at least one month before the dissertation defense. The outside reader should hold a PhD and have an academic affiliation outside Brandeis. At least two weeks before the dissertation defense, the student must submit to the Graduate School the Dissertation Examining Committee (DEC) form (available on the shared Latte site), which is signed by the Sociology Department DGS.

The Dissertation Committee, including the outside reader, has sole responsibility for approving the dissertation. Committee members will have one month to read a complete draft, comment on it, and require revisions. Once all Committee members agree that the dissertation is ready to defend, the candidate should schedule the dissertation defense. The defense must be scheduled with at least two weeks' notice at a time all committee members can attend.

### *Step 3: Defense of the Dissertation*

At least two weeks before the defense, a copy of the dissertation must be made available for review by members of the faculty. This can be done either by placing a print copy in the Sociology Department office, or by placing an electronic copy on the shared Latte site. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department. The student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed, and at this time should also inform the Department Administrator whether the dissertation will be made available in print or electronic form.

The dissertation defense must include all members of the Dissertation Committee, together with the outside reader. If the outside reader is not able to be physically present, university rules allow her or him to be included by videoconference (note that conference calls by telephone are not acceptable). The chair of the Committee chairs the defense, which normally involves a presentation by the candidate outlining the research process and summarizing findings followed by questions posed first by Committee members and then by others present. After the defense, the Committee meets in private to decide whether the dissertation is or is not acceptable and what revisions, if any, will be required for final acceptance.

Before the defense, the student must pay the dissertation filing fee and prepare forms for submission to the Graduate School, in its prescribed format. The student then has the forms signed by members of the Committee and submits them to the Graduate School. All of these forms are available on the Latte page and/or at the web

addresses listed below. When the dissertation is complete, with all revisions approved, the candidate must submit the final copy to the Graduate School, in accordance with deadlines posted in the academic calendar. Students in the final stages of preparation should also obtain an application for the PhD degree from the Graduate School and inform themselves of the final dates by which all requirements must be completed. Students should also obtain detailed instructions for the final format of the dissertation from the Graduate School.

***Information on Filing the Dissertation (see also Appendix 3: PhD Degree Checklist)***

***1. Apply to graduate with the [online Graduate Degree Application Form](#)***

Applications will NOT be accepted after the deadlines listed here. Once a deadline has passed the student will need to make an application for the next application period. PhD degree applicants will be charged a \$235 dissertation fee within a week of submitting the degree application. A new application form is necessary if the student does not complete all requirements for the degree by the dates listed; however the \$235 fee is a one-time payment.

**Application Deadlines:**

November 1 to graduate in February

March 1 to graduate in May

June 24 to graduate in August

***2. Submit [Dissertation Examining Committee \(DEC\) Form](#) Two Weeks before your Defense.***

***Student Instructions:***

- Student completes the DEC form, which states the proposed title of dissertation, defense date, time and location, and names of defense committee members.
- The form must be signed by the Graduate Program Chair (Sociology Department Director of Graduate Studies).
- Student makes one copy for personal records and one copy for department records.
- Student delivers signed form to the GSAS Office (Kutz Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor), at least two weeks before defense date.
- Form will then be approved and signed by Dean of GSAS. GSAS will send a signed copy to department office for file.

***Dissertation Defense Deadlines:***

December 9, 2016 for February 2017 completion

April 7, 2017 for May 2017 completion

July 28, 2017 for August 2017 completion

***3. Forms for your Dissertation Defense***

Bring Your [Dissertation Defense Form](#) and [Signature Page](#) to Your Defense

***Student Instructions:***

- The Dissertation Defense form should be signed by your Committee at the defense and returned to the Registrar's Office.
- The student makes one copy for personal records and one copy for department records.
- Once you have provided the necessary information this form should also be signed by your Committee. The Signature page form is a blank template that needs personalization by your Committee at the end of your defense. GSAS (NOT the student) will secure the signature of the Dean of Arts and Sciences.
- The signed, completed Signature page form needs to be personally delivered to GSAS. This signed form will be held at GSAS.
- An unsigned Signature Page should be included in the prefatory pages of the final, ready-for-publication dissertation.

If revisions are requested, complete [the Report on PhD Revisions form](#)

Please note: minor revisions require only the signature of the Committee chair; substantive revisions require the signature of each Committee member.

Submit the Revisions form after your Committee has accepted the revised dissertation.

Deliver the Revisions form to the Registrar's Office.

Make a copy for the Sociology Department.

Keep a copy for your records.

#### *4. Submit your dissertation*

#### [Dissertation Submission Formatting Information](#)

Submit your dissertation to [ProQuest/UMI](#)

The Doctoral Dissertation Agreement Form, Title Page, and Abstract are all part of the online submission process.

Publishing Options: 'TR' (Traditional Publishing) restrictions and/or embargo on dissertation access is available through TR option; 'OA' (Open Access Publishing) no restrictions available to researcher (author must pay an additional fee for Open Access). See [TR or OA publishing](#)

Dissertation Submission Deadlines:

January 18, 2017 for February 2017 degree

April 27, 2017 for May 2017 degree

August 10, 2017 for August 2017 degree

#### *5. Final Paperwork. Please complete the GSAS Exit Survey and Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) by your Dissertation Submission Deadline*

GSAS Exit Survey. Completed online; GSAS will send you the link to its Exit Survey once your DEC form is submitted.

#### [Survey of Earned Doctorates \(SED\).](#)

Print the survey out and turn in the hard copy to Meghan Peck, GSAS. The SED is conducted by NORC, University of Chicago and collected for NSF, NIH, USED, NEH, USDA, and NASA.

## *Information on Teaching*

The Sociology Department supports a culture where teaching is highly valued, and it aims to make the teaching experience of graduate students significant to their overall professional development. Because teaching is a collaborative activity, professors and their assigned TFs should meet as soon as assignments are firmly made to agree upon TF responsibilities over the course of the semester. These responsibilities may include attending lectures, facilitating discussion sections, grading papers and exams, holding office hours, mentoring and advising Peer Teaching Assistants (undergraduates), and, more generally, meeting with the professor to discuss course content, organization, and pedagogy.

Doctoral students in Sociology receiving stipends from the Department are required to serve regularly as Teaching Fellows (TFs) during their first four years.

For all Sociology PhD students:

- Students will not TF in the first semester in the program.
- Students will TF during their next 6 semesters in the program.
- Students will RF during their 8th semester.
- Note also that, in all cases, no more than one semester of UWS instruction can count toward the required 6 semesters of departmental TF work. Any student who intends to teach in the UWS program in lieu of a departmental TF assignment should submit a petition prior to the end of classes during the previous semester. The Graduate Committee will attempt to meet these requests but cannot guarantee that they will be met.

## *Research Fellow Semester*

During the semester in which they are not acting as a TF (normally in semester 8, as described above), students will work as a research fellow with a Sociology Department faculty member. If students prefer and faculty are available, they can fulfill this research fellowship in the summer immediately following that semester. The research fellowship involves a 10 hour/week commitment to a semester-long, collaborative student-faculty research project. The intention of this project is to expose students to the research process and help them acquire research skills, as well as to aid them in the creation of new sociological knowledge.

Before the RF semester begins, students should be in conversation with their advisor and the faculty member they wish to RF with, and will write a petition to the Graduate Committee by the first Wednesday in November prior to the start of the RF semester. As part of the petition, students will submit a one-page description of the intended project, which includes a rough timeline outlining how the semester will be spent, and specifies what the final goal of the project is. The faculty member who will be supervising the RF semester must sign off on this proposal. Following the RF semester, students will submit to the Graduate Committee a two-page report on what was accomplished during this semester, including successes and challenges encountered. Students will also submit a shorter mid-semester progress report, due by the second Monday in March, outlining what they have accomplished so far.

All TF and RF requirements must be completed by the end of a student's 8th semester in the program. The 9th and 10th semesters are intended to be free from teaching and research assistantships to enable students to work full time on their dissertations.

#### **4. The Joint PhD in Sociology and Social Policy**

The PhD in Social Policy and Sociology is a joint degree of the Department of Sociology and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. It is available to students only after completion of at least one year of graduate study in either the Heller School or the Department of Sociology's PhD program. To apply, students should submit their application by April 1. Applications require a letter of support from the Director of the home department. If the student is accepted by the complementary department (admission is not guaranteed) the following procedures apply. There is a three-year residency for the joint degree.

Students pursuing this joint degree are required to take a total of 18 courses, 9 in Sociology and 9 in Heller with requirements as follows:

##### ***Heller courses***

1. HS 508A Theory of Social Policy and Change
2. HS 372b, Economic Theory and Social Policy
3. HS 401b, Research Methods
4. HS 510a, Applied Design and Analysis
5. HS 404b, Stats/Regression Analysis (including applications lab)
6. HS 405a, Applied Econometrics
7. HS 403b, Qualitative Research
8. HS 410a, Applied Research Seminar: Quantitative
9. Other Heller concentration or methods courses
10. Dissertation Seminar (non-credit) (2 semesters)

##### ***Sociology Courses***

Students are expected to complete a minimum of eight Sociology courses, comprising at least four Brandeis Sociology graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher), plus the Approaches to Sociological Research pro-seminar. Students must participate in Soc 300a, Approaches to Sociological Research during each semester they are completing coursework following matriculation into the Joint Degree program. At least one of the Sociology courses must be in theory.

##### ***Qualifying***

Each student must complete a "comprehensive paper" as required in The Heller School PhD curriculum. In Sociology, students must show competence in two substantive areas following the Sociology Qualifying Portfolio and Defense (QPD) requirements described on pp. 4-5. QPD Committee membership and chair must be approved by the Sociology Graduate Committee (by petition) by December 1 of the student's third year in the joint degree program. The QPD Committee meeting must be completed by December 1 of the student's fourth year in the joint degree program.

## *Dissertation and Defense*

### *Step 1: Approval of the Dissertation Prospectus and Advancement to Candidacy*

A dissertation prospectus should be submitted to a Dissertation Committee soon after the Comprehensive examination and QPD processes are completed. The Dissertation Committee should consist of five members—two Brandeis faculty members each from the Sociology Department and the Heller School (one designated as chair) and one outside reader. Students must submit paperwork for committee, proposal hearing, and defense approvals to both programs following each program's respective procedures. The following procedures outline Sociology rules only; the student should also consult [Heller School guidelines](#) at to be sure that both programs' expectations are being met.

Each student is responsible for forming a Dissertation Committee--that is, securing agreement from each member and then petitioning the Graduate Committee for approval. If a student selects a Heller School faculty member as Dissertation Committee chair, the student's QPD chair will continue as the student's official Sociology Department advisor, and official link between the Department and student, unless the student petitions for a change.

The dissertation prospectus elaborates a student's dissertation topic and explains the research the student plans to undertake. It should clearly state the research question, situate this question in a review of relevant literature, and describe the methods that will be used to answer the question. The prospectus should also provide a tentative timeline for completing the project. If the proposed research involves data collection with human subjects, the student must also seek approval from the Brandeis Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (BCPHS) by the date of the scheduled defense. Examples of dissertation proposals are available on the shared Graduate Student Latte site.

When the Dissertation Committee determines that the proposal is ready, a dissertation prospectus defense is scheduled. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the Sociology Department; the student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed. At least two weeks in advance of the defense, the student must post a copy of the prospectus on the section of the shared Latte site titled, Dissertation Prospectus for Defense. The proposal defense meeting typically begins with the student giving a short (10 minute) presentation on his or her work before answering questions from the faculty. After the defense, the Dissertation Committee meets in private to decide on one of three grades - No Pass, Conditional Pass (meaning that specified further work is needed), or Pass. This grade will be noted on the Dissertation Prospectus Defense Report (available on the shared Latte site), which must be signed by all Committee members and deposited with the Sociology Department Administrator. After a student's prospectus has been passed, a completed PhD Degree Audit Checklist Update Form must be submitted to the Registrar. At this point, the student has advanced to candidacy.

### *Step 2: Approval of the Dissertation*

The joint PhD dissertation may be accepted by the Sociology Department and the Heller School upon the recommendation of the Dissertation Committee. Committee members will have one month to read a complete draft, comment on it, and require revisions. Once all Committee members agree that the dissertation is ready to defend, the candidate should schedule the dissertation defense, which is a public final oral examination. The defense must be scheduled at a time all Committee members can attend. At least two weeks before the defense, a copy of the dissertation must be made available for review by members of the faculty. This can be done either by placing a print copy in the Sociology Department office, or by placing an electronic copy on the shared Latte site. The defense is open to the public and must be announced at least two weeks in advance within the

Sociology Department. The student should issue a request to the Sociology Department Administrator to make this announcement at least one week prior to when the announcement is to be distributed, and at this time should also inform the Department Administrator whether the dissertation will be made available in print or electronic form.

After the dissertation and defense are approved, a report signed by the Dissertation Examining Committee (available on the Shared Latte Site) certifying the candidate's successful performance on the oral exam is submitted to the University Registrar and to The Heller School Office of Student Records. Please see the instructions under PhD in Sociology above regarding the process for filing the dissertation. The forms required from Heller can be obtained from Cheryl Sweeney, Program Administrator of the Heller PhD program.

## 5. MA Programs

### *Master of Arts in Sociology*

A Master's degree in Sociology can be earned en route as part of on-going work for the sociology PhD at any point beyond the first year of residency.

To fulfill program requirements for the MA, students must complete eight courses. At least five of these courses must be taken in the Sociology Department at Brandeis. One course must be a full year of SOC 300a. At least two other courses must be Sociology graduate seminars (courses numbered 200 or higher) or joint undergraduate/graduate seminars. One of the eight required courses must be in research methods and one must be in social theory. For upper-division courses (numbered 100 to 199) to be given graduate level credit, they should be supplemented by additional meetings, readings, and/or written work; the form that this enhancement will take should be worked out with the course instructor in the first two weeks of the course.

In addition to coursework, students will complete either a Master's project or the MA exam. The MA exam is a take-home examination given in the last week of classes of the spring semester. Two Sociology Department faculty members, either from the Graduate Committee or selected by the Graduate Committee, will draft the exam. These same faculty members will read the exam, which will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The exam will include two questions that draw on the coursework students have taken in theory and research methods as well as on their substantive interests. The exam will be given to the students at noon on the day following the last day of class and will be due 72 hours later to the faculty who are administering it. The completed exam can be no longer than 15 pages double spaced, Times New Roman 12 point type, 1 inch margins. Students will be notified of their grade on the exam within two weeks of handing in the paper. Any student who fails the exam will be given the option to retake it once – the following spring

The MA project may be a research paper of professional quality and length or a project students develop in consultation with their adviser and the Graduate Committee. Students completing a Master's project will choose two faculty members of the Sociology Department, one of whom is designated as chair, to guide and review the project. Both faculty members must communicate their approval of the project to the department Graduate Administrator before the University deadline for certifying degree requirements. Students who complete a Master's paper have the option of depositing it in the University's Institutional Repository. Students who wish to do so should discuss this option with their MA project chair, after which the chair will need to inform Erin Jerome of LTS (ejerome@brandeis.edu) that the paper will be deposited.

### *Information on Applying to Graduate*

Complete the [Graduate Degree Application Form](#)

Application for Degree Deadlines:

November 1, 2016 to graduate in February 2017

March 1, 2017 to graduate in May 2017

June 24, 2017 to graduate in August 2017

## *Master of Arts in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*

The Department of Sociology cooperates with Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies in a joint MA. The program is designed for completion in one-year (12 months), with the degree awarded at the next official University degree conferral after completion of residence and requirements. Each MA degree candidate will devise a specialized program with a faculty adviser. At the start of the first semester, MA students should submit a proposed course schedule for approval to her or his adviser no later than the end of the first full week of classes. That proposal should also be submitted to the Graduate Committee to be considered at their first meeting of the semester. For each following semester, students are required to submit their plan of study (agreed on with their adviser) to the Graduate Committee for approval. That plan, including details on the subject of and readers for the MA paper, should be submitted to the Graduate Committee before the end of the add-drop period.

Requirements: Completion of eight courses to be distributed as follows:

- The foundational course in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WMGS 205a);
- One course in feminist research methodologies (WMGS 208b, the Feminist Inquiry course offered through the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, or an alternative);
- One graduate course outside Sociology listed as an elective in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies;
- One graduate Sociology course listed as an elective in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies;
- Three other regular graduate Sociology courses: one in theory, one outside the area of gender, and one elective that could be a directed reading course.
- One other graduate elective of the student's choice.

Also required is submission of a research paper of professional quality and length (normally 25-40 pages) on a topic related to the joint degree. The paper will be read by two faculty members, at least one of whom is a member of the Department of Sociology and at least one of whom is a member of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies core or affiliate faculty. Students have the option of depositing the completed Master's paper in the University's Institutional Repository. Students who wish to do so should discuss this option with their MA paper advisor, after which the advisor will need to inform Erin Jerome of LTS (ejerome@brandeis.edu) that the paper will be deposited.

### *Information on Applying to Graduate*

1. Complete the [Graduate Degree Application Form](#)

Application for Degree Deadlines:

November 1, 2016 to graduate in February 2017

March 1, 2017 to graduate in May 2017

June 24, 2016 to graduate in August 2017

## **7. General Sociology Department and Graduate School Policies**

### ***Student Evaluation and Progress to the Degree***

Admission to graduate programs is granted for one academic year at a time. Every student pursuing work for a degree, whether or not currently in residence, must register at the beginning of each term. All Sociology graduate students will be evaluated by the Graduate Committee, with input from the sociology faculty at large, each spring. Before this evaluation, each student must complete a self-assessment, which will be included as part of the evaluation discussion. At this evaluation the records of all graduate students will be carefully reviewed with reference to timely completion of course work and requirements, quality of work, and teaching.

For students whose records are deemed insufficient, the Department can act up to and including requiring leaves of absence or withdrawal from the program.

Note: Any grade below B-, or a grade of “NC” (no credit), is an unsatisfactory grade in the Graduate School. A course in which the student receives an unsatisfactory grade will not be counted toward graduate credit.

### ***Graduate School Deadlines***

Students should be aware of the deadlines for completion of the various degree requirements. These may be found in the “Academic Calendar,” which is published each year by the University Registrar.

### ***Transfer Credit***

After completing at least one year of residence at a full-time rate or the equivalent at a part-time rate, PhD students may apply for credit for graduate-level courses completed elsewhere. A maximum of one year of residence credit may be granted.

Students entering the PhD program with an MA in sociology or an equivalent social science may petition the departmental Graduate Committee for a reduction of the required course load by as many as six courses (reducing the required load from 18 to as few as 12 courses). Pending approval from the Committee, up to two of these courses can be applied to the graduate-level Sociology department seminar requirements. These petitions should be submitted during the fall of a student’s second year in the program. Courses being transferred must carry a grade of B or better, and must have been earned at an appropriately accredited institution.

Transfer credit is not allowed for the MA degree in Sociology or the joint MA in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Sociology.

### ***Incomplete Courses***

A course grade of “Excused Incomplete,” unless given by reason of a student’s failure to attend a final examination, must be made up prior to the end of the term following the term in which it was received. The Registrar’s deadline for submitting to instructors any incomplete work from the Spring 2016 term is September 8, 2016. The Registrar’s deadline for submitting to instructors any incomplete work from the Fall 2016 term is March 27, 2017. Failure to complete a course on time can jeopardize a student’s academic standing.

### *Leaves of Absence*

Leaves of absence are granted for one year, renewable on petition. To obtain a leave of absence a student must petition the departmental Graduate Committee in writing, with a copy to the Dean of the Graduate School. Before applying, the student should discuss the matter with his/her advisor or committee chair. After Graduate Committee approval, the leave request is sent to the Graduate School, which will make the final decision and notify the student. Conditions for reinstatement are ordinarily set when the leave is granted, and include completion of outstanding work. Petitions for reinstatement will be considered by the Graduate Committee and the Graduate School.

## **8. Resources and Facilities**

### ***The Berkowitz Award***

The Sociology Department annually awards one \$500 prize for assistance in dissertation research in the name of the late Steven Berkowitz, PhD.

### ***Libraries***

The social science collections of the University are housed in Goldfarb Library and Farber Library. These materials are also accessible through an online catalog system called One Search. The libraries have facilities for computerized searches of bibliographic databases such as SocINDEX, JSTOR, and other periodical indices. The Interlibrary Loan Office provides books or articles not owned by the University. Brandeis is a member of the Boston Library Consortium, composed of 12 academic and research institutions in the area. A consortium card, allowing use of these libraries, is available from the circulation desk of the Brandeis Library.

### ***Sociology Graduate Program Intranet***

Sociology graduate students, faculty, and staff have access, via Latte, to a range of shared resources. Included are administrative material, reading lists, proposals, teaching resources, grant information, and much more. Students are encouraged to post additional resources on this site.

### ***Boston Area Graduate Consortium***

Brandeis participates in a cross-registration program with Boston College, Boston University, and Tufts University. Students are eligible to take graduate-level courses at these institutions (no more than one course per term) with the prior approval of their advisors. Refer to the Brandeis University Bulletin for details.

### ***Graduate Women's Studies Consortium***

Students interested in gender and women's studies may enroll, with their advisor's approval, in interdisciplinary courses offered through the Graduate Women's Studies Consortium at Radcliffe College. See [the Consortium website](#)

### ***Graduate Student Affairs***

The Office of Graduate Student Affairs supports and encourages life on campus for graduate students outside of the classroom and serves as a liaison between graduate students and University Administration. The office works to coordinate events and programming among the three graduate schools on campus. Graduate Student Affairs advises and assists the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and the Graduate Student Senate, offers programming throughout the year, and runs Graduate Student Orientation in the fall.

### ***Space in Pearlman***

Graduate Students are invited to use the Graduate Student Lounge, Computer Room, and TF office in Pearlman Hall. They are also welcome to use the microwave in the kitchen on the first floor. Students may bring a lock and select a locker in the Graduate Student Lounge to store personal belongings. All students are also assigned a mailbox where mail and internal university correspondence are directed.

### ***Funding Opportunities for Graduate Students***

Students may consult the “Funding opportunities” page on the [Brandeis Sociology website](#), as well as the GSAS website for information regarding external and internal funding opportunities. Additional information may be found in the “Financial Assistance” section of the current Brandeis University Bulletin.

### ***University Prize Instructorship***

The purpose of this award is to allow a GSAS student to teach an advanced undergraduate course that is related to his or her research interests and dissertation work, so as to enhance the student’s capacity to assume teaching responsibilities following completion of the PhD. Candidates must have completed at least one semester as a teaching fellow and must be “ABD” (i.e., have completed all degree requirements except the dissertation) by early May of the year the prize is awarded.

Up to five instructorships will be awarded to candidates who propose courses that represent strong contributions to the undergraduate curriculum and who have demonstrated excellence in, and commitment to, teaching. Selection criteria include quality of the proposed course as demonstrated by the syllabus, its relevance to the curriculum, and its intellectual appeal to undergraduates.

### ***Travel Funding***

An amount of money is available to PhD students each fiscal year for reimbursement of travel expenses associated with their scholarly activities. To qualify, a student must be in the advanced stages of research and be attending a conference for the purpose of serving on a panel or presenting a paper. Additional information is on the Shared Latte site.

### ***Ethical Conduct***

The department adheres to the [American Sociological Code of Ethics](#)

### ***Dispute Resolution Procedures***

Academic life, especially in apprenticeship situations where so much is at stake, is a messy business, open to many kinds of misinterpretations and disappointments, as well as divergent views among faculty themselves, as well as between faculty and students, as to what counts as good work appropriate for a PhD, or good teaching and advising to enable such work.

Our collective ethic as a faculty is to protect students from any form of intimidation or retaliation. It is also to provide as much opportunity and encouragement as possible for students and faculty to repair relationships that may have been frayed by previous misunderstandings or regrettable behavior on anyone’s part. We do this not only because it is the ethically right thing to do, but because it is in everyone's interest for graduate students to leave the program with dense networks of support and trust, not only with the particular committee with which they may have worked, but with other faculty, who are often asked by faculty at other universities what they may think of particular students. We are proud of this departmental ethic, which we have nurtured for decades and have seen serve scores of PhDs well over the course of their careers.

Thus, when misunderstandings or disputes arise or someone feels treated unfairly, we encourage students and faculty first to talk as constructively as possible with each other. Students and faculty may also seek the counsel of other professors and students. Should the situation remain unresolved, students should consult with the Department Chair and/or the Director of the Graduate Program to seek advice on how to proceed or to lodge a formal complaint. GSAS policy is that students first seek resolution and, when possible, rapprochement, within

the Department. If a student does not find the proposed resolution acceptable, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School.

### *Disability Resources at Brandeis*

At Brandeis University, a diverse body of people come together to form a cohesive community. Brandeis welcomes all qualified individuals into the University community as students, faculty, or staff members. Brandeis is committed to providing “reasonable accommodation(s)” to individuals with appropriately documented physical, learning, or psychological disabilities.

A person is considered to have a disability if s/he fits within any one of these three categories:

- The person has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual.
- The person has a record of such an impairment, or the person is regarded as having such an impairment.
- “Major life activities” include functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

A “reasonable accommodation” is defined as any change in the work or educational environment or the way things are customarily done that will allow an individual with a known documented disability to perform the essential functions of a position or let an otherwise qualified student receive a reasonable modification or adjustment for his/her known documented disability. All accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis. Students, faculty, and staff must follow well-established procedures to obtain accommodations.

For more information regarding reasonable accommodations, contact Jessica Basile ([basile@brandeis.edu](mailto:basile@brandeis.edu)) at GSAS.

## Appendix 1: Timeline for the Doctoral Program

The Graduate Committee will consider compliance with the following timelines in its annual student evaluation each spring. Students are encouraged to consult this timeline as they complete their annual self-evaluations.

Year	Task Timeline
First	<p>Complete two semesters of SOC 300a, as well as five other courses.</p> <p>Teaching: No TF in the Fall. TF in the Spring (for students fully funded through the Sociology Department).</p> <p>Petitions: End of the year, petition to designate your adviser moving forward.</p> <p>First year: Upon the completion of six or more courses, students are eligible to submit a Master's research paper of professional quality and length in application for the MA degree (see description of MA in Sociology).</p>
Second	<p>Complete two semesters of SOC 300a, as well as five other courses.</p> <p>Teaching: One TF per semester (fully funded students). Between your second and fourth years, speak with faculty about RF opportunities.</p> <p>By April 1 initiate QPD process: two QPD Committee members and corresponding areas of study designated and approved.</p> <p>Petitions: Students requesting transfer credit from courses taken at other universities prior to matriculating at Brandeis should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee during the fall semester.</p>
Third	<p>Complete two semesters of SOC 300a, as well as four other courses.</p> <p>By end of second semester: seminar requirement should be fulfilled, and a publishable research paper should have been submitted to a peer-reviewed academic journal.</p> <p>Teaching: One TF per semester (fully funded students).</p> <p>By December 1: third QPD Committee member and area designated. Petition the Graduate Committee for your QPD Committee.</p> <p>By April 1: Student reports to QPD Committee Chair on progress to date.</p>
Fourth	<p>Teaching: One TF in Fall semester, one RF in Spring semester (fully funded students).</p> <p>By end of first semester, students should submit a petition to the Graduate Committee describing the RF project.</p> <p>By December 1: Defend Qualifying Portfolio.</p> <p>By May 1: Write and defend dissertation prospectus. Petition Graduate Committee with Prospectus Committee before the prospectus defense.</p>

Fifth	<p>Teaching: No TF (fully funded students). Students are encouraged to work full time on the research and writing of their dissertations.</p> <p>Students are also encouraged to apply for funding, through Brandeis and more broadly, to support dissertation writing in their sixth year.</p>
Sixth Year and Beyond	<p>Write and defend dissertation. Students are reminded to petition the Graduate Committee with changes to their Dissertation Committee, including adding an outside reader to the committee.</p>

## Appendix 2: Calendar of PhD Evaluation Points

Points	Times	Possible Sanctions
Whenever work is submitted	Any time of the year.	Inform student of his/her progress. Warn of problems.
Annual general evaluation meeting	Each spring. Review of progress based on student self-assessment, examples of written work, and teaching evaluations. The advisor's feedback also required.	Warning, with or without funding contingencies.
MA submission	Voluntary, but for adequate consideration should be submitted in time to read before desired degree deadline.	Submissions are judged solely on whether or not they are worthy of an MA degree.
Final Qualifying Portfolio and Defense Committee Mtg	By December 1 of student's fourth year	Without accreditation, student cannot go on to qualify for PhD
PhD prospectus	By May 1 of student's fourth year	It may not be approved or accepted by committee.
PhD dissertation	Student's fifth year and beyond. Any time during the academic year.	It may not be approved or accepted by committee.
PhD defense	Student's fifth year or beyond. Any time during the academic year (official awarding of the degree in February, May, or August).	May not be approved or accepted by committee, or may require revisions.

### Appendix 3: PhD Degree Checklist

(also available on Latte)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Apply to graduate and submit accompanying fee  
*approximately by Nov. 1 for a Feb degree, March 1 for a May degree, and June 12 for an August degree; see the current Handbook for exact deadlines*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Petition Graduate Committee for outside Dissertation Committee member  
*at least one month before dissertation defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Request Sociology Department Administrator announce defense and whether dissertation will be available in paper or electronic form  
*at least one week before announcement is to go out*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Announce defense  
*at least two weeks before dissertation defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make dissertation available either in electronic form on Latte or in paper form in the Sociology Department office  
*at least two weeks before dissertation defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit Dissertation Examination Committee (DEC) form, signed by the Sociology Department DGS, to GSAS  
*at least two weeks before dissertation defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Defend the dissertation  
*approximately by Dec. 12 for a February degree, April 13 for a May degree, and July 31 for an August degree; see the current Handbook for the exact deadlines*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have Dissertation Committee sign Dissertation Defense Form and Signature Page  
*at the defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit copy of Dissertation Defense Form to Sociology Department Administrator  
*immediately following defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit original Dissertation Defense Form to Registrar  
*immediately following defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit Signature Page to GSAS  
*immediately following defense*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit copy of completed Report on PhD Revisions form to Sociology Department Administrator (if revisions are required)  
*when Dissertation Committee has approved revisions*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit original completed Report on PhD Revisions form to Registrar (if revisions are required)  
*when Dissertation Committee has approved revisions*

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Submit dissertation to GSAS

*approximately by Jan. 15 for a February degree, April 30 for a May degree, and August 13 for an August degree; see the current Handbook for the exact deadlines*

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Complete GSAS Exit Survey and Survey of Earned Doctorates

*by dissertation submission deadline*

#### **Appendix 4: QPD Areas**

modified from [American Sociological Association Current Sections](#)

Aging and the Life Course	Sexualities
Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco	Social Movements and Collective Action
Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity	Social Psychology
Animals and Society	Sociolinguistics
Asia and Asian America	Theory
Body and Embodiment	Urban Sociology
Children and Youth	Work and Occupations
Communication and Media	
Community Sociology	
Comparative and Historical Sociology	
Consumers and Consumption	
Criminology	
Culture	
Demography	
Development	
Deviance	
Disability	
Economic Sociology	
Education	
Emotions	
Environmental Sociology	
Ethnomethodology	
Evolution and Biology	
Family	
Gender	
Global and Transnational Sociology	
Human Rights	
Immigration	
Inequality	
Labor	
Latino/a Sociology	
Law	
Marxist Sociology	
Mathematical Sociology	
Medical Sociology	
Mental Health	
Methodology	
Organizations	
Peace, War, and Social Conflict	
Political Economy of the World-System	
Political Sociology	
Race, Gender, and Class	
Race and Ethnicity	
Rationality and Society	
Religion	
Science, Knowledge, and Technology	