Graduate Student Handbook
Clemson University

MS in Social Science
Department of Sociology, Anthropology
and Criminal Justice
2022-2023

This handbook is to serve as a guide for students in the MS Social Science program at Clemson University. It provides information about eligibility for the program, requirements of the degree, and relevant policies of Clemson University’s Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice as well as its Graduate School. This handbook is subject to change. Please also see the Graduate School handbook for further information.

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

~Jane Goodall
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The Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice consists of a multidisciplinary faculty from four academic traditions: sociology, anthropology, criminal justice and social work. There are unique facets to each of these disciplines, but they share a common interest in better understanding human behavior in social context and in developing ways to improve and enrich the quality of life for all people.

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Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide important information about the current policies and procedures of the MS Degree Program in Social Science. Graduate students are responsible for knowing the information contained in this handbook.

In addition to these guidelines, the policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate School Policy Handbook are a consistent set of standards across all Graduate School programs. It is the student’s responsibility to adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Graduate School. They must also obtain and become familiar with the policies and regulations of the Graduate School as specified in the Graduate School Academic Catalog and the Guide for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations.

The current version of the Graduate School Policy Handbook can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/

The current version of the Clemson Academic Catalog can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/registrar/academic-catalogs/

The Guide for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/theses-and-dissertations/

Graduate students are accountable for all applicable policies and procedures of Clemson University, The Graduate School, and the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice. The Graduate Coordinator is available to provide clarification when necessary; Dr. Bryan Miller can be reached at blm2@clemson.edu.

Overview of program

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice offers the MS degree in Social Science emphasizing practical and theoretical knowledge in the areas of social science research methods and theory, focusing on the acquisition of social research skills, theory application and practical field experience. Thesis and non-thesis options are available.

Department faculty are committed to providing students with opportunities for academic and professional development and believe that individuals continue to develop their expertise throughout their careers. The MS program provides a variety of opportunities to engage in scholarly and professional development activities outside the classroom, including participation in professional conferences, internships, and applied projects. Students are encouraged to become active members of national, regional, and state academic and professional associations, and to participate in as many of these development activities as possible while at Clemson in order to build network contacts in the discipline before graduation.
Students selecting the thesis option complete and publicly defend a project representing a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in the discipline that is the focus of the thesis project. Students selecting the non-thesis option must pass a departmentally administered comprehensive examination.

Additional information about the MS in Social Science may be found on the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice’s Graduate Program page, found here: http://www.clemson.edu/cbshs/departments/sociology/graduate/index.html

**Admission Policies**

The decision to admit an applicant to the MS in Social Science program is made by the Graduate Coordinator, in consultation with the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice’s Graduate Advisory Committee and the Department Chair. To be admitted, applicants must meet all requirements of The Graduate School and the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice. The admission requirements for The Graduate School can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/admissions/. The requirements for admission are reviewed annually by the Graduate Coordinator and the Departmental Graduate Advisory Committee.

**Admission Requirements for Degree-Seeking Students**

The requirements for admission currently include the following:

- A Bachelor's degree from an accredited degree program;
- Completion of a minimum of 15 undergraduate semester hours in the social sciences or you may be required to take additional classes;
- A grade point average of at least 3.0 for the last four semesters of undergraduate school;
- Submission of Graduate Record Examination scores on the verbal, quantitative, and analytical sections;
  - A satisfactory set of scores normally includes a minimum score of 154 on the verbal section, 144 on the quantitative section and a 4.0 on the written section.
- Submission of three letters of recommendation;
  - These letters should come from faculty members of the applicant's previously attended college or university;
  - If you graduated ten years ago or more, letters from employers may be submitted instead of letters from former faculty members;
- Submission of a resume or curriculum vitae (CV); and,
- Submission of a 500-word essay on your career aspirations and goals as well as how completion of the Master's Program in Social Science will assist in achieving these goals.
If there are any questions or concerns about supporting materials, a detailed description of supporting materials can be found here: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/admissions/preparing-to-apply/supporting-materials.html.

Transfer Credits
University policy does not allow automatic transfer of graduate credit. Students with graduate credit earned at another institution, or in another department at Clemson University, or earned before admission to this program, must have this prior work evaluated for transfer credit. Requests for transfer of credit to the program must be recommended by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Graduate Coordinator, the Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Requests must be made in writing for each course or credited activity to be transferred. Each request must be accompanied by an official transcript, catalog description, and syllabus or other supporting documentation. Request for transfer of work taken during your enrollment at Clemson University must be made prior to taking a particular course. Special permission must be obtained to take courses elsewhere and then have them transferred back to Clemson as part of your plan of work. Such permission will be considered if circumstances warrant.

Generally speaking, all courses of work toward the completion of degree requirements should be completed at Clemson University in order to assure that the degree granted is an actual reflection of a student’s education at Clemson. Transfer Credit is rarely approved.

Requirements for Degree

Core Requirements
Each student is required to follow an established curriculum for the Master of Science Degree in Social Science. The student should work closely with their faculty advisor and the Graduate Coordinator in planning an academic program that meets career needs as well as the requirements of the graduate program. The curriculum in Social Science specifies a minimum of 36 hours of coursework for the thesis option and 30 hours for the non-thesis option.

Course requirements for both thesis and non-thesis options include 18 hours of Social Science (SSCI) coursework including Departmental Research and Professional Development Seminar (SSCI 8970), Quantitative Methods for Social Sciences I (SSCI 8010), Qualitative Methods for Social Sciences (SOC 6060/SSCI 8060), Theoretical Models in Applied Social Research (SSCI 8100), and 6 hours of departmental methods electives, independent research, or field experience. Examples of options for these courses include Survey Designs for Applied Social Research (SSCI 8030), Evaluation Research (SSCI 8050), Quantitative Methods for Social Sciences II (SSCI 8070), Ethnographic Fieldwork (ANTH 6030), Independent Study (SOC / ANTH / JUST 8960), or Field Experience (SSCI 8950).  

1 other courses may be substituted with Graduate Coordinator approval
Only courses numbered 6000 and above carry graduate credit. As a rule, undergraduate courses are not to be taken. The exception to this is that taking a specified undergraduate course may be permitted (or required) in cases where a course that ideally should have been completed at the undergraduate level was not taken, or the necessary undergraduate course was taken but a poor grade was earned. That is, undergraduate courses may be taken only when they serve a remedial purpose. This sometimes happens when a student’s undergraduate degree was vastly different than the current degree program in which the student is enrolled.

Below is the recommended course map for on-time completion of the degree.

**M.S. in Social Science Course Map 2021-22**

**First Year, First Semester**
3 - SSCI 8970 Departmental Research and Professional Development Seminar  
3 - SSCI 8010 Quantitative Methods for Social Sciences I  
3 - Elective  
**Total: 9 hours**

**First Year, Second Semester**
3 - SSCI 8060/SOC 6060 Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences  
3 - Methods Elective: (e.g. SSCI 8070 Quantitative Methods for Social Sciences II)  
3 - Elective  
**Total: 9 hours**

**Summer**
3 - SSCI 8950 Field Experience (OPTIONAL)

**Second Year, First Semester**
3 - SSCI 8100 Theoretical Models in Applied Social Research  
3 - Methods Elective: (e.g. SSCI 8030 Survey Designs for Applied Social Research)  
3 - Elective  
**Total: 9 hours**

**Second Year, Second Semester**
6 - SSCI 8910 Master’s Thesis Research (thesis track only)  
3 - Elective (if needed)  
**Total: 9 hours**

**Total hours: 30 (non-thesis) or 36 (thesis)**
This table illustrates the typical course progression through the Social Science curriculum. When planning their curriculum, students should be aware that some courses are not offered on an annual basis, but rather may be offered on a biannual basis. Thus, choosing not to take a core course will delay student progress toward the degree.

**Professional Seminars ("ProSem")**
Graduate school represents a time of important personal, professional, and intellectual transition and growth. A successful graduate career requires that each student actively participate in the “life of the department.” This means taking the initiative to meet faculty, attending research presentations, and participating in course and program assessments. It also means honing and refining knowledge and skills that may be outside the purview of required coursework but are generally considered to be elements of a true professional.

To promote this development, the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice will offer a graduate professional socialization seminar, under the SSCI 8970 Departmental Seminar rubric. All graduate students are required to enroll in three hours of SSCI 8970, Departmental Research and Professional Development Seminar, in the first semester. **Attendance at the graduate proseminars is mandatory.**

**Non-thesis Option**
A non-thesis option is available. The student must submit a non-thesis designation by September 15th of their second year and must designate a major advisor and form a 3-faculty member Advisory Committee. A total of 30 credit hours is required for the non-thesis option. It also includes a comprehensive examination divided into two segments, with a length of four hours each, determined and evaluated by the Advisory Committee. The exam must be completed by the end of March to allow enough time for Committee members to evaluate it. The grading for this exam will be done on a High Pass, Pass, Pass with revisions, or Fail system.

Should a student not pass the examinations, they will not be allowed to retake it again immediately. In this instance, a student will be allowed to re enroll in an additional semester and will be required to retake both examinations.

**Thesis Option**
The thesis is intended to show the student’s ability to plan, organize, research, and report on an original piece of scholarly work. Each thesis will accomplish this goal in an independent way. It also will reflect the student's professional maturity and autonomy. The thesis should be a contribution to the field of social science. The student is responsible for meeting with their Advisory Committee to work out all details of the actual scholarship that is being created.

All phases of the thesis research (including the topic, the proposal for the research problem, design of the research, collection and analysis of the data, and writing of the final report) are
primarily the responsibility of the student and are supervised by the Thesis Advisor and Thesis Committee. In all phases of the thesis research, the student must work closely with their Committee Chair and other members of the Thesis Committee. The student must ensure that the completed thesis meets the format specifications of the Graduate School.

The standards for the master’s thesis are in accord with the latest edition of the Guide for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations published by the Graduate School of Clemson University. Graduate students are expected to attend a workshop conducted by the Graduate School on how to format the thesis.

**Thesis Overview**

**Thesis Credit**
Students completing a thesis must complete six credit hours of the Master's Thesis Research course (SSCI 8910). No degree credit is given for additional hours (beyond six) of SSCI 8910 (Thesis Research), although such credits appear on the student’s transcript.

**Timing of the Thesis**
In order to remain enrolled, students must show satisfactory progress toward the completion of their thesis. Any student who fails to maintain adequate progress towards the completion of their thesis may at any time be placed on academic probation or be terminated from the program on the recommendation of the Graduate Advisory Committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Department Chair.

In order to complete the degree within the normal time period of two years, the Master's thesis must begin (e.g. the written proposal accepted and presented) before or during the first semester of the student's second year in the program. The student is required to begin planning the thesis during the first year of graduate training by selecting a thesis chairperson and forming a thesis committee by the middle of their second semester.

Graduate students should expect to work on their theses during the regular semester and during the various breaks (e.g., summer, winter holiday, etc.). However, while thesis work may be conducted during the summer between the first and second years, committee members and other faculty members often are unavailable, since most faculty only serve a nine-month contract. *Students should not expect to have access to faculty members for thesis work during the summer unless specific arrangements have been made with these faculty members well in advance.*

All students should select a Thesis Chair by the middle of their second semester. From this point on, students will have two advisors: their Thesis Chair and the Graduate Coordinator. The Thesis Chair will be your thesis advisor and will assist you in matters related to your thesis, as well as give you advice about your courses. The Graduate Coordinator handles any programmatic or institutional matters that come up (e.g., academic advising, assistantship matters, room assignments, ensuring progress toward degree, etc.), gives final approval of the student’s course selections, and will remain available for consultation.

The student's major advisor is the Chair of the Thesis Committee, who directs the thesis research. The Thesis Chair also determines when the thesis proposal as well as the completed thesis is ready for committee consideration. Once the student and the Thesis Chair have decided on a thesis topic, the student must select two additional faculty members to serve on the thesis committee. The full committee should be selected and approved by the start of the third semester. All regular members of the committee must be members of the Clemson University faculty and meet the criteria specified in the Graduate School Policy Handbook.

Note: The Department Chair automatically is an ex officio member of every thesis committee. Once the composition of the Thesis Committee has been determined, the student must submit the GS2 (Plan of Study).

Topic Selection

Any research topic in the student's area of interest in social science that is acceptable to the Thesis Committee may be chosen as the thesis topic. The student is advised to discuss the proposed topic with their prospective chair and possible committee members before formalizing the thesis committee selection.

Thesis Proposal

Every student must write a formal thesis proposal. This proposal must be completed and defended before any formal research can begin. Thesis proposals must be defended no later than a semester prior to the completion and defense of the final thesis, with rare exceptions. In no case can the thesis proposal be defended less than two months prior to the defense of the final thesis. Students also must adhere to the proposal guidelines outlined by the Graduate School.

The thesis proposal is prepared by the student under the guidance of the Thesis Committee Chair. The proposal will include a detailed statement of the research to be conducted by the student. All proposals must include the following elements:

- A clear definition of the research problem/question;
- A review of the appropriate literature;
- A description of the research design, including specific hypotheses, with justification for these hypotheses and use of the design;
● Proposed methods for processing and analyzing the data (quantitative and/or qualitative) for the particular problem under study with justifications for using these methods; and
● A description of the anticipated results indicating how these or alternative findings will be interpreted

Students are to work with their Thesis Chairs to develop their proposals. They must take the initiative to meet with their Thesis Chairs and establish deadlines for stages of development of the proposal. Students must allow the Thesis Chair at least two weeks to review each iteration. The Thesis Chair will establish when it is appropriate to submit iterations for review.

Once the Thesis Chair has given approval, the proposal must be submitted in final written form to each member of the committee. This must be done at least two weeks before the meeting at which the proposal is to be defended. The Graduate Coordinator should also be provided with a copy of the proposal. Students should allow faculty at least two weeks to review the proposal. Committee members may suggest changes during this time.

Proposal Defense
The Graduate Coordinator must be informed of the defense date 10 working days prior to the scheduled defense. An email is sufficient, so long as there is notification that the communication has been received. The student will then formally present the thesis proposal at a formal meeting of the entire committee. The defense should be open to all other interested persons as well. If a member of the Thesis Committee is unable to attend the defense, the Graduate Coordinator must be informed.

Voting to accept or reject the thesis proposal is limited to the members of the Thesis Committee. The committee can vote to:
● Accept the proposal as presented by the student;
● Accept the proposal contingent on minor changes stipulated by the committee (and approved by the chair) without holding another committee meeting;
● Require extensive revisions in the proposal stipulated by the committee and reschedule another committee meeting at which the revised proposal will be defended; or
● Reject the proposal and require the student to prepare a new proposal.

If the proposal is rejected by the Thesis Committee, the student has the option of choosing a new chair, committee, and/or topic.

Committee decisions about the thesis proposal must be unanimous. When a proposal is defended and accepted, the Thesis Committee members will sign the appropriate Graduate School form (Approval of Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal). No major changes (i.e., theoretical or methodological) can be made without the approval of the Chair and committee members.
**Conduct of the Research**

Students should plan on beginning their thesis research **no later** than the end of the third semester. Thesis research cannot begin until:

- The thesis proposal has been approved by the Thesis Committee, and
- The research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Clemson University Institutional Review Board, if applicable.

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice normally does not pay for costs involved in conducting thesis research. No expenses incurred by the student will be reimbursed without prior approval. The student is responsible for being familiar with professional and departmental policies, procedures, and ethical standards for conducting thesis research.

**Final Thesis Review**

Students are expected to work with their Chair to ensure that a completed, error-free draft of the final thesis is submitted to the committee members. Committee members have three weeks to complete their **initial** reviews of this draft. Failure to complete an initial review within six weeks is grounds for removal of a committee member, including the Chair.

The student should then make corrections and additions to this draft, as suggested by the Chair and committee members. Upon approval by the Thesis Chair, the thesis must then be submitted in final form to members of the Thesis Committee **at least two weeks** before the thesis defense. As with the thesis proposal, students should not expect faculty members to read numerous drafts of the final thesis. This means that the version of the thesis that is defended during the defense is a **final** draft, with few, if any, minor errors. A digital copy should be provided to each member of the committee, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Department Chair, unless a member specifically requests a printed copy. Notices of the defense will be posted.

**Thesis Defense**

The student will take a final oral examination where the student will defend the thesis to the Thesis Committee at a formal meeting open to all faculty members. This final examination must be passed at least three weeks before the student's proposed date of graduation. Members of the faculty, members of the Graduate Curriculum Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School are invited to attend.

Check the Graduate School list of deadlines for additional information:

[http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html](http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html).
The student must ensure that written notification of the thesis defense be submitted. This is done by submitting the Thesis Defense Form as designated by the Graduate School. This form can be accessed at: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/calendar/defense-form.html

Following the thesis defense, the Thesis Committee will vote to:

- Accept the thesis without modification;
- Accept the thesis contingent on minor revisions stipulated by the committee and to be approved by the committee chair without holding another committee meeting; or,
- Reject the thesis until specified major revisions are made. In this case, a second defense date must be scheduled.

Decisions about the thesis are made by a majority vote of the Thesis Committee. When the thesis defense is accepted, the Thesis Committee members will sign the GS7M (Final Exam and Thesis Approval Form). Access this at: http://www.clemson.edu/graduate/files/pdfs/GS7M.pdf. Once filled out and signed by your Thesis Chair, Committee, and others as designated, take it to the office identified by the Graduate School within three days after the examination.

A student who fails the thesis defense may be allowed a second opportunity only upon the recommendation of the Thesis Committee. Failure of the second examination will result in dismissal from the Master of Science program in Social Science.

**Submission of Final Thesis to the Graduate School**

The Graduate School uses an electronic thesis and dissertation (ETD) publishing system. Details about this process are available on the Graduate School website.

**Graduate students are required to consult the Graduate School regulations and website for more information and to adhere to the guidelines and procedures stipulated in these sources of information.**
Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are distributed by the head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Advisory Committee. All students who are in good academic standing (as defined by GPA and progress toward degree, among other criteria), and who are enrolled full-time are eligible to apply for assistantships and other university support. Preference will be given to superior students who are making continuous, consistent and acceptable progress toward completion of the degree requirements. Graduate students in the program will not be supported for more than four (4) regular academic semesters. Students are usually required to work 20 hours per week for their assistantship. Graduate assistants receive a tuition waiver along with their regular assistantship. Generally, graduate assistants in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice are assigned as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). Teaching assistants will help grade exams, meet with students and hold review sessions, among other duties.

All graduate assistantships are considered both professional work experiences and educational experiences. Thus, students should treat the assistantship as they would any paid, professional job in the “regular” workforce. And, students should take advantage of this opportunity to develop academic skills, learn more about various areas of research, and to form mentoring relationships with their faculty advisors. As employees, GTAs represent and reflect on the department and the program. Professional deportment and presentation of self are expected.

Students are not guaranteed continuation of financial support. Assistantship support is offered on a semester by semester basis and is contingent on the availability of funds and the student’s progress toward degree. Eligibility for continued support is defined in terms of academic performance in courses and reasonable progress through the program. That is, continuation of assistantship support depends on academic and assistantship performance of high quality. Grades below B, incompletes, inadequate job performance, and no or minimal progress toward degree are grounds for terminating assistantship support from semester to semester. Those graduate students who are receiving financial support from the program will be assessed on their progress toward thesis completion and on how well they are performing their assistantship duties.
Standards of performance

Academic Performance

Graduate students in Social Science must maintain an academic performance level at or above a 3.0 GPA in all graduate work. Continuation in any type of university or external agency financial support and internship placement will be contingent on academic performance at or above the 3.0 GPA level. Although a “B” average is expected of all students receiving departmental assistantships, a cumulative GPA of higher than 3.0 is preferred and expected of students receiving such support.

Students who acquire a grade-point average below 3.0 are placed on academic probation. Students must complete all forms related to their proposed plan for success in order to be retained in the program while on academic probation. Students on academic probation may be terminated from the program on the recommendation of the Thesis Committee and with the approval of the Graduate Coordinator and the Chair of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice.

Professional Conduct

Graduate students must recognize that graduate education is professional education. The awarding of an advanced degree requires more than a minimum grade-point average and the completion of academic requirements in courses, seminars, and research activities. It also requires the acquisition of acceptable professional standards. Thus, they must conduct themselves as professionals in their dealings with undergraduates, faculty, staff, and other graduate students. Student conduct during the field placement experience must reflect positively on them, the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, and Clemson University. Violations of these professional standards may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

Student Responsibilities

It is the student’s responsibility to initiate required actions and to meet the deadlines specified by the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice, as well as the Graduate School. While the Graduate Coordinator and the Chair are committed to assisting students, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all necessary forms are properly completed and filed with the Graduate School, and/or, as appropriate, the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator.
Policy Receipt Acknowledgement

I, ______________________________________________ (please print) hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the policies and requirements set forth by the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminal Justice. I am fully responsible for being familiar with the complete content of the Department’s Graduate Handbook as well as Clemson’s Graduate School Policy Handbook. I understand that I must conduct myself professionally with undergraduates, faculty, staff and other graduate students. I acknowledge that any violation of these professional standards may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

_____________________________________________ ________________
Student name (printed)      Date

____________________________________________ _________________
Student signature       Date

_____________________________________________ _________________
CUID #

_____________________________________________ _________________
Director of Graduate Studies     Date

