

# **SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

## **Graduate Program Handbook**

(updated May 2004)

The information provided below is for the convenience of students entering the Master's program in sociology and the Dual Degree program in sociology and social work (in conjunction with SUNY Albany). This handbook does not constitute an official or complete statement of college policies and regulations. Please consult the current Graduate Catalogue and Schedule of Classes, as well as the undergraduate handbook for official statements of college policies and further information that may not be included here. Please note that policies and regulations are subject to change.

### **I. ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

#### **A. Admission to the Master's Program in Sociology**

For admission to the graduate program in sociology, students must have been awarded a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and should have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) in her or his undergraduate work. It is not necessary that students have an undergraduate degree in sociology to apply to the program.

An application for admission to graduate study in sociology includes the following:

- (1) A completed application for admission to graduate study (available from the SUNY New Paltz Graduate School)
  - (2) A written statement by the student of his/her interests and professional goals and reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in sociology
  - (3) Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate course work
  - (4) Three letters of reference from persons who have been in a position to judge the applicant's academic performance and potential for graduate study
  - (5) A \$50.00 application fee payable to SUNY New Paltz (subject to change without notice)
- The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is NOT required

\*\*All of the above should be sent directly to the Graduate School of the State University of New York at New Paltz, 75 S. Manheim Blvd., Suite 9, New Paltz, New York 12561.

Application Deadlines:

February 15 for fall admissions

October 15 for spring admissions

#### **B. Admission to the Dual Degree Program**

In conjunction with SUNY at Albany (SUNYA) a student may earn both an M. A. in sociology and an M.S.W. in social work. For admission to the Dual Degree program in sociology and social work, students must have been awarded a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and should have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 (B) in her or his undergraduate work. Experience

in the human services field is desirable.

An application for admission to the Dual Degree program includes the following:

- (1) A completed application for admission to graduate study (available from the SUNY New Paltz Graduate School)
- (2) A completed application for admission to graduate study for the Nelson Rockefeller School of Social Welfare (available from SUNY New Paltz Graduate School)
- (3) A written statement by the student of his/her interests, professional goals, relevant experience, and reasons for pursuing a graduate degree in sociology and social work
- (4) Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate course work
- (5) Three letters of reference from persons who have been in a position to judge the applicant's academic performance, potential for graduate study, and capabilities for working with people in a human services capacity
- (6) A \$50.00 application fee payable to SUNY New Paltz (subject to change without notice)
- (7) A \$50.00 application fee payable to the University at Albany (subject to change without notice).

The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is NOT required.

\*\*All of the above should be sent directly to the Graduate School of the State University of New York at New Paltz, 75 S. Manheim Blvd., Suite 9, New Paltz, New York 12561. The Graduate School at New Paltz will forward the relevant information to SUNY Albany.

Admission to the Dual Degree program is for fall enrollment only. The deadline for applications is February 15.

Please note, students must gain acceptance into both sociology at SUNY New Paltz and social work at SUNY Albany in order to be enrolled in the Dual Degree program. It is possible to be accepted into one program and not accepted into the other program. In such instances, students may enroll in the school to which they are accepted.

## **II. REQUIREMENTS FOR DEGREES**

### **A. The Master's Degree in Sociology**

Completion of the M.A. degree will require 36 credit hours. For a full-time student, this usually means three semesters of four courses per semester. For part-time students, the number of semesters will vary depending upon the credit load a student takes each semester. Whether a student attends full or part time, all requirements must be completed within six years after admission to the program.

The program includes six core courses (18 credits), four or five electives (12-15 credits), and the thesis (3-6 credits). The core courses (and the semester in which they are offered) are as follows:

87500 Social Structure & Change (fall)  
87501 Sociological Theory (spring)  
87503 Research Methods (fall)  
87551 Social Statistics (spring)  
87352 Social Policy (fall)  
87552 Seminar in Sociological Issues (spring)

Electives are scheduled on a rotating basis and vary from year to year. One sociology elective is offered each semester. Occasionally, electives are offered during summer session. For non-Dual Degree students, Human Behavior and Social Environment 1 may be counted as a sociology elective credit (although students must register for this course through SUNY Albany).

*Independent Study.* It is possible to register for up to six credits of independent study. Independent study credits will count as elective credit. The primary purpose of independent study is to enable students to pursue knowledge in an area not covered by a regularly offered course or to pursue an area of research in much greater depth than is possible through an existing course. Independent study places the major responsibility for learning directly upon the student. Therefore, a student should not undertake to do an independent study unless she or he can assume considerable responsibility in planning and carrying out a project independently. Students should not consider independent study until they have completed at least 9 graduate credits. To do an independent study, a student must meet with a professor in order to devise an appropriate course of study. All independent study proposals must be approved by the department chair, the graduate coordinator, and the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

*Transfer credit.* The department may accept up to nine credits in appropriate course work from an accredited graduate program elsewhere. No transfer credit will be granted for courses in which the student received a grade below B. Students must submit a syllabus or a list of readings and assignments for each transfer course to be evaluated. Students must also submit an official transcript from each school where transfer credits were taken.

*Courses in a Related Discipline.* Under certain circumstances, and with departmental approval, a student may take up to six credits of course work in a related social science. These courses will count as elective credit.

*Non-matriculated course credit.* A student may take up to six credits of sociology course work without being matriculated in the program. The credits as well as the grades will count toward graduation once the student is matriculated. Students who take more than six credits should not expect that the additional course work will be accepted when they become matriculated.

*Plan of Study.* Upon matriculation, each student should meet with her or his adviser and map out a plan of study. An official plan of study form must be completed by the student and the adviser during the first semester of the student's matriculation. This form will be kept in the student's file and updated each semester.

*Grading System and Academic standing.* Student performance in all courses is evaluated by letter

grades according to the following scale: A for outstanding work that is of a consistently high order; A- is for very good work; B+ is for good work that is distinctly above average; B is for acceptable work that is average; B- is for work that is slightly below the average expectation; C+ is for work that falls distinctly below the average expectation; C is for work that is significantly below the average expectation; C-, D+, D is for work that is marginal and falls unacceptably below the average expectation; F is failing.

Students must maintain a B (3.0) average in all course work taken toward the degree. Only two courses with a grade between B- and C (inclusive) will be counted toward graduation. No course with a grade of C- or below will be counted toward graduation. Matriculated students who earn grades below B- in four consecutive courses or who, after their first 9 credits, earn a cumulative grade point average below 2.5 will automatically lose their matriculated status and will not be able to reapply for admissions.

*Incomplete Grades.* The mark of I (Incomplete) may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor and upon the request of a student in cases where the student has completed three-quarters of the required work with a passing grade and where a personal emergency prevents her or him from finishing the work on schedule. The student must complete the course work by the midterm point of the next semester for which he or she is registered (or earlier, at the discretion of the instructor) or the I will be converted automatically to an F. Under unusual circumstances, a student may apply for an extension of time to complete the required work but the application must be made prior to the midterm deadline. Students may not graduate with an I on their record with one exception: a student with an I in a course taken in her or his last semester which was not required for graduation may request a permanent incomplete from the Recorder's Office (HAB 13).

*Withdrawal from a course.* A student may withdraw from a course until the date specified on the academic calendar with the payment of a fee. The signature of the instructor with the last date of attendance must be on the withdrawal form. A course withdrawal after the date specified on the academic calendar will be permitted only for compelling non-academic reasons. Students should consult with the office of the Dean of the Liberal Arts and Sciences. No record of course enrollment will appear on the transcript if a course is dropped during the course-changing period. A grade of W will be recorded for withdrawals from courses after the course-changing period and until the course withdrawal deadline date. A grade of F will be recorded for any student who informally drops a course without following the procedure outlined above.

*Repeat Course Grading Option.* Students may elect to repeat a course under the "Repeat Course Grading Option" if they receive an unsatisfactory grade. This option is available to matriculated students as a one-time single course option, subject to approval of their advisor, department chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School. Under this option, only the second grade will be counted in the student's cumulative grade point average.

*Academic Integrity.* The department of sociology and SUNY New Paltz take academic integrity very seriously. Any student found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty will face disciplinary action.

Students should be particularly aware of the college's policy on plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation, intentional or unintentional, of someone else's words or ideas as one's own. Since

words in print are the property of an author or publisher, plagiarizing is a form of larceny punishable by fine. When using another person's words in a paper, students must place them within quotation marks or clearly set them off in the text and give them appropriate footnoting. When students use only the ideas and change the words, they must clearly identify the source of the ideas. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is a violation of the property of the author plagiarized and of the implied assurance by the students when they hand in work that the work is their own. If students have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, it is their responsibility to clarify the matter by conferring with the instructor. Faculty members must report in writing cases of cheating, plagiarism or forgery to their department chair and their academic dean.

### **B. Master's Thesis**

The final graduation requirement consists of a thesis. The thesis provides students an excellent opportunity to gather and analyze data on a topic of their own choosing. There are two options for the thesis. Students may elect to do a three credit thesis which entails an analytical review of a body of literature. Or, students may elect a six credit thesis which entails collecting and analyzing data. The length of a completed thesis may range from 30 to 100 pages depending on the topic and type of research conducted.

#### Procedures for the Thesis Option

Students should adhere to the following procedural steps:

(1) *Select a Thesis Topic and Thesis Advisor.* Students should select a topic that interests them and that allows for guidance from a full-time faculty advisor. Students should rely on their thesis advisor to help them narrow down and specify their topic of inquiry.

(2) *Select a Thesis Committee.* The thesis committee is comprised of three full-time faculty members (including the Thesis Advisor). At least two of these members must be from the sociology department. Faculty should be selected based on their familiarity with the thesis topic and their willingness to work on this project. Please note, faculty are not obligated to serve on more than five thesis committees at any one time.

Once the committee is established, the names of the three faculty members should be forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator.

(3) *Submit a Proposal.* Students should submit to their committee a proposal of no less than 750 words that includes the following (if applicable): (a) a statement of the problem or hypothesis to be investigated; (b) an indication of the sociological literature to be reviewed; (c) an explanation of the methods to be used in the study.

The proposal will be reviewed by the thesis committee. Once the proposal is approved copies of the proposal will be signed by the committee members and forwarded to the Graduate Coordinator.

(4) *Register for Thesis Work*

Only after the above steps are completed will the student be able to register for thesis credits.

College policy requires that this be done by completing a Graduate Thesis Request Form (available in Records and Registration), signed by the thesis chair and the department chair, and submitted during registration for the semester in which work for the thesis is formally undertaken. For this reason, it is strongly advised that the student obtain committee approval for the proposal as early as possible in the semester prior to that in which he/she plans to register for thesis credit. Generally, thesis request forms may not be signed by the thesis chair or the department chair without thesis committee approval of the proposal.

#### *(5) Progressing Through Thesis Work*

Students should keep in close contact with their thesis committee throughout the period of researching and writing the thesis. As a first draft of the thesis develops, students should show it to the committee for input. This is important to ensure that students are on the right track with regards to organization, presentation of data, analysis, etc. It is better to receive feedback from the committee at this early stage than to wait for comments (and possibly significant changes) during the oral defense.

#### *(6) Oral Defense*

An oral examination or "defense" of the thesis is required upon its written completion. This examination is conducted by the thesis committee. Students must submit a completed draft of the thesis to each member of the committee at least three weeks prior to the exam. At the exam students will be asked first to present a brief outline of the thesis and then to respond to questions and comments posed by the committee. The oral defense is an opportunity for the student and the committee to engage in a scholarly dialogue about the thesis. At the close of the exam, the committee will determine whether the thesis is acceptable. Their acceptance may be conditional, pending revisions. Since it is customary for the committee to recommend some revisions, students should anticipate this by scheduling the thesis exam well in advance of the date expected for graduation.

#### *(7) Filing of Thesis*

A final draft of the thesis must be typed according to library specifications as noted on the handout available from the Graduate School. One final copy must be filed with the Sociology Department. A form acknowledging receipt of the completed, revised thesis must be forwarded by the department chair to the Records and Registration Office before the degree will be granted. A second final copy of the completed thesis must also be filed with the Sojourner Truth Library. The copy for the library must be printed on 20% rag or cotton paper and it must be submitted to the library with a check for \$25.00 (to cover the binding fee) made payable to: SUNY New Paltz I.F.R.A. Account #900404/0920.

#### *(8) Some Practical Matters*

Students who have registered for thesis credits but do not complete their theses by the end of the semester for which they registered will be assigned an "H" grade ("Hold") for the thesis until the thesis requirements have been met. Instructors will not assign final grades for theses until the Library has informed the department that the thesis submitted has been accepted. Graduate students who have finished their required course work, who are not registering for any other credits, and who are using campus facilities (i.e., laboratories, studios, library, etc.) to complete their theses should register for a 1-credit course. The 1-credit course, "Continued

Registration” (80799), will permit students to obtain a valid student ID card enabling them access to needed facilities and equipment. Registration for the course requires a “PC” (permission of chair) card. Credits earned may not be counted toward degree requirements.

Students who, for whatever reason, need to change thesis advisers in the middle of a thesis project need to consult with the Graduate Coordinator and, if necessary, the Department Chair. Sometimes a change in advisers will necessitate that a student changes thesis topics.

### **C. Special Policies for Dual Degree Students**

(1) *M.S.W. Degree*. Only students accepted into the Dual Degree program may earn the M.S.W. degree though the special arrangement with SUNY Albany. Dual Degree students should obtain specific instructions and requirements about the program from SUNY Albany.

(2) *Elective Credits*. Dual Degree students are required to take 9 credits of sociology electives (3-6 of which will be thesis credits).

(3) *Transfer Credits*. By special arrangement, students in the Dual Degree program are granted sociology credit at New Paltz for up to 12 social work credits offered by SUNY Albany. Similarly, up to 18 credits of sociology course work taken at SUNY New Paltz may be counted toward the social work degree at Albany. Acceptance of these overlapping credits allows students to complete both degrees with 72-75 credits instead of 96 credits (60 for M.S.W. + 36 for M.A. in sociology). Because of this arrangement, Dual Degree students must adhere to special policies regarding transfer credit: First, because they will have already exceeded the usual university limit with these overlapping credits, additional transfer credits will not be accepted. Second, only those courses in which a student earns at least a B may be transferred between social work and sociology. Third, Dual Degree students should make sure they file the appropriate forms for transfer of credits between SUNY Albany and SUNY New Paltz, and vice-a-versa.

(4) *Tuition and Fees*. Full-time students enrolled in the Dual Degree program should pay for courses at SUNY Albany first (by the due date on the bill). After paying your tuition and fees for SUNY Albany courses, take your receipt to the Office of Student Accounts at SUNY New Paltz and pay for your New Paltz courses (by the due date on the bill). SUNY New Paltz will not charge you more than what a full-time student at either campus would pay. Please note: Students are required to pay campus use fees at both campuses for which they are taking classes.

Part-time students taking classes at both campuses should pay the appropriate tuition and fees at both campuses.

When paying tuition at SUNY New Paltz, it important that both full-time and part-time students bring a copy of their SUNY Albany receipt to the Office of Student Accounts at SUNY New Paltz so that registration status can be confirmed.

In order to be eligible for financial aid, students must take a minimum of 6 credits per semester. Any aid that is received usually comes from the campus at which the majority of credits are being taken. A limited number of graduate assistantships are available for Dual Degree students through

SUNY Albany.

**D. Applying for Graduation**

Students should apply for graduation the semester before they expect to graduate. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of all filing deadlines. Applications for the degree must be filed with Records and Registration (HAB 19). Forms are available at Records and Registration and must be signed by appropriate individuals.

**DISCLAIMER:**

All colleges and departments discussed in this handbook reserve the right to alter the existing rules and regulations noted herein.

For further information:

Coordinator of Graduate Studies  
Department of Sociology; JFT 516  
SUNY New Paltz  
New Paltz, NY 12561  
phone: (845) 257-3505  
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