

SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL HONORS PROGRAM HONORS THESIS (SOC 679HA/B)

Guidelines and Deadlines

The Sociology Honors Program consists of completion of a two-semester honors thesis, undertaken with a supervisor within the Department of Sociology. In order to write a thesis that reflects your best work, you need to organize and plan ahead. Keep in mind that an Honors Thesis is a major undertaking, and will involve a great deal of individual motivation and time management.

Apply for Sociology Honors Program

Usually during the second semester of your Junior year

Submit Honors Program Application to the Sociology Honors Advisor. *Deadlines are October 1st & April 1st in order to begin the program the following semester.* You must complete SOC 302 and SOC 317L (or approved alternative) prior to applying to the Sociology Honors Program, and should either have credit for or be enrolled in SOC 317M and SOC 379M no later than the semester in which you plan to begin the honors thesis.

You must designate a Thesis Supervisor on your application. Any regular member of the Sociology faculty may serve as a supervisor. To assist you, the Sociology department website at <http://www.la.utexas.edu/socdept/> lists all faculty and their research interests. Prior to admission into the honors program, you must consult with the faculty member with whom you wish to work and confirm that this professor is willing to serve as your supervisor. You will also need a second reader, but the decision for this requirement can be made later in the semester in consultation with the Thesis supervisor.

Once accepted as a Sociology Honors candidate, you will need to register for SOC 679HA (the first semester Honors Tutorial course, worth 3 hours of academic credit) in the Sociology Undergraduate Advising Office.

Before You Begin the Honors Program

In the summer or over the holiday break, you should be thinking about your thesis. This is a great time to be brainstorming ideas, reading background texts, and if possible, meeting with your thesis supervisor. This way, although you will not always have a thesis topic in hand when you start SOC 679HA, you will be able to hit the ground running.

Verify your email address on UTDirect (https://utdirect.utexas.edu/utdirect/bio/address_change.WBX). We will use email regularly to remind you about deadlines, tell you about scholarships, and inform you about important meetings. You are responsible for all communication sent to the email address listed with UT.

Create Structure for Thesis Research

By the end of the first week of class

At the beginning of the semester, set up a schedule of regular meetings with your thesis supervisor. During the early stages of Thesis development, *weekly meetings are advisable.* Your supervisor will direct you to relevant literature, brainstorm with you on possible topics, and help you design a project of manageable proportions. Discuss with supervisor the format and nature of your thesis (is it largely quantitative or qualitative in nature? Will you use existing data sets? etc.). Establish deadlines to finalize your research question and complete a literature review. These deadlines will help you remain on track to finish at the end of the second semester.

Thesis Proposal

By midsemester deadline of first semester (Fall '04: Oct. 20)

By the middle of the first semester you are required to submit a research proposal to your supervisor and the Honors Advisor for review. This proposal should be approximately 3-5 pages in length, and should include a preliminary bibliography, a discussion of the data/sources you intend to use for your research, and a discussion of the methodology you plan to employ in your research. This proposal will allow the faculty to determine whether you have a realistic and manageable topic; it will provide you necessary structure as you continue on with your research; and it will force you to ask difficult questions concerning your project from the beginning.

You will need to have a research proposal and budget if you intend to seek funding such as the Undergraduate Research Fellowship; you will also need to have many of these issues worked out if you need to get Human Subjects Review (IRB) approval to do your research.

Your supervisor should be able to provide assistance with this proposal. For further help, please consult the resources on Blackboard, and you may wish to schedule an appointment with the University Writing Center.

End of first semester

Sociology Honors Colloquium: We encourage you attend the Sociology Honors Colloquium, where students completing their theses will present on their research topics (see below for more information). While you will not be called on to present your research after your first semester, this is a great opportunity to learn from your fellow honors students.

Grade in SOC 679HA: At the end of the first semester, you will receive a grade of 'incomplete' for SOC 679HA, which will be changed to a letter grade upon completion of SOC 679HB.

First Complete Draft

By the midsemester deadline of second semester (Fall '04: Oct. 20; Spring '05: March 28)

The second half of the two-semester thesis course is primarily spent writing the thesis (679HB counts as a Substantial Writing Component). Your supervisor may ask you to submit sections of the Thesis as they are completed. A *complete first draft* (not an outline!), including your "Abstract" and "References", should be submitted by this date. Plan to devote ample time to revising the Thesis once you receive comments on this draft. Ask your supervisor about the advisability of submitting this or other drafts to the second reader.

Sociology Honors Colloquium

At the end of the second semester

For students completing SOC 679HB in a Fall or Spring semester, we require participating in the Sociology Honors Colloquium. This colloquium is the capstone of your thesis research, and allows you to gain experience presenting your research to your peers and to faculty. At this colloquium you will be given 15-20 minutes to discuss your thesis project, including your methodology, data and your ultimate research conclusions, as well as any problems you may have had with the project or areas you would like to pursue in the future. *Note: Students who complete SOC 679HB in the summer may present preliminary results or questions after the conclusion of their first semester of the honors program, and will be expected to arrange for an oral defense of their research with their supervisor and second reader.*

Deadline for Thesis Submission: Last Class Day of second semester (Fall '04: Dec. 3; Spring '05: May 6)*

You will not receive your final grade until you have submitted a final copy of your Thesis to your thesis supervisor and/or the Honors Advisor. It is customary also to give a final copy to the second reader if they request one. The Sociology Department should also be given a copy of the final and approved thesis, to be kept with other Honors Theses in BUR 231. These should be paper-bound copies with a cover page listing the title, date, your name, and the name and signature of the supervising professor. We recommend that your citations and references follow the style sheet of the American Sociological Association, which is listed in the *American Sociological Review*. Another useful reference is *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*.

* Your grades in SOC 679HA/HB must be submitted by your professor no later than the first day of final exams.

Commencement

See official University calendar for date

This is the day when all of your hard work will receive its first major reward. You will be publicly recognized for graduating with Special Honors in Sociology at the Liberal Arts commencement ceremonies. Your family and the faculty will be proud of you, and your accomplishment will become a permanent part of your academic record.

Scholarships and Research Funding

Your supervisor will be notified of certain types of funding available to Sociology, and you may also receive emails with funding opportunities. The Sociology Advising office posts various information pertaining to honors organizations, scholarships and fellowships in BUR 230, and many opportunities will also be posted on the Honors group on Blackboard. One funding source that all Honors students should consider is the Undergraduate Research Fellowship, offered every semester through the Office of the Vice President for Research, <http://www.utexas.edu/research/vp/awards/>.

Summary of Requirements for Graduation with Special Honors in Sociology:

1. 60 hours of work completed *in residence* at The University of Texas at Austin (not including transfer credit, credit by exam, AP credit, etc.);
2. 30 hours of Sociology coursework (in 1998-2000 and earlier catalogs, 27 hours; in 2004-06 catalog, 33 hours), including SOC 302, 317L, 317M and 379M and 679HA/HB;
3. University Grade Point Average of at least 3.0;
4. Sociology Grade Point Average of at least 3.5;
5. Participation at the Sociology Honors Colloquium (or other oral defense with supervisor and second reader);
6. Completion of a satisfactory Honors thesis of 50-80 pages in length, and grades of A in both SOC 679HA and HB;
7. Submission of a signed, paper-bound copy of the Honors Thesis to the Sociology Department.

Important note: if you successfully complete a thesis but do not graduate with the minimum GPA or in-residence requirements, you will receive credit for your six-hour honors thesis coursework but you will not receive the honors designation on your degree.

Revised September 2004