

Change to Program/Graduate Diploma Academic Requirements Proposal Form

1. **Program/Graduate Diploma:** Sociology

2. **Effective Session of Proposed Change(s):** January 1, 2023

3. **Proposed Change(s) and Rationale**

a) A description of the proposed modification(s) and rationale, including alignment with academic plans.

The proposed changes replace our current comprehensive exam system (two comprehensives) with a system that involves one comprehensive exam (taken outside the dissertation area) and a candidacy exam (focused on the dissertation research).

Key changes include the following:

Comprehensive Exam Requirement (revised)

- 1) Purpose of comprehensive exam explained. Notion of competency exam explained
- 2) Roles and responsibilities of the comprehensive exam committee and student outlined
- 3) Structure and format:
 - Number of comp areas reduced from 33 to 10-15
 - Format restricted to take home exam
 - 3 preparatory questions as opposed to 5
 - New principles to guide creation and use of reading lists
 - Requirement for reading list approval by curriculum committee
 - Purpose and length of rationale for reading list clarified
 - Sample exam questions provided
- 4) Criteria and process for evaluation described. New requirement for written rationale for decision from comprehensive exam committee
- 5) Appeals Procedure
- 6) Accessibility and Accommodations

Candidacy Exam (new)

- 1) Role of Candidacy Exam Committee defined
- 2) Structure and format:
 - Dissertation proposal with extended literature review
 - Proposal defence (Proposal Examination Committee, external reader, public defence)
- 3) Criteria and process for evaluation described
- 4) Appeals Procedure
- 5) Accessibility and Accommodations

Rationale:

The current comprehensive exam system continues to be the most serious delay in students' progress through degree requirements. Our current process requires that two comps be completed by the end of year 2. This timeline is rarely met and students continue to get stalled at the comprehensive stage. The proposed changes will streamline and ensure timely completion of the comprehensive exam requirement by:

- reducing the number of comprehensive exam areas offered by the Program;
- updating comprehensive exam reading lists and how they are used;
- reducing the number of format options, with a preference to move to the take home exam only.

The candidacy exam will help ensure that the student has the appropriate knowledge and expertise to undertake a thesis in the selected field of study.

The proposed changes are aligned with new FGS regulations related to the comprehensive exam. Program comprehensive exam guidelines must now include information related to: 1) timing and scheduling; 2) format and structure; 3) accessibility and accommodations; 4) assessment criteria and feedback; 5) outcomes of the examination; 6) procedures for updating graduate milestone examinations

In addition, FGS has informed GPDs that it will soon be establishing a new guideline requiring all students to be ABD by the end of the ninth term of study.

b) An outline of the changes to requirements and the associated learning outcomes/objectives, including how the proposed requirements will support the achievement of program/graduate diploma learning objectives.

The Program's existing requirement is for two-comprehensive exam system. This will be replaced with a system requiring one comprehensive exam and one candidacy exam.

The comprehensive exam meets several Program PhD learning objectives including, most importantly, those related to depth and breadth of scholarship, research and scholarship, communication skills, and awareness of the limits of knowledge. In general, the exercise gives students an opportunity to develop an appreciation of the intellectual contours of an area of sociological inquiry in ways that contribute to their overall scholarly development as well as their future research and teaching activities.

The candidacy exam meets several Program PhD learning objectives including, most importantly, those related to depth and breadth of scholarship, research and scholarship, level of application of knowledge, professional autonomy, communication skills, and awareness of the limits of knowledge.

Through the candidacy exam students must demonstrate that they have: 1) acquired the requisite methodological and theoretical skills to successfully complete dissertation level research; 2) a command of the relevant literature within which their proposed research is situated; and 3) proposed an intellectually original, logistically feasible, and ethically sound dissertation research project.

c) An overview of the consultation undertaken with relevant academic units and an assessment of the impact of the modifications on other programs/graduate diplomas.

In 2020, the Graduate Program established the revision of our comprehensive exam system as a priority. A series of meetings discussing the comp have taken place with the executive committee, the curriculum committee, the Program as a whole, and at our cyclical program retreat.

d) A summary of any resource implications and how they are being addressed.

There are no resource implications.

e) A summary of how students currently enrolled in the program/graduate diploma will be accommodated.

Students admitted under previous requirements will be given the option to choose the new comprehensive examination procedure or the original as outlined in the academic calendar. Future students would then all fall under the new requirement moving forward, and that will be reflected in the 2023-24 academic calendar.

4. Calendar Copy

Existing Program/Graduate Diploma Information (change from)	Proposed Program/Graduate Diploma Information (change to)
<p>Candidates (PhD I) form a three-person supervisory committee by the end of the second year. Candidates must fulfill the following requirements:</p> <p>1. Courses Four full courses, or equivalent, at the 6000-level, including: a full course in theory, a full course in methods, and Sociology 60013.0: Doctoral Seminar I: Professional Development Workshop Series and Sociology 6002 3.0: Doctoral Seminar II: Professional Development Workshop Series.</p> <p>2. Professional Development Requirement This requirement is met by the completion of Sociology 6001 3.0: Doctoral Seminar I: Professional Development Workshop Series in the first year and Sociology 6002 3.0: Doctoral Seminar II: Professional Development Workshop Series in the second year. The overall objectives of these workshop-based courses are: (i) the development of professional skills for the academic and non-academic labour market; (ii) to facilitate timely progress through program; and (iii) to contribute to the development of a research culture in the cohort and beyond.</p> <p>3. Comprehensive Requirements Before proceeding to the doctoral proposal and dissertation work, the PhD candidate must complete the comprehensive requirements. These requirements include: (i) a proficiency in social theory as demonstrated through the completion of one 6000-level full course (or two half courses) in classical and/or contemporary social theory; (ii) a proficiency</p>	<p>Candidates (PhD I) form a three-person supervisory committee by the end of the second year. Candidates must fulfill the following requirements:</p> <p>1. Courses Four full courses, or equivalent, at the 6000-level, including: a full course in theory, a full course in methods, and Sociology 60013.0: Doctoral Seminar I: Professional Development Workshop Series and Sociology 6002 3.0: Doctoral Seminar II: Professional Development Workshop Series.</p> <p>2. Professional Development Requirement This requirement is met by the completion of Sociology 6001 3.0: Doctoral Seminar I: Professional Development Workshop Series in the first year and Sociology 6002 3.0: Doctoral Seminar II: Professional Development Workshop Series in the second year. The overall objectives of these workshop-based courses are: (if) the development of professional skills for the academic and non-academic labour market; (ii) to facilitate timely progress through program; and (iii) to contribute to the development of a research culture in the cohort and beyond.</p> <p>3. Comprehensive Requirements Before proceeding to dissertation research, the PhD candidate must complete the comprehensive requirements. These requirements include: (i) a proficiency in social theory as demonstrated through the completion of one 6000-level full course (or two half courses) in classical and/or contemporary social theory; (ii) a proficiency in research methods as</p>

in research methods as demonstrated through the completion of one 6000-level full course (or two half courses) in research methods and/or social statistics; ~~and (iii) the completion of two comprehensive examinations as selected from the program's pre-approved comprehensive examination areas.~~

Unless an appeal is granted, a comprehensive examination will be deemed as "fail" if the oral exam is not successfully completed within the required time period – that is, by the "Last Date for Oral and Adjudication." The comprehensive requirements are to be completed in the second year of study in the PhD program. Detailed information on these requirements may be found on the Graduate Program in Sociology website.

4. Cognate Requirement

Depending on the candidate's qualifications and intended research, demonstrated competency in a foreign language and/or demonstrated competency in a technical skill, such as statistics, may be required at the discretion of the student's supervisory committee.

5. Dissertation and Oral Examination

~~Candidates must write a research proposal.~~

Candidates must conduct a research study and report the results in appropriate dissertation form. The research and dissertation should demonstrate the candidate's independence, originality, and understanding of the area of investigation at an advanced level. After the formal submission of the dissertation, an oral examination, normally centred on the dissertation and matters related to it, is held to determine whether or not the candidate has fulfilled the dissertation requirements.

demonstrated through the completion of one 6000-level full course (or two half courses) in research methods and/or social statistics; (iii) the completion of **one comprehensive examination (taken outside the dissertation area)** as selected from the program's pre-approved comprehensive examination areas **and (iv) a candidacy exam (focused on the dissertation research)**. Unless an appeal is granted, a comprehensive examination will be deemed as "fail" if the oral exam is not successfully completed within the required time period – that is, by the "Last Date for Oral and Adjudication." The comprehensive requirements are to be completed in the second year of study in the PhD program. **All students must have a passed comprehensive exam on file before proceeding to the candidacy exam.** The candidacy exam has a written and oral component. **The written component is the dissertation proposal which normally should be approximately 10,000 words (40 pages) in length.** The oral component is the proposal defence, which should be approximately two hours in duration. Detailed information on these requirements may be found on the Graduate Program in Sociology website.

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Please submit completed forms and required supporting documentation through the LA&PS Curriculum Toolkit website.

Graduate Program in Sociology PhD Program Learning Outcomes

By the end of the PhD program, students will be able to:

- Critically assess key research questions, debates, and research developments in at least two areas of sociology
- Conduct advanced sociological research that makes original theoretical and/or empirical contributions
- Engage creatively with traditions of qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed-methods approaches to sociological research
- Contribute to traditions of critical, theoretically-focused, and/or publicly-engaged approaches to sociological inquiry
- Conduct sociological research that addresses academic and, where appropriate, non-academic audiences
- Develop advanced writing, analytic, and presentation skills that are transferable to a range of employment settings
- Successfully conduct dissertation research in ways that balance intellectual autonomy with an openness to guidance from committee members
- Understand key debates about research ethics within sociology and related disciplines and reflexively apply the principles of academic honesty and Tri-Council ethics policies to particular research circumstances
- Discuss and debate complex sociological issues in a range of pedagogical and professional settings
- Understand the importance of diverse approaches to knowledge, including the contributions of scholarship that has been marginalized by the academy
- Contribute sociological perspectives to interdisciplinary areas of research and writing

Graduate Program in Sociology
Program-approved process for creating set comprehensive exam reading lists
6 March 2022

APPROVED at the March 16 meeting of the Graduate Program in Sociology

The executive and curriculum committees recommend that the Program approve the process set out below for creating set comprehensive exam reading lists for the Program's new comp areas. This process includes additional detail that updates a version shared with the Program and discussed at the Feb. 16 Graduate Program meeting.

- 1) The Program will establish committees for drafting reading lists by approaching faculty members with expertise in each comp area (evidenced by graduate teaching, comps supervision, publication record, research profile).
- 2) Those committees will include no more than 4 faculty members in total. One faculty member will serve as the list convener and will be responsible for setting and chairing meetings and shepherding the process of creating the set reading list.
- 3) The set reading lists should be finalized within four months of a committee being struck.
- 4) Committees should consult and seek input from additional faculty members with expertise in the comp area as required.
- 4) Committees must create set Program reading lists that adhere to the guidelines outlined below.
- 5) Once completed, the set reading lists are submitted to the curriculum committee for review and approval. Review focuses on potential overlap with the set reading lists from other comp areas. The curriculum committee's approval is based on adherence to the guidelines outlined below.
- 6) There will be no program-level approval of set comprehensive exam reading lists.

Guidelines for Set Program Comprehensive Exam Reading Lists.

These guidelines draw from the experiences of creating a set Program reading list for qualitative methods. See below.

- 1) The Program's set comprehensive exam reading lists must align with the approach to the comprehensive exam outlined in the document "Graduate Program in Sociology--Comprehensive and Candidacy Exam Required Procedures and Processes." Committees creating set reading lists should read that document with careful attention paid to guiding principles (page 3), comprehensive exam purpose (p. 6), and reading lists (p. 8).
- 2) Committee members creating set Program comprehensive exam reading lists must ensure that a range of relevant scholarship is included in the list. The readings must be broken down into meaningful sections (with subsections as required). In making their selections, committee members should be guided by: (1) the culture, traditions, and values of the Program; (2) their understanding of relevant field(s) of research, including the key works students should have an opportunity to read; and (3) faculty research expertise and interests.
- 3) Committees must ensure that their set Program reading lists include appropriate references to work by people historically excluded from the academy including, for example, women, LGBTQ, and BIPOC scholars.

4) Each set Program comprehensive exam reading list must include: 1) a list of faculty who can supervise a comp in the area (based on graduate teaching record, past comp supervision/membership, publications and research expertise); (2) a statement of the overall pedagogical objectives of the comp; (3) a list of sections; (4) detailed instructions to students about how to select readings that also express the list's reading requirements; (5) the full bibliographic reference for each reading in a standard format.

5) How reading requirements are structured will vary from list to list. One approach is to specify a certain *number* of required readings from relevant sections rather than *specific readings* that must be read. This approach requires that students read a certain minimum number of readings from relevant sections (and subsections), but gives to students, in consultation with their comp committee, the choice about what to read. Required readings must be identified in such a way that recognizes that up to 25% of each student's final reading list can contain items not included on the set Program comprehensive exam reading list and that each student's final reading list cannot exceed the equivalent of 25 medium-sized books (5 articles=1 book. A medium sized book is 250 pages in length). In other words, the required readings on any list cannot exceed the equivalent of 18.75 medium-sized books).

6) The Program's set comprehensive exam reading lists should be of a reasonable length. While the length may vary depending on the nature of the comprehensive area, committees might wish to consider the equivalent of 60 medium-sized books as a ballpark figure.

DRAFT—NOT FOR CIRCULATION—PILOT PROJECT

Graduate Program in Sociology Comprehensive Exam Reading List for Qualitative Methodology 8 December 2021

Faculty Members who have declared an expertise in the area: Bischooping, Gazso, Mykhalovskiy, Pupo, Lorna Erwin, Glenn Stalker, others

Pedagogical Objectives

To help prepare students to teach qualitative research methods and conduct qualitative research.

To help students become conversant with “big” questions about qualitative methodology, epistemology and the politics of knowledge, as well as more “hands-on” issues related to the practice and design of qualitative inquiry.

Seven sections of the reading list cover:

- 1) formative critiques of science, positivism, and the enlightenment tradition with a bearing on qualitative modes of inquiry as a critical project of knowledge making.
- 2) readings addressing data collection, coding, analysis, and other aspects of qualitative research design.
- 3) scholarship on representation and reflexivity in qualitative inquiry.
- 4) scholarship exploring ethical issues in qualitative inquiry and critiquing the standardization of research ethics.
- 5) Indigenous, anti-racist, postcolonial, queer, and feminist scholarship that critiques established traditions of research methods.
- 6) scholarship on the post-qualitative turn.
- 7) readings from eight areas of social inquiry with strong ties to qualitative research methods.

Instructions to Students

This reading list has been designed in such a way that balances required readings with readings chosen by the student. Your final list must include:

- 1) The minimum number of readings required in each section of this reading list.
- 2) Additional readings from this list identified by the student in consultation with their comprehensive exam committee.
- 4) Reading chosen by the student that do not appear on this list (up to a maximum of 25% of your final reading list).

In total you should create a reading list consisting of the equivalent of 25 medium-sized books (5 journal articles or chapters = 1 medium-sized book). Students may choose individual chapters from any of the edited collections included in this reading list.

1. Qualitative Methodology, Epistemology and the Politics of Knowledge (4 books, 1 book chapter, 6 articles)

Students must choose at least three readings from the list below.

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Becker, H. S. (1996). The epistemology of qualitative research. *Ethnography and human development: Context and meaning in social inquiry*, 27, 53-71.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Collins, P.H. (1989). The social construction of Black Feminist Thought. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14(4), 745-773.

Gans, Herbert. 2010. "Public Ethnography: Ethnography as Public Sociology." *Qualitative Sociology*, 33(1): 97-104.

Guba, Egon G. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (2017). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In N.K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Haraway, Donna. 1998. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3. (Autumn, 1988), pp. 575-599

Harding, S. (1986). *The science question in feminism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Law, John. *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge, 2004.

MacLure, Maggie. (2011). Qualitative inquiry: Where are the ruins? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17, 10: 997-1005.

Morse, Janice. 2020. "The Changing Face of Qualitative Inquiry." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Volume 19, 1-7.

2. Issues in Research Design (1 book, 9 articles)

Students must choose at least three readings from the list below.

Bazeley, P. (2009). Analyzing qualitative data: more than identifying themes. *Qualitative Research* 2 (2): 6-22.

Bird, C. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry* 11 (2): 226-248.

Creswell, John W. (2013) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage. (or the later 2018 version of the text with new co-author Cheryl Poth).

Deterding, N.M. and Waters, M.C. (2021). Flexible coding of in-depth interviews: A twenty-first-century approach. *Sociological methods & research*, 50(2), 708-739.

DeVault, M. (1990). Talking and listening from women's standpoint: Feminist strategies for interviewing and analysis, *Social Problems*, 37(1), 96-116.

Keightly, Emily. 2010. "Remembering Research: Memory and Methodology in the Social Sciences." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13(1), 55-70.

Poland, B. D. (1995). Transcription quality as an aspect of rigor in qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 1(3), 290-310.

Rapley, T. J. (2001). The art (fulness) of open-ended interviewing: some considerations on analysing interviews. *Qualitative research*, 1(3), 303-323.

Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative research*, 10(2), 199-228.

Small, M.L. (2009). How many cases do I need?' On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research. *Ethnography*, 10 (1), 5-38.

3. Representation, Reflexivity, and Voice (2 book chapters, 8 articles)

Students must choose at least three readings from the list below.

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 15(2), 219-234.

Bourdieu, P. (2006). Understanding. Pp. 607-626 in *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*, edited by Pierre Bourdieu. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Dickson-Smith, V., James, E., Kippen, S. and Liamputtong, P. 2007. "Doing Sensitive Research: What Challenges to Qualitative Researchers Face?" *Qualitative Research* 7(3), 327-353.

Finlay, L. 2002. "Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice." *Qualitative Research* 2(2):209-230.

Hamilton, Patricia. 2020. "Now that I know what you're about: Black Feminist Reflections on Power in the Research Relationship." *Qualitative Research*, 20(5), 519-533.

Kleinman, S. & Copp, M. A. (1993). Feelings about participants. Pp. 1-18 in *Emotions and Fieldwork*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications.

Mauthner, N.S. and Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. *Sociology*, 37(3), 413-431.

Mosselson, Jacqueline. 2010. "Subjectivity and Reflexivity: Locating the Self in Research on Dislocation." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23(4), 479-494.

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative studies in education*, 16(2), 175-196.

Sherif, Bahira. 2001. "The Ambiguity of Boundaries in the Fieldwork Experience: Establishing Rapport and Negotiating Insider/Outsider Status." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(4), 436-447.

4. Research Ethics (2 books, 1 book chapter, 5 articles)

Students must choose at least two readings from the list below.

Fine, G.A. (1993). Ten lies of ethnography: Moral dilemmas of field research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22(3): 267-294.

Gatenby, Bev and Maria Humphries. 2000. "Feminist Participatory Action: Methodological and Ethical Issues." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(1): 89-105.

Humphreys, L. (1975). *Tearoom trade: Impersonal sex in public places*. New York: Aldine Pub. Co.

Mattingly, Cheryl. 2005. Toward a vulnerable ethics of research practice. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health Illness and Medicine*. 9(4): 453-71.

Plankey-Videla, Nancy. 2012. "Informed Consent as Process: Problematizing Informed Consent in Organizational Ethnographies." *Qualitative Sociology*, 35, 1-21.

Shaw, I. 2003. "Ethics in Qualitative Research and Evaluation", *Journal of Social Work* 3(1): 9-29.

Van den Hoonaard, W. C., & Hamilton, A. (Eds.). (2016). *The ethics rupture: Exploring alternatives to formal research-ethics review*.

Van Maanen, John. 1983. The moral fix: On the ethics of fieldwork. In Emerson, Robert, M. (Ed.) *Contemporary field research: A collection of readings*. Pp. 269-287 Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

5. Decolonizing Methods, Decentering Whiteness and Queering Methods (5 books, 1 book chapter, 11 articles)

Students must choose at least four readings from the list below.

Alexander, Bryant Keith. (2008). Queer(y)ing the Postcolonial Through the West(ern). Chapter six, in, Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln & Linda Tuhiwai Smith (eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. CA: Sage.

Choo, H. Y., & Ferree, M. M. (2010). Practicing intersectionality in sociological research: A critical analysis of inclusions, interactions, and institutions in the study of inequalities. *Sociological theory*, 28(2), 129-149.

Compton, D. R., Meadow, T., & Schilt, K. (2018). *Other, please specify: Queer methods in Sociology*. University of California Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1: Article 8.

Dei, G. and Johal, G. (eds.) (2005). *Critical issues in anti-racist research methodologies: An introduction*. New York: Peter Lang.

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. California: Sage.

Evans, M. et al. (2009). Common Insights, Differing Methodologies: Toward a Fusion of Indigenous Methodologies, Participatory Action Research, and White Studies in an Urban Aboriginal Research Agenda. *Qualitative Inquiry* 15.5 (May 2009): 893-910.

Ghaziani, A., & Brim, M. (2019). *Imagining queer methods*. New York: New York University Press.

Ghorashi, Halleh. 2005. "When Boundaries are Blurred: The Significance of Feminist Methods in Research." *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 12(3): 363-375.

Held, M. B. (2019). Decolonizing research paradigms in the context of settler colonialism: An unsettling, mutual, and collaborative effort. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1-16.

Hunter, Margaret. 2002. "Rethinking Epistemology, Methodology and Racism: Or, Is White Sociology Really Dead?" *Race and Society*, 5: 2, 119-138.

Nicholls, Ruth. 2009. "Research and Indigenous Participation: Critical Reflexive Methods." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2), 117-126.

Parker, Laurence and Marvin Lynn. 2002. "What's Race Got to Do With It? Critical Race Theory's Conflicts with and Connections to Qualitative Research Methodology and Epistemology." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 7-22.

Pidgeon, M. (2019). Moving between theory and practice within an indigenous research paradigm. *Qualitative Research*, 19(4), 418-436. doi:10.1177/1468794118781380

Said, E. (1989). Representing the colonized: Anthropology's interlocutors. *Critical Inquiry*,

15(2), 205-225.

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed Books Ltd.

Steinhauer, Evelyn. 2002. "Thoughts on an Indigenous Research Methodology." *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 26(2), 69-81.

6. Post Qualitative Inquiry (1 book chapter, 11 articles)

Students must choose at least three readings from the list below.

Augustine, S. M. (2014). Living in a Post-Coding World: Analysis as Assemblage. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 747–753. *Qualitative Inquiry: Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding*, Volume 20 Issue 6, July.

Barad, Karen. (2003). Posthumanist performativity: Toward an understanding of how matter comes to matter. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2003, vol. 28, no. 3: 802.

Berbary, L. A., & Boles, J. C. (2014). Eight points for reflection: Revisiting scaffolding for improvisational humanist qualitative inquiry. *Leisure Science*, 36(5), 401–419.

Childers, Sara M. 2014. Promiscuous analysis in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 20(6), 819-826.

Gwyther, G., & Possamai-Inesedy, A. (2009). Methodologies à la carte: An examination of emerging qualitative methodologies in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(2), 99-115. doi:10.1080/13645570902727680

Jackson, A. Y. (2017). Thinking without method. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(9), 666-674.

Lather, P. A., St. Pierre, E. A. (2013). Post qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26, 629-633.

Lather, P. (2016). Top ten + list: (Re)thinking ontology in (post)qualitative research. *Cultural Studies - Critical Methodologies*, 16(2), 125–131.

MacLure, Maggie. (2013). Researching without representation? Language and materiality in post-qualitative methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Volume 26, 6: 658.

Ramazanoğlu, C. with Janet Holland. *Feminist methodology: challenges and choices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 6 Researching 'others': feminist methodology and the politics of difference.

St. Pierre, E. A., Jackson, A. Y., Mazzei, L. (2016). New empiricisms and new materialisms: Conditions for new inquiry. *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*, 16, 99-110.

St. Pierre, E.A. and Alecia Y. Jackson, (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding, pp. 715–719. *Qualitative Inquiry: Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding*, Volume 20 Issue 6, July.

7. Forms of Research Associated with Qualitative Inquiry

Students must select readings at least three readings from at least two sections below.

Arts-Based Inquiry (1 book, 4 book chapters, 4 articles)

Berbary, L. A. (2011). Poststructural Writerly Representation: Screenplay as Creative Analytic Practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(2).

Finley, S. (2007). Arts-based research. In Knowles, J. G., & Cole, A. L. (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 71-81). Sage Publications.

Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. The Guilford Press.

Leggo, C. (2007). Astonishing Silence: Knowing in Poetry. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues*. SAGE Publications.

MacDonald, S., & Wiens, B. I. (2019). Mobilizing the “Multimangle”: Why new materialist research methods in public participatory art matter. *Leisure Sciences*, 41(5), 366-384.

Qwo-Li Driskill. "Mothersong: Incorporating Theatre of the Oppressed into Language Restoration Movements." In *Nurturing Native Languages*. Eds. Jon Reyhner, Octaviana V. Trujillo, Roberto Luis Carrasco, and Louise Lockard. Flagstaff: Northern Arizona University, 2003. 155-163.

Richardson, L. (2002). Poetic representation of interviews. In J. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 877-892). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Springgay, Irwin. “A/r/tography as Living Inquiry Through Art and Text.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 11.6 (2005): 897–912. Web.

Whitworth, L. (2019). Goodbye gauley mountain, hello eco-camp: Queer environmentalism in the anthropocene. *Feminist Theory*, 20(1), 73-92. doi:10.1177/1464700118788684

Ethnography (5 books, 3 articles)

Blix, Stina Bergman and Asa Wettergren. 2015. “The Emotional Labour of Gaining and Maintaining Access to the Field.” *Qualitative Research*, 15(6), 688-704.

Burawoy, Michael, et al. (2000). *Global ethnography: Forces, connections, and imaginations in a postmodern world*. Univ of California Press.

Ellis, Carolyn, and Tony E. Adams. 2014. The purposes, practices and principles of autoethnographic research. In Leavy, P. (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Van Maanen, John (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Whyte, W.F. (1943). *Street Corner Society*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Grounded Theory (3 books, 1 book chapter, 2 articles)

Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*, 2, 347-365.

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Walsh et al. 2015. What grounded theory is....A critically reflective conversation among scholars. *Organizational Research Methods*. 18(4): 581-599.

Narrative Analysis (2 books, 2 book chapters, 3 articles)

Bischoping, K., & Gazso, A. (2015). *Analyzing talk in the social sciences: Narrative, conversation and discourse strategies*. Sage.

Labov, W., & Waletzky, J. (1967). Narrative analysis. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts* (pp.12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.

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Ricoeur, P. (1984). *Time and narrative (Vol. 1)*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

Richardson, L. (1990). Narrative and sociology. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, 19(1), 116-135.

Riessman, C. K. (2005). Narrative analysis. In N. Kelly, C. Horrocks, K. Milnes, B. Roberts, & D. Robinson (Eds.), *Narrative, memory, & everyday life* (pp. 1-7). Huddersfield, UK: University of Huddersfield Press.

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Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography*. University of Toronto Press.

Devault, M. and McCoy, L. (2004). Institutional ethnography: Using interviews to investigate ruling relations. In Gubrium, Jaber, F. and Holstein, James, A. (Eds.) *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Pp. 751-776. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

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Smith, Dorothy (1987). *The Everyday World as Problematic*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Smith, Dorothy (2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. Rowman: Alta Mira.

Smith, G. Political activist as ethnographer. 1990. *Social Problems*. 37(4): 629-648.

Discourse and Text Analysis (4 books, 2 book chapters, 1 article)

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*. New York: Routledge.

Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical discourse analysis. In T.A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction, Vol. 2, Discourse as social interaction* (pp. 258-284). London, UK: Sage.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. Vol. 1: An introduction*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Gee, J. P. (1999). *Introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.

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Participatory Action Research and Community-based Research (3 books, 2 book chapters 6 articles)

Banks, S., Armstrong, A., Carter, K., Graham, H., Hayward, P., Henry, A., Holland, T., Holmes, C., Lee, A., McNulty, A. & Moore, N. (2013). Everyday ethics in community-based participatory research. *Contemporary Social Science*, 8(3), 263-277.

Cornwall, A., & Jewkes, R. (1995). What is participatory research?. *Social science & medicine*, 41(12), 1667-1676.

Evans, Mike, Rachele Hole, Lawrence D. Berg, Peter Hutchinson and Dixon Sookraj. 2009. "Common Insights, Differing Methodologies: Toward a Fusion of Indigenous Methodologies, Participatory Action Research, and White Studies in an Urban Aboriginal Research Agenda." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15(5), 893-910.

Freire, P. (2018) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury. (or earlier editions)

Frisby, Wendy, Colleen J. Reid, Sydney Millar, and Larena Hoeber. 2005. "Putting 'Participatory' Into Participatory Forms of Action Research." *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 367-386.

Gatenby, Bev and Maria Humphries. 2000. "Feminist Participatory Action: Methodological and Ethical Issues." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(1): 89-105.

Israel BA, Schulz AJ, Parker EA, Becker AB, Allen A, Guzman JR. (2003). Critical issues in developing and following community-based participatory research principles. In M. Minkler and N. Wallerstein (Eds). *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco Jossey-Bass, Pp. 56-73.

Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A.L., Avila, M., Belone, L. & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on researcher identity and power: The impact of positionality on community based participatory research (CBPR) processes and outcomes. *Critical Sociology*, 41(7-8), 1045-1063.

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Silverman, R. M., and Patterson, K. L. (2015). *Qualitative research methods for community development*. Routledge.

Stoecker, Randy. 2016. "The Community Development Context of Research", pp. 47-74 in *Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach*, Los Angeles: Sage.

Interview Methods (4 books, 2 book chapters, 2 articles)

Best, Amy L. 2003. "Doing Race in the Context of Feminist Interviewing: Constructing Whiteness Through Talk." *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(6), 895-914.

Brinkmann, S. and S. Kvale. (2018). *Doing interviews*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018.

Devault, M. L. & Gross, G. (2011). Feminist Interviewing: Experience, Talk and Knowledge. In Nagy Hesse, Sherlene (Ed.) *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, Pp. 173-193. California: Sage.

Esterberg, Kristin (2002). "Interviews." In Kristin Esterberg *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 83-114.

Gubrium, J. F. & James A. Holstein (2001). *Handbook of interview research: Context & method*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001.

Lamont, M., & Swidler, A. (2014). Methodological pluralism and the possibilities and limits of interviewing. *Qualitative Sociology*, 37(2), 153-171.

Mishler, Elliot (1991). *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press

Weiss, R.S. (1995). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Graduate Program in Sociology
Governance document for managing the comprehensive/candidacy exam system
6 March 2022

APPROVED at the March 16 meeting of the Graduate Program in Sociology

This document outlines a governance system for managing the Program's comprehensive/candidacy exam system. The document outlines decision making authority within the Program and outlines processes meant to ensure that the comprehensive/candidacy exam system is regularly monitored and updated.

1) The curriculum committee is responsible for managing the Program's comprehensive/candidacy exam system. The committee discharges this responsibility with the support of the Graduate Program Director (chair of the curriculum committee) and the Graduate Program Assistant and Graduate Program Secretary.

The curriculum committee's responsibilities are as follows:

a) Approving students' final comprehensive exam reading lists. A detailed description of this responsibility can be found in the document "Graduate Program in Sociology--Comprehensive and Candidacy Exam Required Procedures and Processes."

b) Reviewing (at least) on an annual basis, data compiled by the Graduate Program Office on the comprehensive and candidacy exam systems. The data reviewed will include such matters as: how many comprehensive exams have been completed in a given year, in what comp areas, whether deadlines were met, which faculty members chaired/served on comps committees, whether comprehensive exam guidelines were followed, how many proposal defenses occurred, external reviewer selection, whether candidacy exam timelines were met, etc. The review of this data is meant to support discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the comprehensive/candidacy exam systems and to help identify emerging problems that require attention.

c) Holding an annual meeting to review the comprehensive/candidacy exam system. Ideally this meeting (or two separate meetings if required) would occur in the winter term. Faculty directly involved in the comprehensive exam system (supervisors or committee members of completed comps or members of a proposal examination committee for a completed proposal) will be expected to participate. The purpose of the meeting is to receive feedback from those directly involved in the comprehensive/candidacy exam system about problems, issues, what is working, what is not working, what changes need to be made, etc.

d) Ensuring that the Program's set comprehensive exam reading lists are up to date. During the year in which the comps/candidacy exam system is implemented, the curriculum committee will establish and maintain the ongoing process for revising, sunsetting, and creating new set Program comprehensive exam reading lists. The process created should be informed by the annual meeting described above and should: a) engage appropriate faculty (Program list conveners and committee members, faculty who have sat on a comp committee in the area) in a regular review of the set reading lists of the most popular comp areas; b) ensure that the Program has no more than 13 comp areas at any point in time; c) include a process for identifying poorly subscribed

comprehensive exam areas (e.g. two or less completed comps in an area in five years) and responding accordingly (e.g. sunseting).

Graduate Program in Sociology--Proposed Comprehensive Areas
6 March 2022
APPROVED at the March 16 meeting of the Graduate Program in Sociology

Below is a list of comprehensive exam areas that were discussed and approved by the Program at the 16 March Program meeting.

In arriving at this list, the Program paid careful attention to the requirements of the new comprehensive exam system as follows:

- Approximately 10-12 comp areas in total
- Each student does one comp only and not in an area narrowly defined by dissertation interests
- Assuming a 12-14 person PhD student cohort only 12-14 comps per year
- We are NOT creating a final version of the comps/candidacy system. What we are creating is a workable start that will have to be revisited and revised to respond to problems and opportunities as they arise. We want to be thoughtful about what we are doing and create something that makes sense and that we think will work. But it does not have to be and will not be perfect.

Factors considered in arriving at the proposed new comp included:

- 1) The need to ensure that the comp areas are broadly, rather than narrowly defined. Some faculty will likely encourage their students to think about their careers in terms of primary and secondary research areas with the comp corresponding to the latter. Others will encourage their students to do a comp in methods or theory. Other comp areas need to be conceptualized in ways that fit a system of comps that is not narrowly dissertation focused.
- 2) Ensuring that comp areas represent recognizable areas of sociological inquiry for which there is a sufficient literature to read/write about, while also remaining forward thinking—what emerging areas of inquiry should be included and when?
- 3) Past Practice. While we do not need to be limited by past comp areas, we do need to be mindful of the areas that consistently have been in high demand.
- 4) Faculty expertise and Program Strengths. We need to ensure that our program faculty fit into at least one comp area and that our comp areas correspond to existing strengths. However, we cannot create a system in which every faculty research interest is represented by a comp. That's part of what led us to a system with 40+ comp areas. The committees felt that in order for a comp area to be feasible (remember 12-14 comps per year only) each comp area would need to have roughly three faculty members with declared expertise—i.e. sufficient expertise to supervise a comp in the area.
- 5) Courses. The committees do not feel that a comp area must have one or more corresponding courses. In any given year, we cannot give assurance that a particular course will be taught and our process for identifying and naming courses has historically been tied very closely to specific faculty research interests. Allocating courses each year involves multiple considerations that make it difficult to guarantee course selections that cover off all comp areas every year.

Proposed New Comp Areas

Existing Comp areas that are broad and easily fit into a new system

1. Social Theory (Philip Walsh, Lorna W., Fuyuki, Radhika, Marcello, Harris, Hyun Ok, Karen A. Hira
2. Qualitative Research Methods (done)
3. Quantitative and Mixed Methods (Michael O., Muyang, Ann, Cary)

Existing Comp Areas (corresponding to key areas of research strength. Asterisk: amalgamates two or more existing comp areas)

4. Cultural Sociology (Michael N., Ratiba, Fuyuki, Kathy B., Andil, Glenn S., Deborah D., Muyang, Karen A.
5. Bodies, Genders, and Sexualities*
6. Health Studies
7. Law, Police, Crime, and Surveillance*
8. Political Sociology and Social Movements*
9. Race, Racialization, and Ethnicity
10. Work, Labour, and the Economy*

New Comp Areas

11. Global Sociology (include a section on Transnational Migration, Immigration, and Refugee Studies; other sections: international development,
12. Public Sociology (include a section on critical policy studies)

Note: The Program discussed a potential additional comp area: Digital and Media Sociology. A decision was made to defer introducing this new comp area, pending demonstration of student interest and further identification/development of faculty expertise. In the interim, readings on digital and/or media sociology can be incorporated into existing comp areas (e.g., cultural sociology, quantitative and mixed methods).

Graduate Program in Sociology--Comprehensive and Candidacy Exam
Required Procedures and Processes

Approved at the 24 November 2021 Graduate Program Meeting

Eric Mykhalovskiy and Audrey Tokiwa, Grad Program Executive Committee (Lorna Erwin, Mark Thomas, Andy Dawson, Sylvia Bawa, Mike Ornstein, Rosa Proietto, Eric Van Giessen) and Grad Program Curriculum Committee (Harris Ali, Amber Gazso, Ratiba Hadj-Moussa, Mackenzie Deas, Sarah Marshall, Lisa Seiler)

Introduction

This document is a detailed proposal to replace the Program's existing two-comprehensive exam system with a system involving one comprehensive exam and one candidacy exam.

In 2020, the Graduate Program established the revision of our comprehensive exam system as a priority. A series of meetings discussing the comp have taken place with the executive committee, the curriculum committee, the Program as a whole, and at our cyclical program retreat.

A first step in our revision process was to reaffirm a common understanding of the problems with our comprehensive exam system and establish guiding principles to revise it.

Key Problems

This proposal responds to key problems with our comprehensive exam system that have long been recognized. The problems can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Lack of clarity about the comprehensive exam exercise.
Students are often confused about what the expectations are of the comp. Faculty often orient differently to the comp; they can have different understandings of the exercise and different expectations. These differences can play out in individual comp committees.
- 2) Overspecialization
Comps often move in the direction of overspecialization. Many comps narrowly reflect students' dissertation research interests rather than support breadth in training.
- 3) Too many comprehensive exam areas
Rather than offering a select number of well-supported comp areas that reflect Program strengths, we have created a system with over 40 comp areas many of which attract little interest. The current number of comp areas is unmanageable.
- 4) Too many format options (take home exam, paper, course outline and final lecture)
The number of format options available to complete the comp requirement results in logistical challenges and unevenness in the comp exercise.
- 4) Out-dated comp reading lists
We have no system in place to ensure that our Program comprehensive reading lists are kept up to date and are organized in ways that assist students in their comp work. Students face significant challenges when trying to use our existing comp lists.
- 5) Timeliness of committee formation and preparatory work required for a comp area
Finding supervisors and committee members for comp exams can be difficult and time consuming. The list indicating faculty expertise in comp areas is unhelpful. Finalizing reading lists can take a very long time. There are no guidelines in place for how to create a final reading list. Expectations for the rationale for the reading list are unclear. It can be difficult for students to receive timely feedback on draft lists and rationales from all comp committee members.

6) The relationship of comps to our approved fields is unclear.

7) Significant delays in completion of the comp requirement

The comprehensive exam continues to be the most serious delay in students' progress through degree requirements. Our current process requires that two comps be completed by the end of year 2. This timeline is rarely met and students continue to get stalled at the comps stage. As of 20 November 2020:

PhD4s (4 of 9 students have **not** completed both comps; 3 completed both comps by end of 2nd year, 2 completed both comps at end of 3rd year)

PhD3s (0 of 7 have completed both comps; 2 completed 1 comp by end of second year)

PhD2s (1 of 13 has completed 1 comp)

Guiding Principles

The suggested changes to our comprehensive exam system recommended in this proposal have been guided by principles which were established through executive and curriculum committee meetings, meetings of the full Program, and the cyclical program retreat. Key among them are:

1) Comps are a distinct degree requirement. They are not part of course work or specialized preparation for a dissertation

2) Clarify the nature of the comprehensive exam requirement using the notion of competency.

When thought of as a competency exam, the comprehensive exam requirement provides students an opportunity to read broadly in and become conversant with an area of sociology. That means being able to recognize, understand, critique, and participate in key features of scholarly discourse that animate the comp area. Through their comps, students should demonstrate basic competencies—they should be able to understand and critically reflect on key debates, arguments, trajectories of thought, and contributions within a given comp area.

3) Comps should be organized with realistic and shared expectations.

These can be expressed in the number of works read, the length of the written product, and the range of questions/issues addressed by a comp exam.

4) Balance breadth and depth requirements

The comprehensive exam should not be narrowly focused or overly specialized.

Revisions to our comprehensive exam process should be made in ways that balance standardization with flexibility and adaptability.

5) Streamline and ensure timely completion of the comprehensive exam requirement by:

reducing the number of comprehensive exam areas offered by the Program;

updating comprehensive exam reading lists and how they are used;

reducing the number of format options, with a preference to move to the take home exam only.

6) Faculty must recognize that participating in comps committees as a supervisor or member is a part of their responsibility as members of the graduate program.

FGS Requirements

This proposal is aligned with new FGS regulations related to the comprehensive exam. Program comprehensive exam guidelines must now include information related to: 1) timing and scheduling; 2) format and structure; 3) accessibility and accommodations; 4) assessment criteria and feedback; 5) outcomes of the examination; 6) procedures for updating graduate milestone examinations

In addition, FGS has informed GPDs that it will soon be establishing a new guideline requiring all students to be ABD by the end of the ninth term of study.

Key Proposed Changes

This proposal replaces our current comprehensive exam system (two comps) with a system that involves one comprehensive exam (taken outside the dissertation area) and a candidacy exam (focused on the dissertation research). Key changes include the following:

Comprehensive Exam Requirement

- 1) Purpose of comprehensive exam explained. Notion of competency exam explained
- 2) Roles and responsibilities of the comprehensive exam committee and student outlined
- 3) Structure and format:
 - Number of comp areas reduced to 10-15
 - Format restricted to take home exam
 - 3 preparatory questions as opposed to 5
 - New principles to guide creation and use of reading lists
 - Requirement for reading list approval by curriculum committee
 - Purpose and length of rationale for reading list clarified
 - Sample exam questions provided
- 4) Criteria and process for evaluation described. New requirement for written rationale for decision from comprehensive exam committee
- 5) Appeals Procedure
- 6) Accessibility and Accommodations

Candidacy Exam (new)

- 1) Role of Candidacy Exam Committee defined
- 2) Structure and format:
 - Dissertation proposal with extended literature review
 - Proposal defence (Proposal Examination Committee, external reader, public defence)
- 3) Criteria and process for evaluation described.
- 4) Appeals Procedure
- 5) Accessibility and Accommodations

Comprehensive Exam System Revision Timeline

2012 The comprehensive exam process is a major focus of meetings conducted as part of the 2012 Cyclical Program Review and in response to the 2012 Reviewer Report (Reviewers suggested: enforcing deadlines, reducing the number of comps to one, better articulating comps with fields).

2015 Based on the results of Program Meetings and a meeting with the Executive Committee and Graduate Students, new deadlines are established for both comps to be completed by the end of the sixth term of study

2018 An attempt to revise our comprehensive exam reading list was undertaken but is unsuccessful.

2020 The Program establishes the revision of the comp exam system as a priority for 2020-2022.

25 November 2020 *Moving Towards Revising our Comprehensive Requirement—Discussion Document* is formally presented and discussed at a Program meeting. Among other things, that document:

- a) identifies key problems associated with our current comps process
- b) identifies barriers to change
- c) suggests key principles for the comps revision

Following discussion of the document, the GPD, Grad Program Office, and the Curriculum and Executive Committees are tasked with developing two models for the comprehensive exam system to present to the Grad Program for discussion.

24 February 2021 *Two Options for Modifying our Comprehensive Exam Requirement* is presented and discussed at a Program Meeting. The document presents two options for the Program's revised comprehensive exam system:

- 1) Two comps
- 2) One comp + candidacy exam

The Program requests that a full proposal for option two (one comp + candidacy exam) be developed.

20 October 2021 Program members provided feedback on the document *Graduate Program in Sociology--Comprehensive and Candidacy Exam Required Procedures and Processes*. Further feedback is solicited in an email sent to all graduate faculty.

Graduate Program in Sociology
Comprehensive and Candidacy Exam
Required Procedures and Processes

This document lays out the procedures and processes for completing the PhD comprehensive exam and the PhD candidacy exam in the Graduate Program in Sociology, York University.

Revisions to the comprehensive and candidacy exam required procedures and processes must be approved by the Graduate Program at a Graduate Program Meeting, following program-level governance norms.

The Comprehensive Exam

PhD students must write one comprehensive exam. All students must have a passed comprehensive exam on file before proceeding to the candidacy exam.

Purpose

The comprehensive exam is a distinct degree requirement. It is not part of course work; nor is it specialized preparation for the dissertation. Through the comprehensive exam, students are given an opportunity to read in an area of sociological inquiry (broadly conceived) and demonstrate their understanding of the area, as a whole, in writing and orally. The comprehensive exam meets several Program PhD learning outcomes including, most importantly, those related to depth and breadth of scholarship, research and scholarship, communication skills, and awareness of the limits of knowledge. In general, the exercise gives students an opportunity to develop an appreciation of the intellectual contours of an area of sociological inquiry in ways that contribute to their overall scholarly development as well as their future research and teaching activities.

To ensure breadth of training, students are required to identify a primary research interest (developed through their doctoral research) and a secondary research interest (developed through the comprehensive exam). Students are encouraged to orient to the secondary research interest as a potential teachable area that broadens their training and that can be developed over the course of their professional careers. The secondary research area and the corresponding comprehensive exam and reading list cannot focus on the student's dissertation research topic. The area chosen for the comprehensive exam should be distinct from the dissertation research area.

The Program orients to the comprehensive requirement as a competency exam. Through the comprehensive exam, students should be able to demonstrate that they understand and can critically reflect on relevant theoretical and methodological perspectives and substantive research contributions that define a given area of inquiry. They should be able to understand and critically reflect on key arguments, debates, research trajectories, gaps in knowledge, and new directions for research that are associated with the comprehensive area.

Students should be able to answer the following *types* of questions:

- i) What are the key debates and arguments in the comp area and how have they developed over time?
- ii) What are the key substantive research contributions in the comp area?
- iii) What are some of the limitations and gaps in the literature defining a comp area and what are their implications for scholarship in the area?
- iv) Where is the field headed?

Comprehensive Examination Committee

The comprehensive examination committee guides students through the comprehensive exam process and evaluates students' comprehensive exams. Committee members are expected to provide timely feedback on students' reading lists, rationale, and preparatory exam questions.

The comprehensive examination committee must consist of three faculty members from York University who hold graduate program appointments. The chair of the comprehensive examination committee and at least one other member must be appointed to the Graduate Program in Sociology. One of these members must declare themselves an expert in the comprehensive area being examined. One member of the comprehensive examination committee may come from another York graduate program. While it is not a requirement, the Program encourages overlap between the membership of a student's Dissertation Supervisory Committee and their comprehensive examination committee.

Students are responsible for inviting faculty members to serve on their comprehensive examination committee but should seek the advice of their dissertation supervisor and/or Graduate Program Director before doing so. They should also consult the Program's Comprehensive Exam Reading Lists to identify suitable faculty with expertise in comprehensive area being examined.

It is generally expected that faculty members accept student invitations to participate on comprehensive examination committees as chair or member in comprehensive areas for which they have expertise. However, it would be unusual for a faculty member to participate in more than two comprehensive examination committees in any full academic year.

Structure and Format

Students must complete their comprehensive exam in one of the x comprehensive exam areas defined by the Program. (As a Program we have committed to identifying 10-15 comp areas).

Before writing the exam, students should work closely with their comprehensive examination committee to: (1) develop a reading list; (2) write a rationale for the comprehensive exam; and (3) identify three preparatory exam questions. The reading list, rationale and exam questions must be submitted to the Graduate Program Office by the deadline established by the Program Office and made available to students on a yearly basis.

The format is a take-home exam written over the course of seven days followed by an oral discussion of the exam which should normally take place within two weeks of submitting the exam. The student must write answers (3,000-4,000 words each) to two of the preparatory exam questions chosen by the comprehensive examination committee. The oral discussion should begin with a short

presentation by the student followed by questions and answers posed by members of the comprehensive examination committee.

Reading lists

The Program-approved reading lists and detailed instructions for creating a final list of readings for each comprehensive exam area can be found in the document entitled “Graduate Program in Sociology—Program Approved Comprehensive Exam Reading Lists.” Normally, an approved final comprehensive reading list should include references that total the equivalent of 25 medium-sized books (5 journal articles = 1 book). In consultation with their comprehensive examination committee, students may add readings to their final read reading list that are not included on the Program-approved reading list. These supplemental readings may comprise up to 25% of a student’s final comprehensive exam reading list.

The final reading list must be approved by the comprehensive examination committee. The final reading list must also be approved by the Program’s Curriculum Committee. Approval by the Curriculum Committee can only be withheld when the Program-approved guidelines for the composition of reading lists have not been followed. Normally, approval is a matter of ensuring that the number of readings does not fall below the minimum or exceed the maximum, that the requisite number of required readings have been included, and that no more than the allowed number of supplemental readings has been included.

Rationale

The rationale is a short document (500 words maximum) that explains the learning objectives for the comprehensive exam and that justifies the selection of supplementary readings.

Exam Questions

Exam questions should ask students to critically reflect on key debates, arguments, and research trajectories in the comprehensive area and provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their overall knowledge of the area. To ensure that the exam meets breadth requirements, students and committees are strongly encouraged to include at least one of the following questions among the three preparatory exam questions:

- 1) What are the key arguments made by scholars working in the area? How do they relate with one another and what is your critical assessment of them?
- 2) What is the intellectual context/climate of the area? How has that context/climate changed? What factors have influenced that change and with what impact on the relevant scholarship?
- 3) How have key debates in the area been shaped by specific theoretical or methodological perspectives?
- 4) How do you position yourself in the key areas of debate within the area and why?
- 5) What are the current methodological/theoretical/or substantive research gaps in the area and what are their implications for scholarship in the area?

Timing and Scheduling

Students must complete the comprehensive exam before taking the candidacy exam. The comprehensive exam is normally begun at the beginning of year two (term four) and is completed in term five or six. See [PhD Timeline](#).

Students can write the take-home comprehensive exam during three time slots each year. These time slots generally coincide with the last week of classes of each full term. On an annual basis, the Program Office provides students with deadlines for the following aspects of the comprehensive exam process: 1) final date to submit reading list, rationale, and comp pre-approval form to the Program Office for approval; 2) final date to submit list of three questions to comprehensive examination committee; 3) final date for take home exam questions to be received by student; 4) final date to submit written answers to exam questions (based on a seven day writing period); 5) final date for oral and adjudication.

Excluding exceptional circumstances, the scheduling of the examination(s)—the relevant date, time and (where applicable) location—will take place and be communicated to students and all faculty members involved in the examination process no later than 20 business days prior to the examination(s) date. In the event that an examination must be rescheduled, students and all faculty members involved must be informed no later than 5 business days prior to the examination(s) date.

To ensure timely completion of the comprehensive exam, students are encouraged to begin planning and preparing for their first comp well before Program deadlines. For example, students should begin establishing their comprehensive examination committees and identifying their first comp area two months prior to the completion of their final course.

Evaluation and Outcomes

The comprehensive examination committee is responsible for evaluating the students' work. The outcome of the exam is either pass or fail. Following the completion of the oral discussion, committee members will vote pass or fail. To pass, students must demonstrate competence in their written responses to the two exam questions and in the oral discussion of the exam. Competence is generally demonstrated by a thorough understanding of key arguments, debates and research trajectories of the area and their relationship with one another, as well as insightful and critical reflections on the area covering such issues as shifts in research trajectories and their sources, new directions for inquiry, and gaps in the literature.

A student will pass the exam when two or more members vote to pass the exam. The student will fail when two or more members vote to fail the exam. A written rationale for the final assessment must be prepared by the chair of the comprehensive examination committee. The assessment must be written in a manner that will allow students to understand the decision. In cases when a student has failed the comprehensive exam, the committee's rationale for the final assessment must discuss the weaknesses in the exam as well as required areas for improvement. The chair of the comprehensive examination committee is responsible for submitting the final assessment and the formal outcome of the exam to the Graduate Program Director and the Program Office no later than one week following the oral discussion of the written exam.

A student who fails the comprehensive exam on their first attempt, can appeal the failed exam decision once. Should the student be given the opportunity to rewrite the exam, they will be re-evaluated on the basis of a new written exam and oral discussion of the exam. Normally, the re-examination will be based on the two exam questions initially proposed and include the same comprehensive examination committee. Scheduling for the re-evaluation is flexible but the re-evaluation should take place before or, at the latest, by the next scheduled exam date. Should the student fail the re-examination, they must withdraw from the Program.

After successfully completing the comprehensive exam, students must submit the following to the Graduate Program Office: (i) [Comprehensive Exam Approval Form](#); (ii) electronic copy of the comprehensive exam.

Appeals

If a student fails their comprehensive exam on the first attempt, they can appeal the failed exam decision once. They can do so on the basis that, in their view, the written decision by the committee does not justify the exam outcome. To appeal an exam failure, students must submit a Comprehensive Exam Appeal Form to the Program Office within two weeks of the decision being rendered. They must demonstrate how their responses to the comprehensive exam questions successfully meet the criteria of assessment. The Appeal Form provides the comprehensive examination committee an opportunity to respond in writing to the student's appeal. The comprehensive exam and the Comprehensive Exam Appeal Form are submitted to the Program's awards and appeals committee. The awards and appeals committee can either affirm the decision of the comprehensive examination committee or grant a rewrite (see Appendix 1).

Accessibility and Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations are encouraged to contact the appropriate accessibility office at the university well in advance of the comprehensive exam deadlines. Any adaptation of the format or scheduling of the comprehensive exam will be made in consultation with the student and the applicable accessibility advisor and will follow applicable policies related to access to information and privacy.

The Candidacy Exam

Purpose

The candidacy exam provides students an opportunity to read widely in the area of inquiry that is the focus of their dissertation, to situate their dissertation research within relevant literatures, and to develop and defend a detailed dissertation research proposal. The candidacy exam meets several Program PhD learning outcomes including, most importantly, those related to depth and breadth of scholarship, research and scholarship, level of application of knowledge, professional autonomy, communication skills, and awareness of the limits of knowledge.

Through the candidacy exam students must demonstrate that they have: 1) acquired the requisite methodological and theoretical skills to successfully complete dissertation level research; 2) a command of the relevant literature within which their proposed research is situated; and 3) proposed an intellectually original, logistically feasible, and ethically sound dissertation research project.

Candidacy Committee

Students are guided through the candidacy exam process by the candidacy committee which consists of the members of their PhD supervisory committee. The candidacy committee is responsible for working with students to develop an intellectual sound and rigorous proposal. To the best of its ability, the candidacy committee is responsible for assuring the feasibility of the proposed dissertation research and that its timelines are realistic. Ordinarily, the dissertation should be completed and submitted for examination within two years of the acceptance of the proposal.

Structure and Format

The candidacy exam has a written and oral component. The written component is the dissertation proposal which normally should be approximately 10,000 words (40 pages) in length. The oral component is the proposal defence, which should be approximately two hours in duration.

The dissertation proposal

The dissertation proposal should include a detailed account of the proposed research design including the study objectives, key research question(s), theoretical and methodological approach, extended literature review, research design, ethical issues, and anticipated contributions. The extended literature review should be approximately 5000 words (20 pages) in length. The extended literature review is meant to ensure that the candidate has met expected breadth requirements for the candidacy exam. A literature review can demonstrate breadth in a variety of ways. For example, it may demonstrate how the dissertation topic or research question relates to different areas of sociological inquiry (e.g. sociology of race and racism, sociology of family, sociology of health). Alternatively, the literature review may establish the interdisciplinary nature of the topic or research question by exploring relevant literature within and beyond established contours of sociological inquiry.

The literature review should be based on a list of readings, developed in consultation with the candidacy committee, that contextualizes the dissertation research within wider areas of sociological

and related inquiry. The Program's Comprehensive Exam Reading Lists may be drawn upon for this process when appropriate. The reading list should be submitted to the supervisory committee and approved prior to the start of proposal writing.

The proposal defence

All required paperwork must be submitted to the Program Office 25 business days prior to the proposal defence.

The proposal examination committee consists of the candidacy committee plus one external reader who is at arm's length from the dissertation. Normally, the external reader is a non-expert reader whose role is to strengthen, support and improve the proposed research through constructive, critical dialogue. To assist in identifying arms' length readers, the curriculum committee is tasked with maintaining an up-to-date list of faculty who have agreed to serve in the role.

Normally, the arm's length reader is a faculty member appointed to the Graduate Program in Sociology. Only when a reader from within the Program cannot be identified can an arm's length reader from another York University Graduate Program be considered. Approval from the Graduate Program Director is required for a reader without appointments to the Program. The name of the external reader must be shared with the Graduate Program Office at least 25 business days prior to the proposal defence.

The proposal defence is chaired by a member of the candidacy committee other than the PhD supervisor. All members of the proposal examination committee must attend the proposal defence either in person or remotely. Immediately prior to the defence, in an in-camera meeting, the chair of the proposal examination committee should confirm that all members of the examination committee view the proposal to be examinable and establish a question order and expected duration for the proposal defence. These details should be communicated to the student and any Program members attending the defence following the conclusion of the in-camera meeting.

The defence should begin with a 15- to 20-minute presentation of the proposed research by the student, followed by no more than two rounds of questions about the proposal from the proposal examination committee. Examination committee members should pose questions of the student that help to determine whether the proposed research is: (1) feasible; (2) will lead to a sound dissertation that makes an original contribution to knowledge; and (3) that the student has acquired the appropriate background in the literature and the required methodological and theoretical skills to independently and successfully undertake the research.

The proposal defence is public in the sense that other members of the Program can attend without prior permission. However, only members of the proposal examination committee can pose questions of the student or comment on the proposal unless the student and the examination committee agree otherwise prior to the defence. The Program encourages widespread participation at the defence as a way to promote dialogue among Program members about students' research.

Timing and Scheduling

Students must complete the comprehensive exam before preparing for the candidacy exam. The candidacy exam is normally begun in year two (5th or 6th term of study) and, at the latest, is

completed by the 8th term of study. See [PhD Timeline](#). (Note the current PhD timeline reflects our current practice and will need to be revised)

The student’s PhD supervisor is responsible for establishing a date for the oral defence in consultation with the student, the other candidacy committee members, and the **external** reader and must share the date with the Graduate Program Secretary at least 25 business days prior to the defence. An electronic version of the dissertation proposal should be distributed to all members of the examining committee members by the Graduate Program Secretary at least 20 business days prior to the defence.

Evaluation and Outcome

The proposal examination committee is responsible for assessing the student’s work. The outcome of the candidacy exam is either pass or fail. Following the completion of the proposal defence, in an in-camera meeting of the proposal examination committee, committee members will vote pass or fail. To pass the candidacy exam, the student must demonstrate their readiness to successfully undertake dissertation research both through the proposal itself and their oral presentation and discussion of the proposal.

The proposal examination committee generally includes four faculty members (three-person supervisory committee + external reader). In some instances, it may include five members (four-person supervisory committee + external reader). When examined by a four-person committee, a student will pass when three or more members cast a pass vote. A student will fail when two or more members cast a fail vote. When examined by a five-person committee, a student will pass when three or more members cast a pass vote. A student will fail when three or more members cast a fail vote.

	Pass	Fail
4-person committee	4 pass votes or 3 pass votes and 1 fail vote	2 or more fail votes
5-person committee	3 pass votes and 2 fail votes or 4 pass votes and 1 fail vote or 5 pass votes	3 or more fail votes

A written rationale for the final assessment must be prepared by the chair of the proposal examination committee. The assessment must be written in a manner that will allow students to understand the decision. In cases when a student has failed the candidacy exam, the committee’s rationale for the final assessment must discuss the weaknesses in the proposal and proposal defence as well as required areas for improvement. The chair of the examination committee is responsible

for submitting the final assessment and the formal outcome of the proposal defence to the Graduate Program Director and the Program Office no later than one week following the proposal defence.

A student who fails will be provided one opportunity to revise the proposal and be re-evaluated in a proposal defence. Within two weeks of the initial proposal defence the student and supervisor must identify a proposed timeline for completion of the revised proposal and a tentative proposal defence/re-examination date. At the latest, the re-examination should take place six months following the initial defence, normally with the same examination committee members. Should the student fail the re-examination, they must withdraw from the Program.

After successfully completing the proposal defence, students must submit the following to the Graduate Program Office: candidacy exam approval form and an electronic copy of the proposal.

Note: Students should time the completion of their ethics requirements to align with the successful completion of their candidacy exam. The approved proposal and ethics documents are submitted simultaneously to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

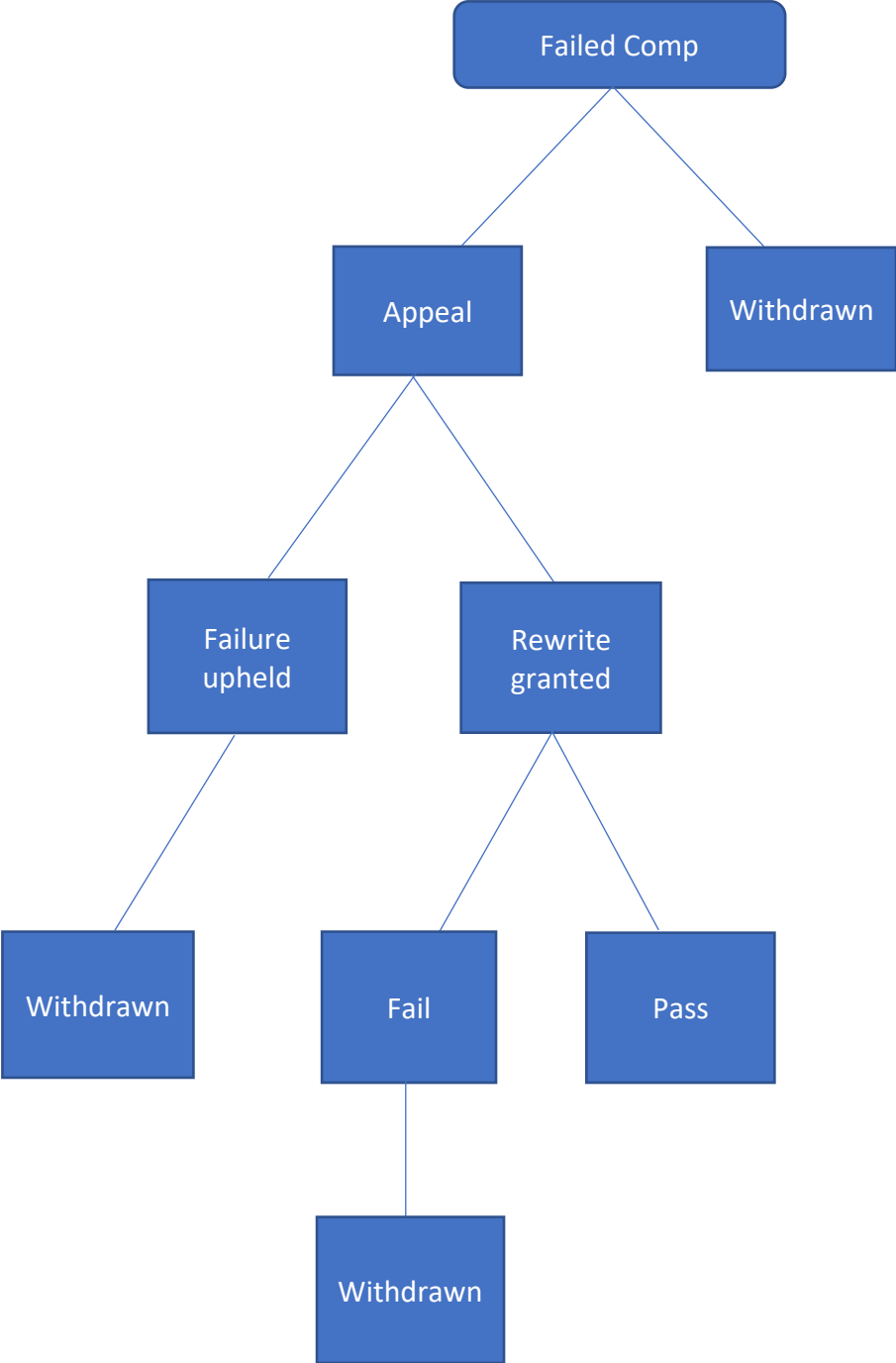
Appeals

Students can appeal a failed proposal examination decision once. They can do so on the basis that, in their view, the written decision by the committee does not justify the exam outcome. To appeal an exam failure, students must complete a Proposal Defence Appeal Form. They must demonstrate how their proposal and responses to questions during the defence successfully meet the criteria of assessment. The proposal examination committee is provided an opportunity to respond, in writing, to the student's appeal. The exam, the Proposal Defence Appeal Form, and any written response from the proposal examination committee are submitted to the Program's awards and appeals committee. The awards and appeals committee can either affirm the decision of the comprehensive examination committee or grant a rewrite (see Appendix 1).

Accessibility and Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations are encouraged to contact the appropriate accessibility office at the university well in advance of the comprehensive exam deadlines. Any adaptation of the format or scheduling of the candidacy exam will be made in consultation with the student and the applicable accessibility advisor and will follow applicable policies related to access to information and privacy.

Appendix 1 – Appeals Decision Tree



List of New Forms to be Created

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Structure and Format

- Comprehensive pre-approval form* requiring students to submit (i) comp area in which being examined; (ii) names of comp committee members (iii) declaration of dissertation research area; (iv) reading list; (v) rationale for reading list; (vi) preparatory exam questions; (vii) term in which comp is to be examined
- Comprehensive exam approval form* requiring students to submit (i) comp area in which they were examined; (ii) names of comp committee members present at the exam; (iii) date of exam; (iv) decision of committee; (v) written rationale from the Chair of the comp committee explaining the decision of the committee

Appeals

- Comprehensive exam appeal form* requiring students to submit (i) comp area in which they were examined; (ii) names of comp committee members present at the exam; (iii) date of exam; (iv) decision of committee; (v) rationale of how the student's responses to the comp exam questions successfully met the criteria of assessment; (vi) space for comprehensive examination committee to respond to the appeal; (vi) decision of the Awards and Appeals Committee

CANDIDACY EXAM

Proposal Defence

- Proposal defence form requiring students to submit (i) names and roles of approved examining committee members; (ii) date of exam; (iii) pdf of dissertation proposal

Evaluation and Outcome

- Candidacy exam approval form requiring students to submit (i) names of examining committee members present at the exam; (ii) date of exam; (iii) decision of committee; (iv) written rationale from the Chair of the committee explaining the decision of the committee; (v) pdf of dissertation proposal; (vi) research ethics paperwork

Appeals

- Candidacy appeal form requiring students to submit (i) names of examining committee members present at the exam; (ii) date of exam; (iii) decision of committee; (iv) rationale of how the student's responses to the exam questions successfully met the criteria of assessment; (v) space for exam committee to respond to the appeal; (vi) decision of awards and appeals committee

*forms currently exist but will need revising to meet new requirements