



School of Social Work

Interdisciplinary PhD Program in Sociology and Social Work

Program Handbook

September 2013

## **A. Program Overview**

### **Introduction**

Established at Boston University in 1981, the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program offers a unique educational experience leading to an interdisciplinary doctorate. The program is grounded in the belief that social workers benefit from the contributions that sociological theory and analysis make to effective practice and policy analysis, and sociologists benefit from the knowledge base and skills of social work in addressing applied social problems. Solutions to the pressing social and clinical problems of our time require the creative integration of social science theories and research with social work practice.

### **Mission Statement of Boston University School of Social Work**

The Boston University School of Social Work (BUSSW) is committed to education that furthers social and economic justice in the urban environment. The school strives to incorporate this commitment into its programs and activities, particularly concerning the empowerment of all oppressed groups. BUSSW recognizes the ever-changing demands on the profession and strives to meet them through the highest quality of teaching, scholarship, research, practice, and political action.

BUSSW's aim is to educate professional social workers who will become leaders in a complex, diverse, and multicultural society, and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to address the needs and potentials of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The School offers an integrated program of study, including clinical and macro social work methods. It emphasizes the engagement of personal and community strengths as fundamental to the understanding, treatment, and prevention of individual and social problems.

The Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Sociology and Social Work at Boston University is an independent program within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GRS), offered collaboratively through the School of Social Work and the Sociology department. The objective of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program at Boston University is to provide its graduates with the education and training necessary to assume leadership roles in social work education, research, practice, and policy. Graduates of the program have positions in national and international social welfare organizations, research institutes, and universities.

### **Boston University and the Community**

Boston University is an independent, coeducational, nonsectarian university with more than 2,500 full-time faculty and an enrollment of more than 30,000 students. It is a union of smaller communities, seventeen separate schools and colleges, each of which retains a human scale and special focus. The 100-acre campus lies along the Charles River, just west of downtown Boston. With the river as boundary to the north, the campus adjoins a chain of tranquil waterway parks and esplanades. Spanning Commonwealth Avenue to the south, the university has quick, convenient access to the heart of a thriving city. Boston is rich in history, Old World charm, and modern vitality. Home to more than 50 colleges and universities, Boston is an intellectual and cultural center, diverse in its people, stimulating in its opportunities, and easily accessible.

## B. Course Requirements for the Doctoral Degree

Students must complete at least 12 courses (48 credits) for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Sociology and Social Work. These include Core courses in both disciplines and Advanced Elective courses, as described below.

### Core Courses

Students must complete four core theory classes, two from Sociology and two from Social Work, and four core research methods courses, one from Sociology, one from GRS and two from Social Work. **Students are encouraged to take these courses on a full-time basis.**

#### 1. Core Theory Courses (4 Classes, 16 credits)

##### Social Work

Sociology of the Social Work Profession (SSW WP 901)	(4 credits)
Perspectives of Social Welfare Policy (SSW WP 903)	(4 credits)

##### Sociology

Classical Theory (GRS SO 701)	(4 credits)
Contemporary Theory (GRS SO 708)	(4 credits)

#### 2. Core Research Methods Courses (4 Classes, 16 credits)

Proseminar in Methods (GRS SO 702)	(4 credits)
Qualitative Data Analysis (SR 906)	(4 credits)
Multivariate Analysis (GRS MA 684)	(4 credits)
Social Welfare Program Analysis and Evaluation (SSW WP 900)	(4 credits)
Or	
Clinical Research Methods (quantitative) (SSW SR 904)	(4 credits)

\*Entering PHD students are required to have completed a graduate-level foundation statistics course in which they received a minimum grade of B in the prior 2 years or audit SSW SR 744 during their first semester

#### Advanced Elective Courses (4 Classes, 16 credits)

After completing Core courses, students work with their advisor to choose four advanced elective courses that are consistent with their interest areas. Although not required, many students choose electives that reflect one of two Social Work specializations, Social Welfare Policy Analysis or Clinical Practice Research.

Students are encouraged to take one or more advanced elective courses in the Sociology Department. Key specializations within the Sociology Department include: community sociology, family sociology, urban issues, race and ethnicity, and medical sociology.

Alternatively, students may decide to take advanced elective courses in another discipline such as psychology, economics, political science, public health or management. As appropriate to each student's course plan, advanced research methods may also be selected.

The doctoral program staff coordinator maintains a log of Advanced Elective courses students have taken in the past, and students may wish to consult this log to identify course options that match their interest areas. Students should then discuss the choice of electives with their advisor and the Program Director. Students have considerable flexibility to choose elective courses, although all electives must include content and assignments appropriate for doctoral study, must reflect the student's area of interest and must be approved by both the advisor and Program Director.

Students may create up to two independent study courses with one or two faculty members. Prior to beginning an independent study the student and the faculty member should develop a contract that specifies the purpose of the independent study and outlines the work that the student will undertake. A final product is expected and should be briefly described in the contract. The independent study contract should be approved by the Program Director.

Below are brief descriptions of core theory and methods courses. Please see the Boston University website for additional course descriptions for Social Work, Sociology, and other fields. **Students may select their elective courses from a wide variety of graduate-level courses in Social Work, Sociology, other social sciences, and other departments/schools at Boston University and within the Inter-University Consortium.**

## **Course Descriptions**

### **Core Theory Courses**

#### **1. Social Work**

##### **SSW WP 901 Sociology of the Social Work Profession**

This course explores the development of social work as a profession and examines historical roots of, and key trends in, the field of social work. Readings are drawn from sociological literature on professionalization and comparison of several professions with social work.

##### **SSW WP 903 Perspectives on Social Welfare Policy**

Focusing on theory, process and substance, this course is designed to expose students to different understandings of the American political institutions as they relate to social welfare policy. Attention is paid to institutional and other factors, shaping and constraining the development of social policies in the United States.

#### **2. Sociology**

##### **GRS SO 701 Advanced Sociological Theory (Classical)**

Primarily for first year graduate students. Advanced survey and review of sociological theory and theorists.

**GRS SO 708 Contemporary Sociological Theory**

Covers the basic elements of the major theoretical paradigms in modern sociology, covering topics and problems in the ethical philosophy of social science and current controversies in the field.

**Core Research Methods Courses****GRS SO 702 Proseminar: Sociological Methods**

Designed primarily for first year graduate students. Review of major sociological methods.

**GRS MA 684 Multivariate Analysis**

This course provided by the Mathematics Department covers multivariate data, analytic techniques, multiple regression and correlation, factor analysis, discriminate analysis, cluster analysis, multidimensional scaling techniques, and multivariate test for one-, two-, and k- sample problems.

**SSW SR 906 Qualitative Research Methods**

Explores qualitative forms of social analysis, including participant observation and intensive in-depth interviewing. Addresses research design, data collection and techniques of analysis appropriate to qualitative data.

**SSW WP 900 Social Welfare Program Analysis and Evaluation**

Course prepares doctoral students in the application of analytical methods as a basis for improving public and organizational decision-making in social welfare. Course addresses the political, value, and technical aspects of policy formation and implementation.

**SSW SR 904 Quantitative Clinical Research Methods in Social Work Practice**

Course familiarizes students with design and implementation strategies for research with clinical populations in an individual or group format. Topics include: design; subject and measurement selection; data organization and management; analysis plans; limitation of results; and ethical concerns.

Note: Students without recent course work in statistics may want to audit GRS MA 614 or SSW SR 744 in the fall semester.

## **C. Doctoral Faculty**

### **Faculty: School of Social Work**

#### **Maryann Amodeo**

Professor and Chairperson

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, Syracuse University; Ph.D., Brandeis University

Research Interests/Expertise: Alcohol and drugs; adjustment of children raised in chemically dependent families; alcohol/drug problems in Southeast Asian refugees resettled in U.S.

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e-mail: mamodeo@bu.edu

#### **Sara S. Bachman**

Associate Professor

Social Welfare Research

Education: MS, University of Massachusetts; Ph.D., Florence Heller School, Brandeis University

Pew Health Policy Scholar

Research Interests/Expertise: Health care for vulnerable populations, including substance abuse treatment services; State health policy; Medicaid financing and reimbursement, including Medicaid managed care

Phone Number: 617/353-1415

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#### **Mary Collins**

Professor

Social Welfare Policy

Education: MA; Ph.D., University of Chicago

Research Interests/Expertise: Substantive areas of child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, risk factors for victimization among adolescent girls, risk of adult imprisonment among youth, child abuse prevention, and psychiatric rehabilitation.

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#### **Melvin Delgado**

Professor and Chairperson

Macro Social Work Practice

Education: MS, Columbia University; Ph.D., Brandeis University

Research Interests/Expertise: Social Welfare policy; people of color; clinician, researcher, historian, and advocate, extensive writings on issues concerning social welfare policy and people of color.

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#### **Ellen Ransel DeVoe**

Associate Professor

Director, Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Sociology and Social Work

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, University of Denver; Ph.D., University of Michigan

Research Interest/Expertise: Trauma, violence, effects of disaster/violence on children and families.

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**Ruth Freedman**

Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Social Welfare Research

Education: MSW; Ph.D., Brandeis University

Research Interests/Expertise: Research, policy analysis, and legal advocacy regarding persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities and mental illness, and their families; special interests include deinstitutionalization; community-based treatments; family supports; long term care; work/family policy.

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**Scott Miyake Geron**

Associate Professor

Social Welfare Research and Policy

Director of Institute for Geriatric Social Work

Education: MA; Ph.D. University of Chicago; post-doctoral appointment, National Long-Term Care Resource Center in the School of Public Health, Division of Health Services Research and Policy, University of Minnesota

Research Interests/Expertise: Long-term care policy and financing, home care, case management and managed care for the elderly and other high-risk and medically complex populations, chronic illness, and comparative long-term care systems. Assessment of quality and client satisfaction for long-term care services.

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**Mark Gianino**

Clinical Associate Professor

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, Boston University; Ph.D., Simmons College

Research Interest/Expertise: Individual and group treatment, agency mental health practice, parenting roles in gay- and lesbian-headed families.

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**Judith Gonyea**

Professor and Chairperson

Social Welfare Research

Education: MSW; Ph.D., University of Washington

Research Interests/Expertise: Gerontology, family and gender studies, intersection of work and family roles; U.S. economic, social and health inequalities, and social policy analysis.

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**Yoonsook Ha**

Assistant Professor

Social Welfare Policy

Education: MSW; Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Research Interests/Expertise: Child and family policy; poverty; the impacts of socioeconomic resources on the well-being of vulnerable children and families; family and work balance among low-income working families.  
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**Hyeouk Hahm**

Associate Professor  
Clinical Social Work Practice and Social Welfare Research  
Education: MSSW; Ph.D., Columbia University  
Research Interests/Expertise: Health status, health care utilization, and foregone health care, acculturation, immigrant populations, mental health and health care utilization among Asian American adolescents.  
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**Robert Hudson**

Professor and Chairperson  
Social Welfare Policy  
Education: Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
Research Interests/Expertise: Aging policy and politics, economic and social factors facing contemporary American elders, elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance, served on the governing boards of the Gerontological Society of America.  
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**Luz Lopez**

Clinical Associate Professor  
Clinical Social Work Practice  
Education: MSW, State University of New York at Buffalo; MPH; Ph.D. Tulane University  
Research Interests/Expertise: Trauma, populations-at-risk, and Latino culture, substance abuse, and HIV prevention.  
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**Lena Lundgren**

Professor and Associate Dean for Research  
Social Welfare Policy  
Director, Center for Addictions Research and Services  
Director of Research, Boston University School of Social Work  
Education: MSW, University of Umea, Sweden; MA; Ph.D., University of Chicago  
Research Interests/Expertise: Substance use, injection drug use, HIV, service utilization, evidence based practice, large data base analysis, longitudinal studies, theoretical and philosophical perspectives on welfare policy.  
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**Daniel Miller**

Assistant Professor  
Human Behavior in the Social Environment



Education: M.A., Tufts University; Ph.D., Columbia University

Research Interests/Expertise: Child obesity and the effect of environmental influences on racial and ethnic disparities in the rates child obesity; broadly interested in social policy for children and families and research examining the impact of policies on low income fathers and their families.

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### **Lisa Moore**

Clinical Assistant Professor and Chairperson, Racial Justice

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, Smith College; Ph.D., California Institute of Integral Studies

Research Interests/Expertise: Black families in the U.S., specifically inter-generational dynamics, intersections of race, sexual orientation, and gender; mental health of students of color and low-income students in higher education, couples and families.

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### **Jordana Muroff**

Assistant Professor

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MA; MSW; Ph.D., University of Michigan

Research/Interests/Expertise: Clinical judgment, mental health assessment and intervention; cognitive behavioral treatment of anxiety disorders; culturally competent and empirically supported intervention methods; clinical decision-making and mental health services research; and cultural racial/ethnic, and gender influences on mental health.

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### **Ruth Paris**

Associate Professor

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, Smith College; Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley

Research Interests/Expertise: Parenting over the life course, early intervention with at risk mothers and infants, women's adult development and aging, impact of alcohol/substance use and abuse on women and families, and family therapy process.

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### **Renee Spencer**

Associate Professor and Chairperson

Human Behavior in the Social Environment

Education: MSSW, University of Texas; Ed.M; Ed.D, Harvard University

Research Interests/Expertise: Adolescent development and the role that strong relationships with adults play in adolescent psychological health and well-being. Also interested in the influence of gender and gender ideologies on adolescent development.

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**Lee Staples**

Clinical Professor

Macro Social Work Practice

Education: MSW, University of California, Los Angeles; Ph.D., Boston University

Research Interests/Expertise: Grassroots organizing; empowerment theory and practice skills; social movements of the poor; public housing; public health, participatory democracy, leadership development, strategies for social change, community based public health.

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**Gail Steketee**

Professor and Dean, BU SSW Program

Clinical Social Work Practice

Education: MSS; Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College

Research Interests/Expertise: Cognitive and behavioral treatment for anxiety disorders (obsessive-compulsive, panic/agoraphobia, social phobia, post-traumatic stress disorder); familial environment and "expressed emotion" as predictors of outcome for anxiety disorders; interventions for compulsive hoarding behavior in adults and elders.

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**Faculty: Department of Sociology**

**Nancy Ammerman**

Professor and Department Chair

Education: Ph.D., Yale University

Research Interests/Expertise: Religion, Community, and Public Policy.

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**Emily Barman**

Associate Professor

Education: Ph.D., University of Chicago

Research Interests/Expertise: Economic sociology, sociology of religion, sociological theory, sociology of culture and research methods (qualitative and quantitative).

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**Ruha Benjamin**

Assistant Professor

Education: BA, Spelman College; MA and Ph.D., UC Berkeley

Research Interests/Expertise: The sociology of science and medicine; racialization and the African diaspora; science policy, public health, and critical social theory.

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**Japonica Brown-Saracino**

Assistant Professor

Education: Ph.D., Northwestern University

Research Interests/Expertise: An ethnographer whose research and teaching interests include community and urban and cultural sociology, as well as the study of sexualities.

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**Catherine Connel**

Assistant Professor

Education: MA and Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin

Research Interests/Expertise: A qualitative researcher interested in the intersections of gender, sexuality, and work.

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**Jeff Coulter**

Professor

Education: MA and Ph.D., Victoria University of Manchester (England)

Research Interests/Expertise: Critical history of the mind/body problem in philosophy and the behavioral sciences; perceptual activities; the relevance of Wittgenstein for the Social Sciences, and the Sociological reconstruction of topics in human cognition.

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**Susan Eckstein**

Professor

Education: MA and Ph.D., Columbia University  
Research Interests/Expertise: Political economy of developing countries (particularly Latin America), urban sociology, political sociology, women in developing countries, sociology of revolutions and social movements.  
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**Julian Go**

Associate Professor  
Education: Ph.D., University of Chicago  
Research Interests/Expertise: Culture, Comparative/Historical Sociology, and Global Sociology.  
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**Liah Greenfeld**

Professor  
Education: Ph.D., Hebrew University  
Research Interests/Expertise: Questions of art, economics, history, language and literature, philosophy, politics, religion, and science, and has studied the cultures of England/Britain, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia/Soviet Union, and the USA.  
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**Alya Guseva**

Associate Professor  
Education: Ph.D., University of California, San Diego  
Research Interests/Expertise: Economic sociology, institutions, Post-Communist transitions, medical sociology, classical theory, comparative, historical, and qualitative methods.  
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**Stephen Kalberg**

Associate Professor  
Education: MA, Ph.D., State University of New York, Stony Brook  
Research Interests/Expertise: Classical and contemporary sociological theory, development and modernization; comparative-historical Sociology; Germany and Japan; political and economic cultures; sociology of intercultural communications.  
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**Nazli Kibria**

Professor  
Education: MA, Ph.D., State University of New York, Stony Brook  
Research Interests/Expertise: Conceptions and experiences of racial and ethnic identity among second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans; poverty and family structure in Bangladesh; comparative study of families, race and ethnic relations. Immigrant families, households, and patterns of adaptation; globalization and family life with a focus on South Asia.  
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**Ashley Mears**

Assistant Professor

Education: Ph.D., New York University

Research Interests/Expertise: Intersections of culture and economy and investigate how gender, race, and class inequalities inform the making of pop culture.

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**Sigrun Olafsdottir**

Assistant Professor

Education: Ph.D., Indiana University

Research Interests/Expertise: medical sociology, sociology of mental health, comparative research, political sociology, sociology of culture, gender, and research methods.

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**Patricia Rieker**

Visiting Professor

Education: Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh

Effects of gender and other social determinants of health outcomes. Prior to coming to Boston University, Dr. Rieker was a Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Society and Health Program at Simmons College.

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**Laurel Smith-Doerr**

Associate Professor

Education: Ph.D., University of Arizona

Research Interests/Expertise: Formal organizations, professions, scientific/technological work and social networks in the economy.

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**John Stone**

Professor

Education: Ph.D., Oxford University

Research Interests/Expertise: Comparative race and ethnic relations.

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**David Swartz**

Assistant Professor

Education: Ph.D., Boston University

The study of elites and stratification, education, culture, religion, and social theory.

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**Peter Yeager**

Associate Professor

Education: MA, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin

Research Interests/Expertise: Organizations and social control with focus on the legal regulation of business in the United States; the institutional and organizational features of large businesses

that shape managers' perceptions and handling of ethical dilemmas at work, in collaboration with the BU School of Management.

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## **D. Qualifying Examination and Dissertation Requirements**

After finishing coursework, students begin more independent scholarly work that includes:

- Qualifying examination comprising a written theory examination, critical essay and oral qualifying examination;
- Dissertation prospectus;
- Dissertation research; and
- Dissertation oral examination.

Each of these steps is described below, along with a description of the role of the dissertation committee.

### **Qualifying Examination**

The qualifying examination for the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Sociology and Social Work consists of three parts: (1) written theory examination (2) critical essay and (3) oral qualifying examination. Successful completion of all three parts is necessary before progressing to work on the dissertation.

#### **1. Written Theory Examination**

The first step of the qualifying exam is the written Theory Exam. The purpose of the exam is to test students' understanding and application of core social work knowledge. Students take the exam after completing coursework. Full time students are expected to take the exam by the end of their third year and part time students take the exam when they are in their last semester of classes, or in the semester following. The exam is offered once a year in late April. The exam tests knowledge regarding social work theory, the profession, social problems and policy. Students who fail the Theory Exam may re-take it, one time, generally the following year.

#### **2. Critical Essay**

After students have successfully passed the written Theory Exam, they prepare a written Critical Essay and then defend it in an Oral Examination. Students may conduct some preliminary work on the Critical Essay while they are also studying for the Social Work Theory Exam; however, completion of the Theory Exam must precede completion of the Critical Essay.

The purpose of the Critical Essay is to ascertain students' substantive command of two bodies of knowledge, one in social work and one in sociology. The intent is for the student to gain substantive and theoretical expertise typically required of an early career scholar. Whenever possible, students should also use the Critical Essay as an opportunity to prepare for conducting their dissertation research. Although review and integration of literature for the Critical Essay may be used as an initial step in developing dissertation research, students may choose to conduct dissertation research on an alternative topic.

While the Theory Exam is used to test students' mastery of material that the faculty believes to be foundational for all doctoral level social workers, the Critical Essay allows the program to test student competence on individualized material specific to the student's own area of interest. The Critical Essay is the student's own critical assessment and synthesis of two substantive areas of specialization. The two substantive areas are integrated into one essay and the student should demonstrate competence in and understanding of the current perspectives in both areas. Both theoretical perspectives and empirical research should be reviewed in the two substantive areas.

To complete the Critical Essay, the student should identify one social work faculty member and one sociology faculty member with expertise in the student's identified areas of interest. Students should read widely in their areas and solicit feedback from the key faculty members regarding the selection and breadth of readings. The student should solicit feedback on drafts of their essay, but should demonstrate independent capability in reading, interpreting, writing, integrating, and drawing conclusions without extensive oversight by faculty members. While the two identified faculty members will be the key advisors for this stage of the qualifying exam, students are encouraged to solicit advice and comments concerning the essay from any faculty member.

The essay should be 30-40 pages in length, typewritten, double-spaced, in 12-point font. Additional pages may be used for references. The appropriate literature should be cited, but need not be exhaustive. Because student areas of interest vary widely, the number of readings, length of the essay, and specific organization of the essay will vary. Advisors on the Critical Essay can provide specific guidance on these questions. Universal guidelines about the essay are that it reflects substantial reading and critical thought, is well written, and demonstrates student's ability to assess and make scholarly conclusions about the literature in their fields.

The chosen area in social work may be a field of social policy (e.g., child welfare), a substantive problem in clinical practice or social welfare (e.g., client engagement), or a population group (e.g., people with mental illness who are homeless). The substantive topic area in sociology ordinarily reflects the specializations within the department (e.g., medical sociology). Students may decide to target their essay to an appropriate sub-field (e.g., health care utilization, prevention of adolescent substance abuse). A student may also pursue an area of specialization not included in the sociology department listing, or specialize in another social science (e.g., anthropology, economics, political science, or psychology) if this is more appropriately congruent with the student's demonstrated interest.

Students should begin to prepare the Critical Essay as soon as course work is completed, and expect to spend at least a semester working on the essay. Students should meet with their faculty advisors from sociology and social work before beginning the essay to discuss the topic area, scope, and key readings. Students then work with faculty advisors to prepare appropriate bibliographies reflecting each body of knowledge before beginning extensive reading. Faculty advising will help the student be certain that he or she has found an appropriate way to address both sociology and social work approaches to the problem. Faculty will also help ensure the student meets the Interdisciplinary Program's requirements for the Critical Essay. To pass the written Critical Essay, the student must show an ability to organize material, clarify concepts, integrate relevant literature, and demonstrate knowledge of the field.



### 3. Oral Qualifying Examination

Students will be examined on their Critical Essay in an Oral Examination. Although the essay will be used as a point of departure in the examination; students are also responsible for the general body of knowledge represented by the two substantive areas addressed in the essay. For the oral examination, the student will form an Oral Examination Committee comprising the two faculty members with whom the student has consulted in the preparation of the essay, and a third member to be added for the examination. The third member will be on the social work faculty. The Director of the Interdisciplinary Program must approve committee membership.

It is expected that all faculty (Social Work or otherwise) serving on the Oral Examination Committee will be members of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GRS) faculty; the Program Director can help students identify appropriate faculty. The student should work with doctoral program staff to schedule a time and reserve a room for the examination. Two weeks prior to the exam, the student should give copies of his or her Critical Essay to each member of the Oral Examination Committee, with one additional copy filed with the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Assistant.

In the oral qualifying examination, performance is evaluated according to standards of “generalized professional knowledge.” In the Oral Examination the student must be able to discuss the material in the essay and related substantive and theoretical material in their two fields of study. Both the written and oral examinations are graded Pass/Fail.

A student who fails the Oral Exam may take it again within three months after the first attempt. If the student fails the exam a second time, the Director and Doctoral Program Advisory Committee will review the total record of the student and decide whether to recommend termination of the student from the program. If more than five years elapse between passing the Oral Exam and approval of the Dissertation Prospectus, the Critical Essay and Oral Exam must be taken again.

The qualifying process is concluded with the successful completion of the Critical Essay and Oral Exam. Oral Examination Committee members sign the final version of the Critical Essay and the student submits it to the Ph.D. Program **staff coordinator**, who then records this information in the student’s file. The Ph.D. program forwards the information that the student has passed all components of the qualifying exam to the Graduate School, using the appropriate GRS form. Students then enter the dissertation phase of the program.

### Dissertation

After completing all course work and passing the three parts of the qualifying examination, students begin work on the dissertation: the final component of doctoral study. A dissertation is a major research study that a student conducts independently, with guidance and mentoring from a faculty committee. The final product of the dissertation is a lengthy written document that includes chapters that discuss the social welfare problem being addressed, the theoretical framework used to shape the research, the methods used in the research study, the results and the

implications of the findings for program or practice. The dissertation process provides a student with the opportunity to conduct self directed research that will provide a contribution to the literature in the student's area of interest.

The first step in completing the dissertation is to form a Dissertation Committee.

### **The Dissertation Committee**

GRS policy states that PhD dissertation examination committees must meet the following criteria:

1. Consist of at least five members
2. At least two members including the chair and first reader must be faculty members from the student's graduate program or department.
3. A majority of the members must be Boston University professorial faculty.

The authority to approve the make-up of a dissertation committee rests with the department/program and requires the signature of the program director. Programs are expected to ensure that committees are appointed that have the appropriate expertise, breadth within the discipline, and independence to ensure a fair assessment of the dissertation, that it is a "valuable contribution to knowledge in the student's field" and that the student "demonstrates a mastery of his/her field of specialization in relation to his/her dissertation" (GRS bulletin).

Members of the Boston University faculty from any school or college within the university that hold professorial rank (i.e. their title includes the word professor) may serve on a GRS PhD dissertation examination committee without need of a special appointment. Special Service Appointments will continue to be required for committee members without a Boston University faculty appointment, and for the exceptional case of a committee member from Boston University not of professorial rank. The primary criterion for approving a special service appointment is that the person is an active scholar/researcher in the discipline as demonstrated by their publication record.

The First Reader, is often but not always, from the School of Social Work faculty, and the Second Reader is often from the Sociology faculty. At least one committee member should have expertise in the methodological approach outlined in the proposal. The Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program must approve the composition of the committee.

To arrange special service appointments, students should meet with the Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program to complete the appropriate paperwork. The proposed committee member will be asked to submit a recent curriculum vitae. In addition, the student will be asked to submit the proposed title of the dissertation, the expected date of defense, and a statement as to why it is appropriate for the outside member to serve on the committee.

The dissertation committee will be expanded by at least one additional faculty member for the final oral examination of the dissertation. This final faculty member will chair the oral examination meeting.

First Reader: The First Reader provides primary support for the student's research, advises the student about writing the dissertation, and advises on administrative matters. The First Reader assumes leadership in guiding the student and maintaining standards of research performance and writing, provides explicit and timely feedback, and helps resolve substantive differences of opinion that may be reflected in comments from various committee members to the student. The First Reader is generally a faculty member of the School of Social Work, but may also be from the Sociology Department.

Second, Third and Fourth Readers: Students should engage committee members with varying types of expertise in content area, theory, and method. One committee member should be from the Sociology Department; sociology faculty at other institutions may serve if appropriate to the student's area. The committee is available to advise the student throughout the dissertation research. The student has a responsibility to maintain contact with committee members and to keep them informed of progress toward completion of the dissertation. Students are advised to engage committee members as mentors and to follow advice provided in this spirit.

Chair: The Chair serves an administrative function at the dissertation defense, rather than a substantive role in guiding the dissertation process. A member of the School of Social Work faculty other than a reader will be selected to chair the examination. The Chair is appointed by the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director in consultation with the student. The role of the chair is to convene the Dissertation Oral Examination (defense), ensure fair and adequate process, and convey defense results to the candidate, including any revisions that are needed. The Chair of the Dissertation Committee is responsible for obtaining and completing the exam forms at the defense, obtaining all signatures, and returning the completed forms to the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director. Additionally, the student brings the "signature page" to the dissertation defense; this form is provided to the student by the Academic Records Officer (see below).

The student works primarily with the First and Second Readers in completing the dissertation. In the event that a committee member is unable to continue to serve, the Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program may replace him or her with a new member.

## **Completing the Dissertation**

### **1. Dissertation Prospectus**

Upon forming the committee, students complete the dissertation prospectus. The dissertation **prospectus must not exceed 20 double-spaced pages using a standard font size**. Topics to be covered in the prospectus include significance of the research problem, conceptual and theoretical framework including a brief literature review, design of the study, method and procedure, estimated timetable for completion of the study, and a selected bibliography citing references from relevant literature. The focus of the prospectus should be primarily the

theoretical framework and method. A title page and one-page abstract should also be included. Students should not undertake dissertation research in advance of having their prospectus approved.

A hearing is held at which the student's Dissertation Committee reviews the dissertation prospectus. If revisions are required, the student will be expected to submit a revised dissertation prospectus within a time limit specified by the committee. Upon approval of the prospectus the student should obtain a dissertation outline approval page from the Director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program, fill in the information requested, and obtain signatures of the readers. This form should be attached to the prospectus and submitted to the doctoral program staff coordinator at the School of Social Work. For studies that involve human subjects, students will be required to submit a protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) after the prospectus has been approved.

At this time, students should schedule an appointment with the Program Director to review his/her academic record and ensure that all the program requirements, with exception of the dissertation, have been completed. In addition, the time frame for completing the dissertation should be discussed with the Program Director, to ensure compliance with GRS calendar deadlines.

## **2. Dissertation Research**

With the prospectus and IRB protocol approved, the student may engage fully in dissertation research. The dissertation is to be a scholarly and original contribution that advances knowledge in the field and is written entirely by the student. The Dissertation Committee's approval of the prospectus commits the student to the topic and research plan, subject to changes made necessary by field situations, problems of data collection, subject matter, and other contingencies that develop during the actual research process. This commitment also serves as a protection for the student; the Committee has agreed that the dissertation research is a worthy area of study, and is appropriately conceptualized, methodologically sound, and feasible given the limitations inherent in dissertation work. If any changes to the plan are required, the student must inform the Committee and obtain their approval. While completing the research, the student is advised to maintain frequent communication with committee members in order to engage them in the mentoring that may be required as the student develops as an independent scholar.

## **3. Dissertation Oral Examination**

After the dissertation has been completed and the written product has been drafted and approved by the readers as ready for defense, the final oral examination, or defense, is scheduled. The student may ascertain the preliminary availability of committee members, but the Chair should contact the members to determine agreement that the dissertation is ready for defense, and then work with the student to schedule the meeting. The student is not eligible to submit the dissertation for final examination until completion of all other requirements for the Ph.D. is on record with GRS. This examination is expected to be held no later than *eight years* after entrance into the doctoral program. Students may petition for extension beyond the eight-year limit. A recommendation for extension is not official until approved by GRS.

\*\*\* *Important:* Students are responsible for several procedures in preparation for scheduling the defense. Prior to defending the dissertation, the student must make an appointment to review the format of the dissertation with the Academic Records Officer in the Graduate School, Room 112, 705 Commonwealth Avenue. A research guide for writers and sample dissertations are available in the GRS office. Before making the appointment, the student should make sure that the draft includes all required preliminary pages specified in the research guide.

In order to receive the degree at May Commencement, the final oral examination must be held and the dissertation submitted to GRS by the middle of April. **The student should consult GRS for deadlines for completing requirements for graduations since these dates change annually.** The student must be registered in the University and must pay appropriate tuition and fees in the semester preceding the examination and the semester in which the degree requirements are completed.

A *Dissertation Abstract form* must be submitted to GRS Records Office, Room 112, with one copy of the dissertation abstract (maximum 350 words), which has been approved by the major advisor and signed by the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director. GRS must receive this *at least three weeks* in advance of the dissertation defense. The candidate will be notified when the abstract is approved and will be informed if revisions are required. Upon approval, the schedule of the final oral examination and 8 copies of the abstract must be submitted to GRS Records Office.

The student should take the following steps three weeks before the examination: finalize the exact date and time of examination; reserve a room for the examination (the Ph.D. Program staff coordinator can assist in reserving a room); obtain the final oral examination schedule from the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director and complete it as directed; and obtain the signature of the chair and submit it to GRS along with 8 copies of the approved abstract. GRS must receive this material at least two weeks before the defense but not before the candidate has been notified by GRS that the dissertation abstract has been approved. The student must also provide the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director with a copy of the completed final oral examination schedule and abstract. Notification of the examination will be circulated to all faculty members in the School of Social Work. The student may invite additional people to observe, but not participate, in the final oral examination. The final dissertation oral examination is open to all Boston University faculty members and Ph.D. students.

As noted in the Graduate School bulletin, the student must “defend the dissertation as a worthy contribution to knowledge in its field and demonstrate mastery of the field of specialization as it is related to the dissertation.” If the final defense is not approved the examiners will notify the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program Director. At some defenses, the student is passed contingent on minor changes to the final dissertation. It is then the First Reader’s responsibility to ensure that the student makes the changes that are agreed on by the committee members prior to submitting the final copy of their dissertation. Approval of the defense by the examining committee is followed by the committee’s recommendation to the officers and trustees of Boston University to award the Ph.D. degree.

## E. Registration

### Registration status

**Full-Time Status:** A student enrolled in three to four-and-a-half courses (12 to 18 credits) will be considered full-time and will be charged full tuition plus a GSU fee, a health service fee and a medical insurance fee (students may choose to opt out of university insurance if they possess another form of medical insurance). Each student must satisfy a residency requirement of a minimum of two consecutive regular semesters of full-time graduate study at Boston University.

**Continuing Student Status:** Ph.D. candidates who have completed all departmental course requirements must register each subsequent regular semester for continuing student status until all requirements for the degree have been completed. Payment of the Continuing Student Fee each semester entitles the student to use of the libraries, research laboratories, academic staff, and other academic facilities of the University for the purpose of completing such requirements as examinations, research, and thesis or dissertation work. Continuing students who are Ph.D. candidates are entitled to officially audit one course each semester without further tuition charge and may register for less than one 4-credit course. Language and physical education courses, studio courses, and lab courses may not be audited.

**Part-Time Status:** All part-time students who are candidates for degrees must register each semester for at least one course until all departmental course requirements are completed.

### Cross-Registration

Graduate students are able to take a limited number of graduate courses at other local universities, including Boston College, Brandeis University, and Tufts University. During a given academic year, a student is permitted to cross-register for one course. Students must receive advisor approval on the form, and receive approval from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Office and the graduate school registrar of the host institution. Further information about cross registration is available from the Office of the University Registrar, 881 Commonwealth Avenue.

### Leave of Absence

Students typically register for each regular semester until completion of all degree requirements. Upon written request to the Graduate School, a student is allowed up to two semesters of leave of absence. Leave of absence forms can be found in the GRS Records Office, Rm 112. The period of authorized leave of absence is counted as a part of the time allowed for completion of degree requirements. Students may not complete any degree requirements in a semester for which they have been granted leave of absence. Students must be registered in the semester in which the degree requirements are completed, as well as in the preceding semester.

## **Contact Information**

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### **Registrar**

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### **Program Director**

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### **Staff Coordinator**

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*Please see the GRS website (<http://www.bu.edu/cas/academics/graduate/bulletin>) for additional information on registration and administrative matters.*