GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN SOCIOLOGY
AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This booklet augments and clarifies the information about graduate studies in sociology given in the Graduate School Bulletin, available at http://www.bu.edu/academics/grs/.

For answers to further questions please contact:

    Prof. Ashley Mears, Director of Graduate Programs
    Ms. Sarah K. Jordan, Graduate Programs Administrator

Boston University policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, age, handicap and veteran status. This policy extends to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, including admissions, employment, financial assistance, educational and athletic programs, and is required by Federal Law, including Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, and the regulations there under. Inquiries regarding the application of these laws to Boston University should be addressed to the Manager of Equal Opportunity, Office of Personnel, 25 Buick Street, Boston, MA 02215, (617) 353-4475, or to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Program, U.S. Department of Labor.
I. THE FACULTY and RESEARCH AREAS

Sociology faculty in 2019/2020 include the following individuals (together with the names of the institutions from which they received their highest academic degrees).

**FACULTY**

- Nancy Ammerman (*Yale University*)
- Emily Barman (*University of Chicago*)
- Japonica Brown-Saracino (*Northwestern University*)
- Cati Connell (*University of Texas*)
- Deborah Carr (*University of Wisconsin-Madison*)
- Susan Eckstein (*Columbia University*)
- Julian Go (*University of Chicago*)
- Neha Gondal (*Rutgers*)
- Liah Greenfeld (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)
- Saida Grundy (*University of Michigan*)
- Heba Gowayed (*Columbia University*)
- Alya Guseva (*University of California, San Diego*)
- Joseph Harris (*University of Wisconsin*)
- Stephen Kalberg (*State University of New York at StonyBrook*)
- Nazli Kibria (*University of Pennsylvania*)
- Ashley Mears (*New York University*)
- Heather Schoenfeld (*Northwestern University*)
- Jessica Simes (*Harvard University*)
- John Stone (*Oxford University*)
- Ana Villarreal (*University of California-Berkley*)

**Lecturer**

- Max A. Greenberg (*University of Southern California*)
- Sarah A. Miller (*University of Massachussets-Amherst*)

**Affiliated Faculty**

- Patricia Rieker (*University of Pittsburgh*)
- David Swartz (*Boston University*)
- Michel Anteby (*New York University*)
- Daniel Kleinman (*University of Wisconsin*)
## Areas of Specialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Primary faculty</th>
<th>Courses offered in 18 - 19 F = Fall S = Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community &amp; Urban</td>
<td>Barman, Brown-Saracino, Simes</td>
<td><strong>----</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative &amp; Historical</td>
<td>Barman, Eckstein, Go, Gondal, Greenfeld, Guseva, Harris, Kalberg, Villarreal</td>
<td><strong>----</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Brown-Saracino, Go, Gondal, Greenfeld, Mears</td>
<td>SO 837 Sociology of Culture (F/S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Barman, Eckstein, Guseva, Harris, Villarreal</td>
<td><strong>----</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Sociology</td>
<td>Barman, Gondal, Guseva, Mears</td>
<td>SO 860 Economic Sociology(F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Grundy, Swartz</td>
<td>SO 844 Sociology of Education (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Lifecycle</td>
<td>Carr, Kibria</td>
<td>SO 804 The Family (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global &amp; Transnational Sociology</td>
<td>Eckstein, Harris, Kibria, Go, Stone</td>
<td>SO 820 Women and Social Change in the Developing World (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Migration</td>
<td>Eckstein, Kibria</td>
<td>SO 838 Migration (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, Crime and Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Schoenfeld, Simes, Villarreal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Sociology</td>
<td>Carr, Guseva, Harris, Rieker</td>
<td>SO818 Health Inequalities (S); SO890 Global Health (F/S); SO834 Mental Illness (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td>Ammerman, Barman, Connell, Eckstein, Gondal, Grundy, Swartz</td>
<td>SO 811 Nonprofits (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Sociology &amp; Nationalism</td>
<td>Eckstein, Go, Greenfeld, Harris, Kalberg, Stone</td>
<td><strong>----</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race &amp; Ethnicity</td>
<td>Eckstein, Go, Grundy, Kibria, Stone, Simes, Schoenfeld</td>
<td>SO 808 Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Ammerman, Kalberg, Swartz</td>
<td>SO 850 Religion &amp; Social Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex &amp; Gender</td>
<td>Brown-Saracino, Carr, Connell, Grundy, Kibria, Mears</td>
<td>SO 803 Gender Stratification (F); SO 852 Contemporary Debates in Sexualities Research (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Change</td>
<td>Ammerman, Carr, Go, Harris, Stone</td>
<td>SO 850 Religion &amp; Social Change (F);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>Go, Gondal, Greenfeld, Kalberg, Schoenfeld, Stone, Swartz, Simes, Villarreal</td>
<td>SO 701 Classical Theory (F); SO702 Graduate Methods (F); SO708 Contemporary Social Theory (S); SO712 Qualitative Methods (S)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. PROGRAMS & POLICIES

Each student is responsible for knowing the rules, regulations, procedures, and deadlines concerning his or her Graduate Program as they appear in this booklet and in the Graduate School Bulletin.

Please note, all students on regular fellowship packages from GRS receive funding for five years, two of which are service-free and three of which require service as Teaching Fellows (TFs) or Research Assistants (RAs).

THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

The Graduate Programs Committee (GPC) is an important partner in guiding the student’s progress through the program. It is composed of a total of four members -- three of the faculty, as well as, the Director of Graduate Programs whom serves as chair. It supervises all graduate programs, and administers regulations that are established by the department faculty in accordance with standards set by the entire department and the Graduate School. The committee has the authority to waive regulations in special individual circumstances and, with approval of the Department Chair, may establish new rules and procedures. The limits of authority for the GPC are set by the Graduate School.

A student may appeal or challenge any rule to the GPC, presenting the appeal in writing to the Director of Graduate Programs. If, after appeal, the decision of the GPC is still not satisfactory to the student, an appeal may be made directly to the department by letter addressed to the Department Chair.

The Graduate Programs Committee is charged with establishing the student’s Examining Committee to oversee the Qualifying Requirement and Comprehensive Oral Examination. The first two members of the Examining Committee are normally proposed to the GPC by the student, with the concurrence of the named faculty. This request is conveyed using the Qualifying Requirement Form. These two members should represent the most relevant expertise for the fields to be covered in the Qualifying Requirement. The third member of the committee will be appointed by the GPC from among other qualified Department faculty.

Similarly, the GPC works with the student and the student’s advisor to select two other members of the faculty to read and approve the dissertation prospectus, participate in an oral examination of it, and (with the advisor) be the official first three Readers of the dissertation. Before submitting a prospectus, the dissertation committee should be approved using the Dissertation Committee Petition Form.

The Committee is also charged with approving changes of advisor, approving the waiver of any program requirements, as well as generally monitoring each student’s progress through the program. Completion of each major program requirement is reported to this Committee.
ADVISORS

Upon arrival new students are assigned a temporary advisor to assist with Fall registration. During the first semester, a new student is required by Graduate School rule to have secured the agreement of a faculty member of his or her choice to serve as advisor, the choice to be reported in writing to the Director of Graduate Programs on the Advisor Form. This person may differ from the assigned temporary advisor. The advisor is available for consultation on all phases of the student’s academic program, including approval of course programs and selection of areas of specialization.

Each student is expected to schedule an annual conversation with his or her advisor to assess progress toward the degree; although more frequent communication and consultation is encouraged. Each spring the GPC requires the advisor and student to complete a progress report for review by the GPC.

Normally advisors are selected in the student’s area of specialization and serve until completion of the M.A. program or the Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations. However, changes may be made at any point by mutual consent, with the approval of the GPC. Advisors may become dissertation First Readers, but the assignment is not automatic. After passing the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination, students are expected to develop dissertation topics in consultation with faculty qualified to help develop the prospectus and supervise the dissertation research. The agreement of a faculty member to serve as First Reader should be in writing, addressed to the Director of Graduate Programs.

REGULATIONS

Registration Status

a) 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 of $162 per year, a health service fee of $206 per year and Basic Medical Insurance at approximately $2,045 per year (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. Students holding regular appointments as teaching fellows or research assistants are considered full-time if they are enrolled in two or more courses. Teaching fellows or research assistants taking fewer than two courses may, if appropriate, be designated as full-time.

b) Continuing Student Status: MA and PhD candidates who have completed all departmental course requirements must register each subsequent 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 appropriate access to and 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 PhD candidates are entitled to officially audit one course each semester without further tuition charge and may register for one 4-credit course each semester with approval from the Director of Graduate Studies. Language and physical education courses, studio courses, and lab courses may not be audited.
c) 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.

*** Please note that the PhD program is full-time, and only advanced PhD students who have completed all requirements may be part-time with the departmental (and ISSO, if an international student) permission.

Cross-Registration

Graduate students are able to take a limited number of graduate courses at many other local universities, including Boston College, Brandeis University, and Tufts University. Students may also register for courses in the University’s other Schools and Colleges, in the University Professors Program, in the Boston University Marine Program, and at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. During a given academic year, a student is permitted to cross-register only once. 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 is available from the Office of the University Registrar, 881 Commonwealth Avenue.

Leave of Absence

Normally, students must 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. The period of authorized leave of absence is not 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.

In addition, as outlined in the below link, a full-time or certified full-time PhD student, in good academic standing, who becomes primary caregiver of an infant and/or adopted child will receive a one-year extension on their approved time to degree.

Further clarification can be found here: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/grs/programs/phd-degree-requirements/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/grs/programs/phd-degree-requirements/)

Academic Misconduct

All students are expected to comply with the Graduate School’s Academic Conduct Code. Academic misconduct, defined as a student’s own conduct which intentionally misrepresents his or her own academic accomplishments, or which jeopardizes the fair judging of another student’s academic work, will be penalized in accordance with the guidelines of the Graduate School Committee on Academic Standards. For further information, consult the Graduate School’s Academic Discipline Procedures at [http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/](http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/).
Sexual Harassment

All students are expected to comply with Boston University’s Sexual Harassment Policy. BU is committed to the principle that no employee, student, or applicant for employment or admission should be subject to sexual harassment. The University strives to provide workplaces and learning environments that promote equal opportunity and are free from illegal discriminatory practices, including sexual harassment. For further information, consult http://www.bu.edu/safety/sexual-misconduct/. BU’s Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center (http://www.bu.edu/shs/sarp/) provides resources for persons who have experienced sexual assault or abuse, as well as their family and friends.

Grades

A grade of “I” for incomplete is given if the work of a course is not completed within the semester of registration. The Graduate School stipulates that this automatically becomes a permanent “I” unless the work is completed and the grade changed within the following calendar year; grades of “I” after 1 year and of C+ or lower are considered failures. Grade changes are permitted only within one year of the original recording of the grade at the end of the semester. The Graduate School enforces regulations concerning Incompletes.

Termination of Studies

If, because of failure to maintain satisfactory grades or to achieve adequate academic progress according to the timetable, the Graduate School recommends that a student be terminated from the program, the student may appeal to the Graduate Programs Committee before the Committee forwards an official notice of termination. Students in such jeopardy should immediately discuss the situation with their advisor and submit in writing to the GPC any relevant information before action is taken. Please see the discussion of “Satisfactory Progress” below for further information.

PhD students are expected to complete all requirements for the degree within seven years of matriculation. MA students must complete their work in three years. Students who anticipate exceeding these limits must petition for extension of their program. Students are also expected to maintain “Satisfactory Academic Progress” as discussed at the end of this handbook.
III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE

The objective of the Master’s Program at Boston University is to prepare the student broadly in the basic skills used by a sociologist. Our goal is to provide training for work as an applied social scientist outside of academic life, as in government administrative jobs or research departments or community programs. There is also room for some specialization or areas of concentration. Usually 8 courses are required.

1. Basic Requirements - 5 courses

- SO-701, Classical Theory
- SO-708, Contemporary Theory
- SO-702, Proseminar in Methods (research design)
- SO-712, Qualitative Methods (or an equivalent GPC approved advanced qualitative methods course)
- SO 724, Quantitative Methods in Sociological Analysis (or an equivalent GPC approved advanced quantitative methods course)

2. Elective Requirements - 3 courses

Chosen in consultation with the faculty advisor, at least one elective must be in Sociology at the 700-level or above. Two electives may be in other social science departments.

3. Master’s Thesis

Students should work with their advisor, who must hold a regular appointment in Sociology, and one other faculty member on a project of original research, resulting in a paper that demonstrates the student’s skills in sociological research and analysis. The student should secure the participation and approval of the two faculty readers using the Master’s Thesis Committee Petition Form. The Graduate Programs Committee must give approval if the second committee member is to be faculty from another department.

An intent to graduate form for the M.A. diploma should be filed with the Graduate School at the beginning of the semester prior to the semester in which the degree is expected to be awarded. Thesis length, how much and what kind of research is included, its format, and content are decided by the student in consultation with the thesis committee. A properly formatted draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the graduate school at least three weeks before the date of the defense. Upon reading and approving the thesis, committee members meet with the student for a thesis defense to discuss and evaluate it. This meeting must be held at least five weeks, if not more, before the date of graduation. For the degree to be awarded, a copy of the final thesis must be submitted to the department and through ETD and a thesis processing fee, Contact Information Form, and a signed Approval Form must all be filed with the Graduate School several weeks before the graduation date. Please follow all dates listed for completion of these requirements by the Graduate School. Further information on ETD is available at
Possible transfer from the M.A. to the Ph.D. Program

Students in the M.A. program may petition for admission to the Ph.D. Program before completing requirements for the M.A., after their first semester in the program. The petition is reviewed as part of the regular Ph.D. admissions review process.

B. Pre-Dissertation Requirement for the Ph.D.

At Boston University, the goal of the Ph.D. program is to produce well-rounded sociologists capable of advancing knowledge in the field through research, teaching and practice. The program involves course work and writing, extensive private reading, and varied research experiences. Progress in the program is shown by passing through five stages: (1) satisfying course requirements, (2) completing the Qualifying Requirement; (3) passing the Comprehensive Defense; (4) writing and defending of the Dissertation Prospectus, and (5) writing and defending the dissertation at a Final Oral Examination.

1. Course Requirements*

   a. Basic Requirements (5 courses)

   - SO-701, Classical Theory
   - SO-708, Contemporary Theory
   - SO-702, Pro seminar in methods (research design)
   - SO-712, Qualitative Methods (or an equivalent GPC approved advanced qualitative methods course)
   - SO 724, Quantitative Methods in Sociological Analysis (or an equivalent GPC approved advanced quantitative methods course)

   *SO-701, 702, and 708 and 724 should be taken in the first year of graduate work.*

   b. Elective Courses (11 4-credit courses or 44 credits)

   When possible, students should specialize in two sub-fields and take at least two courses in each of the sub-fields. “Sub-fields” can be broadly defined as the specialization areas outlined by the American Sociological Association, shown here: [http://www.asanet.org/asa-communities/asa-sections](http://www.asanet.org/asa-communities/asa-sections). This is not a definitive list; our goal is to ensure that students strive for and demonstrate some breadth of training and expertise. Directed Studies are encouraged as a way to do focused work in a specialty but are not permitted for post-. “Directed Studies” also includes credits for registering under a Faculty member whilst students finish their Qualifying Requirement (e.g. students can register for a Directed Study to do their Research Paper, Essay, or Exam). Credits for being a Teaching Fellow are
not included here. Stated otherwise, SO 699 courses, those associated with Teaching Fellowships, do not count toward your total required credits. Students should also explore widely the offerings in other departments and in Consortium schools.

Beginning with the cohort entering Fall 2017, students are limited to two Directed Studies during their academic careers, unless special circumstances arise in which case more than two could be allowed with permission of advisor. Students should limit their Directed Studies only for courses and topics that are not offered. This goes into effect for the new cohort of entering students; for current students beyond their first year, we only recommend you limit the number of Directed Studies you take.

*Transfer Credits: Students may petition the Graduate Programs Committee to transfer credits for elective courses from prior coursework, but whether the credits are accepted is up to the GPC, who will work with the student’s faculty advisor to determine course transfer credit. Only up to 32 credits may be transferred. The GPC does not accept transfer credit for basic requirement courses. Credits towards undergraduate degrees are not accepted.

2. Qualifying Requirement

   Before students write their Dissertation Prospectus (see below), they must first meet a Qualifying Requirement by separately demonstrating their knowledge of the ideas and existing research in two established subfields in the discipline, as described above. The student should present the material in a way that demonstrates his or her facility with the social theories out of which questions in these subfields have emerged, as well as knowledge of the relevant research literature in the field and the ability to frame and critique that literature. While it is expected that the subfield will be the relevant background field for the dissertation, this requirement should demonstrate the sort of broad knowledge of the subject and ability to frame the subfield that might, for instance, be necessary in later teaching a course in that area. The subfields of the Qualifying Requirement will be identified in consultation with the student’s advisor and with the approval of the Graduate Programs Committee. Each subfield will generally be selected from among those listed in this Handbook or from the American Sociological Association’s list of Sections (http://www.asanet.org/asa-communities/asa-section).

   The construction and completion of this requirement occur under the guidance of a Qualifying Requirement Committee consisting of three faculty members. One faculty member should be the main examiner for the one of the two subfields, another faculty member should be the main examiner for the other subfield, and a third serves an additional advisor/examiner. For a subfield for which no member of the department is qualified to serve as examiner, the student may seek approval for the participation of a qualified examiner from outside the department. The sequence of completion is open but students should consult their advisor and members of the Qualifying Committee to ascertain which sequence works best for them.

   The Graduate Programs Committee is charged with establishing the student’s Examining
Committee to oversee the Qualifying Requirement and Comprehensive Oral Examination. The first two members of the Examining Committee are normally proposed to the GPC by the student, with the concurrence of the named faculty. This request is conveyed using the **Qualifying Requirement Form.**

Students may demonstrate their mastery of each subfield by choosing from one of the following three options: exam format, essay format, or research paper. Students should select a format in consultation with their advisor. Upon the committee’s approval of each item, these are then defended in a Comprehensive Oral Examination (see #3 below).

i. **Exam Format**

The student should work with their committee member to identify a subfield of focus and to generate a bibliography of relevant readings. Having engaged with the literature covered in the subfield bibliography, the student will answer two questions, with the questions set by the qualified member of the Examining Committee. Questions are devised by the faculty member in consideration of the student’s research interests, but with the larger goal of ensuring the student’s comprehension of the entire subfield. The format of the critical exam is take-home. The student will receive two questions at the beginning of a three-day period and will submit the two completed questions at the end of the three-day period (exceptions to this time frame may occur on a case-by-case basis, as decided by conversation between the student and faculty member). The student will write approximately 10-15 pages per question (plus bibliography), resulting in about 20-30 pages. Each exam will be read by the full three-member Examining Committee. At least two members must agree that an exam is satisfactory. In the case that an exam is deemed not satisfactory, the student may request a second opportunity to complete a satisfactory exam or to write an essay within the following four months. The completed and approved exam should be filed with the department.

ii. **Essay Format**

Alternatively, the student should work with their committee member to identify a subfield of focus and to generate a bibliography of relevant readings. Having demonstrated engagement with the bibliography’s material, the student may write an essay for the subfield that should consist of 20-30 pages of text, plus bibliography. Essays will be expected to be well written and to conform to standard academic criteria for form, clarity, and accuracy. Essays are distinct from a Research Paper in that they provide a review, synthesis and critique of the literature, but do not require the collection or analysis of original data. Organization of the essay is the student’s responsibility. Advice and comments concerning the essay may be solicited from any faculty member as well as the student’s advisor. The ideal essay is the statement of a scholar who has mastered an area sufficiently to see where her or his own unique contribution might lie.

The student should proceed by generating an outline for the essay, with the qualified examiner establishing the parameters for an acceptable essay. The student should then write a full draft of the essay and submit it to the assigned professor. The professor will provide detailed comments for revision. The student takes those comments into account and submits a completed version of the essay/s for approval to the Examining Committee. The full three-member Examining Committee will read each essay. At least two members must agree that the essay is satisfactory. If the essay is not deemed acceptable, the student is able to revise it one time only within the following four months. The completed and approved essay should be filed with the department.
iii. Research Paper

Through a Research Paper, the student demonstrates the ability to conduct an original research project and write up the results in a paper suitable for submission to a scholarly journal. The paper should make an original theoretical contribution and/or an empirically-informed theoretical contribution, and/or offer a novel empirically-driven illumination of a social phenomenon. The paper will be read by the full Examining Committee, and two members must agree that it is of sufficient quality to submit to a journal. The completed and approved research paper should be filed with the department.

In addition, the student will present their Paper at a Department seminar or an appropriate subfield or disciplinary forum; the selection of an appropriate forum should be determined in consultation with the Research Paper Faculty. It should occur after the Oral Examination but can occur before the Oral Examination as long as the Research Paper Faculty has given it their approval.

•Research: The research should involve the collection and/or analysis of data, but should be of a size and scope that enables the student to complete the Research Paper requirement by the time specified in the Timetable (given in this Handbook). This would mean a research project not nearly as large as that for the Dissertation and rather more akin to that of a M.A. thesis. Students who already have a M.A. thesis may use material from that thesis for the Research Paper but should reorganize it and/or add relevant material/literature so as to be in the form of a paper suitable for submission to a scholarly journal.

•Format and Organization The paper should be minimum 7,000-10,000 words (including bibliography) and should include a literature review and a specification of the methods and data along with the presentation of the results. Students are advised to organize and format the paper along the lines of a scholarly journal and should consult existing publications for examples.

•Topic and Subfield The topic of the research should be discussed with the Examining Committee and involve a subfield that is different in focus from what is covered in the student’s other exam or essay to demonstrate additional competence. It might happen that the other subfield relates to or is a part of the literature for the Research Paper, in which case the student should ensure that another subfield is sufficiently represented in the Paper.

•Other Specifications: The topic and project should be developed in close consultation with the student’s Examining Committee to assure feasibility and relevance.

3. Comprehensive Oral Examination

After the Examining Committee has approved the materials constituting the Qualifying Requirement, a date is set for the Comprehensive Oral Exam at which the student will orally defend their submissions. A copy of the two documents should be on file with the Graduate Programs Director at least two weeks prior to the scheduled Exam. The department will make an announcement of the upcoming examination to all faculty. The exam is open for the participation
of all members of the Department’s graduate school faculty, but only the Examining Committee will vote on whether the student’s performance is satisfactory. A student may invite up to 5 personal guests to audit, but not participate, in the examination.

The Oral Examination will primarily cover the materials in the two components of the Qualifying Requirement. It may, however, cover other substantive, methodological, or theoretical material from the student’s coursework. It should provide an opportunity to probe the degree to which a student has all the necessary foundations – theoretical, methodological, and specialized knowledge – for the work that lies ahead.

A student who fails the Oral Exam the first time may take it again no later than three months after the first attempt. If the student fails the Exam a second time, the GPC will review the total record of the student and decide whether to recommend to the Department Chair termination of the student’s program.

If more than five years elapse between passing the Oral Exam and submission (and approval of) the dissertation prospectus, the two components of the Qualifying Requirement and the Oral Exam must be repeated.

D. DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended by the Graduate School that each student review his/her academic record with his/her major advisor to determine that all course and qualifying requirements have been completed before proceeding with dissertation work.

Dissertation Committee

Students should select a dissertation topic and secure the agreement of (2) departmental faculty members who will serve as First Reader (primary dissertation advisor) and Second Reader. The student and advisors should work together to select a minimum of two other committee members to read and approve the prospectus and serve as third and fourth readers for the dissertation. Please note, each committee must designate a chair, who can serve either as one of the four committee members (the first reader cannot serve in the role of committee chair), as an additional committee member, or solely as the chair of the committee. The student should use the Dissertation Committee Petition Form to seek official approval of and for this Committee. Note that an expanded committee of five persons will read and approve the final dissertation.

The First Reader must be a member of the Department of Sociology. Faculty with joint appointments in Sociology may serve as doctoral dissertation committee members, however in order for the joint appointment faculty member to serve as First Reader, approval must be given by the Graduate Program Committee. Any other dissertation committee member (either at the Prospectus or Dissertation defense stage) who is not on the GRS faculty will need a special service appointment to the Graduate School in order to serve in this capacity. To arrange special service appointments, students should see the Graduate Programs Administrator.

Further information can be found here: https://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/phd-mfa-students/graduation-information/
**External Funding Sources**

Students are encouraged to seek out external sources of funding throughout the course of their graduate career. External sources of funding, in the form of grants and fellowships, are available to students based on their citizenship/residence status, their stage of progress through the degree program, and their focus of interest. Funding is available from federal agencies, foundations, corporations, and professional organizations. A number of search engines and websites provide lists of funding sources for graduate students. These include Community of Science, Grants in Graduate Studies, Cornell University Graduate School Fellowship Notebook, and UCLA’s Graduate & Postdoctoral Extramural Support Database.

**Institutional Review Board**

If a student’s dissertation research entails the study of human research subjects, the student’s research design must obtain approval (or an exemption) from Boston University’s Charles River Institutional Review Board. The Charles River Campus (CRC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) was created to comply with federal regulations and state laws for the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects. The purpose of the CRC IRB is to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects of research and to assure that clinical research is conducted according to corresponding federal regulations, state law, and IRB policies. Students should work with their dissertation committee, the department’s IRB reviewer, and with the Office of Sponsored Programs to secure approval of their research design by the CRC IRB.

**1. The Prospectus**

In most cases, the proposed dissertation will draw on the conceptual work and relevant literature covered in the Qualifying Requirement, but the prospectus will use material from the Qualifying Requirement only insofar as it points to the particular question the dissertation will address.

The prospectus should briefly identify the question to be addressed and the relevant theoretical and research literature from which the dissertation will build. It should then outline the research methods and plan for the study (including an estimated timetable) and provide a focused bibliography. The Graduate School requires that this document (not including bibliography and appendices) be **no more than 20 pages** in length. It constitutes a working agreement (subject to on-going renegotiation) about the project to be undertaken.

Proposals should also deal with relevant questions of ethics and informed consent (see IRB section above). If human subjects are involved, the student should include with the prospectus a draft of her or his application to the Institutional Review Board.

A title page and a one-page abstract should also be included.

Upon approval of the prospectus by members of the dissertation committee, a date is set for the Oral Defense at which the student will orally defend their submissions. A copy of the prospectus should be on file with the Graduate Programs Director **at least two weeks prior** to the scheduled Oral Defense. The department will make an announcement of the upcoming Oral Defense to all faculty. The event is open for the participation of all members of the Department’s graduate school faculty, but only members of the dissertation committee will vote on whether the
student’s performance is satisfactory.

If revisions are required following its Oral Defense, the student will be expected to submit a revised dissertation prospectus within a time limit specified by the Committee.

For a January degree the prospectus is due in the Graduate School by April of the preceding academic year; for a May degree the prospectus is due in October of the preceding semester. These deadlines, however, do not reflect a realistic assessment of the usual time between proposal and dissertation completion.

Copies of the approved prospectus are placed in the Graduate Program Office in the Sociology Department and forwarded to the Graduate School.

2. Dissertation Research

With the prospectus approved and orally defended and approved by the Institutional Review Board (if human subjects research is entailed), the student may engage fully upon the dissertation research. The dissertation is to be a scholarly and original contribution, written entirely by the student, and advancing knowledge in the field.

The Committee’s approval commits the student to the topic and plan of the prospectus, subject to changes made necessary by field situations, problems of data collection, subject matter, and all other contingencies that develop during the actual research process. The Committee shall offer continuing advice and support during the dissertation research and writing. In the event that a Committee member is unable to continue to serve he/she may be replaced after review and approval by the Graduate Programs Committee.

After the prospectus is approved, the First Reader provides primary support for the student’s research, advises the student about writing the dissertation, and takes care of relevant administrative matters. It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain the extent of involvement each member of the committee wants to have during the preparation of the dissertation. The Committee, especially the first and second reader, should be available to advise the student throughout the dissertation research. The student has a responsibility to maintain appropriate contact with committee members and keep them informed of the work being done. The First Reader has the responsibility to assume leadership in guiding the student and maintaining standards of research performance and writing, in providing explicit and timely feedback, and in helping resolve substantive disagreements that may be reflected in comments from various committee members to the student.

3. Dissertation Exam

After the dissertation has been completed, it is read by the four primary Readers, please reference Dissertation Committee in previous section. When they approve it, an expanded committee of five readers is then formed, and the Final Oral Examination is held.

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 of theses and dissertations is 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 the Graduate School for deadlines for completing requirements for graduation since these change annually. There are no exceptions to University deadlines.

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 examination is held and the degree requirements are completed.

A Ph.D. Dissertation Abstract form must be submitted to the Graduate School Records Office, Room 112, with one copy of the dissertation abstract (maximum 350 words), which has been approved by the major advisor, the Director of Graduate Programs, and the Department Chair. This must be received by the Graduate School at least three weeks in advance of the defense of the dissertation for review. The candidate will be notified when the abstract is approved and will be informed if revisions are required. Upon approval, the student files the Schedule of the Final Oral Examination and fourteen copies of the abstract with the Graduate Records Office.

Notification of the examination will be circulated to all faculty in the department. The student may invite up to five personal guests to audit, but not participate, in the final oral examination. The final oral examination is open to all BU faculty.

A member of the Sociology Department faculty other than the First Reader shall chair the examination. The examination report form will be forwarded by the Graduate School to the chair of the dissertation committee, who is responsible for completing the exam forms, obtaining all signatures, and returning the completed forms to the Director of Graduate Programs. These forms must be returned to the Graduate School prior to the time when the student submits the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate School Office.

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.” As with a dissertation prospectus, a final defense can be disapproved; the examiners would then arrive at a recommendation and notify the Graduate Programs Committee and the department chair. 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

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**

All students must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress in order to remain in the program. The following achievements are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress:
A. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
B. Have no more than 2 failing grades (lower than B- or an incomplete grade older than 12 months).
C. Adhere to timetable given below.

**Timetable**

All requirements for the doctorate, including dissertation, must be completed within seven years (exceptions require a petition to GRS). A leave of absence of up to two semesters is permitted for appropriate cause, but the leave period counts towards the seven-year time limit. The following is the timetable for completion of requirements (deviation from this timetable must be approved by the Graduate Programs Committee).

- By End of Second Year: Completion at least 48 credits (12 seminars) and progress towards the Qualifying Requirement
- By End of Third Year: Completion of all course requirements, Qualifying Requirements, Oral Examination, Dissertation Prospectus and its Oral Defense

(a) students should work on their Qualifying Requirement as part of their second year coursework; they should complete one of them (Research paper, Essay or Exam) by or over the summer before their third year; they should complete the other in the fall of their third year and complete their dissertation prospectus over the winter and summer semesters of their third year. The dissertation should be completed and defended by the end of their seventh year.

Students who do not complete the requirements for the doctorate within this timetable will receive a warning from the Graduate Program Committee along with a proposed timeline for completion of remaining requirements. Failure to complete those requirements within the recommended timeline merits grounds for termination from the program. If, because of failure to maintain satisfactory grades or to achieve adequate academic progress according to the timetable, the Graduate School recommends that a student be terminated from the program, the student may appeal to the Graduate Programs Committee before the Committee forwards an official notice of termination. Students in such jeopardy should immediately discuss the situation with their advisor and submit in writing to the GPC any relevant information before action is taken.