

**Boston University**

**Department  
of  
Sociology**

**2021-2022**

# Graduate Student Information

## 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](#).

For answers to further questions please contact:

Prof. Alya Guseva, Director of Graduate Programs

Ms. Natalie Russo, 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 2021/2022 include the following individuals (together with the names of the institutions from which they received their highest academic degrees).

### **Faculty**

Japonica Brown-Saracino (*Northwestern University*)  
Deborah Carr (*University of Wisconsin-Madison*)  
Cati Connell (*University of Texas*)  
Susan Eckstein (*Columbia University*)  
Neha Gondal (*Rutgers University*)  
Heba Gowayed (*Princeton University*)  
Liah Greenfeld (*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*)  
Saida Grundy (*University of Michigan*)  
Alya Guseva (*UC San Diego*)  
Joseph Harris (*University of Wisconsin-Madison*)  
Nazli Kibria (*University of Pennsylvania*)  
Daniel Lee Kleinman (*University of Wisconsin-Madison*)  
Ashley Mears (*New York University*)  
Jonathan Mijs (*Harvard University*)  
Heather Shoenfeld (*Northwestern University*)  
Jessica Simes (*Harvard University*)  
John Stone (*Oxford University*)  
Ana Villarreal (*UC Berkeley*)

### **Emeritus Faculty**

Nancy Ammerman (*Yale University*)  
Stephen Kalberg (*Stony Brook University*)

### **Affiliate Faculty**

Michel Anteby (*New York University*)  
Jonathan Calvillo (*UC Irvine*)  
Robert D. Eschmann (*Chicago*)  
Sanaz Mobasserri (*UC Berkeley*)  
Andrew C. Stokes (*University of Pennsylvania*)  
Merry White (*Harvard University*)

### **Full-time Lecturers**

Max A. Greenberg (*University of Southern California*)

Sarah Miller (*UMass, Amherst*)

### Areas of Specialization

Area	Primary faculty	Example Courses
Community & Urban	Brown-Saracino, Simes	<b>SO 859: Deviance and Social Control</b>
Comparative & Historical	Eckstein, Gondal, Greenfeld, Guseva, Harris, Kalberg, Villarreal	<b>SO 840: Seminar: Comparative Political Cultures</b>
Culture	Brown-Saracino, Greenfeld, Mears, Gondal	<b>SO 837 Sociology of Culture</b>
Development	Eckstein, Guseva, Harris, Villarreal	<b>SO 839: Seminar: State Building and Failure in the Developing World</b>
Economic Sociology	Anteby, Gondal, Guseva, Mears, Gowayed	<b>SO 860 Economic Sociology; SO 848 Culture and Markets</b>
Education	Grundy	<b>SO 844 Sociology of Education</b>
Family & Lifecycle	Kibria	<b>SO 804 The Family</b>
Global & Transnational Sociology	Eckstein, Guseva, Harris, Kibria, Stone	<b>SO 820 Women and Social Change in the Developing World</b>
Inequality	Gondal, Mijs, Villareal	<b>SO 863 Social Status; SO 842 Urban Inequality in the Americas</b>
International Migration	Eckstein, Gowayed, Kibria	<b>SO 838 Seminar on International Migration</b>
Medical Sociology, Mental Illness	Carr, Guseva, Harris	<b>SO 890 Global Health: Politics, Institutions and Ideology; SO 818 Sociology of Medicine; SO834 Sociology of Mental Illness</b>
Organizations	Anteby, Connell, Eckstein, Gondal, Grundy	<b>SO 716 Macro Organization Theory</b>
Political Sociology & Nationalism	Eckstein, Greenfeld, Harris, Stone	<b>SO 847: Seminar: Global Sociology</b>

Race & Ethnicity	Eckstein, Gowayed, Grundy, Kibria, Stone, Simes	<b>SO 808 Ethnic, Race and Minority Relations</b>
Sex & Gender	Brown-Saracino, Connell, Grundy, Kibria, Mears	<b>SO 803 Gender Stratification; SO 852 Contemporary Debates in Sexualities Research; SO 631 Genders, Sexualities and Youth Cultures</b>
Social Change	Harris, Stone	<b>SO 850 Religion &amp; Social Change</b>
Sociology of Law	Schoenfeld	<b>SO 815 Sociology of Law</b>
Theory and Methods	Gondal, Greenfeld, Stone, Simes	<b>SO 701 Classical Theory; SO702 Graduate Methods; SO708 Contemporary Social Theory; SO712 Qualitative Methods</b>

## 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.

### **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 four members of the faculty, including the Director of Graduate Programs as its 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.

For the dissertation prospectus, the student in collaboration with their advisor selects at least two other members of the faculty to form the dissertation committee. The committee members must read and approve the dissertation prospectus, and participate in the student's oral examination of the prospectus. The student's advisor and the two faculty members are considered the First, Second and Third "Readers" of the dissertation. Before submitting a prospectus, the dissertation committee should be approved by the GPC 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.

A note about communication: If you are having trouble logging into Google files shared with only BU account users, you can set up the account through the BU IT links by clicking on the Drive icon <http://www.bu.edu/tech/support/google/>

## **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. 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.

## **REGULATIONS**

### ***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, and a health service fee, [see GRS page for updates](#) (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.

**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.

**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 many other local universities, including Boston College, Brandeis University, MIT and Tufts University.

Students may also register for courses in the University's other Schools and Colleges, 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 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.

### ***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 <https://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

### ***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/>.

### ***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, 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)

## **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.

### **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\*

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 should be taken in the first year of graduate work.*

*SO 712 and SO 724 can be taken in any year the student wishes in consultation with their advisor.*

Strongly Encouraged (1 course)

SO 951 Professional Workshop (runs over two semesters for 4 credits)

Elective Courses (11 Courses, can include SO 951 Professional Workshop, for total of 44 credits)

When possible, students should specialize in two sub-fields and take at least two courses in each of the sub-fields. Directed Studies are encouraged as a way to:

- i) do focused reading in a specialty not offered in the Department
- ii) read and work on a Qualifying Requirement (e.g. students can register for a Directed Study to complete their Research Paper, Essay, or Exam).

Each Directed Study counts for four-credit courses. Their format is arranged between the faculty and the student, and can incorporate memos, assignments, and participation in the [Urban Inequalities](#) Workshop or [Precarity Lab](#).

Students may take up to two Directed Studies to count for their course credit, and if they wish to take a third Directed Study, they may do so with permission from their advisor.

Credits for being a Teaching Fellow are not included here.

Students should also explore widely the offerings in other departments and in Consortium schools. Links to information on registering for the Consortium are [here](#).

*\*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.*

## **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. The student should present the material in a way that demonstrates 1) facility with the social theories out of which questions in these subfields have emerged; 2) knowledge of the relevant research literature in the field; and 3) 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.

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. Students

should consult their advisor and members of the Qualifying Committee to ascertain what sequence of the Qualifying Requirements 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. 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 student will receive two questions at the beginning of a three-day period and they 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 for one time only 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. 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 the 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.

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 at least 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. The paper can be co-authored, including with a faculty member but the student should be the lead author on it.

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.

### **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 Qualifying Requirement 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.

## C. 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 a departmental faculty member who will serve as First Reader (primary dissertation advisor). The student and the advisor should work together to select two other members of the faculty to read and approve the prospectus and serve as second and third readers for the dissertation. 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.

### *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 for 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, and can be searched [here](#).

### *Institutional Review Board*

If a student's dissertation research entails the study of human research subjects, the student's research design must obtain approval 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 three primary Readers. 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**:

1. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher.
2. Have no more than 2 failing grades (lower than B- or an incomplete grade older than 12 months).
3. Adhere to the 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.

Students should take 3-4 courses a semester depending on other commitments such as TF roles with the aim of completing all coursework by the end of the third year. The course load in a given semester can include the 2-credit SO 951 Professionalization Workshop. The decision of how to spread courses over the semesters should be made in consultation with their advisors.

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 (a)

By End of Third Year: Completion of all course requirements, Qualifying Requirements, Oral Examination, Dissertation Prospectus and its Oral Defense (b)

By End of Seventh Year: Completion of dissertation and dissertation 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;
- (b) Students should complete the other Qualifying Requirement in the fall of their third year and complete their dissertation prospectus over the winter and summer semesters of their third year.

### ***Annual Review***

The Graduate Program Committee reviews students' progress annually each spring. Students who do not complete the requirements for the doctorate within this timetable will be put on

probation by the Graduate Program Committee. The student's qualifying paper committees will also periodically evaluate the student's progress on writing and exams and will communicate concerns (if any) to the student and the graduate program committee. Students must make satisfactory progress on qualifying exams to proceed in the program. The student's qualifying paper committee also stipulates a firm timeline for completion of remaining requirements. Failure to complete those requirements within the recommended timeline merits grounds for withdrawal 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.

### **Additional Resources**

About the GRS five year fellowship package, the GRS Teaching Fellowship, and the GRS Research Fellowships: this [document](#) is complete with FAQs.