

Department of Sociology Graduate Program Handbook

Welcome

UNLV Sociology faculty and students combine innovative research with teaching and community service to address questions of social change, diversity, social justice, and sustainability in urban environments. UNLV Sociology enjoys an international research reputation in interpretive sociology, gender/sexuality, environment and urban sociology. Our award-winning research and teaching and our emphasis on public sociology and civic engagement provide students with skills necessary for personal intellectual growth, active citizenship, and professional success.

"UNLV has achieved the rare feat of combining research into local issues - gambling, the environment, and tourism to mention just three areas - with the development of theory in the grand pragmatic tradition of John Dewey."

Dr. Michael Burawoy, President, International Sociological Association 2010-2014; Past President, American Sociological Association, 2006

Las Vegas is a barometer of contemporary urban, regional, and global trends. UNLV sociologists analyze the dynamics of 21st century urban communities and the social forces that both integrate and fragment them. Specifically, our research investigates topics ranging from individual and group experiences within urban communities, community adaptation to change, and urban problems as diverse as poverty, health disparities, aging, workforce experiences, urban politics, gambling and addictions, family dynamics, sex industry and sex trafficking, crime and deviance, environmental degradation, and urban sustainability. Our teaching draws directly from our research to nurture critical intellectual thinking and rigorous methodological training. We also sustain a vibrant, inclusive, and collegial atmosphere focused on discovery and learning.

Our Ph.D. students receive extensive training in both classical and cutting edge theory and methods in order to pursue interesting and important research topics in creative and innovative ways. Faculty members engage in active mentoring of Ph.D. students by providing intensive research and teaching opportunities. Our award-winning research and teaching, as well as our emphasis on public sociology and civic engagement, provide students with skills necessary for personal intellectual growth, active citizenship, and professional success.

UNLV's Department of Sociology is energetic, exciting, and growing. There are few better places than Las Vegas and UNLV's Department of Sociology to study a wide array of contemporary sociological questions. We invite you to become a part of our sociological experience.

Department Mission Statement

Sociology provides scholars with the intellectual tools to analyze social phenomena, uncover injustices, and unfetter the social awareness of its practitioners and the larger public. In order to provide valid and reliable explanations, sociologists study social life theoretically and empirically, both quantitatively and qualitatively. From the ecological to the psychological, no aspect of social life is trivial or unimportant to the sociologist who seeks to understand and improve our social worlds.

We work to enhance academic excellence through our commitment to a program that integrates quality teaching with original research. The Sociology Department seeks to strengthen its academic reputation locally, nationally and internationally and grow selectively by attracting superior students and faculty to its undergraduate and graduate programs. The Sociology Department is committed to a philosophy of education that promotes understanding and appreciation of multiculturalism and diversity in teaching, research, and community service and that champions equality and free expression. The department communicates and collaborates effectively with the university as well as with Las Vegas, Southern Nevada, and the Intermountain West Region.

Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide program specific information that is not found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Students are responsible for understanding and following the policies and procedures delineated in this document and the UNLV Graduate Catalog, as well as the NSHE Code, UNLV Bylaws, and the UNLV Student Conduct Code. Questions about policies should be directed to the Graduate College: valarie.burke@unlv.edu or GradAssociateDean@unlv.edu.

Department Graduate Faculty

A current listing of the graduate faculty can be found in the UNLV Graduate Catalog. Faculty must hold either associate or full graduate faculty status to be involved in graduate education at UNLV. For up to date information regarding graduate faculty status in the Sociology Department, visit the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#).

Program Information

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology (Ph.D.)

- Post- Bachelor's Track
- Post- Master's Track

[Sociology Department website](#)

Department Chair

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Program Requirements

Program requirements regarding [admission](#), [coursework](#) and [culminating experience](#) are found in the Graduate Catalog.

Advisory Committee Guidelines

The student's Advisory Committee is responsible for guiding students through the graduate program, assisting the student with her/his professional paper, thesis, or dissertation, and administering comprehensive exams, and oral defenses. All departmental members of the committee should have expertise in the student's research area. The Advisory Committee consists of at least four graduate faculty members: three from the student's department and one professor who has appropriate graduate faculty status from another department to serve as the Graduate College representative. Further information regarding advisory committee members can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

At the time of admission into the graduate program the Graduate Coordinator will serve as a student's informal advisor. During the first year, students should choose a Faculty Advisor from the Sociology Department's Graduate Faculty. The Faculty Advisor assists students in shaping their intellectual project and course of study. In consultation with the Faculty Advisor, students then select two additional departmental members and one outside committee member to constitute the Advisory Committee. Students may use the [Graduate Faculty status web page](#) to find an outside committee member. These members should have expertise in the student's research area.

By the end of the second semester of enrollment, students should submit an *Appointment of Advisory Committee* form and a *Master/ Doctoral Proposed Degree Program* form to the Department of Sociology and the Graduate College. These forms can be found in the Graduate Rebel Gateway and additional information is displayed on the [Grad College website](#).

The Graduate College must approve all advisory committee members listed on the *Appointment of Advisory Committee* form, before students proceed to work with their Advisory Committee, take comprehensive exams, defend a prospectus, or otherwise participate in any milestone event.

If a student needs to change his/her advisory committee after submission of the initial *Appointment of Advisory Committee* form, they may do so with the *Change in Advisory Committee* form via Grad Rebel Gateway. Students have a right to change their committees as they see fit, however all ethical and professional rules and guidelines governing research data, creative activities, funded projects, must be considered and followed. Also, please note that when a student requests a change of advisory committee immediately after a failed exam or defense, and prior to retaking of said exam or defense, the department and/or Dean may not allow the committee change until the current milestone exam or defense is completed.

The Department of Sociology requires all students to provide a copy of the above-mentioned forms to the main office and recommends that students also keep a copy for their own file.

Graduate Classes Sequence

Regardless of chosen track (listed above); all graduate students must enroll in the required core courses in the following sequence:

Year I – Fall

1. SOC 701 Logic of Social Inquiry (3 credits)
2. SOC 702 Quantitative Methods (3 credits)
3. SOC 707 Proseminar I

Year 1 - Spring

1. SOC 705 Qualitative Methods (3 credits)
2. SOC 723 Classical Sociological Theory (3 credits)

Year II – Fall

1. SOC 724 - Contemporary Sociological Theory (3 credits)
2. SOC 704 Advanced Analytical Techniques (4 credits)

Course Substitution

Graduate work from other regionally accredited institutions with a grade of A- or higher (3.50, A=4.00) may be substituted for required courses in the Sociology PhD degree program subject to departmental and Graduate Dean approval. The Graduate Committee will hear substitution requests on a case by case basis. Guidelines for approving these substitutions include, but are not limited to:

- A- or higher (3.50, A=4.00)
- Courses must have been taken no more than 3 years prior to the request
- No more than two courses can be substituted
- Approval of course instructor(s)

To submit an approval request, please send a copy of the course syllabi (for the year in which they were taken) and a copy of your transcripts containing the course(s) to elizabeth.lawrence@unlv.edu no later than the first year you are in the program.

Degree Program Benchmarks

Thesis/Pro-Paper Defense

BA-PhD students must author and defend an original piece of research or theory that is then approved by committee members and submitted for peer-review to a reputable sociology journal. The paper need not be accepted for publication for the student to continue matriculating in the program, but the manuscript must make a significant scholarly contribution and be of a high enough quality to merit peer review.

- Students must first hold a professional paper/thesis prospectus committee meeting and successfully defend their prospectus. This meeting should only take place after the student has submitted the prospectus to his/her committee. Students should submit the prospectus at least two working weeks before scheduling the prospectus defense. Students are only permitted to enroll in thesis/professional paper courses after they have successfully defended their prospectus and approved to do so.
- After the meeting, and with committee members' approval, students then develop their professional paper/thesis. They must submit a complete and final draft to their committee, which will have two working weeks to decide whether the professional paper/thesis is ready to be formally defended.
 - If the committee agrees that the paper is ready, a defense date will be scheduled.
 - If the committee decides that the paper is not ready to be defended, a meeting will be scheduled with the student. The purpose of this meeting is to indicate to the student what s/he needs to accomplish in order to formally defend the paper. Students must then submit a complete and final draft to their committee, which will have two working weeks to decide whether the professional paper/thesis is ready to be formally defended.
- The committee will hold a meeting at which students will defend their professional paper/thesis. Students must receive majority approval. There are five possible outcomes for the defense: Pass with Distinction; Pass; Conditional Pass with Rewrites (to be completed within two weeks of notification); Terminal Pass (pass but separated from program after graduation); or Fail.
- After a successful defense of the professional paper/thesis, students must receive signatures of support from their Committee Chair and a majority of other Committee members prior to submitting their manuscript to an approved peer-review sociology journal.
- Committee chairs or students should submit the pro paper to iThenticate and generate a similarity report that will be taken into account when determining the outcome of the defense (or revisions). Committees will interpret the results assuming good faith efforts on the part of students.
- Students may complete this stage of the program only after successfully completing all 20 required core course credits, as well as a minimum of six credits of 700-level Sociology classes. Students must complete this before completing 40 credits.

Comprehensive Exam Guidelines

The Department of Sociology has ten distinct Areas of Specialization (AOS) for research and teaching. These areas are: (1) Family, Aging, & the Life Course; (2) Culture; (3) Deviance & Criminology; (4) Environment & Health; (5) Race & Ethnic Studies; (6) Gender & Sexuality; (7) Politics & Social Movements; (8) Social Psychology & Theory; (9) Urban & Community Studies; and (10) Demography & Population Studies. The department regularly offers designated courses, directed studies, and special topics courses in each of these areas.

Doctoral students must declare two areas of specialization and complete at least two three-credit 600 or 700-level courses taught by a graduate faculty member in each area. Three out of the six credits can be taken as a Directed Reading or Independent Study if no AOS-relevant course has been offered within the past two semesters. Students should consult the three-year seminar calendar for courses

and the areas of specialization that these satisfy.

Students are only eligible to take their first AOS exam after they have successfully completed all of their required coursework (except SOC 708) and two courses in the area of specialization in which they want to take the comprehensive exam. Students may enroll in the second course in the area of specialization during the same semester in which they will take the exam.

Students generally complete both AOS exams during the third year of graduate study. Students who do not complete both comprehensive exams by the end of their fourth year of study may be placed on probation. Students can take only one comprehensive exam per semester.

Students who fail an AOS comprehensive exam on their first attempt will be placed on probation via the Graduate College process and must retake the exam the following semester. Students failing an AOS comprehensive exam on the second attempt will be separated from the PhD program.

Students receiving funding from the Sociology Department who fail a comprehensive exam, or who are placed on probation, may lose funding. The Graduate Studies Committee use performance on comprehensive exams as *one* criterion when making funding decisions.

Probation

If a student fails to successfully progress in their degree program, their department/school will recommend that the student be placed on probation by the Graduate College. Students on probation may be dismissed/separated from their program for failing to successfully meet the conditions of their probation by the deadline provided. Please see the **Probation and Separation** section of the Graduate Catalog for more information.

Process for Declaring Areas of Specialization, Preparing for, and Completing Exams

Students are expected to prepare for AOS exams by enrolling in and passing two courses or directed studies with faculty members who have expertise in the area of specialization. AOS exams are designed, administered, and evaluated by students' Advisory Committees, with at least one committee member, though preferably more, listed as an expert in the AOS.

In order to declare an AOS and set up an AOS comprehensive examination, students must complete the following sequence for EACH of their areas of specialization:

1. The students' Advisory Committee (see above for committee guidelines) functions as the evaluating body of for each AOS. Students should select appropriate faculty members who are experts in one or both of their Areas of Specialization to be on the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee must remain intact throughout the exam process. That is, students who fail an exam cannot switch the members of their committee for their second attempt at that exam, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances (i.e. serious injury, illness, or other such incapacitation of a faculty member presently serving on the Advisory Committee). In such cases, students must submit a petition to change committee members to the Graduate Studies Committee. Students who fail their AOS exam on the first attempt are permitted to change Advisory committee members after they successfully pass the AOS exam on the second attempt. This policy applies to the exam process for both Areas of Specialization.

While students cannot declare an AOS until after they have completed all required coursework, they should start thinking about the AOS and the composition of their committee during their first and second years of study.

2. Obtain approval for the AOS by completing the *Area of Specialization Exam* form at least 30 days prior to the comprehensive exam date. Students must also obtain approval from the chairperson of their Advisory Committee and the Graduate Program Coordinator.
3. Prepare a plan of study that includes coursework and independent study in the AOS. With the help of the approved Advisory Committee, students must develop an extended reading list in the AOS. Each AOS will have a master list of core readings created by the faculty area

specialists (~50 readings). AOS reading lists consist of articles, book chapters, books, and other media. All lists will be organized into categories denoting required core texts and more specialized topics. Students are expected to add about 50 readings of special interest to them that will assist them in preparing their dissertation. The student's Advisory Committee Chair must approve added readings. As a guideline, well-developed reading lists generally include about 100 items. Students should begin working on and through their AOS reading list well before the semester in which they plan to take the AOS comp exam. Students must have their final reading list approved by their Advisory committee at least 30 days prior to the comprehensive exam date.

Complete the AOS Exam as described below:

(1) Written Examination.

Using only their reading list and previously prepared notes, students will complete an eight-hour in-class Written Exam (prepared by their Advisory Committee and Graduate College representative). Exams will be administered in a designated computer lab. Students may bring a binder of prepared notes and any necessary personal items. Students may NOT bring portable storage devices, books, or articles into the examination room. Students may not access their email while in the examination room. Students requiring accommodations should go through the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students should start this process as early as possible.

There will be four total questions; two in theory and two in methods. Students will choose one theory and one methods question to answer. Exams will be administered once or twice per semester as designated by the Graduate Studies Committee. Exams are scheduled on a Friday around the 9th week of the Fall semester, and the 3rd and 11th weeks of the Spring semester (depending on holidays, events, or other scheduling considerations). Exams will begin at 8:00 am and end at 5:00 pm with a mandatory one hour break from 12:00 pm -1:00 pm. Students will submit their exam (in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format) to a designated Department official on a flash drive provided by the department.

The exam is designed to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of key issues and debates as well as the broad, conceptual history of the AOS. Students are expected to know the central arguments of the articles and books included on the core AOS reading list and their supplemental sections. The answer to each question on the exam should be about 10-15 typed pages, for a total of about 20-30 typed pages.

Committee chairs or students should submit comprehensive exams (including revisions) to iThenticate and generate a similarity report that will be taken into account when determining the outcome of the defense (or revisions). Committees will interpret the results with consideration to any time constraints and assuming good faith efforts on the part of students.

(2) Oral Defense.

The Advisory Committee will conduct an Oral Defense within approximately two weeks after the student has taken the Written Exam. The student's Graduate College representative should attend the Oral Defense. The Oral Defense affords students an opportunity to clarify specific questions the committee has about the Written Exam. While it will also involve questions about expanded and peripheral ideas, its main goal is to ensure that students can adequately address the committee's questions and concerns about the exam.

Prior to the Oral Defense, students should review their exam to identify areas for additional clarification and to anticipate questions the committee may ask during the Oral Defense. Students should prepare comments on their Written Exam to provide at the Oral Defense. Students' performance in the Oral Defense will be used as one of the criteria in determining the overall grade on the Comprehensive Exam. The Advisory Committee will not give students any comments about the Written Exam prior to the Oral Defense.

Evaluation

After students have completed the Oral Defense, the student's Advisory committee will recommend a grade. This grade will be one of the following: Pass with distinction, pass, conditional pass, major revision, and fail.

Pass with Distinction: The student has answered both questions and performed an Oral Defense in a manner that significantly exceeds the committee's expectations.

Pass: The student has answered both questions and performed an Oral Defense in a manner that satisfies the committee's expectations.

Conditional Pass with Rewrites: The committee has identified omissions, errors, or inconsistencies with at least one of the answers on the exam that the student is unable to clear up during the Oral Defense. The student must correct those flaws and resubmit the answer for reevaluation. All revisions must be completed within two weeks of the Oral Defense. A second Oral Defense will not be conducted. Students who are unable to adequately correct the flaws in the revision will fail the comprehensive exam and be required to retake the exam the following semester.

Fail: The committee has identified significant omissions, errors, or inconsistencies with both answers on the exam that the student has been unable to adequately address during the Oral Defense. The committee also deems these flaws egregious enough that the student could not possibly correct them in a revision. Students receiving a grade of Fail will be required to retake the exam no later than the following semester. Students who fail the exam cannot switch the members of the Advisory Committee for their second attempt, except in the case of unforeseen circumstances (i.e. serious injury, illness, or other such incapacitation of the faculty member presently serving on the Advisory Committee). Students who fail their AOS exam on the first attempt are permitted to change Advisory Committee members after they successfully pass the AOS exam on the second attempt. Students failing the same AOS exam twice will be separated from the program.

Enrolling in dissertation credits

Doctoral students may enroll in dissertation credits, SOC 799, only after they have advanced to candidacy. In some cases, a student's advisory committee chair may petition the graduate committee to transfer an Independent Study/Directed Readings class into dissertation credits if the student has successfully advanced to candidacy.

To adhere to Department and Graduate College enrollment guidelines, students must be registered for a minimum of six semester hours of graduate credit each calendar year (three rolling semesters including summer). The expectation of the Department is that the full time graduate student will be able to complete the PhD program in three to four years. The Graduate College has a six-year and eight-year policy which can be found in the Graduate Catalog.

It is a student's responsibility to maintain continuous enrollment and meet program benchmarks as described in the previous sections. If a student has exceeded the time lines limits as described by the Graduate College, the student may request an additional year by submitting a *One Year Extension Request* Form (this form can be obtained from the main office or the Graduate Coordinator). The Graduate Studies Committee in consultation with a student's Advisory Committee will make a decision on the request.

Sample Program Timeline Continuous Enrollment and Time Limits

| Coursework | BA to PhD goals | MA to PhD goals |
|--|--|---|
| Year 1 Fall | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOC 701 Logic of Social inquiry, • SOC 702 Quantitative Methods • SOC 707 Proseminar I • Elective (AOS 1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ideas for pro paper in consultation with various faculty members • Identify faculty advisor • Investigated any desired graduate certificate programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ideas for dissertation in consultation with various faculty members • Identify faculty advisor • Investigated any desired graduate certificate programs |
| Year 1 Spring | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOC 705 Qualitative Research Methods • SOC 723 Classical Theory • Elective (AOS 1) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select faculty advisor and advisory committee • Submit the <i>Appointment of advisory committee</i> form • Begin pro paper prospectus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select faculty advisor and advisory committee • Submit the <i>Appointment of advisory committee</i> form • Submit presentations and begin publications from MA thesis |
| Year 2 Fall | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOC 704 Analytical Techniques • SOC 724 Contemporary Theory • SOC 709 Teaching Sociology • Electives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend pro paper prospectus • Submit <i>Prospectus Approval Form</i> and <i>Proposed Degree Form parts I & II</i> • Select areas of specialization with advisory committee • Prepare reading list for AOS1 Comprehensive Exam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select areas of specialization with advisory committee • Prepare reading list for AOS1 Comprehensive Exam • Submit publication from thesis. |
| Year 2 Spring | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electives (AOS1 / AOS2) • Advanced theory or methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and defend pro paper • Submit <i>Culminating Experience Result</i> form • Submit <i>Doctoral Advisory Committee</i> form • Prepare for/take AOS1 comp exam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take AOS1 Comp exam • Prepare for AOS2 Comp exam |
| Year 3 Fall | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electives (AOS1 / AOS2) • Advanced theory or methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take AOS1 Comp exam • Prepare for AOS2 Comp exam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take AOS2 Comp exam • Prepare dissertation prospectus • Submit <i>Proposed Degree Form I & II</i> |
| Year 3 Spring | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electives (AOS1 / AOS2) • Advanced theory or methods • SOC 708 Proseminar II | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take AOS2 Comp exam • Prepare dissertation prospectus • Submit <i>Proposed Degree Form I & II</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend dissertation prospectus • Submit <i>Prospectus Approval form</i> • Submit Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy form |
| Year 4 Fall and Spring | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissertation hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defend dissertation prospectus • Submit <i>Prospectus Approval form</i> • Submit <i>Advancement to Doctoral Candidacy</i> form • Work on publications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit job applications • Submit publications • Complete and defend dissertation |
| Year 5 Fall and Spring | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissertation hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit job applications • Submit publications • Complete and defend dissertation | |

Professional Code of Ethics/Discipline Guidelines

UNLV Graduate College policy regarding academic integrity can be found in the Graduate Catalog. The American Sociological Association Code of Ethics (<http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>) outlines the principles and ethical standards that underlie the sociologist's professional responsibilities and conduct.

All graduate students are encouraged to be active participants in the University and Department culture.

For conflicts, problems, or concerns about any matter related to the graduate program or the Sociology Department, please contact the Graduate Coordinator immediately.

Annual Review Procedures

Each spring term, graduate students are **required** to complete the Graduate Student Individual Development Plan form. This online form will be sent by the Graduate College to the student's Rebelmail account. The mandatory review covers the prior calendar year and assesses student progress while setting goals for the year ahead.

Students will meet with their Faculty Advisor to review the information, discuss progress, make comments, and the signed form will be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator and placed in the students file.

Students who have not made satisfactory progress during the academic year will be placed on academic probation. Failure to meet the terms of probation will result in separation from the Graduate College.

Professional Development

Taking advantage of professional development opportunities outside of regular coursework is a critical component of graduate education. Students should participate in as many sociological activities as possible to improve their knowledge and expand their network of friends and acquaintances within the profession. Professional development opportunities may include:

- **Attending Sociology Department and University events.** These include retreats, trainings, brown bag lunches, special seminars, special presentations by visiting scholars and job candidates, graduate student conferences and practice paper presentations.
- **Joining regional and national sociological or specialty associations.** These give access to many professional activities and help the development of a professional library because subscriptions to professional journals are included in many memberships as part of the dues.
- **Conference attendance and presentations.** Graduate students should attend and present papers at as many conferences as possible, both regional (for example, the Pacific Sociological Association, the Southwest Social Science Association) and national conferences (for example, the American Sociological Association, the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, the Society for the Study of Social Problem). Conferences expose students to ideas that may not yet have appeared in print and allow students to interact with professionals with shared interests. These help improve research as well as increase job opportunities. Collaborating with faculty is another good way to get experience.
- **Grants and Awards.** More and more jobs require grant-writing experience. There are plenty of opportunities to fund graduate student research. Common sources of funding are internal (UNLV) and external (National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, the Social Science Research Council; regional and national organizations). Students should start applying for those early, and consider that no award is too small, and that even small grants are gateways to larger opportunities. Students should speak with Faculty Advisors and check UNLV, graduate college, and professional organization websites for opportunities. The PIVOT grant database, to which UNLV subscribes, may be particularly useful.
- **Publishing.** Publishing is critical for graduate students. Ways to increase opportunities to publish include: collaborating with Faculty Advisors, graduate student colleagues and colleagues in other universities, developing their course papers, sharing drafts with other students,

colleagues and faculty. Students can also take advantage of less formal writing to develop ideas, such as writing for blogs and op eds.

- **Professional and community service.** Sharing research and academic skills is critical to the profession, and our department values public sociology. Students should become active in departmental, university and professional organizations and committees, and find ways to share research with public audiences that are most important to the student's interests.

Graduate Assistantship Program

Students must apply for the Graduate Assistantship Program through the Graduate College Grad Rebel Gateway system.

Graduate Assistantship students are selected and assigned by the Graduate Studies. **Students must re-apply for a Graduate Assistantship every Fall semester through the Grad Rebel Gateway system.**

Graduate Assistants who are on the BA-PHD track generally assist faculty members in their teaching duties for up to 20 hours per week, and may be eligible for up to five years, contingent upon satisfactory execution of all duties and responsibilities, as well as timely progress toward degree completion.

Graduate assistants who are on the MA-PHD and who have met the conditions specified below may be required to teach a maximum of two autonomous courses per semester and may be eligible for up to four years, contingent upon satisfactory execution of all duties and responsibilities, as well as timely progress toward degree completion.

Graduate Assistant Instructor Teaching Requirements

Students who teach courses in the Department must hold a Master's degree or equivalent, enroll in and pass a three-credit teaching seminar (SOC 709 Teaching Sociology), and successfully complete a comprehensive exam in the area they want to teach. Students who teach autonomous classes are required to take the teaching practicum (SOC 710) when offered.

As a general rule, graduate students with earned Masters degrees teach only 300 level or lower undergraduate courses as the instructor of record and these are usually capped at a maximum of 75 students. The Graduate Coordinator, in conjunction with the Department Chair, will review graduate assistantship requests for teaching each semester. All decisions are based on Department needs, promise of or evidence of quality teaching, and the Department's desire to give Ph.D. students the opportunity to gain teaching experience.

The Graduate College also offers a Graduate College Teaching Certificate Program. This program offers important information on teaching strategies, using technology and creating teaching portfolios. While the Department strongly encourages graduate students to participate in this program, this participation should not interfere with progress in the PhD program and is not a substitute for any of the PhD requirements. Please see the [UNLV Graduate College Teaching Certificate Program](#).

Graduate Instructors

Graduate Instructors are responsible for autonomously teaching up to two courses (six credits) as assigned by the Department of Sociology. Graduate Instructors must communicate any scheduling conflicts to the Graduate Coordinator within one week of receiving their assignments. Additional instructional responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Attending all assigned class meetings consistent with the course schedule.
- Informing students and the Department Chair of any unavoidable class absences due to professional activities, illness, or other extenuating circumstances.
- Detailing in the syllabus any planned absences for known professional activities. Planned absences should not exceed more than two class periods.

- Being punctual to all class meetings and other meetings with students.
- Attending all mandatory trainings and meetings required by the Department, College, and University.
- Completing and submitting syllabi to the Sociology Department office during first week of semester.
- Scheduling and attending regular office hours.
- Professionally communicating with students on course matters in a timely manner.
- Exhibiting professionalism in all interactions with students.
- Returning graded assignments in a timely manner.
- Demonstrating an overall professional, respectful, and positive demeanor as a representative of UNLV Sociology.

Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistants are responsible for assisting the primary course instructor.

Teaching Assistants must communicate any scheduling conflicts to the Graduate Coordinator within one week of receiving their assignments. Related responsibilities may include, but are not limited to:

- Performing tasks assigned by primary class instructor with skill and precision.
- Exhibiting professionalism and respect when working with the primary class instructor.
- Completing assigned tasks in a timely fashion.
- Attending all assigned classes and scheduled meetings.
- Attending to appropriate duties as defined by the primary class instructor.
- Holding regular office hours.
- Exhibiting professionalism and respect when working with undergraduate students.
- Demonstrating initiative, which may include suggesting ideas for class projects, lectures, and/or research projects and requesting additional work when assigned tasks are completed, etc.
- Demonstrating an overall professional, respectful, and positive demeanor as a representative of UNLV Sociology.

Offices, Keys and Department Resources (specific to GA/TA Students)

Office Space

Graduate Assistants may be assigned a shared office space; a typical office has three occupants. Room assignments are determined by the Department and are subject to change depending on University space needs. Office assignments are final unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the Department. It is the students' responsibility to keep these areas clean and free of safety hazards.

Keys

Graduate Assistants will be given keys to their assigned office space, a work room, and a break room; it is the students' responsibility to ensure that keys are used only by the graduate student. Graduate Assistants will also be given access to the building after hours, to classrooms, and the computer lab located in CBC B-220. If any key is lost or stolen report this to the Department administrative assistant immediately so a new card/key can be ordered. If a student habitually misplaces or loses keys/cards the Department may charge a fee for replacements.

Work Room

Copying and printing activities done in the workroom or with Department resources are reserved for work directly related to GA/TA assignments or for projects for which the graduate assistant has received approval for copying. No other personal or professional copying/printing is allowed using Department resources. All Graduate Assistants will be assigned a mailbox; it is the student's responsibility to check these boxes on a regular basis.

Graduate Assistant Participation Requirements

Graduate Assistants are strongly encouraged to participate in Sociology Department activities including Department retreats/trainings, brown bag lunches, special seminars, Department committees, special presentations by visiting scholars and job candidates, graduate student conferences and practice paper presentations.

Department Conference Travel Policy

Graduate Students who are presenting a paper at a professional conference and are listed in the conference program may apply for Department travel support, when funds are available. A *Department Travel Request* form must be completed and returned to the Sociology Department administrative assistant a minimum of two weeks prior to the conference date. The student will be reimbursed according to the UNLV travel policies and reimbursement guidelines.

Additional travel funds are available from the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA). Students are encouraged to apply for these funds.

University Resources

[The Graduate Academy: Innovative Leadership, Professional, and Career Development](#)

The goal of the Graduate Academy is to serve as a virtual resource providing support and many professional opportunities to UNLV graduate students. The Academy offers information about events and services such as graduate certificate programs, workshops, training sessions and career services. You can follow Academy activities via social media or look for regular updates on the website.

Academic Success Center

The goal of the [Academic Success Center](#) is to help students do well academically and complete their studies on time. They offer or will refer you to such programs and resources as tutoring, advising, skills testing, career exploration and more. They guide students every step of the way to the many established resources created to ensure they complete their educational goals. Learn more about the programs and services the center currently offers.

Alumni Association

With an alumni base 140,000+ strong, the [UNLV Alumni Association](#) offers a variety of services and opportunities in support of alumni and their families. UNLV alumni are encouraged to support the values of higher learning through advocacy, involvement, and giving.

Commencement Office

Located in the UNLV Office of the Registrar, the [commencement office](#) is the last step in the graduation process. Please check with the commencement office for information on the commencement ceremony and your diploma; for all other information about graduate student degree completion and graduation, including thesis/dissertation requirements and doctoral hooding, please contact the Graduate College. It is the students' responsibility to ensure they apply for [graduation on time](#) and submit all required forms to the Graduate College. Questions regarding thesis/dissertation should be directed to the Graduate College [Student Services Team](#) and questions regarding required forms should be directed to the Graduate College [RPC Team](#).

Office of Diversity Initiatives

The vision of the [Office of Diversity Initiatives](#) is to advocate, promote, and support the advancement of equity, inclusiveness, and empowerment of a continuously changing collegiate and global community. The mission of the Office of Diversity Initiatives is to provide leadership and support for UNLV's diversity mission: *to nurture equity, diversity, and inclusiveness that promotes respect, support, and empowerment*. This Office also handles UNLV Title IX questions, inquiries, and reporting.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

The [DRC](#) is committed to supporting students with disabilities at UNLV through the appropriate use of advocacy, accommodations, and supportive services to ensure access to campus courses, services, and activities. The DRC is the university-designated office that determines and facilitates reasonable accommodations in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Graduate students with disabilities must disclose to the DRC in order to receive appropriate accommodations.

Office of International Student and Scholars Services

[International Students and Scholars \(ISSS\)](#) ensures compliance with both SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) and federal law, so that the university can continue to be authorized by the U.S. federal government to enroll international students; host and hire international scholars; assist and advise employment eligibility and authorization relating to international students and scholars, and visa, travel, and immigration issues; provide critical and specialized services to the international students and scholars of the UNLV community; and facilitate their transition to the campus and the U.S.

Jean Nidetch Women's Center

The [Jean Nidetch Women's Center](#) is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive environment for all genders

through programming, services, and advocacy for the UNLV community. The Women's Center has informational resources, brochures, and flyers for a variety of on and off campus organizations to help empower and protect yourself, and learn about your options. They also provide free tampons, pads, and condoms.

The Intersection

[The Intersection](#) is a one-stop resource for UNLV's highly diverse student body — a comprehensive multicultural center grounded in the academic life of our students. As an intersecting campus resource, the Intersection helps ensure students, particularly first-generation and students of color, successfully navigate their academic careers. Here, all members of campus can discuss their differences, discover their similarities, and build a shared sense of belonging.

UNLV Libraries

[UNLV Libraries](#) has always been more than books; they are about encouraging students and creating quality programs that elevate growth and learning. Please visit their website for important information about the services they offer to graduate students.

Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA)

The [Graduate & Professional Student Association](#) serves all currently enrolled University of Nevada, Las Vegas graduate and professional students. The GPSA maintains the Graduate Student Commons located in the Lied Library room 2141 and Gateway Building PDAC Room. The facility a working office equipped with a copier, fax, flatbed scanners, color laser printer, office supplies, and computers with printers and a small kitchen area. The GPSA is the graduate student governance body at UNLV; the GPSA Council consists of one graduate student representative from each graduate department, and they meet monthly. The GPSA also provides volunteer opportunities, sponsors social events, and supports graduate student research through the graduate research and travel grants program.

Office of Student Conduct

The [Office of Student Conduct](#) is a student-centered, service-oriented office located within the Division of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Conduct collaborates with the UNLV community to provide an inclusive system through enforcement of the *UNLV Student Code of Conduct* by:

- Promoting awareness of student rights and responsibilities;
- Establishing accountability for student choices;
- Creating opportunities for involvement in the process; and
- Striving to uphold the values and ethics that advance the common good.

Military and Veteran Services Center

The [Military and Veteran Service Center](#) is staffed with veterans and veteran education benefits-experienced staff to assist more than 1,800 veterans, dependents, active duty service members, National Guard members, and reservists attending UNLV. Their mission is to develop a welcoming, veteran-friendly campus environment that fosters academic and personal success.

The Financial Aid & Scholarships Office

The [Financial Aid & Scholarships Office](#) supports higher-education access and persistence by providing financial aid to eligible students. The office partners with student organizations, the UNLV Foundation, the Graduate College, and other external constituents to provide financial aid learning opportunities and scholarship support for graduate students.

Writing Center

This is a free service to UNLV students to help you with any writing project, from papers to creative writing, to resumes, and we can work with you at any stage of the writing process. The center can help you brainstorm, make an outline, work on your drafts, or just be a soundboard for your ideas. The center staff can assist you in person, or via the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) page.

University Policies and Procedures

Graduate students are responsible for knowing and acting in accordance with UNLV Policies and Procedures. To view the most commonly referenced campus policies and procedures, you can refer to the following websites:

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Activation for Military Service](#)
- [Change of Address](#)
- [FERPA/Privacy Rights](#)

- [Health Insurance - Mandatory](#)
- [Jean Clery Campus Safety and Security Report](#)
- [Proof of Immunization](#)
- [Policies and Procedures on the Protection of Research Subjects](#)
- [Rebelmail Policy](#)
- [Student Conduct Code](#)
- [Student Computer Use Policy](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNLV does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities, including admissions, on the basis of sex/gender pursuant to Title IX, or on the basis of any other legally protected category as is set forth in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 8, Section 13. Reports of discriminatory misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and/or concerns about noncompliance with Title IX or any other anti-discrimination laws or policies should be directed to UNLV's Title IX Coordinator Michelle Sposito.

The Title IX Coordinator can be reached through the [online reporting form](#), by email at titleixcoordinator@unlv.edu, by phone at (702) 895-4055, by mail at 4505 S. Maryland Parkway, Box 451062, Las Vegas, NV, 89154-1062, or in person at Frank and Estella Beam Hall (BEH), Room 555.

To ensure compliance with Graduate College policies and procedures, please review the relevant sections of the [Graduate Catalog](#):

- [Academic Calendar](#)
- [Academic Policies](#)
- [Admission and Registration Information](#)
- [Degree Progression Policies & Procedures](#)

In addition, the [Graduate College website](#) contains additional information regarding policies and procedures.

Nothing in this handbook supersedes any NSHE, UNLV, or Graduate College policy.

Handbook Information

| Last revised | Revised by | Changes summary |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| May 27, 2016 | Barb Brents | Dissertation credit policy, AOS courses, revised Program Timeline |
| March 30, 2017 | Barb Brents | Change in required course sequence |
| Jan 2020 | Simon Gottschalk | Typos, formatting, condensing, double-dipping classes that are relevant to AOS comp exams, Soc 708 requirement |
| September 2022 | Michael Borer | Accessibility formatting, dates |
| September 2023 | Elizabeth Lawrence | AOS course examples removed, DRC now mentioned, formatting, accessibility |
| February 2024 | Elizabeth Lawrence | Ithenticate procedures for comp exams and pro papers for all students moving forward; approved in faculty meeting February 2024 (vote:15-0) |