Doctoral Student Handbook

Social Psychology Program
Department of Psychology, University of Kansas

Fraser Hall, 1415 Jayhawk Blvd, Lawrence, KS 66045

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https://psychology.ku.edu/social

Program Overview

The Social Psychology Ph.D. Program at the University of Kansas is a research-intensive training program in which students develop skills in research methodology and statistics while gaining familiarity with major content areas in the field. Faculty have expertise in areas such as stereotyping, prejudice, intergroup relations, close relationships, prosocial behavior, motivation and emotions, self and identity, and cross-cultural perspectives on the self and others. Most students train toward academic careers, while others pursue careers in industries that value research skills. The program operates under an apprenticeship model in which approximately four students are accepted each year into the program, under the guidance of one of our faculty members as a mentor. Continuous involvement in research is expected, and students develop their own contracts outlining work toward obtaining a Ph.D.

Social psychology has a long and distinguished history at the University of Kansas. In 1946, Roger Barker (Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award from APA, 1964) became Chair. In that same year, Fritz Heider (founder of social cognition) joined the Department (Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award, 1965). Since then, Kansas has been a world leader in research and the preparation of graduate students to succeed in competitive job markets (KU social program is at the 92nd percentile of effective training programs in the USA for placing new faculty into Ph.D. training programs; Ferguson & Crandall, 2007).

Program Curriculum
We want our graduates to be creative, productive scientists, scholars, and teachers. This requires a strong background in psychology, a broad knowledge of social psychology, a detailed acquaintance with some special area in social psychology, skill in teaching, a sound understanding of methods of collecting and analyzing data (both field and laboratory methods), a concern for application of theory and methods to real social problems, and a continuing involvement in research and publication on important theoretical and practical matters.

We believe that if creative and competent scientists are to evolve, the specific form in which these very general requirements are fulfilled should be maximally responsive to the interests and talents of each student. We have therefore developed a highly individualized structure for the Ph.D. program in Social Psychology at the University of Kansas. Program-wide, the main requirements that have been retained are (1) continuous involvement in research, and (2) the University Graduate School requirements. All additional requirements are tailored to the goals and needs of the individual student. Each student works together with a three-member faculty committee to develop a plan of study (or "contract," see more below) for their years in the Social Psychology Program.

Program Structure
Advising and Mentorship
Students in our program usually apply to work in one laboratory, and the faculty in this laboratory is often their primary advisor. However, our program encourages students to collaborate jointly (with their main advisor) or separately with additional faculty researchers. Students can generate such collaboration by reaching out to faculty on their contract committee (a three-member faculty committee to develop an individualized plan of study--or "contract") or to professors who teach them various classes. To get students started, all first-year students during their first year are asked to meet

each social faculty member for a short discussion on research interests. In this way, students gain familiarity with a variety of topics, research strategies, and mentorship styles.

A second unique feature of our program is that graduate training is tailored to each student's interests and professional goals. Program-wide, the only formal requirements are (1) continuous involvement in research, and (2) the University Graduate School requirements. Beyond that, each student is encouraged to chart the course of their graduate career.

Program Faculty

Omri Gillath, Interim Social Program Director, Interim associate chair, and interim DGS, Professor (ogillath@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: Intro Social Psych, close relationships, human sexuality, motivation and emotion, social neuroscience, professional issues, experimental methods in social psychology.

Research interests: *Personality and social psychology, Close relationships, Attachment theory, Brain mechanisms and genetic polymorphisms, Attentional processes, Social networks, and AI.*

Glenn Adams, Professor (adamsg@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Cultural Psychology, Ecological Psychology, Social Psychology, Oppression and Liberation, African Studies, Global and International Studies*
Research interests: *Cultural Psychology, Historical Consciousness, Sociocultural Foundations of Mind, Sociocultural Foundations of Ignorance, Perception of Racism, Cultural-Psychological Foundations of Relationship, Truth and Reconciliation in African Settings*

Monica Biernat, University Distinguished Professor, Interim Chairperson (biernat@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Social psychology, Attitudes, Research methods, Social cognition*
Research interests: *Social judgment and judgment standards, Stereotyping, Prejudice, Discrimination*

Nyla Branscombe, University Distinguished Professor (nyla@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Social psychology, Intergroup relations, Prejudice, Discrimination, Gender, Ethnicity, Victimization, Group processes, Psychological well-being*
Research interests: How both observers and victims make sense of their past trauma; coping with discrimination; social inequality and social change

Chris Crandall, Professor (crandall@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Prejudice, Graduate Social, Group Dynamics, Research methods, Social Influence, Political Psychology, MetaTheoretical Issues in Psychology*
Research interests: *Prejudice, Social Influence, Political Psychology, Similarity and Friendship*

Mark Landau, Professor (mjlandau@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Intro Social Psychology, Grad-level Social Psychology, Research Methods, Existential motivation, Self and Identity*
Research interests: *Existential motivation (e.g., stemming from concerns about mortality, authenticity), Metaphorical cognition and its roles in attitudes and decision making, Conceptions of time and self-continuity.*

Ludwin Molina, Professor (ludwin@ku.edu)
Teaching interests: *Social Psychology, Psychology and Social Issues, Intergroup Relations, Political*

Psychology, Field and Survey Research Methods, Social Psychology and Film, Social Justice
Research interests: *Intergroup Relations, National Identity, Diversity, Immigration, Power, Group Hierarchy, Contact Conditions*

<u>Program Staff</u>
Katie Williams, Graduate Program Coordinator (kfwilliams@ku.edu)
Assists with enrollment requirements, graduate credit, GTA/GRA paperwork and benefits, petitions and policy exceptions, scheduling milestone exams, graduation requirements, connecting with campus and community resources.

Cindy Gilkey, Administrative Associate (cjsexton@ku.edu)
Elizabeth Florence, Communications Specialist (eflorence@ku.edu)
Matthew Scherdin, IT Support Technician (tsc_clas_sbs@ku.edu)

Training Contracts

<u>The Contract System</u>
Incoming Social Psychology graduate students develop a plan of study best suited to their long-term goals. The document describing this plan is called a contract, and the supervising committee of three faculty members is called a contract committee.

The contract states the general objectives of the student's graduate work, including the kind of career the student envisions and the types of training sought in order to be prepared to pursue that career. It also specifies the kinds of courses that will be taken (in related fields, as well as in psychology), the kinds of research experiences planned, the teaching assignments the student would prefer, and the sequence of benchmarks (examinations, publications, papers, courses designed and taught, etc.) by which the student, the committee, and the program faculty may evaluate the student's progress.

Contract Committee Members
During the fall semester, first-year students are expected to identify three faculty members they would prefer as members of their contract committee. The committee chair is typically a faculty member in the Social Psychology Program (the student's primary advisor), and one other member must also be a faculty member in the Social Psychology Program. The third faculty member must be in the Psychology Department but outside of the Social Program, and serves to represent the interests of the Department. (In some instances, the committee can be chaired by a psychology faculty member not in the Social Program, in which case the third member should be from the Social Program faculty.)

This information about the contract committee should be submitted to the Program Director no later than January 15 of the student's first year. If the student is unsure who might be an appropriate outside member of their contract committee, the student should consult with their advisor, the Program Director or with any other member of the Program faculty. The student must then develop a plan of study (contract) and have it approved by the committee by April 15 (of the first year in the program). Earlier preparation and approval of the initial contract is encouraged.

The contract is likely to be more specific for the immediate future than for the long run, and it is subject to revision and elaboration by the student and the committee.

Nature of the Contract
All contracts should explicitly discuss the following topic areas:

1. Professional goals: The student should describe professional goals in as much detail as possible, including areas of specialization, preferred or likely setting for work following completion of graduate training, and the nature of the professional activity in which the student intends to engage. Reference should be made to ways in which the proposed curriculum will provide the knowledge and skills required for the pursuit of these professional goals.

2. Completed coursework: A list of relevant courses already completed should be included. These courses should be categorized on the basis of the areas and activities described in the first section.

3. Projected coursework: A similar categorized list of all projected courses that will comprise the student's individualized curriculum should be included, and the relevance of these courses to professional goals should be made clear.

The areas of projected coursework should include the following: a) research skills, b) substantive content within social psychology, c) substantive content in other areas of psychology, d) substantive content in departments outside of psychology. Though students are not required to take course work in all these domains, the Program faculty recommends serious consideration of ways to develop both breadth and depth in psychology and related fields. To facilitate this consideration, an attachment to this document suggests possible cross-disciplinary "tracks" or "themes" of study (e.g., in sociology, anthropology, philosophy, business).

4. Planned research activity: The student is encouraged to describe the research activities they anticipate engaging in. If any activities are associated with deadlines (e.g., submitting posters to conferences), the student is encouraged to specify them.

5. Other professional development: The student should indicate other plans for development as a professional. These plans might include attendance at professional conferences, presentation of posters or papers at these conferences, and involvement in additional training options (e.g., the Summer Institute in Social Psychology, the ISR/ICPSR summer training at the University of Michigan). As much as possible, specific plans should be outlined in the contract.

6. Plan for evaluation of progress: The student should detail the standards by which their progress will be evaluated. Grades in courses are not sufficient for this purpose. Useful evaluation standards include: preparation of a review paper appropriate for publication that will be read by a committee of faculty members; successful completion of a written examination in some designated area(s); and a published independent report of research. The student is encouraged to provide approximate estimated dates of completion associated with each evaluation standard.

7. Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement: The Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship Requirement (RSRS) is a Graduate School requirement. The specific way this requirement is to be satisfied is left to the discretion of the particular Program or Department. In the Social Program, students are asked to stipulate in their contract how they will meet the RSRS, have the contract approved by the contract committee, and fulfill the relevant part of the contract. The intent of this individualized approach to the RSRS Requirement is to integrate it into the student's overall plan for professional training and to encourage both student and contract committee to give it careful consideration.

For students interested in getting some ideas about the way the RSRS Requirement might be met, some examples of the ways past students have met the Requirement include successfully completing Psychology 790, Psychology 791, Psychology 818, plus three more advanced courses in statistics or methods. Additionally, all students are expected to complete the HSC-L ethics tutorial and the RCR (Responsible Conduct of Research) tutorial (both available at ecompliance.ku.edu), and to attend ethics discussions held periodically as part of the Proseminar series.

8. Dates for graduate school requirements: Estimated dates for the completion of the remaining Graduate School requirements should also be provided. These requirements include the residence requirement, the oral examination for the Master of Arts degree, the oral comprehensive examination, and the final oral examination in which the dissertation is defended.

9. Timeline / completion dates: Students are asked to provide a summary list of projected completion dates for the major activities described in Items 3 through 7. A typical timeline includes completion of the M.A. requirements by the end of the second year in the program, completion of Comprehensives (and the research skills requirement) by the end of year four, and defense of the dissertation by the end of year 5.

The student is tasked with acquiring signatures from contract committee members (electronic signatures are acceptable). The student is also asked to pass along a signed copy of the contract to the Program Director, who will keep an electronic copy on file. The student's proposed contract committee, long-range goals, list of courses to be taken, areas of research interest, proposed methods of evaluation, plan for meeting the Graduate School research skill requirement, and suggested dates for completion of requirements can and often do change. Modifications to the contract require the approval of the student and the three committee members, and a signed copy should be submitted to the Program Director.

Coursework

This section identifies a list of courses that can help students reach their professional goals. The coursework should include the following areas (although the amount from each area will be specific to each individual): basic research skills, quantitative and computational skills, other skills specific to the student's program of study, substantive domain knowledge generic to psychology, and substantive domain knowledge specific to the student's program of study. Students may also elect to pursue one or more Graduate Certificates if doing so would advance their goals. See the Coursework section of this handbook to learn more about the program's requirements and recommendations.

Formal Benchmarks of Student Progress

Students entering without an empirical Masters degree will write an M.A. thesis, comprehensives paper, and Ph.D. dissertation. Each must be followed by an oral examination. Students entering with an approved empirical Masters degree will fulfill the latter two requirements.

Progress Reports

Each student beyond the first year is expected to submit their up-to-date CV and a brief progress report (1-2 pages) to the Program Director and to all members of his or her contract committee by February 28 each year. This report should review and assess progress made during the past year toward professional goals. Progress should be discussed particularly, but not exclusively, with reference to the student's contract. A report of any independent research or scholarship of which no faculty member may be aware would also be highly appropriate. First year students should submit their progress reports, along with their signed contracts, by April 15.

All progress reports should address the following topics, using these headings: (a) research involvement during the past year, (b) courses completed, (c) the importance of progress made, (d) problems encountered, and (e) any revisions in long-term goals or in plans proposed to attain them. All of these areas should be reviewed with reference to the contract. For example, if a completed course fulfills an aspect of the contract, this should be noted; if problems are being encountered in fulfilling an aspect of the contract, this should be noted as well. It is entirely appropriate to append a copy of relevant papers or reports resulting from independent or collaborative work.

Yearly Evaluation

The purpose of the yearly evaluation is to provide feedback about the student's progress, and to assess the nature of problems, if any, encountered by a graduate student that, in the opinion of the faculty, hinder that student's professional development. Students judged to be progressing satisfactorily toward completion of the program may receive less attention than others during the yearly evaluation. Such lack of attention does not mean lack of concern for this student's progress. Instead, it is the responsibility of the chair of each such student's contract committee to provide that student with information concerning the positive assessment by the faculty, as well as to provide any other information on strengths and challenges that seems appropriate.

For first year students, this yearly evaluation will occur near the end of the Spring semester. For students beyond their first year, it will take place during the Spring semester. All students will be provided with written feedback on perceived strengths and areas for improvement.

The students' progress toward the graduate learning goals will also be evaluated during these meetings.

The evaluation procedure will consist of the following steps:

1. Evaluation meetings. Although the Program Director or any contract committee member can request a meeting to evaluate a student's progress at any time, yearly evaluation meetings will be held in April/May. Graduate student representatives will not be present at evaluation meetings. At this meeting, Program faculty will discuss each student's contract and latest progress report. Discussions of students during the evaluation meetings will remain confidential except as noted in the following section.

2. Report to student. The chair of a student's contract committee will be responsible for taking notes on any discussion of that student. This faculty member will then prepare a letter to the student based on the comments of faculty and notes from the evaluation meeting. This letter will also specifically address progress toward fulfillment of the contract and will make recommendations regarding steps to ensure that the contract is largely met by the time of the Comprehensive Exam. This letter will not necessarily attribute specific statements to faculty members by name. Upon the approval of this letter by the Program faculty, one copy will go to the student and one copy will be placed in the student's permanent file.

3. Student appeal. Within two weeks of receiving an evaluation letter, the student may appeal any evaluations or decisions contained in the letter. The student may express the desire to appeal to any Program faculty member, including the contract committee chair or the Program Director. The student may appeal in writing or may ask to appear before the Program faculty.

4. Ongoing feedback. Responsibility for progress within the program lies with the student. To facilitate progress, we encourage frequent discussion with members of the faculty about both work completed, and work planned. Comments and suggestions arising from such on-going discussion should provide constructive feedback, enabling the student not only to realize strengths but also to address challenges without the more formal feedback from the yearly evaluation.

Toward that end, we recommend that students:

a) Consult at length with contract committee members at the beginning of each Fall semester in an attempt to assess their current strengths and areas for improvement.

b) Meet with course instructors and research supervisor(s) at the end of each semester. These meetings can provide useful feedback on progress, indicating areas needing emphasis or opportunities for further development.

c) Consult with members of the faculty at any time upon any matter of mutual interest: research lines, proposed courses, professional growth, reading guidelines, funding grants, and related topics.

Timeline
This section should provide a list of projected/target completion dates for the major activities on the Contract as well as the requirements of the program and graduate school (e.g., milestones).

Mentoring contract
This agreement is a tool that may be used by department faculty to support mentoring relationships with graduate students who have reached the thesis/dissertation stage of their program.

Mentoring & Change of Advisor

Change of Advisor
PSYC Advisor Change Form.pdf

Coursework

Before establishment of a contract, the courses taken by entering students will be worked out with the Program Director. Courses will be selected that will (a) strengthen a student's background in social psychology, (b) develop his or her research and data analysis skills, and (c) lay the groundwork for the individualized plan of study. A typical program for the first-year enrollment of a new student might be as follows:

Fall semester: Advanced Social Psychology I (PSYC 774), Experimental Research Methods in Social Psychology (PSYC 818), and a course in statistics (e.g., PSYC 790)

Spring semester: Advanced Social Psychology II (PSYC 775); Field Research Methods in Social Psychology (PSYC 819), another course in statistics.

Although none of the courses mentioned above is formally required, it is expected that a student will typically need and want to take the Advanced Social Psychology I and II series, the Research Methods series, and a number of statistics courses--unless the student has already taken equivalent courses. Exceptions to these expectations may, however, arise. Each student's needs and desires will be considered on an individual basis.

During the academic year, the Social Psychology program meets once weekly (typically, Fridays at noon) for a Proseminar series. This is a series of talks that include graduate student presentations, KU Psychology faculty presentations, presentations from KU faculty outside of the department, and outside guest speakers. Students may enroll for credit in PSYC 903, but whether or not enrolled, graduate students are expected to attend this series and to present their own research when appropriate. We suggest that students plan to present at Social Prosem at least once a year.

We also highly recommend our students to show up for our weekly happy hour, where they get a chance to continue the conversation from the prosem in a less formal environment.

Recommended Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship Requirements
Each graduate student in social psychology must be continuously involved in research. Entering students should visit each faculty member in social psychology to determine areas of mutual research interest. The student can either become a part of a faculty member's on-going program of research, or identify a faculty member who is willing and able to supervise independent research efforts.

To satisfy the college requirements, students must complete the following prior to the oral comprehensive exam: at least one Statistical Methods course (as described above), at least one Research Methods course (as described above), at least 8 research credits (as described above), and an online tutorial on human subjects research (as described here). Additional coursework related to research skills and responsible scholarship are encouraged (and typical) but not strictly required by the program.

Certificates
Students may also complete graduate certificates by taking a certain number (usually between 9 and 18 credit hours) of elective courses from another department. Examples include the Graduate Certificates in Applied Mathematics (Arts & Sciences), Biostatistics (Medicine), and Data Science (Engineering).

Credit Hour Requirements

There are a few requirements for the number of credit hours a student must enroll in (e.g., minimums and maximums). However, these requirements depend on the semester (i.e., fall and spring versus summer), the student's progress through the program (e.g., before or after completing the comprehensive exam), the student's international status, and the student's funding source (e.g., GTA or GRA). As a result, it is difficult to give general guidance on how many credit hours to enroll in. Instead, students should read about these rules in the Psychology Graduate Student Handbook and check in with the Graduate Program Coordinator when planning out their courses each semester.

Potential Courses

Different courses are offered each year depending on the availability of instructors and perceived demand. You can check the courses offered each semester on the KU Course Catalog. It would also be helpful to communicate to the program director which courses you are interested in so that this information can be factored into the program's planning of which courses to offer each year.

Content Courses
- PSYC 774: Advanced Social Psychology 1
- PSYC 775: Advance social psychology 2
- PSYC 818: Experimental research methods in social psychology
- PSYC 819: Field and evaluation research methods in social psychology
- PSYC 860: Affective Science
- PSYC 899: Thesis
- PSYC 903: Proseminar in social psychology
- PSYC 955: Close Relationships and Adult Attachment
- PSYC 980: Special problems in psychology
- PSYC 993: Professional issues
- Other 993 taught by social faculty
- PSYC 999: Dissertation
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Quantitative (e.g., statistical, data science, computational) Courses
- PSYC 790: Statistical Methods in Psychology I
- PSYC 791: Statistical Methods in Psychology II
- PSYC 792: Data Science for the Social and Behavioral Sciences
- PSYC 797: Bayesian Data Analysis
- PSYC 798: Introduction to Mathematical Methods in Psychology
- PSYC 887: Factor Analysis
- PSYC 893: Multivariate Analysis
- PSYC 894: Multilevel Modeling
- PSYC 896: Structural Equation Modeling
- PSYC 991: Longitudinal Data Analysis

Other Potentially Useful Courses
- PSYC 805: History of Psychology
- PSYC 810: History and Ethics in Psychology

- PSYC 971: Essentials of College Teaching
- PSYC 981: Advanced College Teaching
- PSYC 982: Issues in Scientific Conduct

Other Departments to Explore
- BIOS/DATA: Biostatistics and Data Science
- COMS: Communication Studies
- EECS: Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
- EPSY: Educational Psychology
- Summer Semesters

During the summer semesters students can work as AIs, GTAs, GRAs, at internships, or none of the above.

Recommended Progression through Program

Standard Five-Year Plan

The standard five-year plan includes the 2 required courses, 10 additional elective courses, prosem, and 30 research credits. This plan provides more time to publish papers and complete milestones, but pushes up against program "deadlines" such that falling a semester behind prompts remediation.

Year	Fall Semester	Spring Semester
1	Three courses (10 credits, 10 cumulative) • 774 (Advance Social I) • 818 (Exper Methods) • 790 (Stats 1) • 903 (Social Prosem)	Three courses (10 credits / 20 cumulative) • 775 (Advanced Social II) • 791 (Stats 2) • 819 or 993 • 903 (Social Prosem)
2	Two courses + thesis (10 credits / 30 cumulative) • Elective Course (stat) • Elective Course (seminar) • 899 (Thesis) • 903 (Social Prosem) and/or Teaching course (971/981) *Propose master's thesis*	Two courses + thesis (10 credits / 40 cumulative) • Elective Course (stat) • Elective Course (seminar) • 899 (Thesis • 903 (Social Prosem) and/or Teaching course (971/981) • *Work on/defend master's thesis*
3	Two courses (7 credits / 47 cumulative) • Elective Course • Elective Course • 903 (Social Prosem) and/or Teaching course (971/981) *Expand research program*	Two courses (7 credits / 54 cumulative) • Elective Course • Elective Course • 903 (Social Prosem) and/or Teaching course (971/981) • *Expand research program, comps idea*
4	One or two courses (6-7 credits / 61 cumulative) • Elective Course • 980 • 903 (Social Prosem) *Work on comps paper*	0-1 course + dissertation (6-7 credits / 68 cumulative) • Elective course • 999 (Dissertation) • 903 (Social Prosem) *Oral defense of comps; all course work in contract completed*
5	No Courses (6 credits / 74 cumulative) • 999 (Dissertation - 5 cr) • 903 (Social Prosem) *Work on doctoral dissertation/Diss proposal*	No Courses (6 credits / 80 cumulative) • 999 (Dissertation - 5 cr) • 903 (Social Prosem) *Defend doctoral dissertation*

Time to Degree

Students must complete their degrees (M.A & Ph.D) within a certain time determined by the Office of Graduate Studies. Please review these time limits on the COGA website, and contact the Graduate Program Coordinator if you have any questions.

Resident Requirement

Two semesters, which may include one summer session, must be spent in resident study at the University of Kansas. During this period of residence, the student must be involved full time in academic or professional pursuits, which may include an appointment for teaching or research if the teaching/research is directed specifically toward the student's degree objectives. The student must be enrolled in a minimum of six (6) credit hours per semester, and the increased research involvement must be fully supported and documented by the dissertation supervisor as contributing to the student's dissertation or program objectives. Research work must be performed under the direct supervision of the major advisor if on campus, or with adequate liaison if off campus.

Leave of Absence

A student may petition the Graduate Division through the department for a leave of absence during either the pre- or post-comprehensive period to pursue full-time professional activities related to the student's doctoral program and longrange professional goals. Leaves of absence may also be granted because of illness or other emergency. Ordinarily a leave of absence is granted for one year, with the possibility of extension upon request. For full details on taking a Leave of Absence, review the Graduate Policy and contact the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Milestones

<u>Overview</u>

Purpose

The milestone system was designed to provide structure to the research activities of students and ensure timely progress is made toward independent scholarship and successful completion of the program. There are four milestones to be completed in the following order: the first-year project, the master's thesis, the oral comprehensive exam, and the doctoral dissertation.

Committees

All milestones involve evaluation by a committee of qualified experts (the required qualifications and composition are described below). Either one's contract committee or a special committee determined and agreed upon by both the student and their advisor(s) for the specific milestone. The student should approach each desired committee member (e.g., in person or by email) as early as possible and request their service on the committee. In their request, students should briefly describe their planned project and the relevance of the requested committee member's expertise (e.g., why that person is being invited). Note that, due to other commitments and obligations, not all faculty members will be available to serve on committees at all times; it is thus recommended that students consider who might be alternative members.

Policies

The department prohibits students from providing food or drink to their committee at meetings.

<u>First Year Project</u>

Overview

The First Year Project (FYP) is meant to ensure that students get involved in and make progress on at least one research project during their first year. FYPs can take on many different forms, but typical options include individual class project in 818, secondary data analyses, systematic literature reviews, or fellowship proposals (e.g., the NSF GRFP). Each student should carefully plan their FYP in collaboration with their advisor to ensure that it is achievable during the first year and only requires data, resources, and knowledge that the student will have access to during that time. Note that students may continue working on these projects after the first year (e.g., students may expand the FYP into their thesis or submit the final version of their GRFP application in the fall of their second year), but some version or draft of the project needs to be completed to satisfy the milestone. The final step of the FYP is for students to present their project either in class and/or during PROSEM (usually in the fall semester of their second year).

Presentation

Each student's oral presentation should be as close to 10 minutes in duration as possible (and will be allotted an additional 5 minutes of Q&A and feedback from students and faculty in the program). There are many different presentation styles that could work, and it is recommended that students practice their presentation with their advisor(s) and/or research labs to receive early feedback.

Evaluation

For research-based projects, the FYP should be similar to a conference submission in terms of scope, length, and scientific rigor/complexity. For fellowship proposals, the FYP should be similar to a GRFP application.

Deadline and Remediation

Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Fall semester in their second year will be required to meet with their advisor(s) and the Program Director to develop a remediation plan. Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Spring semester in their second year may be placed on academic probation (described in the Psychology Student Handbook).

Master's Thesis

Overview

Requirements for the M.A. degree include:

- 30 hours of graduate course credit (no more than 6 of which may be in courses offered by other departments)
- A thesis based on empirical research
- An oral examination.

Ideally this should be completed within a period of two years.

Committee

Each Masters thesis must be evaluated by a committee of (at least) **three** authorized members. See the link below to read about the rules for committee eligibility and composition. Some key information: All committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty authorized to serve on Masters examinations, and the majority of committee members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department. If you are unsure whether your planned committee meets these requirements, ask the Graduate Program Coordinator. Each committee must have a chair (or co-chairs)—usually the student's advisor(s). https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/masters-oral-exam-committee-composition

Proposal and Defense

By October 15 of their second year in the graduate program, students intending to earn a Masters degree must write and defend a proposal for a Masters thesis project.

The written document should include a brief literature review (about 4-5 pages), a set of hypotheses/predictions (1 page), and a Method section (up to 3 pages), along with an appendix that includes materials to be used in the project. This proposal should be distributed to all members of the thesis committee at least one week prior to a defense meeting. The proposal defense meeting is meant to be more informal than the actual thesis defense and is designed as an opportunity for students to receive constructive feedback on their projects. At the same time, students should be prepared to defend the importance of their work and relevance to theory/hypothesis testing.

It is possible that a student may plan to include in a Masters thesis a study that has already been completed prior to the proposal defense meeting. This is acceptable. However, in these cases, the proposal must include a brief description of the already-conducted study and a proposal for new research. That is, at least one study to be reported in the thesis proposal document must be in the planning phase at the time of the proposal meeting.

Students are expected to incorporate the feedback obtained from faculty during the defense meeting into their project designs. Students "pass" the proposal defense if 2 of 3 committee members approve the project (pending the incorporation of suggested changes).

Evaluation

Exam Evaluation Form (Qualtrics)

The committee should evaluate the defense document on how well it satisfies the goals of the milestone (e.g., to demonstrate independent scholarship and masters-level research competency) and adheres to the plan that was approved in the proposal meeting (or makes only acceptable and transparently described adjustments to that plan). The thesis should be similar to a journal article that would be publishable in a mid-tier journal in terms of scope, length, and scientific rigor/complexity. A grade of Satisfactory indicates that this bar has been met, whereas a grade of Unsatisfactory indicates that it has not. A grade of Honors indicates that the thesis went above-and-beyond what was required and demonstrates exceptional achievement. Committees may also require specific changes, resulting in a *conditional* grade of Satisfactory (or Honors). For this outcome to be appropriate, the changes should be small enough in scope to be addressable within ten calendar days; after completing the changes in this timeframe, the student should email the updated document to the committee for final approval.

Defenses should not be scheduled until the student and advisor agree that the document is ready, i.e., is expected to receive a Satisfactory or Honors grade. Unsatisfactory grades should thus be rare, but do occasionally occur (e.g., when the committee feels differently than the advisor). In such cases, the student will receive explicit and concrete feedback from the committee on what changes are necessary. Once these changes have been implemented, the student will need to repeat the defense process.

Procedure
1. Check with advisor, contract committee, and the Graduate Program Coordinator that you have taken all required courses
2. Work with your advisor(s) to select desired and alternative Thesis Committee members
3. Confirm desired Thesis Committee members meet policy requirements with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
4. Solicit the service of desired (and, if needed, alternative) Thesis Committee members
5. Work with your advisor(s) to plan a feasible project for the milestone
6. Prepare (and ideally practice) your proposal presentation
7. Schedule the proposal meeting (either yourself or through the Graduate Program Coordinator)
8. Hold the Thesis Proposal meeting.
9. Work with your advisor(s) to prepare and revise your Thesis document
10. Prepare (and ideally practice) your defense presentation
11. Schedule the defense meeting (**<u>must</u>** be through the Graduate Program Coordinator)
12. Hold the Thesis Defense meeting
13. If necessary, make required changes
14. Complete university procedures related to the thesis document and degree completion. Graduate Program Coordinator will provide detailed instructions.

Deadline and Remediation
Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Fall semester in their third year will be required to meet with their advisor(s) and the Program Director to develop a remediation plan. Students

who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Spring semester in their third year may be placed on academic probation (described in the Psychology Student Handbook).

Thesis Process Flow

Oral Comprehensive Exam

Overview

The oral comprehensive exam is meant to mark the transition point of successfully completing doctoral coursework and moving into full-time research on the dissertation milestone. Thus, all coursework laid out in the student's Training Contract should be completed before scheduling the oral comprehensive exam. After completing the oral comprehensive exam, students are considered "doctoral candidates." The oral comprehensive exam can take on several different formats in this program (see below), but generally involves preparing a written document that showcases the student's expertise in their program of study as well as an oral defense of that document.

Committee

Each comprehensive exam must be evaluated by a committee of (at least) **five** authorized members. See the link below to read about the rules for committee composition; the highlights are: All committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty authorized to serve on doctoral exams, and the majority of committee members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department. If you are unsure whether your planned committee meets these requirements, ask the Graduate Program Coordinator. Each committee must also have a chair (or co-chairs), usually the student's advisor(s). https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-student-oral-exam-committee-composition

Exam Formats

All coursework laid out in the contract—particularly coursework related to the RSRS requirement—must be completed before the oral defense of the comprehensives paper is scheduled. There are four possible formats for the Comprehensive Exam in the Social Program:

1. Defense of a major area paper. Using this format, the student presents all members of the examination committee in advance with a major area paper. General models for the major area paper are articles published in *Psychological Bulletin*, *Psychological Review*, and *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. The paper should provide a thorough, comprehensive, and integrated review of the theoretical and empirical literature on some important social psychological topic. Students are encouraged to outline directions for future research based on their synthetic review of prior work, although this is not required. Often, but not necessarily, this paper will serve as the basis for dissertation work. It is not, however, simply a proposal of dissertation research. There is no formal limit on the length of the major area paper, but the recommended length is no more than 50 pages. In the oral exam, the student answers questions pertinent to the major area paper, but the exam is not limited to the paper, only focused upon it. Assessment of the student's performance on the exam will be based on the committee's judgments about the quality of both the major area paper and the oral exam. Each student opting for this format is encouraged to consult with relevant faculty to develop a paper that best fits within their overall program of study.

2. Defense of two research proposals. Using this format, the student presents all members of the examination committee in advance with a written document that: (1) provides a thorough, comprehensive, and integrated review of the theoretical and empirical literature pertinent to two

original empirical hypotheses, and (2) proposes two complete research designs, one to test each hypothesis, including specification of predictions and discussion of intended statistical analyses. The two research designs should represent two *different* projects, not two studies that might appear in the same journal article. The two projects may stem from the same overarching topic or theoretical analysis (outlined in the Introduction), but they should reflect conceptually distinct investigations. In the oral exam, the student defends the hypotheses and designs, but the exam is not limited by the proposed research, only focused upon it. Assessment of the student's performance on the exam will be based on the committee's judgments about the quality of both the written document and the student's oral defense.

3. Defense of written exam. Students may also opt to take a written exam, followed by an oral exam, in response to questions generated by social psychology faculty. The written exam will take place on two consecutive days, in Fraser Hall. On the first day of the exam, the student will answer 4-5 questions. These will address general topics of broad interest to the field of social psychology (or psychology more generally), and at least one question will focus on methodology and/or statistics. On the second day, the student will answer 3-4 questions geared toward their particular area of expertise. Students may be provided with a reading list or suggestions by faculty several months prior to the exam. The written exam will take place in the department on a mutually agreed-upon date. Students will have access to a computer without an internet connection. After review by the faculty and a majority faculty decision to "pass" on the written exam, an oral exam will be scheduled. Any student can choose this option, but some students may be required to take this option if, by the time of their yearly progress review in year 4 of the program (typically February), they are not making progress on one of the other options. In this case, the student will be required to schedule and complete the exam by December of year 5 in the program.

At present, the first format is the one most often chosen by students, and the one most often recommended by the Program faculty.

The composition of the five member Oral Comprehensive Exam Committee is as follows: At least two members should be Social Program faculty; a majority of the committee must be regular graduate faculty of the Department of Psychology; one member must be a regular graduate faculty member outside the Department but from the Lawrence campus. If the Chair is not a member of the regular graduate faculty of the Department, a co-chair must be named who is; remaining committee members may be either regular graduate faculty or ad hoc appointments approved by the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Psychology. Students should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure proper makeup of the Comprehensives committee, and to schedule a defense date with enough time to check that program requirements have been met.

See the Oral Comprehensive Exam Committee Composition Requirements for full details OR Contact the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Evaluation

Exam Evaluation Form (Qualtrics)

Assessment of the student's performance on the oral comprehensive exam will be based on the committee's judgements about the quality of both the written document produced and the student's oral defense of that document. The Oral Comprehensive Exam Grading Rubric (see the Psychology Student Handbook) details the five evaluation criteria: mastery of field, mastery of research methods, presentation/communication skills, analysis and interpretation, and significance and impact.

Procedure

1. Check that you have completed all required coursework on your Training Contract and confirm with your advisor and contract committee.
2. Work with your advisor(s) to select desired and alternative Comps Committee members
3. Confirm desired Exam Committee members meet policy requirements with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
4. Work with your advisor(s) to decide on an exam format for your comprehensive exam
5. Solicit the service of desired (and, if needed, alternative) committee members
6. If relevant to your chosen format, collect the reading list and study those readings
7. If relevant to your chosen format, the committee prepares the exam questions
8. If relevant to your chosen format, prepare and revise your written document
9. If relevant to your chosen format, schedule the written exam
10. Schedule the oral exam meeting (**must** be through the Graduate Program Coordinator)
11. If relevant to your chosen format, distribute your written document to the committee
12. Hold the exam meeting(s) and complete the Oral Comprehensive Exam Grading Rubric
13. Committee chair and Graduate Studies Representative confirm exam outcome to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Deadline and Remediation

Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Spring semester in their third year will be required to meet with their advisor(s) and the program director to develop a remediation plan. Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Fall semester in their fourth year may be placed on academic probation (described in the Psychology Student Handbook).

Dissertation

Overview

The doctoral dissertation is meant to be the culmination of a student's research training and demonstrate both independent scholarship and doctoral-level research competency. It takes the form of a written document describing one or more novel research projects led by the student (i.e., it should contain a substantial amount of work completed by the student after the proposal, although it is acceptable to build upon a foundation of previous work by the student and the work of collaborators). Students are encouraged but not required to submit their dissertation work for peer-reviewed publication. The university requires dissertations be submitted to the ETD and ProQuest systems; read more about these requirements in the Psychology Student Handbook.

Committee

Each dissertation must be evaluated by a committee of (at least) **five** authorized members. See the link below to read about the rules for committee composition; the highlights are: All committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty authorized to serve on doctoral exams, and the majority of committee members must be tenured or tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department. If you are

unsure whether your planned committee meets these requirements, ask the Graduate Program Coordinator. Each committee must also have a chair (or co-chairs), usually the student's advisor(s). https://policy.ku.edu/graduate-studies/doctoral-student-oral-exam-committee-composition

Proposal

Students should select their committee, as described above, and then schedule a proposal meeting and reserve a room or schedule a Zoom meeting (either themselves or through the Graduate Program Coordinator). The program requires the scheduling process begin at least two weeks prior to the earliest possible proposal date. The proposal meeting should be scheduled for 90 minutes and involve the following components: a 10-minute presentation by the student detailing the motivation for and design of the proposed project; a collaborative discussion of the proposal by the committee and student; a discussion by the committee and majority vote (without the student present) about the grade to assign: Approved, Approved with Changes, or Rejected; and an explanation of the grade (including any suggested or required changes) to the student. If Accepted with Changes, the student should email their committee with a summary of the changes made within ten calendar days of the meeting to complete the proposal process. If rejected, the student will need to repeat the proposal process.

Defense

Once a student and their advisor(s) agree that the dissertation defense is ready to be scheduled (i.e., that the proposed work and a satisfactory draft of the dissertation document are complete), students should contact the Graduate Program Coordinator to begin the defense scheduling process. The Graduate Program Coordinator will communicate on behalf of the student to schedule the defense, reserve a room or schedule a Zoom meeting, and complete pre-approval paperwork prior to the exam. The defense scheduling process should begin at least one month prior to the earliest possible defense date. The student should send the final draft of their dissertation document to each committee member via email (or on paper by request) at least ten calendar days prior to the scheduled date of the thesis defense to enable committee members to examine it fully. Committees may request the document sooner, and students are encouraged to work directly with their committee to determine when the final document should be distributed to their committee. The defense meeting should be scheduled for two hours and involve the following components: a 15-minute presentation by the student detailing the motivation for, design of, results of, and implications of the completed project; a discussion of the project by the committee and student including questions for the student about the project; a discussion by the committee and majority vote (without the student present) about the grade to assign: Satisfactory, Honors, or Unsatisfactory; and an explanation of the grade to the student. Students must complete the Dissertation Defense form (see Forms section) and submit their dissertation document to the ETD and ProQuest systems. For more information regarding requirements for formatting and submitting your dissertation, as well as other useful information, see the Psychology Student Handbook.

Evaluation

Exam Evaluation Form (Qualtrics)

The committee should evaluate the defense document on how well it satisfies the goals of the milestone (e.g., to demonstrate independent scholarship and doctoral-level research competency) and adheres to the plan that was approved in the proposal meeting (or makes only acceptable and transparently described adjustments to that plan). The dissertation should be similar to a journal article that would be

publishable in a high-tier journal (or multiple journal articles that would be publishable in mid-tier journals) in terms of scope, length, and scientific rigor/complexity. A grade of Satisfactory indicates that this bar has been met, whereas a grade of Unsatisfactory indicates that it has not. A grade of Honors indicates that the dissertation went above-and-beyond what was required and demonstrates exceptional achievement. Committees may also require specific changes, resulting in a *conditional* grade of Satisfactory (or Honors). For this grade to be appropriate, the changes should be small enough in scope to be addressable within ten calendar days; after completing the changes in this timeframe, the student should email the updated document to the committee for final approval.

Defenses should not be scheduled until the student and advisor agree that the document is ready, i.e., is expected to receive a Satisfactory or Honors grade. Unsatisfactory grades should thus be rare, but do occasionally occur (e.g., when the committee feels differently than the advisor). In such cases, the student will receive explicit and concrete feedback from the committee on what changes are necessary. Once these changes have been implemented, the student will need to repeat the defense process.

Procedure

1. Check with your advisor and contract committee that you have taken all required courses
2. Work with your advisor(s) to select desired and alternative Dissertation Committee members
3. Confirm desired Exam Committee members meet policy requirements with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
4. Solicit the service of desired (and, if needed, alternative) committee members
5. Work with your advisor(s) to plan a feasible project for the milestone
6. Prepare (and ideally practice) your proposal presentation
7. Schedule the proposal meeting (either yourself or through the Graduate Program Coordinator)
8. Hold the Dissertation Proposal meeting and complete Part One of the Dissertation Form
9. Complete the project to meet the expectations detailed on Part One of the Dissertation Form
10. Work with your advisor(s) to prepare and revise your Dissertation document
11. Prepare (and ideally practice) your defense presentation
12. Schedule the defense meeting (**must** be through the Graduate Program Coordinator)
13. Hold the Dissertation Defense meeting and complete Part Two of the Dissertation Form
14. If necessary, make required changes and complete Part Three of the Dissertation Form
15. Complete university procedures related to the thesis document and degree completion. Graduate Program Coordinator will provide detailed instructions.

Deadline and Remediation

Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Spring semester in their fifth year will be required to meet with their advisor(s) and the program director to develop a remediation plan. Students who do not complete this milestone by the end of the Fall semester in their sixth year may be placed on academic probation (described in the Psychology Student Handbook).

Doctoral Exam Process Flow

Student Resources

Student Funding

We strive to fund all students in years 1 through 5. Although funding for a sixth year is sometimes available, students should assume that university/program funding beyond the fifth year is unlikely. For students who enter the program with a Masters we can only guarantee 4 years of funding. Most students are funded on Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) or Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs); see the Psychology Student Handbook for more information about these assistantships. Other funding sources, such as internal or external fellowships, may be available and students are encouraged to apply for such opportunities when appropriate.

Student Office

An office in Fraser Hall (Room 519) has been made available to all students in the BBQ program. The room includes several desks, chairs, bookshelves, and chargers. This room is meant to be shared, so please be respectful and mindful of other students' privacy, preferences, and property. A key to this room will be provided to each student during Orientation week. Contact the department Administrative Associate with key-related questions. Note that additional office or lab space may be made available to students by their advisor(s), and use of the student office is not compulsory. Students can also receive support with computers/software related issues from the departmental IT person.

Brehm Travel Awards: We hope to award at least five Brehm Travel Awards per semester to Social Psychology Ph.D. students, at $900 each. Priority will be given to students who have not received the award previously, and you must have a paper accepted for a conference before applying (poster or talk). You can apply for the award within a 6-month window on either side of the conference (before or after). Students may receive only one award for each trip. Thus, if you also choose to apply for and receive graduate school or SPSP funding for your trip, you will only be eligible to receive the difference between that award and $900 from the Brehm fund.

Brehm Summer fellowship: People need to include a CV and a description of their plans for the summer (no more than 2 pages, double-spaced). In this description, they should make clear how the Summer Fellowship would support and facilitate their research progress. The money needn't be earmarked for specific research expenses; it can serve simply to support your basic living expenses. Nonetheless, you must be spending time this summer in the conduct of activities related to research.

Brehm Research awards: Who can apply? Any graduate student conducting social psychological research is eligible to apply provided they are a) currently not serving on that semester's grant review committee; and b) in good academic standing.

Can my name be on more than one (1) application? Yes and no. Each applicant can be the primary investigator on only one (1) application per Brehm cycle. An applicant, though, can be listed as a primary investigator on one application and be listed as a collaborator on another application.

Are there restrictions on what the award can be used for? Yes. The Brehm Award is to promote basic research in social psychology and is therefore to be used to aid in the collection of data. This could include payment of subjects, purchase of tools or equipment, and travel to collect data. Conference travel and personal software are not designated as an appropriate use. Applications must request funds for data collection activities related to research projects that have already received HSCL approval. If your project does not have IRB approval then you will be asked to submit the letter at a later date in order to receive funds. We must have your HSCL approval letter on file before proceeding with reimbursement of funds.

Wrightsman summer fellowship:

Larry Wrightsman was a long-time KU faculty member who left part of his estate to KU Endowment, to help support graduate students in Psychology. The Wrightsman Summer Fellowship competition is open to graduate students in good standing in the Department of Psychology at KU. The fellowship is meant to help students support their research activities.

Students are asked to submit:
1. An up-to-date CV
2. A degree progress report or transcript (unofficial)
3. A description of their plans for the summer (no more than 2 pages, double-spaced).
> In this description you should make clear how the Summer Fellowship would support and facilitate your research progress. The money needn't be earmarked for specific research expenses; it can serve simply to support your basic living expenses. Nonetheless, *you must be spending time this summer in the conduct of activities related to research*.

Other awards include the Outstanding Thesis Award; The University Graduate Fellowships (UGFs); Doctoral Student Research Fund (DSRF); Argersinger Dissertation Award; Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Competition; Graduate Scholarly Development Fund; Summer Research Scholarship.

Governance and Shared governance

Shared governance between graduate students and faculty is a collaborative framework designed to enhance the educational and administrative environment. By actively involving graduate students in decision-making processes, shared governance fosters a sense of community and responsibility among students and faculty alike. This partnership allows for a more transparent and inclusive approach to addressing academic policies, curriculum development, and resource allocation. Ultimately, shared governance aims to enrich the academic experience by leveraging the unique perspectives and expertise of both students and faculty, promoting a more dynamic and responsive educational ecosystem.

Social program student representatives take place in all/every program function except students evals, and teaching planning. They get to vote on everything but personnel (faculty hires, and admission funding).

Students' jobs/committees:

Representative to the Psychology Department: Reps attend faculty meetings 4 pm, 1st Monday of each month. Only one rep goes to each meeting. NOTE: One official rep and one alternate, official rep should attend every meeting.

Representatives to the Social Program: Two reps needed for this to provide the voice of the students in any program decisions (both reps must attend whenever the faculty meet; usually 1-2 times per semester).

Visiting Students Committee: Committee coordinates/schedules the prospective student-related travel/meals/activities when prospective graduate students visit campus (end of Jan through Feb).

Representatives to the Graduate Admissions Committee: Job includes reading through and evaluating prospective students' applications, attending meetings, etc. Usually no first-year students are selected for these roles. Short-term, but intense, most work around Nov-Jan.

Brehm Grant Fund: Committee involves four students. The committee sends a call for applications, evaluates applications. Students cannot apply for funds while on the committee. Two are needed for each semester. *A fifth person can step in if someone on the committee wants to apply for funds.*

Communications Coordinator: This is the person who delivers the mail from 423 to the student mailboxes in 546.

Diversity Committee Representative: Reps attend Diversity Committee meetings; keep social students informed about Diversity Committee activities.