Guide for Completion of Master’s Thesis

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
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General Course Requirements:
30 HOURS: Typically 24 hours class work; 3 Hours Soc. 600, Thesis Research; 3 Hours; Soc. 601, Thesis Writing
Steps in Writing a Thesis

1. **You must complete required graduate courses prior to beginning thesis work**
   Students must successfully complete Soc 518 (History of Sociological Theory), Soc 530 (Statistical Methods), and Soc 531 (Advanced Research Techniques) prior to registering for Soc 600 and 601 and conducting thesis research.

2. **You must select a thesis chair (second or third semester)**
   Criteria: Sociology graduate faculty, Professor's area of specialization, Favorite Professor. You must contact the professor and get a firm commitment from professor, i.e. ascertain a thesis topic.

3. **You and your thesis chair must select a thesis committee**
   Usually a thesis committee consists of three members, the chair and two other faculty members who will advise and assist you in writing your thesis. Committee members may come from among the Sociology and Anthropology department faculty as well as faculty outside the department. Select on basis of specialization and compatibility. Once selected, student should complete and submit a Thesis Declaration Form to the graduate committee. Prior to enrolling in Sociology 600, students must meet with the department chair to discuss thesis topic and thesis chair.

4. **Thesis proposal (third semester – enrollment in Sociology 600)**
   You and your committee will develop a statement of problem, literature review, and a design for collecting data, which may include a questionnaire. This material will be presented by you to interested department faculty and graduate students for their review, comments and suggestions. This hearing may result in a revision of your thesis plans, or a "go-ahead" for data collection. A copy of your proposal should be made available (in department office) at least one week prior to your scheduled thesis proposal defense. In addition to committee approval, you must receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to collecting your data.

5. **Thesis writing (fourth semester – enrollment in Sociology 601)**
   Data are collected, analyzed, and written up. Summary and conclusions chapter is written.

   When your committee is satisfied that the thesis is in optimum form, you will present your work to interested faculty and graduate students. Thesis defenses are scheduled for 90 minutes. During this time you will formally present your thesis research. Your committee members and other members of the audience will then be given the opportunity to question you regarding your methods (how you collected your data), analysis (coding, statistical procedures), and conclusions. A copy of your thesis should be made available (in department office) at least one week prior to your scheduled thesis defense. Your thesis committee may approve thesis fully or subject to revision. Departmental Clearance form is signed and submitted to Graduate School.

7. **Final Draft (fourth semester)**
   After your thesis defense you must prepare a final draft (including any revisions suggested by committee) of your thesis and present it to your committee for final approval and signatures. This draft must be grammatically correct, free of typographic, spelling and other errors, and must be prepared according to the graduate school standards. These standards are available at graduate office or from the Sociology Graduate Chair.
Checklist for Thesis Students

___ Complete Soc 518, Soc 530 and Soc 531

___ Complete degree plan form and submit to graduate advisor (form available at:  
   http://www.wiu.edu/grad/forms/dp.pdf)

___ Select thesis topic and thesis chair/committee

___ Complete Thesis Declaration Form (available from department secretary or graduate advisor)

___ Meet with Department Chair to discuss thesis research and thesis chair selection and to receive clearance for  
   Soc 600/Soc 601 registration

___ Enroll in Soc 600 (and 601 in same or later semester)

___ Complete paperwork and receive approval from Institutional Review Board for Research on Human Subjects  
   (information regarding IRB policies and protocols available at:  
   http://www.wiu.edu/SponsoredProjects/policies/)

___ Complete and successfully defend thesis proposal

___ Collect and analyze data

___ Complete 24 hours of coursework (including Soc 518, Soc 530, Soc 531 – See Graduate Catalog for additional  
   information on course requirements)

___ Apply for graduation (by 6th week of final semester – form available at:  
   http://www.wiu.edu/grad/forms/clear.pdf)

___ Complete and successfully defend thesis

___ Submit corrected thesis to library for deposit (See graduate studies requirements for thesis formatting and  
   submission http://www.wiu.edu/grad/resources/thesis.shtml)