

**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY  
GRADUATE COURSE/CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

**GENERAL GRADUATE SCHOOL COURSE/CREDIT REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE PH.D.**

**A minimum of 72 credit hours are required for receipt of the Ph.D.**

A minimum of 24 research credit hours.

A minimum of 48 course credit hours.

**Minimum Required Research Credits: 24**

Only “Research in Psychology” (701; 702) counts for this requirement. You will usually take research credits every year.

**Required Course Credit Hours: 48 (typically, 16 courses)**

12 credits of non-thesis research (501; 502) count toward course credits. Highly recommended: take non-thesis research credits during the first year.

**REQUIREMENTS SPECIFIC TO THE  
SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE PROGRAM**

**1. SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY CORE COURSES (Must take two out of three core courses to meet the core course requirement):**

[16:830:506] Attitudes and Social Cognition

[16:830:619] Self and Intergroup Relations

[16:830:618] Self-Regulation and Self-Control

**2. COLLOQUIUM 16:830:500 (REGISTRATION FOR THIS TWICE IS REQUIRED)**

Colloquium I- Must be completed by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Colloquium II- Must be completed by end of 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Both I & II are worth 2 credits each. Pass/fail based on both attendances to colloquium AND mandatory presentations as follows:

15-20 minute area-wide colloquium presentation for Colloquium I

45-60 minute area-wide colloquium presentation for Colloquium II

**3. STATISTICS (both are required)**

16:830:521: Research Design and Analysis I

16:830:522: Research Design and Analysis II

**4. METHODS (2 courses)\***

Contemporary Methods in Social Psychology (16:830:508)

Special Topic Methods Courses: e.g., Research Methods in Intergroup Relations, Psychophysiological Methods, Scientific Integrity, VR in Psychology, Social Psych and AI Methods

Implicit Theory and Methods (16:830:631)

*\*(Methods courses outside the area or department can be taken only with approval of Area Coordinator)*

## **5. SEMINARS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (at least 2)**

Any course entitled Seminar in Social Psychology listed under course number (16:830:617) in the psychology department fulfills this requirement as well as Health Psychology (16:830:577), Decision Making (16:830:534), Psychology of Gender (16:830:612), Industrial Organizational Psychology (16:830:510), and Social Psychology of Organizations (16:830:610).

## **6. COURSES OUTSIDE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (at least 2)**

Any graduate course outside of those offered by the Social Psychology Graduate Program will fulfill this requirement. That includes courses offered by other graduate programs in Psychology (BBN, Cognitive, and Clinical), and courses offered by other graduate departments. A common way to fulfill this requirement is to take statistics classes offered by the Graduate School of Education or by other Universities in the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (see <http://gsnb.rutgers.edu/academics/inter-university-doctoral-consortium>) that complement (not repeat) Rutgers graduate training in statistics.

## **7. ELECTIVES (at least 2)**

These can be any graduate course in any area of psychology or any department at Rutgers. For example, this could be met by taking additional social psychology graduate courses, psychology courses outside of social psychology, and/or in other departments such as anthropology, political science, etc. Any courses in the Inter-University Doctoral Consortium can also count towards this requirement.

Please bear in mind that a single course cannot fulfill multiple requirements (i.e., if a course is meant to count as your elective, it cannot simultaneously count as your methods requirement).

## **DEADLINES**

**Master's Proposal** - completion and approval by the Master's Committee by the end of the third semester (first semester of second year).

**Master's Thesis** – successful defense by the end of the fifth semester (first semester of 3<sup>rd</sup> year).

**Qualifying Examination** – Completed by the end of the seventh semester (first semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year). Or completed by the end of the fourth semester for students who arrive with an acceptable Master's thesis from another institution (see transferal information on following page)

**Ph.D. Proposal** – approved by the Dissertation Committee by the end of the ninth semester (first semester of fifth year). Or completed by the end of the sixth semester for students who arrive with an acceptable Master's thesis from another institution.

**Ph.D.** –successful defense of dissertation before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> year (before 13<sup>th</sup> semester). For those with an acceptable Master's thesis from another institution, successful defense before the end the fourth year (before 9<sup>th</sup> semester).

Students who miss deadlines will risk termination from the program. If terminated, they must reapply to be reinstated to complete the program.

## THE MASTER'S THESIS

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the Master's Thesis is to provide the student with an opportunity to design an empirical research project, carry out data collection and statistical analysis, and present their work in written and oral form.

**PROCEDURE:** All successful Master's Thesis share several formal features: (1) Formation of a Master's Committee; (2) Successful Oral Defense of a written Master's Proposal; (3) Successful Oral Defense of the Thesis; (4) Approval of the Written Thesis

**THE COMMITTEE:** The three-person Committee is formed by the student in collaboration with the advisor, who normally serves as the Committee Chair. The Committee must be approved by the Social Area Coordinator, the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Director (Chair of Psychology Department). The Committee Chair must be either Associate or Full Members of the Rutgers Graduate Faculty in Social Psychology. Where necessary, a fourth member may be added from outside the Psychology Graduate Faculty, with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. The potential outside member's vita must be submitted to facilitate evaluation of his/her credentials.

**CONTENT:** In keeping with the Program's research-apprenticeship model, much of what goes into a Master's project must be worked out between student and advisor and also will reflect conventions in the particular area of Social psychology addressed by the Thesis. Sample Master's Proposals and Theses are on file and available for inspection.

**TRANSFERRAL OF THESIS FROM ANOTHER INSTITUTION:** The Master's requirement may be waived if the student has completed an acceptable empirical research Master's Thesis at another institution. In such cases, a committee of three members of the Social Program will judge the acceptability of the thesis. The student selects the Committee chair, who, in collaboration with the Program Coordinator, selects the other two Committee members.

## THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

**PURPOSE:** The Qualifying Examination is a specialty examination by means of which the student demonstrates mastery of an area of specialization within social psychology. A specialty area is an integrated or interrelated set of methods and theories in social psychology, not simply a collection of topics.

**PROCEDURE:** The student, in collaboration with his or her advisor, begins the Qualifying Examination process by selecting a general topic area and forming the Qualifying Examination Committee. Typically, the student, in consultation with the Committee, refines the topic and develops a set of questions (no less than three, no more than six) that assess understanding of the area of specialization. Typically, the proposal includes an empirical review paper, a paper proposing a theoretical model of the phenomenon, and a research proposal.

**THE COMMITTEE:** The four-person Committee is usually chaired by the advisor. The Committee must be approved by the Social Area Coordinator, the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Director (Chair of Psychology Department). The Committee Chair must be a Full Member of Rutgers Graduate Faculty in Psychology. All Committee members

must be either Associate or Full Members of the Rutgers Graduate Faculty in Psychology. ***For the traditional qualifying exam (see description below), at least two members of the Committee must be members of the core Social Psychology faculty of the graduate Social Program in Psychology. For the alternative qualifying exam (see description below), at least three members of the Committee must be members of the core Social Psychology faculty of the graduate Social Program in Psychology.*** When necessary, a fifth member may be added from outside the Psychology Graduate Faculty, with the approval of the Dean of Graduate School. The potential outside member's vita must be submitted to facilitate evaluation of his/her credentials.

### ***Traditional Qualifying Exam***

**PROPOSAL:** A Qualifying Examination proposal is submitted to the Committee. Subsequently, the student meets with the Committee to discuss, and usually further refine, the proposal. The Committee may approve the proposal as-is, or with specific revisions; or the Committee may decide that more work is needed before providing approval. Once the proposal questions have been approved, the committee and student establish a time limit for completing the exam. This is typically 4-6 weeks, but could be longer if a compelling reason is provided.

**CONTENT:** The Qualifying Examination Questions must address the following general issues: (1) How is the specialty related to the discipline of Psychology and the sub-discipline of Social Psychology? (2) What are the major theoretical positions and conceptual issues in the area of specialization? How might conceptual or theoretical analysis in the area be improved? (3) What is the nature of the empirical base in the specialty area? How might this literature be organized? What can be done to improve the research done in the area? (4) What is the primary research methods in the area? (5) What specific research can be proposed that would represent a significant addition to the specialty area and social psychology as a whole? These questions are normally addressed in three or more papers. The papers typically take a form similar to that of manuscripts submitted to *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review*, or similar to that of a dissertation proposal or NSF or NIH grant proposal. Sample Qualifying Examination Proposals and Papers are on file and available for inspection.

**TIME LIMIT:** Once approved by the committee, you will have a finite amount of time to complete the qualifying exam. In the recent past, that has typically ranged from 1-2 months. The precise time limits are arranged with your committee.

**EVALUATION:** Each question, and the exam as a whole, will be independently graded by each member of the Committee. The following grading system will be used: A=superior performance; B=adequate performance; C=inadequate performance. For a student to pass the Qualifying Examination, ***at least three of the four*** Committee members ***(or four of the five Committee members for an expanded committee)*** must give the examination a grade of A or B as a whole. Each member decides on his/her own how to weigh responses to individual questions in arriving at an overall grade.

If the student does not pass the examination on the first attempt, revisions (i.e., rewriting or readdressing issues raised by the committee) can be allowed if acceptable to a majority of the Committee members. If the Committee feels that a revision is not warranted or if the revision does not meet an acceptable level (using the same procedure as for the initial examination), the Committee may recommend to the Department that the student be terminated from the

Psychology Graduate Program. In grading the initial or revised examination, each faculty member must provide a written response (grade plus supporting comments) to the Committee Chair. (Under normal circumstances grading should be completed within 30 days of receipt of the written examination.) The Committee Chair is responsible for collecting responses and informing both the student and Committee members of the results of the evaluation.

### ***Alternative Qualifying Exam***

Students may submit two first-authored, published papers as the qualifying exam to the regular qualifying exam committee as required by Rutgers Graduate School and the Psychology Dept. The qualifying exam committee will evaluate those papers to determine whether they constitute a passing exam. Each committee member will grade each paper; and each committee member will provide an overall grade for the combination of papers (***as described above for the traditional qualifying exam***). ***At least one of the papers must be based on research conducted as a graduate student in the graduate Social Psychology Program at Rutgers. One publication may be based on the student's Masters thesis. Participants who pass the alternative are also required to give a 45-50 minute colloquium presentation in addition (not to be substituted by Colloquium I or II).***

Having two first-authored publications, even in good, refereed journals, will not automatically constitute a passed qualifying exam. Those papers will still need to be evaluated by a qualifying exam committee. Consequently, in general, it will be a good idea for students considering this route to consult extensively with their potential committee members before submitting publications as a qualifying exam.

## **THE DISSERTATION**

**THE COMMITTEE:** The committee is formed by the student with the aid of their advisor, who typically serves as the committee chair. The committee needs to be approved by the Social Area Coordinator, the Vice Chair for Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Director/Chair of the Psychology Department. In addition to the SGS requirements for a dissertation committee, the social area requires that the committee include at least 2 social faculty on the dissertation committee (one of which may be the adviser). As a reminder, the 4-person faculty committee must also include an outside member who is not on the graduate faculty in the Psychology department (either from another department at Rutgers or a qualified person from outside Rutgers University). If the outside member is from another university, approval must be obtained from the Graduate Director.

**PROCEDURE:** (1) Formation of dissertation committee, (2) Successful oral defense of the written dissertation proposal, (3) Successful oral defense of the written dissertation, (4) Approval of the written dissertation

**CONTENT:** In keeping with the Program's research-apprenticeship model, much of what goes into a Dissertation must be worked out between student and advisor and also will reflect conventions in the particular area of Social psychology addressed by the dissertation. The number of studies for dissertations can vary and should be discussed with your advisor and committee. The final dissertation should include a full writeup of the dissertation work, including all of the formal sections of an APA manuscript. Sample proposals and full dissertations can be found in the Social Area box drive.