The PhD program is designed to attract students who wish to develop a broad base of sociological knowledge, such as would equip students to embark on academic careers in leading institutions of higher education. The PhD program boasts a wide array of curricular strengths and diverse methodological offerings, all of which draw upon the department’s emphasis on the study of social inequalities along lines of race, class, and gender. Faculty expertise ranges widely from domestic U.S. concerns to issues that affect groups, regions, and societies on a global scale.

The PhD program is organized around four key areas of specialization:

- Globalization (http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/socant/graduate/globalization)
- Urban Sociology (http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/socant/graduate/urban-sociology)
- Sociology of Gender (http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/socant/graduate/sociology-of-gender)
- Environment and Health (http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/socant/graduate/environment-and-health)

In addition to the graduate courses offered in the areas of specialization, the program offers a strong foundation in both theory (classical and contemporary) and methods (quantitative and qualitative). Reflecting the program’s distinctive emphasis on social inequalities, students are required to select a core elective in this field, choosing from a list of approved courses maintained by the department (e.g., Social Psychology of Stratification (SOCL 7263). As students complete their core requirements, they also work closely with individual faculty members to advance their work within one of the department’s standing areas of specialization. Students also have the right to petition to construct their own areas of specialization (pending departmental approval) and have completed area examinations in a host of subfields. Among these are environmental justice, political economy of global capitalism, theoretical criminology, feminist theory, political sociology, social psychology, sociology of violence, and immigration, among many others.

The PhD program is designed to admit relatively small numbers of graduate students each year, which affords students the opportunity to forge close working relationships with the faculty. Our faculty and graduate students work together in a number of interdisciplinary research projects, programs, and centers, including the Social Science Environmental Health Research Institute (http://www.northeastern.edu/environmentalhealth); the Brudnick Center on Violence and Conflict (http://www.northeastern.edu/brudnickcenter); the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy (http://www.northeastern.edu/dukakiscenter); the (http://catalog.northeastern.edu/graduate/social-sciences-humanities/sociology/sociology-phd/Institute%20on%20Urban%20Health%20Research%20and%20Practice) Institute on Urban Health Research and Practice (http://www.northeastern.edu/iuhrp); the Environmental Justice Research Collaborative (http://www.northeastern.edu/nejrc); the Institute on Race and Justice (http://www.northeastern.edu/iirj); and the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program (http://www.dac.neu.edu/womens.studies). Many of the faculty in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology have additional interests and are affiliated with other departments on campus, including environmental studies; law and public policy; Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean studies; African-American studies; international affairs, Jewish studies; and criminal justice. Students who wish to work with faculty in other disciplines are encouraged to enlist the aid of the sociology graduate director or their advisors in contacting individual faculty members.

Admissions

Students interested in the PhD should apply directly to that program. Students admitted without a master’s degree earn the MA in sociology en route to completing their PhD requirements. Please note that all applicants for the doctoral program are required to submit a writing sample that should consist of written materials that demonstrate their capacity for scholarship at the doctoral level. (Copies of several course or term papers or a copy of a master’s thesis or paper are appropriate.)

Residency Requirement

The university’s residence requirement can be satisfied by one year of full-time graduate work, or its equivalent, beyond the Master of Arts degree. If the student’s MA degree is not in sociology, a longer period of residence is typically required. Most students should expect to spend approximately two years, or the equivalent, in full-time graduate study beyond the requirements of the master’s degree.

Theory Examination

Students entering the graduate program must take a theory qualifying examination at the conclusion of their first year of study during the spring semester. The theory qualifying examination is a standard exam taken by all students in the same cohort. The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis. Students who fail the examination may take it a second time but will not be allowed to enroll for course work beyond the 30-semester-hour MA requirement or their first year of PhD residence (whichever case applies) until successfully completing the qualifying exam. Students who fail the examination on their second attempt will be asked to leave the program. In the latter case, a student may petition the graduate committee for a review of the student’s record and performance in the program.

Course Requirements

As prerequisites, all doctoral candidates are expected to have completed the core methodology and theory requirements for the Master of Arts in Sociology:

- Statistical Methods of Sociology (SOCL 7210)
- Research Methods (SOCL 7211)
- Foundations of Social Theory 1 (SOCL 7200)
- Foundations of Social Theory 2 (SOCL 7201)

Doctoral candidates are also required to complete two advanced methods classes from a list of approved courses maintained by the department. Finally, doctoral students must take a course in the area of social inequality, choosing from a list of approved courses maintained by the department.

Students entering with a bachelor’s degree complete 54 semester hours. Students entering with a master’s degree complete a minimum of 24 semester hours beyond the master’s degree.

Degree Candidacy

To enter into degree candidacy, the student must have earned a Master of Arts degree or its departmental semester-hour equivalent, passed the qualifying examination, established a graduate committee of three
faculty members from the sociology department, and successfully
completed the candidacy examination.

Once students complete doctoral course work, they will register for the
following courses in the following sequence:

- Exam Preparation—Doctoral (SOCL 8960) The semester following
  completion of course work, students will register for Exam
  Preparation. During this semester, students should complete
  their first comprehensive exam. Students only register for Exam
  Preparation once. Even if a student is unable to complete their first
  comprehensive exam during this time frame, they will not register for
  Exam Preparation again.
- Research (SOCL 9986) The next semester, students will register for
  Research, during which their second comprehensive examination
  should be completed. Upon completion of both comprehensive
  examinations, students will have achieved PhD degree candidacy, be
  certified by the graduate school, and will have five years to complete
  the dissertation.
- Dissertation (SOCL 9990) Upon achieving PhD degree candidacy,
  students will register for two consecutive semesters of Dissertation,
  during which they should complete and defend their dissertation
  proposal.
- Dissertation Continuation (SOCL 9996) Following the successful
  defense of their dissertation proposal, students will register for
  Dissertation Continuation for their remaining semesters until the
  dissertation is approved by the graduate school and submitted
  electronically to Proquest. Students do not have to register for
  Dissertation Continuation during the summer unless that is when
  their dissertation defense occurs.

Program Requirements
Bachelor's Degree Entrance
Complete all courses and requirements listed below unless otherwise
indicated.

Milestones
Qualifying examination
Annual review
Two field comprehensive examinations
Dissertation committee
Dissertation proposal
Dissertation defense

Requirements
Core Courses
SOCL 7200 Foundations of Social Theory 1 3
SOCL 7201 Foundations of Social Theory 2 3
SOCL 7210 Statistical Methods of Sociology 3
SOCL 7211 Research Methods 3
SOCL 7263 Social Psychology of Stratification 3

Advanced Methods
Complete 6 semester hours from the following: 6
SOCL 7212 Feminist Methodologies
SOCL 7213 Advanced Research Methods
SOCL 7215 Advanced Quantitative Techniques
  or CRIM 7715 Multivariate Analysis 1
  or POLS 7215 Advanced Quantitative Techniques
SOCL 7220 Seminar in Qualitative Analysis
CRIM 7316 Advanced Topics in Methods

Exam and Dissertation
Exam Preparation
SOCL 8960 Exam Preparation—Doctoral

Research
SOCL 9986 Research

Dissertation
Complete the following (repeatable) course twice:
SOCL 9990 Dissertation

Dissertation Continuation
Complete the following (repeatable) course until graduation:
SOCL 9996 Dissertation Continuation

Program Credit/GPA Requirements
54 total semester hours required
Minimum 3.000 GPA required