

## How to be Graduate Student in Social Psychology

In this document, we offer advice about how to be a graduate student in social psychology along with concrete information about the expectations and requirements of this program. This document is meant to give a narrative overview; the Psychology Department Graduate Handbook includes much more information about program details, deadlines, and requirements. Although we hope you will find this information helpful on its own, feel free to discuss career issues with the faculty at any time. If questions, doubts, or concerns arise, speak to your advisor, area head, or any other faculty member. We wish you an exciting, productive, and happy time in graduate school! **I. The big picture: What are you doing here?**

You are here to become a researcher in social psychology. If all goes well, you will earn your Ph.D., but this is most valuable for what it certifies – that you are trained to do research in social psychology. Your time here will make a lot more sense if you think always about what you need to do to become an effective researcher and scholar, not about what you need to do to get your piece of paper. That said, the second half of this document lists the social area requirements and deadlines. Information about the graduate program more generally can be found in the department's Graduate Student Handbook. Keep in mind that we accept only about 5% of applicants to this program; you were selected because you are smart, interested, and capable of becoming a researcher in social psychology.

### II. What will you do afterwards?

- *Academic research and teaching:* Our program is designed to prepare you to conduct independent scientific research. Because almost all research in social psychology is conducted at such universities, our goal is to prepare you to compete for, and get, a faculty appointment at a research university. At a research university, you are expected to spend a significant proportion of your time conducting research; such positions usually have teaching loads that assume an active research program. To succeed in this path, you will need an outstanding record of research publications, outstanding letters of recommendation from faculty, and some teaching experience.
- *Teaching:* Some of you will find that you enjoy teaching more than research. You can then use your Ph.D. to get a faculty position at a college or university that emphasizes teaching more than research. The teaching load is higher at such institutions, and they vary in their research expectations. You are probably expected to include undergraduates in the research that you do. To succeed in this path, you will need an outstanding teaching record, outstanding letters of recommendation from faculty, and some research publications. Teaching positions are quite competitive; they go to people who are extremely qualified to teach, not people who are looking for a “fallback” if their research career does not pan out.

- *Non-academic research:* Some of you will want to continue doing research, but prefer to work in private industry or the government. You could seek a position with a marketing firm, government agency, consulting firm, or the tech industry. To succeed in this path, you will need data analytic or statistical modeling skills, experience with different kinds of research methods, experience managing large and complex data sets, strong letters of recommendation from faculty, and some publications.

There may be other reasons to pursue a Ph.D., but if by the end of your second year you do not think you want a career in teaching or research, you should consider taking your master's degree and moving to a situation more targeted to your goals.

### **III. A year-by-year plan.**

#### *First Year*

You should take 4 or 5 content courses (i.e., courses that meet and assign a letter grade), including two stats courses and any courses taught by social area faculty. You are also required to participate in the weekly area Brownbag and the department-wide Seminar in Psychology Science, which offers an introduction to faculty in other areas.

You might also be a teaching assistant (TA). A TA position might be intimidating, but the university offers resources here to help you meet your teaching goals. Read teaching sites (e.g., <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/members/teaching>), attend teaching seminars, talk to others about teaching, and ask the faculty member you are assisting for guidance.

Taking courses and teaching can consume a lot of time, but remember that your top priority is to get your research going. Research requires a close collaboration with one or more faculty members, which you should begin as soon as you arrive. Research takes time; the sooner you begin thinking about the questions that you want to answer, the better. Research involves a lot of reading about the topics that interest you, as well as a lot of “nuts and bolts” work of planning studies, collecting data, and analyzing the results. It also involves many conversations with faculty members and other graduate students about the topics that interest you the most – seek out opportunities to talk about your work with others.

In your first year you will have a primary advisor, and you will attend lab meetings and contribute to the functioning of the lab. It is fine to be involved with another lab as well, as long as your research is up and running in your primary lab. Don't spread yourself too thin.

You should begin thinking about your place in the field. Join SPSP, APS, and any other relevant professional associations. Membership is relatively inexpensive for students. Joining their email lists and/or following them on social media will help keep you updated on what is going on in the field. You should almost certainly go to SPSP's annual conference, and may want to consider APA or APS if they are nearby or affordable. Also consider other,

more specialized conferences as well, and regional conferences such as the Society of Southeastern Social Psychologists (SSSP).

Developing strong writing and speaking skills are essential to success in graduate school. Buy—or find a PDF of—the APA publication manual, and use it. If writing well is not one of your skills, seek help from the UF writing center. The best way to get better at writing is to write. Also attend seminars and workshops. Develop an ear for simple, clear, direct writing. Consider consulting social psychology professor Paul Silvia's excellent books—[How to Write a Lot](#) and [Write It Up](#). Start building your library. Some people find it useful to have a filing system for articles. Taking notes on the things you read can be important, and some find it useful to organize them. Keep track of what's going on in the department. If someone is speaking on a topic of interest, even if tangential, go. Being a psychologist is much more than being an expert in your specific area of research; it requires familiarity in the breadth of social psychology and the ability to connect your specific research interests with ideas and theories from other disciplines. Meet with visiting faculty to start making professional contacts in the field and to get used to talking with others about your own and their research.

Two big things happen at the end of your first year. One is that you will propose your master's thesis, or you will ask a supervisory committee to approve the transfer to UF of your master's thesis from another university. The Psychology Department Graduate Handbook has more information about master's thesis requirements and committee composition; it is different for students who are obtaining a new master's degree versus transferring a master's degree from another university. The second is that you will give a talk at the Social Area Brownbag (near the end of the spring semester) about one of the research projects you pursued during your first year. This talk is the first big public event to show the area what you have done so far in graduate school.

Four final pieces of advice for your first year (and those that follow):

1. **Be ethical.** Acquaint yourself immediately with the APA Ethical Standards of Psychologists. Learn the requirements of our Institutional Review Board. Consider scientific best practices. We are an area that values open science. This includes encouraging preregistration of studies and hypotheses, making our methods transparent, and when possible, sharing data and materials (e.g., see <https://cos.io>).
2. **Be professional.** For example: Use professional language and titles when contacting faculty and colleagues that you do not know, use proper spelling and grammar in email communication, always be on time, do not use your computer or phone during Brownbag or classes, and dress appropriately for academic functions. Complete your work and other requirements well in advance of when they are due. Even if you luck out and are able to meet a requirement at the last minute, it may not make a good impression. Remember that you will eventually ask faculty members to write

you letters of recommendation. You want them to be enthusiastic about your sense of responsibility, organizational skills, dedication, and professionalism.

3. **Learn to give and accept feedback.** Be tough on one other, and demand quality work. Ask hard questions, but be kind. Keep in mind that “critique” and “criticism” are not the same, and that the best suggestions go beyond simply pointing out flaws

in others’ work. Similarly, seek feedback whenever possible. Ask others to read your papers, to talk over your ideas, to watch you teach. Don’t be defensive if you do not agree with what others have to say about your work. Learn to listen and to incorporate their advice and suggestions. Welcoming others’ constructive criticism makes your work stronger and is a cornerstone of success in academia. You can reward each other’s collaborative work and feedback with co-authorship.

4. **Be engaged and approach-oriented.** Show up for area and departmental events, even the informal ones. Help out with prospective visits and other area activities. Attend as many lab meetings as you can. Attend talks, especially job talks. Watching non-social job talks will help hone your presentation skills. Organize informal discussion and reading groups among other graduate students. Seek out all of the opportunities the University of Florida has for graduate students. Apply for awards, such as the SPSP travel award, and training opportunities, such as the Summer Institute in Social and Personality Psychology ([SISSP](#)) and its precursor, the European Association of Social Psychology’s (EASP) [Summer School](#). You can find lots of opportunities if you look for them.

### *Second Year*

Your coursework will continue, as will your teaching. By now you know how things work around here, and you’ve gone through all of the parts of the research process with your first-year project(s). This year should be even more focused on research. You’ll conduct the research that you proposed for your master’s thesis, but should do other work too.

Second year is a good time to expand your research interests and to think about the questions that you want to answer. Use your second year to explore collaborations with other faculty or other students. You can also explore research in other areas of the department. Do not confine your reading to your courses. Pursue opportunities to talk with others about your work and theirs. You should present your research at one conference (at least) this year. You will defend your master’s thesis by the end of April.

You should also start thinking seriously about how to get publications before you graduate. The publication process can take a long time, and you will need publications before you graduate if you want to get an academic job. Your master’s thesis might be appropriate for publication, but also consider other lines of research that might lead to a neat package of studies that you can submit. Ask your advisor(s) about possible co-authorship

opportunities on a book chapter or to help out with their research (e.g., analyzing existing data). Think about writing or collaborating on a theory or review paper. Collaborate with other graduate students and earn co-authorship on each other's papers (and potentially double your research output!). Talk with your advisor about the possibility of serving as a reviewer on a manuscript; in addition to demonstrating your service to the field, it's a good way to learn about other relevant research.

### *Third Year*

You'll complete your qualifying exam at the beginning of your third year and will likely finish your coursework (see Doctoral Qualifying Exam section below for details). But even after you finish your courses, you'll probably want to audit at least one course per semester. Third year is a good time to look at courses outside of the department. If you are leaning toward a non-academic path, then this is a great time to take additional courses in statistics, data analysis, and even programming languages.

By now you are honing your research focus and developing a line of inquiry that you are truly passionate about and that you will make your own. You might have side projects and other lines of work, but you should have one line of research that is truly *yours*. This line will almost certainly become your dissertation work, which you will propose at the end of this year.

Think about how to get grant funding for your work, even if you are financially supported. In addition to public funds, and funds from the university, dozens of private foundations fund all kinds of research (e.g., [the APA lists several](#)). Having your own money will help you to think big, and it will look great on your CV.

Make sure you are meeting other social psychologists. Attend conferences. Take advantage of social opportunities for graduate students. The benefits of doing so cannot be overstated – you will learn what others are working on, get feedback about your own work, meet potential reviewers and editors, and learn important information through “informal” channels. In addition to the importance of having professional contacts, the research process is slow enough that if you are finding out about research from the current issue of journals, you may already be “behind.”

### *Fourth and Fifth Years*

By now you have passed your qualifying examination, proposed your dissertation, and become a doctoral candidate. You are making the transition from being a student learning about a field to an expert contributing to that field. During your fourth and fifth years you will conduct the research that you proposed for your dissertation, but should conduct other research too.

In terms of professional development, these years are crucial. You will probably apply for [academic jobs and/or postdoctoral positions](#) in the fall, well before you finish your dissertation. To get such positions you need an impressive CV and an impressive set of academic skills and professional contacts. Continue getting to know social psychologists at other universities. When these psychologists are considering hundreds of applications, it will help if they remember seeing you give a talk, or remember a great conversation with you at a conference or when they gave a talk at UF.

#### **IV. Some final words of encouragement.**

When you look ahead at all the things you'll have to learn and do in just four or five years, it can be daunting. Chances are that you will have moments of serious self-doubt. Have patience. Keep reading. Keep running studies. Keep getting yourself socialized in social psychology. Put yourself in situations that will help you succeed. Again, most importantly, keep running studies. You will be astounded at how much you will learn in five years. When the time comes for you to enter the job market, you really will be a social psychologist, able to teach and to conduct independent research.

One of the most important suggestions we can give you for staying sane (and maybe even happy) in grad school is to remember that none of us got into this line of work for the money. We are social psychologists because we are fascinated by human social behavior and because we love being part of a community of researchers trying to figure it out. And we have this racket going: all of us, including you, can get paid to do something that we truly love.

### **UF Social Area Requirements**

#### **I. Program Overview and Timetable**

The [Psychology Department Graduate Student Handbook](#) is the definitive source of information about program requirements and deadlines. Please look at it regularly to make sure you are on track.

The program is designed so that it is possible to finish in four years. Most students stay for a fifth year to build their vita and to be more competitive in the job market.

Keep in mind that summers present problems for finishing work. Faculty in our department are on nine-month contracts and may not maintain the same schedules as they do between August 15 and May 15. We thus require students to schedule committee meetings and the completion of important deadlines during the fall and spring semesters.

Also, most projects take longer than you expect. Again, do not plan your work so that you anticipate finishing or meeting with your committee immediately prior to a deadline. Leave time to respond to last-minute feedback.

*First Year*

- *Immediately:* Start establishing Florida residency (U.S. citizens and permanent residents).
- *March or April:* Present your first-year work at Brownbag.
- *March:* Choose a supervisory committee for your master's degree or master's degree transfer. You should also secure a secondary mentor and, once they have agreed, email the Area Head to let them know who that person is. Your secondary mentor may be on your master's supervisory committee but does not have to be.
- *April:* Orally defend your master's thesis proposal or your master's thesis from a previous institution. Note that you must give your proposal or thesis to your committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled proposal defense. If you are transferring master's credits from another institution, you must complete the necessary paperwork at the same time.

*Second Year*

- *April:* Defend master's thesis.
- *April:* Form a supervisory committee for your dissertation.
- *June:* If exam (vs. paper) option, then submit a qualifying exam reading list to the social area faculty.

*Third Year*

- *August:* If exam option, then complete your qualifying exam.
- If paper option...
  - By September 1: Submit paper topic and list of references to diss. cmte. chair.
  - By October 15: Interim draft due to diss. cmte. chair.
  - By December 8: Final draft due to diss. cmte.
  - By December 15: Oral defense of quals paper.
- *April:* Propose your dissertation.

*Fourth and Fifth Years*

During these years, you will conduct your dissertation research. The Department of Psychology has a policy of guaranteed funding for five years assuming satisfactory progress in the program.

**II. Coursework**

Use Appendix A to chart your progress and make sure you are on track for degree completion. Charting and monitoring your progress is your responsibility. Note that, even if

you transfer a block of 30 master's credits from another university, you must still fulfill the requirements listed in Appendix A. [The Department Graduate Student Handbook](#) has more information about substituting courses.

### III. Master's Thesis

The master's thesis is designed to show evidence of research competence. Although the master's thesis does not have to be as original or imposing as the dissertation, you should try to select a topic that is important, interesting, and likely to lead to a publication.

*Proposal structure.* The first step is to write a thesis proposal and have it approved by your committee. The proposal consists of three major sections. The first section is an introduction in which you will review the relevant research literature, present your ideas, and articulate your hypotheses. The next section is a method section that describes exactly how you plan to test your hypotheses. The final section is an anticipated results section in which you describe exactly what analyses you will use to test your hypotheses. These sections should be comparable to those in a journal article, though written in future tense instead of present or past. A reference list must accompany your proposal.

*Discussing ideas and going over drafts.* Before writing the proposal, discuss your ideas with the chair of your committee (and perhaps other committee members). Once you agree on the topic with the thesis chair, write the proposal and have the chair of your committee read and comment on it. Students are normally surprised by the number of drafts required for theses and publications, so you should plan accordingly. Expect that your first draft, and perhaps several more, will require revision after you receive feedback from your chair. As such, leave plenty of time for editing and revisions.

*Forming the thesis committee and defending the proposal.* Begin thinking about your master's thesis committee early in your first year. Once you and your chair decide that the proposal is ready to go to the committee, work with your committee members to schedule a time for the oral thesis defense. Distribute your thesis proposal to the committee at least two weeks before the proposal defense, and reserve a room for a 90 minute block of time. At the proposal defense, you should present a very short ( $\approx 10$ -minute) overview of the proposed research, and be prepared to answer questions and respond to suggestions.

Theses sometimes report data collected previously (e.g., as part of a larger project conducted by your supervisor). In such cases, your proposal should indicate that the data already exist. If the proposal is well done and the prior data are appropriate for the proposal, the committee often will allow you to analyze and report the prior data. However, approval is not guaranteed. In fact, the committee may require new, different data. Moreover, you may want to propose a follow-up study with new data. This latter process normally yields high-quality theses because you already identified a phenomenon to follow up. Thus, the risk of lack of interesting findings is reduced.



*Completing and defending the thesis.* You will collect data and write your thesis during your second year in the program. You should again plan to exchange a number of drafts with your thesis chair. When you and your chair decide that the thesis is ready to go to the full committee, send your thesis to your committee electronically at least two weeks before the proposal defense date. You should reserve a room for at least 90 minutes. At the thesis defense you should prepare a short ( $\approx$ 10-15-minute) presentation of your research, and be prepared to answer questions. Your committee will convene before and after your defense and you will be asked to leave the room at those times.

#### **IV. Qualifying Exam**

*See Doctoral Qualifying Exams section near the end of this document for details. The rest of this subsection explains only the exam option, not the new paper option for new students.*

You are required to pass qualifying exams before you are officially admitted as a Ph.D. candidate. Students who come in with a master's degree can take the qualifying exam at the end of their first year; however, if not possible, then completing the examination at the end of the second year is acceptable.

The qualifying exam committee, composed of a group of social psychology faculty members, will schedule, construct, administer, and grade the written portion of the qualifying exam. You should assemble a qualifying exam reading list, drawn from your coursework, before June 1<sup>st</sup> prior to your August exam date. The qualifying exam committee will then evaluate the list and make changes if necessary.

The written portion qualifying exam consists of roughly nine items, all drawn from research methods and the core areas of social psychology. The qualifying exam questions are the same for all students taking the exam at a particular time. You will complete 4–5 questions in the morning, break for lunch, then complete 3–4 questions in the afternoon. You may use the journal articles from your reading list (i.e., an “open book” exam) but no other outside sources. The qualifying exam committee is charged with grading all written exams and advising the dissertation supervisory committee of their evaluation of your performance on the written portion. Students who are judged to have ‘*Marginal Performance*’ or ‘*Failing*’ performance will be required to rewrite their responses and have them rescored. Depending on the outcome of the exam, the student may be required to do remedial work such as take additional coursework or write a paper, or may be required to retake part of the exam.

After passing the written portion of the exam, you will also orally defend your quals responses in a meeting with your PhD supervisory committee. The oral examination will consist of responding to questions from your committee about your written quals responses as well as a brief discussion of your plans for dissertation research. Successfully completing quals requires passing both the written and oral portions of the exam and is ultimately decided by your PhD supervisory committee. More detailed information about

the qualifying examination will be distributed by the end of the academic year preceding the qualifying exam.

## **V. Dissertation Research**

The dissertation is your opportunity to show that you can make significant contributions to the research literature and that you are, in fact, a social psychologist.

It is typical, but not required, that your dissertation supervisory committee is the same as your master's thesis supervisory committee, with one additional member. You may opt to have additional committee members if you feel it benefits your dissertation. The process of proposing the dissertation research, defending the proposal, conducting the dissertation research, and defending the dissertation is identical to the process for the master's thesis.

## **VI. Annual Evaluation and Vita**

The social area faculty evaluate all graduate students at the end of each academic year. The purposes of these evaluations are to commend outstanding work, to provide constructive feedback, to ensure that faculty are cognizant of the characteristics and performance of our students, to deal with problems, recognize accomplishments, and to make recommendations about assistantship positions for the following year. To aid the faculty in their evaluation, we ask all students to update their vita annually. Preparing your vita at the end of each year will also give you a clearer picture of how you are performing.

### **APPENDIX A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM OF STUDY COURSEWORK WORKSHEET**

\*Note that this worksheet is subject to change as department requirements change\*

#### **I. Department Breadth Requirement.**

\_\_\_ **Option A:** If you have an undergraduate degree in Psychology from an accredited university, you have met the department breadth requirement.

\_\_\_ **Option B:** If you do not have an undergraduate degree in Psychology from an accredited university, you may fulfill the breadth requirement by: (a) documenting that you have completed 9 credit hours of Psychology courses outside of the graduate specialization at your prior institution (undergraduate or graduate), (b) successfully completing 9 credit hours of Psychology courses outside of the graduate specialization during their training in our graduate program, (c) teaching PSY2012, or (d) applying for an exemption.

**II. Social Area Seminar Participation:** All students must participate in a weekly area colloquium speaker series. First year students should participate in the discussion portion of the course if it is offered and are encouraged to take the course for credit).

**III. Social Area Courses Research Methods, Advanced Social Psychology, and 3 additional SOP courses.** These cannot also count toward any other section. These must be courses with a letter grade (i.e., not pass/fail).

Course	Semester & Year	Hours	Grade
Survey of Social Psychology	_____	___	___
Advanced Research Methods	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___

**IV. Statistics & Research Methods: Minimum 4 courses.** Two of these courses may count toward the distribution requirement if they do not have an SOP prefix. These must be courses with a letter grade (i.e., not pass/fail).

Course	Semester & Year	Hours	Grade
_____	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___
_____	_____	___	___

**V. Master’s Hours: Minimum 6 hours.** You must earn a minimum of 30 hours for the awarding of a Master’s degree, of which no more than 8 master’s research credits can be transferred from another institution. At least 3 hours of PSY 6971 (master’s research) must be taken in the semester that the degree is awarded.

Course	Sem. & Year	Hours	Grade	Course	Sem. & Year	Hours	Grade
PSY 6971	_____	___	___	PSY 6971	_____	___	___
PSY 6971	_____	___	___	PSY 6971	_____	___	___

**VI. Dissertation Hours: Minimum 12 hours.** You must earn a minimum of 90 hours beyond the bachelor’s degree for the doctoral degree. You can transfer no more than 30 hours of a master’s degree from another institution. You must take at least 3 hours of PSY 7980 (doctoral research) in the semester that the degree is awarded.

Course	Sem. & Year	Hours	Grade	Course	Sem. & Year	Hours	Grade
PSY 7980	_____	___	___	PSY 7980	_____	___	___
PSY 7980	_____	___	___	PSY 7980	_____	___	___

PSY 7980 \_\_\_\_\_ PSY 7980 \_\_\_\_\_

PSY 7980 \_\_\_\_\_ PSY 7980 \_\_\_\_\_

**VII. Distribution Requirement: Minimum 12 hours.** Students must take at least 12 credit hours from courses that do not have an SOP prefix. These must be courses with a letter grade. The chair of your supervisory committee will approve these courses.

Course	Semester & Year	Hours	Grade
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**VIII. Elective Hours.** This category represents any course you took that does not fulfill another requirement.

Course	Semester & Year	Hours	Grade
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**Final Note:** You can transfer a maximum of 30 hours from another institution toward the doctoral degree. If you are transferring courses, please make clear which courses are transferred.

Important Events	Date Completed
Read Ethics Code; Pass <a href="#">IRB Ethics Course</a>	
Form Supervisory Committee for Master's Degree and secure secondary mentor (April of 1 <sup>st</sup> year)	
Transfer Master's Thesis and Credits (if applicable; April of 1 <sup>st</sup> year)	
Master's Defense (April of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	
Form Supervisory Committee for Dissertation (April of 2 <sup>nd</sup> year)	
Qualifying Exam (August that begins 3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	
Teach Introductory Psychology	

Dissertation Proposal (April of 3 <sup>rd</sup> year)	
Dissertation Defense (April of 5 <sup>th</sup> year)	

# Doctoral Qualifying Exam

## Social Psychology Area

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
Organizing the Dissertation Committee	2
Written Component: Paper vs Exam Option	2
<b>Paper Option</b>	<b>2</b>
Timeline	3
Topic and Outline	3
Interim Draft	3
Final Draft	3
Feedback Policy	3
Oral Defense	3
Grading	3
Probationary Status	4
Academic Integrity	4
<b>Exam Option</b>	<b>4</b>
Exam Content	4
Reading List	4
Exam Format	5
Open Book/Note Policy	5
Oral Defense	5
Grading	5
Academic Integrity	6
<b>Important Dates</b>	<b>6</b>

## Overview

All doctoral students enrolled in the Social Psychology Program are required to take a Doctoral Qualifying Exam. This exam has a written component and an oral component that is administered by a student's Doctoral Supervisory Committee. The oral component occurs after the written component. Students who successfully pass the qualifying exam become doctoral candidates.

### Organizing the Dissertation Committee

Your dissertation committee will read your qualifying exam and participate in your oral defense. Advancement to candidacy requires their approval. Thus, you will need to establish a dissertation committee prior to taking qualifying exams. You should organize your dissertation committee as soon as possible after fulfillment of your master's thesis requirement, and no later than August of (the start of) your third year.

### Written Component: Paper vs Exam Option

Students entering the program August 2022 or earlier may select between the paper or exam option. You must communicate your decision in writing to your primary advisor by May 1st of your second year. This decision is binding; students choosing the exam option cannot shift to the paper option later (or vice versa). As of August 2023, students entering the program must complete the paper option; the exam option will then be phased out.

## Paper Option

Students entering the program on or after August 2023 will complete a review paper to satisfy the written component. The goal of the paper is to better understand a topic of your interest. The document should summarize and critically review an area of literature and spur future research, including ideas for your dissertation proposal. We have explicitly designed the paper requirement to be something that you can eventually submit for publication. Indeed, the quality of the review paper should be at a level suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed outlet in the field (e.g., *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*). Typical length for this paper is between 30-50 pages double-spaced, APA style.

With permission from your committee, you may also develop a theory paper or meta-analysis of comparable length and format suitable for submission to an outlet such as *Psychological Bulletin* or *Psychological Review*. Such a paper exceeds the requirements for the written component, and students should realistically consider the timeline entailed in doing so.

Spring 2023

## Timeline

(All dates take place during the Fall semester of the 3rd year)

### Topic and Outline

Students should submit the topic for the paper (i.e., a working abstract and detailed outline including a list of references) to the chair of their dissertation committee for feedback no later than September 1 of your third year. You will receive feedback on your outline by September 10.

### Interim Draft

An interim draft is due to the chair of your dissertation committee no later than October 15. This draft should reflect progress on the paper to date and can range from an early rough draft to a nearly polished final draft. You should expect to receive feedback on your draft by October 30. The more detailed and polished the draft, the more likely the feedback will be detailed and useful.

### Final Draft

The final draft should be formatted for submission and is due to your dissertation committee at least one week prior to your oral defense date which should take place before December 15.

### Feedback Policy

You may consult with your advisors during the planning stage; however, we permit only a single editorial review from the advisor before submitting the paper to your dissertation committee. To this end, the chair of your dissertation committee will provide feedback on your a) outline and b) interim draft only. You can maximize the usefulness of this feedback by submitting outlines and drafts that have undergone multiple rounds of self-revision and editing prior to submission.

## Oral Defense

Your oral defense must take place no later than December 15 and should be scheduled for 60 minutes. Keep in mind that this is after classes have ended and you cannot count on your committee members being available; schedule this in early November at the latest. The oral defense will consist of questions from your dissertation committee about your paper, as well as the field more broadly.

## Grading

Your dissertation committee will meet at the end of your oral defense to determine whether you have successfully met the requirements for advancement to candidacy. The committee will make an overall recommendation on the basis of the written and oral components: *fail*, *provisional pass*, *pass*, or *pass with distinction*. A passing score is required for advancement to PhD candidacy.



Spring 2023

A *provisional pass* will be accompanied by feedback on revisions necessary to achieve a passing score. The revised document incorporating these changes must be submitted to the chair of the dissertation committee no later than one month after receiving the committee's feedback.

### Probationary Status

Students who miss the fall of the third year deadline (or who do not receive a passing score on the exam) will be placed on probation. Students on probation have one semester to meet the requirements for advancement to candidacy. If these are not met by the end of that semester, funding may be withdrawn.

### Academic Integrity

You may consult with your advisors during the planning stage, and discuss your progress with advisors and peers. However, the written work you submit must be your own. Editorial review (by your advisor, or any other faculty member at UF or elsewhere) prior to submitting is allowed at two timepoints: once when submitting your initial outline and once after submitting your first draft.

You are welcome to access general university writing resources, such as the Writing Center. You may also consider supporting each other's progress through writing groups and/or peer editing.

You may read other students' previous review papers and/or discuss defense experiences with students who have previously completed quals.

## Exam Option

Students entering the program on or prior to August 2022 have the option of taking a written exam instead of a review paper. This option is an in-person open book timed exam that takes place in early August.

### Exam Content

The exam covers all graduate courses offered by social faculty in the two academic years prior to the exam. Coverage includes brownbag, all SOP grad seminars, and the methods and grad theory courses (if taught). Students are responsible for all material, even if they did not take a specific course.

### Reading List

It is the responsibility of the graduate students to prepare a reading list for the qualifying exam and distribute it to the Qualifying Exam Committee. The reading list should include every article assigned in any graduate course offered by social faculty in the previous four semesters. The Qualifying Exam Committee will draw exam questions from this reading list. Please send this list to the faculty member chairing qualifying exams by May 15 of the year in which you will take your qualifying exam.

Spring 2023

The Qualifying Exams Committee will review the list and may choose to highlight specific articles to emphasize to guide your studying. Although quals questions may draw more heavily upon these readings, you are responsible for all readings on the list. All students who choose to take the qualifying exam must submit the finalized reading list by June 1 of the year in which they wish to take their qualifying exam.

## Exam Format

The exam takes place all-day on campus, with a morning and an afternoon session. In the morning you will have four hours to answer four (out of five) written essay questions; followed by an hour lunch break. In the afternoon you will have another four hours to answer a second set of written questions (i.e., select three out of four questions). The faculty member chairing the quals committee will reach out to students taking the exam in early May to select an August date for the exam.

The exam should be completed on the computer in a word document.

## Open Book/Note Policy

You may access any saved digital or print articles for reference, but cannot use outside notes or any other resources on the exam. It is acceptable to have notes/annotations in the margins of the articles you reference, as long as they are related to the paper at hand and in the spirit of quals. (That is, this provision is not a loophole to embed pre-written responses or other extensive/extraneous written content that you would not typically include when critically reading an article).

## Oral Defense

Your oral defense must take place within 4 weeks of receiving your written exam grade, and will be scheduled for 60 minutes. The oral defense will consist of questions from your dissertation committee about the feedback on your written exam responses, and a progress update on your plans for your dissertation proposal. We advise you to schedule your defense date with your committee well in advance.

## Grading

The Qualifying Exam Committee (which consists of at least three social psych faculty members) grades exams anonymously and will average the scores to form an overall recommendation: fail, marginal pass, pass, or pass with distinction. You must receive a passing score to advance to PhD candidacy.

The Qualifying Exams Committee will communicate their recommendation to your dissertation committee, along with a copy of your written responses. Your written responses will form the basis of your oral defense. Your dissertation committee will meet at the end of your oral defense and decide whether you have successfully met the requirements for advancement to candidacy. The decision is ultimately up to the dissertation committee.

Spring 2023

### Academic Integrity

You are encouraged to study together with other exam-takers and to take notes on articles as you read. You may use these annotated articles on the exam. You may look at old qualifying exams and/or review answers from students who have previously taken exams.

## Important Dates

<b>Date</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Task</b>
May 1	2nd	Declare exam or paper option [both]
May 15	2nd	Submit full reading list [exam]
June 1	2nd	Submit final reading list [exam]
Early August	3rd	Written exams are held [exam]
September 1	3rd	Submit topic to committee chair [paper]
September 10	3rd	Feedback received [paper]
October 15	3rd	Submit draft to committee chair [paper]
October 30	3rd	Feedback received [paper]
>1 week before oral defense	3rd	Final draft to committee chair [paper]
(By) Early December	3rd	Oral defense [both]
<b>Oral defenses must be finished by December 15th</b>		