

**RESEARCH & WRITING PROJECT  
SOC 492 SYLLABUS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY**

**DESCRIPTION**

The Research & Writing project (SOC 492) is designed to allow students to conduct a critical and in-depth analysis on a particular sociological issue (problem), a specific area of sociology (e.g., social stratification, deviance, race, gender, housing), or a critical review of the literature surrounding a contemporary sociological debate. Students elect SOC 492 as an option rather than SOC 490 Thesis or SOC 491 Experiential Research & Learning. The subject area for Research & Writing is open in order to provide students with the opportunity to select an issue, area, or debate that engages their interest. Students work with a sociology faculty advisor and choose between three alternatives:

1. *An issue or problem project.* Students may identify a significant, fundamental, conceptual issue or problem in sociology and critically examine that issue or problem. Students are expected to assemble and synthesize the appropriate literature relevant to the problem, bringing their own analysis to bear on the issue chosen.
2. *A critical review of the literature in a specific sociological area of interest.* Students, working with a sociology faculty advisor, create a comprehensive bibliography in the special area. Using this bibliography, the student is responsible for reading and critically reviewing the literature on that area of interest.
3. *A critical review of the literature surrounding a contemporary sociological debate.* Again, students, working with a sociological faculty advisor, are responsible for assembling, reading, and critically reviewing literature surrounding a contemporary sociological debate (e.g., quantitative vs. qualitative, structure vs. agency, etc.)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES (written and oral components)**

In order to receive a passing grade and three credits for SOC 492 students must demonstrate the ability to conduct an independent, sociologically grounded and relevant analysis of sociological literature. The final project must demonstrate the student's competence in sociological theory and methodology, and their ability to investigate the literature, debates, or issues in a sociological area of interest. Furthermore, both the written and oral aspects of the activist research or experiential learning project must demonstrate competence in the following areas:

1. Analytical reading, knowledge, and presentation of relevant sociological literature on issue/area/debate under study;
2. Sociological and critical thinking about the issue/area/debate;

3. A well-organized, logically-developed, properly-cited, and grammatically-correct written portion;
4. A well-organized and logically-developed oral defense of project.

## **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

SOC 492 requires advanced standing in either the M.A. or 5 year M.A.-B.A. program. Students who elect NOT to do a Thesis or an Experiential Learning Project must take SOC 492. Students should register for SOC 492 after completing between 24-27 credits of coursework. All outstanding incompletes in coursework must be removed from the student's transcript prior to enrollment in SOC 492. Students should be aware that faculty members are not available to oversee projects or sign registration forms during university breaks (including the summer) and holidays.

Students may either work in collaboration with a full-time faculty member to craft a project or they may elect with the approval of their faculty project advisor(s) to expand upon an earlier interest or topic. Projects submitted for previous course work will **not** count toward the final paper required for SOC 492. A student **may** undertake new work on a previous area of interest with their advisors' permission. Students should consult with a full-time member of the sociology faculty before commencing substantial work for either SOC 492. Any work previously completed or begun or work done without the approval of the faculty chair will not be accepted for credit toward SOC 492.

## **FACULTY COMMITTEE**

After reviewing the course descriptions for SOC 492, students will formulate initial ideas about how they might fulfill the requirements. Students will then approach one full-time sociology faculty member, preferably whose interests are similar to yours, to discuss your ideas and to form a faculty committee. The faculty committee minimally includes two people, the faculty chair and a second member-reader. The second reader may be another member of the sociology faculty at Roosevelt or a faculty member from another discipline or university that has a demonstrated knowledge of your research or project topic. The second reader of your committee should be chosen in consultation with the faculty chair of your committee. Additional readers may be added to your committee with permission of the faculty chair. The faculty chair of your committee will work closely with you during all phases of your research and writing project including the exploration and conceptualization of potential issues/areas/debates; development of a bibliography; the writing of the initial and subsequent drafts, revising and editing all drafts, and formatting the final polished product (i.e., use of style guide for citations, references, and other supporting documents).

## **EVALUATION AND PRESENTATION OF WORK (I combined the first evaluation paragraph with this one)**

The written and oral portions of SOC 492 will be overseen by the candidate's committee chair, the second reader, and any additional readers that have been approved by the faculty chair. The

written portion is normally the length of a long journal article. The paper should be between 25-35 pages in length excluding references and appendices. Page length is less important than strength of sociological and critical analysis. Four hard copies of the final paper must be submitted to the faculty chair. You should submit the final version of your thesis, project or paper to your committee no later than one and a half months before the university graduation deadlines to give them time to read and comment on your thesis, to schedule a defense of the final paper and for you to make any requested revisions. For instance, if you want to finish by the December graduation date, you should have your final draft to your committee by November 1.

Once the final draft of the candidate's work has been provisionally accepted by the faculty chair and the other members of the candidates' committee, the candidate will then schedule her/his oral defense of their work. This oral defense is an opportunity for the candidate to present her/his work to the members of the sociology faculty and other invited guests. The committee chair and all other readers evaluate the candidates written and oral performance and render a grade of Pass or Fail. A grade of Pass carries with it 3 credit hours; a grade of Fail carries 0 credit hours.

Please note that the oral defense and any revisions requested following it must be accomplished in a timely fashion that meets the university deadlines for graduation. A final grade of PASS will not be submitted until the candidate has successfully complete their oral defense and has responded in writing to any final recommendations made by the faculty chair in consultation with the members of the candidates' committee and any full-time member of the sociology faculty present at the oral defense. Please keep in mind that failure to meet ALL deadlines will delay the candidate's graduation for at least one semester.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

It is the candidate's responsibility to read and observe the university's policy on academic integrity. If you have any questions or do not understand what constitutes academic integrity, it is the student's responsibility to discuss this with their faculty committee chair before submitting any written work. Failure to observe the University's standards of academic integrity will preclude the awarding of academic credit for SOC 492.

## **PROCEDURES AND TIMELINE FOR SOC 492**

1. SOC 492 should take **one** semester to complete. Students should not expect Research & Writing projects to be read or graded when the university is not in session (i.e., Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, or Spring Break, or Summer Session). Students are responsible for considering these blackout dates when planning a timeline for completion of SOC 492, the degree, and for graduation submission deadlines.
2. After completing 24 credit hours of instruction, students must approach a full time member of the sociology faculty to discuss ideas for their Research & Writings project and to select a faculty chair. Once a faculty member agrees to chair the candidate's committee, the candidate should consult with that person on the selection of one additional faculty members for their

committee and then contact those faculty members to determine if they are available and able to serve on the proposed committee. The candidate should ask and secure a faculty chair and committee members no later than two weeks into the first semester of their expected final year of study.

3. Candidates must submit the completed SOC 492 **Intent and Approval Form** to the Sociology Chair (available from any full time member of the sociology faculty), with the required signatures, **no later than the last week of classes in the semester prior to when the candidate plans to enroll in SOC 492**. This form requires the candidate to attach a written 3-4 paragraph project description, including: 1) a purpose statement about the research topic, question, debate, issue, argument, or intention; 2) a brief overview of the project's scope; and 3) a preliminary bibliography (which should first be discussed with the faculty chair). The Intent and Approval Form may be completed by the candidate with the assistance of their faculty chair. Finally, upon completion, the Intent and Approval form must be signed by the candidate, the faculty chair, and any additional readers BEFORE enrollment in SOC 492 is possible.

4. Once completed the Intent and Approval Form should be signed by the candidate and then submitted to the faculty chair and all other committee members for their signatures. When all of the required signatures have been obtained, the candidate should ask their faculty chair to complete an "Individualized Section Registration Form," which once completed and signed will allow the candidate to register for SOC 492. This form is available from the departmental office in room 752 or online (<http://www.roosevelt.edu/pdfs/individsecreg.pdf>). The candidate cannot register for SOC 492 until all the required signatures (i.e., faculty chair, all committee members, and the candidate) are obtain the form is submitted to the faculty chair.