

Description of the training of graduate students in scholarly ethics and integrity, Department of Sociology

The Sociology Department's approach to ethical instruction of M.S. and Ph.D.¹ students centers on a required, first term, one credit-hour course, SOC 5914, "Orientation to the discipline". This weekly seminar includes two weeks of instruction on ethical matters and one writing assignment that allows students to adhere to disciplinary and university codes of conduct in their scholarship. Evaluation of these assigned writings provides an assessment of a student's mastery of this ethical material.

1. Plagiarism and other violations of the Graduate Honor Code

All entering students in the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in sociology must take SOC 5914 during their first semesters, while also taking GRAD 5004. The instructor of SOC 5914 invites a member of the Graduate School's Honor System to address the class on topics of cheating, plagiarism, falsification, academic sabotage, and the Graduate School's avenues for reporting misconduct, in order to allow students to learn the Graduate Honor Code.

2. Proper use of professional conventions in citation of existing research and scholarship, accurate reporting and ownership of findings, and acknowledgement of contributions to the work

Students in SOC 5914 learn the stylistic guidelines of the *American Sociological Review (ASR)* and study portions of the ASA Code of Ethics regarding data sharing, plagiarism, and authorship credit. At the end of each Fall semester, first-term students write short literature reviews and research proposals as part of SOC 5914. The instructor assesses the writing in terms of the following criteria:

1. proper citation (i.e., lack of plagiarism)
2. proper acknowledgment of contributions to the work, including sources of data and editorial advice
3. use of appropriate *ASR* guidelines for the manuscript

3. Ethical standards in teaching, mentoring, and professional activities (with optional topics in boldface)

Students in SOC 5914 read and discuss the entire ASA Code of Ethics, which addresses diverse matters of discipline-specific professional behavior: conflicts of interest, **teaching and training (mentoring)**, **assignment of authorship**, employment practices, informed consent and

¹ We see no need to differentiate the ethical requirements of the M.S. and Ph.D. programs.

confidentiality in human-subjects research, publication of research, and responsible representation of expertise.

We also require all new M.S. and Ph.D. students to attend the GTA training workshops (GRAD 5004), which include a mandatory session on the “Prevention and handling **harassment and discrimination in the classroom**”, as well as other pertinent sessions chosen by individual students. The department's Graduate Director solicits input from the faculty regarding the performance of the GTAs, and when necessary, meets with the GTAs one-on-one to advise them on any challenges they face in their professional development.

Furthermore, students in SOC 5914 also hear a presentation from a university librarian, which touches on matters of **fair use**. Finally, they register with the **Institutional Research Board**, which requires that they pass an exam on research ethics (including the maintenance of human subjects’ **confidentiality/anonymity**) and IRB compliance.

4. Available avenues for reporting alleged misconduct

Relevant avenues appear in the ASA Code of Ethics, the Graduate Honor Code, the Graduate School’s website, and the Graduate Expectations, all of which students review as part of SOC 5914.

Students who complete all portions of SOC 5914 and GRAD 5004 are considered to have completed the ethical requirements of the M.S. and Ph.D. programs, which we will modify our Plan of Study form to note.