Medical Sociology

Prospective students should use website below to obtain specific admissions requirements on how to apply to Graduate School:

http://www.uab.edu/cas/sociology/graduate-programs

Medical Sociology Ph.D. Program

This program is designed to provide students with the coursework and research experiences to become leading researchers, professors and practitioners in medical sociology. Doctoral training in medical sociology exposes students to the central issues of the field through a variety of methodological techniques encompassing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Graduate students study the social and cultural bases of health beliefs and behaviors, organizational structures of health care delivery, and health disparities, to name just a few examples. Students acquire expertise in theory formulation and data analysis.

There are abundant opportunities for graduate students to work with faculty on research projects in medical settings across the campus.

Admission

Admission to the Ph.D. program in medical sociology generally requires a minimum overall score of 290. Scores should range from 150-162 verbal and 140-157 Quantitative. Minimum GPA of 3.0 (A = 4.0), or a 3.2 GPA for the last 60 semester hours in a B.A. or B.S. program; and minimum GPA of 3.5 in all previous graduate coursework. Students should have completed at least 18 hours in social science courses, including social theory, statistics, and research methods. Students entering the program with a master's degree can waive 16 hours of courses, of which 6 credits are thesis research credits. Please see the sociology website for more information coming in with a masters. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the Medical Sociology Ph.D. program, students with diverse backgrounds in social science and health-related fields are encouraged to apply. Students lacking adequate backgrounds in theory, research methods, or statistics may be required to make up deficits after enrollment.

Advising

The Graduate Director and/or the student's faculty mentor will provide continuous advisement on academic progress during the student's graduate study, including assistance with course selection and recommendations for research experiences that are consistent with the student's developing interests and abilities. In addition, each year the student will be formally evaluated by the Graduate Committee and will be provided with performance feedback.

Research supervision is provided by faculty whom students select to chair the master's thesis and doctoral dissertation committees. Typically, the student will select persons with whom a close, supportive relationship develops.

The placement of Ph.D. students in research sites within the Department and/or in areas across campus is an important part of the Medical Sociology Program. Such placements usually involve assisting faculty on research grants. Such experiences provide students with invaluable real-life exposure to medical sociology “in action.” As such, they are important accompaniments to the coursework of the Ph.D. program. Teaching and research positions are offered to students based on department needs, funding available and student merit.

Financial Aid

All students admitted to the Ph.D. program will be considered for financial aid. Sources include graduate fellowships and assistantships.

Additional Information

Deadline for Entry Term(s): Fall
Deadline for All Application Materials to be in the Graduate School Office: August 1
Number of Evaluation/recommendation Forms Required: Three

Entrance Tests: GRE (TOEFL, IELTS and TWE also required for international applicants whose native language is not English.)

Ph.D. Program in Medical Sociology http://www.uab.edu/sociology/

For detailed information, contact UAB Department of Sociology, HHB 460A, 1401 University Boulevard, Birmingham, Alabama 35294-1152.
Telephone 205-934-2562
E-mail pdrentea@uab.edu
Web http://www.uab.edu/sociology/

Curriculum

The components of the Ph.D. program are as follows:

1. Required Coursework

Medical Sociology Core (9 hr)

Required:

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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 780 Advanced Medical Sociology</td>
<td>3</td>
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2 of the following Required Electives:

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<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 724 Body and Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 734 Global Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 755 Race/Ethnicity and Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 756 Gender and Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC 775 Place and Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 781 Sociology of Health and Illness</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 783 Health Care Delivery Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 785 Family and Health</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 786 Health Disparities</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 787 Sociology of Mental Health</td>
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Theory Core (6 hr)

Required:

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<th>Requirements</th>
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Requirements

SOC 720 Classical Theory 3
SOC 722 Contemporary Sociological Theory 3

Statistics and Research Core (15 hr)

Requirements

SOC 601 Data Management and Analysis 3
SOC 703 Regression Analysis 3
SOC 704 Categorical Data Analysis 3
SOC 705 Advanced Research Methods 3
SOC 711 Qualitative Methods 3

Research Hours

(required by The University)

Master’s Thesis Research Hours (6 hr)
Doctoral Dissertation Research Hours (24 hr)

Sociology/Health Electives/Transfer Credits

Entering with a BA: 24 hrs Sociology electives
Entering with an MA: 15 hrs Sociology electives
Entering with MA, thesis required: 9 hrs Sociology electives

GRD 717 Responsible Conduct of Research requirement by the university (3 hr); counted as an elective.

Proseminars (3 hr)

Proseminar, SOC 702 - 1 hr Fall Research
Proseminar, SOC 702 - 1 hr Spring Professionalization
Proseminar, SOC 702 - 1 hr Summer Teaching

*students may take up to 3 790-793 classes for credit as electives.

*students may take up to 2 online courses towards their degree

2. Graduate Proseminar Functions

The graduate proseminar series (SOC 702) is required of all entering doctoral graduate students for their initial three terms in the graduate program. These classes familiarize new students with departmental policies and procedures, as well as various facets of the profession of sociology. This series should not only help students become situated within the graduate program, but also give them an opportunity to become better acquainted with the faculty and graduate student body. Students should also gain experience with basic professional skills such as identifying appropriate journals, creating a curriculum vitae, identifying one’s own research interests, developing basic classroom skills, and addressing ethical issues associated with the profession of sociology.

3. The Master’s Thesis

Students pursuing the doctoral degree must follow Plan I (Thesis Plan) of the existing master’s degree program by producing a research-based thesis, but two types of documents will be acceptable. The first is a traditional thesis organized in the form of an extensive book monograph. This option is especially appropriate for qualitatively based research. The second acceptable type of document is a manuscript in the standard form of a journal article with appended materials. Specifically, this journal article thesis will consist of:

1. A forward which places the research in context, specifying the journal to which the article is to be submitted, delineating the rationale for co-authorship (if appropriate), and making acknowledgments;
2. A journal article manuscript with a text no longer than the page limitations of a journal selected by the committee, plus footnotes, references, tables, and figures;
3. An appendix with an annotated bibliography of relevant literature;
4. An appendix that details, in full, the methodological procedures;
5. An appendix of measurement instrumentation (e.g., survey instruments, in-depth interview schedules, observational logs, etc.);
6. An appendix of additional tables and/or samples of observational notes;
7. An appendix of other research documentation such as survey cover letters, human subject review approval forms, and letters of support and approval from facilities at which the research was conducted.

The master's thesis process involves:

1. Formation of the thesis committee;
2. Oral defense of a written thesis research proposal;
3. Oral defense of the completed thesis;
4. Submission of the completed manuscript to the Graduate School;
5. Submission of the journal article for publication.

The thesis committee consists of a minimum of three full-time faculty members, including one from outside the Department of Sociology. This committee will be responsible for guiding the research process, evaluating the final draft of the thesis, presiding over the oral defenses of the thesis proposal and the completed manuscript, and approving the journal article for submission for publication. In addition to meeting general M.A. degree requirements, before being admitted to candidacy for the M.A. degree, a student in the Ph.D. program in Medical Sociology must have completed the master’s level core course in theory (SOC 722) and the core methods courses (including SOC 601 or SOC 703 and SOC 704 and SOC 705 or SOC 711), completed two of the five courses in the medical sociology core, and made a successful oral defense of the thesis proposal.

For those students entering with a master’s degree, the graduate director will review the student's transcript, evaluate course transfers (if any), and devise a course plan. This student's doctoral advisory committee also will handle the student's admission to candidacy and the requirement of submitting a journal article for review. The student with the master's degree will not be required to make oral defenses of his/her thesis work from another institution.

4. Comprehensive Examination Policy

Exam Description

The comprehensive exam is a take-home exam that requires you to answer 4 out of 5 questions related to major theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues in medical sociology and a chosen specialty area. Your specialty area must be a combination of health and one substantive area reflecting the specialties of our department (e.g., health disparities, aging and health, health behaviors, health and demography, etc.). There is no oral examination.

Developing a Readings List

The comprehensive exam committee will use your reading list to create exam questions related to your chosen specialty area and medical
sociology more broadly. This means that successfully completing your comprehensive exams will require you to work with your faculty advisor and the exam committee to develop a readings list. You should aim to have your list approved by your committee and advisor (if not in the committee) by the 2nd week of the semester preceding the one when you wish to take your exam.

Readings lists range between 100 to 125 published papers, including peer-reviewed articles, literature reviews, and books. Your list must draw from your coursework, major works in medical sociology, the department’s required readings list, and key scholarship from your chosen specialty area. Ideally, your readings list should include one or more sections directly related to your dissertation. Reading lists are public and can be shared in the department.

The Comprehensive Exam Committee returns their first set of revisions for the list or their approval within 2 weeks of receiving the list. Faculty and student work together until the list is accepted. However, faculty can NOT approve student work during the summer.

**Exam Preparation**

Preparation is absolutely critical to passing your exams. We expect all students to take initiative and use the resources provided by the department to prepare for the exam. The main office has a file with old lists and test questions. Students are encouraged to use these lists and exam questions/answers to prepare. The best exams are written by students who have organized their notes and spent time writing answers to common exam questions.

**Taking the Exam**

The student will answer four of five questions as a take-home exam. The exam is distributed at 4:00 p.m. on Friday and is due the following Monday at 9:00 a.m. While taking your exam, you may not discuss it with anyone other than the comprehensive exam committee. You are encouraged to use any notes or practice answers you have prepared.

**Comprehensive Exam Committee**

The comprehensive exam committee will consist of three faculty members selected on a rotating basis by the Graduate Committee. One faculty will head the committee and make sure the questions are distributed and answers received. They will also notify the Graduate Director of the outcome. The Graduate Director is not a member of the Comprehensive Exam Committee.

5. **The Doctoral Dissertation**

The dissertation process is as follows:

1. Formation of the dissertation committee;
2. Oral defense of a written dissertation research proposal;
3. Oral defense of the completed dissertation;
4. Submission of the completed manuscript to the Graduate School.

In consultation with faculty, and near the completion of all substantive coursework, a student forms a dissertation committee consisting of at least five members, with two from outside the Department of Sociology. This committee will be responsible for guiding the research process, evaluating the final draft of the dissertation, and presiding over the oral defenses of the dissertation proposal and the completed manuscript. A student is admitted to candidacy after successful oral defense of the dissertation proposal and no earlier than the term in which the required substantive coursework is completed.