Medical Sociology Ph.D. Program

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:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
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<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:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC 720 Classical Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 722 Contemporary Sociological Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
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Statistics and Research Core (15 hr)

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<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 601 Data Management and Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 703 Regression Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 704 Categorical Data Analysis</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 705 Advanced Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 711 Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
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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.

**Graduate Certificate in Social & Behavioral Statistics**

The Graduate Certificate in Social & Behavioral Statistics is available to students currently enrolled in a Graduate Program who have a 3.0 GPA or higher.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC 707</td>
<td>Statistical Programming for Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Statistics Courses</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PY 719</td>
<td>Multivariate Statistical Methods or PY 719Lab for Multivariate Statistical Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>PY 727</td>
<td>Longitudinal Data Analysis Laboratory or SOC 716Advanced Longitudinal and Multi-level Data Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>PY 746</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modeling</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC 704</td>
<td>Categorical Data Analysis</td>
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Total Hours: 15

1 Other advanced statistics electives may be approved by the Program Director.

**Contact**

Program Director: Sylvie Mrug, Ph.D.

E-mail: smrug@uab.edu

**Courses**

**SOC 503. Regression Analysis. 3 Hours.**
Multivariate Statistical Analysis.

Prerequisites: SOC 410 [Min Grade: A]

**SOC 601. Data Management and Analysis. 3 Hours.**
An introduction to statistical theory and univariate and bivariate statistics.

**SOC 613. Intro to Applied Sociology Research Methods. 3 Hours.**
Overview of methodologies used in applied social science research; major emphasis includes components of the research process, problem conceptualization, research design, measurement, sampling, questionnaire development, modes of data collection, and ethical issues in both quantitative and qualitative research.

**SOC 620. Public Sociology. 3 Hours.**
Explores the role and potential of sociologists and social research as instruments of social change and policy; examines techniques for communicating with the public about concepts and advances in sociology as well as the importance of doing so.

**SOC 623. Applied Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.**
Overview of classical and selected contemporary social theorists with an emphasis on the relevance of their work to applied sociology.

**SOC 626. Applied Sociology. 3 Hours.**
An overview of the field of applied sociology with special attention to current trends and issues in the application of social science in both for-profit- and not-for-profit sectors.

**SOC 627. Applied Social Psychology. 3 Hours.**
Examination of how social psychological theory and evidence are applied to understanding and addressing social and practical problems on such topics as health, education, criminal justice, community, environment, and diversity.

**SOC 628. Teaching Sociology. 3 Hours.**
Development of practical strategies and skills to improve classroom techniques for teaching sociology in a way that awakens the sociological imagination of students.

**SOC 629. Sociology of the South. 3 Hours.**
The contemporary American South is a region of contrasts. It is decidedly rural yet contains four of the ten most populous states in the nation. In fact, according to the Census Bureau, it is the most populous area in the United States, home to 36 percent of all Americans. Once seen as the cauldron of American racism, the South now has more elected African American political leaders than any other section of the country. Despite the emergence of the Sunbelt as an economic juggernaut – and the presence of some of the most prosperous zip codes in the country – it remains a region plagued by extreme poverty. This course examines different facets of the Southern experience from a sociological perspective, exploring the social forces that have shaped the region. It is designed as a 10-week summer session offering for the online MA in Applied Sociology program. As such it makes extensive use of digital resources as well as conventional texts and reading assignments.

**SOC 637. Practicum in Innovation, Creativity, and Applied Sociology. 3 Hours.**
Directed activities that emphasize research is a creative endeavor and allow students to develop innovative ways to apply social sciences to challenges faced by society, business, and government. Prerequisites: SOC 613 [Min Grade: C] or SOC 714 [Min Grade: C] or permission of instructor.

Prerequisites: SOC 613 [Min Grade: C] or SOC 713 [Min Grade: C] or SOC 714 [Min Grade: C]

**SOC 645. Sociological Practice. 3 Hours.**
Advancing sociologically-informed research and practice, to further public discussion of sociological issues and promote the use of sociology to inform public policy. Prerequisites: SOC 623 [Min Grade: C] and SOC 626 [Min Grade: C] or permission of instructor.

Prerequisites: SOC 623 [Min Grade: C] or SOC 626 [Min Grade: C]

**SOC 676. Capstone Project. 6 Hours.**
A faculty-directed research project, undertaken at the conclusion of the online M.A. in Applied Sociology program that provides an opportunity to synthesize all previous course materials.

**SOC 698. MR Level Non-Thesis Research. 1-12 Hour.**
Integration of theory and research methods: synthesis of data into well-written report derived from research activities.

Prerequisites: GAC M

**SOC 699. Thesis Research. 1-12 Hour.**
Thesis Research.

Prerequisites: GAC M

**SOC 702. Proseminar: The Profession of Sociology. 1 Hour.**
The culture and organization of sociology; norms and values of the graduate student culture and the profession; the sociological imagination; sociological careers; the practice of sociology; thesis development. Designed to orient the student to the perspective and practice of sociology. Required of all beginning graduate students.
SOC 703. Regression Analysis. 3 Hours.
Bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis.
Prerequisites: SOC 601 [Min Grade: C]

SOC 704. Categorical Data Analysis. 3 Hours.
Introduction to the most fundamental regression models for binary, ordinal, nominal, and count outcomes with an emphasis on post-estimation strategies.
Prerequisites: SOC 703 [Min Grade: C]

SOC 705. Advanced Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Developing sociologically important research questions and identifying appropriate strategies to answer these questions in ways that are scientifically valid.
Prerequisites: SOC 703 [Min Grade: C]

SOC 706. Advanced Longitudinal and Multi-level Data Analysis. 3 Hours.
Applied approaches to the study of longitudinal change and events using panel data. Topics include fixed effects models, growth curve/multilevel models, and event history analysis. Techniques for handling missing data. Proficiency in Stata required.
Prerequisites: (SOC 703 [Min Grade: C] and SOC 704 [Min Grade: C]) or PY 719 [Min Grade: C]

SOC 707. Statistical Programming for Social Sciences. 3 Hours.
Introduction to statistical programming for quantitative researchers interested in developing a workflow that ensures reproducible results.

SOC 711. Qualitative Methods. 3 Hours.
Gaining access to research settings: ethnographic field strategies; developing and analyzing field notes; in-depth interviewing and focus groups; the interrelationships between research and thinking theoretically; writing research reports.

SOC 714. Survey Research Methods. 3 Hours.
Survey design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection and analysis, and report writing.
Prerequisites: SOC 613 [Min Grade: C] or SOC 713 [Min Grade: C]

SOC 715. Program Evaluation. 3 Hours.
Topics associated with the use of social sciences to evaluate programs, including appropriate measures of quality; selection of evaluation methodology; accuracy, reliability, and validity of measures.

SOC 716. Social Stratification. 3 Hours.
Theories of inequality; race and ethnic inequality, gender inequality, and international inequality.

SOC 718. Social Capital and Social Networks. 3 Hours.
Interrelationship between social capital and social networks; how social structure arises from interdependence of actors and then affects individual actors; important research findings; research methods used to study social networks and social capital; and critiques of social capital theory.

SOC 720. Classical Theory. 3 Hours.
An examination of sociological theory from its philosophical roots to post-modern theories of self and society.

SOC 722. Contemporary Sociological Theory. 3 Hours.
Review of late 20th century and 21st century sociological theories and issues.

SOC 724. Body and Health. 3 Hours.
Seminar focused on examining how the body is socially constructed and understood within medical sociology.

SOC 729. Consumer Culture. 3 Hours.
An exploration of theoretical understandings of consumer culture from Georg Simmel to Jean Baudrillard and their application to consumer research.

SOC 730. Sociology of Education. 3 Hours.
Survey of sociological insights into - and influences upon - education, including topics such as social historical development of education; theories on how education reproduces or changes one's social status; evidence of inequality in educational outcomes; debates on contemporary education policy; and effects of education over the life course.

SOC 731. Health Disparities among Children and Adolescents. 3 Hours.
Seminar focusing on socioeconomic and race/ethnic differentials in the health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents, as well as the policies and programs aimed at improving children's health and reducing disparities. This class will draw on the scholarly literature in the interrelated fields of demography, public health, health policy, and sociology.

SOC 734. Global Health. 3 Hours.
Sociological perspectives on global health issues; global health disparities.

SOC 740. Deviant Behavior. 3 Hours.
Contemporary sociopsychological theories of deviant behavior; recent empirical findings.

SOC 743. Religion and Health. 3 Hours.
The effects of religion, spirituality and religious life on mental and physical health.

SOC 755. Race/Ethnicity and Health. 3 Hours.
Seminar focusing on social and behavioral aspects of physical and mental health that center on the intersection of race-ethnicity and other social determinants of health in the United States.

SOC 756. Gender and Health. 3 Hours.
Review of changes in gender research over time. Theories of gender from earlier work on essentialism and gender stratification, to the social construction of genders, gender identity and queer theory. Research on gender and health.

SOC 759. Aging and the Life Course. 3 Hours.
The study of aging and older adulthood, life expectancy and health, inequalities in aging, caregiving, and how early life experiences affect later life outcomes.

SOC 760. Sociology of Death and Dying. 3 Hours.
Sociological, social psychological and existential perspectives on death and dying; recent trends in definition, distribution, and practices surrounding death and dying.

SOC 761. Sociology and Neuroscience. 3 Hours.
Sociological perspectives on neurosciences; neuroscience as culture; social neuroscience: brain, mind, and society.

SOC 770. Techniques of Population Analysis. 3 Hours.
Composition of population; constructing life tables; population estimation and projection; migration.

SOC 772. Medical Demography. 3 Hours.
Quantitative assessment of health status of populations in clinical, epidemiological, and sociological studies; interrelationships of health with population structure and dynamics. Modeling preventive health strategies.
SOC 775. Place and Health. 3 Hours.
Spatial patterns of health across urban and rural places and their effects on behavior and social structure.

SOC 777. Demography of Health and Aging. 3 Hours.
Focus on demographic processes, such as mortality, morbidity, migration, and fertility; how each influences number and proportion of older adults; how such processes shape age/sex structure; other demographic characteristics of older people.

SOC 778. Demography. 3 Hours.
Effect of population processes such as birth, death, migration, and marriage on growth, decline, composition, and distribution of population.

SOC 780. Advanced Medical Sociology. 3 Hours.
Theory and research in medical sociology; systematic overview of relevant literature.

SOC 781. Sociology of Health and Illness. 3 Hours.
Focuses on theories, research methods, and empirical examples in the sociological study of health and illness.

SOC 783. Health Care Delivery Systems. 3 Hours.
Sociological study of the ways that healthcare is organized and delivered in the U.S. and around the world.

SOC 785. Family and Health. 3 Hours.
How family structures and family processes affect health outcomes. Family theories are introduced and applied to current family and health research. Examination of families and inequality.

SOC 786. Health Disparities. 3 Hours.
Prevalence, causes, and consequences of health and mental health problems for special populations, such as homeless, poor, African-Americans, and others; service delivery systems.

SOC 787. Sociology of Mental Health. 3 Hours.
Foundational review of the theoretical, methodological, and substantive issues that shape research in the sociology of mental health. Biomedical, psychological, and sociological perspectives on mental health are examined from a critical lens.

SOC 788. Sociology in Medicine. 3 Hours.
Application of sociological theory and methods in medicine and other health fields. Critical review of current medical and public health research that engages sociological perspectives and methods.

SOC 789. Patient Care Relations/Ethics. 3 Hours.
Issues shaping content and quality of patient care; special significance of practitioner-patient-family triad; broad sociocultural and political economic forces affecting medical practice, and creating moral dilemmas.

SOC 791. Seminar in Substantive Sociological Areas. 1-3 Hour.
SOC 792. Seminar in Substantive Sociological Areas. 1-3 Hour.
SOC 793. Seminar in Substantive Sociological Areas. 1-3 Hour.
SOC 794. Special Topics. 3 Hours.
Special Topics.

SOC 798. Non-Dissertation Research. 1-12 Hour.

SOC 799. Dissertation Research. 1-12 Hour.
Research for Graduate Student.
Prerequisites: GAC Z