All graduate students are expected to follow guidelines set forth by the Graduate School of The Ohio State University (see Graduate School Handbook) and the Department of Psychology (see Summary of Rules Concerning Graduate Students in Psychology; also, Graduate Program Handbook). Below are additional guidelines developed for graduate students in the Social Psychology program. These guidelines, along with those of the Psychology Department and the Graduate School, define what the Social Psychology Area considers reasonable progress toward a degree.

Graduate training in the social psychology area is designed to instruct students in the findings, theories, and research methods of contemporary social psychology through a variety of course offerings and research experiences.

It is desirable for students entering the social psychology area to have prior course work in social psychology, research experience, and a background of at least elementary statistics or mathematics. During the first two years of graduate work, students typically take four courses each fall and spring semester. In the third year and beyond, students typically take one course each semester.

The courses required for the doctoral degree in social psychology are:

1. **The Core Sequence**
   a. Psychology 7873, *Attitudes and Persuasion*
      Survey of classic and contemporary attitude theory and research
   b. Psychology 7871, *Social Cognition*
      Survey of research on cognitive underpinnings of social behavior
   c. Psychology 7872, *Social Motivation*
      Survey of research on motivational underpinnings of social behavior
   d. Psychology 7874, *Research Methods*
      Issues of research design and methods of data collection

   These four courses are offered on a rotating basis every other year, so that a student will have the opportunity to take all four during the first two years in the program.

2. **Statistics Sequence**
   The basic two-course graduate level sequence, Psychology 6810 and 6811, is required. Students typically take these two courses during their first year in the program.

3. **Professional Issues**
   This course, Psychology 8876, provides students with experience at reviewing manuscripts and also exposes students to a variety of professional issues, including the grant application process and preparation for the job market. The course is offered every other Spring semester. Students are to enroll in the course in either their second or third year in the program.

4. **Topical Seminars**
   Typically, at least one topical seminar in social psychology, Psychology 7897, will be offered each semester. These seminars allow for in-depth examination of a topic of the instructor’s choosing. Instructors routinely provide an announcement of the seminar topic prior
to the course registration period. Students are required to take a minimum of two topical seminars.

5. Minor

Students are required to complete a minor, which consists of at least 2 courses in a single concentrated area of study outside of social psychology. The minor may be from areas within the Psychology Department (e.g., statistics, cognitive psychology, judgment and decision making, behavioral neuroscience, clinical psychology, or developmental psychology) or from outside the Department (e.g., political science, organizational behavior, marketing, or communications).

6. Breadth

Students are expected to develop some breadth of knowledge regarding areas of psychology other than social psychology. The minor often represents one such step. Indeed, the breadth requirement is waived if students choose to minor in an area within the Psychology Department other than statistics (i.e., behavioral neuroscience, clinical, cognitive, developmental, or judgment and decision-making). Otherwise, students are required to take at least one substantive course from one of the areas of psychology listed above.

7. Current Research Courses

Each semester two Current Research courses are offered: (a) Psychology 8877, Current Research: Attitudes, and (b) Psychology 8878, Current Research: Social Cognition. These courses occupy a very central role in the graduate curriculum. They provide advanced training in the conduct, evaluation, and presentation of research related to attitudes and social cognition, the specialty of the OSU social psychology program. Students typically enroll in one such course each and every semester of their first five years in the program. To ensure breadth of training within social psychology, students are required to take a minimum of 12 credit hours of each of the two courses.

Example Schedule of Courses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>Social Cognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective/Breadth</td>
<td>Topical Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistics 1</td>
<td>Statistics 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Research</td>
<td>Current Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the course requirements are completed within the first two years of the program, as illustrated in the table above. The recommended course work emphasizes the traditional content domains of social psychology, coupled with a diversity of skills in research methods and data analysis. In that way, the curriculum aims to facilitate preparation for the candidacy exam (see below), which is taken at the start of the third year.

After students achieve candidacy for the Ph.D. (normally early in the third year of study), they spend the remainder of that year in activities particularly directed toward their individual career objectives. Students may continue to take courses in the third, fourth, and fifth years, but
rarely will take more than one course per semester (the Current Research course) during these years. This lighter classroom load permits more extensive involvement in research, including the dissertation.

**Research Requirements**

Students are expected to immerse themselves in research immediately upon entering the graduate program. Research is to be pursued vigorously throughout one’s graduate career. Indeed, progress with respect to one’s research forms a key component of the area faculty’s annual evaluation of each student’s academic performance. Three notable milestones within this continuous research progression are:

1. **The First Year Project Presentation**

   Students’ first year research culminates in a symposium scheduled during the last week or two of the academic year. Each first year student delivers a 15-minute presentation of his or her research to an audience consisting of the faculty, postdocs, and graduate students in the social psychology program.

2. **The Masters Thesis**

   By May 31 of the second year, students should have completed and defended a Masters thesis reporting some or all of the research they have conducted during the first two years in the program. The thesis itself is prepared in accordance with the rules of the Graduate School. The oral defense is to involve a committee of three faculty members from the social psychology area – the student’s advisor and two additional faculty. If the thesis research involves a linkage to some other area of psychology (e.g., behavioral neuroscience), the student may petition to have an appropriate faculty member from the other area of the Department substitute for one of the social psychology faculty. Any such request should be relayed to the area faculty through the student’s advisor.

3. **The Dissertation**

   Research in the final years culminates in the completion of the dissertation, again in accord with the rules of the Graduate School. The dissertation defense involves a committee consisting of the student’s advisor, two additional members of the social psychology faculty (once again, one faculty member outside of the social area may be substituted if the research links closely to another discipline), and a representative selected by the Graduate School.

**Candidacy Exam**

The candidacy exam is intended to evaluate students’ mastery of significant knowledge in the field, and to help students consolidate that knowledge and thus prepare for dissertation-level research. The candidacy examination is constructed so that any student who survives the rigorous screening for admission to graduate study in social psychology, and who has completed the first two years of course work and the pre-dissertation research requirements with normal diligence and reasonable application, should expect to pass.

Consistent with rules of the Graduate School, the candidacy examination is composed of both written and oral portions. The written portion is administered shortly before the start of the Fall semester. Students must take it no later than the beginning of their third year of graduate study at Ohio State. The written examination consists of two sections: (1) a sit-down
examination, which lasts four hours, primarily involving a series of medium-length essay questions, and (2) a take-home section, which the student has one week to complete, involving two or three general questions that require students to integrate material and offer insightful observations about social psychological theory and research. The two-hour oral portion of the candidacy examination is scheduled within a few weeks of the written exam. The oral is administered and evaluated by a committee consisting of four qualified faculty members, one of whom one is from the student’s minor area and at least two from the Social Psychology Area. The student’s advisor chairs the oral examination committee.

Annual Reviews

The program faculty evaluate the progress of each graduate student on an annual basis. At the end of each academic year, students are asked to update their online Student Activities Report, in which they provide information about their coursework, research, teaching and service activities. These reports are available to all area faculty. Early in the summer, the program faculty meet as a group to review students’ performance. Several areas of performance are evaluated, including research progress, performance in courses, quality of writing, quality of teaching (e.g., as a Graduate Teaching Associate), participation in area and departmental activities, participation in professional meetings, and service to the program.

Students receive written notification of the faculty’s assessment of their progress in the form of a letter prepared by the student’s advisor. Although written primarily by the advisor, all faculty review each letter and provide relevant input. Thus, the letters reflect the collective assessment of the program faculty.

This evaluation is intended to provide students with formal feedback concerning their progress toward the degree. It also is used by the program faculty in determining whether the area will recommend continuation in the program, and for recommendations for appointment or reappointment to such positions as departmental Graduate Teaching Associateships.

Conversion Policy

Students who are enrolled in the program at the time of the conversion from quarters to semesters will not be adversely affected by the transition. All of the required semester-based courses have a direct historical equivalent in the quarter system. So, for example any student who takes the core course on Social Motivation under the quarter system will be considered to have satisfied the parallel course requirement under the semester system. Similarly, any quarter-based topical seminar will count toward the seminar requirement under the semester system. Thus, students who started under quarters will not be delayed in graduating by virtue of the requirements defined by semesters.