Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Senior Thesis Guide 2021-22

Swarthmore Sociology & Anthropology
Thesis Guide

All Sociology/Anthropology majors are required to write a two-credit thesis in order to graduate. This is normally accomplished during the senior year, during which the student registers for SOAN 096/180F in the first semester of the senior year and SOAN 097/180S in the second semester. By enrolling for the thesis, the student is automatically enrolled in the Thesis Writers Master Class, SOAN 098 offered in the fall. This class will provide insight into thesis writing, and offer you structured writing time.

All students writing a senior thesis with the Department (special majors housed in SOAN, SOAN/EDUC special majors, course and honors majors, and honors minors who have chosen the thesis option) meet every Monday evening during the first semester of the year.
> At the discretion of Department faculty, students pursuing Honors who are not making good progress on their thesis will be withdrawn from the Honors Program on December 1.

Those majors planning to spend a semester student-teaching are advised to develop a modified schedule to ensure their thesis work is done during their non-teaching semesters. This usually means doing the first semester of thesis work during the second semester of their junior year.

Why a thesis?
The thesis plays a key role in developing critical skills that will serve you in any job that you may have, in graduate school, and in life more broadly. They include:
- Reading critically, writing clearly, and analyzing adequately.
- Designing a research proposal, conducting research, making changes in the field as necessary, and bringing a project from vision to completion.
- Framing a research question and choosing a methodology that is appropriate for addressing it.
- Deepening knowledge of cross-cultural issues around social processes such as race and ethnic relations, class inequalities, globalization, violence, gender dynamics, etc.
- Knowing when to work collaboratively and independently.
- Expressing ideas at an abstract and theoretical level.
- Providing an opportunity for in-depth knowledge of a particular area of the world or an important social issue.
- Working closely and well with someone who is charged with evaluating your work.
- Integrating independent research, an internship, or community service into academic work.

Goals and Expectations

Students will have a research question that:
- demonstrates understanding of relevant issues in the field they choose to study
- reveals an appreciation of anthropology and/or sociology, and if pursuing a special major, bridges at least one of the disciplines of their special major
- engages existing literature in a productive and thoughtful way
- is focused enough to limit the research but broad enough to provide for thoughtful exploration

Students will design a study that allows them to engage with a research question or set of questions. As part of this process each student will:
- identify appropriate data collection tools to address the question
- build on methods used in the literature reviewed
- complete necessary DRC or IRB applications, if working with living human subjects
- collect and/or work with original data or primary source material

- analyze data in systematic ways

Students will draw on appropriate theory and research in the field and:
- complete a literature review to frame and begin to examine the research question/topic
- explore data in light of existing literature in the field
- identify (or construct) a conceptual framework that allows for a systematic exploration of the research questions/focal points

In the complete draft of the thesis, students will produce:
- an abstract of the thesis
- a statement of the research question
- a literature review that frames the analysis (discussing the relationship between this study and prior work in the field)
- a description of research methods
- an analysis of data (including a reflection on the limitations of the study)
- and a conclusion or set of conclusions

Finally, the thesis should be structurally coherent, thoughtfully argued, and well written with proper grammar and mechanics.

Thesis Proposal

Your thesis proposal is the formal start to your senior thesis project. Contact your advisor the first week of classes to discover if s/he will meet with all advisees in a group or one-on-one. This is especially important for students who did not conduct research over the summer. Your advisor will help you develop your ideas for the thesis and will offer you feedback on your thesis proposal. Keep in mind that the overall proposal should be from three to five pages long. It should consist of:

Research Statement (around 300 words): The research statement should include a clear statement of the research question and explicitly point out the relevance of the study—this is usually considered the answer to the question "So why should anyone care?" The statement should include specific connections to coursework in Sociology and/or Anthropology at the College and, if relevant at other institutions. The statement should be clear, evocative and concise. It might help to frame your research question as a paradox, such as "why have indigenous organizations in Bolivia declined while the number and quantity of funding sources has increased?" You might also frame the research question in terms of making connections, such as "what has been the impact of neo-liberal economic reforms in Bolivia on religious beliefs and festivals?" It is important to formulate a research question that is researchable! In the research statement you should also mention the theoretical objectives of your study and, if possible, point out how you are bringing a fresh perspective to the question.

Methodology Statement (around 500 words): The methodology statement should emphasize how you plan on answering your research question. What kind of documents, statistics, or materials do you need to answer your question? Do you plan on doing any observations or interviews? Do you expect to use content analysis, take videos and analyze them, run regressions, conduct surveys? Will you be reviewing documents, analyzing theories? We expect that at this point in your career, you have taken a methods course and you will use the methods to which you've been exposed to investigate your questions. If you took a methods course that has nothing to do with your plan, the onus is on you to teach yourself that method with advice about readings from your advisor.

Initial Bibliography (around 10 sources): As a scholarly piece of work, your thesis must engage (methodologically and conceptually) relevant studies. In conjunction with your faculty advisor and advice from

the Social Sciences Reference Librarian, you should list ten works that will play a central role in framing your research. The sources must be books and/or scholarly articles; websites are inappropriate as scholarly sources at this point (but could be used as sources of data to analyze in the thesis).

Human Subjects Research- IMPORTANT
If you are planning to do research involving human subjects, please talk with your advisor as soon as possible about completing an application to be reviewed by either the
Department Review Committee (DRC):
https://www.swarthmore.edu/sociology-anthropology/human-subjects-research
or the College Wide Institutional Review Board (IRB) process:
https://www.swarthmore.edu/institutional-review-board

May 4, 2021, noon: Due date for submitting Summer Research DRC application for review

May 25, 2021, noon: Deadline for submitting updated Summer Research DRC application for review

Sept. 13, 2021: Applications to conduct Human Subjects Research are due. More details below.

Oct. 8, 2021: Deadline to submit updated applications to conduct Human Subjects Research

See the Department of Sociology & Anthropology webpage for links to the IRB's guidelines and application and another to the DRC's guidelines and application.

In addition, you will have to complete the CITI training. CITI stands for Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative. It usually takes about 3 hours.

Many ethical concerns arise when human beings are the subjects of both physical and social research. Be sure to speak with your advisor about steps you can take to ensure that your social science research meets the criteria for ethical research.

Thesis due dates
All chapters should be submitted in electronic form, as a Word document, with the naming convention, Last, First, Chapt #, to Stacey Hogge (shogge1@swarthmore.edu) **and** your thesis advisor on the due date for each chapter.

May 07, 2021, noon: Thesis Proposal due

September 17, 2021, noon: Revised Proposal due. Please include a title (tentative is ok)

October 22, 2021, noon: 1st Chapter due

November 19, 2021, noon: 2nd Chapter due

December 3, 2021, noon: Posters due
Must include:
- Title
- Author
- Research Question/ Hypothesis
- Methodology
- Two or three authors from your Lit Review

- Preliminary Findings
- Acknowledgments

Please view posters we find particularly useful as guideposts for your own before seeing your advisors. Also, please take a look at last year's posters hanging in the hallway (second floor, Kohlberg Hall).

December 6, 2021, 4:30- 6pm: Poster Reception

January 28, 2022, noon: 3rd Chapter due

February 25, 2022, noon: 4th Chapter due

April 1, 2021, noon: Complete Draft of all Theses due
Two hard copies, double spaced, single sided
Also submitted electronically as a Word document, with the naming convention, Last, First, Rough Draft, to Stacey Hogge (shogge1@swarthmore.edu)

Must include:
- Abstract
- Title Page (including title, advisor's name, date, your name)
- Table of Contents
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Page Numbers
- Introduction, Conclusion, and Bibliography (even if you expect them to change dramatically in your final version)
- Citations (within text or footnote)
- Bibliography, Formal and complete (in the Sociology or Anthropology citation style)

After handing in your rough draft, you will schedule a meeting (or conversation) with your thesis advisor and one other faculty member. The focus of the meeting will be on the thesis itself, although the two readers may also ask you to discuss links between the thesis and your coursework in the department. You may be asked to make specific revisions before submitting your final draft.

April 29, 2022, noon: Final Honors Theses due to Kohlberg 232

One hard copy, double-spaced, double sided
One PDF file with naming convention, Last, First, class year, emailed to
Stacey Hogge, shogge1@swarthmore.edu

May 9, 2022, noon: Final Course Theses due to Kohlberg 232

One hard copy, double-spaced, double sided
One PDF file with naming convention, Last, First, class year, emailed to
Stacey Hogge, shogge1@swarthmore.edu

Please note that all thesis writers must complete and submit (along with the final draft) the release form included at the end of this document.

We strongly recommend that you read at least one thesis written by a SOAN major. Please consult with your advisor on theses they find exemplary or relevant to your specific interests.

Things to keep in mind as you are researching and writing:

Research Outline

<u>I. What is my research question?</u>

A. What is already known?

    1. Can I concisely state my research question (i.e. within a question or two)?
    2. How can theory help me frame my research question?
    3. How will my research add to or challenge what has already been said about this subject?

    4. Do I know what is already in the literature on this topic? If not, do I know how to find out what has already been published?
    5. What kinds of research methods have other researchers used?
        ☐ Textual analysis
        ☐ Observation/participant-observation
        ☐ Interviews
        ☐ Surveys
        ☐ Life Stories
        ☐ Historical and comparative analysis

B. How did I come to be interested in this question?

    1. How much background information do I have about this topic?
    2. Do I need more background information before I develop my research question?
    3. Why is this research interesting?
        a. Who else is interested in this research question and why?
        b. Does the research have social, political, and/or ethical implications?

C. Is my research comparative?

    1. Am I studying one setting or planning on comparing two different research settings?
    2. How will the difference between these two approaches affect the outcome of my research?

D. Who are the subjects of my research?

    1. Why study this particular population? What are the strengths and limitations of focusing on these subjects?
    2. What effect will my research have on my subjects?
    3. To what effect will my presence at the research site influence my findings?

E. Who is my audience?

    1. Who will be interested in the results of my research?
    2. Who might use the information I present and for what purposes?

<u>II. How will I conduct my research?</u>

A. What kinds of methodologies do I want to use?

1. literature review and/or historical studies
2. analysis of documents/discourse analysis
3. analysis of social theory
4. observation/ participant-observation
5. interviews
6. surveys

B. What is the time frame for my research?

1. Do I have a reasonable start and finish time table?
2. Have I allowed for possible problems and setbacks?
3. Have I allowed enough time to get clearance to speak to people and travel?
4. Have I allotted enough time for my literature review and other library work?
5. Do I have a clear sense of which documents I need to acquire?

C. Is my methodology feasible?

1. Do I need to get clearance to conduct research at this site?
2. Have I gone through proper channels to verify that clearance will be given?

Checklists for Methodology
Library Research: (We strongly recommend that you contact Sarah Elichko: selichk1@swarthmore.edu 610-690-5786).
☐ Have I found adequate information on my research topic?
☐ Do I trust the published information?
☐ Have I found varied sources and voices on the topic (i.e. perhaps not just formally published works, but primary materials as well)?

Observation/Participant Observation/Ethnography
☐ How long do I need to observe my research subjects to get adequate information on my research subjects?
☐ Will I have a position other than "researcher" among this population (i.e. will I be a teacher as well as a social scientist)?
☐ Have I gotten clearance for my research?
☐ Do I have contacts at the research site that will help me become acquainted with the place and the people?

Interviews
☐ How can I find people to interview?
☐ How representative are the people whom I find to interview of the wider population I am interested in studying?
☐ How many people must I interview to get the kind of information I need and to help assure a representative sample?
☐ Will my interviews be:
1. unstructured
2. semi-structured
3. question-and-answer
4. other
☐ How will I record the information I get from the interviews?
1. videotaped
2. audio only

3. jotted notes
4. recalled notes

Surveys
- ☐ Do I want to survey a portion of my population? Will the findings help support other types of research?
- ☐ Have other researchers conducted surveys on my population that I can analyze?
- ☐ Can I develop a questionnaire that will measure my research topic?
- ☐ Can I readily access my survey population?
- ☐ Do I have a reasonable means of distributing and collecting the survey?

Discourse Analysis
- ☐ Which documents or visual representations will serve as the basis of my study?
- ☐ How have others researched or discussed similar documents?
- ☐ Can I readily gain access to these documents or visual representations?
- ☐ Can I obtain background information on the documents/visual representations?
- ☐ What tools of discourse analysis can I bring to bear on the documents/visual representations?

Social Theory
- ☐ Who are the authors that I will focus on in discussing a theoretical issue?
- ☐ Which social dynamics and issues will inform my discussion (such as defining power and class)? Would a focus on an influential theorist or a main concept (such as hegemony, power, liminality…) be the best way to do my thesis?
- ☐ Do I plan on developing a historical or comparative perspective on how certain theorists have grappled with social issues (such as a comparison of Marxist and Weberian notions of historical change)?
- ☐ What fresh perspective might I be able to bring to bear on important theoretical debates? Have other authors writing about the development of social theory analyzed similar issues?
- ☐ To what extent is the issue that you are exploring currently debated in sociology and/or anthropology?

Visual Ethnography
- ☐ Which visual representations do you anticipate exploring (photographs, indigenous or community-based film, cinema, etc.)?
- ☐ Have others explored the issues that interest you (for example representations of gender in photographs of Native Americans at the turn of the century)?
- ☐ Do you plan on making your own film or collection of photographs and if so which style and form do you plan on using? To what extent is your production practice going to be embedded in local understandings of video production and photography?
- ☐ At what levels will you be able to conduct your research(production, semiotics, distribution, and reception)?
- ☐ Do you plan to conduct interviews with filmmakers and or audiences of a particular work?

Some Helpful References:

For a review and more information on different research methodologies, please see Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, H. Russel Bernard (AltaMira Press, New York, 2002) and *Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences by* Kristin Luker (Harvard University Press, 2010).

Some Helpful External Links:

American Anthropological Association ethical guidelines

American Sociological Association ethical guidelines

If you have not done so, please make sure to review the statement on ACADEMIC HONESTY to be found on page 24 of the Student Handbook and that is included below.

III. THE COLLEGE STATEMENT OF PLAGIARISM

Academic honesty is a foundation of academic life. One of its tenets is that all scholars present as their work only that which is truly their own. For students this standard embraces all work submitted for academic purposes, not only examinations, laboratory reports, term papers, essays, etc., handed in for academic credit, but also papers written for seminar or for class discussion, whether graded or not. Transgressions of the principle are known as plagiarism, the use of another's ideas, language, or thoughts and representation of them as one's own.

When an instructor suspects plagiarism in a piece of written work, the instructor should present the evidence to the student who submitted it. If the student is unable to remove the instructor's suspicion of guilt, the instructor is required to submit the case to the Dean for consideration by the College Judiciary Committee. In its deliberations, the Committee considers the following to be evidence of plagiarism in a piece of writing: 1) the failure to put quotation marks around (or when appropriate to indent and to single-space) words, symbols, phrases, sentences, quoted verbatim from any source, whether published or not; 2) the failure to acknowledge one's use of reworded or restated material--even when loosely paraphrased; 3) inclusion of another's data, ideas, or arguments when not acknowledged by footnote and reference.

Writers may refer to a handbook on scholarly writing for information about correct citation procedures. The MLA Handbook is particularly useful since Section 6 also provides examples of plagiarism. Supplementary Departmental regulations governing joint projects, etc., may be found on file in departmental offices. The informal nature of some writing may obviate the necessity of rigorously formal citation, but still requires honest attribution to original authors of all borrowed materials. Students should feel free to consult with instructors whenever there is doubt as to proper documentation.

Fear of being charged with plagiarism need not inhibit anyone from appropriately using another's ideas or data in a piece of writing. Even direct quotation frequently serves as an effective device in developing an argument. Academic honesty requires only that writers properly acknowledge their debts to other authors at least by means of quotation marks, footnotes, and references, if not also with in-text phraseology like "Einstein argued in 1909 that. . ." or "As Melville implies in Chapter 3 of Moby Dick..." Such usage is fully within the tradition of forthright academic work.

Because plagiarism is considered so serious a transgression, it is the opinion of the faculty that for the first offense failure in the course and, as appropriate, suspension for a semester or deprivation of the degree in that year is suitable; for a second offense the penalty should normally be expulsion. A full description of the College judicial procedure may be obtained from the Office of the Dean.

IV. FORMAT FOR REFERENCES

Rather than using footnotes for citations, a common practice in the social sciences is to use parenthetical references to author, date, and page numbers within the text, followed by a bibliography at the end of the paper, which contains complete information for each citation. Footnotes are then used only for substantive information. There will be a discussion of these processes in class, but it is always a good idea to consult with your advisor about the different reference styles (such as MLA, Chicago…) and which one might work best for your purposes.

Style Guides

American Anthropological Association
http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm

American Sociological Association
ASA Citation Guide
ASA Style Guide can borrow from McCabe Library

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
ELECTRONIC THESIS RELEASE FORM

We now digitize every thesis, so you will be asked whether you want yours to remain on our "Swarthmore College shelf", as hard copies have in the past, or to be more widely available to the Tri-College community and beyond. You will have the opportunity to decide whether your thesis is available to ALL browsers or just to members of Tri-Co or Swarthmore only. Please be in touch with the department chair or your advisor if you have any questions about the thesis process.

Please read the following carefully and initial the statement that reflects your wishes concerning electronic dissemination of your thesis, which will be deposited in the [Swarthmore College Thesis Archive](.).

Thesis Permission

_____ *I grant Swarthmore College the non-exclusive, perpetual right to archive and provide unrestricted access to my thesis. I represent that the submission is my original work, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.*
Select this option if you would like your thesis to be available to scholars worldwide.

_____ *As of January 1, _____ (year), I grant Swarthmore College the non-exclusive, perpetual right to archive and provide unrestricted access to my thesis. Prior to this date, access to my thesis will be limited to the Swarthmore College network. I represent that the submission is my original work, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.*
Select this option if, after the stipulated delay above, you would like your thesis to be made available to scholars worldwide.

_____ *I grant Swarthmore College the non-exclusive, perpetual right to archive and provide limited (TriCollege network) access to my thesis. I represent that the submission is my original work, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.*
Select this option if you do not want scholars outside of the TriCollege community of Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore Colleges to view your thesis.
_____ *I grant Swarthmore College the non-exclusive, perpetual right to archive and provide limited (Swarthmore College network) access to my thesis. I represent that the submission is my original work, and does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright.*
Select this option if you do not want scholars outside of the Swarthmore community to view your thesis.

_____ *I do not grant Swarthmore College the right to archive or provide access to my thesis through the Swarthmore College Thesis Archive.*
Select this option if you do not want Swarthmore College to digitally archive and provide access to your thesis.