

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM  
IN PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY  
(Supplement to the Graduate Student Handbook)

The guidelines summarized below apply to all students coming into the program on or after the fall of 2003. Students entering before that time may elect to follow these guidelines rather than those in effect at the time they entered the program.

The Social/Personality Psychology program at the University of Missouri subscribes to an "apprenticeship" model of training in which students work closely with one or more faculty members including a primary advisor on research of mutual interest. Beginning in the first year, students will be actively involved in their advisor's ongoing research program. The exact nature of this involvement will be determined by the interests and needs of both partners, and may entail attending research meetings, designing research studies, running subjects, analyzing data, and/or writing research reports. The Social/Personality Training Committee (SPTC) believes that the research enterprise cannot be meaningful and motivating until a person has this type of "hands-on" experience. Based on their research experience, students are expected to make at least one presentation to faculty and fellow students each year they are in the program. These experiences in conjunction with completing coursework and other program requirements (as outlined below), are intended to provide a firm grounding in the theory and methods of social/personality psychology, as well as the skills to conduct and publish one's own research. Please hold on to this information and refer to it as needed.

### Yearly Sequence of Events

The following 5-year plan provides a suggested timeline for progressing through the program. Based on one's background and goals, optimal progress may vary across students, and should be determined in conjunction with your advisor and other faculty.

The first year. Upon entering the social/personality psychology program, students will be assigned an advisor based, whenever possible, on a congruence of interests. It will be the advisor's responsibility to aid the student in course selection, registration, and other administrative details. During the first year, students will be expected to successfully complete a set of recommended courses (see below), and collaborate with their primary advisor on research. At the end of the first year, students will present an informal talk based on their first-year research to a gathering of area faculty and graduate students. It is recommended that students identify a Master's thesis topic during the summer following their first year, and constitute their committee soon thereafter.

The second year. Students will continue their coursework throughout the second year, and will have nearly completed all course requirements by year's end. During the second year, students will propose their thesis, and work toward its completion. Students may not begin data collection without explicit and formal approval from their committee. Students are also expected

to give a talk to faculty and fellow graduate students during the second year on their in-progress or completed thesis, or on other research in which they are involved.

The third year. By the end of the third year, students will ordinarily have completed all course requirements. Sometime during the third year, students are also expected to defend their completed Master's thesis, and to give a talk to faculty and fellow graduate students based on the thesis.

Subsequent to the defense of the Master's thesis (either in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year), students will be expected to write a comprehensive review paper, such as those published in Psychological Review, Psychological Bulletin, or Personality and Social Psychology Review. This paper is intended to fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement, as outlined in the departmental graduate student handbook. To ensure adequate coverage within the chosen topic area, the student will develop, in conjunction with his or her advisor, a detailed formal outline with a reading list. To ensure adequate breadth in the student's perspective, the outline must also specifically address how the topic of the review relates to the larger field of social or personality psychology. The final outline and reading list must be approved by your comprehensive committee, which typically will be the same as your doctoral dissertation committee. Once the outline is approved, the student will complete the paper (within a 6-month window) without input on the written document from their advisor or other faculty. (Examples of previously approved outlines and papers are on file in the social/personality library located in the basement of McAlester Hall.) Students are expected to complete and defend their comprehensive paper by the end of the summer of the third year or during the fall of the 4<sup>th</sup> year, and to give a talk based on the review paper once it has been completed. Once the comprehensive paper has been successfully defended, students may advance to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

The fourth and fifth years. Ideally, the comprehensive paper will lay the groundwork for the student's dissertation, and lead logically into it. Students will write and defend their dissertation proposal by the end of the fourth year, and defend the dissertation by the end of the fifth year. As with the Master's project, students may not begin data collection without explicit and formal approval from their committee.

Yearly evaluation. By April 15 of each year, students will be asked to complete a cumulative record of their year's activities. This includes first- and second-semester grades, research experiences, and any other program relevant information. By the end of the academic year, students should expect to receive a formal evaluation of their progress toward the M.A. or Ph.D. degrees by the SPTC. This evaluation will cover coursework, research, and professional skills.

### Other Procedural Matters

Financial support. There are two primary sources of financial support open to graduate students in good standing: (1) research assistantships provided by the department or on a faculty member's grant, or (2) teaching assistantships provided by the department. The area and departmental policy is that students in good standing are provided support through their fourth

year. Support beyond the fourth year is not guaranteed, though it has in the past been provided to all students in good standing.

Coursework. While the Ph.D. program in social/personality psychology emphasizes the accumulation of research skills by participating actively in ongoing research, acceptable performance in coursework is also an integral part of the doctoral program. The training committee expects that students performing at the Ph.D. level should receive A's in the area methods and theory courses (i.e., 9310-8620, 9320-9330), and no worse than B's in other courses. Students receiving incomplete grades will be given one semester in which to remove the incomplete. After one semester, the training committee will treat the grade as equivalent to an F.

Lead Time on Papers. Students must provide copies of completed papers (theses, comprehensive outlines & papers, dissertations) to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the defense of that paper. Exceptions to this policy must be negotiated individually by the student with all members of the committee.

Exemption to Program Requirements. Students who seek exceptions to the rules and procedures established by the SPTC may appeal in writing to the training committee. The appeal should specifically indicate the reasons for the appeal.

### Probation and Termination

Reasons for probation or termination. The Social/Personality Psychology training area subscribes to the reasons for termination stated in the Graduate Student Handbook. These reasons include poor grades (as defined above), poor progress, and unprofessional conduct. For the present purposes, poor progress is defined as falling more than one year behind the suggested timeline for completing the Master's Thesis, the comprehensive review paper, and the dissertation. Procedures related to probation and termination are detailed in a separate document, and may be obtained from the area director.

### Area of Concentration Requirements for Social/Personality Psychology Students (24 hours)

Department regulations require students to complete a minimum of 24 credit hours within their area of concentration. For social/personality area students these requirements are as follows:

#### A. Methodologies Sequence (6 hours)

Psych 9320 - Experimental Methods & Laboratory Research

Psych 9330 - Field Research Methods

Psychology 9320 and 9330 cannot be used by social/personality students to fulfill the general departmental requirement for a third course in statistics and methods.

#### B. Theories Sequence (6 hours)

Psych 9310 - Seminar in Social Psychology (Overview of classic & contemporary research and theory in experimental social psychology)

Psych 8620 - Seminar in Personality (Overview of classic & contemporary research and theory in personality psychology)

C. Social/Personality Content Courses (12 hours)

Social/personality students must complete 12 hours of coursework chosen from the courses listed below. Other courses may meet this requirement if approved by the training committee.

Psych 4850 - Seminar in Health Psychology

Psych 9725 - The Literature Review\*

Psych 9515 – Latent Variables\*

Psych 9350 - Studies in Social/Personality Psychology (repeatable with altered content; e.g., Interpersonal & Intergroup, Creativity)

Psych 8610 - Motivation

To count as a Social/Personality Content Course, students must write a paper on a pre-approved topic in social or personality psychology; formal approval of the topic must be obtained from the SPTC prior to the writing of the paper. Only **one** of the two methods courses can be used to fulfill a Social Content Course requirement. Other regulations pertaining to Area of Concentration requirements can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook