

Steps Toward a Thesis

A senior thesis is a large, independent research project that students may choose to complete in order to fulfill the comprehensive requirement in the major. The thesis should be a project that can be feasibly completed in 7-10 months. Generally, a thesis is about 40-80 pages, but there is no minimum or maximum. Please review the following steps towards a thesis, as well as the suggested timeline. Additional information and resources can be found on our website: <http://sociology.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/advising/thesis.html>

1. **Prerequisites:** Sociology 3A The Evaluation of Evidence (formerly SOCY 103B) and, if possible, have completed or in progress with the Disciplinary Communications (DC) requirement. These prerequisites should ideally be completed by the end of junior year, as methodological and theoretical preparation for thesis research.
2. **You must be in good academic standing.** Students on academic probation are not eligible to write a senior thesis. A senior thesis is an honors-level option for the comprehensive requirement in the major. Students should be doing well in their Sociology courses.
3. **Submit a thesis proposal to the preferred faculty thesis sponsor for approval.** Students may begin this process with a discussion of their thesis topic ideas with their preferred faculty thesis sponsor, then formalize the idea in a thesis proposal. Or some students may choose to write a thesis proposal first before speaking to their preferred faculty thesis sponsor. The proposal must be submitted and approved by the faculty thesis sponsor one quarter prior to the commencement of the thesis work.
 - a. **The proposal must include:** a working title, a description of the work to be undertaken, research question(s), methodology, a brief bibliography, a timeline to completion, at least three keywords describing your thesis topic, and materials from relevant courses that might help faculty determine your preparedness to complete the thesis. Students must also familiarize themselves with IRB protocols (<https://irb.ucsc.edu/>) and include in their proposal whether their research includes human subjects, if the project is IRB exempt, or if an IRB application will be needed.
 - b. **Students unsuccessful in obtaining a thesis sponsor** through these means may submit their thesis proposal to the Sociology Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC), through the Undergraduate Advisor, no later than the sixth week of the quarter, one quarter prior to the commencement of the thesis. This is ideally in spring quarter of your junior year. UEC members will review the merits of the proposal and if approved, the UEC will consult with available faculty and assign the student to a faculty member who has not yet agreed to serve as a thesis advisor. Students will be notified of the UEC's decision within three weeks.
4. **Complete the “Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course”** once the faculty thesis sponsor has approved the proposal. Students must complete the form and obtain their faculty thesis sponsor signature prior to submitting it to the Undergraduate Advisor. The faculty thesis sponsor signature on the form indicates their approval of the project proposal and their approval to sponsor your thesis course.
5. **Submit an approved thesis proposal and “Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course” to the Undergraduate Advisor.** Enrollment numbers will not be given to students until they have submitted the approved thesis proposal and the “Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course” signed by the thesis sponsor. You must submit a completed and signed form each quarter you are working on your thesis in order to receive the thesis enrollment number.
6. **Enroll in SOCY 195A: Senior Thesis.** Two quarters of thesis work is required; however, three quarters is highly recommended. Students are allowed 10-15 units of individual study course credit for the thesis (195A, 195B and 195C), which may be taken consecutively or concurrently. Students must complete SOCY 195A and 195B, while 195C is optional. Five units of this course credit may be counted as one of the upper-division elective courses required for the major.
7. **Complete the first draft of the thesis** early in your final quarter, or as discussed with the faculty thesis sponsor. Students are expected to take draft comments from the faculty thesis sponsor into account in revising for the final draft. For examples of previous students’ research and thesis writing, some copies of past projects are available in the department office, for review only.
8. **Submit the final hard copy of the thesis to the faculty thesis sponsor** by the due date discussed with the faculty thesis sponsor. It is recommended that students complete their thesis prior to the end of the quarter in order to be eligible for the department’s Sociology of Race, Class and Gender Senior Thesis Award, the campus’s Deans’ and Chancellors Undergraduate Research Award, and other thesis based campus awards in Spring quarter. The thesis is read and evaluated only by the thesis sponsor, unless they believe it is deserving of honors. In this case, the faculty member will ask a second reader to evaluate the thesis.
9. **Email the Undergraduate Advisor a pdf version of the final thesis** to be filed in the department’s thesis archives. All theses filed in the department archives will be available as examples for future students to refer to, unless you request otherwise.

Recommended Thesis Timeline

Decide to write a thesis	Early spring quarter of your junior year
Develop research questions and project proposal	Mid Spring quarter of your junior year
Review Institution Review Board (IRB) information and determine if your research requires IRB review https://irb.ucsc.edu/	Mid Spring quarter of your junior year
Select and meet with faculty advisor to discuss proposal approval	Spring quarter of your junior year
Obtain faculty advisor approval on the "Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course Form". Submit proposal and form to Undergraduate Advisor to obtain thesis enrollment info.	By the last day of spring quarter if your junior year
Last Day to Submit "Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course Form" to the Undergraduate Advisor to Obtain Thesis Enrollment Number for Fall	Check the campus calendar for the add/drop/swap deadline: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/calendar/academiccalendar.html And view advising availability times: http://sociology.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/advising/index.html
Read and research for literature review	Summer-October
Develop IRB application, if one is needed. Review with faculty advisor before submitting IRB application. Submit several weeks before research is scheduled to begin	Summer-November
Design instruments	September-October
Test instruments	November
Write intro and literature review	November-December, by end of quarter
Last Day to Submit "Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course Form" to the Undergraduate Advisor to Obtain Thesis Enrollment Number for Winter	Check the campus calendar for the add/drop/swap deadline: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/calendar/academiccalendar.html And view advising availability times: http://sociology.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/advising/index.html
Data collection	January-February
Initial data analysis	February-March
Write methods chapter	February-March
Write results chapter	Early March
Revise intro and literature review based on faculty advisor feedback	March
Write discussion and conclusion	March
Last Day to Submit "Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course Form" to the Undergraduate Advisor to Obtain Thesis Enrollment Number for Spring	Check the campus calendar for the add/drop/swap deadline: http://registrar.ucsc.edu/calendar/academiccalendar.html And view advising availability times: http://sociology.ucsc.edu/undergraduate/advising/index.html
Revise results chapter based on faculty advisor feedback	Early April
Complete first draft and submit to faculty advisor	Early April
Incorporate faculty advisor feedback	April
Complete final draft and submit to faculty advisor	Late April-Early May
Incorporate faculty advisor feedback and proofread	May
Thesis Due	Ideally by the 7-8th week of Spring quarter to meet award and second reader deadlines

Additional Notes on Timeline:

- This is a recommended timeline. Students must discuss a timeline to completion with their faculty thesis advisor.
- It is highly recommended that students begin this process in spring of their junior year and take the full three quarters to complete the thesis. Students who intend to complete the thesis in two quarters (SOCY 195A and 195B) or start this process late, must discuss the shortened timeline with their faculty thesis advisor.
- Students are expected to meet with their faculty thesis advisor frequently, typically once every 1-2 weeks. Meeting frequency should be discussed with your faculty thesis advisor when you are obtaining their signature on the "Petition for Undergraduate Individual Studies Course" each quarter.
- This timeline assumes that a student begins thesis research in the summer. While this is not required, it is highly recommended.