

SOCIAL

1. Coursework

Requirements for the Ph.D. set by the Graduate School at Northwestern include two consecutive years of full-time coursework. Three courses per quarter constitute a full-time load. Therefore, students normally take two to three courses per quarter during their first two years of graduate work and receive some course credit for supervised research. Students in the Social Area are required to take a set of core social psychology and statistics/methodology courses, but there is considerable flexibility in tailoring the rest of the required course work around each student's particular areas of interest.

At Northwestern, graduate courses are "400-level" courses (levels 100 through 300 are undergraduate courses). Social Area students must complete at least six graduate courses in social psychology. Two of these are mandatory: Psychology 481 (Theories in Social Psychology) and Psychology 482 (Research Methods in Social Psychology). The remaining four may be chosen from among the many options regularly offered. In addition to these six social courses, students must also complete another three courses. At least two of these must be content courses outside of the social area – that is, courses offered by other areas of the Psychology Department or by other departments at Northwestern.

The following graduate social psychology courses are offered regularly:

- 430: Attraction and Relationships
- 440: Self-Regulation
- 481: Theories in Social Psychology
- 482: Research Methods in Social Psychology
- 483: Social Cognition
- 485: Psychology of Attitudes
- 486: Stereotyping and Prejudice
- 489: Special Topics in Social Psychology (e.g., Motivated Cognition, Psychology of Gender, The Self, Implicit Social Cognition, Cooperation and Prosocial Behavior).

Students are also required by the department to take a full year of statistics (three courses, typically Psychology 450, 451, and 453). Most students take additional statistics courses and practicums in topics like teaching, grant-writing, and research communication, and these are highly encouraged. However, such courses do not count toward the two outside-area courses required for Social Area students. Finally, during their first year, students are required by the department to take (a) two quarters of a department-wide proseminar designed to introduce students to the field of psychology as a whole and (b) an ethics training sequence during a third quarter (Psychology 519).

In addition to enrolling in courses, students may receive course credit for

independent, supervised research (Psychology 499) as part of a full-time load. This may only account for one credit per quarter during the first year of study, but may account for two credits in later years. A typical sequence for completing all of the required course work during one's first two years in the program is outlined in the chart below. However, it is not uncommon for schedules to deviate based upon the availability of particular courses and for students to finish some of the required course work during the third year. Also, it should be noted that this schedule reflects the minimal requirements for coursework, but students frequently take additional courses beyond the minimum, particularly in Year 2.

Year 1

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
Proseminar	Proseminar	Ethics Course
Statistics Course	Statistics Course	Statistics Course
400-level Seminar	400-level Seminar	2 x 400-level Seminars or
		400-level Seminar + Psych 499

Year 2

<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Spring</i>
2 x 400-level Seminars	2 x 400-level Seminars	2 x 400-level Seminars
Psych 499	Psych 499	Psych 499

Within the framework of these basic requirements, students are free to develop a program of coursework that suits their particular career and research aspirations. Beyond the offered Psychology courses, relevant graduate courses may be offered by the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, the School of Communications, the School of Education and Social Policy, and the Kellogg Graduate School of Management (particularly the Marketing and the Management and Organization Departments). These often (but not always) may serve as outside-area courses. In very special cases, a unique 300-level undergraduate course may also be substituted for a graduate course. Before enrolling in undergraduate courses or courses in other departments, prior approval is required from one's advisor and the head of the Social Area, who will consult with the other faculty in the area in reaching a decision.

2. First Year Research

The program is designed to introduce new students to psychological research from the outset of their involvement in the program. Students work closely with their advisers to develop a first-year research project during their first quarter of

graduate school. They are expected to take an active role in planning and executing this project, and they typically present their findings in an informal "brownbag" presentation at the end of the first year.

They are also required to submit a publication-style article based on this research to their adviser by the end of the summer following their first year.

3. Master's Thesis

Students are also required to write a master's thesis reporting original research conducted by the student under the guidance of a master's committee that is normally chaired by the student's primary academic advisor. This research may develop the themes presented in the first-year project, or it may concern an entirely different topic. The master's thesis committee consists of at least two members of the graduate faculty, one of whom is the student's primary faculty adviser. Thesis research is typically conducted during the second year of graduate study. In contrast to the dissertation, the master's thesis does not require an initial proposal. Students conduct the research and write the thesis under the guidance of the advisor and submit a written document to the masters committee, who will also conduct an oral examination. Students should complete the Master's thesis, including the oral examination, before the end of their second year of graduate study.

4. Comprehensive Qualifying Examination

To become candidates for a doctoral degree, students must pass a written comprehensive qualifying examination that tests their knowledge of core issues relating to research and theory in social psychology. This examination is normally scheduled to follow completion of the Master's degree requirements and the core coursework. A reading list is distributed toward the end of spring quarter of the second year, allowing students to spend that summer reading and preparing for the exam. From this foundation of knowledge, the comprehensive exam provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their knowledge of the field. The examination itself has two components, a timed and a take-home portion. The timed portion lasts four hours and follows a closed-book short-answer format. The take-home portion lasts a week and follows an open-book essay format. This exam takes place in the late summer following the student's second year. The Graduate School (TGS) requires that all students be admitted to candidacy (which includes passing the comprehensive qualifying exam) no later than August 30 following their third year in graduate school.

5. PhD Dissertation Proposal

The final program requirement is the completion of a doctoral dissertation reporting original research conducted by the student under the guidance of a dissertation committee that is normally chaired by the student's primary academic advisor. The dissertation committee consists of four members of the graduate

faculty, at least one of whom must come from outside the social area faculty. The first formal step in the dissertation process is a written proposal (“prospectus”) that includes a comprehensive literature review, theoretical discussion, and the method for the proposed research. The proposal is written sometime during the third and/or fourth year, and students must defend it in an oral examination administered by the dissertation committee. The proposal defense must take place by the end of the fourth year of graduate study, and all other degree requirements must be completed prior to the defense. TGS requires that all students have their dissertation prospectus approved no later than August 31 following their fourth year in graduate school.

6. PhD Dissertation

Writing of the dissertation takes place during the student's fifth year, and the complete doctoral thesis must be defended in a final oral examination, which is typically completed by the end of the student's fifth year. The date of the examination must be early enough to allow the student sufficient time make any necessary revisions and submit the completed dissertation and all supporting materials to TGS by the graduation deadline the student is intending to meet (see TGS's Web site for the deadlines in a given year).

For all milestones, students must complete a TGS form to officially register completion of the milestone. Students can do this by logging in to CAESAR and clicking on Main Menu, then TGS Forms. Print out a hard copy of the completed form (the Graduate Program Coordinator can print the qualifying exam form for you), and take it to the meeting for committee members to sign. The signed copy should be given to the Graduate Program Coordinator for submission to TGS.