

SOCI 499¹ - Honours Seminar and Graduating Essay

Instructor/Contact details



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Course Description/Objectives

The Honours Seminar facilitates learning of the theoretical, methodological, and empirical competencies necessary for completion of the honours thesis. The honours thesis offers students the opportunity to demonstrate theoretical sophistication, clear and focused argumentation, sound analytical reasoning, and concise writing. The honours program is designed to prepare students for graduate-level studies. The honours thesis is based on a process similar to completion of an MA thesis. Under the supervision of a faculty member in the Department of Sociology, students will write and defend a research proposal, complete a thesis within the allotted timeline, and present their research at an end-of-year symposium.

Students have three options for their honours thesis. A thesis typically consists of an in-depth appraisal of key literature on a specific topic or issue that is of interest to the student. This appraisal features a critical synthesis of selected peer-reviewed articles, concise argumentation about the nature of the topic/issue, and a discussion of sociological implications. In some cases, a supervisor may offer the student the opportunity to work on a grant-funded project that will serve as the basis for the thesis. The student needs to negotiate the requirements for this research with the supervisor and submit a copy of this agreement to the honours advisor. Under exceptional circumstances, students will carry out their own independent research project for their honours thesis. Students are encouraged to discuss these options with the honours advisor.

Entrance Requirements

Students typically apply for entry into the honours program at the end of their third year but can apply any time up until the beginning of their fourth year. Declaring a major in Sociology is required prior to applying. To apply, submit an application form to the Sociology honours program adviser (see <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/sociology/assets/docs/honours/honours-app-form.pdf>).

¹ This online outline is only intended to give an overall and approximate sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.

Entry requirements include having a declared major in Sociology, a GPA of at least 6.00 in all Sociology courses numbered at or above the 200 level, including in at least one required methods course. In addition to completing the requirements for a major in sociology, honours students are expected to maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 6.0 in all upper-level courses and to complete SOCI 499 with a minimum grade of B+.

Required Textbook/Readings

Required readings include specific journal articles assigned for each week of the course in the fall term. The readings will be listed in the syllabus and available on Brightspace. The articles will be uploaded at least one week prior to the seminar to which they are assigned. It is crucial to do the readings at the beginning of each week so as to keep up with the material we cover in the seminars.

Format

SOCI 499 will be taught online using Brightspace and Zoom. Brightspace is UVic's new primary Learning Management Tool and it will serve as our 'home site' for all course content, i.e., lecture links, videos, outlines, announcements, grades. Zoom is a video conferencing tool which we will be using for weekly synchronous seminars in the fall term and bi-weekly seminars in the spring term. An important aspect of the seminar discussions is the sharing of ideas and research progress for peer-feedback.

Evaluation

Thesis Proposal:

The proposal should specify a topic of investigation, a methodology and expected contribution to sociological knowledge. The combined written proposal and proposal defence presentation are worth 10% of the total grade. Once the proposal is defended, students are expected to carry out the project as described in the proposal, although some modifications may be needed based on feedback from the honours advisor and/or supervisor.

Thesis:

The Honours thesis should be 40 to 50 pages in length and formatted according to the university's graduate thesis guidelines. The honours thesis is worth 80% of the total grade. The supervisor is responsible for reading and grading the thesis.

Research Symposium:

Students will present their thesis research at the annual Sociology Honours Research Symposium. This presentation is worth 10% of the total grade. The Symposium may be online or in-person depending on university guidelines for Covid-19.

The final mark for SOCI 499 will be determined by the supervisor in consultation with the honours advisor. The grade is based on the honours thesis, written proposal, proposal defence, and symposium presentation. Each student needs to submit a bound version of their thesis to the Department of Sociology.