

Queen's University Department of Sociology

## SOCIOLOGY 520 - THESIS

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### The Thesis

A thesis is an intensive study of a particular topic or question; it usually consists of a number of chapters which are linked together to form a single coherent piece of work. Its purpose is to offer those nearing the end of their program an opportunity to pursue in depth, an interest that they have developed in the general field of Sociology. In the thesis, you will have more time and freedom to follow individual interests than in a normal course, and more opportunity to "range" over the field than in a directed study course. It is hoped that the thesis will enable you to bring together much of the work you have done in previous years, and so "round off" your studies in a creative, constructive and individual way. The thesis need not involve a social survey or any other field work; studies of literature or other documentary material are equally acceptable. Normally a thesis is approximately 50-75 pages (15,000 words) in length.

A thesis is done under the supervision of a faculty member with whom you must work closely during the session. In choosing a topic for the thesis, the initiative lies with you and it should reflect your special interests. You must take the initiative to seek out and obtain agreement to supervise from the appropriate professor. It is therefore, advisable to choose an area or topic and seek out a supervisor before completing your third year, and begin to familiarize yourself with relevant literature before you begin your fourth year.

The scope of the topic should not be too broad and should take into account limitations of time and money; people sometimes select topics that are too ambitious, even for two semesters of work. Bear in mind that the thesis is the equivalent of one full course, and you should tailor your plans to that scale of significance for your overall degree program. In instances where the thesis involves the use of human subjects (observations, interviews, surveys, etc.), you must undergo an "ethics review" procedure to ensure that the rights of these subjects are protected and the researcher is guarded against liability.

### Supervision

The supervisor will normally provide advice about the basic plan for the work, such as limiting its scope to what is attainable and practical; advice about relevant literature and other sources of data; advice about specific problems that arise in the course of the work; and assistance in accessing sources outside the University, where appropriate.

Supervision should take place at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Precise arrangements must be worked out between the supervisor and the student on an individual basis. Normally, the thesis must be submitted to the supervisor by the end of the academic year, **i.e., prior to the regular examination period.** However, individual supervisors have the prerogative to require earlier or later deadlines. Theses are graded according to the regular standards set out in the Calendar. Please note that Faculty of Arts and Science regulations

state that if your thesis is not completed on time, your supervisor must submit an "ED" (Examination Deferred) grade together with an explanation of why the thesis is not yet completed. The final decision about the acceptance of the thesis is made by the Board of Studies, which may overturn the recommendation of the supervisor.

### **Format and Presentation of the Thesis**

You must submit **two** copies of the thesis to your supervisor: one for him/her and the other for the Department of Sociology.

The thesis must be in typescript using double-spacing, on 8-1/2" x 11" white bond paper. There must be a margin of at least 1-1/2" on the left side of the pages, suitable for binding.

The thesis must be presented with a front page stating title, author's name, date of submission, and the words "An Undergraduate Honours Thesis Submitted to the Department of Sociology, Queen's University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of B.A. (Honours)".

There should be a table of contents indexing the numbered pages.

Footnotes and bibliography must follow the format required for theses, as given in Turabian, A Manual for Thesis Writers. The Canadian Review of Sociology utilizes a straightforward style of footnoting and bibliography, which is advocated for the thesis. Northey and Tepperman's Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research Writing and Style is also a useful source.

### **Copyright**

Copyright of the work resides with the author. There is no objection to publication of the whole or a part of the thesis providing that permission has been obtained from sources to use any data that are deployed in the thesis. Acknowledgment must be given to the Department of Sociology, Queen's University.

## **SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR PREPARATION OF THE HONOURS THESIS**

Spring 2022	Preliminary exploration of an area of study and approach to prospective supervisor(s).
September 2022	Selection of a thesis topic and agreement of supervisor, including preliminary discussion of the topic and relevant source material.
Early October 2022	Submission to supervisor of a preliminary bibliography and a broad outline of the thesis, including the structure of the chapters and a description of the research you intend to undertake. Supervisors may suggest that you do this in the form of an introductory chapter. Theses range from 3-5 chapters in length typically.
November 2022	Submission of first chapter to the supervisor. This is the period during which you must work the most regularly, frequently and systematically with your supervisor since his/her feedback is crucial to the final outcome of the thesis.
December 2022	Submission of second chapter to the supervisor.
January 2023	Submission of the third chapter to the supervisor.
February 2023	Completion and submission of first full draft of thesis.
March 2023	Undertake revisions and submit final draft to the supervisor for evaluation.
Early April 2023	Submission of the final copies (2) to the supervisor. (last day of classes)