

## HONORS PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

### WHAT IS THE HONORS PROGRAM? WHAT'S A THESIS?

The Honors Program in Sociology combines the advantage of a liberal arts college with that of a major research university by offering students the opportunity to answer their own independent research question with the guidance of faculty mentors. The research culminates in a thesis, a written analysis of the research data.

### WHY CONSIDER IT?

Completion of an honors thesis demonstrates a student's discipline and motivation as well as strong writing, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning skills—assets prospective employers and graduate school admissions committees look for.

### APPLYING

#### To apply to the Honors Program in Sociology, a student must

- be a sociology concentrator,
- have at least a 3.5 GPA in sociology courses,
- have at least a 3.4 overall GPA,
- and have at least second-semester sophomore class standing.

#### The application requires

- a two- to three-page essay indicating the student's interest in the discipline and exploring potential topics for a thesis,
- two letters of recommendation from University of Michigan<sup>1</sup> faculty or GSIs,
- a writing sample,
- and an unofficial transcript.

Applications are due during fall semester of the student's junior year, and the required three-course sequence (SOC 397, 398, and 399) begins the next semester, in winter.

<sup>1</sup> Recommendations from Department of Sociology faculty or GSIs are strongly encouraged.

## **COURSE PLANNING**

In addition to the required three-course, nine-credit, sequence for the honors program, prospective honors students should plan to

- Complete the concentration statistics requirement ( SOC 210 or STATS 350, typically offered every full and half term) prior to enrolling in SOC 397 (offered in the winter term only)
- Complete the research methods requirement (SOC 310 or SOC 312, typically offered every full and half term) prior to or concurrently with SOC 397(offered in the winter term only)

## **SOC 397: Junior Honors in Sociology**

This course is organized as a workshop. All of the course assignments and activities are designed to help students define a topic for research, develop a research question, review the literature relevant to the topic, and specify the methods to be employed in answering the research question. Students focus on the tasks needed to develop their research plan, write their research prospectus, and begin communicating with a faculty mentor.

## **Sociology 398 and 399: Senior Honors in Sociology**

In SOC 398, the student works directly with a faculty mentor, but the honors coordinator retains a partial mentoring relationship, meeting frequently with the honors students. In SOC 399, the student completes the analysis of data and writes the thesis under the direct supervision of the mentor, with guidance from the honors coordinator. The thesis is evaluated by both the faculty mentor and a second reader who is also a faculty member in the Department of Sociology.

To graduate with honors, students must meet all general concentration requirements in addition to completing the honors thesis. Upon completion of the coursework and the evaluation of the thesis, successful students will receive one of the following designations on their diploma: “with honors,” “with high honors,” or “with highest honors.”

## **HONORS SYMPOSIUM**

At the conclusion of the three-course sequence, students present their research projects, findings, and analyses to their family and friends at the annual Sociology Honors Symposium.

## **QUESTIONS**

If you have more questions about the purpose and function of the Honors Program in Sociology or the application process, please email Sociology’s undergraduate program coordinator, Elise Harper, at [saraelis@umich.edu](mailto:saraelis@umich.edu).