Disclaimer
The information contained in this handbook is correct for the academic year 2021–22. The most up-to-date version can be found at www.mailman.columbia.edu/people/current-students/academics/student-handbooks

Although the degree and academic requirements in place normally will not change within any given academic year, Mailman School and departmental policies are reviewed and updated regularly. The Department of Sociomedical Sciences reserves the right to make changes at any time with appropriate notice to the community (e.g., email notification).
# Department of Sociomedical Sciences
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SMS Doctoral Handbook 2021–22 2
Overview

In 1968, the Columbia University School of Public Health, now called the Mailman School of Public Health (MSPH), became the first institution in the country to offer a graduate degree in Sociomedical Sciences (SMS). What began as a collaborative research project on rural health care in 1956, spearheaded by a physician, an epidemiologist, and a sociologist, evolved over a decade’s time into a formal doctoral program. Professor Jack Elinson, the first head of SMS, coined the term "sociomedical sciences" to incorporate the social sciences of sociology, anthropology, history, political science, and social psychology into a multidisciplinary study of health and medicine.

SMS faculty are broadly involved in both research and teaching, with the goal of applying social science theory and methodology to health and medical issues. Research projects are focused on such contemporary health topics as sociocultural aspects of drug behavior and alcoholism, tobacco control, sexuality and health, adolescent health, the role of social supports and social networks, aging and health, social aspects of disability, the organization of health care and health care program evaluation, the health professions, stress and coping, the behavioral and ethical impact of AIDS, behavioral and structural approaches to prevention, implementation science, the social roots of public health policy, and gender and health.

Within the teaching program, two doctoral degrees are available: the Doctor of Public Health (DrPH), conferred by the Mailman School of Public Health, and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), conferred by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) but administered by the Mailman School of Public Health.

Learning Objectives of Doctoral Programs

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The PhD is designed for individuals who wish to combine training in history or in a social or behavioral science discipline with research on questions significant to public health and medicine. Students combine 30 credits of coursework in the disciplinary program to which they are admitted with similar length of training in public health. Faculty mentors are drawn from SMS, as well as other MSPH faculty with social science training, and faculty from social science departments from GSAS. The successful PhD graduate will be a scholar with a portfolio of independent research, prepared to teach students in either a social science department, an interdisciplinary program (such as global health or gender studies) or a school of public health.

Upon satisfactory completion of the PhD degree in SMS, graduates will be able to:

- Identify and explain problems in public health and health care from the perspective of both public health and the theory and empirical findings of a social or behavioral science discipline:
- Summarize and critically analyze theoretical principles and positions in three of the following five disciplines - anthropology, psychology, history, political science, and sociology - as they have been applied to research problems in public health and medicine, and
- Restate, critique and synthesize the general theory and methods in one of the following disciplines: Anthropology, History, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology;

• Identify the major qualitative and quantitative methods in the social and behavioral sciences and assess their major strengths and limitations:
  - Identify and explain core theoretical principles and methods in biostatistics and epidemiology;
  - Select the social science method or methods appropriate to addressing a research question specific to population, time and setting, and
  - Demonstrate an in-depth proficiency in data collection, research design and data analysis for two narrowly defined areas of social science methodology, one of which should include the major methodological traditions of the student’s disciplinary concentration;

• Conduct independent scholarly research that advances knowledge in public health and that both draws on and contributes to theory and methods of the social science discipline of their choice:
  - Conceive, formulate and conduct original empirical research that applies or tests theory from a social science discipline to a research problem on health, illness, health behaviors among individuals and groups or the organization of public health and health care, and
  - Communicate in written and oral form the results of research findings to other scholars in both the selected social science discipline and public health; and

• Apply current standards for conducting ethical research with human subjects:
  - Identify principles and requirements for the protection of human subjects in public health research, and
  - Write and implement a research protocol that follows guidelines of the Institutional Review Board, and that protects the confidentiality of study subjects, minimizes their exposure to physical, social and psychological harm and, as appropriate, compensates subjects for their participation in a research study.

**Doctor of Public Health (DrPH)**

The DrPH is designed to train individuals who wish to build academic, policy, or program-oriented careers in public health, drawing on the theory and methods of the social and behavioral
sciences. The DrPH in SMS prepares students to assume positions in academic and practice settings where they apply their expertise in evidence-based public health practice. Students must enter the program with an MPH or its equivalent. Students follow a course of study that brings the theory and methods of multiple social science disciplines to bear on a public health topic of the student’s choosing. Students are encouraged to select topics that fall within the research expertise of faculty in SMS, but other School of Public Health faculty with social science training may mentor DrPH students. Departments outside of SMS with faculty who participate in the training of DrPH include, but are not limited, to Health Policy and Management, Population and Family Health, and Epidemiology. The successful DrPH graduate will be a scholar who has acquired sufficient expertise in a specific area of public health so that they are prepared to train the next generation of public health masters and doctoral students in the current state of social science knowledge, or a public health professional whose work draws from the social sciences to advance programs, policies, and services aimed at addressing population health.

Upon satisfactory completion of the DrPH degree in SMS, graduates will be able to:

- Critically analyze and apply theoretical principles and positions in three of the following five disciplines – anthropology, psychology, history and sociology – to research problems, programs, policies, or services in public health;
- Integrate behavioral and social science knowledge, approaches, and methods and potential contributions from other professions and health systems to address public health problems; and
- Critique and synthesize key social and behavior science theories and empirical findings to develop research, programs, policies, and services aimed at addressing key public health issues;

- Explain and identify the major qualitative and quantitative methods in the social and behavioral sciences and assess their major strengths and limitations in public health research and practice:

  - Select social and behavioral science methods that are appropriate for addressing a significant public health research question, and for evaluating programs, interventions, or policies in public health
  - Drawing from the methods and tools of the social and behavioral sciences, design a qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, policy analysis or evaluation project to address a key public health issue; and
  - Explain and critique qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research and evaluation methods to address public health issues at multiple levels: individual, group, organization, community and population.
• Undertake independent research that contributes to public health practice, programs, interventions, or policies:
  - Develop and conduct original research drawing from the behavioral and social sciences
  - Communicate in written and oral form the results of research findings and, based on findings, propose strategies for health improvement to other scholars, public health practitioners, community leaders, and other partners; and
  - Communicate public health science to diverse stakeholders

**Department of Sociomedical Sciences Central Office**

The Department of Sociomedical Sciences is located on the 5th and 9th floor of 722 West 168th Street. The SMS Central Office, located on the 9th floor, serves as a center of information for its students and faculty. Housed in the Central Office are the Department Chair, the Associate Director of Academic Programs, administrative support staff, and the Business Office. The Department has designated a Deputy Chair responsible for directing the doctoral programs. The Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies is located on the 5th floor, as is the Graduate Research Assistant room. The Deputy Chair consults with the Department Chair regarding procedures that require Departmental approval, e.g., examination and dissertation committees. The Deputy Chair also works with other faculty on admissions, review of student academic performance, and curriculum. Jennifer Hirsch is the Deputy Chair of the Doctoral Program as well as the Chair of the SMS Subcommittee in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

To assist the Deputy Chair, SMS faculty members have been designated as liaisons with each of the downtown Departments and a Director for the DrPH program. Among their roles are to monitor program requirements for their respective concentrations and to advise students on course requirements. For 2021–2022, the faculty liaisons are:

- **Anthropology:** Jennifer Hirsch (jsh2124)
- **History:** David Rosner (dr289)
- **Psychology:** --HIATUS--
- **Sociology:** Connie Nathanson (can2003)
- **DrPH Program Director:** Marni Sommer (ms2778)

**General Information and Resources**

This section of the handbook includes general information and resources for both PhD and DrPH programs, unless otherwise specified. Information pertinent to only one of the degree programs is mentioned in the respective sections of this handbook.
Email & Accessing Information

Columbia UNI & Email
An official Columbia University email address is required for all students. The University has the right to send official communications to the University email address, which is based upon the University Network ID (UNI) assigned to the student.

Mailman Public Health students receive an @cumc.columbia.edu email account when they begin enrollment CUMC. The address is formatted as uni@cumc.columbia.edu, where uni is your own Columbia UNI (ex: abc1234).

The University expects that every student will receive email at his or her Columbia University email address and will read email on a frequent and consistent basis. A student's failure to receive and read University communications in a timely manner does not absolve that student from knowing and complying with the content of such communications.

IMPORTANT: Email Use at CUIMC prohibits automatic forwarding of your messages to an outside provider such as Gmail, iCloud, etc. and can result in permanent loss of incoming messages. Individual messages can be manually forwarded when in compliance with email, data protection or other relevant requirements.

SMS Listerv and E-weekly
The department regularly sends information for master’s students such as program announcements, practicum opportunities, and job postings for students. We also have a department weekly newsletter, sent Monday afternoons, with department announcements, shout-outs, and upcoming events and programs for all SMS faculty, staff, and students.

Mailman Public Health Transmission
The Mailman School of Public Health has three news and events weeklies:

- Transmission is the Mailman community weekly newsletter sent to faculty, staff, and students.
- Event Transmission is the Mailman community events calendar.
- Transmission Action is the weekly e-mail for students produced by the Office of Student Affairs with important announcements.

Mailman Bias Response and Support System (BRSS)
The Mailman School of Public Health is committed to creating an inclusive working, learning, and living environment where all are respected. The occurrence of bias related incidents, involving conduct, speech, or expressions reflecting prejudice are an opportunity for learning and growing as a community. All students, faculty, staff, and alumni and anyone observing or experiencing a potential bias-related incident involving our Mailman community members can use BRSS. More information and to access BRSS.
**Columbia Gender-Based Misconduct Policies and Interim Title IX Policies**

Columbia University is committed to fostering an environment that is free from gender-based discrimination and harassment, including sexual assault and all other forms of gender-based misconduct. The Gender-Based Misconduct and Interim Title IX Policies and Procedures for Students is one part of the University's multifaceted approach to eliminate gender-based misconduct from our community, which also includes educational programs; services and resources for those affected by gender-based misconduct; accessible, prompt, and fair methods of investigation and resolution of reports of misconduct; and protections designed to prevent against recurrence. For more information, [https://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/university-policy](https://sexualrespect.columbia.edu/university-policy)

**Columbia Transportation Services**

Columbia Transportation provides travel options and information that allows the Columbia community to make safe, efficient, and timely travels to, from, and between Columbia's Morningside, Manharttanville, and Medical Center campuses.

**Intercampus Campus Shuttle**

A free campus shuttle bus service is available between the CU Medical Center Campus and the Columbia Morningside Campus. A valid Columbia University identification card is required. For up to date information about this and other shuttle bus services operated by Columbia University visit [https://transportation.columbia.edu/](https://transportation.columbia.edu/)

**Campus Safety Escorts**

The Department of Public Safety at the Morningside Campus provides a safety escort service

- **Morningside Campus Escort Service**

  The on-demand, point-to-point Public Safety Evening Shuttle by Via has replaced the escort service at the Morningside campus. Please visit the [On-Demand Evening Shuttle page](https://transportation.columbia.edu/) for more information.

- **Medical Center Escort Service**

  On the Medical Center Campus, foot escorts are provided by Public Safety personnel at all times. From 6:00PM until 6:00 AM, vehicles may be used for escorts if available. The escort area is West 159th Street to West 168th Street, Riverside Drive to Amsterdam Avenue and from West 168 Street to 181 Street, Broadway to Haven Avenue. A valid Columbia ID Card is required to obtain an escort. Please call 212-305-8100 to request an escort. Allow 10-15 minutes for the escort to arrive.

- **Manhattanville Campus Escort Service**

  Manhattanville Public Safety provides an evening escort service to faculty, staff and students at Manhattanville, from 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. The service accompanies you from any Manhattanville Campus building to the 1 train subway station at 125th Street
and Broadway. The on-demand, point-to-point Public Safety Evening Shuttle by Via is also available in Manhattanville. To request an escort, call the Manhattanville Operations Center non-emergency line at 212-853-3301.

**Resources for Parents**

Beginning in fall 2016, the following benefits became available to all Sociomedical DrPH and PhD students who have been enrolled in 14 or less semesters (i.e., no more than seven years):

**Parental Leave**

Students who give birth, adopt, or become legal guardians or foster parents, as well as students whose spouse or partner gives birth, can have responsibilities associated with their doctoral program suspended for twelve calendar weeks without loss of funding. In addition, students may elect to take a semester of unpaid accommodation after their paid leave concludes.

**Childcare Subsidy**

Students may receive a $2,000 subsidy per year for each child who is: 1) under the age of five, and 2) not attending kindergarten. If both parents are doctoral students eligible for funding at Columbia, each of them may apply individually for the child-care subsidy.

**Adoption Assistance Program**

This benefit is available to a doctoral student who: 1) is in years one through seven in their doctoral program, 2) is fully funded, 3) has adopted a child who is under the age of 18, and 4) has finalized the adoption process within the past six months. This benefit provides a one-time reimbursement of up to $5,000 for expenses incurred on or after the parent's first day of enrollment in their SMS doctoral program. There is a limit of one $5,000 reimbursement per adopted child, even if both parents are Mailman students.

**International Students**

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) ([www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/isso.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/isso.html)) provides other informational and social resources for international students.

Under United States immigration law, it is your personal responsibility to maintain lawful F-1 or J-1 student status. That is, **you are responsible for finding out, knowing, and following pertinent regulations**. If you take time early on to familiarize yourself with your obligations to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), you should find it easy to maintain your legal status. If, however, you allow yourself to fall “out of status” it may be extraordinarily difficult to be reinstated to legal status.

If you have valid academic or health reasons for requiring more time to complete your program than that which is authorized on the Columbia I-20 or DS-2019, you must request a program extension through the International Students and Scholars Office. Contact the ISSO as soon as
you know that you will need an extension and at least 30 days before the completion date noted on your I-20 or DS-2019 in order to have enough time to obtain any necessary documents.

**Funding & Stipends**

Effective in the 2021-2022 academic year, SMS doctoral students in years 1-5 will receive an annual (12 month) stipend of $40,000, coverage of tuition & fees, and health insurance, which is the benefit package provided to all doctoral students at Columbia University. This is possible due to a substantial ‘topping off’ for each student, to come from SMS funds.

The stipend is our standard level for all funded doctoral students at the Mailman School of Public Health. It is inclusive of all required departmental expectations for satisfactory completion of doctoral training in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences, including teaching rotations (assistantships) and research rotations across faculty mentors. Thus, no additional payment will be received for meeting the doctoral program expectations in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences. The MSPH stipend is for a 12-month period, thus students are not permitted to take outside full-time work in the summer months and expected to spend their summers in a way that advances their progress in the doctoral program. Stipends are disbursed once per term (fall & spring) and are processed and deposited in the student’s account; no timesheets submitted.

Students will receive the annual stipend of $40,000 as long as they remain in good academic standing with timely and satisfactory progress towards completion of doctoral studies. This annual support is guaranteed for years 1 – 5 (five successive years). By that time, it is expected that the student will have made clear progress toward completing, or have completed, the dissertation.

**Funding & Rotations**

The rotation policy applies to the funding packages of students who receive five years of funding and entered in 2018 or thereafter.

Students will complete a six to eight rotations, which should include working with at least three different faculty members and serving as a teaching assistant at least twice. Rotations are expected to require 15-20 hours of work per week during the semester, excluding winter break and spring break. The increased funding is intended to support students over the summer. Work with a faculty member can, if mutually agreed upon, last for a full academic year and count towards two rotations.

Work on applications for external funding which could substitute for training grant or SMS funding support (for example, a first-year student’s fall-semester development of an application for an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, or a second-year student’s fall or spring semester development of an ‘F31’ application) would count as a research rotation. Students who secure external funding, as illustrated in the example below, will do fewer total rotations than students who do not.
Students beyond the fifth year are not eligible for departmental funding. Every effort will be made to help students transition to other funding, in recognition that some SMS doctoral students need more than five years to complete the program. Possible mechanisms of funding beyond Year 5 include individual fellowships or support from faculty research grants.

**What are the research and teaching rotations?**

Beginning several weeks into the first semester of their first year in the program, students will do a maximum of eight rotations, which can be either teaching rotations or research rotations, for approximately 15-20 hours/week during the semester, excluding winter and spring break. The priority for these assignments will be building academic connections between SMS faculty and doctoral students. In a limited fashion, it may also be possible for students to have research and teaching assignments outside of SMS.

- For teaching rotations, faculty will commit to providing a ‘teaching assistant’ experience that will build pedagogical expertise; this should include work on syllabus design, learning objectives, development of assessment tools, classroom instruction, and grading. Faculty working with doctoral students will commit to ensuring consistency across TA experiences and set learning objectives at the outset of the rotation.

The classes to which students may be assigned in SMS include but are not limited to:

<table>
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<th>Course</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mailman MPH Core</td>
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<tr>
<td>P8736 Theories &amp; Perspectives in Sexuality and Health</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>P8750 Race &amp; Health</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>P8776 Advancing Health Literacy</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>P6728 Health Promotion Theory Practice &amp; Research</td>
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<td>P8792 Dissemination &amp; Implementation</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>P8705 Evaluation of Health Programs</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>P8745 Social and Economic Determinants of Health</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>P8785 Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>P8796 Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

- If students TA for a class outside of SMS, the funds that that department would ordinarily pay a TA will be applied to the SMS subsidy for the doctoral student, rather than to the student directly (that is, students won’t earn more for TAing outside of SMS; it will count as a teaching rotation unit).
- Students will be assigned to teaching rotations that fit their skills and interests.

- We hope at some point to develop a teaching rotation to provide writing support for MPH students.
- For research rotations, priority assignment will go to SMS faculty.
**How are rotations decided?**

The rotations offer a means to connect students more effectively to faculty and provide greater exposure to and collaboration in faculty research, as well as to build doctoral students’ teaching skills. At the same time, not all classes require a TA (typically determined by class size and extent or required writing), and individual faculty member’s research needs and mentoring bandwidth will vary over time. Therefore, rotations are decided in conversation with students and faculty, in a process co-led by Professors Hirsch and Sikkema. Beginning in the spring of 2022, the process will be as follows:

- Faculty will have the opportunity, via a survey distributed in the beginning of the second semester, to list projects and topics that could be the focus of a research rotation for the following year. Students can also learn about faculty research by reviewing faculty bios, attending seminars in SMS where faculty present, and keeping an eye on faculty publications listed in SMS weekly.
- In February, a survey will be distributed to doctoral students, with opportunities for research rotations as well as a list of courses that will need TAs for the following year.
- Rotations for the upcoming academic year will be tentatively settled by April.

Each year, feedback about the rotations (both process and impact) will be collected from students (on the annual reports) and faculty (via a survey). That feedback will be taken into account in planning rotations for subsequent years.

Some key points regarding securing external funding and the SMS stipend:

- Doctoral students in years 1-3 are **expected** to work with their faculty mentors to apply for fellowships and grants to partially cover their stipend and to support their research in years 3 and beyond.
- Faculty in turn are also encouraged to write rising doctoral students into NIH applications.
- In recognition of how much work is involved in writing an NSF, NRSA, or other major application for funding, the work of developing and submitting that application, when realized with mentorship from an SMS faculty member, will count as a semester-long research rotation.
- If a student secures external support through NSF, NRSA, or foundation funding which includes a stipend, the externally-supported stipend funding is applied towards the total stipend, rather than being received by the student in addition to the $40K annual stipend.
- In no instance would a student who secures external funding receive a lower stipend; SMS will top off all stipends so that students receive the same amount.
If the student secures funding that includes a stipend that is equivalent (or nearly so) to the amount of the SMS stipend, they will be expected to complete two fewer rotations in the succeeding years. Rotation assignments (of the 6-8 required) will also take into account additional work (such as coursework for a FLAS) that is required as part of external funding. For example, a student who secures an NSF at the end of their first year could be expected to do a maximum of 4 additional rotations, rather than the maximum of 6 rotations that will remain for their peers at the end of year 1 (see table for example).

### Sample rotation plans

*Sample rotation plans*  
*(does not cover every possible permutation, but intended to give some sense of how rotations and applications for external funding fit together)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample rotation plan, student submitting and securing an NSF</th>
<th>Sample rotation plan, student submitting and securing an NRSA</th>
<th>Sample rotation plan, student not successful in securing external funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Year 1:**  
- Fall: NSF application  
- Spring: research rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds | **Year 1:**  
- Fall: research rotation  
- Spring: research rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds | **Year 1:**  
- Fall: Research rotation (or NSF application)  
- Spring: research rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds |
| **Year 2:**  
- Fall: Research rotation with a different mentor  
- Spring: Teaching rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central Funds | **Years 2:**  
- Fall: F31 application  
- Spring: teaching rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds | **Year 2:**  
- Fall: research rotation (or F31 application)  
- Spring: teaching rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds |
| **Year 3:**  
- Fall: Research rotation  
- Spring: Teaching rotation  
- Funding: NSF + SMS Central Funds | **Year 3:**  
- Fall: research rotation, including resubmission of F31 if necessary  
- Spring: Teaching rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds | **Year 3:**  
- Fall: research rotation, including possible resubmission of F31  
- Spring: teaching rotation  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds |
| Remaining years:  
- no additional required rotations  
- Funding in years 4-5 from NSF + SMS Central Funds | Remaining years:  
- no additional required rotations  
- funding in years 4-5 from NIH + SMS Central Funds | Years 4-5:  
- two additional rotations, any combination of research + teaching, to be decided in conversation with director of doctoral programs.  
- Funding: T32 + SMS Central funds |

**Total # of rotations:** 6  
**Total # of rotations:** 6  
**Total # of rotations:** 8

### External Funding

All students are strongly encouraged to apply for fellowships and grants from government agencies and private foundations. Students interested in exploring these funding possibilities should consult with the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies or with the liaisons or program director for the program in which they are enrolled; more advanced students are also a good source of information about funding opportunities. *Because the work that goes into an application for an NSF or NRSA award is so significant, students may (in communication with the Deputy Chair*
Doctoral Studies) arrange for that to count as a one-semester research rotation. Students may also wish to consult the list of funding opportunities for graduate students found at www.mailman.columbia.edu/information-for/research-resources-r2/graduate-students

When preparing such grants, students should consult with the SMS Grants and Contracts Officer, who will provide assistance with preparing the appropriate grant documentation. The SMS Business Office requests that all materials be submitted to them at least 10 business days before the grant is due.

Below is a timetable that lays out the overall sequence of milestones and suggests the moments at which different types of funding applications should be considered. Students should note that:

- they are expected to take no more than 18 months to move through the sequence of post-coursework exams (the methods exam, oral examinations, and the dissertation proposal defense);
- students entering with a Master’s degree are expected to have defended the dissertation proposal by their sixth semester in the program, and
- students entering without a master’s degree are expected to have defended the proposal by their eighth semester in the program.

Students who fail to meet this expectation will not be considered in good standing, which may compromise their ability to apply for certain external funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Training</th>
<th>Duration, Timing or Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>Students should meet with their faculty advisor or sponsor at least annually to discuss opportunities for securing external funding and to map out a long-term strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH: 1.5-2 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD: 2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall semester of first year</td>
<td>NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (Available only to PhD students who are US citizens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early spring of first &amp; second year</td>
<td>Summer research/travel grants for pre-dissertation exploratory research. If this work is considered ‘human subjects research’, students will need to submit a protocol for review to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of first year – end of second year</td>
<td>Students planning to submit an F31 (also known as a National Research Service Award) should begin thinking about it in the spring of their first year, spend time planning focus &amp; mentorship committee over that summer, and aim to submit the proposal in the spring of their second year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods &amp; Theme Essays</td>
<td>Students preparing for the methods exam should also be thinking about additional milestones listed below. As the dissertation topic comes into focus, students should begin planning their funding strategy to support of dissertation research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Proposal</td>
<td>By this point students should have identified a sponsor and begun to draft the dissertation proposal in order to apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for external funding, and preparation of dissertation research protocol for submission to IRB.

| **Dissertation Proposal Defense** | Students entering with a Master’s degree are expected to defended the dissertation proposal by their sixth semester. Students entering without a master’s degree are expected to defended the proposal by their eighth semester. Students must have completed ALL OTHER program requirements before defending the dissertation proposal. |
| **During Dissertation Research** | Students should seek funding for support of dissertation writing 6-12 months before completing dissertation research. |

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### Academic Affairs

**Faculty Advisors**

Doctoral student advisement and mentoring occurs at multiple levels and evolves during the course of doctoral study. Upon matriculation to SMS, each student is assigned a faculty advisor. The advisor is responsible for guiding the student through the initial years of the program. The faculty advisor is often, but not always, the PhD disciplinary liaison or DrPH Director. The faculty advisor assists students in planning coursework to meet their needs and research interests. During the coursework phase of their doctoral studies, students should meet with their advisors at least once a semester. If the advisor does not reach out to the student to schedule this meeting, the student should contact the advisor to do so. In addition, all first-year students should meet at least once with the Director of the Doctoral Programs.

Most students change advisors as their specific research focus develops. Once the student has begun to work with a faculty member on developing the dissertation proposal, that faculty member is referred to as the student’s ‘sponsor’, which also encompasses the responsibilities of the advisor (such as signing off on the annual report). All Department faculty members are eligible to serve as advisors; many students select an advisor whose discipline matches their own disciplinary concentration, but it is not required that students do so. Students may find it helpful to discuss the selection of a sponsor with the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies. Students are encouraged to reach out directly to any faculty member with whom they would like to work. Students should inform the Associate Director of Academic Programs when contemplating any change of advisor or when selecting a sponsor.

The Associate Director of Academic Programs (Andrea Constancio) is knowledgeable about the rules and facilities of the University and serves as a resource person to both students and faculty. Students should meet with Andrea at registration times and should consult with her about questions regarding the fulfillment of requirements or any other administrative or program-related matter.
**Minimum Performance Standards**

To remain in good standing, students must:
1) receive grades of B or higher in all required courses
2) maintain an overall grade point average (GPA) of B+ (3.3) or higher
3) have no incompletes.

Students who receive a grade of B- or lower are placed on academic notice and must develop a remediation plan in collaboration with their advisor. Students receiving B- or lower in two or more courses will be placed on Dean’s Hold until a plan of remediation, approved by the student’s advisor, is submitted to the Office of Student Affairs. The written plan should be placed in the student’s file and a copy sent to the Dean of Students. Students with any type of Hold, including a Dean’s Hold, are not eligible for financial aid.

**Annual Academic Progress Review**

Doctoral students’ academic progress is assessed annually via the annual progress report completed each spring. These reports are the basis for review by the Department to identify possible academic difficulties in terms of progress towards completion of the program. For students who are beyond the seven-year limit for doctoral study established by the school, the reports provide a basis for the Director of the Doctoral Program to make a recommendation to the Department Chair and the Dean as to whether progress has been sufficient to merit a one-year extension (for more information on this, see “Program Time Limits” in the respective PhD and DrPH pages).

Students must complete the annual report form, consult with their academic advisors/dissertation sponsor for review and signature, respond to their advisor or sponsor’s comments, and submit the completed form to the Courseworks/Canvas site by the deadline ([courseworks.columbia.edu/welcome/](http://courseworks.columbia.edu/welcome/)). The review of annual reports examines student’s progression through the program. In addition to considering whether students are on-track regarding coursework and milestones, review assesses two other criteria: 1) progress in developing as a scholar, as measured by peer-reviewed publications, participation in professional meetings and conferences, submission of applications for external funding, and 2) development of independent research interests, as measured by the above but also as indicated by whether students in the first few years give other indications of settling on a dissertation topic and gravitating towards a faculty sponsor.

Students who fail to submit the form on time will not be considered ‘in-good-standing’ and will have a hold placed on their account.

**Students engaged in any form of human subjects research as part of the dissertation process, whether it is preliminary research or dissertation research, must submit evidence of current IRB approval with the annual report.**
**First Year Student Review**

First year students’ academic performance is reviewed by SMS faculty in January and June. The goals of these additional reviews are to assess whether students are adjusting well to doctoral-level training, to identify areas of potential concern so that appropriate means of remediation can be taken and, in very rare cases, to identify students whose academic performance leads to a recommendation to withdraw from the program. After the January review, students receive a written evaluation that takes into consideration grades in courses and on assignments as well as GRA or TA-related work.

At the end of students’ first academic year, the Doctoral Committee evaluates and recommends whether the student is in good academic standing, is required to do additional work, or should not be permitted to advance in the program. The review will be based on the overall portfolio of the student’s performance, which includes the student’s first year course grades, rotation-related work, the student’s annual report, and other faculty input regarding the student’s overall performance and transition to doctoral-level work.

The Doctoral Committee will recommend whether the student 1) has finished the year in good academic standing; 2) requires additional or remedial work in the second year, or 3) should not be permitted to advance in the program. If a recommendation is made for additional or remedial work, the student shall meet with an ad hoc committee to develop a plan of action. The ad hoc committee may include advisor, DGS, PI or supervisor. The student will meet quarterly with her or his advisor in year 2 to assess progress on that plan of action.

**Registration Process**

Registration periods are listed on the academic calendar. You will receive information about these registration periods from the Office of Student Affairs. Students should check SSOL for any holds on their accounts and to view their next registration appointment times.

Each semester, course schedules for the entire university are published online in the Columbia Directory of Courses (www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb/). The Mailman School of Public Health publishes a separate course schedule available online at https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/people/current-students/academics/course-directory.

Although students may take courses offered in any school in the University, their registration must be processed through the school in which they are enrolled. All students register through the Medical Center Campus registrar. Students should note that semester start and end dates, as well as holiday schedules, may not be the same for all schools in the University, so please consult the calendars for each school and campus (CUMC & Morningside).

Some courses require obtaining the instructor's or department approval. If approval is required, it will be noted in the Mailman course listings and the Columbia Directory of Courses. Students who encounter difficulty registering for courses in their disciplinary departments on the Arts and
Sciences campus should seek help from their disciplinary liaison rather than try to resolve these issues on their own.

**Late Registration**

Students are expected to register for and enroll in courses prior to the first day of class. Registration holds may sometimes delay a student’s registration, but the onus is on the student to resolve any/all holds preventing one’s registration by no later than the payment due-date of the second billing statement of the semester. After this deadline, students must work directly with Student Academic Records and Standards to determine next steps, which may include a leave of absence until the hold(s) can be resolved.

**Registration Holds**

Students should periodically check SSOL to ensure their student record is accurate and that no holds are in place. If a hold is present on a student’s account, it will likely prevent the student from taking any registration action (e.g., adding or dropping a class, change of grading options, etc.). Only the office that put the hold in place may release the hold, and contact information for the specific office(s) will be listed alongside the hold. Lifting a hold may take more than 24 hours to process, so students should reconcile their holds well in advance of registration appointments. **Important to note:** Students with a Dean’s Hold or Financial Hold are not eligible for financial aid, including stipend support, until the items are resolved.

**Change of Program Period - Add/Drop**

Changes in your class schedule may be made during the add/drop period, usually the first 8-10 days of the semester. There are no extra charges for adding or dropping courses during this period. However, because it is less than ideal to join a course without having attended the first weeks, it is recommended that students make every effort to register on time and consult with advisors prior to registration.

**Pass/Fail**

No required courses may be taken for Pass/Fail (unless this is the only grade option available for the course as set by the instructor). This option is designed to permit students to register for credit in courses relevant to but outside of their area of study. Elective courses may be taken for Pass/Fail **with the approval of the instructor and the advisor**.

**R Credit**

Two kinds of credit are awarded for participation in a course: E credit (Examination credit) and R credit (Registration credit). Students who wish to be given R credit for a course must receive permission from the instructor.
A course that has been taken for R credit may not be repeated for a letter grade. A student who has been approved to take a course for R credit is not required to take the final examination but is required to meet any other requirements established by the instructor of the course. It is assumed that the student will meet all course requirements other than the final examination unless the instructor states otherwise in writing when the permission for R credit is granted. Courses taken for R credit are applied toward the calculation of Residence Units for billing purposes in the same way as courses taken for a letter grade. The number of points of R credit acceptable for a degree, however, is set by each program in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

**Incomplete Grades**

Incompletes, INs are effectively fixed-time extensions intended to be used sparingly and only when a student has **met the participation expectations** of a course and if the faculty has determined that **remaining coursework can reasonably be completed** in the few weeks (~8) immediately following the deadline for submitting grades. The dates by which students must reconcile their INs are published in the Academic Calendar and noted below. In rare circumstances, an extension may be granted by Mailman OSA in consultation with the course instructor. Extensions must be requested before the IN completion date in the Academic Calendar. Extensions are not guaranteed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester of Incomplete</th>
<th>Deadline for Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>Week 6 of the subsequent Spring semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Week 5 of Summer A term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Week 7 of the subsequent Fall semester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Waiver of Course Requirements**

Students may request a waiver or exemption from a specific course requirement if they have evidence of having satisfactorily completed a graduate-level course that is comparable in rigor and scope to that of the required SMS course. Students initiate this process by submitting a written request that identifies the course to be waived and describes the prior course. Students should attach to the statement a syllabus for the prior course and transcript indicating the final grade for this course and submit a signed and dated written request along with the supporting material to the Associate Director of Academic Programs.

With the exception of students applying for transfer credit, there is no reduction in course credits towards graduation. The waiver allows the student to substitute an elective course for the course out of which they have been waived.

PhD students seeking transfer credit based on coursework from prior master’s degree, please refer to transfer credit within PhD section (see pg 23).
**Tutorials**

A tutorial is an individualized course of study in which a student works with a faculty member in a less structured setting than a classroom course. One-to-one student/faculty tutorials may include, for example, participation in major research or other projects, small individual projects, pilot projects, literature review, and field experience. A tutorial may be taken for one, two, or three credits depending on the amount of work it entails.

No more than 20 percent of coursework may be taken in tutorials and no more than 6 credits of tutorials may be taken with any one faculty member.

**Leaves of Absence & Readmission**

All students who will not continue with their registration, but who intend to return to their studies must apply for a formal Leave of Absence. Any request for a leave must be accompanied by a Leave of Absence form and a Request to Deviate from Academic Program. All students must secure department approval and return the forms to the Mailman School Office of Student Affairs.

Leave of absence requests are generally approved for two semesters with a maximum of four semesters. Exceptions to these limits will be considered on a case-by-case basis through a petition to the student’s department and final approval by the Dean of Students.

If a student does not officially request a leave of absence and they do not register for a semester, they are then required to submit a formal request for reinstatement with a progress report and an academic plan before registration is allowed.

**Filing for Graduation**

Degrees are granted three times a year by the University: October, February and May. Students may file an application for graduation when they anticipate fulfillment of all degree requirements by the graduation date. The filing deadlines are absolute and are the strictest in the University. It is the student’s responsibility to file for graduation on time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Conferral Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MA*</td>
<td>registrar.columbia.edu/registrar-forms/application-degree-or-certificate</td>
<td>Sept 1, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Nov 1, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Jan 1, 2022</td>
<td>Oct 20, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Feb 09, 2022 &lt;br&gt; May 18, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DrPH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/people/current-students/academics/policy-and-procedures/graduation/graduation-application">www.mailman.columbia.edu/people/current-students/academics/policy-and-procedures/graduation/graduation-application</a></td>
<td>Aug 1, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Dec 1, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Feb 1, 2022</td>
<td>Oct 20, 2021 &lt;br&gt; Feb 09, 2022 &lt;br&gt; May 18, 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please refer to the Dissertation Office Deposit Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Conferral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 15, 2021</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00pm EST</td>
<td>Last day to deposit a dissertation for the October conferral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 2022</td>
<td>February 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00pm EST</td>
<td>Last day to deposit a dissertation for the February conferral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2022</td>
<td>May 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00pm EST</td>
<td>Last day to complete deposit of a dissertation for the May conferral and have your name appear in the Convocation Booklet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 22, 2022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00pm EST</td>
<td>Last day to complete deposit of a dissertation for the May conferral. Last day to have your name appear in the addendum to the Convocation Booklet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Students who are granted two RUs of transfer credit are not eligible to receive the MA degree from Columbia; however, a student awarded one RU may earn a Columbia MA degree. (See Master of Arts Degree section of this handbook for more information)

**Candidates who have completed all the necessary requirements apply through their departments in order to receive the MPhil degree. Applications for the MPhil degree can be filed at any point in the calendar year. Students receiving an MPhil only do not participate in the Convocation ceremony, but may participate in the Commencement ceremony.

**Participating in commencement ceremonies**

As of January 1, 2017, the following MSPH policy took effect: The Mailman School Doctoral Committee understands that it can take some time to arrange a defense date. We want to preserve the GSAS guidelines of allowing a student to walk if they expect to receive their degree by the University October deadline. We want to operationalize this to mean that a student would be allowed to walk in May commencement ceremonies if their thesis committee has agreed that they are ready to defend their dissertation. This means that the candidate has to distribute their thesis to their dissertation committee prior to the Mailman graduation application deadline of April 1st for them to be included in the University Convocation or Mailman Graduation Ceremony.

**PhD PROGRAM**

**Administration and Subcommittee**

The SMS PhD program is formally administered by the Doctoral Program Subcommittee on Sociomedical Sciences within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). Members of the Subcommittee hold appointments in different Departments and Schools of the University and share a scholarly interest in health issues and research. In addition to Sociomedical Sciences, the Departments and Schools currently represented on the Subcommittee include: the GSAS Departments of Anthropology, History, Sociology, Psychology* and Political Science* (*SMS is
not currently admitting students into the political science or psychology concentrations); Mailman School of Public Health; and the College of Physicians & Surgeons, Faculty of Medicine. A listing of current members of the Subcommittee is included at the back of this Handbook (see Appendix A).

Administrative details of the Sociomedical Sciences program are handled by the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies, Professor Jennifer Hirsch, who chairs the doctoral program subcommittee, and by the Associate Director of Academic Programs, Ms. Andrea Constancio. She is also the program advisor for all students and is often the students’ first point of contact to address administrative matters.

Degree Requirements & Registration

All students in the PhD program must complete a minimum of 30 points in public health courses and 30 points in their social science disciplinary focus. Each social science discipline concentration has its own specific course and language requirements (see page 26).

Each student is responsible for ensuring that their course selection is consistent with timely completion of all course requirements as stated in this handbook. Students may satisfy course requirements through successful completion of equivalent graduate level courses. Students seeking a waiver of any requirements should consult the procedures outlined on page 19. Please allow reasonable time for review of any waiver request. Students may not take required courses pass/fail (unless this is the only grade option available for the course as set by the instructor).

Introduction to Public Health: PhD students with no prior public health coursework must complete a self-paced, online module, P6025 Intro to Public Health. This zero-credit module is pass/fail and must be completed by September 30, 2021.

Residence Unit (RU) Requirements: In addition to registering for individual courses, PhD students are required to register for the Residence Unit (RU) which provides the basis for tuition charges and provides full-time status. Six RUs are required for the PhD degree. RUs may only be earned during fall and spring semesters, not during the summer. PhD students must register for 1 RU each semester up to the total required 6 RUs. After the student has satisfied the residency requirement they must register for Matriculation & Facilities (M & F) (see Continuous Registration page 24).

SMS Doctoral Seminar: During their first year, all doctoral students are required to take a social theory course sequence: P8788 Theoretical Foundations in SMS in the fall and P8789 Contemporary Debates in SMS in the spring. Waivers are not permitted for these courses.

Epidemiology & Biostatistics: SMS PhD students are also required to demonstrate competence in epidemiology and basic statistics. This requirement may be satisfied by taking the Mailman School core courses in Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
**Methods Courses:** In addition, a course in quantitative methods and one in qualitative methods are mandatory. Public Health course descriptions are listed in the Mailman School of Public Course Directory. There are numerous social science methodology courses taught throughout the University that would satisfy the methods course requirements. Check with your academic advisor or with the Associate Director of Academic Programs to confirm that courses meet this requirement.

**Social Science Courses:** SMS doctoral students must further demonstrate competence in approaching public health and medical research from the perspective of social science disciplines other than the one in which they are concentrating. The requirement may be fulfilled by successfully completing two courses that cover a broad survey of a social science discipline’s approach to public health and medicine. The course does not have to be an SMS course, but it must be taught at a graduate level for either masters or doctoral students and should focus on a discipline other than the one in which the student is concentrating. Students wishing to substitute one or both discipline courses should submit their request through existing process for waiver of course requirements (see page 19).

**GSH Fellows (only):** Students who are fellows in the Department’s Gender, Sexuality and Health Training Program and other training programs may be required to complete additional course requirements. The GSH additional courses are outlined on page 30.

*Expected Timeline for Completion of Coursework*

Students in the PhD program entering with a Master’s degree should complete coursework in their first two years in the program. Students who enter the PhD program without a Master’s degree should complete coursework in three years.

*Transfer Credit*

**Doctoral Students Entering with a Master's Degree:** All doctoral students are required to complete a total of six Residence Units. Doctoral students who have completed the requirements either a) for an appropriate MA degree, conferred in another division of Columbia or by another regionally accredited institution (or the international equivalent), or b) (occasionally) for an appropriate professional degree taken at Columbia or elsewhere, may be granted, upon entrance to the Graduate School, two Residence Units toward the required total of six. Departments decide whether the previously completed MA is appropriate: it must meet Columbia departmental standards and contribute directly and substantially to the fulfillment of the requirements for the MPhil and PhD degrees at Columbia.

Students who have been granted two Residence Units toward the total of six Residence Units are not eligible to receive an MA from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

**Doctoral Students Entering without a Master's Degree:** PhD students who have taken graduate-level courses at Columbia before joining their current doctoral program, but have not completed
an appropriate MA degree program or the equivalent (or an appropriate professional degree),
may receive up to 30 points of transfer credit.

PhD students who have taken graduate-level courses outside Columbia, but have not completed
an appropriate MA degree program or the equivalent (or an appropriate professional degree),
may receive up to 15 points of transfer credit. In this case, MA coursework requirements may be
shortened by the amount of transfer credits, subject to approval by the department. For
example, if the MA degree requires 30 credits and the student transfers 10 credits, they may
need to fulfill only the remaining 20 credits.

Students who registered previously in a graduate program at Columbia without receiving a
master’s degree must register in six RUs while matriculated in the PhD program.

Students may not apply for transfer credit until they have successfully completed at least one
semester of work in the doctoral program. The student is responsible for initiating the process of
obtaining transfer credit. To initiate the process, the student should contact the Associate
Director of Academic Programs and the discipline liaison for a review and evaluation of the prior
graduate coursework. The Associate Director of Academic Programs will file the Transfer Credit
Form, which must be submitted with a transcript for final approval.

Important Note: Transfer credit does not exempt students from taking courses required by the
program or from courses which the student's advisor considers essential to the student’s training,
i.e., even though the student is awarded 30 credits/2 RUs of transfer credit they may have to take
more than the nominally 30 additional credits to complete SMS coursework requirements.

**Continuous Registration**

Continuous registration is required of PhD students until all requirements (including dissertation
defense) have been completed. Continuous registration means the student must register each
and every semester for one of the following: a Residence Unit (RU), Matriculation and Facilities
(M & F), Extended Residence (ER); or, they must be on an official leave of absence. If continuous
registration is not maintained a student runs the risk of poor academic standing which may result
in, among other consequences: a hold on their account, suspended financial aid, loss of health
service and insurance.

- Residence Unit (RU) - for six semesters during the coursework period, less if the student
  has received transfer credit mentioned above.
- Matriculation and Facilities (M & F) - after the six RUs, including transfer credits, have
  been satisfied.
- The Extended Residence (ER) - used for any term beyond the required six RUs in which
  students are taking courses.
Program Time Limits

As previously noted, PhD students are expected to complete coursework within two to three years, to have defended the dissertation proposal within eighteen months of the completion of coursework, and to have completed the program no more than seven years after matriculation. After those seven years, a student may apply for two one-year extensions.

These time limits are part of a set of policies established by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. They apply to PhD students matriculating in 2011 and after, and are available at http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/nine-year-policy-time-phd-degree. Students should attend particularly to the following: Students who enter a Ph.D. program in the Arts and Sciences beginning in Fall 2011 are allowed nine years of continuous registration to satisfy all requirements for the doctoral degree. Students who do not complete all requirements for the doctoral degree by the end of the ninth year will no longer be considered GSAS Ph.D. degree candidates and will be notified accordingly in writing by GSAS. Students so notified may appeal this determination within 30 days of receipt of notification.

Master of Arts Degree

PhD students are expected to apply for the MA degree before the end of semester four. To obtain the MA in Sociomedical Sciences, a student must satisfactorily complete: (a) 2 RUs and minimum of 24 credit points in a combination of courses offered by the Mailman School of Public Health or the student's chosen social science discipline at GSAS, and (b) a Master’s Essay in Sociomedical Sciences.

The master’s essay may develop from a term paper for a course, from a research project, or as a separate project. The form and content of the project are not rigidly specified as long as the subject is appropriate and the quality is high. The Master’s essay should be submitted to the student’s social science liaison (who may not necessarily be the student’s advisor) for approval, with a copy submitted to the Associate Director of Academic Programs.

The student initiates the awarding of the MA degree by filing an application with the GSAS registrar. Those students who have been granted transfer credit as a result of prior academic or professional degrees are considered to have completed the MA requirements and are not awarded a Columbia MA. Students who have only received 1 RU of transfer credit may earn a Columbia MA by fulfilling the two requirements listed above (24 points and a Master’s Essay).

Master of Philosophy Degree

The Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is awarded to students who have fulfilled all of the requirements for the PhD except the proposal defense and the dissertation defense. After successful completion of coursework, completion of a master’s degree with submission of a master’s essay (or transfer credit), the language and/or statistics requirements, the theme and methods essays, and the fulfillment of the necessary Residence Units, the Chair of the
Subcommittee recommends to the Dean of the GSAS for award of the MPhil.

**Concentration Requirements for the PhD in Sociomedical Sciences**

Requirements for each of the social science concentrations available within the Sociomedical Sciences program are determined by the collaborating GSAS Departments (Anthropology, History, Psychology, and Sociology). All concentrations carry a 30-credit minimum course requirement. The course requirements for each discipline outlined below are developed by SMS faculty in consultation with the directors of graduate study and subcommittee members from the respective disciplinary departments. Students should bring to their advisor’s attention courses not being offered or SMS requirements that are no longer in accord with current requirements for doctoral students in the department of specialization. The disciplinary liaison will work with each student to find suitable course substitutions.

**Anthropology**

**Language:** Competency in the language of fieldwork, as measured by a grade of B or higher in an intermediate level course. Students conducting fieldwork in English must demonstrate a reading knowledge of German, French, Spanish, or other major language of anthropological scholarship.

To help prepare for the language examinations, which are generally administered through the social science departments or language departments, language courses specifically designed for this purpose are offered at the University. In some cases, taking the preparatory course will exempt you from taking the language exam. Language course listings may also be accessed through the Columbia Directory of Courses. Students planning substantial training in a foreign language may want to explore the Foreign Language Area Studies program, which provides some support for students doing language study: [https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/financing-your-education/flas-fellowship-academic-year](https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/financing-your-education/flas-fellowship-academic-year)

**Coursework:** 18 points for E credit, 12 points for R credit. In addition to the SMS doctoral seminar, first year students without a strong background in anthropology are urged to take Principles/Applications of Social and Cultural Anthropology in the Anthropology Department. Because theory in anthropology develops out of substantive field-based engagements, generic survey courses may ill serve a student’s needs. In consultation with advisors, then, students are urged to take 2 courses with a pronounced theoretical focus, either downtown or in one of the consortium’s schools. Two additional requirements: an advanced course in medical or public health anthropology and one in ethnographic methods. The remaining 18 elective credits should be spread across courses covering specific substantive, methodological and/or geographic topics, with particular attention to the development of those tools of inquiry needed to pursue a dissertation subject.

**Theme Essay:** As noted in the Methods & Theme Essays section, PhD students in the Anthropology concentration fulfill the requirement by writing their theme essay under the supervision of a faculty member who is an anthropologist.
**History**

**Language:** No language requirement.

**Coursework:** Students take a minimum of 12 points in the Morningside History Department. During the first year, entering students are required to take an introductory colloquium in historiography, (GR8910 / 4 points), which is designed to introduce them to the history and current state of historical scholarship. In addition, students take a course that deals primarily with 19th century history (4 points) and a course that deals primarily with 20th century history (4 points) in the History Department.

Students must take a minimum of 9 points in courses offered through SMS’s Center for the History and Ethics of Public Health. These courses include: P8703 Health Advocacy; P8747 Ethics of Public Health; P8757 Global Politics of Aging; P6785 Poisoned Worlds: Corporate Behavior & Public Health.

The remaining points consist of electives in history, policy, law, and ethics, and may be taken throughout the university. It is strongly recommended that at least some of these courses be taken in the History Department to augment the minimum 12 points noted above; however, students should choose these courses in consultation with their advisor in areas appropriate to their research interests.

**Oral Examination:** Students in the history concentration will prepare four readings lists, one each in consultation with four faculty members who will serve as examiners. At least one of the examiners must hold an appointment in the Morningside History Department. One of the four lists must deal with the history of public health and medicine. The other three lists must deal with recognized subfields of history and/or ethics. Examples of acceptable subfields for examination include:

- Public health ethics or bioethics
- A defined historical period (e.g., 19th century, colonial, Progressive Era)
- Urban history
- Women’s history
- African American history
- History of consumer movements
- History of U.S. colonialism
- History of bioethics

**Psychology**

**Language:** No language requirement.

**Coursework:** 30 points. Students enroll in three required Proseminars during their first year of
study (G6001, G6002, and G6003) (9 points); one course in quantitative sciences (this may be Biostatistics, Statistics, Mathematics, or Computer Science and may be taken at the School of Public Health or other CU departments or schools) (3 points); 2 graded advanced seminars at the Psychology Department (6-8 points). Students should enroll in the following courses every semester, barring scheduling conflicts with other required courses:

- PSYC G6600 Supervised Individual Research: pass/fail, 1-4 points per semester. Students are expected to work closely on a research project with a faculty mentor in the Department of Psychology and receive credit for this supervised research apprenticeship. Students should consult with their Psychology Department advisor to determine the number of credits (4 credits are recommended for a “standard” type of research internship with a faculty member in the Psychology Department).
- PSYC G9990 Departmental Colloquium: 0 points per semester.
- PSYC G9397(Fall)/G9398(Spring) Research Seminar in Social & Personality Psychology: pass/fail, 1 point per semester.

Additional electives should be taken as needed to fulfill the 30 point coursework requirement and can be taken in the Psychology Department, other GSAS departments, or Teacher’s College, in consultation with the student’s advisors.

**Comprehensive Examinations:** Students are required to present a Master’s talk in the Department of Psychology during the Spring semester of their second year of study. The Master’s talk must be based on a research project with data analysis. In preparation for the Master’s talk, students should work closely with their Psychology Department advisor; however, they may present data from either a Psychology or Sociomedical Sciences research project. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the Master’s talk symposium during their first year to become acquainted with the procedure. The Master’s talk provides a forum for students to receive feedback from faculty members and other students on a research project that culminates in a Master’s-type research paper. This research paper should be completed during the third year of study and must be approved by two faculty members in the Psychology Department.

**Additional non-academic service requirements:** Academic positions require research, scholarship, academic, and service activities. To further prepare students for future academic careers, during their second and third years, they are expected to engage in “service” activities by assuming a “department job”. This might involve running social activities, meeting prospective students, or mentoring.

**Other:** Students are not required to complete an annual report with the Psychology Department.

**Sociology**

**Language:** No language requirement

**Coursework:** 24 points of credit: These should include at least 18 points of courses taken for a
letter grade or Pass/Fail, and up to 6 points of R credit all taken within the Department of Sociology. Courses may be taken outside the department but only with prior authorization from the Sociology Liaison and the Director of Graduate Study (DGS).

Required courses: Satisfactory completion of, or exemption from, required courses. Generally, these courses are taken in the first year or 3 semesters, and generally offered for Pass/Fail only. The required courses are:

- SOCI GR6051 Sociological Theory
- SOCI GR4074-GR5075 Introductory Social Data Analysis I and II. This is a two-semester sequence. Students with sufficient prior statistical training should petition the DGS for exemption from these courses. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- SOCI GU6097 Designs of Social Research
- Advanced Courses: 2 one semester courses: 1 theory course and 1 advanced methods or statistics course.

Literature Review / Field Statement - The sociology comprehensive examination is satisfied by preparation of a literature review of the theoretical and empirical research in a subfield of sociology. This is often referred to as the ‘field statement’. Students must submit a brief statement of intent as well as a proposed reading list to two faculty readers, one of whom must have an appointment in sociology. One of the readers chairs the student’s literature review committee. Signed approval of the statement of intent and reading list is required. There are several models for a literature review. It may, for example, follow the traditional format of articles in the Annual Review of Sociology. It may follow the format for a meta-analysis or research synthesis. It may inform, but not constitute, the student’s dissertation proposal or a chapter of the dissertation. It must be broad enough to cover the core ideas of the subfield of specialization. It should demonstrate knowledge about how the subfield is related to both classic and contemporary social theory. Upon completion of the lit review, the student must submit a statement signed by the first reader signifying successful completion of this requirement.

The literature review is distinguished from the master’s essay (required only of students who come in without a Master’s Degree) by its in-depth attention to the sociological literature. The master’s essay demonstrates the student’s mastery of empirical research, the subject matter need not be tied to sociological literature. Constance Nathanson should be consulted for questions regarding satisfying the master’s essay requirement.
Requirements for the Pre-Doctoral Training Program in Gender, Sexuality and Health (Fellows Only)

The Department of Sociomedical Sciences supports pre-doctoral training fellowships in Gender, Sexuality, and Health. The program is funded by the Population Dynamics Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Development. The fellowships are available only to PhD candidates, and eligibility is limited to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Fellowships will usually be awarded at the time the student enrolls for PhD studies in SMS. Applicants to the PhD program who indicate an interest in the training program are considered for fellowships after they have been accepted for admissions through the normal PhD admissions process.

Fellows must satisfy course requirements in addition to those required for their disciplinary concentration. These include:

1) P9719 Critical Perspectives on Research in Gender, Sexuality, and Health

2) One of two courses in conceptual and research approaches to sexuality:
   - P8709 Seminar in Sexuality, Gender, Health, and Human Rights
   - P8736 Theories and Perspectives on Sexuality and Health"

3) A course in research ethics (usually POPF P9630: Research Ethics & Public Health)

4) Attendance at the ongoing faculty-trainee Seminar in Gender, Sexuality, and Health

5) A research apprenticeship supervised by program faculty

6) Doctoral research focused on a topic in gender, sexuality, and health.

All coursework requirements (1, 2, and 3) must be completed prior to or in the semester the student elects to take the methods examination. Students should consult Professor Jennifer Hirsch about specific courses that satisfy requirements 3 and 6.

Support is guaranteed for five years. However, trainees will be encouraged to apply for other funding as soon as possible following their matriculation at Columbia and will be expected to apply for other funding to cover dissertation research and writing.
DrPH PROGRAM

Administration

The Doctor of Public Health (DrPH) degree program is designed for students wishing to prepare for teaching, research or advanced administrative or practice positions in the area of sociomedical sciences within the field of public health and evidence-based public health practice. The degree program is administered by the Standing Doctoral Committee of the Mailman School of Public Health, which carries out faculty policy regarding admissions to the doctoral program and upholds the criteria for granting the degree.

Administrative details of the Sociomedical Sciences doctoral programs are handled by the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies, Professor Jennifer Hirsch. To assist the Deputy Chair, a faculty member is appointed as the DrPH Director. Among that person’s roles are monitoring program requirements and advising students on course requirements. The Director of the DrPH program is Professor Marni Sommer. In addition, the Associate Director of Academic Programs, Ms. Andrea Constancio is the program advisor for all students and is often the students’ first point of contact to address administrative matters.

Degree Requirements & Registration

Required Courses and Credits

A minimum of 36 credits is required for the DrPH degree. Each student is responsible for ensuring that their course selection is consistent with timely completion of all course requirements as stated in this handbook. Students seeking a waiver of any requirements should consult the procedures outlined on page 19. Students may not take required courses pass/fail (unless this is the only grade option available for the course as set by the instructor). Not more than 6 of the 36 course credits may be taken as tutorials.

DrPH students must have earned the MPH degree or its equivalent. All five Public Health core courses – Biostatistics, Environmental Sciences, Epidemiology, Health Policy & Management, and Social & Behavioral Sciences – are required pre-admission.

To augment the prior core public health coursework the Mailman School requires 6-7.5 points of required core courses for all DrPH students:

- Case Studies in Public Health Leadership (3cr)
- DrPH Seminar in Strategic Management (1.5cr)
- DrPH Seminar in Management and Organizational Behavior (1.5cr)
- Essentials of Teaching and Communication for Doctoral Students (0-1.5cr)

In addition to the Mailman Core requirements, SMS DrPH will take the following:
**SMS Doctoral Seminar (6cr)**: During their first year, all doctoral students are required to take a two-semester, year-long social theory course sequence: P8788 Theoretical Foundations in SMS in the fall, and P8789 Contemporary Debates in SMS in the spring. Waivers are not permitted for these courses.

**Methods Courses (9cr)**: All DrPH students must take three methods or advanced statistics courses. One of these must be a quantitative methods or statistics course, and the second must be a qualitative methods course. Public Health course descriptions are listed in the Mailman School Bulletin. There are numerous social science methodology courses taught throughout the University that also meet the methods requirements. Check with your academic advisor or the Associate Director of Academic Programs to confirm that courses meet this requirement.

**Social Science Courses (6cr)**: Social Science Courses: SMS doctoral students must further demonstrate competence in approaching public health and medical research from the perspective of social science disciplines other than the one in which they are concentrating. The requirement may be fulfilled by successfully completing two courses that cover a broad survey of a social science discipline’s approach to public health and medicine. The course does not have to be an SMS course, but it must be taught at a graduate level for either masters or doctoral students and should focus on a discipline other than the one in which the student is concentrating. Students wishing to substitute one or both discipline courses should submit their request through existing process for waiver of course requirements (see page 19).

**Electives (7.5-9cr)**: DrPH students will take 6 credits of SMS electives (courses within our department) and 1.5-3 general elective credits. A general electives is any graduate level course taken in or outside of SMS. General electives may be taken at other schools of the university. Within Columbia University most graduate level courses are indicated by course numbers of 4000 or higher.

*Applied Practice Experience (APE)*

All public health students in accredited schools of public health in the United States must complete a planned, supervised and evaluated practice experience as part of their public health professional degree program. The APE (also referred to as the practicum) should provide the opportunity to apply the concepts and methods of social science and public health learned in the classroom to actual public health problems. As of fall 2017, all DrPH programs at the Mailman School mandate the practicum in addition to doctoral research requirement.

**Overview**

SMS DrPH students are expected to engage in one or more applied practice experiences. Students are responsible for completion of at least one project that is meaningful for an organization and to advancing public health practice. Although exceptions exist, students are expected to complete their field practice between the first and second years, and prior to taking their qualifying exams. The practicum should be conceptualized as a discrete experience that is aligned in topic with the students’ proposed or future Integrated Learning Experience (ILE).
The settings of student practica may vary and the acceptable content of a practicum is flexible to meet a diverse range of student interests, educational needs, professional objectives, and career goals. Practica can be conducted either within the United States or another country, with relevant organizations including research institutions, other non-profit organizations, government agencies, or for-profit settings. SMS DrPH students work with their advisors to identify practicum sites and projects. The practicum and any resulting deliverables must be approved by the students’ academic advisor and the DrPH academic director (Marni Sommer). The practicum should take place within an organization external to the Mailman School, so that it is not solely an academic exercise, but rather the application of learning in a “real world” setting. The practicum generally cannot be completed within the student’s own work setting.

**Identifying a Practicum**

Students can identify practicum sites in different ways, including through their own personal networks, faculty recommendations, and initiatives affiliated with the Department of SMS and the Mailman School Office of Field Practice.

The Office of Field Practice (OFP) is the central office providing support and an array of resources to support and promote student participation in public health field-practice. All students must complete and submit the Scope of Work (SOW) form to ensure that all parties understand and agree on practicum location, supervisor, objectives, activities deliverables, and credits if applicable. The selection process must clearly address the needs of the agencies or organizations involved, and the site or agency must benefit from the students’ contributions or expertise. It is important to note the completed SOW must be approved before students may begin the practicum.

**Timing**

Students are recommended to engage with their practicum between their first and second years, building off the coursework they will have completed, and providing insights into the topic they are considering or have chosen for their future ILE. There is no minimum number of hours for the APE, however at least 8-10 weeks of field-based research or practice is strongly suggested. Students are required to present on their experience and deliverable at a doctoral seminar for faculty and students during the first semester of their second year.

**Practicum Expectations**

The practicum is designed to ensure that DrPH students have advanced-level practical experiences collaborating with practitioners, allowing an opportunity to develop leadership competencies and contribute to the field. A minimum of five foundational and/or concentration-specific competencies must be clearly specified and described in the Scope of Work (SOW) form. Students must fulfill at least one competency from the leadership, management and governance domain, or choose a concentration specific competency as it relates to leadership skills. Competencies may differ from student to student. The SoW is approved by the student’s faculty advisor and departmental administrator.
Deliverables
Practicum deliverables can include, but are not limited to: interpretation/presentation of research findings for the general public or for a specific target audience; creation of practice guidelines for a professional organization; completion of a policy statement; design for a community program; developing a plan for a training component in their discipline; or evaluation of a health program. The deliverable should align topically with the students proposed or future ILE, and should be determined by the student in conjunction with their practicum preceptor and academic advisor.

Integrated Learning Experience (ILE)

Overview
The successful defense of an ILE is the final eligibility criterion for the DrPH degree in SMS. The ILE demonstrates the student’s capacity to conduct original research and to present findings in a scholarly manner, along with a demonstrated understanding of public health professional practice leadership. The student uses their acquired social science knowledge and skills to investigate a problem in the health field, along with the application of their learning in public health practice. The student's research may involve the collection of data, or may be an analysis, from a new point of view, of data that has been previously collected. The student should view the ILE as a demonstration of research competence, and not necessarily expect to provide definitive answers to the theoretical questions posed. Students are urged to discuss possible ILE topics with several faculty members. Incorporated within the ILE is the development a detailed plan for change that demonstrates the student’s understanding and application of public health practice and leadership.

An SMS DrPH student may choose to write a standard thesis (in the format of an integrated piece of independent scholarship) or a three-paper format. Both approaches include an implementation plan demonstrating the linkage between the learning and public health practice and leadership. See Dissertation section for more information.

Continuous Registration

DrPH students must be continuously enrolled at the Mailman School. The continuous enrollment policy begins with the semester in which the student first enrolls in the DrPH program and continues through the semester the dissertation is deposited.

To be continuously enrolled, after completion of academic coursework, DrPH students must register for one of the following in all spring and fall semesters:

- **Doctoral Research Registration**
  - RSRH P0001 - charged one credit of tuition - full time status.
  - RSRH P0003 - must have department approval - charged one credit of tuition - part time status.
Program Time Limits

DrPH students are expected to complete coursework within two years. A full-time course load is a minimum of 12 credits. The required 36 credits are completed within three semesters; in some case, with department approval the coursework may be completed in the fourth semester. It is important to note that students MUST be registered full-time for any work assistantship they are assigned.

An overall time limit of seven years is set from the date of first registration following admission into the doctoral program. This limit applies to both full and part-time students. Periods during which the student is formally granted a leave of absence will not be counted in the seven-year limit. Leaves of absence must be approved both by the Department and the MSPH Standing Doctoral Committee. In order to adhere to the seven-year limit, students are expected to complete the post-coursework examinations (methods, comprehensives, dissertation proposal defense) in three semesters (eighteen months).

Methods and Theme Essays

Before proceeding to the proposal defense, a student must demonstrate readiness to undertake independent research by showing evidence of mastery of i) key substantive and theoretical areas of interest and ii) research methods. Demonstration of mastery in theory and methods has two parts: the theme essay and the methods essays.

- Students are encouraged to complete both by the final year in which they are taking courses. They are required to have completed at least one (either the methods or the theme essay) by the final semester of coursework and are required to have completed both by the end of the first semester after completing coursework. (Students should confer with the Associate Director of Academic Programs to make sure that they understand and comply with the requirements regarding registration status for this period in which they are completing coursework and exams.)
- Students can choose to do both requirements in one semester or to do them in either order over the course of two semesters.
- Students must have completed all required methods courses by the end of the semester prior to completing the methods essays.
- The student should inform the Associate Director of Academic Programs of plans to proceed with these milestones so that a formal review of the student's record can be made to verify that all coursework requirements have been met.
- Students in each PhD discipline also have discipline-specific requirements, either written or oral, which they must complete before moving on to the dissertation proposal defense. These are described below in the “Social Science Requirements for the PhD in Sociomedical Sciences”. Language requirements and discipline-specific requirements must be completed before the dissertation proposal defense takes place.
Methods Essays

No later than the semester after completing all required courses, students will write two “methods essays.” Students must complete all required methods courses the term prior to writing the methods essays, though they may still be taking elective methods courses in the term in which they take the exam. The Methods Committee is comprised of faculty members for their expertise in areas of social science methods. Additional members may be added for each semester, based on the methodical expertise and students taking the exam. The 2021–2022 Methods Committee Members are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Research Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Philbin</td>
<td>Qualitative and ethnographic research methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Rosner</td>
<td>Historiography and archival methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karolynn Siegel</td>
<td>Survey research methods, research design, qualitative and mixed methods research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Wilson, Chair</td>
<td>Survey research methods, measurement, research design, statistical methods, longitudinal data analysis; Secondary: Grounded theory, mixed methods research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the beginning of the semester in which they intend to complete their methods essay, students must communicate to the Chair of the Methods Committee their intention to do so. There are two parts to the methods essays:

**A. The shared question:**

For this essay, students will respond to a question developed by the faculty methods committee for students taking the exam that semester. The question will provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate competence in the range of research methods required of doctoral students trained in the department.

The question, which will be appropriate for students across disciplines, will require students both to articulate key elements of a methodologically diverse research approach and to demonstrate deep familiarity with some of the particular methodological challenges of research in their major area of expertise. The shared question essay, essay should be approximately 3,500-4,000 words.

**B. The individual question**

Students should begin thinking about and planning for the individual question essay before the term in which they take it. One step of planning for the individual essay question is to meet with one of the members of the Methods Committee at least one semester prior to taking the exam. At this meeting, the student should discuss with the faculty member their preliminary ideas for the student-submitted question and the reading list on which the student will draw in preparing to answer the question. The faculty member will offer suggestions for constructing the reading list and preparing the question, as well as suggest appropriate examination members to review the lists and questions. This meeting is preliminary to and not a substitute for subsequent meetings that review the specific content of lists and questions. The individual question essay
should be approximately 3,000 words.

**Preparation and Process**

Students should begin thinking about and planning for the exam before the term in which they take it.

The examination covers the knowledge and concepts contained in three reading lists: the core methods list is prepared by the Department, representing material which all doctoral students are expected to have mastered and the second and third are prepared by the student. Students may substitute readings that are comparable or more advanced than the core readings. Students should check with a member of the Methods Committee, however, before making substitutions.

In addition, students will be responsible for preparing two supplemental reading lists that reflect their own professional areas of interest and specialization. One of the areas must be selected from those enumerated in the core list (statistical concepts and analytic techniques, survey research, experimental design, field methods, historical methods, secondary data analysis, and evaluation research). Students will draw on this list, as well as the Department’s core methods list, in answering the shared question for the exam.

The second list will cover either methodological techniques and issues that are likely to be utilized in the student’s future professional work (including but not limited to dissertation research), another area on the core list, or a well-defined area of methodology not covered in the core list. This is the list on which students will rely in developing and answering the individual question.

Students should prepare the second and third reading lists in consultation with members of the Methods Committee. A methods committee member may approve both lists, or only one list (in which case, the student would get approvals from two different methods committee members), as appropriate. Please review the list of members’ specialties in deciding the most appropriate faculty members to consult with for your lists. Other Columbia faculty may serve on the Methods Committee in an ad hoc capacity if a student wishes to prepare a reading list on social science methods that falls outside the expertise of existing members. Students should seek the approval of the Chair of the Methods Committee for an outside examiner early in the development of the reading lists.

**Distribution and Evaluation**

The methods essay questions (shared & individual) will be distributed to students four weeks before the end of the semester and the students’ essays are due before the winter and summer breaks.

The returned methods essays are distributed to members of the Methods Committee, and are graded by at least two readers. All the members of the Methods Committee consider and approve the results (high pass, pass, low pass, or fail), which are conveyed to exam-takers within
a month. Students also received written comments on each essay, approximately one month after the exam. Graders will assign a grade to the essay of high pass, pass, low pass or fail. Students whose essay receives a low pass or a fail from more than one grader will be expected to revise and resubmit the essay. In the event that after multiple re-takes the student is unable to develop an essay that earns a passing grade, they will be asked to leave the program. The Chair of the Methods Committee reports the results in writing to the Chair of the Department, the Deputy Chair of Doctoral Programs, the DrPH Director, and the Associate Director of Academic Programs. The due dates for the 2021–22 academic year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Fall 2021</th>
<th>Spring 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methods Overview Meeting</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>NO Spring Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved lists and question due</td>
<td>MON 11/08/21</td>
<td>FRI 4/01/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam distributed</td>
<td>FRI 11/19/21</td>
<td>WED 4/13/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam due</td>
<td>FRI 12/17/21</td>
<td>FRI 5/13/22</td>
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**Theme Essay**

In their final year of coursework (or, as described above, in the following semester), students will write and submit a “theme essay”, which presents a scholarly overview of the state of knowledge and of the major approaches to research within the student’s chosen research area. The focus of the essay is more specific than “public health” or any particular social science discipline, but is broader than the dissertation topic. For example, a student planning on doing dissertation research exploring obesity and the built environment might write a review essay on public health research on obesity; a student whose dissertation would explore the rise of gluten-free eating might review and critique the history of food fads and movements in 20th century America; or a student planning do to develop and test a novel approach to sexuality education might write about the development, implementation and impact of sexuality education on sexual practices. A primary function of the essay is to demonstrate the student’s breadth of competence beyond the specific questions and approaches of the dissertation. Students are strongly encouraged to choose a topic that will lay the groundwork for the dissertation, but a student who changes the focus of their dissertation research after completing the theme essay will not be required to do another theme essay.

The Theme Essay is designed to maximize flexibility and student self-determination, and it can be written in a wide variety of formats. The only formal requirement regarding format and content is that the plan be approved by the student’s Theme Essay Committee (which will include the student’s intended dissertation sponsor and two additional readers, chosen by the student in consultation with the sponsor). PhD students in the Anthropology concentration will write their theme essay under the supervision of a faculty member who is an anthropologist.

Different formats may be more or less appropriate for different students and projects. Possible formats include (but are not limited to) a review paper or a handbook chapter.
• As part of the process of developing the theme essay, students will submit an outline and the names of two proposed additional readers to the sponsor by the end of the prior semester.
• Students must submit at least one draft of the theme essay to the sponsor for comments, and the sponsor is expected to return the draft within one month in order to provide time for student to revise before submitting to full committee.
• The theme essay is graded by the three-member committee as either high pass, pass, low pass or fail. Students whose theme essay receives a low pass or a fail will be expected to revise and resubmit the essay. In the event that after multiple retakes the student is unable to develop an essay that earns a passing grade, they will be asked to leave the program.

After successfully completing the methods essays and the theme essay, a student is ready to defend their dissertation proposal.

**Dissertation Proposal and Final Dissertation**

The successful defense of the dissertation is the final eligibility criterion for the DrPH and PhD degrees. The dissertation demonstrates the student’s capacity to conduct original research and to present findings in a scholarly manner. The student uses their social science knowledge and skills to investigate a problem in the health field. The student’s research may involve the collection of data, or may be an analysis, from a new point of view, of data that has been previously collected. The student should view the dissertation as a demonstration of research competence, and not necessarily expect to provide definitive answers to the theoretical questions posed. Students are urged to discuss possible dissertation topics with several faculty members.

*For DrPH students, the dissertation project constitutes the Integrated Learning Experience (ILE).* DrPH students may choose to write a standard thesis or a three-paper format. Both approaches include an implementation plan demonstrating the linkage between the learning and public health practice and leadership.

**ILE Option 1: Single Dissertation Format**
Students may elect to present their research and implementation plan within the traditional integrated dissertation format. The ILE must be prepared with respect to guidelines regarding content, style and length presented to candidates - format and guidelines follow that provided by GSAS. The concluding chapter will incorporate a detailed “plan for change” that describes the players, resources, and strategies needed to make the changes identified as part of the dissertation research.

**ILE Option 2: Three Paper Format**
Students may elect to present their research and implementation plan within a three-paper format. Two sub-options exist within this possibility:
Two papers developed from the ILE research; One paper incorporating implementation-related content, aimed at publication as a professional practice article and key aspects of the “plan for change”; concluding chapter would not need to include the plan for change.

Three papers developed from the ILE research (per current SMS requirements); the “plan for change” should be incorporated into the concluding chapter.

Both options require an introductory chapter(s) including background and the conceptual framework for the ILE, and a concluding chapter that incorporates the key learnings and recommendations; with the “plan for change” included as described above.

All doctoral students defend their dissertation proposal and the completed dissertation in front of a five-member interdisciplinary committee. Both DrPH and PhD have the option of a traditional dissertation format or choosing the publishable papers format. Student will choose a format at the time of their proposal defense and carry that through to the completed dissertation defense. Students are not permitted to switch to another format after having defended the proposal.

Selecting a Sponsor

At some point towards the end of coursework or, at the latest, while developing the reading lists for the theme essay, the student formally designates a faculty sponsor. By the time a student reaches this point in the program, they should have a well-developed idea for dissertation research and should have identified a faculty member under whose mentorship they plan to conduct independent research. It is expected (though not required), for example, that students will have written their theme essay under the supervision of the faculty member with whom they intend to work for their dissertation research. It is at this point, after the student begins drafting the formal dissertation proposal, that the student’s primary mentor is referred to as a ‘sponsor’ rather than an ‘advisor’.

The main criterion is to find a faculty member who is willing to devote the necessary time and effort to mentor the student through the dissertation process. Students should consult with Deputy Chair Prof Jennifer Hirsch, or with Andrea Constancio, Associate Director of Academic Programs if they have any questions as to whether a faculty member can sponsor a DrPH or PhD dissertation. Students can also approach Prof Hirsch and ask for help, either in reaching out to a particular faculty member or in figuring out who might be the most appropriate sponsor, given the students’ interests and disciplinary focus.

Dissertation sponsorship for both doctoral degrees is very similar, however GSAS does have some very specific and strict rules and policies on PhD dissertation sponsors, committees, and defense, which will be noted in the following pages. It is expected that PhD students will select from the list of GSAS approved sponsors (see Appendix B) and DrPH students will select a sponsor from the list of SMS faculty (see Appendix C). If a student wishes to work with a Columbia University faculty member not on the lists, the student should consult with the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Studies. Adjunct faculty are eligible to serve as sponsors, provided that a full-time Columbia
faculty member, who is an approved sponsor, serves as a co-sponsor, and accepts that designation as a genuine responsibility.

**Sponsors and IRB:** There are faculty on the lists of approved sponsors who do not hold full time appointments at Mailman (for example, faculty who are emeritus or whose primary appointment is in another school). This CUMC IRB does not permit faculty without a full-time appointment at Mailman to serve as the PI for student research protocols. In those circumstances, students should consult with their sponsor and identify another committee member who is an SMS faculty member and who can serve as PI of the IRB protocol. The sponsor should be included on the protocol as an investigator and should work with the student in the preparation of the protocol.

**Defense Committee**

The full committee (five members) is formed at the time of the proposal defense. **Students** may be consulted on, but **do not select their Dissertation Defense Committees** and should not be put in the position of having to ask particular faculty members to serve on their Dissertation Defense Committee. The student’s sponsor may undertake an informal exploration of willingness of faculty to serve in this capacity. The responsibility for selecting and recommending Dissertation Defense Committee members rests with the faculty sponsor and Deputy Chair of the Doctoral Program. **It is expected that the same five-member committee will be used for both the proposal and final dissertation defenses.**

When the faculty sponsor feels that the proposal is ready for a formal presentation, the sponsor requests that the Department form a Defense Committee and schedule a proposal defense. The faculty sponsor’s request is addressed to the Deputy Chair (Jennifer Hirsch). The request includes a working title for the students’ dissertation research and recommendations for possible committee members. **Acting on behalf of the Department and after consultation with the student’s faculty sponsor, the Deputy Chair of the Doctoral Program formally invites and confirms the five-member Defense Committee. It is the Department’s, not the student’s, responsibility to schedule the dates and locations for the dissertation proposals and dissertation defenses.**

*Although GSAS rules state that the Proposal Defense Committee is composed of a minimum of three faculty members, the Department has elected to appoint the full five-member Defense Committee for the proposal defense.*

**A)** **PhD Dissertation Defense Committee** is composed of exactly five members, all of whom are expected to be present for the dissertation defense. **Three** of the members of the final defense committee must be **inside examiners** (holding a formal appointment or approved as a dissertation sponsor in the doctoral candidate’s home department or program). The list of approved GSAS sponsors is available online at: [https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/dissertation/doctoral-dissertation-sponsors#sociom](https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/dissertation/doctoral-dissertation-sponsors#sociom)
**Sponsor:** a faculty member who has been named as an approved dissertation sponsor in the degree candidate's program (SMS). The sponsor is the person who guides you through the dissertation.

**Chair:** a faculty member in SMS and is an approved PhD sponsor. The Chair is responsible for making sure the Dissertation Committee follows the formal requirements for dissertation defense. The Chair convenes the defense and moderates the candidate’s presentation and committee members’ questions and discussions.

**Committee members:** At least one other member in addition to the Sponsor and Chair must be from the list of approved PhD sponsors. The approved list of PhD sponsors in SMS combines all faculty with primary appointments in SMS and/or appointments to the SMS subcommittee. If the sponsor does not hold a full-time appointment at Mailman, another member of the committee who does should be designated as the PI for the student’s IRB protocol, with the sponsor included as an investigator.

In addition to the three insider examiners, at least one (but preferably two) of the five must be an outside examiner, defined as:

i. a faculty member, clinician or practitioner who holds a position at another university or research institution
ii. a full-time faculty member at Columbia University outside the student’s own department or program
iii. a research scientist at Columbia University outside the student’s own department or program
iv. an adjunct professor at Columbia University outside the student’s own department or program
v. a full-time faculty member whose appointment is at Barnard College, Jewish Theological Seminary, or Union Theological Seminary

OR
vi. a full-time faculty member in the student’s interdisciplinary program whose field is outside of the student’s dissertation field

*In cases where the “outside” member satisfies the criterion vi. above, the department/program must include with the defense a brief explanation with the defense application to clarify how the fifth examiner’s primary field differs from the focus of the student’s dissertation.*

A committee may include members from outside of the University if the faculty sponsor believes such outsider members bring an expertise or knowledge of the research topic not available among existing CU faculty. The faculty sponsor must assure the Department that the outside member will be able to be present for dissertation defense. The Department does not have funds to cover the transportation expenses that might be incurred by outside members. The names of outside examiners from other University
Departments shall be submitted by the Subcommittee Chair to the Dean of GSAS. Outside examiners from other universities must submit evidence of their qualification, in the form of curriculum vitae, for approval by the Dean.

B) **DrPH Dissertation Defense Committee** shall be composed of five members, all of whom are expected to be present for the dissertation defense:

**Sponsor:** an approved DrPH sponsor, is the person who guides you through the dissertation.

**Chair:** a tenured or senior faculty with a primary appointment in SMS. The Chair is responsible for making sure that the Dissertation Defense Committee follows the formal requirements for dissertation defense. The Chair convenes the defense and moderates the candidate’s presentation and committee members’ questions and discussions.

**Three Committee Members:** must be SMS faculty members and two must be outsiders, either from other Columbia Departments and/or schools or universities. If the sponsor does not hold a full-time appointment at Mailman, another member of the committee who does should be designated as the PI for the student’s IRB protocol, with the sponsor included as an investigator. The 5th member of the committee must be someone who engages in public health practice.

A committee may include members from outside the University, if the faculty sponsor believes such outsider members bring an expertise or knowledge of the research topic not available among CU faculty. The faculty sponsor must assure the Department that the outside member will be able to be present for the dissertation defense. The Department does not have funds to cover the transportation expenses that might be incurred by outside members. The names and contact information of outside examiners from other University Departments shall be submitted by the Associate Director of Academic Programs. Outside examiners from other universities must submit evidence of their qualifications, in the form of curriculum vitae, for approval by the Dean.

**The Dissertation Proposal**

The formal approval of a proposal is given upon successful defense and provides assurance that completion of the proposed study will provide the basis for an acceptable dissertation. The dissertation proposal is a description of an idea which is worthy of research, and which has been described in a manner showing the student’s ability to plan an independent investigation. The proposal stage should not be a problem if the student has been thinking about and discussing possible topics earlier in the program. Class discussions, readings, and exchanges with faculty and other students contribute to the proposal’s development.

Many students (particularly those who intend to collect their own data) spend the summers between the first and second or second and third years engaged in some form of preliminary
dissertation research. All individuals conducting research are required to submit a protocol for review by the Institutional Review Board. This review can take several months and so it is important to submit it with sufficient lead time. In order to be permitted to draw on this preliminary research in one’s dissertation proposal, a student must file a copy of the IRB approval for that research with Ms. Andrea Constancio, Associate Director of Academic Programs.

**Proposal Format**

Once the student has identified a possible dissertation topic, they should secure the support of a faculty sponsor with appropriate research interest. The student, in consultation with the dissertation sponsor, should prepare a proposal on the topic. Development of the proposal requires considerable time and effort; it should include:

- Abstract (1 page)
- A statement of the problem to be investigated
- Research aims of the dissertation
- A synthesis and critique of the literature bearing upon this problem
- A statement of hypotheses or questions
- For DrPH dissertation only: A statement of the implications for public health practice. The statement must describe how findings from the dissertation project can be used to influence public health programs, policies or systems. The DrPH dissertation must include one chapter or section discussing implications for public health practice.
- A description of the methodological approach, including research design and plans for data collection and analysis
- Status of human subjects review
- Timeline

Excluding references and the abstract, the body of the proposal must not exceed 30 double spaced pages (using 11 pitch type face or larger). Beyond covering the topics listed above, the Department has no specific expectations regarding the precise format and content of the proposal, which varies among the social science departments and disciplines. The student’s sponsor is responsible for assisting the student in developing a suitable format for the proposal.

**Proposal Defense**

The Department will first confirm committee participation and then move on with scheduling. If a proposal defense cannot be scheduled in a timely manner with all five members present, the defense may proceed with a minimum of the sponsor, chair, and at least one other member from outside of SMS. Members not present at the proposal defense are requested to prepare comments on the dissertation proposal and to submit them in writing before or at the time of the defense to the student and faculty advisor, with copy to the Associate Director of Academic Programs and the Deputy Chair for Doctoral Study.

There is a great deal of variation in the extent to which students solicit input from members of
the dissertation proposal defense committee in advance of the meeting. In some cases, the proposal a student distributes two weeks before the defense will be the first version a faculty member reads. In other cases, in addition to working closely with the sponsor, a student has shared multiple drafts of a proposal with several members of the committee. Although the primary responsibility for mentoring a student falls to the sponsor, students are encouraged to share their work as it develops, and when the sponsor feels that it is ready, with those members of their committee who are available and willing to provide input at an earlier stage.

It is the candidate’s responsibility to distribute hard copies of the proposal to all committee members at least two weeks before they meet. E-mail is not an acceptable means for distribution of the defense version of the proposals to committee members. Students who reside away from NYC should distribute proposals by US postal services or other mail delivery service. The student is responsible for confirming that all committee members have received proposals in a timely manner. The student may, of course, distribute electronic copies in addition to the hard copy if so requested.

Students are required to attend their proposal defense in person. At the proposal defense, the student should be prepared to make a brief (no more than 10 minutes) formal presentation, outlining the project, discussing its methods and substance, and explaining the rationales underlying decisions that were made as the proposal developed. This meeting may be the first time that the sponsor and Proposal Defense Committee have ever come together to discuss the proposal. The meeting should be viewed as a working conference, where the committee takes a critical look at the research plan with the aim of protecting the student from attempting to execute an inadequate and unfeasible plan. Any differences among committee members concerning the adequacy of the plan should be resolved among themselves during the meeting. If the committee members agree that there are weaknesses in the plan that are not resolved during the meeting, the student may be asked to revise the proposal and another meeting of the committee may be convened before the proposal is approved.

Target dates for completion of various steps should be set when the proposal is approved, not to constrain the student, but to give a standard against which to evaluate satisfactory progress. The approved proposal should provide readers with a sufficient sense of the whole to make later review of drafts of individual chapters valuable. Unanimous approval must be obtained from the Committee before the student can proceed with the dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the Proposal Defense Committee to inform the Associate Director of Academic Programs of the approval of the dissertation proposal. A copy of the approved proposal should be given to the Associate Director of Academic Programs to be kept on file. Successfully defended proposals will be considered for the Department’s Eugene Litwak Prize, awarded annually for the best proposal to help support students while they are completing their dissertations.
**Publishable Papers Proposal Review Process**

The process of evaluating for evaluating the publishable papers option is identical to that followed for the traditional book-style dissertation:

1) The student selects a faculty sponsor, who also agrees to the publishable papers option, and the faculty sponsor reaches out to the full committee to ensure that all committee members are in agreement;

2) The dissertation proposal follows the same guidelines for SMS doctoral dissertation proposals, with the addition of a Table that lists working titles for each proposed publication along with their “potential submission journal”;

3) The dissertation committee composition and selection will be identical to those followed for the book-style format, and

4) The standards for assessment of dissertation research will be similar to those applied to a book/monographic format, with the additional requirement that to receive a grade of pass with minor revision, appraisal should take into account whether each article would stand alone as a separate publishable article.

**IRB Requirements**

All students must submit an application to the Columbia University Medical Center Institutional Review Board (IRB) and obtain their approval for any research involving human participants. Even research that will be using data covered by existing IRB protocols, or that does not involve direct contact with human participants must be submitted for IRB review; the determination of whether dissertation research is exempt is the responsibility of the IRB, not the student researcher. Students should develop the IRB protocol at the same time as they begin to write the proposal. The proposal defense can be scheduled prior to IRB approval (and it is not necessary to include details of submission [actual or planned] in the proposal narrative), but **students must have IRB approval before commencing research.** The CUMC Institutional Review Board is extraordinarily user-friendly, and students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the IRB’s ‘office hours’ to seek advice on the preparation of their protocols. These preliminary conversations will make it clear whether the protocol presents any particular challenges regarding human subjects protection, how those challenges might be addressed, and what supplementary materials it is necessary to submit. Seeking this advice in advance of submission can mean the difference between a protocol that is approved in 4 weeks and one that creates major delays in the initiation of research. More information is available at [www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/irb/](http://www.cumc.columbia.edu/dept/irb/). **Students conducting research outside the United States will be required to submit their project for review within that country as well, and so developing a relationship with a host institution is a critical part of any pre-dissertation preparatory work.**

The IRB application must be submitted by the student’s sponsor (not the student) though an
online system, RASCAL (rascal.columbia.edu). Students should be prepared for the possibility of a lengthy IRB proposal approval process, although this can be avoided by seeking input in advance from IRB staff. Six to eight weeks, or even longer, is not unheard of, and students should take that into consideration when planning. The student’s proposal defense includes a brief presentation of the status on the IRB review. It is possible that recommendations made by the committee during the proposal defense may require changes in the research design that may initiate modifications to approved IRB protocols. In addition, if research involves collaboration with other institutions, approval of the modification by their IRB may also be required.

As noted above, faculty without a full-time appointment at Mailman may not serve as the PI for student research protocols, and there are a number of faculty on the list of approved sponsors who fall into that category. In those circumstances, students should consult with their sponsor and identify another committee member who is an SMS faculty member and who can serve as PI of the IRB protocol. The sponsor should be included on the protocol as an investigator and should work with the student in the preparation of the protocol.

All CUMC students, faculty, and staff must complete HIPAA certification and our students must also compete the CITI Human Subjects Protection training. Students may access information and training from https://research.columbia.edu/content/compliance-training.

Students are responsible for renewing the IRB approval annually throughout the course of dissertation research, which includes the period of data analysis and writing. In other words, even when data collection has been completed, it is the responsibility of the student to maintain IRB approval. Students who permit their IRB approval to lapse will not be considered in good standing. As part of the completion of the dissertation, students will be expected to present evidence of continuous IRB approval; if the renewal letters are uploaded annually to Sakai when students submit their annual report, this is considered sufficient evidence of continuous approval. Students are also responsible for ‘terminating’ the IRB protocol when they complete the doctoral program.

**The Dissertation in Progress**

Once the proposal has been approved by the dissertation proposal defense committee and the protocol has received IRB approval or been determined to be exempt, the student may begin dissertation research. The student should keep in close contact with their sponsor for suggestions and advice. Each student should work out arrangements with the rest of the committee regarding how the committee wishes to keep abreast of their progress.

GSAS provides formatting guidelines and a very helpful Word template for your convenience and use while you write your dissertation – or toward the end, when you are preparing it for deposit.

Committee members are expected to provide written or oral responses to drafts within a reasonable time period. Generally three weeks to a month should be sufficient time to permit a detailed response to a single chapter. Six weeks should be sufficient time to review a group of
chapters, two months for a full draft of a dissertation. Some supervision should be provided during summers, and special arrangements for continuous guidance should be worked out when faculty are on leave or during the summer. It is appropriate, and can be very useful, for a student to sit down with the sponsor and work out a schedule for the submission, review, and revision of dissertation chapters.

There is a great deal of variation in the extent to which members of the dissertation committee read drafts of dissertation chapters. In order to take maximum advantage of the mentorship provided by the full committee, and to reduce the likelihood that at the time of the defense faculty will see major unaddressed flaws in the dissertation research, it is **strongly recommended** that students share a full draft of the dissertation with all members of the committee well in advance of the dissertation defense, and allow time to incorporate whatever feedback committee members provide. The specifics of how committee members would like to be kept abreast of research in progress and to receive drafts and provide feedback should be discussed at the time of the dissertation defense, and should take into account the preferences of the student and the sponsor as well as the availability and specific expertise of committee members. Students who feel that they would benefit from more mentorship than they are receiving from their sponsor or other members of the dissertation committee should discuss the matter directly with Professor Hirsch.

*Students should also note that for both the PhD and the DrPH, the approval of a second reader is required before the dissertation can be distributed to the full committee.*

**The Dissertation Defense**

No defense shall be scheduled until both the dissertation sponsor and a second reader have signified that, in their judgment, the dissertation is acceptable and thus ready for a formal defense.

It can be complicated to coordinate the schedules of five faculty members and a student, and so arrangements for the examination can take several months to make; students should plan accordingly. When the student and dissertation sponsor feel that the dissertation has been completed in a satisfactory manner, the sponsor shall inform the Deputy Chair of the Doctoral Program and the Associate Director of Academic Programs and request that a time and date for the defense be scheduled.

Dissertation defenses are held throughout the **academic** year. The exact days and times are arranged to suit the convenience of the faculty committee and the student.

*Students must deliver hard copies of the dissertation to all member of the Dissertation Defense Committee at least four weeks prior to the date on which they plan to defend. E-mail is not an acceptable means for distribution of the defense version of the dissertation to committee members.* Students who reside away from NYC should distribute copies by US postal services or other mail delivery service. The student is responsible to confirm that all committee members
received the copies in a timely manner. The student may, of course, distribute electronic copies in addition to the hard copy if so requested.

**Conduct of the Defense**

The student and all committee members are expected to be present in person at the dissertation defense. The DrPH defense is an open defense and guests are permitted to attend. The PhD defense is a closed defense. GSAS has very strict rules and policies on this. Under no circumstance are guests permitted to attend: *Only the candidate and the approved members of the dissertation defense committee may be present during the defense. Columbia University policy does not allow spectators or other individuals to attend a defense. There are no exceptions to this rule.*

The defense must be conducted in English.

The dissertation defense is usually two hours in length. At the time of the defense, the Dissertation Defense Committee usually meets briefly in closed session to outline the themes to be covered during the examination. The candidate and any guest present (for the DrPH defense only) are then invited into the examination room.

The student defends the sources, findings, interpretations, and conclusions of dissertation. The candidate is expected to show familiarity with the research and literature pertinent to the subject topic, and the knowledge relevant to the research questions and methods. The candidate may be asked to begin by summarizing, within ten minutes, the theoretical content of the dissertation and the broader significance of key findings. Following the overview, the committee members ask the candidate to defend the validity of the research and the importance of the findings.

Points made by the examiners will naturally divide into substantive and editorial. Generally, a sheet of notes on editorial matters is handed to the candidate by the reader, thereby leaving examining time for matters of substance. The public audience does not generally ask questions of the candidate, although the Chair of the Committee may allow questions of clarification to be posed by members of the audience.

**Results of the Defense**

After the two-hour dissertation defense, the student (and anyone else who is not a member of the committee and who has been present at the DrPH defense) leaves the examination room and the Dissertation Defense Committee, in closed session, judges the acceptability of the dissertation. To be judged acceptable, the dissertation must meet current standards in the student's dissertation topic, and must add to the existing knowledge or concepts in the field. For those candidates whose dissertations are deemed acceptable pending minor revisions, the Chair of the Committee shall, at the conclusion of the defense, call for a closed vote of committee members as to whether the degree should be nominated for the Benton Dissertation Award. A unanimous vote is required, and the Chair and Sponsor of the committee must submit a nominating statement for the Benton Award within 30 days following the defense.
The student is called back into the examination room and informed of the results. The possible outcomes for each program:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PhD</th>
<th>DrPH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Approved as submitted - The committee may ask that minor revisions or corrections be made before the dissertation is deposited. A written description of those minor revisions should be provided to the candidate at the defense. These minor revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the sponsor within one month after the defense.</td>
<td>Accept subject to minor revisions - The dissertation is corrected by the candidate in light of the committee’s comments, and the revisions are supervised by the student’s sponsor. Upon completion of the required revisions, the candidate is recommended for the degree. All revisions should be completed and the final dissertation deposited no later than three months from the date of the dissertation defense.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Approved pending revisions - The committee may ask that revisions be made before the dissertation is deposited. A written description of those revisions should be provided to the candidate at the defense or shortly afterward. These revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the sponsor within six months after the date of the defense.</td>
<td>Accept subject to major revisions – A three-member ad hoc subcommittee, including the sponsor, will be named at the conclusion of the defense and a written description of revisions will be provided to the candidate at the defense or shortly afterward. The revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the 3-member ad hoc subcommittee within six months after the date of the defense. The sponsor will notify the Associate Director of Academic Programs and the student may then proceed to deposit the dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred - The committee believes that substantial work must be undertaken on the dissertation by the candidate before it can reach a recommendation to award the degree. A detailed written description of the reservations about the examined dissertation should be provided to the candidate at the defense or shortly afterward. At the time of the defense, a subcommittee composed of at least three unanimously agreed upon members of the original committee (and including the sponsor) will be formed. The specified revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the subcommittee within one year after the date of the defense. A majority of the subcommittee must approve the revised version for the candidate to be recommended for the degree.</td>
<td>Not accepted - The dissertation is deemed unacceptable and the candidate is not recommended for the degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail - The committee believes that the dissertation is not acceptable, and the candidate will not be recommended for the degree. No candidate may have a second defense unless the dean of GSAS concludes, upon evidence provided either by the candidate or by a member of the committee, that procedural irregularities occurred during the defense.</td>
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Final Deposit of the Dissertation

Once the student has successfully defended the dissertation, the last remaining academic requirement is to complete your dissertation deposit. The examining committee may have directed the student to make minor revisions to the dissertation. Once these revisions are complete, the student may begin the deposit process.

PhD Students: There are specific formatting requirements for the dissertation. Visit the GSAS website to view the guide to formatting: gsas.columbia.edu/content/formatting-guidelines

There are four steps to completing your deposit. The steps may be completed in any order, but your deposit is only considered complete when all four steps are completed.

gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/dissertation/electronic-deposit-gateway

1. Complete the GSAS deposit application and pay the $85 processing fee.
2. Submit the required Survey of Earned Doctorates online.
3. Upload and submit a PDF copy of your dissertation.
4. Obtain and submit a signed Approval Card that certifies you have made all required revisions and that the dissertation has been approved for deposit by your sponsor and by your doctoral program.

DrPH Students: The Mailman School does not have specific formatting requirements and DrPH may also use the GSAS guidelines.

There are three steps to completing your deposit - these steps can be done in any order, but your deposit is only considered complete when all 3 steps are done.

1. Complete the required Survey of Earned Doctorates
2. Upload and submit a PDF copy of your dissertation to ProQuest ETD Administrator
3. Obtain and submit a signed Dissertation Defense form that certifies that you have made all required revisions and that the dissertation has been approved for deposit by your sponsor and by your department chair.

DrPH students only: The continuous enrollment policy begins with the semester in which the student first enrolls in the DrPH program and continues through the semester the dissertation is deposited. [see Mailman Handbook]

Guidelines for Publishable Papers format Doctoral Dissertation

In addition to the traditional monograph or book-style format for SMS doctoral dissertations, students may select an alternate format for the dissertation: two analytic chapters written in the format of a publishable papers. Since norms of scholarly publication vary across the social science disciplines, a student must obtain the approval of their sponsor before selecting the publishable
papers option, and the sponsor should consult (well in advance of the proposal defense) with the full committee to make sure that they also find this format acceptable. As stated on page 39, students are not permitted to switch to another format after having defended the proposal.

Under this format the two publishable papers are preceded by a comprehensive literature review also in a format suitable for publication. There should be a substantial introductory section that places the papers in the literature more broadly – what is the background of this work, what problems are outstanding, what motives the papers included in the thesis? The two publishable papers are followed by an integrative concluding chapter stating succinctly what was learned in the papers regarding the issues raised in the introduction, and stating what might be the next steps. An appendix may also be added if a more complete description of study methodology is required beyond what would conform to standard practice in the methods section of a journal articles.

Students selecting this option must also include at the end of their dissertation proposal a working title and potential target journal for the review article and the minimum of two “publishable papers”. Each paper would be expected to conform to the submission journal’s format style for, respectively, literature review and original research articles. The committee convened for the proposal defense will approve the list of articles linked to a “potential submission journal” for each paper. Successful defense of the dissertation is not contingent on either acceptance or submission of the publishable papers prior to the defense. The student may change the “potential submission Journal” contingent on sponsor approval.

The publishable papers option provides students a supervised experience in preparing manuscripts appropriate for submission to a scholarly journal, and is intended facilitate the publication of doctoral dissertation research. This format requires that the review and the empirical papers should be publishable. Though it is difficult to define publishable, the committee will adopt standards similar to those used in reviewing papers for peer reviewed journals similar to those listed in the dissertation proposal. It should be noted that this alternate format may require greater effort from both the student and faculty sponsor than the more traditional thesis because when prepared in this format the dissertation must be comprehensive and thorough, while at the same time being a great deal succinct than is required of the standard monograph format.

**Format of Publishable Papers Dissertation.**

**DrPH Students - Integrated Learning Experience (ILE) Guidelines**

As previously mentioned, two sub-options exist within this Publishable Papers format for DPH Students:

Option 1: Two papers developed from the ILE research; One paper incorporating implementation-related content, aimed at publication as a professional practice article and key aspects of the “plan for change”; and a concluding chapter would not need to include the plan for change.
Option 2: Three papers developed from the ILE research (per current SMS requirements); the “plan for change” should be incorporated into the concluding chapter

**PhD Student Guidelines**

1. A comprehensive literature review of the research literature to be addressed by the publishable papers that follow. The literature review should be of length, format and quality comparable to reviews published in the annual review series or other journal that accepts review articles. For a literature review of a field that includes quantitative research, a meta-analysis type of literature review may also be appropriate and must be assessed against current standards of such reviews such as those promulgated by the Cochrane Collaborative. The literature review must provide the theoretical and empirical context for the publishable papers that follow. A well-written review article for a dissertation would end with a succinct statement of the research questions or hypotheses to be addressed in the empirically grounded papers that follow.

2. At least two papers of publishable quality consistent with the standards of a peer-reviewed journal in the field.

3. A final chapter that integrates and discusses the findings of the papers. It should include discussions of the conclusions of the research and should make recommendations for policy or further research.

4. Optional: An appendix outlining in detail the study methods that would not fit within the normal constraints of methods section for most journal articles. Tables too long and detailed for the text may be included in the appendix.

**Dissertation Review Process.**

The process of evaluating for evaluating the publishable papers option is identical to that followed for the traditional book-style dissertation:

1) The student selects a faculty sponsor, who also agrees to the publishable papers option, and the faculty sponsor reaches out to the full committee to ensure that they are in agreement;

2) The dissertation proposal follows the same guidelines for SMS doctoral dissertation proposals, with the addition of a Table that lists working titles for each proposed publication along with their “potential submission journal”;

3) The dissertation committee composition and selection will be identical to those followed for the book-style format, and

4) The standards for assessment of dissertation research will be similar to those applied to a book/monographic format, with the additional requirement that to receive a grade of pass with minor revision, appraisal should take into account whether each article would stand alone as a separate publishable article.
Appendix A

Doctoral Program Subcommittee on Sociomedical Sciences

Chair: Jennifer Hirsch, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
722 W. 168th St., 5th floor, 212-305-1185, jsh2124

Vice Chair: David Rosner, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and History
722 West 168th St., 9th Floor, 212-304-7979, dr289

Vice Chair: Robert Shapiro, Professor of Political Science
713 International Affairs, 212-854-3944, rys3

Ronald Bayer, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
722 West 168th St., 9th Floor, 212-305-1957, rb8

Peter Bearman, Professor of Sociology
814 International Affairs, 212-854-3094, psb17

Elizabeth Blackmar, Professor of History
323 Fayerweather, 212-854-3016, eb16

Myron Cohen, Professor, Department of Anthropology
757 Schermerhorn, 212-854-1739, mlc5

Geraldine Downey, Professor and Chair of Psychology
402C Schermerhorn, 212-854-8718, gd20

Denise Kandel, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
60 Haven Ave., B-4 (P.I. Box 20), 212-304-7070, Ext. 1, dbk2

Constance Nathanson, Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences
722 W. 168th St., 5th Floor, 212-305-1593, can2003

Brendan O’Flaherty, Professor of Economics
807B International Affairs Building, 212-854-2449, bo2

Lesley Sharp, Professor of Anthropology, Barnard College, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
411A Milbank, 212-854-5428, lsharp@barnard.edu

Karolynn Siegel, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences
722 W. 168th St., 9th floor, 212-304-5578, ks420
Appendix B
PhD - GSAS Approved Sponsors


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angela Aidala</th>
<th>Diana Hernandez</th>
<th>Robert Y. Shapiro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronald Bayer</td>
<td>Jennifer Hirsch</td>
<td>Lesley A. Sharp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Bearman</td>
<td>Kim Hopper</td>
<td>Rachel Shelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Blackmar</td>
<td>Rebecca M. Jordan-Young</td>
<td>Karolyynn Siegel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter Bockting</td>
<td>Denise B. Kandel</td>
<td>Kathleen Sikkema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlin Chowkwanyun</td>
<td>Helen-Maria Lekas</td>
<td>Kavita Sivaramakrishnan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myron L. Cohen</td>
<td>Lisa Rosen-Metsch</td>
<td>Marni Sommer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Colgrove</td>
<td>Constance Nathanson</td>
<td>Michael Sparer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geraldine Downey</td>
<td>Gerald M. Oppenheimer</td>
<td>Gina Wingood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert E. Fullilove</td>
<td>Morgan Philbin</td>
<td>Patrick Wilson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Giovenco</td>
<td>David Rosner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C
Faculty Research Interests

Aidala, Angela (aaa1), Associate Research Scientist (Ph.D. - Sociology). Research, teaching, and service delivery strategies to work effectively with disadvantaged and often ‘harder to reach’ populations in urban settings; social-structural and cultural determinants of health; housing/ lack of housing and individual and community health; collaborative, practice-based evidence to advance health equity.

Bayer, Ronald (rb8), Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - Political Science). Ethical and social policy issues in health; AIDS and screening for AIDS.

Caton, Carol (clc3), Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences (in Psychiatry) (Ph.D. - Sociology). Social epidemiology of severe mental illness, mental illness and substance use comorbidity, and homelessness; HIV/STI risk among homeless women; evaluation of treatment and support programs for homeless people.

Chowkwanyun, Merlin, (mc2028), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD, MPH). History of public health; health social movements; racial inequality; environmental health and toxic substances policy; immigration; GIS; oral history, interviewing; archival research; text-mining, databases, cloud/parallel computing methods

Colgrove, James (jc988), Professor (Ph.D. – Sociomedical Sciences), Vaccination; Government responsibility for public health; the relationship between individual rights and communal responsibilities from the 19th century to the present; the role of the law and other forms of coercion in public health; ethical issues in public health.

DiAquoi, Raygine (rcd60), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (EdD, Sociology of Education). Critical Race Theory; racism over the life course; racial socialization; racial inequality; interviewing, photo elicitation/visual elicitation methods.

Ford, Jessie (jf3179), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD-Sociology). Areas of interest-sexual and reproductive health; gender inequality; sociological approaches to health; sexual violence, health, and pleasure; qualitative research and mixed methods.

Franks, Julie (jf642), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD, History). Areas of interests: HIV and AIDS, especially in sub-Saharan Africa; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender health; behavioral health interventions; sex workers; social networks; the emergent global COVID-19 pandemic; engagement of under-represented populations in health research; qualitative research and mixed methods.

Fullilove, Robert (ref5), Professor at Columbia University Medical Center of Sociomedical Sciences (Ed.D.). Minority health; effects of mass incarceration; HIV/AIDS; addiction
Giovenco, Daniel (dg2984), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD, MPH). Tobacco control policy and disparities in tobacco use; impact of marijuana legalization; population survey data analysis; GIS and community mapping techniques; neighborhood field data collection.

Gooden, Lauren (lk2129), Assistant Professor at Columbia University Medical Center of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD-Epidemiology). Areas of HIV testing and prevention; HCV prevention and treatment; and access to and engagement in care.

Hernandez, Diana (dh2494), Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD-Sociology). Areas of poverty and social inequality; race, ethnicity and immigration; health, law and public policy and qualitative methods and evaluation.

Hirsch, Jennifer S. (jsh2124) Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - Anthropology and Population Dynamics). Gender, sexuality, and reproductive health; U.S.–Mexico migration and transnational communities; HIV/AIDS (heterosexual transmission, cultural and political-economic approaches); the application of anthropological theory and methods in public health.

Hopper, Kim (kh17), Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences (PhD - Sociomedical Sciences/Medical Anthropology). Homelessness; the "de facto" public mental health system; recovery from severe psychiatric disorders; ethnographic methods; ethics and research.

Kunzel, Carol (ck60), Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences and Dental Community Health (Ph.D. - Sociology). Clinician behavior, social-behavioral models of clinical decision-making; diffusion of innovation; patient–clinician communication; health literacy, access to care, health disparities.

Lovero, Kate (kll2153), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD – Neuroscience). Prevention and treatment of adolescent mental health problems in low-resource settings; global mental health; adolescent depression, anxiety, trauma, suicide; dissemination and implementation science; community engagement and participatory research; research-policy partnership; cultural adaptation; capacity-building; mixed methods.

Markowitz, Gerald (gem67), Adjunct Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - History). History of occupational and environmental health; history of public health.

Nathanson, Constance (can2003), Professor at Columbia University Medical Center of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - Sociology). Comparative cross-national politics and sociology of public health; health-related social movements; gender and sexuality; gender and health outcomes; reproductive health; sociology of health and medicine.

Oppenheimer, Gerald (go10), Professor at Columbia University Medical Center of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - History; M.P.H. - Epidemiology). History of HIV/AIDS; history of public health; history of epidemiology, particularly heart disease epidemiology; history of social medicine; history of race and research.
Philbin, Morgan (mp3243), Assistant Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD, MHS). Social policies/structural factors; Gender and sexuality; Biomedical HIV prevention; adolescent health; sexual minority health; health disparities; substance use; qualitative and ethnographic research methods.

Prins, Seth J (sjp2154), Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Sociomedical Sciences (PhD, MPH). Collateral public health consequences of mass incarceration and criminalization; psychiatric epidemiology; relational social processes; economic exploitation and domination; racial capitalism; critical social theory; quantitative methods; critical causal inference.

Rosen-Metsch, Lisa (lm2892), Dean, Columbia School of General Studies, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (Ph.D. - Sociology). Health promotion research, social policy research, social/structural interventions, health services research in primary care settings, substance abuse policy research, women's health, public health interventions in oral health care settings. Multi-level intervention development, implementation, and evaluation for moving persons at risk and living with HIV across the HIV treatment cascade/HIV care continuum.

Rosner, David (dr289), Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (also History) (Ph.D. History). History of public health; history of urban health; race and mental health; occupational and environmental disease; health in New York City; history of hospitals and medical care.

Shelton, Rachel (rs3108), Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (ScD- Society, Human Development & Health; MPH). Racial/ethnic and socioeconomic-based disparities in cancer screening and preventive health behaviors; adherence and decision-making regarding HPV vaccine, colorectal, breast, prostate, and cervical cancer screening; development, evaluation, and dissemination of cancer prevention/control interventions, particularly for low-income and medically underserved populations; Lay Health Advisor and Patient Navigation programs; role of social, cultural and contextual factors in influencing health behaviors and outcomes.

Siegel, Karolynn (ks420), Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and Social Work (PhD - Sociology). Psychosocial dimensions of genetics and disease; living with chronic or life threatening illness; stress and coping with health related stressors; stigma; HIV/AIDS.

Sikkema, Kathleen (ks3364), Stephen Smith Professor and Chair of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD Clinical Psychology). Community based HIV prevention and mental health intervention trial research; global mental health; community-level prevention trials; mental health interventions to improve HIV care engagement; intervention trials to address sexual trauma, coping and gender violence; U.S. and South Africa; university-community research collaboration; syndemic nature of HIV and mental disorders.

Sivaramakrishnan, Kavita (ks2890) Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD - History) Global health history; international health and politics of disease surveillance, history of public health and society in south Asia; population health politics; historical and comparative perspectives on age and aging; health and volunteering across cultures; history of chronic disease...
in colonial and contemporary settings, WHO and history of social determinants of health; nonwestern medicine and traditions of ethics, healing and professionalization

**Sommer, Marni (ms2778)**, Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (DrPH). Menstruation, puberty, gender and sexuality; global health; adolescent health; qualitative and participatory research methods; intersection of puberty and girls’ education; Tanzania, Eritrea, sub-Saharan Africa.

**Wilson, Patrick (pw2219)**, Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (PhD – Psychology), community psychology, HIV/AIDS prevention and health promotion in ethnic and sexual minority populations, ecological-level influences to mental and physical health, and program evaluation and community research.

**Wingood, Gina (gw2326)**, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences (ScD- Society & Health; MPH) Research focuses on the design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of HIV prevention programs for African American women and adolescents in clinical and non-clinical settings (i.e. church settings). Research portfolio in women's health, social justice, dissemination and implementation science and; reduction of stigma associated with HIV and diabetes. Assess efficacy of prevention interventions using self reported outcomes, biological outcomes and social media.
Appendix D
Student Prizes

The following are prizes for doctoral students awarded by SMS. Students may submit articles for the Elinson award. Faculty nominate students for the remaining awards.

Elinson Prize

For a published article by SMS students that best exemplifies sociomedical research. To be eligible, the article must be published or accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal. The student must be the sole or first author. The article must have been written while in the Department and the student’s SMS affiliation is explicitly acknowledged in article. A prize winner is not eligible to complete in the year following the award.

Litwak Prize

For the best dissertation proposal submitted by an SMS Doctoral Student. Candidates for the Litwak Prize are nominated by the student’s proposal defense committee. They should be in the upper 20% of all dissertation proposals.

Benton Prize

For the dissertation that best exemplifies application of Sociomedical Science Research to Public Health Practice or Policy. Eligible applications are SMS students who successfully defended their Dissertation in the preceding year. Candidates for the Benton prize are unanimously nominated by their dissertation committee as among the top 10% of all SMS dissertations. A member of the committee must submit a brief nominating statement outlining the merits of the dissertation for this prize.

Student work eligible for these prizes must have been completed and nominations submitted during the year ending March 31.
Appendix E
SMS PhD Tracking Sheet

Program Requirement Checklist (Coursework 60 credit minimum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (credits) - Public Health Requirements (30 total)</th>
<th>Semester Planned</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P6025 Introduction to Public Health (online module) (1.5)</td>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P6104 Biostatistics (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>P6400 Epidemiology (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SMS Doctoral Seminar: 6 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>P8788 Theoretical Foundations (3)</td>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P8789 Contemporary Debates (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SMS Social Science Selective: 6 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methods: 9 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative Methods (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Methods (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Electives (7.5-9 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective 1 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elective 2 (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Science Requirements - 30 credits coursework</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters Essay or transfer credit: ____RUs / ____ Credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency (Anthropology students only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Exam (History students only)</td>
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<td>Masters Talk (Psychology students only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review/Field Statement (Sociology students only)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Addition Program Requirements:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food for Thought (FFT) Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix F  
SMS DrPH Tracking Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Requirement Checklist (Coursework 36 credit minimum)</th>
<th>Semester Planned</th>
<th>Semester Completed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mailman Core: 6-7.5 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>P9070 Case Studies in Public Health Leadership (1.5 fall/1.5 spring)</td>
<td>Fall 2021 &amp; 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH Seminar in Strategic Management (1.5cr)</td>
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<td>Spring 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>DrPH Seminar in Management and Organizational Behavior (1.5cr)</td>
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<td>Spring 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essentials of Teaching &amp; Communication (0-1.5cr)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SMS Doctoral Seminar: 6 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>P8788 Theoretical Foundations (3)</td>
<td>Fall 2021</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P8789 Contemporary Debates (3)</td>
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<td><strong>SMS Social Science Selective: 6 credits</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methods: 9 credits</strong></td>
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<td>Qualitative Methods (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantitative Methods (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Elective (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Electives (7.5-9 credits)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>SMS Elective (6)</td>
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<td>General Elective (1.5-3)</td>
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<td><strong>Addition Program Requirements:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Practicum</td>
<td>Summer 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme Essay</td>
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<td>Proposal Defense</td>
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