

Last Revision: June 2025

Race and Ethnic Relations Area Exam

Purpose of the Area

Race and ethnicity remain important components of many societies in the world, and in the United States they have been, and remain defining forces. Furthermore, race and ethnicity are intertwined with many other identities such as gender, religion, and class. This area exam has been structured to facilitate doctoral student development as a scholar with an expertise on the sociological perspectives on racial and ethnic identities, inequalities, and interactions.

Structure of the Area Exam

The race and ethnic relations area exam is comprised of both a written and oral portion. The written exam will consist of three questions: theory, research methods, and a substantive area selected by the student in consultation with the committee.

1. Exams may be taken during either the Fall or Spring semesters.
2. To prepare for the exam, students are encouraged to take at least one of the suggested courses (listed below). A three- member committee should be formed and a chair selected from the affiliated faculty members. This committee should be formed at least six months prior to the planned examination date. This will allow for the development of a reading list in consultation with the committee. Once approved, reading and preparations should begin.
 - 2a. The development of a substantive area must also be approved by the committee members. The substantive area is typically based on student research interests.
3. Students propose three themes they wish to explore: one for theory, methods, and the substantive area for their exam. This is done in consultation with the committee. These themes will be developed into questions based on the reading list and discussion with committee members. Once the committee has fully developed the themes into area exam questions, the chair will distribute the proposed exam for committee approval. Once approved, the student and committee shall determine the examination date.
4. The written portion will be a take home examination typically completed in one week. The committee chair will issue the exam at 8am on Monday and it will be due by 5pm Friday of the same week and returned to the committee chair. The exact days can be flexible. *Each response should be no more than 20 double spaced typed pages.*
5. The oral portion of the exam will be scheduled three weeks after the written exam. The purpose of the oral portion of the exam is to allow the student to review, defend, and or justify their answers. This is typically scheduled for 2 hours.

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6. Once the oral portion is completed, faculty members will have the student leave the room to confer and vote on the outcome of the exam. The committee will either issue a *pass*, give an *incomplete* (requiring revisions), or a *fail*. Any details of the outcome will be discussed with the student and given in writing. Please see the department of Sociology Graduate Handbook for the policy on area examinations in the doctoral program.

Suggested Courses

To prepare for the race and ethnic area exam, students should take at least one course on race and ethnicity or a related subject at or above the 5000 level within the department of sociology. A related course may be taken from another graduate program as well. In addition, students can also prepare for the exam through exposure and knowledge of the area by participating in research projects, professional work experience, and or publications.

Possible courses include:

- SOC 5680- Race, Ethnicity, and Justice
- Variable topic courses (SOC 5900) related to race, inequality, or stratification
- Directed independent studies with an affiliated faculty member (the reading list should be submitted to the committee for review)

Affiliated Faculty Members

Please see the doctoral handbook and department web site for each member's areas of research and expertise

Dr. Charles Crawford

Dr. Chien-Juh Gu

Dr. David Hartmann

Dr. Ann Miles

Dr. Angie Moe

Dr. Zoann Snyder