

# Community and Prevention Research

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## Major Course Requirements

### CPR Major Area Core Courses

- PSCH 531: Community Research Methods (3 hours) Note--Students will enroll in PSCH 531 for one semester during year 1.
- PSCH 533: Advanced Community and Prevention Research (3 hours)
- PSCH 537: Seminar in Action Research (6 hours) Note—Students will enroll in PSCH 537 for two semesters
- PSCH 539: Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research: Brown Bag (8 hours total): Note--Students are required to enroll in PSCH 539 Fall and Spring for the first four years of the graduate program for a total of 8 hours, and encouraged to continue participation for all years in residence.
- PSCH 540: Research with Diverse Groups (3 hours)

## Preliminary Examination Requirements

Preliminary Exam Purpose. The primary purpose of the C&PR Preliminary Examination is to determine the candidate's potential and readiness for completing the doctorate in Community and Prevention Research. The prelim paper must demonstrate competence in the field of Community Psychology and Prevention Research with respect to knowledge and understanding of important research literature and conceptual underpinnings of the field. It serves as a demonstration of the ability to assess the quality of research, important community psychology concepts, and conceptual frameworks within the field of community psychology. The goal is to demonstrate both knowledge and critique of existing literature and provide direction for how the field can advance in terms of research questions, clarification of concepts, and elaboration of conceptual frameworks. The Exam should result in a product that can yield a professional contribution such as a publication.

Examination Committee. Students will identify an Examination Committee with three faculty members—a main advisor, a second faculty member from the Program, and a third member from the Psychology Department or other relevant unit of the university, such as Public Health or Anthropology. The prelim committee may be chaired by a student's advisor or any other committee member deemed relevant by the student, and must be approved by the CPR Program Chair. In addition, two ex-officio faculty members serve as specified by Department guidelines.

Timelines. Prior to initiating the Preliminary Examination, students should have completed Psychology 531, 533 or their equivalent as well as the Masters' thesis. Students have one year after completion of the Masters' thesis to propose and successfully complete a preliminary examination. The C&PR faculty views the preliminary examination as project that should be able to be completed within three months after approval of the proposal.

Preliminary Exam Components. There are two major elements to the C&PR Preliminary Examination: (1) a Preliminary Examination proposal, and (2) a Preliminary Examination paper. Students will receive feedback from faculty concerning each element.

Proposal Purpose. The purpose of the proposal is to clearly delineate the scope, focus, and value of the Preliminary Examination paper. The proposal itself would be limited to a 6-10 page double spaced description of the proposed project. It consists of three parts: (a) a topic description and rationale that address why the topic is important, the new ground broken by the paper, and its relevance to community and prevention research (About 3-5 double spaced pages) and (b) a detailed description of the process for carrying out the work - this includes a discussion of how relevant articles will be identified and a detailed methodology for quantifying, coding, or otherwise analyzing the identified articles and (about 2-3 pages) (c) a working bibliography of sources identified to date (about 2-3 pages). The paper is to be written in APA format.

Proposal Process. The meeting process for the prelim involves 1-2 meetings of the Examination Committee. The initial meeting is on the 6-10 page proposal where issues of topic, scope, expectations, and process are discussed. The second meeting is optional and depends on the degree of agreement following the first meeting that the proposal is sufficiently developed to proceed with the writing of the Preliminary Examination. These meetings can take place remotely (e.g. via email) unless the committee decides otherwise.

When reviewing the proposal the committee has three options:

- a) determine that the proposal is sufficiently developed and the student can proceed to start the prelim clock (assuming the integration of minor feedback from the committee)
- b) determine that the proposal needs improvement and following specific revisions the committee we will reevaluate the proposal
- c) determine that the proposal is wholly inappropriate and will not lead to a successful prelim exam and the student must start over.

Format Options. Two options are offered in terms of the structure and purpose of the Preliminary Examination.

Option 1: A Systematic Literature Review. This option is patterned after the typical kind of literature review that appears in the Psychological Bulletin, a reflective, precise review of the existing research literature in terms of questions asked, methods used, results found, and future directions for research. The emphasis is on a “within paradigm” approach that takes the literature on its own terms, reflects on it in terms of substantive and methodological rigor, synthesizes findings and controversies in the literature, and provides directions for what questions should be asked next and what issues remain in debate for future work. Doing this paper rests on finding a topic on which there is a significant body of empirical literature and developing a focus on that literature for the review. *It is important that this product should go beyond a simple review of the existing literature, but also summarizes and critiques it in a meaningful way.*

Option 2: Conceptual Paper. This option involves a critical analysis of a key concept in community psychology and/or prevention research. It can be structured in various ways. For example, the paper could consist of an analysis of how empowerment is defined and used in any particular area of community psychology or how is the concept of sustainability is defined and used in prevention research? Within this option, the first task might be a critical discussion, with examples from the literature, of the meaning(s) of the concept. Next might be the selection of a relevant body of research literature in community or prevention research that explicitly claims to reflect that concept. The analytic task would be to assess the varied ways that the concept is reflected in existing research literature; that is, how is it operationalized in particular studies, how consistent or different are these operationalizations, what the current state of the concept is, and

what kinds of conceptual issues need to be dealt with to improve our understanding of the concept.

Alternatively, another approach might be to apply a community or prevention paradigm to a phenomenon developed within a non-community or prevention perspective to provide an example of how C&PR might enrich a particular topic. For example, what would studies in a specific area of research on parenting look like if approached from an ecological perspective? This might begin with a thorough literature-based explication of what was meant by an ecological perspective. Next might be an analysis of a specified body of literature in research on parenting that would be viewed from an ecological perspective. This would necessitate a discussion of what the current literature reflects in terms of ecology followed by an examination of how well the body of literature in research on parenting reflects an ecological perspective. Next might be an examination of what that area of research might look like if approached from an ecological perspective. The overall contribution of this paper would be to highlight how research on parenting would be different if approached from an ecological perspective.

Preliminary Examination Paper. In writing the Preliminary Examination, the student is allowed to discuss issues related to the paper with committee members and other relevant parties. However, committee members themselves will not have a role in the actual preparation of the paper or in reading drafts. The final paper should not exceed 35 pages (excluding references). The student submits the proposal to the members of the Preliminary Exam Committee. The Committee reviews the proposal and gives the student feedback.

Evaluation Criteria. The general criteria for the Preliminary Examination paper are that the student demonstrates the capacity to:

- a) Define the phenomenon of interest and specify its historical and contemporary relevance in community and prevention research.
- b) Integrate community and prevention theory, research, and action relevant to understanding the phenomenon.
- c) Assess critically and incisively the strengths and weaknesses of existing theory, research, and action concerning the phenomenon.
- d) Recommend future direction for the theory, research, and action on this topic including, if appropriate, a re-conceptualization of the phenomenon.
- e) Place this paper in the context of other research, theory, and action concerning this topic including a strong, clear statement of the distinctive contribution of the paper to our understanding of the phenomenon.

The Examination Committee will complete its review in two weeks and make its recommendation on the essay to the C&PR faculty. The Committee may (a) approve the paper as is, (b) approve the paper contingent on specified revisions, or (c) not approve the paper.

At its discretion, the Committee may decide that revisions are necessary before it can decide on its recommendation. Only if the final prelim paper were seen as needing significant revision before it would be considered a “pass” would an additional meeting be considered. If revisions were required, a specific time for completing them based on how extensive they might be would be specified.

## Requirement Checklist

### I. General Departmental Requirements

- Advisor-approved MA Proposal
- Approval of Proposed Minor
- Committee-approved MA Proposal
- Committee-approved MA Thesis
- Graduate College--Approved MA Degree
- Preliminary Examination Proposal
- Committee-approved Preliminary Examination
- Graduate College--Admission to Candidacy
- Committee-approved Ph.D. Proposal
- Committee-approved Ph.D. Dissertation
- Major Program Requirements
- Minor Area Requirements
- Two semesters 50% TA (or equivalent) and TA orientation class
- Graduate College--Approved Ph.D. Degree

### II. Department Course Requirements

- PSCH 507 Emerging Research Issues (1 hour fall, 1 hour spring)
- PSCH 508 Colloquium on Teaching Psychology (1 hour, fall, required)
- PSCH 541 Introduction to Computing in Psychology (1 hour, spring)
- PSCH 543 Research Design and Analysis (4 hours)
- PSCH 545 Multivariate Analysis (3 hours, spring)
- PSCH 591 Research Apprenticeship (2 hours-fall)
- PSCH 591 Research Apprenticeship (2 hours-spring)
- PSCH 598 Thesis Research (3 hours-fall)
- PSCH 598 Thesis Research (3 hours-spring)
- PSCH 599 Dissertation Research (12 hours)
- Students must complete 32 semester hours of course work for the MA
- Students must complete 96 semester hours of course work for the Ph.D.

### III. Major Area Course Requirements

- PSCH 531: Community Research Methods (3 hours) Note--Students will enroll in PSCH531 for one semester during year 1.
- PSCH 533: Advanced Community and Prevention Research (3 hours)
- PSCH 537: Seminar in Action Research (6 hours) Note—Students will enroll in PSCH 537 for two semesters during year 3

\_\_ PSCH 539: Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research: Brown Bag (1 hour): Note--Students are required to enroll in PSCH 539 for the first three years of the graduate program for a total of 6 hours, and encouraged to continue participation for all years in residence.

\_\_ PSCH 540: Research with Diverse Groups (3 hours)

IV. Minor Requirements (Specify area, course #, and course work if opting to complete)

\_\_ Area: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_ Course #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_ Course #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_ Course #3: \_\_\_\_\_

or \_\_ Brown Bag (2 semester): \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample 4-year Course Schedule

### Year 1- Fall Semester

- 507 Emerging Research Issues (1 hour)
- 543 Research Design and Analysis (4 hours)
- 591 Research Apprenticeship (2 hours)
- 531 Community Research Methods/Quantitative (3 hours)
- 539 Current Topics in Community & Prevention Research (1 hour)
- 596 Independent Study (1 hour)
- 5--- Elective Course if completing (3 hours)
- TOTAL 12 - 15 hours

### Year 1- Spring Semester

- 507 Emerging Research Issues (1 hour)
- 539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)
- 541 Computing in Psychology (1 hour)
- 545 Multivariate Analysis (3 hours)
- 591 Research Apprenticeship (2 hours)
- 594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)
- 5--- Elective Course if completing (3 hours)
- TOTAL 12 hours

**Notes:** CPR students who are TAs must enroll in Psychology 508: Colloquium on Teaching of Psychology (for 1 hour) during the Fall Semester.

### Year 2- Fall Semester

- 539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)
- 540 Research with Diverse Groups (3 hours)
- 594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)
- 598 Thesis Research (4 hours)
- 5--- Elective Course if completing (3 hours)
- TOTAL 12 hours

### Year 2 – Spring Semester

- 539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)
- 533 Advanced Community and Prevention Research (3 hours)
- 594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)
- 598 Thesis Research (7 hours)
- TOTAL 12 hours

**Notes:** Students typically complete their Required Foundation courses by the end of Year 2.



**Year 3- Fall Semester**

537 Seminar in Action Research (3 hours)  
539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)\*  
594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)  
596 Independent Study: Preliminary Exam Essay (4 hours)  
599 Dissertation Research (3 hour)  
TOTAL 12 hours

**Year 3- Spring Semester**

537 Seminar in Action Research (3 hours)  
539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)\*  
594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)  
596 Independent Study: Preliminary Exam Essay (4 hours)  
599 Dissertation Research (3 hour)  
TOTAL 12 hours

**Notes:** Students typically will complete their minor by the end of Year 3 if opting to complete a minor.

**Year 4- Fall Semester**

539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)\*  
594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)  
596 Independent Study (3 hours)  
599 Dissertation Research (7 hour)  
TOTAL 12 hours

**Year 4- Spring**

539 Current Topics in Community and Prevention Research (1 hour)\*  
594 Faculty Research Group (1 hour)  
596 Independent Study (3 hours)  
599 Dissertation Research (7 hour)  
TOTAL 12 hours

**Notes:** Students typically will propose their Dissertation Research in Year 4 and will complete all required coursework by the end of Year 4.