

Social and Personality Psychology

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Major Course Requirements

Course Requirements for the Major

All five core courses, including four semesters of 519, plus one elective.

Core Courses

- PSCH 512 (3): Attitudes and Social Cognition
- PSCH 513 (3): Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes
- PSCH 516 (3): Research Methods in Social Psychology
- PSCH 519 (1): Social Psychology Brown Bag Seminar
- PSCH 570 (3): Personality Psychology

Elective courses that can be taken to fulfill Major requirements

- PSCH 411 (3): Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Racism
- PSCH 417 (3): Psychology and Law

PSCH 518 (3): Seminar In Social Psychology (May be Repeated) *

* Examples of Recent Seminar Topics (PSCH 518)

- Children and the Law
- Self Regulation
- Political and Moral Psychology
- Distributive and Procedural Fairness

Preliminary Examination Requirements

(rev. 10-19-2020)

The Preliminary Examination (prelim) is the last major program requirement that students must compete before beginning work on the doctoral dissertation.

Purpose

The purpose of the prelim is to determine the student's readiness to undertake dissertation research. In the Social and Personality Psychology (S&PP) program, this is accomplished by (1) evaluating the student's performance in writing a scholarly review or theoretical paper on a topic in social and/or personality psychology that is chosen by the student and approved by the Division, and (2) assessing the student's overall progress in the program to date. The intent of the paper is to give the student an opportunity to demonstrate an essential professional writing skill, along with broad conceptual competencies in social and/or personality psychology, while at the same time creating a potentially useful (i.e., publishable) professional product (although actual publication is not a requirement). In many cases, the prelim paper also lays important conceptual groundwork for the dissertation research (but again, there is no requirement that it do so).

Prerequisites and Timing

Before beginning the S&PP prelim, a student must first have completed at least 3 of the Division's 4 named core courses (PSCH 512, PSCH 513, PSCH 516, PSCH 570), as well as four semesters of PSCH 519, have an average grade of B in all program courses taken so far, and must have successfully defended the MA thesis. [Note that these prerequisites enable the student to begin the prelim before completing all of the S&PP course requirements. However, students will not be advanced to candidacy until all requirements have in fact been completed.]

Normally these prerequisites are completed during the first two years in the program, with the prelim taken during the third year. Students are encouraged to consider writing the prelim paper as early as the summer between their second and third years in the program. The Departmental deadline for completing the prelim is the end of the third year (i.e., the 6th semester). Should it become necessary, students may petition COGS for a 1-semester extension (until the end of the 7th semester) if they have the support of their Advisor and the Division. However, students are strongly discouraged from delaying the prelim until the 7th semester, as doing so leaves little or no additional time for making revisions should they be required at either the proposal or paper-writing stages (see below).

Also, please note that the S&PP program requires all graduate students who wish to teach an undergraduate course at UIC to have first passed the prelim. Students may be permitted to enroll in the first semester of the two-semester teaching practicum (p587) before the prelim has been successfully completed (the teaching practicum is a prerequisite for teaching an undergraduate course), but must have past the prelim before enrolling in the second semester.

A prelim proposal may be submitted at any time during the first 12 weeks of class of the Fall or Spring semesters, or anytime during the summer session. In planning when to submit a proposal, students should keep in mind the following points. First, the prelim paper will be due 14 weeks from the date the proposal is due. If a religious or some other significant holiday or life event falls within that 14-week period, students may petition the Program Chair for a one week extension. Second, should it become necessary to revise the proposal, the proposal approval date will be delayed. This in turn will delay the date on which the prelim paper is due. Finally, if the proposal is submitted during the Summer session, there may be a brief delay in getting feedback on the proposal from the reading subcommittee, as faculty are often out of town during portions of the Summer. It will be the responsibility of the Program Chair to ensure that such delays are kept to a minimum, and avoided altogether whenever possible. Sometimes, however, delays due to faculty travel are not possible to avoid.

Any student who wishes to take the S&PP program prelim in a given semester should make these intentions known to the Program Chair at least two weeks prior to submitting the proposal.

Proposal

The prelim proposal will consist of a document that addresses the following three points in no more than 10 pages of double-spaced text.

1. **Topic of the Paper.** Write a concise thesis statement that describes the goals and objectives the paper is intended to achieve.
2. **Relevant Literature.** Describe the literature(s) that you will review to address your question. Your goal here is to communicate a sense of the scope of the literature to be covered -- its range and boundaries -- not to provide an exhaustive reference list or annotated bibliography.
3. **Your Contribution.** Describe the unique contribution that you expect to make with this paper. That is, explain how the paper will help advance the domain within which you are working, and so contribute to the extant literature in that domain.

The S&PP Program Chair will appoint a two-person reading subcommittee from among the Division's faculty (excluding the student's advisor). The task of the subcommittee is to oversee the prelim process for the student in question. The subcommittee will read the student's proposal, and will, within two weeks of its submission, inform the student

about whether the proposal has been approved. If approved, the student will then have 14 weeks to write the paper. The student may not consult with anyone other than the subcommittee members about the paper in the 14 weeks during which it is being written, with the exception of soliciting writing feedback from the UIC Writing Center (students are free, however, to consult with whomever they wish -- including their advisor -- up until they receive word that the proposal has been accepted.)

If the reading subcommittee does not approve the proposal, the subcommittee may decide to give the student an opportunity to revise the proposal. In consultation with the student, the subcommittee will set a specific due date for the revision. It is expected that most proposal revisions can be accomplished within 2 weeks. If the revised proposal is approved, the student will then have 14 weeks to write the paper (i.e., the paper will always be due 14 weeks from the date of approval, no matter when that approval is given). If the revised proposal is not approved, again, the subcommittee may give the student a second opportunity to revise the proposal. If the second revision is not approved, no further opportunities to revise the proposal will be given, and the student will be considered to have failed the prelim. (See below for information about petitioning to retake the prelim.)

The Paper

There are two main types of prelim papers. Both are problem-oriented, critical, and integrative, rather than simply descriptive. The first is a critical analysis of the empirical literature in a carefully circumscribed area of social or personality psychology that is written in the style of a *Psychological Bulletin* article. This analysis may take either a narrative form or be a quantitative meta-analysis. In either case, the topic area should be defined narrowly enough that a truly comprehensive, and fully up-to-date, critical review of the current empirical literature in the student's topic area can be prepared. The second type of prelim is a theoretical paper written in the style of either a *Psychological Review* or *Personality and Social Psychology Review* article. A student may be at a stage where the student can propose a novel theoretical idea in a particular area of social or personality psychology. In doing this, the student would draw upon empirical findings that bear upon the new theory, and compare and contrast the new theory with other relevant theoretical notions currently found in the literature.

A successful prelim paper will not just be a recitation of others' research and thinking on the prelim topic. A critical component of a successful prelim is the presence and quality of an independent analysis and integration of the literature, whether presented in the context of a literature review or the proposal of a novel theoretical idea. The maximum length for the paper is 30 pages, tables and references excluded.

The completed paper must be submitted to the reading subcommittee no more than 14 weeks from the date of approval. If the subcommittee judges that the paper satisfactorily meets the goals and objectives set forth in the proposal, then they will recommend to the

program faculty that the student receive a grade of "pass" on the paper. In the case of an exceptionally meritorious paper, the subcommittee may recommend that the paper receive a grade of "high pass."

Alternatively, if the reading subcommittee judges that the paper does not satisfactorily meet the goals and objectives set forth in the proposal, the subcommittee may give the student an opportunity to revise the paper. This opportunity will be provided only if the paper, although not completely acceptable in its current form, nevertheless shows substantial promise, and in the estimation of the subcommittee, can be improved to a passing status with relatively little additional work. If the subcommittee gives the student an opportunity to revise the paper, the subcommittee, in consultation with the student, will set a specific due date for the revision. It is expected that most revisions to the prelim paper can be accomplished within 4 weeks. Note that although a subcommittee request for a revision is an encouraging sign, it is not a guarantee that the revision will be judged satisfactory. The revision will be evaluated independently, and must stand on its own merits. If the subcommittee in fact does judge the revised paper to be satisfactory, then they will recommend to the program faculty that the student receive a grade of "pass" on the paper. However, should the revised paper still be judged unsatisfactory, the student may be given a second chance to revise it, again at the subcommittee's discretion. If the second revision is also judged unsatisfactory, no further opportunities to revise the paper will be given, and the student will be considered to have failed the prelim.

Petitioning to Re-Take the Exam upon Failure at Proposal or Completed Paper Stage

A student who fails the prelim, either because the proposal was not approved or because the paper was judged unsatisfactory, may petition the program faculty to re-take the prelim. In considering such a petition, the program faculty will meet to review the student's overall progress through the program. If the petition is approved, the "re-take" prelim must entail a new topic. In no case may the prelim be re-taken more than once. A student who fails the prelim a second time, or who is not permitted to re-take the prelim after failing it once, will be dropped from the program.

The prelim subcommittee may solicit feedback from other program faculty before rendering a pass/fail decision on a prelim paper.

Advancement to Candidacy

It is the S&PP program faculty as a whole, not the reading subcommittee, who decide whether or not the student advances to candidacy. Their decision will be based not only on the recommended grade for the paper, but also on a review of the student's entire record. A student will be declared to have passed the prelim, and so will be advanced to Candidacy for the Ph.D., only if the student has (a) satisfactorily met all other program requirements except the dissertation, (b) is judged to be making good progress in developing an independent program of research, and (c) has received a recommended

grade of "pass" (or "high pass") on the prelim paper. Note that the implication of "(a)" above is that although the student may initially begin the prelim after having completed all but 1 of the required core courses, and without having completed any electives, students will not be advanced to candidacy until the missing courses are in fact taken and passed with an average grade of B or better.

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)
- PSCH 541 Introduction to Computing in Psychology (1 hour, spring)
- PSCH 543 Research Design and Analysis (4 hours, fall)
- 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 512 Attitudes and Social Cognition (3 hours)
- PSCH 513 Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes (3 hours)
- PSCH 516 Research Methods in Social Psychology (3 hours)
- PSCH 519 Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag--4 semesters)
- PSCH 570 Personality Psychology

Plus one additional course from the following list:

- ___ PSCH 411 Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Racism (3 hours)
- ___ PSCH 417 Psychology and Law (3 hours)
- ___ PSCH 518 Seminar in Social and Personality Psychology

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

___ Area: _____

___ Course #1: _____

___ Course #2: _____

___ Course #3: _____

or ___ Brown Bag (2 semester): _____

Sample 4-year Course Schedule

Year 1--Fall Semester

Department	507	Emerging Research Issues	1
	508	Colloquium on Teaching in Psychology	1
	541	Introduction to Computing in Psychology	1
	543	Research Design and Analysis	4
	591	Research Apprenticeship	2
Major	512	Attitudes and Social Cognition	3
	519	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
		TOTAL	13

Year 1--Spring Semester

Department	507	Emerging Research Issues	1
	545	Multivariate Analysis	3
	591	Research Apprenticeship	2
Major	516	Research Methods in Social Psychology	3
	LST**	Elective Social Course	3
	519	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
		TOTAL	13

Notes on Year 1:

1. Psychology 512, 513 and 516 are usually offered every other year. Thus, with respect to these three courses, the sequencing for Years 1 and 2 is reversed in alternating academic years.

Year 2--Fall Semester

Department	598	Thesis Research	5
Major	513	Interpersonal Relations and Group Processes	3
	519	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
Minor	LST**	Minor Course (If completing)	3
		TOTAL	12

Year 2--Spring Semester

Department	598	Thesis Research	5
Major	570	Personality Psychology	3
	LST**	Elective Social Course	3
	519	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
Minor	LST**	Minor Course (If completing)	3
		TOTAL	15

Notes on Year 2:

1. Most or all required Social Program course work should be completed by the end of Year 2.
2. Students are expected to complete their Master's Thesis research by the end of Year 2.

- Students are encouraged to consider writing their Social and Personality Psychology Preliminary Exam during the summer between Years 2 and 3.

Year 3--Fall Semester

Department	596	Independent Study (Prelim)	7
	599	Dissertation Research	1
	519	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
Minor	LST**	Minor Course (If completing)	3
		TOTAL	12

Year 3--Spring Semester

Department	599	Dissertation Research	9
Major	519*	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
		TOTAL	10

Notes on Year 3:

- Departmental regulations require that the Preliminary Exam be completed by the end of Year 3. Social Program students are encouraged to complete it either during the summer before Year 3, or in the fall of Year 3. The Teaching Practicum (587) elective cannot be taken before completion of the Prelim.
- Students are strongly encouraged to propose their Dissertation Research by end of Year 3.

Year 4--Fall Semester

	599	Dissertation Research	9
Major	519*	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
		TOTAL	10

Year 4--Spring Semester

Department	599	Dissertation Research	9
Major	519*	Current Topics in Social Psychology (Brown Bag)	1
		TOTAL	10

Notes on Year 4:

- Students may wish to consider taking the teaching practicum during Year 4.
- Most or all requirements for the Ph.D. should be completed by the end of Year 4.

* Course is recommended but not required and may be substituted.

** Course is from a list of elective courses from which the student may choose.