Process and Evaluation Criteria of the Second-Year Paper

The second-year paper is a milestone requirement for the Ph.D. in Sociology. Papers should be about the length of a journal article and demonstrate competence in theory, literature review, evidence presentation, and writing and thinking (as outlined in the Evaluation Criteria below). Papers need not be of publishable quality.

Timeline

Year 1

- Students typically design a second-year paper topic in consultation with their advisor during the Spring quarter of their first year, which allows collecting or identifying data during the first summer.

Year 2

- Students take ProSem II during the Winter quarter of their second year to prepare for oral presentations and written submissions of their second-year papers.
- Students make a formal oral presentation of their second-year papers to the faculty and graduate students in the mid-Spring quarter.
- Students submit their second-year papers for evaluation toward the end of the Spring quarter.

Evaluators

- Three faculty members evaluate each student's second-year paper—the student's advisor and two readers.
- Students choose their readers from among Sociology faculty or Sociology-affiliated faculty. If a student cannot secure a reader, the Co-Graduate Directors (in consultation with the ProSem II instructors) can do so.

Evaluation

- The advisor and readers evaluate whether a paper satisfies departmental requirements and offer recommendations of pass, minor revisions, major revisions, or does not pass.
- The advisor and readers also offer comments and suggestions for revisions when warranted.
- The Co-Directors of Graduate Studies provide a decision based on the advisor's and the readers' recommendations and their reading of the paper.

Year 2, Summer

Revisions

- In the case of minor revisions, the student has approximately one month to revise their paper. The student's advisor alone evaluates the revised paper, and the Co-Directors of Graduate Studies communicate the advisor's decision to the student.
- In the case of major revisions, the student has approximately two months to revise their paper. Both the student's advisor and readers evaluate the revised paper. The Co-Directors of Graduate Studies provide a decision based on the advisor's and the readers' recommendations and their reading of the revised paper.
Program Criteria for Evaluation

1. Theory

The paper should be theoretically relevant in one or more of the following ways:

a) The paper's main argument or central concepts relate to some sociological theory.
b) The paper tests/engages sociological theory.
c) The paper compares the utility of several models or approaches in explaining the social pattern under examination.
d) Empirical patterns discussed in the paper are related to general patterns or broader sociological questions.

2. Review of Literature

The research described in the paper is related to some existing body of research. For example, the paper disputes the findings of some past studies, adds a new angle, or extends an earlier analysis to a new case.

3. Evidence to Support Arguments

Appropriate methods are used to collect relevant evidence, and there is a clear and convincing discussion of how the evidence relates to the paper's central arguments.

4. Writing and Thinking

a) The paper is well organized and written and follows the presentation style of relevant academic journals.
b) The paper has a clear question or set of issues and logically analyzes them.