The American University in Cairo

Handbook of Graduate Programs in Sociology-Anthropology[[1]](#footnote-1)

About this Handbook

The Handbook of Graduate Programs in Sociology-Anthropology is a complementary document to the Graduate Studies Manual which encompasses the procedures and practices for different aspects of graduate studies at AUC. This Handbook covers guidelines and regulations that are specific to the Sociology-Anthropology graduate program.

For overall guidelines of graduate study at AUC, including academic requirements and regulations, university resources and more detailed information about financial affairs and fellowships, assistantship, support grants, work study program, graduate advisory council and campus life, please consult the graduate studies manual, to be found here: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/manual>

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A. Program Overview

**1. Mission Statement**

The graduate program in sociology and anthropology equips students with a thorough grounding in the theory and research methods of both disciplines. Drawing on the expertise of faculty members in sociology and anthropology, it offers a unique opportunity for students to conduct original research in an intellectually stimulating environment. Its longstanding tradition of combining scholarship with a commitment to social, economic and political justice makes the program a dynamic environment for learning and research.

Located in the heart of the Middle East, students and faculty engage critically with the region as well as with the representation of its people, cultures and politics. The vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Cairo is an ideal location for students interested in conducting fieldwork in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Arab world, as well as the Mediterranean region, Sub-Saharan Africa and the larger Global South. The program accepts qualified applicants from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds especially those who are interested in acquiring alternative and critical perspectives on society and politics.

**2. Program Faculty and Staff**

Find full faculty biographies here:

* <https://huss.aucegypt.edu/departments/sea/faculty>

Contact information are available on the Graduate Program website:

<https://huss.aucegypt.edu/departments/sea/contact-us>

1. **Description of MA Program**

A Master’s Degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the American University in Cairo prepares students for the pursuit of doctoral studies in the social sciences as well as professional careers engaged in research, social work, and policy development. Accordingly, the Master’s program provides students with a critical introduction to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and exposes them to theoretical, methodological, and empirical issues and debates in sociology and anthropology.

Students completing an MA degree in Sociology-Anthropology have two options: a Thesis Track and a Comprehensive Exam Track.

**a. Thesis Track**

Students who opt for a thesis track must complete a research thesis in accordance with university regulations. Before commencing work on the thesis, the student must write a thesis proposal following departmental guidelines that is approved by three faculty members, who compose the MA thesis committee. Students should familiarize themselves with procedures and deadlines regarding writing the thesis proposal, committee selection, writing of the thesis and presentation to the supervisor and readers. Complying with the procedural requirements by the appropriate deadlines is the responsibility of the student. After completion of the thesis, it must be defended and approved by the thesis committee.

In close consultation with thesis committee, students will develop expertise in a particular area of study, demonstrate the ability to conduct original research, and make an innovative contribution to the fields of sociology or anthropology through the completion of a Master’s Thesis.

Our students conduct research in Egypt and throughout the Middle East on topics such as: urban transformations; gender; religious and social movements; memory and politics of the past; the state, migration; environment; ecologies; violence and trauma; health; the family; poverty; ethnicity and nationalism; work and labor; media; activism; art, poetry and expressive culture; youth.

**b. Comprehensive Exam Track**

This option allows students who do not wish to write a fieldwork-based MA thesis to complete, as an alternative, two further courses and take comprehensive exams. Students not opting to do a thesis will, after the completion of all course requirements, take comprehensive examinations administered by an Examination Committee. An oral examination may be given following the written test.

B. Registration, Financial Aid, Fellowships and Enrolment Status

**1. Advising and Registration**

Each semester students are required to meet with the Graduate Program Director to schedule courses, evaluate progress in the program, and troubleshoot course or thesis related problems. Students will need to come prepared with the Advising Form filled out for the desired courses in order of interest. After each semester’s advising, this form will be signed by the Graduate Program Director and passed onto the Program Specialist in order to enroll students in required classes.

**2. Financial Affairs**

General information about financial affairs, tuition and fees, can be found here, including financial aid and work-study opportunities:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/tuition-and-fees#graduatetuition>

For details about Financial Aid, please check this site:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/financial-aid>

1. **Fellowships**

AUC offers a wide-range of fellowships for Egyptian and international students. Fellowships vary in regards to monthly stipends, tuition waivers, and hours of work required. Detailed information about fellowships, their different types, application process, deadlines and requirements, can be found on the page of the AUC website:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/admissions/fellowships>

1. **Assistantships**

Assistantships are offered to students to help them enhance their own learning experience and that of students by assisting course instructors in facilitating learning activities for courses inside and outside the classroom. Graduate students can be awarded a teaching assistantship by the program through the Teaching Assistantship System, managed by the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, and based on allocations made to the department or the academic unit. This award is for one semester and can be renewed. The eligibility, responsibilities and duties of departmental assistants are outlined here:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/teaching-assistantships>

1. **Work Study Program**

The program allows students to make use of their time between classes to gain hands-on experience, develop transferable skills, earn some money and boost their resumes. The WS positions that are offered differ from one department to another depending on the nature of the work in each department and the level of technical skills required to complete the assigned tasks. The program is available to enrolled, full-time students during the Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer semesters. For more details, please consult the website:

<https://caps.aucegypt.edu/careercenter/WSStudents/Main?ModuleId=10006&PageID=10049>

1. **Support Grants**

All enrolled graduate students at AUC are eligible to apply for research, conference, and study abroad grants. Those who have just graduated, and intend to present the results of their graduate thesis at a recognized professional conference, may also apply. A graduate student is allowed only one conference grant per year, with a maximum of two conference grants per study period. They are also allowed up to one research grant per study period and up to one study abroad grant per study period. For more details, please visit this website:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/support-grants>

### Enrollment Status and Time Limit for a Degree Completion

The normal load for a fulltime student is 9 credit hours per semester. Upon the recommendation of the program concerned, students may register for up to 15 credit hours per semester. Overload forms are available at the Office of University Registrar’s webpage: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/students/registrar/online-forms>

A student taking a load of less than 9 credit hours per semester is typically considered a part-time student. A foreign student taking a course load of 9 credit hours per semester is entitled to university certification for obtaining a student visa. Foreign students carrying less than a full load are not entitled to such certification unless they are fellows or sponsored students. In case of withdrawal, the university reports to the Egyptian authorities to cancel the student residence visa that was received through the university.

Typically, the completion of these requirements takes two years of full-time academic work for the master’s degree. Students unable to carry a full course load may be permitted to take more time to complete their degree. However, they must complete all requirements, including the thesis, where applicable, within five years of the date of first registration as a provisional or fully admitted graduate student in a master’s degree program. The time limit does not include semesters for which students are only enrolled in English language instruction. Any period of interrupted studies, such as an approved Planned Educational Leave of Absence, or a period of temporary withdrawal, is counted as part of the time period required for degree completion.

An academic program may grant an extension for completing the degree beyond the set limit by one semester, up to a maximum of one academic year. This requires the approvals of the Dean of the degree program and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

C. Coursework and Program Overview

**1. Coursework for Thesis Track**

The Sociology-Anthropology Master’s degree - the thesis track- requires students to take eight courses (24 credits): four compulsory courses and four electives. The compulsory courses are:

* SOC/ANTH 5201 Classical Social Thought
* SOC/ANTH 5202 Contemporary Social Thought
* SOC/ANTH 5203 Ethnographic Fieldwork or  [SOC/ANTH 5204](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=27&poid=4831#tt2989) The Magic of Numbers: Reading and Working with Numbers.
* SOC/ANTH 5298 Thesis Writing Seminar

Of the four electives students must take two from SOC-ANTH listed graduate courses. The remaining two may be from any school or department at the graduate level (or up to two 4000 level sociology or anthropology courses); our students often take electives in programs as varied as CMRS (Center for Refugee and Migration Studies), IGWS (Institute for Gender and Women’s Studies) and the Middle East Studies Center as well as departments of Law, Political Science, Philosophy, Economics, Psychology, Arabic and Islamic Studies, among others. Courses offered in the Sociology-Anthropology graduate program differ from semester to semester but they have included:

 [SOC/ANTH 510/5210 - Selected Topics in Sociology-Anthropology (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 515/5215 - Relations: Kin, Friends and Neighors (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 520/5220 - Gender and Sexuality (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 525/5225 - The Sacred and the Profane: Religion and Society (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 530/5230 - Theorizing the State (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 535/5235 - Maintaining Systems of Global Inequality (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 540/5240 - Revisiting the Rural (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 545/5245 - The City: The Making and Unmaking of Urban Lifeworlds (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 555/5255 - Care, Well-Being and Decent Life (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 565/5265 - Ethnicity, Identity and Nationalism (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 570/5270 - Environments, Ecologies and the Anthropocene (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 575/5275 - Insurgent Publics (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 580/5280 - History and Memory (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 502/5285 - Reading Egypt (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 591/5297 - Independent Study and Readings (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

 [SOC/ANTH 000/5295 - Reading Capital (3 cr.)](https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=37&poid=6428&hl=SOC-ANTH+MA&returnto=search)

Additionally, after completing the required eight courses (24 credits) students must enroll in [SOC/ANTH 5299](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=27&poid=4831#tt708) until the completion of their degree. 

Check the AUC online course schedule (Banner) for semester-by-semester availability.

Students who take a leave of absence for 3 or more years will be required to re-take 5203 or 5204, and 5298 at a minimum in order to ensure an up to date thesis proposal and thesis.

**2. Thesis Writing**

A very useful document to read in the student’s first semester of the SOAN MA program is the Thesis Preparation Guidelines prepared by the Office of Graduate Studies:

<https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/thesis-guidelines>

Here you will find information about responsibilities and expectations of the student, thesis advisor/supervisor, reader and department, general thesis requirements, thesis submission guidelines, IRB procedures, thesis writing timeline, Academic Integrity issues, contents of a thesis proposal, thesis style guidelines and thesis submission checklist and forms.

In conjunction with the required coursework students will also be working on creating, researching, and writing an original thesis based on primary research during the two-year program. This process begins in the first semester of a student’s time at AUC with graduate roundtables and workshops aimed at helping students come up with a viable research project. These workshops will provide students with the needed assistance in forming committees, IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval, writing tips, etc … Typically students write their thesis proposals in their second semester in either SOC/ANTH 5203 and then begin their research the summer between their first and second years. The last required course, SOC/ANTH 5298: Thesis Writing Seminar, is typically taken in the spring of their second year in order to help students make progress on writing their theses in a structured environment with faculty and peer support. (Please see sections below on “Typical Student Schedule and “The Master’s Thesis” for more details about the thesis research and writing process.)

Most students will enroll in 5299-01 in the spring of their second year during which time they will be focused on synthesizing fieldwork and research into an approximately 120-page thesis. SOC/ANTH 5299 is billed as a three-credit hour course but is not credited toward your academic load. If a student is unable to finish their thesis in the first semester, they may enroll in 5299-01 again the following semester (it is again billed as a three-credit hour course, but is not credited toward your academic load). In the unlikely circumstances that students need a third semester to finish their thesis, they may enroll in 5299-02 at which point they will be billed for only one credit hour.

1. **Typical Two-Year Plan\***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Semesters | Coursework & Program Requirements | Thesis Progress |
| Year One |  |  |
| Fall Semester | SOC-ANTH 5201 Classical Social Thought  ELECTIVE 1  ELECTIVE 2 | -Preparatory research for thesis topic.  -Preparatory research for committee formation |
| Spring Semester | SOC-ANTH 5202 Contemporary Social Thought  SOC/ANTH 5203 Ethnographic Fieldwork  ELECTIVE 3 | -Formation of Thesis Committee  (Form to be signed by committee)  - Thesis Proposal Approval  (Form to be signed by committee)  -Apply for IRB Approval online:  <https://www.aucegypt.edu/research/institutional-review-board> |
| Intervening Summer |  | - Apply for IRB Approval  - Continue working on literature review and developing theoretical framework-FIELD RESEARCH or other primary research/data collection; Organizing field notes |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year Two |  |  |
| Fall Semester | ELECTIVE 4 | - Data Analysis and chapter drafting |
| Spring Semester | SOC-ANTH 5298 Thesis Writing Seminar  SOC-ANTH 5299-01 | -Submit complete draft to committee approximately 6 weeks before the last day of classes. For guidelines of this process of writing, defending and submitting your thesis, please check the graduate studies manual:  <https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/thesis-guidelines>  -Defense  (Committee signs thesis defense forms)  -Revisions  -Submit three copies of final approved thesis to the department and DAR (Digital Archive and Research Repository) along with all the necessary forms:  - Thesis title page singed by committee members  - IRB Proof/Waiver form After Research signed by advisor along with IRB approval letter  - Submit release of thesis forms signed by advisor |

\*All required forms can be found on the page of the Graduate Studies Manual <https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/manual>

**D. The Master’s Thesis**

The culmination of the SOC-ANTH master’s program is an approximately 120-page thesis based on original research. Students should begin having conversations and making decisions about their thesis topic in their first semester. Below are the components of the SOAN writing process.

1. **Committee Selection**

Students should begin thinking about their thesis committee during their first semester in the program by attending workshops, meeting SOAN faculty and searching for faculty outside of the department with similar research interests. A thesis committee is composed of three faculty members: an advisor and two readers. The advisor and at least one reader must be a Sociology or Anthropology full time faculty member at AUC. Students may choose a third reader from outside of Sociology-Anthropology program or from outside of the AUC. Students will need to send a copy of a potential outside reader’s CV to the department along with their written intention to participate in the AUC thesis submission process. Students are responsible for ensuring that all of their committee members will be available for at least two semesters to ensure the smooth continuity of thesis research and writing. In the spring semester of a student’s first year, the student should have officially chosen their committee members and asked them all to sign the Thesis Committee Form.

In addition to the responsibilities and expectations of thesis advisors and readers delineated in the following document: <https://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/graduate-studies/thesis-guidelines>, the sociology-anthropology faculty members have agreed that the thesis advisor is to take the primary role in guiding the development of the thesis. The advisor usually meets with the student regularly and often reads the thesis chapter by chapter. The advisor also takes the leading role in guiding the thesis proposal. The sociology-anthropology faculty members have agreed that the role of the readers is to be involved in the development of the thesis from the very beginning. After the thesis advisor has given feedback on the thesis proposal, the readers are also asked to give feedback on the proposal and the whole committee must approve the proposal before the student moves on to fieldwork or data gathering. The readers should ideally provide feedback after the student has completed and received feedback from their advisor every two chapters. The readers should provide a copy of their feedback to the student and the thesis advisor. If there is contradictory feedback from committee members during this process, the advisor will guide the student in incorporating the appropriate feedback and, if necessary, ask the committee to meet with the student to reach consensus on how feedback should be incorporated before reaching the full draft stage. Once the student has a full draft that the advisor has read and the student has incorporated the advisor’s feedback then the rest of the committee receives the draft. The last day for the committee to receive a full draft that will be the basis of deciding whether or not a student can move to the defense is approximately 6 weeks before the last day of classes (April 1st for spring graduation and November 15th for fall graduation).

1. **Thesis Proposal Approval**

In the spring semester of their first-year students should be working to put together a thesis proposal in conjunction with class-work in SOC-ANTH 5203. A thesis proposal is usually a 10-15 page document specifying the research problem, a review of the basic literature on the subject, the main argument, and the principal concepts, methodologies, and bibliographic sources to be used. It is imperative that students stay in communication with their thesis advisor during the process of writing the thesis proposal (as well as with other members of their committee depending on varying levels of availability).

During that semester, the student needs to meet the following deadlines:

* Selecting a thesis advisor by end of the second semester or the sociology-anthropology faculty will select them for the student
* Selecting two readers for the committee by the first summer or the sociology-anthropology faculty will select them for the student (finalizing the committee earlier is better)
* Thesis proposal approved by the whole committee and applying for IRB approval by the end of the first summer.

No later than the third semester, students should obtain the Thesis Proposal Approval Form from the Program Specialist, or program website and proceed to procure the signatures of all three committee members indicating their approval that the student may begin fieldwork. When all three signatures have been collected, students should return the completed form along with a hard copy of their thesis proposal to the Program Director along with the IRB before the Research form is signed by the thesis advisor. Exceptions to this norm will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

**Fieldwork may not commence until students have had their proposals approved by their committee and have received IRB approval (see below).**

1. **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval**

All MA theses that require human subjects for their research (in-depth interviews, participant observation, oral histories, among others) are required to apply for approval from the Institutional Review Board in order to proceed with fieldwork. **Under no circumstance may students begin fieldwork without prior IRB approval.**

Students must have already obtained approval from their thesis advisor (based on the approval of the Thesis Proposal) in order to apply for IRB approval. Successful completion of the various stages of IRB documents is imperative to being able to progress in the thesis writing process. As such, students should read this information, as well as that found on the official IRB website carefully and follow the directions as laid out. As a general rule, IRB cases are sent to the board on Thursdays at 3 pm. Students, however, should send their materials early enough to allow for notification of missing documentation or incomplete information.

**Pre-IRB Application**

Before completing the IRB forms, students will need to fill out the IRB Preliminary Approval or Waiver for Graduate Thesis Form (which requires an advisor’s signature) and submit it to the Program Specialist, along with the completed Thesis Proposal Approval Form and a copy of the Thesis Proposal itself. The department will send these materials on to the Office of the Dean of the School. This form simply indicates whether or not a given thesis project requires IRB approval and functions as a record that a student has spoken with his/her advisor about the IRB process. It is assumed that nearly all students completing an MA in Sociology-Anthropology will be required to obtain IRB approval.

In addition, before completing the IRB Online Application students are required to undergo an online training in the protection of human participants. Upon completion of this training, students will be given a certificate that they should then append to any IRB applications in the future. Sign-up and details about the training can be found on the IRB website.

**IRB Application**

All students are required to complete the IRB Online Application Form that can be accessed through this <https://www.aucegypt.edu/research/institutional-review-board> (you must have a current and active AUC ID in order to complete the form). This stage of the process requires a student to have already obtained their thesis advisor’s approval of the thesis proposal.

In addition to the IRB Online Application Form, students will need to use an official AUC Informed Consent Form Template adjusted to their particular research project. If research will be done with Arabic-speakers then students will need to use the official Arabic translated Informed Consent Form, adjusted to their particular research project. The IRB also requires in the case of interviews, detailed information regarding interview recording, storage and retrieval, and length of time that recordings will be kept. All the applicable forms can be found on the IRB webpage.

**Post-IRB Application**

Once students have completed their thesis, they will need to fill out the Proof of IRB Approval/Waiver Form signed by the thesis advisor at the thesis defense. Students must also include with this form: 1.) a copy of the IRB Approval Letter, 2.) the abstract of the student’s thesis and 3.) the Thesis Copyright and Availability Form. All these materials should be collected together and given to the Program Specialist who will forward them to the Office of the Dean of HUSS. All necessary forms may be found on the SOAN program website and AUC Graduate Studies webpage.

1. **Thesis Defense**

Students must successfully defend their thesis and make any revisions required by their committee before submitting the thesis for graduation. Thesis defenses are open to the public, and all committee members must be present at a student’s thesis defense. The deadlines for submitting the complete thesis draft, and scheduling the defense are mentioned below under “Thesis Submission”.

The defense begins with an approximately 15-minute student presentation of their work followed by a 45-minute open question and answer period led by the thesis advisor in which a student will be asked to defend and explain their work and respond to critical and constructive feedback from their committee members. Following this discussion, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates on revisions. The committee has the following options as outcomes: 1) thesis approved, no further revisions, 2) thesis approved, minor revisions (usually the committee agrees that the advisor will read the thesis one last time before submission to ensure the comments are addressed), 3) thesis approved, major revisions (usually the whole committee reads the thesis again to ensure the comments are addressed, graduation could be delayed depending on the amount of work required), 4) thesis rejected. The committee signs the thesis defense form and the student will submit it to the Program Specialist. Upon approving the thesis, the committee members will sign the Thesis Signature Page. In most cases committee members will ask students to incorporate further corrections/enhancements to the thesis before they agree to sign.

If the student has been receiving regular feedback on their thesis drafts from their advisor and two readers then ideally a defense should only be scheduled if the committee agrees that the work is defensible. In the rare case of a disagreement among the committee members about the acceptability of the thesis, the chair of the SEA department will appoint an ad hoc committee of at least two sociology-anthropology faculty members not on the student’s committee to adjudicate and resolve the impasse. Exceptional cases will be dealt with on an individual basis. If the student still feels that s/he has been unfairly treated then s/he should follow the grievance procedures spelled out below.

1. **Submission of Thesis**

If the degree is expected at the end of the fall semester, an acceptable (supervisor -approved) thesis must be presented by November 15. If graduation is expected at the end of the spring semester, the deadline for submitting the thesis is April 1. Each student is advised to submit the thesis early to allow time for the revisions which may be required. Otherwise, awarding of the degree may be delayed.

Within three weeks of submission of the thesis, the candidate will meet with the committee appointed by the program for an examination of the thesis. The committee may include members from outside the department or outside the university.

All revisions required by the committee must be incorporated in the final copy. The committee members may consider the revised thesis individually or schedule another meeting with the candidate. The originality of the final thesis text must be checked on Turnitin program, and corresponding form signed by the advisor before final submission of the thesis.

The top copy of the accepted and signed thesis is submitted to the office of the dean of the degree program the third Tuesday of January (for fall, and winter graduates), by the third Tuesday of June (for spring graduates) and by the third Tuesday of July (for summer graduates). In case the university is closed on any of these days, then the submission of the thesis is due on the following day the university is open. If the thesis is submitted late, the degree will not be conferred that semester. In addition to submitting a hard copy of the thesis, students are required to submit an electronic version of the thesis directly to the AUC Knowledge Fountain <https://fount.aucegypt.edu/>.

**E. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM TRACK**

Students who do not wish to do a fieldwork-based MA thesis may, as an alternative, complete two further courses and take comprehensive exams, i.e. a total of 30 credits or 10 courses. The purpose of comprehensive exams is to provide evidence of students’ knowledge of the range of ideas and literature that comprise the foundational as well as the current debates in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Comprehensive examination goes beyond individual courses to test students’ ability to integrate and analyze at a broad, general level. Material from courses will be an important part of the basis of many answers, but students are expected to prepare for comprehensive exams through substantial reading – beyond that required for their courses – in consultation with faculty advisors. Comprehensive exams are taken after completing all other degree requirements.

**Committee**

Students will choose a faculty examiner acting as the chair of their committee and two other readers from Sociology and Anthropology. Depending on the topic and following the approval of the Chair of the Examination Committee, no more than one of the two readers may be chosen from outside of SOAN.

Each committee member will, in consultation with the student, prepare a reading list of key texts in an agreed upon area of study. Students should discuss with each Committee member the range of ideas and literature, which they are expected to master. Students are responsible for determining what areas have already been adequately covered through course work and what areas require further reading.

One faculty member will serve as the head of the committee. Their responsibility will be to prepare the exams.

The student must form a committee and submit an exam committee form by the end of the first three weeks of the semester in which they plan to take the exam.

**Areas of Study**

The exam will consist of questions from three substantive areas of study in Anthropology and Sociology.

One of these areas of study will concern theory. The other two areas will be sub-fields within Anthropology or Sociology, with at least one of the areas focused on a particular geographical region. For example, if the area of study is rural sociology, the reading list should reflect questions about rural sociology in a particular region.

**Reading List**

Students, in consultation with the Committee, should prepare bibliographies to cover areas that require further reading. The final bibliography for each topic will normally be at least twice the length of the bibliography for a major research paper.

**Exam**

In the last week of November (for Fall exams) or April (for Spring exams) each committee member will send a list of three potential exam questions in confidence to the committee head.

The committee chair is responsible for ensuring that the combined questions cover specified topics broadly and will choose two questions submitted by each reader to achieve this objective. The Chair will, if necessary, ask the other examination committee members to submit alternative questions.

In the first week of December (for Fall exams) or May (for Spring exams) the exams will take place. Students will take the written comprehensive exam in a single, three-hour session and answer one question (out of two) from each topic chosen.

After a student passes the written exam the Committee and the student will convene for a half-hour oral examination. For students who have received grades of B or better in the written exam, the oral exam is primarily supplementary and provides an opportunity for the committee to allow students to clarify or amplify their written answers or to open other areas of discussion for which students have prepared. The Committee chair will determine that questions are appropriate, and may choose to waive the oral examination if the student has a grade of B or better in the written examination and all the Committee members are satisfied with the student’s performance.

**Evaluation**

The relevant committee member will grade each answer (using A, B, C, etc., with the usual pluses and minuses) and submit the grade to the committee chair. The minimum passing grade is B. A student who has received a grade of B- in no more than one of the written answers may, at the discretion of the Committee, provisionally be required to take an oral examination.

The student should write the best answer possible, referring to relevant assigned texts, within the one-hour time limit.

Students will be allowed to bring notes and texts into the exam. However, they will not be allowed access to online material.

Immediately following the oral examination, the committee chair will convene the Committee to average the grades for the written exam, assess the student’s oral performance, and award a final grade of “Pass with Honors,” “Pass,” or “Fail.” The Committee will determine whether students who have taken the oral examination with a grade of B- in one portion of the written exam will receive a “Pass” or be required to retake that part of the written exam.

If the grade on two or more answers of the written exam is less than B, the chair of the exam committee will assign a grade of “Fail.” A student who has failed a comprehensive exam may take another comprehensive exam during the following semester. In this case, no further questions need be answered in topics for which a previous answer was graded B or above. The student may not change either the topics to be re-examined, or the faculty advisors. Where necessary, the Committee, in consultation with the SOAN Program Director may appoint a new member to replace an examiner who is not available for the re-examination.

The student can only re-take a comprehensive exam one time.

Only students registered for the comprehensive examinations in a particular semester can sit for the examinations.

The grades of the examinations should not be communicated to the relevant students before the end of the semester when the grades are reported to the Office of the Registrar.

1. **Sociology-Anthropology Graduate Diploma**

The program seeks to provide a thorough foundation in the principles of Sociology and Anthropology while also developing critical skills for a wide range of real world professional situations.

## Requirements

Students take 6 courses (18 credits) in a single two-semester year. All students must take:

[SOC/ANTH 500/5201 - Classical Social Thought (3 cr.)](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=26&poid=4632#tt2680)

[SOC/ANTH 501/5202 - Contemporary Social Thought](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=26&poid=4632#tt4908)

[SOC/ANTH 505/5203 - Ethnographic Fieldwork (3 cr.)](http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=26&poid=4632#tt9499)

The remaining three courses can be chosen from among 5000 level SOC/ANTH courses.

### Admission Requirements

Requirements for admission to the Graduate Diploma program are the same as those for admission to the MA Sociology - Anthropology. Graduating diploma students may apply to transfer to MA status; however, transfer to such status is not guaranteed and applications are evaluated according to the standard selection criteria (including academic merit, statement of purpose and recommendation letters).

1. **Academic Requirements and Regulations:**

For detailed information on the following aspects of Graduate Studies, please consult the relevant section of the Graduate Studies Manual:

### Dual Graduate Degrees

### <http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1341#academic_load>

**Probation, Dismissal, Course Repeat and Retake**

<http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1341#probation_dismissal_repeat>

### Planned Educational Leave of Absence

### <http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1341#leave-absence>

### Withdrawal from the University

### <http://catalog.aucegypt.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=1341#withdrawal-from-the-university>

1. **Grievance Procedures**

Normally if a student has a problem with an instructor of a course or a member of their thesis committee, the student should try to resolve the issue with the faculty member directly or in consultation with their thesis advisor. If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, then the student should go to the sociology-anthropology graduate program director.

If the issue still cannot be resolved, the student can then resort to the University’s grievance procedure, but please note that this should be a measure of last resort.

All details concerning the University’s grievance and appeal process can be found at the following link:

<https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/Policies/Grievance%20and%20Appeal%20Process%20for%20Student%20Concerns.pdf>

1. More information can be found on the Sociology-Anthropology Graduate Program website:

   <https://catalog.aucegypt.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=36&poid=6192> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)