

# Manual for the Comprehensive Exam

## Introduction

Welcome to your comprehensive exam stage of the Doctoral Program in Sociology – a journey that is delightful, rewarding and challenging at once!

The aim of the reading list for the comprehensive exam is to equip you with a broad overview and demonstrated knowledge of key theoretical and methodological developments in the history of the discipline: from its beginning until our very present. Unlike the sharp distinction that many make between sociology and anthropology, at IHU we take both as sister (or, brotherly, if you will) disciplines.

Based on your critical reading of the literature below, we expect you to have a firm grasp of the fundamental concepts, theories and methods of sociology in their full diversity. By “grasp,” we mean your demonstrated ability:

- A] To understand and analyze these concepts, theories, and methods,
- B] To explain these concepts, theories and methods convincingly, accurately and critically in writing as well as orally,
- C] To compare and evaluate these concepts, theories, and methods with one another so as to identify analytical merits and demerits of each.

In short, our goal is to have you develop a sociological and anthropological perspective on the world we live in and the world we want to live in. It is from within this frame that we also value interdisciplinarity in theory and method alike. To this end, we also encourage you to give more attention to a specific theoretical framework and methodology relevant to your area of specialization; however, this interest in the specific area should flower in conjunction with the general profile and goals of social theory.

## The Manual

The comprehensive exam is a crucial milestone in your PhD journey. It is designed to assess your mastery of the core concepts and theories in Sociology, as well as your ability to apply them to

various empirical and analytical problems. The exam also evaluates your readiness to conduct original and rigorous research and your general disciplinary knowledge of Sociology.

The exam consists of two parts: written exams and an oral exam. Written exams are designed to assess the students' knowledge of the core areas of sociology and their ability to apply sociological theories and methods to various topics. The oral exam is designed to evaluate the students' ability to defend their written answers and to demonstrate their critical thinking and communication skills.

The written exams consist of two parts in consecutive days: first the theory exam and the following day the methodology exam. The committee will consist of three faculty members from the Sociology department, and 2 external faculty members. The written exams are based on a list of readings that covers a wide range of topics in Sociology. You are expected to read and understand all the readings on the list, and be prepared to answer any questions related to them. In written exams, you will have to choose and answer from given elective questions, and show how your answer relates to the broader sociological perspective.

The students will have six hours to complete each of the written exams. They will have to write clear, concise, and well-organized essays that demonstrate their understanding of the concepts, arguments, and evidence presented in the readings and lectures.

The expectations of the Sociology department for the written exams are as follows:

- The students should demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of the core areas of sociology and their chosen specialization.
- The students should be able to apply sociological theories and methods to analyze various social phenomena and problems.
- The students should be able to compare and contrast different perspectives and approaches within sociology and across disciplines.
- The students should be able to synthesize and evaluate existing literature and empirical evidence on a given topic.
- The students should be able to communicate their ideas effectively in writing, using clear language, logical structure, coherent arguments, and proper citations.

The oral exam will take place just after the written exams, only one day break in between. Only those who pass the written exams will take the oral exam. The oral exam committee will be the same with the written exams committee. The oral exam will focus on the questions and answers from your written exam and reading list that the department provides. The oral exam will last for about two hours for each student.

In this part of the comprehensive exam, the committee will ask you to clarify, elaborate, or defend your answers, as well as to demonstrate your knowledge of the relevant literature. Also, the committee will evaluate:

- The student's general knowledge of sociology and their chosen specialization, including relevant theories, concepts, debates, and empirical findings.
- The student's critical thinking and communication skills, including their ability to articulate their arguments, respond to questions, and defend their position.

To pass the comprehensive exam, you will need to score at least 70% on average of the written and oral exams. If you fail any of the exams, you will have one opportunity to retake it the next semester. If you fail the second attempt, you will be dismissed from the PhD program.

The comprehensive exam is a challenging but rewarding experience that will prepare you for your dissertation research and your future career as a sociologist. We encourage you to study hard, consult with your advisor and peers, and practice your writing and presentation skills. We wish you all the best in your comprehensive exam!