GUIDELINES FOR PH.D. PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS
(all students admitted prior to Fall 2017)
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

NOTE TO STUDENTS: PLEASE READ THESE GUIDELINES VERY CAREFULLY.
AFTER EACH EXAM SITTING, YOU WILL BE ASKED TO SIGN THE BOTTOM OF THE
COVER SHEET TO YOUR EXAM, INDICATING THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED AND
HAVE READ THESE GUIDELINES. YOU WILL RECEIVE THESE GUIDELINES VIA
EMAIL BEFORE THE EXAM.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:
1. A faculty proctor will be present for each exam sitting and they will be responsible for handing out and
collecting all copies of the exam questions, cover sheets, prelim guidelines, etc. A faculty monitor will be in
charge of assigning all exam takers with a unique identification number so that members of the grading
committee are unaware of students’ identities while grading. Neither you nor the committee will know your
identification number. Faculty proctors and the faculty monitor are appointed by the Director of Graduate
Studies. YOU MUST TYPE THE ANSWER IN TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT 12 TO CONCEAL YOUR
IDENTITY.
2. Do not put your name anywhere on your answer. You will attach a cover sheet to your exam with your name
on it. As you begin each exam sitting, put the date at the top of the first page and number your pages.
3. Begin your answer by writing out the question that you are attempting to answer. It makes it easier for the
graders.
4. You will receive scrap paper for outlining your answers or taking notes as you type, but you will turn in all of
your notes with your exam answer at the end of the exam sitting.
5. If you have any questions about the exam while writing the exam, please talk to the faculty proctor.

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IMPORTANT:
1. YOU MAY NOT ACCESS ANY OTHER FILE ON THE COMPUTER DURING THE EXAM.
2. YOU MAY NOT ACCESS THE INTERNET DURING THE EXAM.
3. YOU MAY NOT USE ANY KIND OF CELL PHONE OR LISTEN TO AN IPOD DURING THE EXAM.
4. YOU MAY NOT ACCESS ANY NOTES OR BOOKS DURING THE EXAM.
5. Do not have any identifying information in your file that will appear when printing.
6. SAVE YOUR WORK FREQUENTLY ON THE FLASH DRIVE PROVIDED. ALSO SAVE IT ON THE
HARD DRIVE WHILE YOU ARE WRITING. WHENEVER THE MACHINES IN THE LAB REBOOT THEY
ERASE ALL FILES! AFTER YOU TURN IN YOUR ANSWER AT THE END OF THE EXAM SITTING, YOU
WILL BE ASKED TO ERASE ANY FILES YOU CREATED FROM THE HARD DRIVE. When saving to the
flash drive, you are allowed to give your file a unique name, as you will use the same flash drive for all your
answers. Be sure to save each answer with a separate name through the three exam periods. You will turn in your
flash drive at the end of each exam sitting and then receive your flash drive back when you begin the next exam
sitting. At the conclusion of the exam, you will turn in your flash drive for one final time. The Department will keep
the files on your flash drive until grading is completed. After grading is completed and exam results have been
announced, then all flash drives will be erased.
7. When you have completed each exam sitting, you will print out 2 copies of your answer and attach the cover
sheet to one of the two copies.
   Turn in one printed copy with the cover sheet attached to the faculty proctor.
   Turn in your flash drive to the proctor.
   Turn in your notes to the faculty proctor.
   After you have printed your answer, erase everything on the hard drive.
   You will keep the second printed copy of your answer and the exam questions after each exam sitting.
STUDENTS TAKING DEPARTMENTAL PRELIMINARY EXAMS MUST READ THESE PROCEDURES BEFORE COMMENCING THE EXAM. FACULTY INVOLVED WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THESE EXAMS MUST READ THESE PROCEDURES PRIOR TO DEVELOPING THE EXAM, AS WELL AS DURING ITS ADMINISTRATION AND GRADING.

MAKING UP OF EXAMS:
1. Specialty area committees shall meet to develop the questions for the exams.
2. The exams shall be written a minimum of one week prior to its scheduled administration.
3. Committee Chairs (for the Medical, Sex/Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Urban, and Labor areas) shall make up the final draft of the exam after consulting with all members of the grading committees for each exam area.
4. Committee Chairs shall forward the final draft of their exam to the Director of Graduate Studies at least one week before its scheduled administration.
5. The Director of Graduate Studies will make sure that all copies of the exam have been made and are ready the day of the exam. These copies will be given to the faculty proctor for each exam sitting.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE EXAM:
1. A member of the Department will serve as Faculty Monitor for the exams. The Faculty Monitor will be someone who is not a member of any grading committee during this round of exams. A faculty monitor will be in charge of assigning all exam takers with a unique identification number so that members of the grading committee are unaware of students’ identities while grading. No one except for the faculty monitor will know students’ identification numbers.
2. A Faculty Proctor, appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies, will be in the exam room at all times. This proctor will be responsible for monitoring student conduct, and for enforcing examination rules during the exam.
3. The proctor will instruct students where to sit during the exam.
4. The proctor may ask any student to move at any time during the exam.
5. The proctor will have discretion about letting students leave the exam room to use restroom facilities.
6. The proctor may answer student questions during the exam, as long as the proctor does not provide information that might help students answer exam questions.
7. The proctor shall maintain student anonymity at all times.
8. The proctor will make sure that the exam begins promptly at its designated time, and ends promptly at the end of the two hour sitting.
9. At the conclusion of the exam, the proctor shall collect the exams and flash drives and turn them over to the Faculty Monitor, for assignment of the numbers. The proctor will collect the student’s notes and will make sure that anything on the hard drive has been erased.
PROCEDURES DURING THE TAKING OF THE EXAMS:

1. All exams occur at the same time each semester. Currently exams are given each January and August (twice a year). They are typically given one or two weeks prior to the start of classes. Students cannot take exams unless they have completed all required PhD coursework. Students must talk with their advisors about whether they are ready to take the exams, or if they should wait until the next exam sitting.

2. Students taking the exam must have filled out a Prelim Application Form at least one month prior to taking the exam. This form must be signed by the student’s advisor, the chair of the exam specialty area, and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who fail to complete this application form will not be permitted to take the exam. Students should notify the chair of the exam committee in writing 24 hours prior to the exam date if they decide not to take the exam.

3. All students now write the exams directly onto the computer in a computer lab. Students who are unable to do so for whatever reasons should consult Section 9 below.

4. These are NOT open-book exams. Students may not bring any study materials or test-taking materials (e.g., books, notes, paper, computer flash drives, or materials of any other type) into the exam area. Coats, other items of apparel, purses and book bags will be placed in locations apart from the students’ seats. No electronic or mechanical devices (iPods, iPads, laptops, cell phones, calculators, etc.) are permitted.

5. Students may not look at exams, answers, or scratch paper (or any other material) belonging to other students, during an exam. The proctor will be watching for these behaviors.

6. Any questions about the conduct of the exam or any question of clarification (regarding the exam content) must be directed to the proctor only. The proctor will decide whether to respond to the question, and whether to share the response with the other students. No talking will be permitted among students at any time, irrespective of the purpose or topic.

7. A student shall not initiate any communication whatsoever concerning the exam to any member of the grading committee following the conclusion of the exam, until the chair of the grading committee informs the student of the results of the exam. Any communication, no matter how innocuous, might influence the grading of the exam and lead to unfair advantage or disadvantage.

8. Once a student receives the exam question during the first exam sitting, he or she will be considered as participating in the exam and the exam will be graded.

9. Students who need special physical arrangements for taking the exams must consult the Director of Graduate Studies ahead of the exam’s scheduled administration, to learn the university procedures which must be followed. Special accommodations can be made if a student has physical or emotional conditions that are not conducive to the typical exam format. However, it is essential that these accommodations be worked out in advance.

10. The answers will be identified by an identifying number. Each student will have a unique number for each question they answer, assigned by the Faculty Monitor (see above for a description of the Administration of the Exam). Students’ names will not appear on the exams. Anonymity of each student will be maintained at ALL times.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

1. Students will be identified only by number once the exam answers have been turned in.

2. Graders will not know the identity of the student until after the grading process has been completed. Students will not know the number assigned to each of their answers.
3. The Faculty Monitor will be responsible for assigning the numbers and maintaining the confidentiality of the exam process.

4. Students will submit their computer flash drives, written notes or outlines, and typed copies of the exams TO THE PROCTOR at the end of each exam sitting. Notes will be destroyed. The flash drives and printed answers will be turned over to the Faculty Monitor as soon as the exam sitting is over. Students will keep a printed copy of their answers.

**GRADING OF EXAMS:**

1. Members of the grading committees shall complete the grading of the exams within one month of the date of the exam (hopefully within the few weeks right after the exam). Every attempt will be made to grade exams quickly. Vacation days and holidays shall not count in the determination of the time frame, however.

2. Grades are to be assigned to each individual question, and then calculated for students’ exam as a whole.

3. Once the grading of each exam answer has been completed, the chair of each grading committee shall call a meeting of the grading committee. Grades on each individual question will be solidified before the committee members know the identity of the students taking the exam.

4. Once the grading of individual questions has been completed by the grading committee, the Faculty Monitor will notify the chair of each grading committee of the identity of the students’ answers, and the grades for students’ entire exams will be assigned.

5. To "pass" the exam in full, students must receive a passing grade on all three answers (i.e., a "B" grade or above on all three answers). Students may be given a "provisional pass" if they receive passing grades on two of the three exam answers. In the case of a provisional pass, students will come back for the next exam sitting and retake the portion of the exam that they failed. If student fail the question that they are retaking, then they must sit for the entire exam again at a future exam time. Students who do not receive passing grades on two or more of their exam answers receive a "failure" for the entire exam, and must sit for the entire exam again at a future exam time. See the "Committees and Voting" section below for further explanation of grading policies.

6. All students in the Department of Sociology receive two chances to pass the exam in full. To remain in good academic standing in the Department, students should pass the exam during their first exam sitting.

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND VOTING:**

1. All grading committees should have an odd number of members in order to facilitate fair grading practices.

2. Committees may conduct business with a quorum present. A quorum of the committee shall be 2/3. Graders may participate by speaker phone or conference call if necessary.

3. A majority vote of the committee shall be required to pass or fail each student’s answer, as well as the exam as a whole.

3. Grades (both for the exam as a whole and for individual questions) shall be: Pass, Provisional Pass, and Fail.

4. A student may be given a grade of "Provisional Pass" if one of the answers is graded as "Fail." In this case, however, the remaining two answers must be graded as "Pass."
5. A "Provisional Pass" requires that the student retake that portion of the exam the next time it is offered.

6. No student may receive a "Provisional Pass" if a grade of less than "Pass" has been achieved on TWO of their exam answers. In summary:
   a. Students pass the exam if they receive a passing grade on all three exam answers. A passing grade is a B or higher.
   b. Students fail the exam if they receive a failing grade (B- or less) on two or three exam answers.
   c. Students receive a provisional pass if they receive a passing grade on two answers and a failing grade on the third answer.

SOCIOMY DEPARTMENTAL POLICY ON REWRITING EXAM QUESTIONS:
The requirements for receiving a grade of "Provisional Pass" were altered by the Graduate Committee during the 2006-2007 academic year. These changes take two forms:
   1. Students may no longer receive a "Provisional Pass" if two questions have been graded as "Fail."
   2. Students who receive "Provisional Pass" grades on their Prelims are no longer permitted to fulfill the requirement by writing a paper. They must now retake the section of the exam in which they did not receive a grade of "Pass" at the next time the exam is offered.

STUDENT SANCTIONS:
1. If a student fails to obey any of the above rules, or fails to obey any instruction or request of the proctor, the proctor has the discretion to recommend a failing grade on the exam. The proctor must provide a written report on the transgression to the chair of the appropriate grading committee, to the Director of Graduate Studies, and to the Department Chair.
2. These rules supplement the University's Student Due Process Policy. Students must be notified of Departmental decisions regarding alleged academic dishonesty according to the Due Process Policy. Students have the right to appeal Departmental decisions according to the Due Process Policy.
3. Students who violate any of the above rules, or compromise the integrity of the examination process in any way, shall receive a grade of "Fail" on the entire exam, and shall not be permitted to retake the exam for one year.

FACULTY SANCTIONS:
Faculty who violate these rules (such as tardiness in grading the exams or assisting students in compromising the integrity of the exam) shall be barred from serving on a preliminary exam committee for one year.

MAINTENANCE OF THESE RULES:
Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining the rules implied in the above process, i.e., for insuring that books or notes are not used, that computers have been cleared of material that could compromise the exam, that confidentiality is maintained, and so on. A COPY OF THESE RULES SHALL BE PROVIDED TO FACULTY PROCTORs AND TO STUDENTS BEFORE EACH ROUND OF EXAMS.