

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SOCI 4010A Graduation Thesis I**  
**Course Outline**

First Term, 2021/22  
Thursdays 9:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.  
Venue: SB 239

*Teacher:* Prof. Nicole Wai Ting CHEUNG  
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**Course Description**

Graduation Thesis is a seminar-based, required course for the four-year curriculum and is intended for the final year students. This is a two-term course (SOCI 4010A & 4020A) and students are expected to conduct research in small groups under the supervision of faculty members. As a capstone course, the objective is to help students integrate their sociology knowledge and research skills. At the end of the second semester, students should complete a research paper in a form similar to an academic journal article.

**Organization**

Group projects are advised, as time and resources can be tight and limited to complete a research study in two semesters. Students will be divided into small groups consisting of 2 to 6 students, and each group will complete a group research paper. Students in the same group should work on a common thesis topic. This will facilitate cooperation and discussion among group members. Students can suggest their interested sociological thesis topics, which are not necessarily related to the thesis supervisor's research areas and teaching interests. As to methodology, the selection of quantitative versus qualitative approach hinges on students' choices, research questions and feasibility.

**Final Thesis**

The research paper should be written in English and follow the format of an academic journal article (American Sociological Review or American Journal of Sociology format). The length of the paper may vary by the number of students authoring the article. Assuming double spacing, Times New Roman font, size 12 pitch and 1-inch margin on A4 paper, I recommend no less than 30 pages for a group paper by 5 to 6 students, 25 pages by 2 to 4 students, and 20 pages for an individual paper. The length indicated here does not embrace references and appendices.

**Teaching Mode**

All classes of this seminar-based course in Term 1 will be conducted face-to-face, unless otherwise announced by the University.

Contingency: If the University announces online teaching due to the pandemic, meeting will

then be conducted via Zoom. In this case, students are required to use their full English name on Zoom for ease of identification and attendance taking.

### **Assessments of Term 1**

#### **1. Preliminary literature review prepared for consultation session (15%)**

In the first semester, each group should have good understanding of their field of study and research direction, so it is essential to start with literature review. The ultimate goal of literature review is to identify research gaps, which would then become or be connected to the research question(s), and to illuminate the selection of theoretical framework to analyze the research question(s).

#### **2. Proposal presentation (25%)**

Students will present their proposals in the last meeting of the first semester. Similarly, each group should prepare PPT in English for proposal presentation, yet this time there is no need to submit the PPT.

#### **3. Written proposal (60%)**

Each group is required to submit a full version of proposal in English (no more than 13 double-spaced A4 pages with 1 inch for all margins, Times New Roman font, size 12 pitch, and including the reference section).

The proposal should contain introduction of research question(s), literature review to identify research gaps, preliminary theoretical framework, and methodology. Students are expected to put effort into the proposal because a well-conceived proposal would constitute certain parts of the final thesis and facilitate the ensuing phase of data collection and interpretation.