



2022-23 Social and Behavioral Sciences PhD-PHS Curriculum Guide

Introduction

The Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) field of study in the Population Health Sciences (PHS) PhD program provides a common core education addressing issues of Social and Behavioral Sciences. PhD students enroll in coursework and develop expertise in *social determinants of health* which emphasizes the analysis of the major social conditions that affect the health of populations as well as *planned social change* which focuses on the application of theory in the design of intervention programs, as well as on research and evaluation methodology. The program is designed to train researchers in these two areas of study, to understand how they might intersect, and to bring this expertise to their research careers.

SBS Doctoral Competencies

1. Critically assess, integrate, and apply behavioral & social theories and conceptual paradigms to the design of basic and applied inquiries, with specific attention to:

- The role of social determinants in health outcomes and health disparities
- The historical, political, social and cultural context

2. Formulate social and behavioral change interventions based on these theories that are appropriate and responsive to the social and cultural context

3. Critically assess and apply principles of research, evaluation, and public health monitoring/surveillance methodology, including quantitative and qualitative methods, to address research hypotheses using a range of research designs. It is expected that students will:

- Identify, access, manage and apply a range of data sources to support scientific inquiry
- Apply rigorous approaches to measurement of social and behavioral constructs, including disparities
- Apply rigorous methods to the assessment of community assets and systems and the measurement and monitoring of population health and health inequities

4. Understand and apply knowledge of biology relevant to public health and the influence of lifespan factors, to health outcomes



5. Understand and apply rigorous, theory-based approaches to research translation for practice, policy, and public health settings, including communication with policy makers, civil society organizations, and the lay public

6. Develop advanced professional skills, including:

- Demonstrate skill in the review, synthesis and critique of research literature
- Attain familiarity with social inclusion, diversity, social justice, and ethical principles in research and interventions

PHS PhD Core Requirements

Year 1

- PHS 2000 A + Lab*, 4 GSAS ordinal credits
- PHS 2000 B + Lab*, 4 GSAS ordinal credits
- SBS 506, 2 GSAS ordinal credits
- EPI 201 + Lab, 2 GSAS ordinal credits
- EPI 202 + Lab, 2 GSAS ordinal credits

Subsequent years

- RCR – Responsible Conduct of Research: Year One or Year Two
- TF – Teaching Fellowship: Years Two – Four (and Five if needed)

****Note on PHS 2000 Course Timing & Experience***

PHS2000A and B are required and most students will take them in the first year. However, for those without substantial previous biostatistics background, the option exists to take PHS2000A and B the second year and to take a more basic biostatistics course (e.g. BST201, BST210) the first year.

The deadline to add/drop fall courses with the GSAS Registrar’s Office is Monday, September 19, 2022. We encourage students to discuss their experience in the first three weeks of the course with the course instructors and with their advisors if they feel that they may want to drop the course, and we will support those students in finding alternative course options to further prepare for PHS 2000 A/B in the 2023 fall semester.



Social and Behavioral Sciences Field of Study Requirements:

The required coursework for doctoral students in Social and Behavioral Sciences field of study are divided into three categories: a) required courses for all Population Health Sciences PhD students; b) Field of Study Core course requirements c) course requirements to develop specific competencies. The following section outlines the requirements specific to the Social and Behavioral Sciences field of study. General requirements for the Population Health Sciences PhD program are covered in the PHS Curriculum Guide.

Field of Study Core course requirements

20 total ORDINAL credits:

All Population Health Sciences PhD students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences field of Study are required to take the following field of study core courses which, along with the PHS core courses, form the basis for the content of the written field of study qualifying exam:

Year 1

- *SBS 201*, Society and Health, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- *SBS 507*, An Advanced Seminar in Theories of Disease Distribution & Health Inequities: History, Politics & Public Health, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- *SBS 522*, Multi-Level Theoretical Approaches to Health Behavior, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits

Year 2

- *SBS 245*, Social and Behavioral Research Methods, 4 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- *SBS 263*, Multilevel Statistical Methods: Concept & Application, 4 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- *SBS 500*, Developing a Research Protocol, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- *SBS 523*, Advanced Intervention Evaluation Methods, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits
- Human Biology, Ecology and Physiology*, 2 GSAS ORDINAL credits (course chosen in consultation with your advisor from the options below) *The human biology course may be taken in Fall of the third year.

Human Biology, Ecology and Physiology:

Students may take at least 2 credits of the following options or petition for a different course with advisor's guidance and via the [SBS Course Substitution Form](#).

- **ID 220: An Introduction to Planetary Health (2 credits)**
- **HBTM 200: Pathology of Human Disease (2 credits)**
- **BPH 210: Pathophysiology of Human Disease (same as EH 208, 2 credits)**
- **BPH 208: Human Physiology (same as EH 205, 4 credits)**



Additional Field of Study Requirements - 16 total ORDINAL credits - specific courses should be chosen in consultation with your academic advisor

- 8 GSAS credits intermediate or advanced research methods (see approved list of courses below)
- 2 GSAS credits in policy, sociology, or social science
- 6 GSAS credits in your chosen area of expertise - All doctoral students in the SBS field of study are expected to augment the basic requirements with substantial course work appropriate for a research orientation and in the topic of their interest.

Intermediate or Advanced Research Methods courses

In addition to **any upper level BST or EPI course at HSPH**, the following courses may be counted toward the intermediate/advanced research methods courses (5 credits need to be taken at HSPH.)

- API 114 & 115: Econometric methods for applied research 1&2
- ECON 2150: Econometrics II
- EDU S010B: Designing Surveys and Questionnaires: Principles and Methods
- EDU S010C: Large-Scale Data Analysis for Complex and Weighted Survey Designs
- EDU S032: Accumulating Evidence: How to Conduct a Meta-Analysis that Informs Ed Research, Policy, and Practice
- EDU 2043: Multilevel and Longitudinal Methods
- EDU S052: Intermediate and Advanced Statistical Methods for Applied Educational Research
- EDU S061: Statistical and Psychometric Methods for Educational Measurement
- EDU S090: A1 Structural Equation Modeling
- GHP 525: Econometrics for Health Policy
- PSY 2030: Bayesian Data Analysis
- GHP228: Econometrics Methods in Impact Evaluation
- EDU A164: Program Evaluation and Education Policy
- STAT 140: Design of Experiments
- STAT 293/393: Design of Experimental and Non-experimental Studies
- GOV 2798: Field Experiments for Policy and Program Evaluation
- SOCIOL 2275: Social Network Analysis: Seminar

Electives

Students are required to enroll in additional elective courses to fulfill the degree requirement of 2 years [64 credits] of full-time course work.

Course times and days may change from year to year. Be sure to refer to the courses and schedules on my.harvard for the most up-to-date information.

Note: There are six optional concentrations available to students in the Social and Behavioral Sciences field of study: *Maternal and Child Health/Children, Youth and Families Concentration, Health Communications Concentration, Obesity Epidemiology and Prevention Interdisciplinary Concentration, Public Health Leadership*



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Interdisciplinary Concentration, Women, Gender and Health Interdisciplinary Concentration and Nutrition and Global Health Concentration. Courses in these concentrations may be taken as electives.



Course Plan for SBS Field of Study PhD Students

The doctoral program is designed to move students through coursework and into the research phase with due speed.

- By the end of the first semester of study, all students in the doctoral program will have prepared a plan of required and elective courses for first two years of coursework.
- During your final year of coursework (normally your 2nd year), ***you should meet with your advisor before the start of the spring semester to confirm that you have met or are meeting all of the degree requirements.*** Any appropriate waivers should be requested at that time.
- A written field of study qualifying examination (PQE 1) is taken immediately following the completion of the second year of coursework
- An oral preliminary qualifying examination (PQE2) is taken within 6 months of the successfully passing the written field of study qualifying examination (PQE1)

Students who satisfactorily complete these requirements become doctoral candidates and proceed to conduct original research and prepare and defend their dissertation.

PHS-SBS Timetable

Prospective Program Form	Due end of 2 nd semester
Tracking Sheet	Due beginning of 4 th semester
Written Qualifying Exam (PQE 1)	End of 4 th semester (all coursework must be completed)
Final Program Form	Due early in the 5 th semester (following successful completion of the written exam)
Oral Qualifying Exam (PQE2) Scheduling Form	By middle of 5 th semester
Oral Qualifying exam (PQE2)	By end of the 5 th semester
Dissertation Advisory Committee Nomination Form	One month after successful completion of Oral Exam
Progress Report Form (must be submitted at least four times a year until thesis defense)	3 months after passing oral exam (Note: you must have at least one post orals committee meeting prior to scheduling your defense)
Dissertation Advisory Declaration Defense Scheduling Form	Due at least 3 weeks in advance of defense date.

More detailed information on SBS doctoral milestones can be found in the Procedures & Guidelines document:

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/social-and-behavioral-sciences/sbs-curriculum-guide/>



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