

# Doctoral Course Descriptions

## **SASS 608. Philosophy of Science and Theory Building. 3 Units.**

This is a required foundation course. The nature of theory is examined. Inductive and deductive methods for knowledge building are reviewed. Course content draws from philosophy of science as well as empirical and phenomenological research.

## **SASS 612. Evaluative Research. 3 Units.**

This is an advanced research methods course focusing on the techniques and principles of evaluation research. Emphasis will be on methods of evaluation and research design, instrument development, and data collection techniques within a public/applied setting. Additionally, students will become familiar with the policy implications and consequences of evaluation research. Focus will be placed on using evaluative research to build students' scholarship/research careers.

## **SASS 613. Advanced Research Design. 3 Units.**

This foundation course in research methods is required of all students. It is a prerequisite to the quantitative and qualitative courses. Topics covered include operationalization of variables, threats to validity, and experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental research design.

## **SASS 614. Models of Qualitative Research. 3 Units.**

This required course introduces students to the principles, approaches, methods, and analytical techniques utilized when conducting qualitative research in the social sciences. Five models of qualitative research design and methodology are studied, including narrative analysis, case study, ethnography, and grounded theory and phenomenology. This course is designed to provide students with the tools to critically evaluate as well as to enhance the academic rigor or "quality" of qualitative data. Prereq: [SASS 608](#) and [SASS 613](#).

## **SASS 615. Social Statistics and Data Analysis. 3 Units.**

This foundation course (or its equivalent) is required of all students. Content includes univariate, bivariate and inferential statistics, and the use of electronic data processing technology to manage and analyze data.

## **SASS 616. Applied Regression and the Linear Model. 3 Units.**

This is a required course in the research methods sequence for MSASS doctoral students. At the end of this course, students will be able to apply ordinary least squares regression and logistic regression in the analysis of social science data. They will learn to formulate research questions and hypotheses, specify statistical models, carry out the appropriate analyses, interpret their findings, and communicate their results clearly and effectively. Prereq: [SASS 613](#) and [SASS 615](#).

**SASS 618. Measurement Issues in Quantitative Research. 3 Units.**

This required course covers the operationalization of social science concepts and development of methods for their measurement. Issues covered include index and scale construction, validity, reliability, questionnaire design, factor analysis, measurement error, and missing data.

Prereq: [SASS 613](#) and [SASS 615](#).

**SASS 619. Structural Equation Modeling. 3 Units.**

This advanced-level, elective statistics course focuses on the family of analytical techniques referred to as structural equation modeling (SEM). SEM covers both measurement models (e.g., confirmatory factor analysis) and structural models. The course covers theoretical and methodological considerations and preliminary data screening necessary to ascertain whether SEM would be an appropriate technique; terminology and notation specific to SEM; statistical assumptions and strategies for assessing and remedying possible violations; use of SEM to conduct confirmatory factor analysis; use of SEM to test structural models, including mediation models; advanced models (e.g., multiple-group, longitudinal, dyadic, to be determined by student interests); how to critique SEM analyses and identify common problems; statistical power; and best practices for reporting SEM analyses and results. AMOS will be used to conduct the SEM analyses and SPSS to conduct preliminary analyses. The course uses a combination of readings, class discussion, lecture, written assignments, and hands-on computer labs.

Prereq: [SASS 613](#), [SASS 615](#), [SASS 616](#) and [SASS 618](#).

**SASS 622. Mixed Methods in Social Science Research. 3 Units.**

This course will provide advanced skills to rigorously "mix" quantitative and qualitative methods and analytic techniques using didactic sessions with in-class laboratory sessions to achieve two aims. First, students will be introduced to the application of the approaches, methodological designs, and analytic techniques used in mixed methods research in the social sciences. Second, students will apply "integration," the quintessential component of mixed methods research, through experiential or application-based learning opportunities related to methodological designs and analytic techniques. Students will work with real data in the application of "integration" and develop skills to navigate the complex work of mixing methods. The course will focus on an introduction to: 1) approaches in mixed methods research, 2) the three core mixed methods designs and related analytic techniques, 3) application of "integration" in methods, analysis, and interpretation, and 4) complex mixed methods designs in the social sciences. This course is designed to be flexible to students' learning journeys and does not require the completion of any prior courses in quantitative or qualitative analysis; however, students need to have completed at least one research methods course to be eligible for the class. Prereq: [SASS 613](#).

**SASS 623. Research Synthesis & Systematic Review Methodology. 3 Units.**

This course will provide advanced skill development of systematic review methodology and will combine didactic sessions with in-class laboratory sessions where students will be taught how to perform each step in a review. Students will conduct their own systematic review resulting in a final product of a systematic literature review manuscript that is ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. The purpose of this course is to (1) develop student's methodological skills in how to

conduct a systematic literature review and (2) train students on how to analyze, integrate, and synthesize a body of literature. By the end of the course, students should have achieved the following objectives: -Identify a suitable research topic for the preparation of a systematic review - Systematically search and identify literature -Code and collect data from identified studies - Analyze and interpret patterns of evidence across studies -Write about the body of literature in an integrated and synthesized manner -Present systematic literature review findings in a manuscript format ready for submission to a peer-reviewed journal Students who wish to take this course as a Fellowship Course must follow the School of Graduate Studies policy and submit an application (<http://case.edu/gradstudies/currentstudents/forms/>). This application requires permission of the instructor, the student's faculty advisor, and the School of Graduate Studies. Students taking the course as a Fellowship Course are expected to meet all course requirements and prerequisites. Prereq: [SASS 613](#).

**SASS 630. Seminar on Social Work Education. 3 Units.**

This required seminar examines the structure and content of social work education within the context of higher education in American society. Emphasis is placed on curriculum design and course development. The course also is designed to help students develop a strategic approach to teaching based on learning theory. Finally, attention is given to current issues and future directions for social work education.

**SASS 631. Job Seekers Seminar. 1 - 3 Units.**

This dynamically dated seminar is designed to prepare doctoral students for a successful academic job search. The course objectives include: Obtaining knowledge about where to find academic job postings and how to determine appropriate fit; understanding the job search process; developing application materials; practicing mock interviews and mock job talks; and, developing a strategy for a successful first year as a professor. Prereq: Advanced to Candidacy.

**SASS 637. Individual Reading. 1 - 9 Units.**

This is an elective individual reading course permitting students to select areas of interest and pursue these interests with specific faculty.

**SASS 638. Integrative Seminar: Research Development for Social Welfare Scholars. 1 Unit.**

Social work is, historically, an inclusive and diverse discipline that draws from multiple traditions to focus scholarship and research to address social justice and social change. The field of social work is in a period of critical self-reflection, strategy-setting (e.g. the Grand Challenges), and transformation. Developing scholars of social welfare will enter into an increasingly transdisciplinary research landscape that requires training opportunities that align with trends in the field, including capacity and readiness to engage in team science, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams, translations of research evidence to policy, and partnerships with multiple stakeholders. The purpose of this year-long integrative seminar is to provide a forum for developing social welfare scholars to engage in an active learning community across cohorts. The community is designed to actively engage in developing dimensions of social welfare researchers that are common to all of us, although we have varied research aims, populations, change goals, and disciplinary and/or system/community partners. The seminar uses a range of formats (e.g. invited

speakers, discussion panels, and student working sessions) and is designed to offer flexible responsiveness to challenges that doctoral students are experiencing, and beyond the normative bounds of standing courses or project activities. This course is purposefully cross-cohort, from first year students through dissertation active students. The aim is to foster a sense of collegiality, peer mentorship, and doctoral student community.

**SASS 639. Independent Study for Early Teaching Support. 0 Unit.**

Doctoral candidates are required to complete [SASS 630](#): Seminar on Social Work Education in fall semester of the second year, and during that semester or immediately following, to complete a non-credit teaching mentorship with a full-time faculty. Following the mentorship and with judged readiness to teach independently, the student will request that the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs assign the student an undergraduate or graduate course to teach independently. This course is designed to be taken concurrently with the candidate's independent teaching experiences. In rare instances, and with permission of the Chair of the Doctoral Program (or permission of the instructor), it may be taken prior to or concurrently with [SASS 630](#). The course is offered in fall and spring. The course may be repeated during the candidate's first three teaching experiences for students entering Fall 2016, or later.

**SASS 644. Critical Theories in Social Welfare. 3 Units.**

This doctoral seminar focuses on the nature and role of theory in contemporary social welfare research and policy, informed by a central commitment to social justice and multiculturalism. It provides foundations in the socially constructed nature of theory and social 'problems' and in historical changes in conceptual and theoretical perspectives on human society, interactions, and policy in the social realm. Domains of interest encompass a range of theoretical perspectives and provide the opportunity for exploring the theoretical and meta-theoretical assumptions and models that frame social welfare and social science scholarship, research, and policy. The overarching goal of this course is to help you develop a working knowledge of how theory, including metatheoretical assumptions and mid-level 'explanatory' theories shape social welfare and social science scholarship, research, and policy. Reviewing, critiquing, refining, and integrating theories is central to this process and thus we will devote much of the course to these tasks. Also central to this process is the linking of 'levels of theory' (i.e. metatheoretical assumptions; grand theory; and mid-level 'explanatory' theory) to the applied, i.e. contemporary social work practice and social welfare policy. To this end, the major assignment provides students with the opportunity for in-depth study of theoretical developments in a social welfare research domain of personal interest. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on critical thinking, collegial engagement, and the conventions of formal scholarly practice.

**SASS 701. Dissertation Ph.D.. 1 - 9 Units.**

This course is intended for students who have passed the qualifying examination and are actively working on their dissertation. Prereq: Predoctoral research consent or advanced to Ph.D. candidacy milestone.