

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HONOURS PROGRAMME (AUG 2023 – APR 2024)

**A**     **GENERAL**

**1. Eligibility for Honours track**

Students from cohort 2016 to 2020 must have completed 110 units, including 44 units in the Major, with a GPA of 3.2 and above.

**2. Coursework requirements for Honours students**

- a. All Honours students must read **8** Sociology courses in their Honours year.
- b. Students can choose to read either all 8 at level-4000 or a combination of level-4000 courses and a maximum of two level-5000 courses (subject to department's approval).
- c. Students who do not read the Honours Thesis will read other level-4000 courses to fulfill the Honours Requirements.
- d. Students may read SC4660 Independent Studies Module (5 units) if they have completed 100 units, including 60 units in the Major, with a minimum GPA of 3.2 at the point of registration.
- e. SC4401 is a preclusion of SC4660 and vice-versa. Students can read either SC4401 or SC4660, **not both**.
- f. Most level-4000 courses have a general pre-requisite of 80 units, including 28 units in the Major, with a minimum GPA of 3.2 OR be on the Honours Track (some Level-4000 courses may have additional pre-requisites).

**3. Eligibility for SC4401 Honours Thesis (Cohort 2016 to 2020)**

- a. Honours students in the 2016 to 2020 cohort who have completed 110 units including 44 units of SC major requirements with a minimum SGPA of 4.00 and GPA of 3.5. Those who have a minimum GPA of 4.25 and completed 110 units may seek a waiver of the SGPA pre-requisite from the department.
- b. Honours Thesis (15 units) is optional.

**4. Registration for SC4401 Honours Thesis / SC4660 Independent Study**

Students are to ensure that they register for the course during the pre-allocation phase of course registration prior to the commencement of the respective semesters. An email will be sent to students regarding this.

**5. Plagiarism**

Please refer to the NUS Acceptance Record (NUS Student Code of Conduct) at <https://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

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**B**     SC4660 INDEPENDENT COURSE (ISC)

**1. About the course**

The ISC offers an opportunity for students to do something they are personally interested in and is meaningful to them. The ISC paper is not an Honours thesis. It is best conceptualised as an extended term paper. Still, students have to propose their own topics to the supervisors of their choice and engage in some research work.

**2. Registration for ISC**

Students are to ensure that they register for the course during the pre-allocation phase of course registration prior to the commencement of the respective semesters. The ISC course can only be undertaken during the final semester before graduation.

**3. Word limit**

The length of the paper does not exceed 5000 words and the supervisor is solely responsible for assessing the written work.

**4. Submission deadlines**

Item	For students graduating in Sem 1 of AY23/24 (Nov 2023)
Submit supervisor's name and ISC working title	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2023
ISC written report to supervisor	3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023

**C**     SC4401 HONOURS THESIS (HT)

**1. About the course**

The HT is a scholarly exercise in which students formulate their own research problems and carry out the research projects themselves. Students can conduct library research, archival work, fieldwork or work with data sets. Students can write a conceptual paper, do ethnography, generate quantitative data for analysis, or conduct interviews with a sample of respondents/informants with regard to their research problem. Students should not employ research assistants for their projects.

**2. Department Ethics Review Committee (DERC)**

Please take note that all research projects involving human subjects (e.g. conduct of interviews, participant observation), **might be** subjected to clearance by the Department's Ethics Review Committee, and if necessary, by the NUS Institutional Review Board (IRB) before commencement of any data-collection.

Please refer to the Guidelines on Research Ethics below for more information. If in doubt, please contact the department at [socbox3@nus.edu.sg](mailto:socbox3@nus.edu.sg).

**3. Supervision & HT topic**

- a. Students are strongly encouraged to propose their own topics and prepare a one page proposal for discussion with their potential supervisors. Please refer to the list of staff, their research interest and areas of expertise.
- b. Supervisors may require that students have taken, or be taking, a particular course in order to be eligible to elect a certain HT topic.
- c. Students are not permitted to work on a joint project or on exactly the same topic.

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**4. Word limit**

Maximum of 12,000 words (excluding endnotes, appendices and bibliography).

**5. Penalties**

- a. Three marks shall be deducted from the final mark of the HT for every additional 1,000 words (or part thereof) exceeding the word limit. Only the main text (excluding the endnotes, appendices, and bibliography) will be counted as part of the word limit. Students are required to indicate the word count (excluding the endnotes, appendices, and bibliography) at the bottom of the last page of the main text.
- b. One mark shall be deducted from the final mark of the HT for each additional day (or part thereof) beyond the deadline.

**6. Grading timelines**

- a. The HT course accounts for 15 units in total for the entire academic year (not 15 units for each semester). Students must forecast their study plan accordingly to ensure that they obtain the sufficient units for graduation. Students can write to the Dean's office to overload for the semester (if necessary)
- b. Students are to note the following grading timelines:

	<b>Semester 1 AY22/23</b>	<b>Semester 2 AY22/23</b>
Weeks 1 to 13	IP (In Progress)	Final Grade
Drop course by last day of Reading Week (Week 14) of 1st semester: (Sunday, 2359hrs)	No HT reflected on record	--
Drop course between first day of Week 15 of 1st semester and last day of Week 2 of 2nd semester: (Monday, 0000hrs – Sunday, 2359hrs)	W	--
Drop after Week 2 of 2nd semester: (Monday, 0000hrs)	--	F

**7. Submission deadlines**

- a. Submit to the Department of Sociology by the final HT submission deadline:
  - i. Submit softcopy through Canvas. The folder will be shared with students after the deadline of the submission of final HT title.

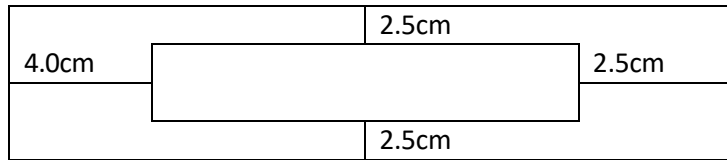
<b>Item</b>	<b>For students graduating in Sem 2 of AY23/24 (Apr 2024)</b>
Submit supervisor's name and HT working title	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2023
Submit final HT title online	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
Submit final HT for grading	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Note: Extension of thesis deadline may be granted only under very special circumstances. An appeal for extension (in writing) must be accompanied by the written support of the Supervisor.**

**8. Format of HT (in PDF)**

- a. **Page size:** Copy of the thesis is to be converted to PDF copy on A4-sized pages (8.27" x 11.69") with white background and black font for the text.
- b. **Margins:** The left margin should be 4.0 cm wide. The top, bottom and right margins should be 2.5 cm wide. Printed on single-sided.

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- c. **Font & spacing:** The text should be typed in letter quality using font size 12 and double-spacing. Long quotations should be indented and single-spaced.
- d. **Sequence of content:** The content of the thesis should be in the following order:
- Title page
  - Acknowledgements
  - Abstract (up to 250 words in double spacing)
  - Table of Contents
  - List of Tables
  - List of Figures
  - List of Illustrations
  - Main body of thesis
  - Bibliography
  - Appendices
- e. **Page numbering:**
- i. Page numbers should be in Arabic numerals and runs consecutively throughout the HT. For the preliminaries --- preface, acknowledgements, table of contents, etc. --page numbering should be in Roman lower-case numerals beginning with "ii" for the page after the title page, which should not be numbered.
  - ii. Page numbers of the first page of each chapter and the preliminaries (preface, acknowledgements, etc) should be in the middle of the bottom margin.
  - iii. Page numbers in the rest of the pages should be positioned at the right-hand corner of the top margin.
  - iv. Endnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout all chapters and should appear on separate pages at the end of the entire text.
- f. **Reference and bibliography listing:**
- i. The bibliography and appendices (in single spacing) should be placed after the endnotes.
  - ii. Tables, figures and maps should have appropriate titles at the top, be numbered consecutively and appear immediately following the text at the first point of reference.
- Please refer to recent issues of the American Sociological Review (ASR) and American Journal of Sociology (AJS) for guidance.

**D SC4401 MEDIA BASED HONOURS THESIS (MHT)**

**1. About the course**

The MHT comprises of two parts:

- a. A media output (e.g., a video ethnography, photographic essay, graphic novel, or short film)\*
- b. An accompanying written text\*\* of approximately 4000 words.

The media output and the accompanying text will constitute 70% and 30% of the effort respectively, and the grading of MHTs will be in accordance to the weightage assigned to these two components.

\*The length/ scope of the media output will be decided with the supervisor/ committee.

\*\*The content of the text will be decided through consultation with the supervisor.

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**2. Eligibility Requirements and Prerequisites**

- a. Students are strongly encouraged to have done at least one or two of the following courses: SC2214 Media and Culture; SC2225 The Social Life of Art; SC3213 Visual Ethnography: Theory and Practice; SC3223 Visual Culture I: Seeing and Representing; SC4202 Reading Ethnographies; SC4205: Language and Communication; and SC4226 Cultural Production: Power, Voice, Policy.
- b. Students who have not completed the relevant NUS courses but have completed courses focused on the arts, film, and photography offered elsewhere in NUS or in other institutions of higher learning can be considered, subject to the endorsement from the Approving Committee.

**3. Process of Application**

- a. Students proposing to do an MHT must clearly indicate in the proposal how media will feature in the thesis.
- b. An Approving Committee will determine the student's capacity (in terms of academic and technical skill) to undertake an MHT by evaluating the proposal and interviewing the student.

**4. Evaluation of MHTs**

- a. The grading of the MHT shall be undertaken by a Committee of two (which is consistent with the grading of text-based thesis), which may comprise either two domain experts from the fields of visual anthropology/visual sociology, or one domain expert and one content expert. The supervisor shall not be involved in the grading process to avoid potential conflict of interest.
- b. Two sets of criteria will apply for evaluating the MHT: one for the written component and the other for the media work.

**5. Grading Criteria for Written Component**

The written portion of the MHT should be approximately 4000 words. It should serve to complement the media work by:

- a. Revealing the anthropologically and/or sociologically-informed thinking behind the work (i.e., the intellectual, political, aesthetic and practical labour embodied in the work);
- b. Constructing for the reader / viewer a broader context against which the student likes us to understand the media work; and
- c. Articulating an analytical and reflexive account of the process and its accomplishments.

Therefore, the key focus should be on documenting the intellectual work central to taking this production from conception to conclusion and a critical analysis of the issues involved. The text should include details of the original conception of the project and any subsequent changes in direction, the developmental process, the methods employed, the research, selection of sources, the nature of the problems encountered and the solutions devised to meet them, and a rationale for the suitability of the chosen medium.

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**GUIDELINES ON RESEARCH ETHICS**

1. It is imperative that students discuss with their supervisors the ethical issues relating to their intended projects early in the semester.
2. As a rule there should be no covert research or deception about aims of research.
3. Respondents/informants should know that they are the subjects of research, and participation should be voluntary. Participants must not be hurt, physically or psychologically, by the study.
4. In participant observation studies, observation may be conducted without the observer's knowledge if the activities observed are public for all to see, including the researcher.
5. Once verbal contact with the observed is initiated and personalised knowledge is sought, the observed should be informed of the research project and his/her permission to continue the study sought.
6. The researcher should ensure and preserve confidentiality of information collected if the respondent / informant requires it (this may not be relevant to all studies, e.g. in some oral history studies, people may even wish to be identified.)
7. If you are unsure/unclear about the ethical considerations of your research project, please consult your supervisor, Honours Year Advisor or the Department's Ethics Review Committee.

**ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS OF A SOCIOLOGY HONOURS STUDENT**

1. Develop research skills in sociology.  
A sociology graduate should have a working knowledge of various research tools, conceptual, quantitative or qualitative, and has the ability to pick out the most appropriate one for a particular problem.
2. Ability to put sociological imagination to use while engaging in critical interpretation and analysis of social issues.  
The sociological imagination is a powerful lens through which one looks to discern deeply embedded social trends and forces, which are not obvious to the layperson.
3. Ability to understand and cure oneself of ethnocentrism, of different kinds of biases and prejudices that divide people--especially those based on race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender, religion and age. Capacity of be tolerant, that the other person may be right.
4. Conviction that sociology is relevant and useful--which derives itself from a long-standing belief in sociology as a discipline that contributes to understanding issues in society.
5. Sociological research often happens in a social context of people doing things together--thus the importance of interpersonal skills, empathy, self-discipline, and tolerance.

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6. In terms of pedagogy, we move away from exam-based assessment, and toward project-based continuous assessment in contexts that provide students with ample opportunities during the three to four years of their undergraduate studies to:
- a. learn to do research well;
  - b. develop a fondness for reading the sociological literature;
  - c. learn to articulate one's thoughts informally in a small group, and to make formal presentations in front of a critical audience--always as members of a team;
  - d. learn to write clearly and effectively, while enjoying it;
  - e. develop a certain confidence and pride about one's identity as a student of sociology.

Although the Honours Thesis requirements have been moderated in view of the revised four-year degree honours structure, students are strongly encouraged to consult honours theses done in previous years to get a sense of what goes into the honours thesis. You may consult previous years' theses which are kept at the department and Theses Collection section of the Central Library at ScholarBank@NUS:

[https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/browse?type=itemdept&authority=ou00336&sort\\_by=2&order=ASC#](https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/browse?type=itemdept&authority=ou00336&sort_by=2&order=ASC#)

## LIST OF STAFF, THEIR RESEARCH INTERESTS AND AREAS OF EXPERTISE

### **Noorman ABDULLAH**

#### **Senior Lecturer**

PhD (Sociology), Bielefeld, 2011

Religion and Society, Deviance and Social Control, Sensory Studies, Everyday Life

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