

# PhD Induction

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# Welcome to the Department of Sociology!



- Professor Vanessa May, Head of Department
- Petra Nordqvist, PGR Director

# + Overview

- Getting to know one another and our research projects
- Introduction to Manchester Sociology
- Structure of the research degree (PhD) and the thesis
- Supervision and the supervisor relationship
- Reviewing and monitoring your progress – E-Prog
- Research and conference funds
- Sociology PhD Workshops
- Sociology Colloquium and social events
- Departmental Seminars
- Qualitative Research Methods (QRM) units
- Feeding back
- Communication – email and the Postgraduate Newsletter
- Desks, computers and lockers
- Student reps





# Getting to know one another (15 min)



- In pairs, introduce yourselves and your project
  - Things to talk about
    - Your study background/how you arrived at Manchester
    - What your PhD project looks at; who are your supervisors
    - Your theoretical frameworks (at the moment!)
    - Your planned for methods (at the moment!)
- Introduce your partner and their project to the group
- Together, lets identify overlaps in topics, theory and methods

# + Manchester Sociology

- Big department doing some of the most innovative and exciting sociological research to be found anywhere in the world, with a very high research rating in the national Research Excellence Framework (REF). Around 60 members of academic staff, including research staff.
- PhD students (c50) are an important part of this culture and count toward our research reputation
- Ethos: theory-led social research using diverse methods. All topic areas of sociology are included
- Research Centres and institutes with links to the department:
  - Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CODE)
  - Morgan Centre for Research into Everyday Lives
  - Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis
  - Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research
  - Sustainable Consumption Institute (SCI)
  - Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA)
- Vibrant research culture with lots of events, seminars, in the department, School, and Faculty
- We are part of the North West Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (NWSSDTP) along with sociology departments at Liverpool, Lancaster, and Keele universities. This is an important source of funding and additional training – you will be notified by UoM’s Doctoral Academy about events and training opportunities



# + Structure of the degree

- 3.5 years of research. Assessed by thesis of 60-80,000 words
- The course of study varies for each project but as a rough norm:
  - Year 1: orientation; clarifying research questions; literature review; designing research and planning; obtaining ethics approval
  - Year 2: Fieldwork; gathering data; sorting, coding, sifting; analysis, interpretation
  - Year 3: Clarifying the argument; positioning what has been found in the wider context, writing the thesis – **though you will be writing from the start and throughout the programme, with reviews of literature, reflective pieces on data, proto-chapters, etc.**
  - Year 3.5 and into 4 if needed (no more), writing up



# The thesis



- 60-80,000 words
- Normally has 5 or 6 chapters, plus intro and conclusion
- Examined by two examiners – 1 internal and 1 external to UoM
- The thesis must make a contribution to knowledge – this sounds intimidating (because it is!) but also very **EXCITING!**
- It's your chance to immerse yourself in a set of intellectual debates, theories, and empirical worlds; to engage actively in academic culture in the department and through conferences, presentations, and publications; and to contribute your own research to your field

# + Supervision



- Supervision is by teams of 2, very occasionally 3 staff. One will be the 'main' supervisor but the norm is 'co-supervision'
- Regular meetings, every 2 or 3 weeks – less frequently when on fieldwork and in later stages of writing
- Supervisors discuss your ideas, read and give comments on your writing in progress, give guidance, suggestions, criticism – all towards helping you fashion your own thesis
- Supervisors also provide support in other ways – introductions, guidance on conference papers, publishing etc. – always feel free to ask them for this kind of extra-thesis advice
- Your first port of call in case of academic difficulties





# Reviewing and monitoring progress



- Your progress will be reviewed twice each year
- After six months (the 'mid-year review') by your supervisory team, to check you are progressing well and plan out the remaining year
- At the end of the academic year (June-July) by a panel consisting of your supervisors plus one other academic from within sociology – the 'annual review'
- For the annual review you submit 8000 words of documents reflecting your writing and progress, and these form the basis for discussion at the hour-long review meeting
- The purpose of the reviewing system is to consolidate progress, to identify problems before they arise, and to familiarise you with the external review process which will culminate in your PhD oral exam or 'viva'
- The annual review needs to be passed in order to progress to the next year, though there is opportunity to revise and resubmit for a second review 12 weeks later

# + e-Prog



- Our on-line platform used to keep record of meetings with supervisors and progress made (eg annual reviews) – you will become very familiar with it!
- Provides email prompts to action which is useful
- Source of documentation relating to key steps like gaining ethical clearance for your research (around May/June year 1) or applying for specific kinds of funding, etc.
- Important to respond to the e-Prog system when you or your supervisors receive messages – the system needs to be told when things have been done...

+ Questions so far?





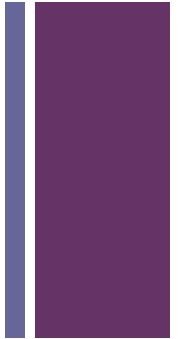
# + Research and conference funds – the RTSG and SERB, and Key Travel

- Students funded by the School of Social Sciences or the ESRC/NWSSDTP are provided with a **Research Training and Support Grant (RTSG) of £1,000 each year**. For more info, please see the PGR Handbook
- Students who are self-funded or by another institution without an RTSG equivalent can claim on the **Student Experience and Recruitment Budget (SERB)**. The max claim per year is **£300**. Petra will remind you periodically about applying for SERB, and you should **contact Petra to discuss a potential spend before you make it** – you need her approval in advance.
- Travel and accommodation (whether funded from RTSG or SERB) **must be purchased directly by the travel agency Key Travel** (after you have received approval for the spend from Petra, if it's from SERB) **you cannot pay for it yourself and then claim it back – no exceptions!**
  - You need to register for Key Travel with your UoM email and student number to do this.  
<https://www.keytravel.com>
- **The Faculty of Humanities also has a research expenses fund** (including for larger expenses in the thousands, if you have a good case). You will be emailed about this periodically by the UoM Doctoral College (not by Petra) – one reason why it's vital that you're attentive to all UoM emails



# SOCY60510

## Sociology PhD Research Workshop



- Taught by Professor Nick Thoburn in semesters 1 and 2, fortnightly **starting next week** – Nick will email you with the details
- An integral part of our PGR programme - develops your **core generic research skills, and practitioner and professional skills**, that combine with the substantive skills of your supervisions
- It also helps build collegiality and the sharing of research and academic experience among the Sociology PGR cohort
- All PGR students are required to attend, except when on fieldwork year
- Includes a PGR-organised symposium mid-way through the year and a conference in June – Nick will seek an organizing-committee for these early on



# PGR Sociology Colloquium and social events



- The Sociology Colloquium is a monthly self-organized space run by and for Sociology PhD students to practice presentation skills, test and discuss ideas, and receive feedback in a collegial environment
- The current organisers will email the group list soon to announce this semester's talks
- Your reps in consultation with me will organize 2 or 3 social events during the year, such as visits to museums, art exhibitions, walking tours etc. If you have any suggestions for a group event –please contact your reps, Nick or me
- These social events are an important way of building the PGR community, meeting new people, enjoying the life of the city

# + Departmental Seminar

- This is the Department's main forum for academic staff to share and discuss our research – typically a new book, article, or the founding of a new research project
- Attended by academic staff and PGR students, it is a valuable opportunity for us all to meet and discuss as a research community. You are all invited to come for a coffee with the speaker afterwards (Nick T organises this!)
- The structure is a short presentation followed by prepared questions from a respondent, usually an invited PGR student, followed by open questions
- The seminar is also an opportunity for you to: learn about research in the department; to hear about developments in sociology outside of your own particular field (vital if you are seeking to become an academic); and to gain experience in presentation styles (vital to your training for conference etc. presentations); and to practice formulating questions.
- It's integrated in the schedule of the PhD Workshop and PGR attendance is required
- 2 or 3 times a semester, on Wednesday afternoons for one hour, organized by an academic member of staff







# Qualitative Research Methods (QRM)



- The School of Social Sciences co-ordinates a suite of workshop-based course units in **Qualitative Research Methods** and these are offered by several of the disciplines in the School of Social Sciences and beyond.
- These are designed to meet the needs of postgraduate research students and ESRC funded students, and the requirements with respect to training in qualitative methods set out in the ESRC's Postgraduate Training Guidelines
- The aim is to offer a comprehensive and thorough training in qualitative research methodologies that will prepare students for PhD and/or later non-PhD research work inside or outside a University environment
- If you wish to take one of these units you need to consult the **QRM Handbook**
- Module convenor James Hodgson (Sociology)



# More about enrolling onto QRM modules



- You are able to enrol but you will need to register onto the module (you can't just audit).
- QRM is organised according to a sort of pick and mix approach
- You will need to select from the list of modules by the same deadline as the MA/MRes students – currently this is on the 2 October (this might change slightly but it will be around then)
- You will need to complete a form to choose your modules to enrol. The link for the form is in the QRM handbook (*Petra to share when this is finalised*).

# + Feeding back

- If you encounter problems that you can't solve with your supervisors (for whatever reason), you should come to me in the first instance – I'm the PGR personal tutor and PGR Director
- If that doesn't work (for whatever reason), you should talk to Sociology's Head of Department – Vanessa May
- Each year has one or more student representatives. Reps meet as a group with me 2 or 3 times a semester to feedback any student issues and to discuss possible resolutions.
- We really do welcome your views – do please feedback any concerns and issues to your reps or to me as and when.  
**Whether you are facing difficulties or have suggestions about the programme, your reps and I are very keen to hear from you!**





# Communication: Email and PG Newsletter



- Email is our main means of communication – if you have been emailed about something we consider you to have been adequately informed
- Please only use your university email address when in contact with UoM, and check it at least every other day
- Various members of the UoM Doctoral Academy and I will send you regular emails, and you will receive Department, School, and Faculty emails about events, talks, research funds, etc. There is a dedicated Sociology PGR email list – if you would like to share something academic or related on it, I can do that for you
- Email your supervisors now to arrange your first supervision next week, if you or they haven't done so already
- Sociology Postgraduate Newsletter: aggregating the main events, news, notifications etc. twice a semester. Edited by a PhD student (Thomas Bosak and Deniz Diler). They will shortly invite you to send your bios and a photo to the Newsletter

# + Desks, computers and lockers

- We have PGR desks in the open plan area of the department, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Arthur Lewis Building (the third floor is split in two between Sociology and Economics) – we will visit it together this afternoon
- If you work in the department **3 or more days a week, you can claim a desk** as your own. Please do so this week or next, leaving a clear A4-sized note with your name, date and saying you are a PhD student, and notify me of quad/number you have chosen. **Please let me know which desk you have chosen**
- If you work in the department **2 or fewer days a week, there are Hot Desks** for you to use
- Please keep to these rules – there are always enough desks for everybody if they are kept
- The Faculty provides everyone will their own **UoM laptop/MacBook. Everyone needs to order theirs individually.** All your research analysis and writing should be undertaken on UoM owned machines, so **best to order a laptop/MacBook ASAP** asap (link available in PGR handbook).
- If you think a claimed desk isn't being used, please don't take matters into your own hands and occupy it but rather contact me
- Lockers: If there are any available tower lockers dotted around the department, you are welcome to claim one. The School provides pedestal lockers (drawers that sit under the desk - one/desk). If you have an existing one but cannot find the key, please e-mail me so that we can provide a new key.
- Don't leave any valuables on your desk – unfortunately things have got stolen in the past

# + PGR student reps

- Sociology reps meet as a group (online) with me 2 or 3 times a semester to feedback any student issues and to discuss resolutions. Reps also sit on the Sociology Board Meeting (SBM), which meets twice a semester.
- It isn't an onerous role and is a great way to become more integrated in the life of the PGR community and the Department.
- The rep role requires readiness to contact your colleagues, be responsiveness to email, and readiness to attend the meetings with me
- Would two or three of you like to volunteer? You can do so now, or wait until this afternoon where you can discuss the role with one of our current reps in the Kro Bar, or email me about it. I would like to have one or two of you in post by the end of this week for a reps meeting in week 2 or 3

# + Welcome social



- Welcome social for all new PGR students in a School social 3-5 pm (Arthur Lewis, board room (2.016))
- Sociology social - 5 pm in KroBar on Oxford Road, opposite the Students Union – we've reserved the upstairs front room
- When you arrive, ask me for a token to exchange at the bar for a free drink – and ask again when you're ready for a second, in case there are any tokens remaining!
- Do please come along, it's a great opportunity to meet each other informally and for you to meet existing PGR students

# + Rest of today...

- 14:00 Walking tour of Sociology Department and campus with Sociology PGR Director (let's meet at the Oxford Road entrance to University Place (the 'tin' can))
- 15:00-17:00 Social for School of Social Sciences. The boardroom, second floor ALB
- 17:00 Sociology Social at Kro Bar





# + Any questions or comments?

- Always feel free to drop me an e-mail
- [Petra.Nordqvist@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Petra.Nordqvist@manchester.ac.uk)

