Certificate in Interdisciplinary Graduate Social Theory
College of Arts and Sciences
The University of Tennessee

Bylaws

These bylaws govern the Graduate Certificate in Interdisciplinary Social Theory (henceforth, the “Program”), which is an interdisciplinary graduate certificate offered by the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tennessee. The Certificate’s activities are also governed by policies of the College and of the University and applicable state and Federal regulations. Any provision within these bylaws that conflicts with College or University policies or with state or Federal regulations shall have no effect.

I. Mission statement

The Interdisciplinary Social Theory program offers a graduate certificate, enabling students to develop rigorous interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary training in diverse areas of social theory (including classical social theory, contemporary sociological theory, critical social theory, critical literary theory, critical race theory, feminist theory, poststructuralist theory, postcolonial theory, etc.). The program will introduce students to a range both of modes of interpretation and of ways of framing research, and encourage them to adopt and refine the methods that best meet their needs. It will enhance analytical and critical skills, expand horizons (both spatially/geographically and temporally/historically), and promote abilities related to deconstructing and reconstructing representations of social, political, cultural, and economic reality along a spectrum ranging from individual experiences to national and global constructions of identity.

The program is designed to provide a supplementary perspective for students already enrolled in graduate programs, to provide an entry into graduate study for those who are exploring a number of disciplinary approaches, to provide enrichment for members of the community who have a bachelor’s or an advanced degree, and to develop skills for professionals in various fields.

II. Membership

Faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences who are responsible for teaching required graduate courses in their department or program, as well as faculty who regularly offer graduate courses, constitute the “core faculty” of the Program (and the concurrent Committee on Social Theory). Faculty who occasionally teach graduate courses in theory, or who regularly teach undergraduate theory courses (including especially required courses) are “affiliated faculty.” Members of the core faculty may serve as “faculty advisor” for students pursuing a graduate certificate in interdisciplinary social theory, while affiliated faculty may serve as committee members on a student’s Program committee. Faculty affiliations are reviewed on an annual basis. Core faculty who do not offer any graduate theory courses in a two-year period become affiliated faculty; affiliated faculty who do not offer any theory courses at the graduate or undergraduate level, in a three year period, will be removed as faculty members of the Program (and concurrent committee).

I. Program Governance
A. Certificate Chairs

The Certificate Chairs oversee the day-to-day functioning of the Program and insure that program activities are conducted in accord with these bylaws. The Chairs are appointed by the Dean of the College from a slate of two or more candidates approved by the Executive Committee. The Chairs ordinarily serve as Chairs for a term of three years, and can be reappointed for subsequent terms by mutual agreement of the Chairs and the Dean of the College.

B. Other Officers

The Certificate does not have any additional Vice Chairs or other named officers.

C. Standing Committees

1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides advice to the Chair regarding the administration of the Program. The Executive Committee also oversees the Certificate’s curriculum and proposes changes to it; these proposals are transmitted to the appropriate divisional Curriculum Committee(s) of the College for further review and approval. The Executive Committee reviews these bylaws on a regular basis and approves amendments to them.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once during each nine-month academic year. The Chairs shall prepare an agenda for each Executive Committee meeting and shall distribute it at least 10 days before the date of the Executive Committee meeting. Executive Committee meetings are open to all Program members.

Executive Committee members are selected by the participating departments. Each department shall select one member for the committee. The term of service on the Executive Committee is two years, renewable at the discretion of the selecting department (unless both the Program Chairs file an objection). Faculty members of the Program can call a meeting by filing a request with their department’s member on the Executive Committee. Both the Executive Committee and core faculty members have the ability to initiate curricular changes.

The Chairs shall insure that minutes of Executive Committee meetings are sent to the Program’s members and to the Dean of the College (or to an Associate Dean designated by the Dean) in a timely fashion.

D. Ad hoc Committees

Ad hoc committee may be called into existence depending on emerging needs. Their members are chosen by vote or acclamation at Executive Committee meetings; with the support of Program members, the Chairs may propose or choose suitable members. Core faculty members also have the opportunity to self-nominate. The maximum lifetime of an ad hoc committee is two years.
E. Definition of Quorum and Majority; voting procedures

For ad hoc committee meetings, a two-thirds presence shall be regarded as a quorum. Votes are taken by voice ballot, unless the committee members unanimously decide that a secret ballot should be taken on a particular issue. As a rule, email votes are permitted.

II. Program Dissolution

The Executive Committee may choose to dissolve the Program. Program dissolution by the Executive Committee can only be considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee during the nine-month academic year, and requires the approval of a two-thirds majority of the Committee. Dissolution of the Program will be effective on July 31.

III. Amendments

These bylaws shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee at least once every three years.

Amendments to these bylaws can only be considered at a meeting of the Executive Committee and require the approval of a two-thirds majority of votes cast at the meeting. The text of the proposed amendment must be distributed by electronic mail to members of the Program and members of the Executive Committee at least 10 days before the date of the Executive Committee meeting at which the amendments are considered.

The Chairs shall inform the Dean of the College (or an Associate Dean designated by the Dean) of any changes in these bylaws.