PhD Learning Objectives – Social Sciences

USC Dornsife Ph.D. students in the Social Sciences are admitted to a five-year program that typically consists of two years of fellowship support and three years of graduate assistantship training.

USC Dornsife Ph.D. programs in the Social Sciences provide a well-structured and suitable education and training that reflects the current state of the chosen field of study. Through effective student-centered mentoring, research and teaching, professionalization workshops, and collaborative support for conference participation and publishing, Ph.D. candidates in the Social Sciences train to be leading scholars who are competitive in both the academic and non-academic job markets.

Learning Objectives

• **Disciplinary Knowledge**: Students will demonstrate mastery in critically applying theories, methodologies, and knowledge to address fundamental questions in their fields study, as evidenced by their academic performance in the programs curricular requirement (coursework).

• **Teaching Competence**: Students will demonstrate a mastery of pedagogical skills and knowledge at a level required for college and university undergraduate teaching in their discipline as evidenced by their academic performance in the teaching practicum seminar, MDA 593, and the quality of students’ teaching evaluations.

• **Modes of Inquiry/Methodologies**: Students will gain, practice and evaluate their skills in various quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to conduct scholarly research consistent with the highest standards of the discipline as evidenced by their academic performance in the core and advanced methodology courses.

• **Research Competence**: Students engage in and conduct original research

• **Written and Oral Communication**: Students show proficiency in oral and written presentation of original scientific research – qualifying exams and are eligible to receive their Masters and go on to PhD candidacy

• **Capstone/Dissertation**: Students will produce an defend a capstone project (dissertation) by gaining the intellectual independence and skills to conduct research that results in an original contribution to knowledge in their field
• **Professionalization**: Students will gain and demonstrate scholarly communication skills adequate to publish, and prepare grant proposals. Students will develop the professional skills needed in their intended career placement as evidenced by their level of professionalism in the program.