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Department of Sociology and Rural Studies

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Great Plains IDEA Student Handbook: South Dakota State University Version

Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance

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GREAT PLAINS IDEA

Student Handbook December 2015

Welcome to Great Plains IDEA

We're glad you're here! As a Great Plains IDEA student, it is your responsibility to become familiar with the information in this handbook and the applicable policies and procedures of your home institution. You are encouraged to read and retain this student handbook.

Student Responsibilities & Expectations

- Read and retain this student handbook
- Learn the policies and procedures of your home institution
- Follow scholarly codes of ethics in course work, research and professional activities

About Great Plains IDEA

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA) is a partnership of 20 public university members providing access to the best educational opportunities by collaboratively developing and delivering high-quality online academic programs. Great Plains IDEA is an academic alliance that offers fully-online graduate programs in high demand professional fields.

Student Success Center

The Great Plains IDEA [Student Success Center](#) is the online hub of resources to support your academic and student experience. Students can access partner university Learning Management Systems, libraries and email systems from the Great Plains IDEA [Symbaloo](#). The Success Center integrates articles and tools regarding time management, writing and research information, and financial and career resources. We encourage you to bookmark this page so you can easily return to this information throughout your program.

Terminology to Know

- Home Institution –the university where the student applied and was admitted. Students enroll, pay tuition and receive their degree* from the home institution. (**Degree/Certificate titles vary by institution. Consult each institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma*)
- Teaching Institution –the university where the faculty member teaching a course is located.
- Campus Coordinator –the person available to assist students through Great Plains IDEA processes.
- Academic Advisor/Major Professor –the faculty member/staff person assigned to assist the student in academic decisions (e.g. course sequence, program planning, etc.)
- Supervisory Committee (graduate students only) –the group of faculty designated to serve as guides in the completion of the student's program of study and culminating experience. Students should work with their academic advisor/major professor to determine the process for creating a committee at their home institution.
- Enrollment Information Exchange Date –the day when priority registration for program students ends and the day when non-program students may be moved from the wait list to class rosters as space allows.
- Wait List –the process used for enrolling students into courses when a course reaches capacity before the first day of class AND after the enrollment information exchange date. The wait list is used after the enrollment information exchange date as a way to ensure students from all institutions receive an equal/first-come, first-serve chance at enrollment.

Student Processes and Forms

Student Acknowledgment Form

Students participating in Great Plains IDEA courses are required to sign and submit a Student Acknowledgment Form to be kept on file at the home institution. This form allows the exchange of information between the partnering institutions. All information is shared through a secure, web-based database. Campus Coordinators initiate the Student Acknowledgment Form process with newly admitted students. A sample form can be found in the appendices to this handbook and on the Great Plains IDEA [website](#).

Title IX Mandatory Training for Students

Students are required to complete Title IX training provided by their home institution. Consult with your Campus Coordinator for instructions regarding this training.

Communication

Contact Information

Students must notify their home institution Campus Coordinator of any changes in contact information, including: email address, phone number(s), mailing address, etc.

Email

Your email address is the primary method of communication between you and your instructors and your home institution. Your home institution will provide you with an email account. **It is strongly recommended that you use your home institution email account as your link between you and your home institution.** Often other accounts hinder communication because messages may be filtered as spam. The following are common issues and suggestions related to email:

- If you change your email address make sure you update your Campus Coordinator.
- **Check your Spam and Junk Mail folder for course messages.**
- Include a subject line in all email correspondence, especially mail sent to Campus Coordinators and instructors. We receive a high volume of mail, and sometimes a lot of junk, so are likely to delete message if there is no subject, especially if we do not recognize the email address/name.
- When taking courses through this program, communication is a shared responsibility. You should plan to check email regularly for messages from your instructor(s) and home institution. We recommend a ***minimum*** of twice per week.

Enrollment

Students enroll in courses at their home institution according to the enrollment dates set at their university. Course names and numbers vary by institution. Each course has a corresponding course information sheet posted on the Great Plains IDEA website prior to enrollment for the upcoming term: [Human Sciences course information sheets](#) and [AG*IDEA course information sheets](#). The course information sheet contains instructor contact information, textbook information and course access information. The anticipated rotation of courses is available on the website as well. [Human Sciences course matrix](#) and [AG*IDEA course matrix](#).

Wait List

The Great Plains IDEA maintains a wait list to be used when a course reaches capacity prior to the enrollment deadline. If you need to be added to the wait list you should contact your Campus Coordinator.

Course Information Sheets

The Great Plains IDEA website houses course information sheets for each Great Plains IDEA class offered (excluding independent study, thesis, and practicum). Course information sheets are designed to provide a quick reference for course materials and instructor information. Course information sheets are

not the official syllabi for the course and are subject to change as additional course information becomes available.

Course Access

Students access courses through the Course Management Systems (CMS)/Learning Management System (LMS) at the teaching institution for a given course. This platform serves as the virtual classroom environment. Campus Coordinators will facilitate access to the CMS/LMS for non-home institution students. Students should expect to receive an email from the teaching institution at least five business days before the first day of class. Students who have not received course access instructions from the teaching institution five days before the first day of class should contact their home institution Campus Coordinator.

Library Access

Great Plains IDEA students will have access to the online library system of their home institution. Students may receive access to the library resources at the teaching institution if the instructor expects students to utilize such resources.

Drop and Refund Information

If you need to drop a course, you must notify your home institution Campus Coordinator, the teaching institution Campus Coordinator and the instructor of the course. Refunds are based on the policies of the student's home institution.

Program of Study (graduate students only)

Students will file a program/plan of study according to the policies and procedures of their home institution. Academic advisors and/or Campus Coordinators can provide additional information about the requirements for the home institution. Degree and course titles vary by institution.

Graduation/Degree Completion

At least two semesters before your anticipated graduation you should contact your academic adviser and your Campus Coordinator. These individuals will provide institution-specific information for degree completion requirements. Institutions may require additional exams/projects in order to complete.

Graduate School Policies

Students are expected to adhere to the policies of the Graduate School at their home institution. It is the responsibility of the student to become familiar with these policies.

Grades

Students build their transcript at the home institution. Student transcripts are housed by the student's home institution. Grades for a course are determined by the instructor of the course. The home institution will determine the translation for a course grade from a teaching institution that uses a different grading system using the Great Plains IDEA Grade Translation [Matrix](#).

Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be issued by the instructor of a course. If an incomplete grade is issued, the student will work with the instructor and the teaching institution Campus Coordinator to file an incomplete grade form with their home institution. The incomplete form outlines the expectations for completion of the course.

Academic Integrity

Everyone within the Great Plains IDEA is responsible for and affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. Academic integrity is defined as doing and taking credit for one's own work.

Instructors are expected to use reasonably practical means of preventing and detecting academic dishonesty. Students are encouraged to share the responsibility for the academic integrity of the Great Plains IDEA by reporting incidents of academic dishonesty to the graduate administrator at their home

institution. Any student found responsible for having engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to academic penalty and/or disciplinary action. Examples of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized possession or disposition of academic materials, falsification, and facilitation of cases of academic dishonesty.

In the case of academic misconduct, the members of the consortium agree to the following procedures.

1. Teaching faculty members have the authority to determine academic assessment of the work where there has been academic misconduct within their classes and other instructional contexts. The academic assessment will be based on the academic standards stated in the course syllabus, catalogues, handbooks and other materials notifying students of academic requirements. The procedure for appeal of the academic assessment in the course shall follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution.
2. The instructor is responsible for notifying the program administrator (chair, head, director) at the teaching institution of the misconduct and course sanction. The program administrator is responsible for notifying the dean for graduate or undergraduate studies or other appropriate administrator at the teaching institution who will in turn notify his/her counterpart at the student's home institution.

Grade Appeals

Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

Complaint and Grievance Processes

The Great Plains IDEA community is committed to resolving student concerns in a timely and effective manner. It is hoped that differences can be resolved through an informal communication process that promotes open expression in a climate of courtesy, sensitivity and mutual respect. If a resolution is not reached, formal grievance processes are available at all participating institutions.

Informal Complaint Process: When a student is concerned about the actions of an instructor in a course or other faculty decisions regarding the student's program, the first step toward resolution is communication directly with the instructor/faculty member as soon as possible. It is expected that the instructor/faculty member will respond promptly. If the concern is not resolved, the student should contact the department chair at their home institution.

Formal Grievance Process: A grievance means a dispute concerning some aspect of academic involvement arising from an administrative or faculty decision that the student claims is unjust or is in violation of his or her rights. Grievances under this procedure include disputes over grades, course requirements, graduation or degree program requirements, and thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions.

When a student wishes to file a formal grievance, the following process will be in effect:

1. Grievances regarding grade appeals, course requirements or other action of an instructor of a course:

Students will file the grievance and follow all procedures at the teaching institution. The teaching institution will inform the Great Plains IDEA representative at the student's home institution that a grievance has been initiated. A formal grievance should be filed in a timely manner, or a student may relinquish the right to pursue the grievance. Time limits for filing a grievance may vary by institution. If filing a faculty or course requirement grievance, the student may contact the Campus Coordinator at the teaching institution for assistance in locating policies and contact information at that institution.

2. Grievances regarding graduation, program requirements, thesis/dissertation committee and advisor decisions:

Disputes involving graduation or degree program requirements, thesis and dissertation committee and/or advisor decisions will follow the procedures of the home institution. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with all home institution policies and procedures governing the degree program. Campus Coordinators at each institution are able to assist students in locating the campus grievance policy, and finding contact information for the appropriate parties.

Cost and Student Financial Assistance

The Common Price

Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Common Price is reviewed and established annually by the Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers team and approved by the Cabinet. The Common Price may be adjusted on an annual basis. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution. The Common Price includes all fees, distance delivery costs, and other such "add-ons" common for distance education. No additional fees shall be charged by any participating institution. Textbooks and other material and administrative costs (such as late enrollment fees) are allowed.

If there is an onsite component of a course, e.g. field experience and/or laboratory experience, included in the curriculum, any additional fees and travel-associated expenses incurred in attending the required onsite experience will be the full responsibility of the student and must be fully disclosed to the student prior to their course selection and enrollment.

Student Financial Assistance

Students may be eligible for financial assistance through their home institution. Consult your home institution's Office of Financial Assistance for details about how to apply. Campus Coordinators can provide contact information if needed.

Disability Support Services

Disability support services play an important role in the success of students with disabilities. However, the traditional service model does not fit the needs of a distance education student taking courses at multiple schools at the same time. The offices at participating institutions need to work together in order to serve students in this new educational paradigm.

Obtaining disability accommodation and services is a student driven process. This is also a confidential process. Campus Coordinators do not need to be informed of a disability or the need for services unless you, the student, chooses to share that information. Since the goal of Great Plains IDEA is to have one point of entry and ease of student access, to be eligible for accommodations in a course, students must request those accommodations by registering with their home institution disability support services office. **Requests for accommodations must be completed for each course and repeated each semester.**

Students sign a release of information when registering with the disability office. If the student takes a course at another institution, the student's home disability office sends the release form with an accommodation letter to the teaching institution's disability office. The letter gives basic information about the disability. Should more information be needed, such as actual documentation, the home institution can forward appropriate documents to the teaching institution. The teaching institution disability office provides the accommodation according to its processes and procedures which may be different than those of the home institution.

Faculty may NOT independently provide accommodations. And because students request accommodations each semester (for the classes they choose), it is possible that the same student may

have an accommodation one semester, but not the next. Faculty are encouraged to work with their institution's disability support office for more information or assistance.

Students can obtain information about disability support services in many locations. The Great Plains IDEA website has contact information for each member institution's disability support services office. Each course information sheet includes contact information also. Students may choose to request contact information from Campus Coordinators as well.

Students should remain in contact with their home institution's Disability Support Services office throughout the program.

Student Surveys

Great Plains IDEA is committed to continual program improvement. In order to gain a better understanding of the views and experiences of students and to provide feedback to program faculty students will receive the following surveys from the Lead Institution:

- New Student Survey
- Course withdrawal survey (only for students withdrawing from a course)
- Program Completion Survey

All surveys have been reviewed and approved by the Kansas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Surveys are voluntary and responses are anonymous. Survey data are aggregated, analyzed and reports are provided to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet, Boards of Directors and program faculty.

The Community Development Program

Mission

We contribute to a more prosperous, sustainable and just world by preparing future leaders in Community Development through:

- Providing high quality graduate education
- Creating cross-pollinating networks of local practitioners and educators responding creatively and innovatively to the rapidly changing conditions in their communities
- Addressing social, economic and spatial equity through transformative community process and practices that are globally engaged and locally focused
- Engaging students and faculty in cutting-edge research and practice to advance the field.

The five Great Plains IDEA Institutions participating in the Community Development program are:

- Iowa State University
- Kansas State University
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- North Dakota State University
- South Dakota State University

Program Description

Community Development deals with challenges faced by communities in the United States and other countries, particularly those in rural areas. Global economic restructuring and the devolution of government services have produced an environment in which Community Developers are called on to think and act in innovative ways.

Community Development is a progressive field, actively promoting positive social, economic, cultural and environmental change. It encourages people to see the "whole picture," engaging citizens in democratic decision making and action.

In the Great Plains IDEA Community Development Master's degree program, a diverse faculty from several institutions teaches critical thinking, ethical consideration, careful planning and involvement of all stakeholders. A Master's degree in Community Development equips the student with a breadth of perspective and depth of cutting-edge material in the field.

The Great Plains IDEA online Master's program is ideal for Community Development students and practitioners. Students seeking a professional career in Community Development can attain the necessary knowledge base without commuting or relocating. Community Development practitioners who wish to augment their training can use the skill set gained through the Community Development Master's degree to work most effectively in, or to advance beyond, their current position.

A Master's degree in Community Development is ideal for professionals in a wide variety of fields:

- Community and Regional Planning
- Sociology
- Economics
- Political science
- Geography
- Local Planning Departments
- Community Economic Development Organizations
- Cooperative Extension Services
- Housing Agencies

- Parks & Recreation
- Tribal Programs
- Non-Profit Organizations focusing on Community Enhancement

The Community Development Curriculum

Master's Degree

The master's degree in Community Development is a 36-37 credit hour post-baccalaureate program of study. To qualify for this degree, students must be admitted to the master's degree program at a participating university, complete the necessary coursework, and meet the master's degree requirements of their admitting/degree granting institution. Students may register for no more than six credits per semester. Incomplete course hours from a previous semester will be deducted from the six credits that can be taken in any succeeding semester.

Core Courses:

- Community Development Orientation
- Community Development I: Principles & Strategies of Community Change
- Community Development II: Organizing for Community Change
- Community Analysis (Introduction to Methods)
- Community & Natural Resource Management
- Community & Regional Economic Analysis

Course descriptions may be found on the Great Plains IDEA website.

Degree titles vary by institution:

Iowa State University	Master of Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies with an area of specialization in Community Development
Kansas State University	Master of Science in Community Development
University of Nebraska	Master of Applied Science
North Dakota State University	Master of Science/Arts in Community Development
South Dakota State University	Master of Science in Sociology

SDSU Department of Sociology and Rural Studies Master's in Community Development Degree Program GPIDEA on-line curriculum, Option A, B or C for completion

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SDSU Program Contact Information:

GPIDEA Community Development Program Advisor:

Meredith Redlin

Dept. of Sociology and Rural Studies

206 Scobey, Box 504 SDSU

Brookings, SD 57007

*E-mail: meredith.redlin@sdstate.edu

Office phone/FAX: 605-688-4084/605-688-6354

* Please note that e-mail is the most efficient form of communication for quick response.

GPIDEA SDSU Coordinator:

Theresa Swedzinski

Continuing and Extended Education

Box 506, Wecota Hall SDSU

Brookings, SD 57007

E-mail: gpidea@sdstate.edu

Office phone/FAX: 605-688-6988/605-688-6918

1. Entering the Program

1.1 Application and Admission. Students in this program learn about applied theories and methods to enhance community sustainability and locally-based development policies and practices. This training is valuable for career fields in community extension services, town and county government, tribal offices, and state and local economic development agencies. All students enter the GPIDEA program through application and admission to the South Dakota State University Graduate School. For admission to the following fall term, all application materials must be submitted to the graduate school by Apr. 15. For the following spring term, all application materials must be submitted to the graduate school by Aug. 15 (Oct. 1 for US citizens). Application forms are available on the Graduate School website. Graduate School instructions for completing the Application are included here in Appendix A.

1.2 Admission requirements and considerations. The Graduate School requires a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 for unconditional admission into any program. Given that this program is directed toward nontraditional and professional students, we do take into account life experience for conditional admission to our program. The relevance, breadth and strength of this experience should be presented and discussed in an attached letter, and reflected in two letters of recommendation.

1.3 Recommended skills and academic preparation. The Master's in Community Development is an entirely on-line program. Consequently, you are strongly encouraged to also ensure that you have adequate technical access, skills and the academic background to ensure your success. Below find the minimum recommendations in each of these areas to help you succeed in the on-line learning environment and in graduate work. [Note: These elements are not required, but have proven to be helpful.]

Technical access (recommended):

Unlimited web access in the home

PC or Mac word processing programs (2010 or later)

Mapping and statistical software programs OR the technical ability and willingness to download and include such programs on your computer

Skills (recommended):

Knowledge of live chat programs

Familiarity with navigating diverse course platforms

Strong writing and composition skills

Ability to self-motivate and learn independently

Academic Background (recommended coursework prior to program admission):

Social statistics (both general understanding and data manipulation skills)

Logic

Advanced undergraduate English composition and/or technical writing

2. Beginning the program

2.1 Master's in Community Development program description. This degree requires the successful completion of 36 credit hours, for Option A (Thesis) and Option B (Practicum/Capstone research paper), and 37 credit hours for Option C (coursework only). All completion tracks require an oral examination for graduation. Note: New coursework may be added both to track areas and electives. Be sure to check with Dr. Redlin and Theresa Swedzinski about course offerings by term.

2.2 Option A. Thesis completion (37 credits total): (1) 32 credit hours of coursework, including the 17 credit required core courses and 15 elective credits; (2) Soc 798 Thesis (5 credits): Composing thesis proposal (approved by committee), gathering literature review, conducting original research, and completing thesis document are required. Note that this may take a full year for completion of these credits. An oral defense of the thesis project and an oral examination on degree coursework is also required at the time of the thesis defense.

2.3 Option B. Practicum/Capstone research paper completion (37 credits total): (1) 32 credit hours of coursework, including the 17 credit required core courses and 15 elective credits; (2) Soc 791 Independent Research (2 credit): Creative component proposal, literature review, and research design; and (3) Soc 794 Practicum/Capstone Research Paper (3 credits): Completion of research activity and of a written applied research report and an oral defense of the research project. An oral examination on degree coursework is also required, which is conducted at the same time as the research project defense.

2.4 Option C. Coursework completion (37 credits total): (1) 35 credit hours of coursework, including the 17 credit required core courses and 18 elective credits; (2) Soc 794 Practicum (1 credit): Completion of program portfolio, committee selection and completion of an oral examination on degree coursework.

2.5 Course Registration. Each term, students are registered for courses by the SDSU GPIDEA coordinator. Please contact Theresa Swedzinski directly to ensure your timely enrollment; courses can fill so timely registration is important.

2.6 Course load/Progression. The course load per semester for students in this program is generally no more than 6 credits. Most students work full-time, and the time demands for on-line learning are very high. We strongly suggest that for the first year of coursework, that students take no more than 3-5 credits per term if they have never had an on-line learning experience. Note: Incomplete course hours from a previous semester will be deducted from the six credits that can be taken in any succeeding semester. All students must begin with the CD 600 Orientation course. This course provides important practice and information for on-line learning, as well as gives you base information for the program. We also encourage all students to complete core coursework in their first two years, or as soon as scheduling permits. Core courses all include basic skill sets for successful completion of the program, and will also give you an overview of the areas in which you can plan your final project.

2.7 Plan of Study (POS) form. By the end of your first year of coursework you must complete and submit a Plan of Study (POS). The POS helps you plan your progression through the program, based on course offering schedules posed three years in advance. A copy of the POS form and directions for its completion is available at: <http://www.sdstate.edu/graduate/forms/index.cfm>). Note: Course offerings for the next 3 years are available from Dr. Redlin, or from a link on the SDSU website, under the Community Development program (<http://www.sdstate.edu/soc/grad/master/index.cfm>). You submit the completed and signed Plan of Study by FAX or e-mail (scanned document with signature) to Program Advisor Dr. Redlin, who will then review your plan, suggest changes (as warranted) and submit it to the Graduate School for final approval. A copy of the final POS will be included in your student file. Please keep a copy for your records. If you need to change your POS as you move through the program, the change is easily accomplished with notification to Dr. Redlin and the completion of a Change of POS form, found at the same website (<http://www.sdstate.edu/graduate/forms/index.cfm>).

Reasons to change the plan include changing the area of concentration and/or unavailability of coursework. The former is MUCH more common than the latter!

2.8 Transfer Credits. Graduate credits earned at other institutions may be applied toward your degree if they were awarded a grade of at least “B” (3.0), and if they are approved by the Advisor and the Dean of the Graduate School. Requests for transfer of credits are usually made at the time a Plan of Study is approved and must be supported by an official transcript filed with the Graduate School. Generally no more than nine graduate transfer credits are accepted for program completion.

2.9 Time Limit and Outdated Course work. If the requirements for the Master’s degree are not completed within six years from the time of admission to work toward the degree, reconsideration of the student's program will be required and the rules of the Graduate School in effect at the beginning of the seventh year will apply. Courses completed more than six years prior to completion of the requirements of the Master's degree and not part of a previous degree are regarded as outdated course work. Outdated courses and thesis credits may be used in the Master's degree program only if validated by the Advisor, Advisory Committee and the Department Head. Validation of course relevance and the student's knowledge and skill in the subject area may be accomplished by a variety of means to be determined by the Advisor and the Advisory Committee.

3. Moving forward

3.1 Minimum GPA requirement and Continuous Enrollment. A graduate student in the Master's in Community Development program (offered through the SDSU Department of Sociology and Rural Studies) must attain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better. In any individual course, a grade of “C” or better must be received for credit in the program. Students are also expected to remain enrolled each term through to completion. Note: This requirement includes only fall and spring registration, summer term is optional. If you need to skip course enrollment in fall or spring, you must again complete the application for the Graduate School to continue. While a new application fee must be submitted, you will be readmitted to your previous status without any other charge. Please consult as soon as possible with Dr. Redlin if you need to skip a spring or fall term registration.

3.2 Building a committee. As you progress through your courses, be aware of how your interests correspond with the interests of the faculty with whom you work. For the conclusion of your degree, you will need to enlist two GPIDEA faculty (an SDSU primary advisor and a committee member) to serve on your oral exam and creative component committee; the SDSU Graduate School will also appoint a representative. Note: As you are completing the program through SDSU, either Dr. Redlin, Dr. Emery or Dr. Phillips will serve as your primary advisor, and either they or an additional GPIDEA faculty member may serve to complete the committee. Committee members should bring skill and insight to your work and help you in your final project, so be sure to think about who can best serve your needs in these roles. You must have your committee in place to complete the Plan of Study form. Note, however, that you can easily change your POS and the composition of your committee if your work takes you in a new direction.

3.3 Completing the IRB Certification. SDSU has an Internal Review Board for research on human subjects (IRB). All university faculty, students, and research personnel complete a CITI certification for doing survey, interview, focus group or other research with human subjects. You may complete this certification as part of your work in the CD 600 Orientation course or in the CD 604 Community Analysis course. However, if not, you must complete it before the end of your second year independently. The CITI certification is offered on-line, and

takes about 6 hours to complete. You will complete the Basic Course in the Protection of Human Subjects in Social and Behavioral Science research. Go to the new user registration page at: <https://www.citiprogram.org/enroll/courseregistration1.asp?language=english>. Scroll through to find South Dakota State University in the participating institutions list. Follow the instructions to create your own account, and to access the course. When you have completed the course, forward the E-certificate to both Dr. Redlin, who will file a copy in your student file, and to Dr. Norm Braaten (norm.braaten@sdsu.edu) in the SDSU Research and Sponsored Programs office.

4. Finishing the program

4.1 Option A: Thesis. The thesis is a traditional academic document reflecting original theoretical and research work relevant to the discipline of community development. The thesis will reflect both analytical and methodological skills, will pertain to a current issue of importance in the discipline and will demonstrate student insight and expertise. The expected length is 60-75 pages (see Graduate School website for layout directions) and a complete bibliography. Theses should follow the American Sociological Association Style Guide for citation forms to be used in the work (An abbreviated version is available at: http://www.asanet.org/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf. You may also order the full guide at www.asanet.org).

Planning your topic. You should begin planning your topic as soon as you begin the program. It takes time to develop, so please keep in regular discussion with your advisor as your thoughts and experiences begin to focus. Generally, your topic will reflect the concentration area you have selected for the program, and much of the material provided there can assist you in beginning your literature review.

Human Subjects (IRB) research review. All theses must be based in original research and/or statistical analysis of secondary data sets. If your work includes surveys, interviews, focus groups or other direct information gathering from people, you must complete a Human Subjects review form. The full form and directions are found on the Human Subjects website: <http://web.sdsu.edu/humansubjects/>. Please consult with Dr. Redlin for additional direction in completing this form appropriately for your project. Most projects in the program are either exempt from full committee review, or are acceptable for expedited review by a subcommittee. While this facilitates a speedy decision, be aware that you must submit your IRB proposal and receive approval before beginning any original research work.

Expectations and outcomes. It is expected that your work will meet the following guidelines for quality, content and organization (See table below).

	Thesis Option
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical examination of community /issues/opportunities/challenges • Demonstration of theoretical knowledge in the area by applying key models of community development to the research topic • Demonstration of research skills through conducting original research in the area, in addition to integration of secondary information and

	<p>existing data sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the setting/context of community development work • Specialization—topical and geographic focus
Literature Review	Discussion of research literature that demonstrates an understanding about why this issue or concern is worthy of consideration and or recommendations.
Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of key theoretical frameworks for understanding the phenomenon/topic of study. • Highlights key concepts of use in the research and explains their operationalization
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of the research design and presentation of the research steps and components • Justification as to why the methods utilized by the student are appropriate especially if they differ from the methodology used in other cases.
Research and Analysis	Demonstrates through data analysis and findings that the student holds a thorough understanding of the issue or concern that persuasively supports the report’s key findings or recommendations.
Use/Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant use for a real community or region. • Relevant use for others in the discipline • Makes recommendations or proposes solutions. • Integrates community development knowledge and skills in academic insight and practical application.
Format and Style	Follows format and style guidelines of SDSU Graduate School and the Department of Sociology and Rural Studies

Committee members and feedback. Your committee should be confirmed at the conclusion of 12 course credits. The committee is comprised of a SDSU primary advisor (Dr. Redlin, Dr. Emery or Dr. Phillips) and one other faculty member from either SDSU or another partner institution. The primary advisor will provide both content and institutional guidance for your work, the additional committee member is also there to assist you with specific questions in their areas of expertise. If your primary advisor suggests, or you desire, that you pursue an issue with another committee member, certainly ask for specific help and assistance as needed and

with respect for their time. The third member of your committee, a graduate faculty representative, is assigned by the SDSU Graduate School when you submit the names of your committee members. The graduate faculty representative serves to ensure the integrity of the completion process and that the student is treated fairly in degree completion.

4.2 Option B: Practicum and Capstone research paper. The Capstone research paper is a professional written report reflecting original applied research pertinent to a community or organized area. The report will reflect skills learned throughout the program, pertain to a place-based community development issue (broadly defined), and demonstrate student insight and expertise. A sample outline for the Option B paper can be found in Appendix B of this document. The expected length is 30-35 pages (double-spaced, one inch margins all sides), not including tables, maps, references, or appendices. The American Sociological Association Short Style Guide for citation forms to be used in the work (An abbreviated version is available at: http://www.asanet.org/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf). You may also order the full guide at www.asanet.org).

Planning your topic. As noted above, you should begin planning your topic as soon as you begin the program. It takes time to develop, so please keep in regular discussion with Dr. Redlin as your thoughts and experiences begin to merge. Generally, your topic will reflect the concentration area you have selected for your POS. You will want to have your topic decided upon before beginning the Soc 791 2-credit Independent Study which precedes your Creative Component registration.

Human Subjects (IRB) research review. All Creative Components must include some original research. If your work includes surveys, interviews, focus groups or other direct information gathering from people, you must complete a Human Subjects review form. The full form and directions are found on the Human Subjects website: <http://web.sdstate.edu/humansubjects/>. Please consult with Dr. Redlin for additional direction in completing this form appropriately for your project. Most projects in the program are either exempt from full committee review, or are acceptable for expedited review by a subcommittee. While this facilitates a speedy decision, be aware that you must submit your IRB proposal and receive approval before beginning any original research work.

Expectations and outcomes. It is expected that your work will meet the following guidelines for quality, content and organization (See table below).

	Practicum and Capstone Research Paper
Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical examination of community /issues/opportunities/challenges • Demonstration of experience in applying key components of community development practice or putting ideas into practice • Demonstration of research skills using secondary information and existing data sources • Understanding of the setting/context of community development work
Literature Review	Abbreviated discussion of literature that demonstrates an understanding about why

	this issue or concern is worthy of consideration and or recommendations
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbreviated discussion of how similar problems have been examined. • Justification as to why the methods utilized by the student are appropriate especially if they differ from the methodology used in other cases
Research and Analysis	Demonstrates thorough understanding of issue or concern that persuasively supports the report's key findings or recommendations
Use/Contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant use for a real community or region. • If possible, should have a client. • Makes recommendations or proposes solutions. • Integrates community development knowledge and skills in practical application.
Format and Style	Follows format and style guidelines of SDSU Graduate School and the Department of Sociology and Rural Studies

Committee members and feedback. Your committee should be confirmed at the conclusion of 12 course credits. The committee is comprised of a SDSU primary advisor (Dr. Redlin, Dr. Emery or Dr. Phillips) and one other faculty member from either SDSU or another partner institution. The primary advisor will provide both content and institutional guidance for your work, the additional committee member is also there to assist you with specific questions in their areas of expertise. If your primary advisor suggests, or you desire, that you pursue an issue with another committee member, certainly ask for specific help and assistance as needed and with respect for their time. The third member of your committee, a graduate faculty representative, is assigned by the SDSU Graduate School when you submit the names of your committee members. The graduate faculty representative serves to ensure the integrity of the completion process and that the student is treated fairly in degree completion.

4.3 Option C. Portfolio and Oral Exam. The portfolio completion option allows you to study more broadly in community development. The expectations include: 1) Maintaining a 3.0 average throughout all coursework; 2) Identification of an oral exam committee; 3) Compilation of a program portfolio as a basis for the final exam; 4) Oral examination demonstrating the student's ability to integrate course information and place it in context of the community development profession. Guidelines for the Option C Portfolio are available in Appendix C of this document.

Expectations and outcomes. It is expected that your work will meet the following guidelines for portfolio quality, content and organization (See table below).

	Portfolio completion
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<p>Learning Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of primary theoretical frameworks and research models for practice and study in community development • Demonstration of knowledge in applying key components of community development practice or putting ideas into practice • Demonstration of written analysis • Understanding of the setting/context of community development work
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Committee members and feedback. Your committee should be confirmed at the conclusion of 12 course credits. The committee is comprised of a SDSU primary advisor (Dr. Redlin, Dr. Emery or Dr. Phillips) and one other faculty member from either SDSU or another partner institution. The primary advisor will provide both content and institutional guidance for portfolio compilation, and will provide approval for submission of the portfolio to the committee and the scheduling of the oral exam. The third member of your committee, a graduate faculty representative, is assigned by the SDSU Graduate School when you submit the names of your committee members. The graduate faculty representative serves to ensure the integrity of the completion process and that the student is treated fairly in degree completion.

4.4 The Oral Examination. All master's degree students at SDSU need to demonstrate accomplishment in an oral examination. The student's examination can be a visual distance presentation and discussion or a face-to-face meeting and discussion on the SDSU campus. The form of the oral defense and examination should be confirmed with Dr. Redlin at the beginning of the graduating term.

Content. The oral examination for Option A or Option B includes two primary components: 1) A verbal presentation of the thesis or capstone research paper, and a "defense" of the work and content in discussion with committee members, demonstrating specific expertise in theory and methods of applied community development; 2) An oral examination of past coursework material, demonstrating broad-based synthesis of program material.

For Option C, the student's Oral exam will focus on the Portfolio presentation and general coursework. Students will not receive questions prior to the exam, but committee members may be consulted for assistance (although, as noted above, please be respectful of time).

Setting a date and filing the Form for the Graduate School. The Oral Examination needs to be scheduled through the Graduate School and specific deadlines apply. This form is available at: <http://www.sdstate.edu/graduate/forms/index.cfm>. Note: These dates change by term so be sure to check with the Graduate School to ensure your timely submission for graduation eligibility in the term you desire.

4.5 Graduation: the Intent to Graduate form. The last step you need to take is to notify the Graduate School of your intended completion. A copy of the Intent to Graduate form is available at: <http://www.sdstate.edu/graduate/forms/index.cfm>. This form should be filed in February or September--again, please check with the Graduate School for specific dates.

APPENDIX A: GPIDEA Student Acknowledgment Form

STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM GREAT PLAINS INTERACTIVE DISTANCE EDUCATION ALLIANCE (GREAT PLAINS IDEA)

The Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (Great Plains IDEA) sponsors multi-institution, online degree and certificate programs (gptidea.org). Students are provided with high quality instruction by faculty from multiple Great Plains IDEA partner universities. After admission to the partner institution of their choice, students enroll in courses sponsored by Great Plains IDEA directly through their home institution. Credits earned are counted at the home institution as regular, not transfer, credits.

Student Information Exchange. To register a student in a class, the home university enters student information into a secure Great Plains IDEA database. The information includes the student's home institution, student identification number, name, address, phone number, e-mail address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, military status, academic history and Great Plains IDEA academic records. Teaching institutions access this information for course enrollment and grade reporting. A limited number of member university employees are granted access to the database on a need-to-know basis. Great Plains IDEA does not share student information with outside parties.

Common Price. Great Plains IDEA courses are offered at a Common Price per credit hour. The Great Plains IDEA Financial Officers Functional Team reviews the Common Price annually and makes a recommendation to the Great Plains IDEA Cabinet for approval. The Common Price includes regular tuition and any course, program, facilities or student services fees as well as distance delivery costs. This does not include additional administrative fees incurred by the student, for example, application fees, late enrollment or late payment fees. The Common Price may be higher or lower than regular tuition at the home institution.

Degree Titles. The degree or certificate title printed on the diploma and/or the transcript is determined by each institution and may be different than the Great Plains IDEA title for the academic program. Students should consult their home institution for the title as it will appear on the diploma or certificate.

Grade Appeals. Grade appeals for all courses will be handled by the teaching institution. Students will not have access to the grade appeal process at their home institution unless it is also the teaching institution for the relevant course.

Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty undermines the educational experience offered through Great Plains IDEA, lowers morale by engendering a skeptical attitude about the quality of education and negatively affects the relationship between students and instructors. Students are expected to understand and abide by the academic integrity policy found in the Great Plains IDEA policy and procedure manual. Teaching faculty members have the prerogative for determining the penalty for academic misconduct in their classes. The procedure for determining the penalty and the process of appeal for the academic penalty will follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution. The student's home institution may administer remedial action and institutional sanctions using its policies and procedures. Appeal of these additional sanctions will be adjudicated at the home institution.

- I understand _____ (*home university name*) will disclose my personal information in the manner outlined above and hereby consent to said release/use of education records under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- I understand the purpose of sharing student-specific information among my home and teaching universities.
- I understand the Common Price may be higher or lower than the standard tuition at my home institution.
- I agree to substitute the grade appeal process at the teaching institution for my home institution's process.
- I have read and understand the academic integrity policy of Great Plains IDEA and I agree to abide by this policy.

(Electronic Signature)

(Date mo/dd/yy)

(Print Last Name)

(Print MI)

(Print First Name)

Revised 11-15-2005; Approved Great Plains IDEA Graduate Deans, 02-23-06; Approved Great Plains IDEA Board of Directors 03-02-06; Revised 10-14-11, 3-21-2013.

APPENDIX B: Option B Paper Sample Outline

- I. Introduction (1.5-2 pages)
 - a. An explanation of the topic and its importance in the context of community development (about 1-2 pages, can be pulled from proposal?) Statement of the research question(s).
- II. Literature Review (3-4 pages)
 - a. A presentation of what other researchers have found about this topic, particularly the key concepts underlying your research question(s).
- III. Theory and Method (4-5 pages)
 - a. A presentation of the key theoretical concepts used in the study (with references) and the anticipated relationships between these concepts (much of this too should be able to be drawn from the proposal?)
 - b. A presentation of the research design, including operationalization of concepts, forms of measurement, methods used, how the data was gathered, how participants were selected and how the data was analyzed (again a lot of this was already in the proposal, right?)
- IV. Findings (6-8 pages)
 - a. Demographic report on the study population (who participated—how many, characteristics, range of characteristics)
 - b. Report of the quantitative results that reflect anticipated outcomes (this is where you can insert and discuss the means tables and/or crosstabulation tables that reflect results and address the research question)
 - c. Report of the qualitative results that reflect anticipated outcomes (this is where you use quotations to reflect the key ideas that address your research question and that support and/or expand on the quantitative findings).
- V. Discussion and conclusion (4-5 pages)
 - a. Explain the research findings and connect them to your research question(s)—what answers have you found in the data?
 - b. Explain the limitations of the research—what were you unable to do to answer the question(s)?
 - c. Identify what future researchers should build on from this research—what would a next study look like?
 - d. Summarize the key findings by way of conclusion.
- VI. Bibliography

APPENDIX C Portfolio Compilation Guidelines