HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES (HDFS)

Course of Study for HDFS

I. Required Courses: ..............................................................21 credit hours
   HD 501 Child Development (3)
   HD 562 Dynamics of Family Relations (3)
   HES 509 Research Methods (3)
   *Statistics I (3)
   *Statistics II (3)
   HD 599 Thesis Research (6) or HD 598 Research Practicum (6)

II. Choose at least one from the following Developmental courses: 3 credit hours
   HD 602 Infant Development (3)
   HD 603 Adolescent Development (3) or BEP 655 Adolescent Development (3)
   HD 512 Adult Development (3)

III. Choose at least one from the following Family Studies courses: 3 credit hours
   HD 664 Family Crises (3)
   HD 576 Human Sexuality (3)
   HD 535 Parent-Child Relationships (3)

IV. Elective course may be selected from options above or one of the following courses: 3 credit hours
   HD 525 Preschool Development and Curriculum (3)
   HD 580 Children of Divorce (3)

Total Program Requirement: ..................................................30 credit hours

* The specific course taken must be approved by the major professor. Students who take courses without advice of their faculty advisor may need additional courses to meet requirements (See Statistics Section page 12).
* Statistics core requirement for HDFS, PAFLE and MFT

Students are required to take two graduate level courses in statistics for the HDFS and PAFLE programs. Only one course is required for the MFT program. Each student must meet with their graduate faculty advisor to discuss and plan the sequence, or courses, which best fit with their individual career objectives, skill level, and schedule. (Make sure to also consult with your faculty advisor before taking the second statistics course.)

- If the student is seeking a terminal Master’s degree, the Psychology Data Analyses course sequence (PY 502/503) or the Statistics Data Analyses course sequence (ST 550/551) may be considered.

- If the student is planning a career that includes health education or research (including public or community health), he/she may opt to take the community health biostatistics sequence (CHS 525/526).

- The educational statistic course sequence (BER 540/545) is also an option for students seeking a terminal Master’s degree. TO TAKE BER ONLINE COURSES, STUDENTS MUST HAVE AUTHORIZATION TO DO SO FROM THEIR FACULTY ADVISOR AND THE CHAIR OF THE DEPARTMENT.

- A combination of courses (BER 540 and ST 551) to fulfill the statistics core requirement is also an option that faculty advisors may recommend.
THESIS OR PROJECT-IN-LIEU-OF-THESIS (PILOT)

PLAN I- Thesis (HD 599)

A thesis evidencing research capacity, independent thought, and the ability to interpret materials is required of all Master's degree candidates who pursue Plan I. The subject chosen must be in the major field and must be approved first by the student’s major professor and then by the graduate committee of the major department or school and by the head of the student's major department or division.

The thesis committee must consist of at least three members approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. A student and his or her major professor will select the thesis committee. All members of a thesis committee must be members of the Graduate Faculty. One member must be from outside the student's major department. A form appointing a thesis committee is available at the Graduate School's Web site. (http://graduate.ua.edu/academics/forms/committee_thesis.pdf)

The candidate must give members of the examining committee a minimum of two weeks to read the thesis before the date of the final oral examination. *A Student Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations*, is available at the Graduate School office and on the Graduate School's Web site. Approval of the thesis by the graduate Dean is necessary before graduation.

The thesis should be completed, if possible, while the student is in residence at the University. To request permission to complete a thesis in absentia, the student must, before leaving the University, submit a satisfactory outline and timeline for the completion of the thesis project, as well as evidence that adequate facilities are available where the work will be done, to the head of the major department or school. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the thesis while in residence.

Steps to Completing a Thesis

1) Research idea and form hypotheses
2) Meet with Major Professor/ Advisor to assess feasibility of proposal
3) Write literature review
4) Develop timeline for turning in draft of proposal to committee
5) Write IRB Proposal and site approval
6) Develop timeline for draft submission to give to advisor and committee
7) Collect and analyze the data
8) Write up the findings
9) The defense
10) Submit theses to Grad School and to Department
PLAN II- PROJECT IN-LIEU OF THESIS (PILOT) (HD 598)

Students may be able to complete a project-in-lieu-of-thesis (PILOT) at the discretion of the student’s Major Professor. A PILOT (Plan II) is not always available, or feasible. Students should not assume that they will be able to conduct a PILOT.

The major difference between a traditional thesis and a PILOT is that in the former, the student originates the idea for the study and fully develops the research question and the design of the study. In contrast, a PILOT is likely to be an idea that the major professor has already fully developed, or is in the process of developing, or is a study or project already in the process of being conducted.

After consulting with their Major Professor about the possibility of completing a PILOT, and receiving approval to complete a PILOT, a written agreement should be developed between the student and the Major Professor as to what will comprise the PILOT, including a timeline to complete the PILOT. The Major Professor and student must sign the agreement for it to be valid.

Prior to starting on the PILOT, students must also propose their project to a committee of three faculty members. All three committee members may come from within the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. The student’s major professor will chair the student’s committee and will be one member on the PILOT Committee. Only two of the three committee members must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

The student must produce a written document that describes the planning and implementation of the project, including a literature review, (or similar acceptable document, such as an IRB protocol) to present to the PILOT committee. No date will be set for the committee to meet until the committee reads and provides feedback to the Major Professor and/or student about the PILOT. The student is responsible for scheduling a proposal meeting with the PILOT committee, presenting the proposal and receiving approval from the committee to conduct the PILOT.

Once the project is completed, the student submits the written document to the committee, and presents the results of the project at a final defense before the committee members. The PILOT committee unanimously must approve the student’s defense of the project and sign-off on the PILOT Defense Form. PILOT Defense Forms can be obtained from the Program Assistant in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

If the PILOT is part of a study already being conducted, the IRB must be amended to include the student’s name after the PILOT committee has approved the PILOT. The student is expected to write different sections of the PILOT, including assisting with the writing of the PILOT (e.g., literature review), collecting and working with data (e.g., administering assessments, coding videotapes, scoring and entering assessments into a database, etc), assisting with the data analyses and interpretation and write up of the results and discussion sections.
Steps to Completing a Project-in-lieu of thesis (PILOT)

1) Meet with the Major Professor and assess feasibility of conducting a PILOT.
2) After approval, an agreement must be signed by the major professor and the student.
3) Form a PILOT Committee of three members, one of which will be the Major Professor (who will also serve as the chair of the student’s PILOT committee).
4) A proposal, including a literature review, (or similar acceptable document, such as an IRB protocol) must be completed by the student and approved by the Major Professor before the student meets with his/her committee.
5) The approved proposal will be submitted to the committee members. No date will be set for the committee to meet until the committee reads and provides feedback to the Major Professor and/or student about the PILOT.
6) The student will be responsible for scheduling a proposal meeting with the 3 committee members, presenting the proposal, and receiving approval from the committee to conduct the PILOT.
7) At the completion of the PILOT, the student will summarize the results of the project in a written document. Submit the document to the PILOT committee and receive feedback.
8) After receiving feedback, the student can schedule a defense meeting for the PILOT.
9) The student must successfully defend the project before the PILOT committee. The PILOT committee unanimously must approve the student’s defense of the project and sign-off on the PILOT Defense Form.
10) The student must file the signed PILOT Defense Form with the Department of Human Development and Family Studies before the student can graduate.

Students who decide to complete a project-in-lieu of thesis must enroll for no less than 6 credit hours of HD 598-Research Practicum.