**HUMAN ECOLGY: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND FAMILY ECONOMICS, PH.D.**

This is a named option within the Human Ecology, Ph.D. ([guide.wisc.edu/graduate/human-ecology-school-wide/human-ecology-phd](https://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/human-ecology-school-wide/human-ecology-phd))

The Department of Consumer Science develops and disseminates information on the ways in which the interactions among consumers, business, and government can enhance the interests and well-being of consumers, families, and communities. The program focuses on various dimensions of well-being including economic/financial security, consumer empowerment, health, food security, housing security, sustainability, and the public policy that affects those dimensions of well-being. The program is interdisciplinary; current faculty have degrees in diverse fields including economics, marketing, sociology, retailing, social work, and consumer science. Some faculty have joint appointments with Cooperative Extension, providing students with opportunities for training in outreach and applied research. Ph.D. students work closely with faculty members, often collaborating on research and outreach programs.

Ph.D. students work closely with faculty members, often collaborating on research and outreach programs. Ph.D. concentrations include both consumer behavior and family economics; however all Ph.D. students must complete core courses in consumer behavior, family economics, and research methods.

Students undertake research on consumer decision-making affecting the social and economic well-being of individuals and families. This is a multi-disciplinary degree program. The goal of this program is to prepare students for the following types of job placements:

1. Tenure-track academic faculty positions, primarily in other schools of human ecology, consumer science or related units
2. Research administration positions in government, non-tenure academic units, nonprofit organizations, think tanks and related entities
3. Applied consumer research in the public and private sector, including market research, policy research and consulting.

**ADMISSIONS**

Applications are accepted once per year for Fall admission and are due by December 1st of the preceding year. Admission to the Consumer Behavior & Family Economics (CBFE) Ph.D. option in Human Ecology is based on academic merit and fit with the research strengths of the Consumer Science faculty. As such, the student’s Statement of Purpose should clearly indicate how their research interests correspond to the Ph.D. program and faculty strengths.

Applicants should have successfully completed college-level courses covering subjects including introductory and intermediate microeconomics, consumer behavior, research methods, statistics and regression analysis, and calculus. Students who fail to meet the minimum course requirements for admission may still be admitted to the program but be required to take additional courses. An interview by phone or in person may be required.

To be considered for admission to the Consumer Behavior & Family Economics (CBFE) Ph.D. option in Human Ecology, the department requires the following materials:

- Online application ([https://grad.wisc.edu/apply](https://grad.wisc.edu/apply)) indicating “Human Ecology PHD—Consumr Behav & Family Econ” as your program selection
- $75 application fee
- Curriculum vitae/resume
- Unofficial transcripts or academic records from each institution attended (official transcripts will be required for students who receive an admission offer)
- Official Graduate Record Exam or GMAT scores (GRE Institution code #1846)
- International students only:
  - Official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or Melab scores
  - International students who hold degrees from U.S. institutions do not need to submit language test scores
- Three letters of recommendation (Submitted electronically through your Graduate School application)
- Uploaded Statement of Purpose/Reasons for Graduate Study

Additional information is available on the program website ([https://sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/research-and-creative-scholarship/consumer-behavior-family-economics](https://sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/research-and-creative-scholarship/consumer-behavior-family-economics)).

**GRADUATE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS**

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic degree programs and the Graduate School. Applicants must meet requirements of both the program(s) and the Graduate School. Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online ([https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions](https://grad.wisc.edu/admissions)).

**FUNDING**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information ([https://grad.wisc.edu/funding](https://grad.wisc.edu/funding)) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and processes related to funding.

**PROGRAM RESOURCES**

Funding opportunities for Human Ecology graduate students are available and made possible, in large part, by generous donations to SoHE. Every year, these funds are used to fund teaching or project assistantships, award academic excellence scholarships, and provide students doing their masters or doctoral research or final MFA project with conference travel scholarships and graduate research scholarships. See the School of Human Ecology Enrollment Policy on Funding.
Eligibility (https://sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/academic-policies-forms-deadlines/full-time-enrollment-policy-for-funding-eligibility) and view current funding opportunities on our program website (https://sohe.wisc.edu/graduate-students/funding) for more information.

**REQUIREMENTS**

**MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

**NAMED OPTION REQUIREMENTS**

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face to Face</th>
<th>Evening/Weekend</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Hybrid</th>
<th>Accelerated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mode of Instruction Definitions**

**Evening/Weekend**: These programs are offered in an evening and/or weekend format to accommodate working schedules. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses and personal connections, while keeping your day job. For more information about the meeting schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Online**: These programs are offered primarily online. Many available online programs can be completed almost entirely online with all online programs offering at least 50 percent or more of the program work online. Some online programs have an on-campus component that is often designed to accommodate working schedules. Take advantage of the convenience of online learning while participating in a rich, interactive learning environment. For more information about the online nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**Hybrid**: These programs have innovative curricula that combine on-campus and online formats. Most hybrid programs are completed on-campus with a partial or completely online semester. For more information about the hybrid schedule of a specific program, contact the program.

**Accelerated**: These on-campus programs are offered in an accelerated format that allows you to complete your program in a condensed time-frame. Enjoy the advantages of on-campus courses with minimal disruption to your career. For more information about the accelerated nature of a specific program, contact the program.

**CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS**

| Minimum Credit Requirement | 51 credits |
| Minimum Residence Credit Requirement | 32 credits |
| Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement | Half of degree coursework (26 credits out of 51 total credits) must be completed graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university’s Course Guide. |
| Overall Graduate GPA Requirement | 3.00 GPA required. |

**Other Grade Requirements**

The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

**Assessments and Examinations**

Doctoral students are required to take a comprehensive preliminary/oral examination after they have cleared their record of all Incomplete and Progress grades (other than research and thesis). Deposit of the doctoral dissertation in the Graduate School is required.

**Language Requirements**

Contact the program for information on any language requirements.

**Doctoral Minor/ Breadth Requirements**

All doctoral students are required to complete a minor.

**REQUIRED COURSES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNSR SCI 748</td>
<td>The Economic Organization of the Household (Required)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNSR SCI 888</td>
<td>Advanced Consumer Behavior (Required)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNSR SCI 901</td>
<td>Graduate Special Topics in Consumer Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNSR SCI 930</td>
<td>Seminar in Family Economic Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNSR SCI 901</td>
<td>Graduate Special Topics in Consumer Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTER-HE 801</td>
<td>Special Topics in Human Ecology (Human Ecology Theories &amp; Perspectives)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCS 801</td>
<td>Special Topics in Civil Society and Community Research (Proseminar)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTER-HE 793</td>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A A E 636</td>
<td>Applied Econometric Analysis I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose two additional 3-credit courses in consultation with your advisor to fulfill this requirement.

| Research Methods | 6 |
| 9 |
| Gradual Electives | 6 |
| Research & Thesis | 3 |

**POLICIES**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES**

The Graduate School’s Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the
degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

**NAMED OPTION-SPECIFIC POLICIES**

**GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

**PRIOR COURSEWORK**

**Graduate Work from Other Institutions**
With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 18 credits of graduate coursework taken at other institutions or as a UW–Madison Special student (with a maximum of 9 special student credits as part of the 18). Prior coursework taken at other institutions may not be used to satisfy the minimum graduate residence credit requirement. Credits earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree are not allowed to satisfy requirements.

**UW–Madison Undergraduate**
With program approval, up to 7 credits numbered 300 or above from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward degree credit; undergraduate courses must be numbered 700 or above to count toward the minimum graduate coursework requirement. No undergraduate coursework may count toward the graduate residence requirement.

**UW–Madison University Special**
With program approval, students are allowed to count up to 18 credits of graduate coursework taken at other institutions or as a UW–Madison Special student (with a maximum of 9 special student credits as part of the 18). coursework must be numbered 300 or above for residence and degree credit and 700 or above to satisfy the minimum graduate coursework (50%) requirement. Credits earned ten or more years prior to admission to a doctoral degree are not allowed to satisfy requirements. Use of Special student credit may require payment of tuition difference.

**PROBATION**
The Graduate School regularly reviews the record of any student who earned grades of BC, C, D, F, or Incomplete in a graduate course (300 or above), or grade of U in research credits. This review could result in academic probation with a hold on future enrollment or in being suspended from the Graduate School.

**ADVISOR / COMMITTEE**
Every graduate student is required to have an advisor. An advisor is a faculty member, or sometimes a committee, from the major department responsible for providing advice regarding graduate studies. An advisor generally serves as the thesis advisor. In many cases, an advisor is assigned to incoming students. Students can be suspended from the Graduate School if they do not have an advisor.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, the Graduate School expects them to meet with their advisor on a regular basis.

A committee often accomplishes advising for the students in the early stages of their studies.

**CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED**
12 credits

**TIME CONSTRAINTS**
Doctoral degree students who have been absent for ten or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence. Individual programs may count the coursework students completed prior to their absence for meeting program requirements; that coursework may not count toward Graduate School credit requirements.

A candidate for a doctoral degree who fails to take the final oral examination and deposit the dissertation within five years after passing the preliminary examination may be required to take another preliminary examination and to be admitted to candidacy a second time.

**OTHER**
n/a

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES**
Take advantage of the Graduate School’s professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

**PROGRAM RESOURCES**
The School of Human Ecology Graduate Program values the professional development of graduate students and provides financial awards to those who are invited to present at professional conferences/exhibits. The purpose of the support is to encourage participation in professional development, scholarly research, and/or creative endeavor and to help cover expenses not covered by other sources. Students may receive a maximum award of $650 for travel ($750 for international travel) to support conference participation in a single academic year.

In addition, each academic department within the School of Human Ecology may offer additional professional development grant opportunities. See the program Events Calendar (https://sohe.wisc.edu/calendar-of-events) for the most up-to-date information on professional development opportunities.

**PEOPLE**

**Faculty:**

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES**

**Professors:** Cynthia Jasper (chair), Constance Flanagan

**Associate Professors:** Lori Bakken, Brian Christens

**Assistant Professors:** Kendra Alexander, Jennifer Gaddis, Leah Horowitz, Carolina Sarmiento, Shannon Sparks
CONSUMER SCIENCE (CONSUMER BEHAVIOR & FAMILY ECONOMICS)
Professors: Nancy Wong (chair), Judith Bartfeld
Associate Professors: J. Michael Collins, Clifford Robb
Assistant Professors: Feneba Addo, Lydia Ashton, Dee Warmath

DESIGN STUDIES
Professors: Roberto Rengel (chair), Jennifer Angus, Wei Dong, Majid Sarmadi, Mark Nelson
Associate Professors: Mary Hark, Carolyn Kallenborn, Jung-hye Shin
Assistant Professors: Marianne Fairbanks, Marina Moskowitz, Kevin Ponto, Kristin Thorleifsdottir

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES
Professors: Janean Dilworth-Bart (chair), Charles Raison, Julie Poehlmann-Tynan, Linda Roberts, Stephen Small
Associate Professors: Larissa Duncan, Sarah Halpern-Meekin, Sigan Hartley, Heather Kirkorian, Robert Nix, Lauren Papp
Assistant Professors: Kristin Litzelman, Margaret Kerr