

U N I V E R S I T Y   O F   N E W   M E X I C O  
D E P A R T M E N T   O F   A M E R I C A N   S T U D I E S  
**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK**

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## ABOUT THE GRADUATE HANDBOOK

This Handbook (also available online at <http://americanstudies.unm.edu/graduate/current-graduate-handbook.pdf>) and the UNM Catalog (available online <https://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2022-2023/>) contain information essential to your successful graduate career at UNM. It is strongly suggested that they be included in your “required reading.” **Ignorance of a rule does not constitute a basis for waiving that rule.**

Students must comply with the procedures and meet the requirements stated in the Graduate Handbook for the year in which they began their graduate work in the department. The department reserves the right to correct errors that appear in the print or online versions of the Handbook.

## INTRODUCTION

For over seventy years, the Department of American Studies has provided graduate students at the University of New Mexico with a unique opportunity for pursuing interdisciplinary studies. First chartered as an interdepartmental post-master's PhD program in 1944, American Studies was reconstituted as a regular department in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1975. A Master of Arts degree was added three years later. The Department currently offers the only PhD in American Studies in the Rocky Mountain region. Since 1979, when an undergraduate major was added to the minor course of study, American Studies graduate students have been able to teach a variety of our introductory courses.

The graduate program in American Studies is designed to familiarize students with a wide range of scholarship as a basis for their pursuit of specific programs of study. Recent American Studies graduates have pursued careers in academia, public policy, secondary education and cultural institutions in the arts and government.

Foremost among the American Studies Department's many areas of distinction in research and teaching are:

- 1) Transnationalism and Globalization
- 2) Critical Regionalism and Southwest Studies
- 3) Critical Race and Class Studies
- 4) Environmental and Social Justice Studies
- 5) Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies
- 6) Comparative Cultural and Popular Culture Studies

Students have the opportunity to develop a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to historical, literary, visual, and ethnographic theory and methods.

While students are required to complete seminars within the department in two or more of the above areas, the department encourages students to develop programs of study that creatively combine resources of multiple colleges and departments.

This Graduate Handbook is designed to provide students with technical information about requirements for completing each stage of the graduate degree process. Graduate students are expected to exercise initiative and responsibility in fashioning their curricula, constituting their faculty committees, and maintaining contact with their faculty advisor as they determine a course of study and a timeline for completion of the degree.

## **THE DEPARTMENT**

During the academic year, the Department periodically sponsors scholarly presentations by guest lecturers, faculty, and graduate students. Presentations include reports on current research, previews of papers to be read at off-campus professional meetings, and seminar or course materials.

Over fifty MA and PhD candidates – many of the latter in the dissertation writing stage – are currently enrolled in the American Studies Department. Those already enrolled are governed by the rules in effect when they were advanced to candidacy.

Since the American Studies Department is relatively small, the faculty usually acts as a committee of the whole to make most policy decisions about admissions, curriculum, and financial assistance.

## **OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (OGS)**

The first Committee on Graduate Study was formed at UNM in 1916. A year later the first Master's degrees were awarded in Chemistry and Latin. In 1919 the Graduate School was formally constituted, and in 1947 the University's first PhDs were graduated in American Studies and Latin American Studies.

In 1977 the Graduate School was decentralized, and the Office of Graduate Studies was created. The Faculty Senate Graduate Committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies in conjunction with the college graduate committees are now responsible for coordinating and monitoring graduate student activities throughout the University. The American Studies Department aims to have its policies function in concert with those of OGS. Students are responsible for consulting the OGS guidelines, which may be accessed online at <http://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2017-2018/graduate-program.html>.

Students may fulfill the requirements for graduation stated in the UNM Catalog for the year in which they were enrolled for the first time in a degree-granting graduate program at the University of New Mexico, provided they complete the graduation requirements for the degree sought within the time frame prescribed in that Catalog. Students admitted to American Studies after matriculating at another UNM degree-granting program must graduate using the American Studies policies published in the Catalog in effect at the time of their transfer.

## **GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GPSA)**

GPSA is the independent service organization that was established in 1969 to serve all part-time and full-time graduate students. The GPSA is governed by a Council comprised of representatives from all graduate student departments on campus (American Studies has one GPSA representative). In addition, the GPSA Student Research Allocation Committee (SRAC) provides funds for student research projects (thesis and dissertation) and travel to research-associated conferences such as the national American Studies Association conference.

GPSA provides other services and regularly appoints graduate representatives to some eighteen standing university committees and policy-making boards. Currently, GPSA is located in the Student Union Building, Suite 1021 at the Plaza Level.

## **ADMISSIONS**

Students applying from outside the Department or University should contact American Studies and the Admissions Office for information and an application. Application information is also available on the Department website at <http://americanstudies.unm.edu/graduate/index.html>.

Students **currently enrolled** in the American Studies MA program at UNM who wish to pursue a PhD in the department do so under the same application criteria and deadlines as all prospective applicants to the PhD program.

### **NEW MEXICO RESIDENCY DEFINITIONS**

A student who enters and remains in New Mexico principally to obtain an education is presumed to be a non-resident for tuition purposes.

A student is classified as a resident or non-resident for tuition purposes based on information supplied on the application at the time of admission. The residency status is only changed upon re-application for admission or submission of a petition to the Office of the Registrar. Petitions are accepted for the Fall term beginning the first week of July, for the Spring term beginning the first week of December. Your completed petition and required supporting documentation must be submitted to the Mesa Vista Hall North One-Stop, no later than the second Friday of the term. State law establishes residency requirements for tuition purposes. Each person must meet the requirements individually (marriage is not a factor in deciding residency).

To become a legal resident of New Mexico, the student must satisfy four basic requirements:

1. Twelve months consecutive presence
2. Financial independence
3. Written declaration of "Intent" to relinquish residency of any other state
4. Overt acts as defined by the Registrar's Office

Other relevant factors may be considered along with those itemized above. More detailed information on basic requirements as well as guidelines on exceptions and additional regulations can be found at <http://registrar.unm.edu/residency/index.html>.

Second-year students who receive fellowships, assistantships, or other awards **do not** automatically attain resident status. Awards including tuition and fees cover resident tuition rates only. To ensure in-state tuition rates, students must file a petition establishing New Mexico residency.

Persons who have special problems concerning residency should arrange for a conference with the Registrar.

### **FINANCIAL AID AND OTHER FUNDING SOURCES**

#### **Department Aid**

**All students accepted in the PhD program are awarded multiple years of full funding** (contingent on remaining in good academic standing for this duration). This funding includes a monthly stipend, tuition remission for graduate coursework up to twelve (12) credit hours each long semester, and health insurance benefits. Funding packages for PhD students are comprised of a combination of half-time teaching assistantships, graduate assistantships, and other potential fellowship opportunities, such as nominations for the New Mexico Higher Education Department Graduate Scholarship for eligible students. Financial aid awards are subject to final budget approval. To maintain eligibility, students must be registered for at least nine (9) hours of graduate credit (the equivalent of three graduate courses), and maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in graduate work.

Department funding is based on working as an instructor on main campus. If you are planning to conduct research away from campus after completing coursework, please notify the department in writing and know that your funding offer may be contingent on your availability to teach on main campus.

## **Other Funding Sources**

The Department encourages MA students to seek funding from other UNM sources as well as pursue fellowship and grants programs outside the University. The Office of Graduate Studies offers a limited number of financial aid fellowships and awards. Some may be held concurrently with other forms of aid. Contact: Office of Graduate Studies, Humanities 107, (505) 277-2711. At UNM, there are a number of scholarships for which MA students are eligible to apply, including the Ida Romero Memorial Scholarship of El Centro de la Raza and the Graduate Student Success Scholarship. Consult <http://scholarship.unm.edu/> for additional listings. Fellowships at UNM that American Studies graduate students have been awarded include: Center for Southwest Research Fellowships (<http://elibrary.unm.edu/cswr/fellowships.php>) and Center for Regional Studies Fellowships (<http://crsinfo.unm.edu/index.html>). American Studies graduate students have worked as tutors and student managers at the Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS) (<http://ctl.unm.edu/employment/>).

Funding available to UNM MA students for research and conference travel include the Tinker Field Research Grant (<https://lail.unm.edu/funding/assets/documents/frg-student-application.pdf>), a variety of funding sources through the Latin American and Iberian Institute (LAI) (<http://lail.unm.edu/funding/student-funding.html>), Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) (<https://gpsa.unm.edu/funding/grants-funding/grant-scholarship.html>), and Graduate Research Project and Travel Grants (<https://grad.unm.edu/funding/research-travel-grants/index.html>). The Student Research Allocations Committee provides money for student research projects and for travel expenses to conferences and workshops directly related to the student's degree program. Contact: SRAC, Graduate & Professional Student Association, Student Union Building (SUB), Room 1021, (505) 277- 3803. Some funding for travel and/or research is usually available through the Department's American Studies Graduate Student Association.

The University administers National Direct/Perkins Loans and Federal Direct Student Loans and cooperates in the administration of a number of other such funds, as well as work study and student employment programs. Short-term emergency loans are also available to currently enrolled full-time graduate students. Contact: Student Financial Aid Office, Mesa Vista North One Stop, (505) 277-8900.

For outside sources of funding for study and research, various listings of grant opportunities are available through the Office of Research, 327 Scholes Hall, (505) 277-6128.

## **ADVISEMENT**

Each semester, during the months of October and April (before registering for classes), all students should consult with their faculty advisors.

New students are assigned temporary faculty advisors during their first semester of study. After two semesters of coursework, NO LATER THAN the completion of twelve (12) hours of coursework, students must choose a faculty advisor and notify the Graduate Director in writing of the faculty member's agreement to oversee their progress and exams. The Graduate Director should be apprised in writing of any changes in this selection, and students should notify the department administrator as well.

All students should meet at least once a semester with their faculty advisors to discuss appropriate coursework. The faculty advisor will assist the student in planning a program of studies fostering mastery of fundamental knowledge of their interdisciplinary areas through full exploitation of the resources of the University.

## **ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW**

The faculty is concerned that all students make consistent and timely progress toward their degrees. To

this end, the entire faculty conducts an annual graduate student review to hear the faculty advisors' report and to check student progress in forming exam committees and/or completing degree requirements. Students whose record appears to indicate current or potential difficulty are notified in writing.

If a student shows little promise of completing the degree program, the department will notify the student and the Dean of Graduate Studies in writing that the student is disenrolled from further work in that program. Disenrolled students are not eligible to continue work in any graduate degree program in the University for a period of one calendar year from the date of disenrollment. Readmission after the disenrollment period requires the approval of the department to which the student has applied for readmission and of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Note: A student record reflecting two incompletes, which extend beyond one semester, will be considered grounds for automatic disenrollment.

## **COURSEWORK**

All courses must carry graduate credit within their particular department. In the case of American Studies, this means courses numbered 500 and above.

**All American Studies graduate students are required to take at least seven (7) graduate seminars offered within the Department. Three of these must be the Core Graduate Course Sequence (CGCS)** [see below]. The four remaining seminars should address two areas of emphasis in the department. Students should take these required American Studies graduate seminars from among several different faculty in the department. Note: *not all courses with 500-level course numbers are graduate seminars! It is your responsibility to check the course's status.*

Students who are admitted to the PhD after completing the MA in American Studies at UNM will be exempt from repeating the required graduate sequence, but must have a total of 14 graduate seminars (42 hours total) offered within the department in their combined MA and PhD coursework. Students must also meet academic residence requirements and continuous enrollment regulations appropriate to their degree program (see "Residence Requirements, OGS" and "Thesis and Dissertation" below).

### **Master of Arts**

#### Plan I (Thesis)

1. A minimum of 27 hours of coursework.
2. A minimum of 6 additional hours of thesis (AMST 599) credit.
3. At least 18 hours completed in residence at UNM.
4. No more than 3 hours of independent study credit (AMST 597).

#### Plan II (Non-thesis)

1. A minimum of 33 hours of coursework.
2. No more than 3 hours of independent study credit.
3. At least 26 of these credit hours must be completed in residence at UNM.

#### Plan III (Coursework only)

1. A minimum of 33 hours of coursework.
2. At least 27 of these credits must be completed in residence at UNM.
3. No more than 3 hours of independent studies

4. No capstone project required. This plan is designed primarily for students who were admitted directly to the PhD program without a previously earned Masters. These students will earn the MA in American Studies along the way to earning the PhD.

## **Doctorate**

### ***Students admitted directly to the PhD program without a previously earned Masters***

1. Must complete the American Studies MA Plan III requirements detailed above.
2. Must have a total of **12 graduate seminars** (36 hours total) offered within the Department in their combined MA and PhD coursework.
3. A minimum of **18 hours post-MA coursework** (in other words, a minimum of 51 total credit hours of combined MA and PhD coursework.)
4. At least 18 additional hours of dissertation credit (AMST 699)
5. Only 6 hours of PhD coursework may be in individual study (AMST 697), for a maximum total of 9 hours individual study in combined MA and PhD coursework.
6. At least 24 of the total 48 PhD credit hours must be completed at UNM.
7. Doctoral candidates must be enrolled in AMST 699 the semester in which they complete their degrees, including summer sessions.

### ***Students admitted to the PhD with a previously earned Masters***

Note: Students who are admitted to the PhD after completing the MA in American Studies at UNM—in other words, students who were admitted to the MA in American Studies at UNM and completed their MA at UNM before applying to the PhD program—will be exempt from repeating the required graduate sequence (because they have already completed the sequence during their MA), but must have a total of **12 graduate seminars** (36 hours total) offered within the Department in their combined MA and PhD coursework. Students must also meet academic residence requirements and continuous enrollment regulations appropriate to their degree program (see "Residence Requirements, OGS" and "Thesis and Dissertation" below).

1. A minimum of 30 hours post-MA coursework
2. At least 18 additional hours of dissertation credit (AMST 699)
3. Only 6 hours of PhD coursework may be in individual study (AMST 697), for a maximum total of 9 hours individual study in combined MA and PhD coursework.
4. At least 24 of the total 48 PhD credit hours must be completed at UNM.
5. Doctoral candidates must be enrolled in AMST 699 the semester in which they complete their degrees, including summer sessions.

## **Minors**

American Studies offers a minor to MA students in other departments. Please consult the UNM catalog for details.

American Studies graduate students wishing to complete a minor in another department may do so in consultation with their advisors, and must contact the other department for specific guidelines. American Studies faculty will not serve on committees of studies for minors in other departments. Plan I students may take no more than 6 hours of graduate coursework in a single other department; Plan II students are limited to 12 hours of graduate coursework in a single department other than American Studies.



## **INCOMPLETE POLICY**

A student record reflecting two incompletes, which extend beyond one semester, will be considered grounds for automatic disenrollment.

## **RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS, OGS**

**Note:** The following residency requirements refer to credits taken **prior to admission** to the Department of American Studies. The graduate school allows MA applicants to transfer credits from a comparable MA program **at the discretion of the American Studies Department**. The following OGS residence requirements do not apply to coursework taken after admission to the Department. The American Studies Department requires that all courses taken after admission to the Department be taken at the University of New Mexico.

### **Master of Arts**

At the master's level, candidates must complete at least 50% of their coursework at UNM after admission into the MA program. (Translation: Students enrolled in an MA program outside of UNM may petition to have courses transfer to the department should they be admitted. The decision to accept courses taken prior to admission is at the discretion of the Department of American Studies).

### **Doctorate**

For the PhD, the minimum residence requirement is at least eighteen (18) credit hours completed at UNM after the admission into the PhD program.

## **LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT AND ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH TOOL**

### **Master of Arts**

At the present time there is no foreign language requirement for the MA.

## **Doctorate**

Before a student may take the comprehensive exam, they must satisfy the OGS language or research skill requirement and file the “Certification of Language or Research Skill Requirement” form. Students who select the language option should, if possible, choose a language that may be useful in their research.

Language competency may be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

- 4 semesters of coursework in the language with a grade of B or above (may be part of undergraduate coursework or other coursework taken elsewhere)
- A graduate-level course in that language with a grade of B or above
- A minor or its equivalent in the language (may be completed elsewhere)
- Passing the ETS examination in the chosen language
- Passing an exam given by the Foreign Languages and Literatures or the Spanish and Portuguese department
- Student speaks the language with near-native ability as certified by UNM
- Student is a foreign student with a good command of English and their native language meets the language requirement
- Other options by petition to the department. Please see below:

The alternate methodology option allows a student to pursue proficiency in research skills appropriate to their dissertation. Students electing this option must complete 6 to 12 hours of graded coursework, which does not apply to course credits for the doctorate. In some cases, coursework completed previously, elsewhere, may be acceptable. Students who choose the Alternative Research Tool option must, after consultation with their faculty advisor, submit a proposal (1-2 pages) explaining and justifying the alternate research skill and specifying the coursework that satisfies this requirement. This proposal must be accepted by the department and approved by the student’s advisor, the graduate advisor, and the department chair.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Frequently, in order to verify enrollment to determine eligibility for financial aid and loan deferment, the University is required to certify the enrollment status of a student. In such instances a student’s course load is described as full-time, half time, or part-time according to the following:

### **A. Academic Year**

#### 1. Full-time

9 or more credit hours per semester

6 credit hours per semester and an assistantship

#### 2. Half-time

5 – 8 credit hours per semester

#### 3. Less than half-time

4 or fewer credit hours per semester

### **B. Summer Session**

#### 1. Full-time

6 credit hours or more

3 credit hours and an assistantship

2. Half-time  
3 – 5 credit hours

3. Less than half-time  
1 – 2 credit hours

Note: Students with loans or other external funding are encouraged to verify what is considered full-time status with their lender, as it may be different from University standards.

### **AMERICAN STUDIES CORE GRADUATE COURSE SEQUENCE (CGCS)**

Before advancement to candidacy, all American Studies graduate students must successfully complete the American Studies Core Graduate Course Sequence with a passing grade of B or higher in each of the courses.

The American Studies Core Graduate Course Sequence must be taken in the following order: AMST 500 is required during the first fall semester of each student's graduate career; AMST 501 must be taken during the following spring semester; and AMST 502 is mandatory during the fall semester of the student's second year.

#### **1. AMST 500 – American Culture Studies Proseminar**

The proseminar examines the formation of the field of American Studies. Over the course of the semester, the first year cohort of students work to develop a shared frame of reference for the multiple ways in which American Studies scholars utilize, reimagine, and/or challenge the interdisciplinary range of texts that circulate as touchstones for the field. Organized around keywords or terms that have been central to debates within American Studies, the proseminar introduces students to the intellectual questions and problems that have shaped the field historically, as well as providing an opportunity to engage recent innovative texts that extend and/or critically rethink aspects of American Studies and related scholarship. Readings and course discussion are intended to provide students with knowledge of the multiple disciplinary perspectives and thematic fields most relevant to the specific formation of American Studies at UNM.

#### **2. AMST 501 – Theory and Methods in American Studies**

The second course in the required sequence of the American Studies core graduate curriculum, this seminar builds on the introduction to theories and methods provided in AMST 500 by focusing on two or three theoretical traditions that have informed the current configuration of American Studies. The seminar establishes a foundation for understanding the critical intellectual genealogies that shape contemporary debates in American Studies scholarship. Readings in this course further examine connections between historical and intellectual work that has served as the ongoing basis of critical inquiry and innovative contemporary scholarship that emerges from and critically rethinks these preceding interventions. Through a close analysis of theories and methods of American Studies, students are prepared to consider the place of theory and method in the development of their own research projects.

#### **3. AMST 502 – Research Methods Practicum**

This seminar teaches students applied research skills and methods. The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with the tools to develop a thesis or dissertation prospectus draft, with a thorough understanding of how to go about locating primary source material and conducting various forms of research that can serve as a foundation for their prospectus. Students complete this seminar having drafted

an initial prospectus and with insight into the mechanics of scholarship that will prepare them both to develop their comprehensive exams and to embark on the independent research required to produce an MA thesis or PhD dissertation.

### **ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY**

Before advancement to candidacy, all graduate students must successfully complete the American Studies Core Graduate Course Sequence (CGCS). Students are advised to make a list of proposed coursework to submit to their advisor and the Graduate Director after their completion of 15-18 credit hours.

#### **Master of Arts**

At the MA level, after completion of the CGCS and 27 hours of resident graduate credit, students secure a Program of Studies form from the Office of Graduate Studies website (<https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/pos-masters.html>). In consultation with the student's faculty advisor, the candidate lists completed and projected coursework and declares election of either Plan I (thesis), Plan II (non-thesis), or Plan III (coursework only). The form is then signed by the student, their faculty advisor, and the department chair before being sent to OGS for the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. OGS requires that the approved Program of Studies form is received in their office **at least one semester before the student plans to graduate.**

#### **Doctorate**

At the PhD level, after successful completion of coursework and the comprehensive examination, students secure an Application for Candidacy from the Office of Graduate Studies website (<https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/application-candidacy.html>). In consultation with the student's faculty advisor, the candidate lists completed coursework. The student, their faculty advisor, and the department chair must sign the application before it is sent to OGS for the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The PhD residence requirements and foreign language requirement (see above "Residence Requirements, OGS" and "Language Requirement and Alternative Research Tool") must be completed and reported before doctoral students may take the comprehensive exam. After successful completion of the comprehensive examination the student will be formally advanced to candidacy.

### **COMMITTEE COMPOSITION**

#### **Master of Arts**

MA students who elect the non-thesis (Plan II) option must form a comprehensive exam committee, following the guidelines listed under "Comprehensive Examinations" below. Students who select the Thesis option (Plan I) for the MA are required to form a Committee on Studies (see "Thesis and Dissertation – Thesis Committee").

#### **Doctorate**

Each doctoral student is required to have a Committee on Studies. The Committee on Studies, which will also serve as the Examination Committee, must be formed in consultation with the faculty advisor. The committee should consist of three UNM faculty members who hold regular, full time appointments. At least two of the committee members must be from the American Studies core faculty. Normally, the student's faculty advisor serves as chair of the Committee on Studies.

Committee composition requires final approval by the department chair and the graduate school dean. Students may arrange changes or additions to the committee membership in consultation with the chair of their committee, the graduate advisor, and the department chair. If a committee member is not UNM faculty, their vita will need to be secured for approval for committee service by OGS.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

The comprehensive exam at both the MA and PhD levels is designed to test depth and breadth of knowledge in American Studies teaching and research fields. In consultation with the faculty exam committee, students are expected to develop a bibliography and write an exam that crosses at least two of the department's fields of study. Once the student has identified the fields of study, they then define the research concentrations that emerge out of their specific set of courses and research projects completed while pursuing the degree. MA students are expected to develop two research concentrations, and PhD students are expected to develop three research concentrations. The exam fields and research concentrations should be designed around academic specializations with which the students have established familiarity.

Each research concentration should be organized around a distinct scholarly literature with authors engaged in a related set of questions and subject of inquiry. The bibliography for each concentration is expected to reflect the major contours and current issues of the scholarly literature in the area of concentration. In general, the scope of a concentration should be narrow enough to allow the student to master the principal scholarly literature in the topic area and broad enough to define an undergraduate course. Examples include: Environmental Justice, Southwest Studies, Visual Culture, Queer Theory, Diaspora Literatures, and Theories of the Modern State. Keep in mind that the exam question incorporates and is addressed to the two or three concentrations together. Therefore it is to your advantage when designing the concentrations to consider ways that each list might in some way speak to or intersect with the other. At the same time, the concentrations should not be too closely aligned as subconcentrations of a single literature (for example: Subaltern Studies, Postcolonial Theory, and United States Imperialism).

The comprehensive exam is distinct from a research paper, wherein students develop and argue a particular thesis based on primary and/or secondary sources. In contrast to a research paper, the objective of the comprehensive exam is to show that you have read and understood the literature on your concentration list to the degree that you can discuss a broad spectrum of that literature in a synthetic and coherent manner.

American Studies teaching and research concentrations are often interdisciplinary; we therefore ask, at the outset, for each student taking a comprehensive exam to prepare a **3-5 page comprehensive exam statement** in which they describe the exam concentrations.

After approving the comprehensive exam statement, the exam committee will work with the student to develop the bibliographies for each concentration. Once the comprehensive exam and bibliographies have been approved by the committee, the committee chair, in consultation with the committee, will write one exam question. The exam question will be addressed to the exam concentrations.

Comprehensive exams at the PhD level are intended both to prepare students to begin dissertation work and to demonstrate mastery of the breadth and depth of the exam concentrations.

### MA Exam

The process of preparing for and writing the MA exam should allow students to synthesize material drawn from MA coursework and to create areas of special concentration and knowledge. Students who plan to pursue a PhD may define their comprehensive concentrations in anticipation of their future course of study.

### Examination Committee

After preliminary advancement to candidacy (following 27 hours and completion of the CGCS) and at least four months before the anticipated date of the comps, master's students should meet with their faculty advisor to determine membership of the Examination Committee. The committee will consist of at

least three members with approval for graduate instruction, two of which must hold regular, full-time UNM faculty appointments. In addition, at least two committee members (one of whom is the Committee Chair) must be from American Studies.

### **Exam Schedule**

MA students may schedule comprehensive exams for the semester in which they will finish coursework.

At least four (4) months before the anticipated date of the comprehensive exam, an MA student should meet with their faculty advisor to discuss potential areas of concentration and to plan how the student will work with their exam committee to prepare for the exam. Working with their exam committee, the student will develop a **comprehensive exam statement (3-5 pages)** in which they will define the parameters of, and a rationale for, the exam fields. Once the committee has agreed to the fields defined in the comprehensive exam statement, the student will work with the committee to develop a bibliography centered on their exam fields. We strongly urge students to work closely with the individual faculty member whose work is most closely related to each student's defined areas of concentration to develop an appropriate bibliography that encompasses the significant literature on that field or topic.

Three (3) months before the anticipated date of the comps, students should have secured preliminary approval for each of the bibliographic sections from the faculty member with whom they have been working to develop it.

Students will submit to each exam committee member a "Comprehensive Examination Bibliography" with the following format:

- (A) The comprehensive exam statement.
- (B) A comprehensive set of fully cited bibliographic entries divided by area/field and arranged alphabetically within each section.

Exam committee members will have two weeks to suggest changes to the bibliography. In consultation with the committee chair, the student will incorporate these changes and produce a final version of the bibliography. All members of the committee must sign this version at least six (6) weeks prior to the examination.

As preparation for the exam, we urge students to meet regularly with committee members to discuss the readings included on the bibliography.

At least three weeks prior to the exam, students should inform the department administrator of their intention to take the exam, the scheduled date and time, and their exam committee membership. **OGS must receive the "Announcement of Examination" form listing the exam committee members and approved by the department chair at least two weeks prior to the exam.** No examination can be given unless this form has been properly completed and filed. The form can be retrieved electronically at <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/announcement-examination.html>.

Between two and three weeks before the scheduled start of the exam, the exam committee, led by the student's advisor, will develop the exam question and submit it to the department administrator. Both the graduate director and the department chair sign the final copy of the comps question. Within 24 hours after receiving the question, the student may contact the exam committee chair for clarification of this question.

MA comps must be completed and submitted to the department office in seven (7) days. They should be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and standard font. The Departmental style sheet is the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be referenced in the Department office. The exam response should be **30-35 pages in length**. The student is responsible for distributing copies of the exam response and question to each exam committee member and for providing a copy for the department file.

### **PhD Exam**

The areas of concentration defined for the PhD comprehensive exam should provide the foundation for dissertation research and writing (including subject matter, methodology and/or theory), but should also be thought of as the fields in which the student plans to claim expertise as they seek academic or other professional employment.

In consultation with their Committee on Studies, a student will develop a comprehensive exam statement in which they will define the parameters of, and rationale for, the exam fields. After each committee member has approved the statement, the student will work closely with the committee members to develop a bibliography covering their exam fields. This bibliography should not consist merely of texts the student has encountered in their coursework. Rather, it should represent a concerted attempt to develop expertise in several (commonly three or four) well-defined fields of knowledge.

### **Examination Committee**

A doctoral candidate's examination committee is composed of the three members of their Committee on Studies.

### **Exam Schedule**

At least five (5) months before the anticipated date of the comprehensive exam, a PhD student should meet with their faculty advisor to discuss potential areas of concentration and to plan how the student will work with their exam committee to prepare for the exam. We strongly urge students to work closely with the individual faculty member whose work is most closely related to each student's defined areas of concentration to develop the comprehensive exam statement and an appropriate bibliography that encompasses the significant literature on that field or topic.

Four (4) months before the anticipated date of the comps, students should have submitted and secured preliminary approval for the comprehensive exam statement and each of the bibliographic sections from the faculty member with whom they have been working to develop it.

At this point, students will submit to each exam committee member a "Comprehensive Examination Bibliography" with the following format:

- (A) The comprehensive exam statement.
- (B) A comprehensive set of fully cited bibliographic entries divided by area/field and arranged alphabetically within each section.

Exam committee members will have two weeks to suggest changes to the bibliography. In consultation with the committee chair, the student will incorporate these changes and produce a final version of the overview and bibliography. All members of the committee must sign this version at least six (6) weeks prior to the examination.

As preparation for the exam, we urge students to meet regularly with committee members to discuss the readings included on the bibliography.



At least three weeks prior to the exam, students should inform the department administrator of their intention to take the exam, the scheduled date and time, and their exam committee membership. **OGS must receive the “Announcement of Examination” form listing the exam committee members and approved by the department chair at least two weeks prior to the exam.** No examination can be given unless this form has been properly completed and filed. The form can be retrieved electronically at <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/announcement-examination.html>. Note: If students are turning in their Announcement of Exam form for a subsequent semester, they must be registered for that semester before OGS will approve the form.

Between two and three weeks before the scheduled start of the exam, the exam committee will discuss and agree on a comprehensive examination question that the exam committee chair will finalize. Both the graduate director and the department chair sign the final copy of the comps question. Within 24 hours after receiving the question, the student may contact the Exam Committee Chair for clarification of this question.

PhD comps must be completed and submitted to the department office in fourteen (14) days. The Departmental style sheet is the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be referenced in the Department office. They should be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. The exam response should be **40-45 pages in length**. The student is responsible for distributing copies of the exam response and question to each exam committee member and for providing a copy for the department file.

Comprehensive exams will be graded and the student notified of the results within two weeks of their completion. After formal notification of results by the department, students should contact their exam committee chair to arrange to review readers’ comments. **Comps may be judged: Pass, Minor revisions required, or Fail.** Minor revisions must be submitted within one week (MA) or two weeks (PhD) of notification. Students who fail their comps may retake them once within six months of the failed test. They must enroll for at least one semester of independent study with a faculty member in American Studies before retaking their exam. The second attempt at comps is a pass/fail situation; minor revision will not be possible.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Both MA and PhD comps are take-home exams. Students must back up computer files and keep hard copies of their exams-in-progress. Only with such evidence can judicious extensions be made to accommodate mechanical failure.

## **THESIS AND DISSERTATION**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The following regulations supersede the minimum standards set by the Office of Graduate Studies, particularly in regard to the specific membership of committees.

### **The MA Thesis**

The MA thesis should be modeled on a scholarly journal article, and should be approximately 50 pages in length and based on original research.

The MA thesis is a semester-long project, equivalent to the work done for the MA comprehensive exam or to six hours of coursework.

### **Thesis Credit Hours**

Students opting for the MA with thesis must complete a minimum of six (6) hours of thesis (599) credit. While working on the thesis, students must continue to register for a minimum of one hour of 599 each fall and spring semester until they submit the thesis and the dean of OGS approves it. Thesis candidates



must be enrolled the semester in which they complete degree requirements, including summer sessions. Enrollment in 599 thesis hours may not begin prior to the semester in which the thesis is being written.

### **Important Dates**

To receive a spring semester degree, a student must file their thesis with OGS by April 15. That means that thesis committee members should have the completed thesis in hand by mid-March, and the thesis defense should be scheduled by April 1. For a fall semester degree, the thesis must be filed with OGS by November 15, with the draft to the committee by mid-October. A student who wishes to complete their thesis during the spring semester but cannot meet a mid-March deadline may defend during the spring semester after the April OGS deadline, but will receive the degree in the summer semester. Faculty members are generally not available to serve on MA thesis committees during summer months.

### **MA Thesis Committee**

Plan I (thesis) master's students must formally constitute a Thesis Committee before enrolling for thesis (599) credit. Students initiate the formation of their committee by selecting a faculty member to serve as director of the thesis and chair of the committee. Then they agree upon the remainder of the committee and complete a departmental "Appointment of Thesis Committee" form, which must be endorsed by the department chair. (At this time, OGS has no form for constituting a thesis committee.) MA thesis committees must include at least three faculty members with approval for graduate instruction, two of whom must hold regular, full-time UNM faculty appointments; the chair of the committee must be from within the American Studies Department. If a committee member is not UNM faculty, their vita will need to be secured for approval for graduate committee service by OGS.

### **Thesis Prospectus**

The thesis prospectus should be completed in the semester before the student plans to write the thesis. The prospectus should be **5 pages** in length. It must offer a clear statement of topic and an explanation of the major research question or argument that will structure the thesis. The prospectus must also specify the primary sources, texts, or other data on which the thesis will be based, as well as information about the availability of the materials to the student. The prospectus should conclude with a brief statement discussing the significance of the project and a very specific plan (with target dates) for the research and writing stages of the thesis. A one-page bibliography of relevant secondary works and a one-page CV should be attached to the prospectus. If a student plans to do ethnographic research, oral histories, interviews, or surveys, they must receive approval from UNM's IRB before conducting such research.

### **Approval of Prospectus**

After the thesis chair has approved the proposal, it must be submitted (with the "Committee Evaluation Form" cover sheet, available through the department office) for the approval of other members of the committee. The graduate director (if they are not already a member of the committee) will also read the prospectus. Committee members will evaluate the prospectus and return it, with comments, within two weeks. The prospectus is not considered accepted until all committee members approve it. A copy of the approved prospectus should be filed in the student's departmental file.

### **Thesis Style and Suggested Length**

The Departmental style sheet is the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be referenced in the Department office. **Suggested length for the MA Thesis is 50 pages.** OGS manuscript guidelines and required front matter forms can be obtained from the OGS website (<http://grad.unm.edu/degree-completion/index.html>).

### **Thesis Submission**

A complete draft of the thesis should be submitted to the student's committee chair and their faculty committee well in advance of the anticipated defense date. The MA defense should be scheduled no later

than the end of October in fall and the end of March in spring. After approval by the full thesis committee, one hardbound copy of the final manuscript is deposited with the department administrator, and an electronic copy is to be submitted to OGS for approval. **In order for a student to graduate in a given semester, OGS must receive the thesis, all required forms, and all other degree requirements by November 15, April 15, or July 15, for fall, spring, or summer respectively.**

### **Thesis Defense**

The thesis defense is an hour-long discussion of the thesis and its significance and is required for completion of the degree.

Three weeks prior to the defense, students should inform the department administrator of their intention to defend, the scheduled date, time, and location, and the committee composition. **As with the comprehensive exams, OGS must receive the “Announcement of Examination” form listing the thesis committee members and approved by the department chair at least two weeks prior to the exam.** No defense can be held unless this form is properly completed and filed. The form can be retrieved electronically at <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/announcement-examination.html>.

The final defense is public and open to all who wish to attend. Candidates should note that the Catalog directs that a complete copy of the thesis must be submitted to each member of the committee at least two weeks before the final defense. The student is also responsible for giving each committee member a copy of the department “Guidelines for Thesis Defense” (available in the department office).

**In order to graduate in a given semester, the student and/or department must submit all required documents to OGS, by November 15, April 15, or July 15 for fall, spring or summer respectively.** It is up to the student to be aware of the current requirements and policies concerning **required documentation and formatting guidelines.**

The student should meet with an OGS representative to ensure compliance with the electronic formatting and submission guidelines. All required forms can be found at the OGS website. A hardbound copy of the thesis is deposited with the department administrator. Check with the manuscript coordinator at OGS about procedure for binding.

### **Dissertation Committee**

The Dissertation Committee is constituted in the same way as the Thesis Committee. Doctoral students formally constitute a Dissertation Committee after successfully passing the comprehensive exam. Students initiate the formation of their committee by selecting a faculty member to serve as director of the dissertation and chair of the committee. Then they agree upon the remainder of the committee.

- The dissertation committee must include at least four (4) members approved for graduate instruction.
- The committee chair must be a core (tenured or tenure-track) member of the American Studies department. A co-chair may be added, with department approval, and may be from inside or outside UNM.
- At least two members (including the chair) must be regular, full-time faculty members in American Studies.
- One of the members must be “external,” meaning he or she must hold a regular (tenured or tenure-track) position outside the American Studies department. This member may be from another UNM department or from another university. Scholars who do not hold faculty positions in colleges or universities are not usually accepted by OGS to satisfy this requirement.

- One of the members may be a non-faculty expert in the student's research area. This person need not hold a faculty position, but must be approved for graduate committee service by OGS.
- Up to three of the members may be drawn from the American Studies department. Additional members beyond the required 4 may be appointed in consultation with the committee chair.

If a committee member is not UNM faculty, the student will need to obtain their CV as OGS must approve non-UNM personnel for graduate committee service.

### **Dissertation Credit Hours**

The program for the doctorate includes a minimum of 18 hours of dissertation (699) credit. While working on the dissertation, students must continue to register for at least three hours of 699 each fall and spring semester until the dean of OGS approves the dissertation. Doctoral candidates must be enrolled the semester in which they complete degree requirements, including summer sessions. Enrollment in 699 may not begin prior to the semester in which comprehensive exams are taken.

### **Dissertation Prospectus and Format**

After passing comps and constituting a dissertation committee, students begin work on the prospectus, a **10-page exposition of topic, methodology, review of sources, and research plan with a 3-5 page bibliography**. Only proposals of this length will be accepted. An outline for the dissertation proposal is available in the department office.

Within six (6) months of completing their PhD comprehensive exam, and after approval by their dissertation chair and committee (using the "Committee Evaluation Form" cover sheet available in the department office), students submit the dissertation prospectus to each member of the dissertation committee. The student should schedule a **prospectus defense** with the entire committee at least two weeks after each member has been given the prospectus. During the prospectus defense, the student will be expected to give the rationale for the project and talk in detail about the feasibility of completing the project as planned. Each member of the dissertation committee must approve the prospectus before the student may proceed to the ABD phase of their graduate career. Because of the importance of the prospectus in shaping the dissertation, students should expect to revise the prospectus multiple times before gaining the approval of the entire committee. The prospectus will have to be revised until the dissertation committee gives its unanimous approval. A copy of the approved prospectus should be filed in the student's departmental file.

Once the original prospectus is approved, any major topic changes and/or changes to the chair of a dissertation committee will require that the student meet with their dissertation committee to gain renewed approval of the changes and the direction of the dissertation.

### **Dissertation Style**

The Departmental style sheet is the Chicago Manual of Style, which can be referenced in the Department office. OGS manuscript guidelines and required front matter forms can be obtained from the OGS website.

### **Dissertation Final Defense and Submission**

A final oral examination dealing with the dissertation and its relationship to American Studies is required.

Three weeks prior to the defense, students should inform the department administrator of their intention to defend, the scheduled date, time, and location, and the committee composition. As with the comprehensive exams, **OGS must receive the "Announcement of Examination" form listing the exam committee members and approved by the department chair at least two weeks prior to the**

**exam.** No defense can be held unless this form is properly completed and filed. The form can be retrieved at <https://grad.unm.edu/resources/graduate-students/gs-forms/announcement-examination.html>.

The final defense is public and open to all who wish to attend. Candidates should note that the Catalog directs that a complete copy of the dissertation must be submitted to each member of the committee at least two weeks before the final defense. The student is also responsible for giving each committee member a copy of the department “Guidelines for Dissertation Defense” (available in the department office).

In order to graduate in a given semester, the student and/or department must submit all required documents to OGS, by November 15, April 15, or July 15 for fall, spring or summer respectively. **It is up to the student to be aware of the current requirements and policies concerning required documentation and formatting guidelines.**

The student should meet with an OGS representative to ensure compliance with the electronic formatting and submission guidelines. All required forms can be found at the OGS website. A hardbound copy of the dissertation is deposited with the department administrator. Check with the manuscript coordinator at OGS about procedure for binding.

## **GRADUATION**

### **Deadlines**

#### A. Notification of the Intent to Graduate

Both MA and PhD students must inform the Department of their intent to complete all degree requirements by 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the semester immediately preceding the semester in which they intend to graduate.

#### B. Report of Exam/Thesis/Dissertation

Results of exams and reports of theses and dissertations must be submitted to OGS on the appropriate form by November 15, April 15, or July 15 in order to complete graduation requirements in Fall, Spring, or Summer sessions respectively.

#### C. Graduation Ceremony

Degrees are awarded three times during the year. University Commencement is held in both December and May, and the annual Departmental Convocation takes place in May.

## **Academic Requirements for Graduation**

### **Master of Arts**

#### **Plan I (Thesis)**

Master’s candidates under Plan I (thesis) complete their graduate work by fulfilling coursework requirements and submitting an approved thesis to their department and OGS.

#### **Plan II (Non-thesis)**

Master’s candidates under Plan II (non-thesis) complete their graduate work by fulfilling coursework requirements and successfully passing the comprehensive examination.

#### **Plan III (Coursework only)**

Master’s candidates under Plan III (coursework only) complete their graduate work by fulfilling coursework requirements and submitting the required OGS paperwork in a timely fashion.

## **Doctorate**

Doctoral candidates complete their graduate work by fulfilling coursework requirements, successfully passing the comprehensive examination, and submitting an approved dissertation and report of dissertation defense to their department and OGS.

## **TIME LIMITS**

### **Master of Arts**

Currently, OGS dictates that all work toward a master's degree must be completed within a seven (7) year period, including any transfer credit from another institution. Those students on federal grants and loans should check carefully with the Student Financial Aid office for their regulations on progress toward the degree and credit hour caps.

### **Doctorate**

A doctoral candidate will have five years for the completion of all degree requirements from the date they successfully pass their comprehensive examination. This time limit includes the oral defense and submission of final dissertation to OGS. Those students on federal grants and loans should check carefully with the Student Financial Aid office for their regulations on progress toward the degree and credit hour caps.

Note: A student must request an extension of this time limit in writing, the semester before the time limit expires. The request must be supported by the department and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. **Extensions are not automatic;** students must demonstrate progress toward completion of degree requirements (refer to "Annual Progress Review" above and "Leave of Absence and Readmission" below).

## **GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

The Department of American Studies follows the "Graduate Student Grievance Procedures" outlined in the *Faculty Handbook* (<http://handbook.unm.edu/section-d/d176.html>). The following departmental procedures are modeled on those set out in the *Faculty Handbook*. A grievance is defined therein as including, but not limited to, issues related to "allegedly improper or unreasonable treatment" that impacts a student's academic progress. Note that both the Graduate Student Grievance Procedures policy and the Student Conduct and Grievance Procedure policy defined in the *Pathfinder* also direct students with grievances "based upon alleged discrimination or sexual harassment" to contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at UNM. A student who is considering whether they have an academic complaint and how to pursue it is encouraged by the *Handbook* "to consult with the Office of Graduate Studies to discuss their concerns, seek to clarify pertinent rules and regulations governing graduate study, and explore constructive ways to resolve the problem directly with the faculty member or administrator involved."

Once a student has determined that they have a potential grievance to raise with a faculty member in the department, the following are the steps to take. At any point in this process, the student is welcome to bring a peer advocate from within the department to meetings with faculty and administrators.

1. Should a policy grievance arise, the student should schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies and provide a written statement outlining their concerns and the remedies requested. This statement will be kept confidential as far as the law requires, but any person against whom the complaint is directed will be given an opportunity to respond. The DGS will work with the student and the faculty member to help resolve the dispute. If agreement cannot be reached, the student may appeal to the Chair. The Chair will work with the student and the faculty member to attempt to resolve the dispute. At the Chair's discretion, the case may be taken to the faculty. (If the dispute relates to the DGS, the student may take the issue directly to the

Chair. If the dispute relates to the Chair, the student takes the complaint to the DGS and from there to the Arts and Sciences Dean if it cannot be resolved in the department.)

2. Once the department Chair has reached a conclusion, the Chair and the DGS will hold a meeting with the student to provide a summary determination of the matter and to give the student a second opportunity to have their position heard again.
3. If the matter cannot be resolved at the department level, the student may bring the issue to the Arts and Sciences Dean. From there the process is determined by the College Dean and Dean of Graduate Studies as described in the “Graduate Student Grievance Procedure” in the *Faculty Handbook*.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND READMISSION**

University policy on leaves of absence is covered in the UNM Catalog. There are two possible options for students.

### **Leave of Absence:**

A student who is unable to continue their graduate studies due to exceptional circumstances may request, in advance, a leave of absence. The written request, along with a letter of support from the department chair or graduate director, will be sent to the Graduate Dean, who will make the final decision. Leaves of absence are granted on a semester-by-semester basis. Semesters of approved leave of absence are not counted toward the time to complete the degree so long as the student is not enrolled in any UNM course.

### **Stop Out:**

The stop out is a less formal, but more limited, option than the leave of absence. Students may notify the graduate director in writing that they intend to “stop out” for up to two consecutive semesters (summer semester counts). If the student does not enroll for the third semester, they must reapply for admission. The time spent in a “stop out” does count toward the time in which a degree must be completed.

Students are not excused from completing any departmental or university requirements because of leaves of absence or stop-outs.

An absence of three or more semesters, including summer sessions, will result in a student being automatically dropped from the program. A student who is admitted and completes at least one semester of graduate studies in the Department will receive registration materials for three subsequent semesters (including summer sessions). An absence of more than three semesters (including summer sessions) requires that an application form for readmission be filed with the department at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the semester in which the student will be returning.