Guidelines for American Studies Graduate Students

Revised 2019
Doctor of Philosophy Degree Requirements

Master of Arts Degree Requirements

A. 72 semester hours of course work:

Required Foundation Courses (6 s.h.) for all students

- AMST:5000 Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies (taken twice in consecutive years for a total of 6 s.h.)

Area Foundation Courses (6 s.h.)

For American Studies PhD students:

- 2 American studies graduate seminars (AMST prefix) (6 s.h.)

For Sport Studies sub-track PhD students:

- SPST:5002 Critical Theories of Sport (3 s.h.)
- SPST:6074 Seminar in Sport History (3 s.h.)

1st interdisciplinary field of concentration (18 s.h.)

For American Studies PhD students:
Courses in an interdisciplinary field with a historical concentration, designed with the advisor and approved by the department’s Plan of Study Committee (18 s.h.)
For Sport Studies sub-track PhD students:
Courses on sport in cultural and historical contexts selected with the advisor and approved by
the department's Plan of Study Committee (18 s.h.)

2nd interdisciplinary field of concentration (18 s.h.)

For American studies students:
Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's
Plan of Study Committee (18 s.h.)

For Sport studies students:
Courses in an interdisciplinary field designed with the advisor and approved by the department's
Plan of Study Committee; may be a second field in sport studies or a field outside sport studies
(18 s.h.)

Research Skills Requirement:
For all PhD students
• AMST:7085 Dissertation Writing Workshop (taken 3 times for 1 s.h. each)

For all Sport Studies sub-track PhD students:
• SPST:7070 Sport Studies Workshop (taken 3 times)

Additional [for all students]:
• Electives and AMST:7090 PhD Thesis (to bring total s.h. to 72)
• 18 s.h. completed coursework annually for all students prior to comprehensive
  examinations

B. Admission to PhD candidacy: Admission to Ph.D. candidacy signifies that the department judges the
doctoral student qualified to take the comprehensive examination. Doctoral students advance to Ph.D.
candidacy based on a review conducted during their second year in the Ph.D. program (typically during
fall semester); the review assesses a student’s readiness to complete studies through the
comprehensive examination and the dissertation, which is an original work of scholarship. In addition to
judging a student’s readiness for Ph.D. candidacy, the review provides a progress report on the student’s
work and a tentative prognosis for future prospects in the field.

C. Comprehensive examinations—written and oral examinations demonstrating mastery of American
Studies and fields of concentration and the ability to work on representative problems and issues both
in breadth and in depth. The exams are taken when the student has completed 55-60 semester hours of
coursework. The comprehensive examination comprises three written exams and one oral exam.

The first exam is taken under the supervision of an American studies faculty member, who also chairs
the comprehensive examination. The candidate takes a timed, take-home written exam of no less than
four hours and no longer than two days; the exam details the candidate’s approach to American studies
(methods and models), including the student’s position and critical engagement with models of
American studies scholarship.

The remaining two written exams explore the candidate's major fields; these are at least four hours long
and may be given on a take-home basis at the examiner's discretion.
The oral exam covers material from the written exams. It should be scheduled at least 10 days following the completion of the final written exam.

The examination committee consists of five faculty, who are members of the Graduate College (on occasion, an external faculty member may be approved by the Graduate College). At least two members of the committee must be faculty who hold appointments in American Studies. Four affirmative votes are required for a pass.

**D. Dissertation:** A PhD dissertation or thesis in American studies is a substantive work of scholarship that involves interdisciplinary research and analysis, and represents an original contribution to knowledge. In most cases, the dissertation takes the form of a book-length manuscript. However, students may propose alternatives to the traditional form, provided they have the dissertation committee’s approval and complete a memorandum of understanding with the Director of Graduate Studies in American Studies.

All dissertations must first be approved by a committee of five faculty; at least two of these faculty must hold appointments in American Studies. Thesis committee members must be members of the Graduate College or, on occasion, may be an external faculty member approved by the Graduate College. A written prospectus that identifies the main argument, the rationale, preliminary sources and methods, a chapter outline, and timetable for completion is required for approval of the thesis, which is normally only granted after an oral meeting with the candidate about the prospectus. Students are expected to complete the thesis within two years after a successful prospectus meeting but no later than five years after the completion of comprehensive examinations. A final examination that is a public dissertation defense with the entire committee is required.

**Master of Arts Requirements**

36 semester hours of course work:
- AMST:5000 Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies (taken twice in consecutive years)
- 2 graduate seminars in American Studies (6 s.h.)
- 5 courses in MA interdisciplinary field of concentration (15 s.h.)
- Electives (9 s.h.)
- Approval of the Master's Portfolio

**The Master's Portfolio must include:**
- Research Paper. A graduate seminar paper that demonstrates a student’s skills as a research scholar and writer, and represents the student’s strongest work to date (25-30 pp. in length, including bibliography).
- Faculty Evaluations for all courses taken in the first full year of graduate study.
- Self-evaluation. This essay summarizes the methods and materials of American Studies that have shaped the student’s interdisciplinary work in the field and states how the MA work has contributed to, challenged, or complicated the student’s goals and ambitions beyond the MA. (5 pp. in length)

The master’s Portfolio will be assembled under the guidance of the MA candidate's advisor. It will be submitted no later than the 1st of December of the student's 3rd semester in residency. The Master's
Portfolio will be evaluated on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis by a 3-person American Studies faculty committee. Students whose Master's Portfolio receives a U may resubmit the Portfolio in the 4th semester in residency. For students who wish to continue their education with doctoral study, the M.A. portfolio serves as the application for admission to the Ph.D. program in American studies. The department informs applicants whether they have been accepted into the Ph.D. program by the end of the fall semester in which they submit their M.A. portfolio; admission is contingent upon successful completion of the M.A. during a student's fourth semester of residency.

I. FOR NEWLY ADMITTED STUDENTS
A. Getting registered: All new students are assigned an American studies faculty academic advisor.
   1. First-time advising should be accomplished shortly after official acceptance into the program either in person, via e-mail, or on the telephone. All students must discuss course schedules with their academic advisors in order to register for classes.
   2. MYUI is the University website that provides course schedule information, including the time and location of a class, size, description, and name of instructor.
   3. Registration may be accomplished online once a new student has received a HawkID (login) and password.

B. All new students are assigned peer mentors – current American Studies PhD students who are helpful guides to non-academic questions about beginning graduate school (e.g., apartment rentals in Iowa City, quality of life questions about Iowa City, used and new bookstores, what kinds of things to expect).

C. Upon arriving in Iowa City, email the American Studies secretary your local contact information, including cell phone and personal (not UI) email address.

II. LIFE OF THE DEPARTMENT
A graduate education includes much more than individual courses, examinations, and research papers. The intellectual community of American Studies and other units at the University, cultural and social institutions that cooperate with the University and relationships among faculty, graduate students all shape graduate education in fundamental ways.

The Department of American Studies supports extracurricular activities that are essential to graduate student education:

- Floating Fridays: the Department of American Studies lecture and workshop series featuring faculty and graduate student speakers from the University of Iowa and other universities; events are typically scheduled 3-4 times each semester;
- Presenting American Studies: a workshop series in which graduate students have an opportunity to practice professional research presentations (of roughly 15-20 minutes in length). This is an opportunity to try out papers developed from coursework; papers proposed/upcoming for regional, national, and international conferences; and/or public presentation of research from a dissertation. This workshop series is typically scheduled once a semester.
- Professional Workshops: development of practical professional skills, e.g. writing a curriculum vita, preparing a syllabus, interviewing for a job; typically scheduled once a semester.

The Department of American Studies frequently co-sponsors speakers, symposia, and other events with other UI academic units and research centers.
The American Studies Graduate Student Association (ASGRAD) is a social and peer mentoring organization that supports graduate student life in the Department. ASGRAD hosts an online community listserv, participates in the planning of Department events, and elects representatives who serve as voting members at Department faculty meetings and at the Mid-American American Studies Association Executive Council. ASGRAD also organizes numerous social activities for American Studies graduate students, their partners, families, and friends.

III. ADVISING

1st and 2nd year students: A faculty advisor is assigned to each new student upon admission. This is to ensure that every student has a faculty academic advisor. Students should individually consult with faculty academic advisors on a regular basis – not just to pre-register – but also to communicate regularly about progress toward the degree and one’s professional development. Students are free to change advisors at any time prior to preparation for comprehensive examinations, especially as students begin to work with individual faculty in American Studies.

To change advisors: Simply inform the American studies secretary -- no explanation needs to be offered and no offense will be taken.

In addition, all 1st year students attend two group advisory meetings: an orientation meeting the Friday before the beginning of fall semester and a follow-up advisory session after the start of the spring semester. Departmental financial aid policies for ongoing students are explained at the latter meeting.

All 2nd year students develop their Plans of Study in the Fall semester of their second year of residence in consultation with their individual advisors. 2nd year students should arrange to consult with their advisors regarding the Plan of Study in the first weeks of Fall semester. They will subsequently hold individual Plan of Study sessions with a committee of American Studies faculty as part of their Admission to Candidacy.

3rd and 4th year students—Students Preparing for the Comprehensive Examination: All students preparing for the comprehensive examination determine who will be the American Studies faculty guiding them in the American Studies field. This faculty member serves as the student’s academic advisor and director of the comprehensive examination committee.

ABD—Students Preparing a Prospectus and Dissertation: Normally, the director of a student’s dissertation is also their academic advisor. If a student’s dissertation director is someone not in American Studies, the student must designate an American Studies faculty member on the committee as the academic advisor. At this stage, once a prospectus committee has approved a thesis project, ANY changes to the dissertation committee must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Chair.

Teaching Supervision

All teaching assistants (TAs) are assigned teaching supervisors. Students who are TAs in Rhetoric, Gen Ed. Lit., or another department will be assigned teaching supervisors by those programs. Students with appointments in American Studies will be assigned an American Studies supervisor appropriate for the assignment. A teaching supervisor is not only the person responsible for overseeing the TA’s teaching duties but an advisor for helping the TA with the teaching process, including (as appropriate): developing a syllabus, determining course materials and requirements, handling classroom problems, cases of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, grading questions and appeals. Teaching supervisors are
important resources; they are there to support each TA in fulfilling his or her teaching responsibilities.

For MA only Students: 1st and 2nd year rules above apply.

Advising—Registration and Course Selection
A. All students are expected to be enrolled each consecutive semester (summer excluded) until the degree is awarded. All students are expected to complete 18 s.h. of coursework annually in the years leading up to comprehensive examinations in order to remain in good standing.

B. Course selection and registration occur during pre-registration periods each semester for enrolling for the subsequent semester (mid-November for spring semester; mid-April for fall semester). Registration for all courses occurs online. Academic advisors must authorize a student’s registration before a student may register.

C. Graduate students may not take for credit courses taught by graduate students, courses designated as “undergraduate only courses,” (under 3000-level) or courses from Distance and Online Education.

D. Students may add or drop courses according to the rules and deadlines of the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Independent studies: Independent studies or readings and research individually pursued under the guidance of a faculty member are permissible as part of a student’s overall plan of study but only when they support a strong foundation of structured coursework. Independent studies are normally taken as part of preparation for the comprehensive examination and to supplement formal coursework, especially during summer sessions.

It is recommended that any student pursuing an independent study have completed prior coursework with the supervising faculty member.

IV. TIMETABLE TOWARD DEGREES
A. Students are expected to make consistent progress toward their degrees and are assessed annually for whether or not they are meeting this requirement.

B. To be in good standing in the Graduate College, students must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA.

C. Pre-comps Ph.D. students must complete at least 18 s.h. for each calendar year (August-July) in order to be considered making satisfactory progress toward the PhD. (In exceptional circumstances, the Department may allow a student to matriculate part-time. However, in general, expectations are that students will matriculate full-time.)

D. Grades of "I" (Incomplete) must be completed within the University deadline before they turn into an "F." Neither “I” nor “F” grades count as hours completed toward the degree, when evaluating whether satisfactory progress has been made.

E. Students may not be admitted to candidacy with an "I" or with a grade of "F" because of missing the deadline for completion of an incomplete.

F. Students may not take comprehensive exams with an “I” or “F” for any course that is required to complete the plan of study.
G. All PhD students must be admitted to candidacy before the end of their second year in residency. [See: Admission to Candidacy and Plan of Study] Failure to do so could result in denial of permission to register and dismissal from the program.

H. All PhD students must undertake the comprehensive examination when they reach 55-60 s.h. of coursework (including both courses completed at Iowa and all courses accepted for transfer credit). If a student has not successfully completed the comprehensive examination by the time 60 s.h. are achieved, a written warning will be issued. If a student has not successfully completed the comprehensive examination by the time 62 s.h. are achieved, the student may be denied permission to register and be dismissed from the program.

I. A dissertation prospectus should be approved by a student’s dissertation committee by the end of the term following the one in which the student took the comprehensive exams (excluding the summer term).

J. The Graduate College requires all post-comps students to register for a minimum of 1 s.h. each consecutive semester (except summers) until and including the semester in which the PhD is awarded.

K. All post-comps students are required to report at least annually to their American Studies academic advisors on their progress toward their degree.

L. While the Graduate College maintains a strict rule that all students must complete their PhD within five years of the date of the successful comprehensive examination or be required to retake that examination, American Studies may also consider failure to complete the PhD within the 5-year period cause for dismissal from the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Progress Toward PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of 1st year</td>
<td>18 hours of completed coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of 2nd year</td>
<td>36 hours of completed coursework Adm. to Candidacy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Plan of study &amp; any transfer credits approved]</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of 3rd year</td>
<td>54 hours of completed coursework*</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd-4th year: at 55-60 s.h.</td>
<td>Comprehensive Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd-4th year: Post-comps</td>
<td>Prospectus Meeting – 1 semester after comp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th-5th year: 72 s.h.</td>
<td>Dissertation defense; awarding of degree</td>
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</table>

*Schedule would be accelerated for PhD students with an MA from another university and transfer credits approved for the PhD; timeliness of comprehensive examination is based on number of hours completed.

M. Students who fail to conform to the timetable and are therefore not in good standing in the Department will first receive a warning letter that they are no longer in good standing. The warning letter will provide a deadline for compliance and returning to good standing. If a student fails to meet the deadline, the Department may dismiss the student from the program.

N. All graduate students will be reviewed annually by the American Studies faculty for making
satisfactory progress toward their degree.

O. When there are extenuating circumstances, the student has the right to appeal Department policies and decisions and should consult the Director of Graduate Studies for how to do so.

V. TRANSFER CREDITS
A. When a student is admitted, the Graduate Office of Admissions evaluates transfer hours and designates the maximum number transferrable: these are usually all graduate courses elected in the past 10 years for which a passing grade has been reported.

The department conducts its own subsequent review and allows for transfer credit courses and hours congruent with the student’s MA or PhD plan of study. The maximum number of hours that may be accepted for a MA student is 18 s.h.; for a Ph.D. student, 36 s.h.

B. Acceptance of transfer hours for Ph.D. students occurs as part of the deliberation regarding a student’s admission to candidacy, i.e. second year of residency.

C. MA students may request assessment whenever their plan of study is formulated; they should write to the Director of Graduate Studies requesting assessment.
   1. Transfer courses should be clearly indicated on the plan of study, with a description of a course’s relevance where its title may be uninformative, or for independent study, thesis credits, or internships. The Department reserves the right to request further information from the applicant about a course.
   2. Transfer credits should not dominate a field; normally it should not have more than 9-12 semester hours.
   3. An applicant for candidacy may propose, or the Department may dictate, that only a portion of the hours of a course will be accepted, as, for example, when a student seeks to transfer the hours from a Master’s Thesis that was 9-15 s.h.
   4. A student may also request transfer credits as elective hours toward the degree.

D. Students may NOT use transfer credits to fulfill the Department’s course requirement for AMST:5000 Interdisciplinary Research in American Studies and two additional graduate seminars in American Studies.

VI. ADMISSION TO PHD CANDIDACY
Admission to PhD candidacy is the Department’s approval of a PhD student’s qualifications for pursuing the comprehensive examination. It is not the same as admission into Iowa’s PhD program but is instead a review conducted during a student’s 2nd year (typically in fall semester) of the student’s readiness to complete his or her studies through a comprehensive examination and a thesis that is an original work of scholarship. Most University of Iowa graduate programs require students to be admitted to PhD candidacy before they may sit for comprehensive examinations although each graduate program may set its own rules and regulations regarding candidacy procedures and standards. Admission to PhD candidacy expedites progress toward the comprehensive exams and thesis, provides the student with a progress report on his/her work and a tentative prognosis of future prospects.

To be considered for admission to PhD candidacy, a student must:
- Have completed 18 s.h. of coursework at UI, with no outstanding I’s or F’s
- Be a student in good standing (minimum gpa of 3.0)
• Complete a Petition for Admission to PhD Candidacy form
• Have written evaluations on departmental forms provided from all UI instructors
• Submit a Plan of Study, including any request for transfer credits

Once these five criteria are met – typically by the Department’s mid-October deadline of a student’s 2nd year in residency but no later than the end of a student’s 2nd year in residency – the Director of Graduate Studies schedules a formal meeting between the student and a committee of American Studies faculty appointed by the Department Chair. The faculty committee determines whether or not the student may be admitted to candidacy.

Departmental criteria for admission to candidacy:
1. Successful accomplishment in the total course work undertaken at Iowa.
2. Demonstration of critical and analytical skills, discipline, and habits of mind to conduct independent research and writing – important for successful, timely completion of the comprehensive examination and the demands of a dissertation.
3. A plan of study that meets Department requirements for completing the degree in a timely fashion, defines two interdisciplinary fields of concentration, and offers a plan and mentors for achieving sufficient breadth and depth that the student will be able to demonstrate mastery of knowledge in both fields at the comprehensive examination.

When a student is not admitted to PhD candidacy, the faculty may require a revised plan of study and/or additional remedies (e.g., additional preparatory coursework, improved faculty evaluations) with PhD candidacy deferred until a satisfactory plan is approved and all conditions are met. In exceptional cases, the faculty may deny candidacy and recommend the student’s participation in the doctoral program be terminated. When dismissal from the program is recommended, the student has the right to appeal the decision.

VII. THE PLAN OF STUDY

A Plan of Study names and briefly describes 2 fields of study that the student anticipates will form the basis of future graduate and professional work. It lays out the planned and completed coursework respective to each field that will assure the student’s competencies in each.

For PhD students, a Plan of Study includes:
• 2 areas of interdisciplinary inquiry
• Title and paragraph description of each interdisciplinary field;
• Coursework that has been completed toward training in the field;
• Future coursework that will ensure proper depth and breadth of training in the field;
• Transfer courses (if applicable) toward each field;
• For each field, the names of at least 2-3 potential UI mentors, who might be examiners for that field; and
• American Studies coursework that fulfills the requirement for graduate courses in American Studies.

A student may wish to include any other relevant intellectual contributions to training in each field (e.g., Master’s Thesis, TA teaching).

Conceptualizing Interdisciplinary Fields of Concentration:
A. An area is defined by a title and the ground shared by a minimum of 18 s.h. of course work, including at least six courses. It is possible that to ensure proper depth and breadth of training, either a student or the faculty may deem that a field requires more than 18 s.h. of coursework.

B. An area may designate a group of people, a body of material, a period of time, a theme, or some combination of these.

C. Each area (not just the plan as a whole) must be interdisciplinary.

D. Each area must include courses from more than one department.

E. Each area must include advanced-level training (graduate seminars), although it may include a few mixed undergrad-graduate level courses, when appropriate for successfully mastering the area.

F. Each area must include sufficient course work with proposed mentors/examiners and, given unpredictable staff changes, each area must propose more than one potential mentor.

G. No area may be comprised entirely of transfer credits.

H. Independent studies may be included in a plan of study, but an area may include no more than 6 s.h. of independent studies.

I. Some courses may not always be obvious “fits” for a plan of study area but may indeed be relevant because a student completed research, writing, or other course requirements appropriate to an area’s focus. When this is the case, the applicant should include a very brief identification or explanation of what made the course relevant.

J. Future course offerings are usually uncertain, and so applicants may wish to list more titles than the minimum required.

K. It is not necessary to contact individual mentors/examiners to secure their permission or approval for their future participation. This is a list of potential examiners only that simply assures there are sufficient faculty resources at UI for the student to develop mastery of the area.

L. All plans of study must attend to the diversity of American culture not only through the definition of each field but through course work that supports each field.

M. Plans of study that attend to perspectives on American culture in an international context are also encouraged.

N. Plans of study need to include sufficient coursework with American Studies faculty that a student will have American Studies mentors available to direct and participate in the comprehensive examination and the dissertation.

In a student’s PhD plan of study, a student may plan for up to 18 s.h. of dissertation credit in order to reach the 72 s.h. required for graduation.
Any significant changes to a student’s approved Plan of Study must be approved by the American Studies Plan of Study committee.

VIII. EXAMPLES OF FIELDS OF CONCENTRATION
(Courses that begin with numbers instead of letters, as 033:179, are courses from the old course numbering system that no longer exist).

20th Century African American Literature and Society
ENGL:6610 Studies in African American Literature
AMST:3329 African American Cinema and Culture
AFAM:3710 African American Women Writers
HIST:7214 Readings in African American Women’s History
AMST:6050 Topics in American Studies (Critical Dialogues: Stuart Hall)
ENGL:7600 Technology in American Literature and Culture

Music, Culture, and Identity in 20th Century United States
AFAM:3900 Topics in African American Studies (Classic Hip-Hop)
COMM:6352 Seminar: Media Theory
ANTH:6315 Foundations of Ethnomusicology
MUS:6314 Topics in Ethnomusicology: Music and the Politics of Culture
033:179 Music and Nationalism
AMST:6050 Topics in American Studies (Critical Dialogues: Stuart Hall)

U.S. Cultures in International Perspective
HIST:6635 Crossing Borders Seminar
131:215 Women’s Issues: A Transnational View
HIST:7435 Seminar: U.S. in World Affairs
ENGL:3535 Inter-American Studies
AMST:6050 Topics in American Studies (World’s Fairs)
AMST:6080 Race and Ethnicity in American Cinema

The American Built Environment: Vernacular Architecture, Landscape, and History
16:282 Readings in Latina/o History
HIST:7276 Readings in the American Frontier
045:260 Seminar: History, Literature, and American Culture
ARTH:6085 Seminar: Problems in Architectural History
45:193 American Photography
AMST:6050 Topics in American Studies (The Culture of Nature)

The Construction of American National Memory, 1860-1920
8:465 Work, Labor, and Literature in the U.S., 1776-1900
AMST:6050 Topics in American Studies (World’s Fairs)
AFAM:2600 The African American Religious Experience
1H:267 American Visual Culture, 1830-1900
HIST:4255 The Gilded Age in America
AMST:3063 American Ruins

Religion in American Life, America in Religious Life
HIST:7260 Seminar: American Colonial History
32:145 Ultraconservative and Radical Theologies in American History
IX. PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

PhD candidates are required to take their comprehensive exams when they have completed 55-60 semester hours of course work. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a letter of warning if a student has not passed comprehensive examinations by 60 semester hours; failure to pass the examination by 62 semester hours may result in a student being denied permission to register and dismissal from the program.

Comprehensive examination committee

A comprehensive examination committee consists of five professors, who are members of the Graduate College and are subject to approval from the Department of American Studies. At least two members of
the committee must be faculty who hold appointments in American Studies. No examiner may supervise more than one field in the written examination.

Although only three individuals are responsible for supervising the written examination, all five members of the examination committee share responsibility for evaluating the examination and conducting the oral examination. Four affirmative votes are required for a pass.

**Parts of the Examination**

A. **Field #1: American Studies**: must be supervised by a faculty member in American Studies. This person chairs the comprehensive examination. The student takes a timed, take-home written examination of no less than four hours and no longer than two days on the student’s approach to American studies (methods and models), including the student’s position and critical engagement with models of American Studies scholarship. The examination will be based on a bibliography negotiated between the student and the examiner of 10-12 books that represent key texts for the student’s position in the field.

B. **Written examination in the two fields of concentration.**

Each examiner and the student negotiate the form the written exam will take. A timed written exam should be not less than four hours and no longer than one week. The examination is based on a bibliography approved in advance by the examiner. The Department of American Studies recommends a bibliography of approximately 30 books, but many examiners will require their own standards of bibliographic competency since fields vary so greatly.

**Note:** When a field is supervised by a professor from outside American Studies, the student is responsible for delivering a copy of "The Comprehensive Examination in American Studies" (available here or from the department secretary) to the examiner.

C. **Oral examination**: 2-hour oral examination of the written material.

**Timetable for PhD Comprehensive Examination Process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet with American Studies committee chair/advisor</td>
<td>At least one semester prior to examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver &quot;The Comprehensive Examination in American Studies” document to non-American Studies committee members</td>
<td>At least one semester prior to examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize bibliographies for all three fields</td>
<td>Beginning of semester in which exams are to be taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete PhD Plan of Study forms for Graduate College</td>
<td>Two weeks prior to first written examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule dates for written and oral examinations</td>
<td>Early in the semester but no later than 4-6 weeks prior to oral examination date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written examinations</td>
<td>Scheduled for specific dates within 10-15 day period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral examination</td>
<td>Scheduled for at least 10 days after completion of last written examination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
X. DISSERTATION
A PhD dissertation or thesis in American studies is a substantive work of scholarship that involves interdisciplinary research, analysis, and represents an original contribution to knowledge. In most cases, the dissertation takes the form of a book-length manuscript. However, students may propose alternatives to the traditional form, provided they have the dissertation committee’s approval and complete a memorandum of understanding with the Director of Graduate Studies in American Studies.

All PhD dissertations must be approved by a committee of five faculty; **at least two of these faculty must have appointments in American Studies.** Dissertation committee members must be members of the Graduate College or, on occasion, may be an external faculty member approved by the Graduate College, and are subject to approval by the Department of American Studies.

The Department of American Studies requires a formal prospectus meeting for approval of the student’s thesis at the outset of the student’s project. The prospectus meeting should be held no later than one semester after the comprehensive examination has been passed. A written prospectus (usually 12-20 pages) identifies the main argument, the rationale, preliminary sources and methods, a chapter outline, and timetable for completion.

Students are expected to complete the thesis within two years after a successful prospectus meeting but no later than five years after the completion of comprehensive examinations.

A final examination that is a public dissertation defense with the entire committee is required.

**Any changes to the membership of the dissertation examining committee after the prospectus meeting must be requested in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies and will be granted only when there is sufficient cause for changing committee membership.**

Students should consult the Graduate College [webpage on the Thesis and Dissertation](#) to ensure they are following Graduate College standards, guidelines, and deadlines.

Students may receive up to 18 s.h. of credit for writing the dissertation.

The Graduate College requires continuous registration (at least 1 s.h.) until graduation (excluding summer semesters).

**Appendix I. INTERNSHIPS**
Internships offer valuable public engagement, develop professional competence and a record of achievement, teach from/with a diverse group of people, provide contacts who might be helpful after graduation, and sometimes provide a salary. Internships include experiences at: museums, libraries, archives, historical societies and sites, community action programs, performance troupes, historic preservation/restoration organizations, filmmaking, archaeological sites, government agencies, and/or public social service agencies.

Internships may be taken during the summer or academic year, instead of or in addition to regular course work. Internships for graduate credit hours must be negotiated with a supervising faculty member and the agency, within one’s approved Plan of Study. Internships may only be awarded credit hours on a pass-fail (S-U) basis.

General requirements of the Graduate College require a prerequisite of 15 s.h. and a 3.0 grade point
Qualified graduate students in American studies can arrange internships with a number of local agencies, including the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Division of Historic Preservation, the University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, the Iowa Humanities Board, Brucemore, the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, and the Putnam Museum and Science Center. With special permission, candidates conducting research during such on-the-job training may receive academic credit through AMST:7994 Independent Study. Other internships with social agencies, government, or business also may be arranged. See an academic advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies for further information.

Appendix II. SOME BASICS ABOUT FINANCIAL AID AWARDED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND GRADUATE COLLEGE

For new students: A student’s initial letter of admission will typically identify the amount of hours (e.g., half-time, quarter-time) and number of years for which the Department makes a commitment of financial aid, contingent upon the student making satisfactory progress toward the degree. In some cases, the letter may specify types of assignment on an annual basis (fellowship, teaching assistant). But in many cases, it will not.

For students past 5th year: If a student has not yet completed his or her degree and has completed the Department’s committed number of years of financial aid, he or she may still apply for additional financial aid from the Department on an annual basis. However, the student is only eligible to be awarded a teaching assistantship after all contractual commitments have been honored to continuing and new students. (Fellowships are competitive, based on the stated requirements for each fellowship.) Typically, a few students decline teaching assistantships late in the spring or in the summer because they have been awarded a fellowship, have decided not to matriculate at UI, or for other personal reasons. Occasionally, new funds become available in late spring or early summer for additional course sections. Therefore, students who have completed their multiple-year financial aid contract with the Department may receive additional financial aid (i.e. teaching assistantships) due to last-minute openings.

Regardless of a student’s initial award letter and type of financial aid commitment, ALL continuing students who wish to receive financial aid (including Graduate College or external fellowships) must submit the required “Supplemental Aid Form for American Studies” to the Department by February 1 for financial aid the following academic year.

The Director of Graduate Studies holds an annual meeting late in January prior to the February deadline to explain financial aid application procedures, types of aid available for the forthcoming year, and other considerations.

The Supplemental Aid Form for American Studies asks students to report on progress toward degree, teaching assistant assignment preferences, and to explain any circumstances regarding “unsatisfactory progress.”

The current COGS contract stipulates that all teaching assignments for students who have financial aid award letters and commitments must be made by April 15 for assignments to begin the following fall semester. For further information regarding COGS rules and regulations governing TA assignments, salary, and benefits, see: https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/graduate-assistant-employment. Each academic unit that utilizes teaching assistants also has a graduate student Union Steward who may assist TAs with their rights and any grievances, according to the collective bargaining agreement. The
COGS office can inform a TA of who is the current American Studies Union Steward.

**Graduate Fellowships**

- Graduate College Iowa Recruitment Fellowships (by nomination only)
- Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Awards (by nomination only)
- Graduate College Summer Fellowships
- Ballard and Seashore Dissertation Fellowships (by nomination only)
- T. Anne Cleary International Dissertation Research Fellowships
- Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Summer Fellowships (Pilot Program)

**Travel for Professional Development and Dissertation Research**

1. Conference travel funds are available through the Graduate Student Senate (GSS): [http://gss.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/gss-travel-funds](http://gss.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/gss-travel-funds)
2. Kern Travel and Kern Dissertation Awards. Professional conference travel and dissertation research travel funds available through the Department. Application procedures and criteria announced each semester; 2-4 Kern Travel Awards made annually; 1-2 Kern Dissertation Awards made annually.

**Teaching Assistantships**

The Department of American Studies assigns students to teaching assistant appointments in American Studies, Rhetoric, General Education Literature, Health and Physical Activity Skills (HPAS), and other departments, when possible and especially when there are cognate departments or programs that do not have graduate students or when a student possesses a specific area of expertise or skill in demand by another department (e.g., fluency in a foreign language).

A teaching assistant’s assignment could be: leading discussion sections and/or grading for a large lecture course; teaching an independent section of a course from a template or from one’s own design. The latter are generally reserved for more senior teaching assistants.

Typically, assignments take into account seniority among the students and any teaching experience prior to the University of Iowa. Assignments are not normally specified in a student’s admission letter but are determined, contingent upon satisfactory progress toward degree, on an annual basis. Since UI teaching assistants are unionized and have a collective bargaining agreement with the University, all assignments, salaries, and deadlines are made in accordance with the current COGS collective bargaining agreement.

**Appendix III. TRAVELING SCHOLAR PROGRAM OF THE BIG TEN ACADEMIC ALLIANCE**

**Purpose** The program, under the auspices of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation representing thirteen universities in the Midwest, enables a doctoral student to take advantage of special resources available on another campus but not available on his or her own campus: special course offerings, research opportunities, unique laboratories, and library collections.

**Procedure**

1. A CIC Traveling Scholar first must be recommended by the scholar’s own graduate adviser, who will approach an appropriate faculty member at the possible host institution in regard to a visiting arrangement.
2. After agreement by the student's adviser and the faculty member at the host institution, graduate deans at both institutions will be fully informed by the adviser and have the power to approve or disapprove.

3. A CIC Traveling Scholar will be registered at the home university and fees will be collected and kept by that institution.

4. Credit for the work taken will be recorded at the home university.

5. Those desiring additional information should inquire at the Office of the Graduate College.

**Conditions** CIC Traveling Scholars will normally be limited to two semesters or three quarters on another campus. Each university retains its full right to accept or reject any student who wishes to study under its auspices.

**Appendix IV. FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

American Studies [Candidacy Petition](#) (download)

American Studies [Candidacy Faculty Evaluation form](#)

[Comprehensive Exams in American Studies information](#) for committee members outside the department

Graduate College [website](#)

Graduate College [Non-Doctoral Plan of Study Summary Form](#) for Master’s Students (download)

Graduate College [Doctoral Plan of Study Summary Form](#) For Doctoral Students (download)

Graduate College [internal fellowships & awards / deadlines](#)