

American Studies®  
*The University of Iowa*



# Guidelines for American Studies Graduate Students

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(s.h. = semester hours)

## Doctor of Philosophy 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.)

#### 1<sup>st</sup> 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.)

## **2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2-3 times for 1 s.h. each). PhD students must take the Dissertation Writing Workshop twice (2 semesters) and are strongly encouraged to take it three semesters in a row. A PhD student's dissertation advisor may require the student to take the Workshop for an additional semester if progress on the dissertation has slowed. The Workshop serves post-Comps PhD students who are writing their dissertation prospectus or drafting chapters of their dissertation. It generally does not serve as a workshop for journal articles or conference presentations. Beyond the 2- (or 3-) semester requirement, dissertation students may take the workshop as many times as they like.

*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 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 1<sup>st</sup> of December of the student's 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 portfolio receives a U may resubmit the Portfolio in the 4<sup>th</sup> 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, Zoom, or telephone. All students must discuss course schedules with their academic advisors to register for classes. After this discussion your advisor will unlock your registration.
  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 graduate 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 administrator 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 times each semester. Students are expected to attend all events as beyond being informative they foster relationships between graduate students and faculty members.

- 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**

**1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 administrator -- 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 week prior to the start 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.

**3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

Students whom the Graduate College has admitted to ABD status must register for a minimum of 1 s.h. of post-comprehensive credit each semester until the degree is awarded (summers excepted). The student must request that a short hours form be completed by the department administrator whenever their registration falls below 9 s.h.

### **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:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year rules above apply.

### **Advising—Registration and Course Selection**

A. All students must be enrolled each consecutive semester (summer and winter sessions 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 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 their progress is reviewed annually by the graduate faculty.
- 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) 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.

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

\*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 University's 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 during the candidacy process 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 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 2<sup>nd</sup> year in residency but no later than the end of a student's 2<sup>nd</sup> year in residency – the Director of Graduate Studies schedules a formal meeting with the student and the student's advisor. The faculty advisor and the DGS determines whether 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.

PhD students who arrive at Iowa with an MA degree from another university will hold a Plan of Study meeting with the Department's Plan of Study committee during their third semester, i.e. during the late Fall of their second year. In the Spring prior to this, or in the student's second semester in the PhD program, they will meet together with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to consult about the process of designing and submitting a Plan of Study. For PhD students admitted to the PhD program directly from the Department's MA program, the Plan of Study meeting is usually scheduled for the late Fall of their first semester in the PhD program. In this case, the new PhD student meets with their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies early in the student's first Fall semester to consult about preparing a Plan of Study for the meeting held later that Fall.

A selection of sample Plans of Study are available in the American Studies office.

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 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  
RELS:4939 Religion and Violence in America  
HIST:7276 Readings in the American Frontier  
129:124 The African American Religious Experience  
ENGL:7010 Seminar: Literary Criticism and Theory (Religion, Secularism, Modernity)

*U.S. Mass Culture/Popular Culture in the 20th Century*

- COMM:4030 Special Topics: African Americans in Television  
AMST:6080 American Film and Culture  
19:203 Popular Culture and Mass Communication  
45:115 American Culture of the 1930s  
HIST:7253 Seminar in American Social History  
CINE:5673 Advanced Film Theory

*The Politics of Museum Representation in the U.S.*

AMST:6050	Topics in American Studies (Critical Dialogues: Stuart Hall)
ARTH:4081	The Art Museum: Theory and Practice
ARTH:4040	Art, Law, and Ethics
AMST:6050	Topics in American Studies (World's Fairs)
AFAM:7214	Readings in African American Women's History
ANTH:3257	North American Archaeology

*Sound and Mass Media in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

CINE:5673	Advanced Film Theory: Hollywood Sound in the 1930s-1940s
PORO:6335	Prosem: Contemporary Rhetorical Studies: Digital Rhetorics
COMM:6353	Sem: Intellectual Property
MUS:3780	Audio Recording
ENGL:7600	Technology in American Literature and Culture
AMST:6058	Technology and American Culture

*Work and Culture in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America*

AMST:6050	Topics in American Studies (Money and American Culture)
ENGL:3160	Literature & Philosophic Thought: The Frankfurt School
HIST:7251	Social History of the American Working Class
AMST:6058	Technology and American Culture
HIST:7255	Readings: Gilded Age and the Progressive Era
ENGL:6610	Studies in African American Literature

**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.

A Plan of Study form must be approved by the committee chair and Department chair and filed with the Graduate College. This becomes the student's roadmap, so to speak, of what must be completed prior to the dissertation defense. Keep your copy and refer to it each semester when registering for classes to ensure appropriate classes are taken. Occasionally a student will get to the dissertation defense stage only to be notified that they are missing a class or classes they had included on the Plan of Study form. It is the student's responsibility to be certain all course requirements are met.

**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 the Department's comps guide for outside examiners to that examiner. This is titled "The Comprehensive Examination in American Studies" and is available [here](#) or from the department administrator.

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

## Timetable for PhD Comprehensive Examination Process

Task	Deadline
Meet with American Studies committee chair/advisor	At least one semester prior to examination
Deliver "The Comprehensive Examination in American Studies" document to non-American Studies committee members	At least one semester prior to examination
Finalize bibliographies for all three fields	Beginning of semester in which exams are to be taken
Complete PhD Plan of Study forms for Graduate College	Two weeks prior to first written examination
Schedule dates for written and oral examinations	Early in the semester but no later than 4-6 weeks prior to oral examination date
Written examinations	Scheduled for specific dates within 10-15 day period
Oral examination	Scheduled for at least 10 days after completion of last written examination

## 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 two semesters 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 average. 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**

### **Teaching Assistantship Appointments and Financial Support**

The Department of American Studies assigns students to teaching assistant appointments in American Studies, Rhetoric, General Education Literature, and occasionally with 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 consider 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.

**For new students:** A student's initial letter of admission will typically identify the number of hours per week a student will be employed by the American studies or other department (e.g., half-time=20 hours, quarter-time=10 hours) 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. Teaching assistantships are made based on nine months employment. The department of American Studies limits assistantship support to two (2) years for those pursuing a Master's degree and to five (5) years for those pursuing a PhD. For students entering the PhD program directly from the UI American Studies MA, the Department limits support to three (3) years in the PhD program and thus for a limit of five (5) years total of University of Iowa assistantship support. Each year, approval of renewal will be based upon factors including the quality of work during the previous appointment, satisfactory progress toward the degree, and satisfactory completion of all duties related to the appointment.

All candidates for appointments must have their applications processed through the departmental office. Upon arrival, each appointee should complete a withholding statement through the employee self-service website and show proof of citizenship or resident alien status by completing an I-9 form with the department administrator. The University Payroll office will not process a paycheck until these procedures are completed. Paychecks are generally deposited into your account in a local financial institution. Payments are divided into ten equal amounts, five each semester; the first payment is September 1 and the last one June 1.

**For students past 5<sup>th</sup> 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 of any kind (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, the categories 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.

Each appointee should complete a withholding statement through the employee self-service website and show proof of citizenship or resident alien status by completing an I-9 form with the departmental administrator. The University Payroll office will not process a paycheck until these procedures are completed. Paychecks are deposited into your account; checks are not issued. Payments are divided into 5 payments per semester (10 per academic year), with the first payment on September 1 and the last on June 1.

### **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](#)

### **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>
2. Kern Travel, Kern Dissertation, Sport Studies Travel, and JoAnn Castagna travel awards. Professional

conference travel and dissertation research travel funds are available through the Department. Application procedures and criteria are announced at the start of each semester. Multiple Kern Travel Awards are made annually along with 1-2 Kern Dissertation and 1 or 2 Castagna awards.

### **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 [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](#)

### **Appendix V. MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **Building and Departmental office**

The front door of the Jefferson Building will be unlocked 6:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 6:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, and 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Sunday. At all other times that door will be locked. After those hours you will need your university ID card to access the front door. The back (alley) door can always be accessed with your ID card.

The department office and departmental administrator are located in 210 Jefferson Building and is open 8:00-4:30. This is where the department administrator's office is located. Her work hours are 7:30-4:00. Please visit or call her with questions.

### **Office space and keys**

The Department does its best to provide office space for all its graduate students. Please respect the space, equipment, and supplies assigned to or used by others in this shared office space. Be aware that your music tastes may not be the same as your office mates'. Please use ear buds or headphones. Restrict personal fragrances as others may be especially sensitive to strong scents.

Each graduate student will have keys to the stairwell door and their office. Each student is responsible for the keys and must return them to the departmental administrator when changing offices or upon graduation. Under no circumstances may they be given or lent to others. If keys are lost, report it immediately to the administrator. One replacement will be given for free; thereafter a charge is imposed for each key.

### **Office supplies and copying**

Office supplies are kept in the cabinet in room 734 JB (the copy room). Take what is needed for your job as a department teaching assistant, but not for your personal use. Be judicious in use as our funds are limited. Should you need department letterhead for official correspondence ask the department administrator for the department template. It may only be used for academic or university-related correspondence.

Each office has at least one computer to be shared among the office occupants. In addition, there is Wi-Fi throughout the building for personal laptop use. Use a USB drive or your [UI OneDrive](#).

Everyone has scanning capabilities. If you are teaching an American studies or sport studies course you have also been set up for the printer/copier features. Your office computer is networked to the copier/printer in 734 JB. Your code is the last 4 of your SS#. Enter that with the touch screen and push OK. All course materials should be done on your own number.

Please use the 7th floor copier for course copying such as syllabi, quizzes, exams and short hand-outs. We have a very small department budget and cannot afford to provide students with extensive copies. You can scan articles to upload to CANVAS. You may copy enough review sheets or guides for each class member. We ask that you use common sense about what is reasonable. **Personal research or other copying is not allowed.** The Department does not, and cannot, support copying for personal use or for graduate seminars. Please plan ahead. If we see your copy numbers are excessive for the class you're teaching we'll speak with you about what that reason might be.

No copying of entire books under any circumstances (it is not legal).

### **Graduate and Professional Organizations**

Each year the graduate students elect representatives from the American studies and Sport studies tracks to attend faculty meetings and act as liaisons between graduate students and faculty.

Membership in professional organizations such as the American Studies Association, The Mid-American America Studies Association, The North America Society for the History of Sport (NASSH), the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), among others, is not required by the Department, but it is encouraged. All graduate students are encouraged to attend conferences (see info on conference funding). It is assumed that, unless teaching duties interfere, students will attend all talks sponsored by the American Studies department.

### **Professional Development and Remaining in Good Standing**

Ongoing financial aid is dependent upon maintaining a 3.0 GPA, the minimum for remaining in good standing. The Department's policy concerning Remaining in Good Standing accords with that expressed in the Graduate College's Student Handbook:

A doctoral student on regular status shall be placed on academic probation if, after completing 9 semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at The University of Iowa, the student's UI Cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. A student regains good academic standing when his or her UI Cumulative GPA returns to 3.00. If, after completing 9 more semester hours of graded (A, B, C, D, F) graduate work at this University, the student's UI Cumulative GPA remains below 3.00, the student will be dropped from the degree program and denied permission to re-register within any Graduate College doctoral degree program.

The student may apply for and be accepted into a non-doctoral degree or certificate program. Failure to pass the graduate exams within proper time limits may also result in a candidate's dismissal from the program.

In making appointments or renewing them, the Department considers not only the academic record of the students but also their professional development and sense of responsibility towards the field of American studies/Sport studies and the Department. Professional development includes the wider sense of responsibility and accountability that is expected of graduate students, who are learning how to become professionals in their chosen field. While this is not an exhaustive list, examples of professional behavior include:

- not intruding on the office space of others with possessions or noise, maintaining your own office space with reasonable cleanliness, and working cooperatively with your fellow graduate students;
- communicating in a timely manner with the DGS, your professors (both in seminar work and in TA settings) and the departmental administrator;
- responding promptly to emails (whether from professors or students);
- completing assigned TA work in a timely and professional manner; and
- attending all department-sponsored lectures (unless the student is teaching at that time).

If you are ill or cannot teach your own course, you must notify the course supervisor, the DEO, and the departmental administrator. In addition, you must make a good-faith effort to obtain a substitute to teach the course. If you are unable to obtain a substitute, notify the course supervisor, the DEO, and the departmental administrator so a replacement can be found. If you are unable to attend a course that you are taking, you must notify the professor in charge. If you are unable to attend a department lecture or function, you should notify the DGS.

Students should accept primary responsibility for developing a career following the completion of the doctoral degree. The student should seek guidance from available resources, including the research advisor, career counseling services, the dissertation committee, and any other mentors. Even in your activities as a student, you are a professional member of the Department, and your conduct should reflect that standing.