



American Studies at the University of Kansas

A Handbook for Graduate Students

Department of American Studies
1440 Jayhawk Boulevard
Bailey Hall, Room 213
Lawrence, KS 66045

(785) 864-1011

amerst@ku.edu

americanstudies.ku.edu

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This handbook is for informational purposes and does not constitute a contract. Degree requirements currently enforced appear in the KU [catalog](#) under the American Studies section. This is a working document, so please access it via the Department website to ensure you are viewing the most recent version.

This handbook and associated appendices can be found on the [AMS Grad Student Documents SharePoint site](#).

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What does American Studies mean to us?

American Studies at the University of Kansas is an interdisciplinary department whose faculty and students think critically about community, identity, and social justice in U.S. culture, politics, and society. We study the multiple and contested meanings of “American” both nationally and transnationally, and with attention to constructions of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, region, age, and sexuality. To prepare students to better understand, effectively argue, and constructively respond to social divisiveness and inequity, we must learn to turn history into questions, to critically engage and assess the veracity of sources and information, and to learn from, by, and about the many marginalized communities that make up our shared histories.

Such an inclusive – and therefore realistic – definition of “American” requires an equally capacious understanding of the critical impact of difference and power on the formation of traditional scholastic disciplines. American Studies embraces research methods that combine, cross, and stretch conventional academic boundaries between the Social Sciences, the Humanities, and the arts. American Studies is rooted in civic engagement and on scholarly discourse that informs policy, and that addresses the local, national, and global processes underlying our thinking, doing, and imagining. Through creative thinking and rigorous analysis of historical and current events, encompassing official institutions, social and religious movements, popular and media culture, and other areas, we explore complex formations of American community and identity, both within and beyond US borders.

American Studies produces undergraduate and graduate students better understand the connections between themselves and the world, are aware of the complex historical processes, past and present, that make the United States and the specific experiences of the populations that make up its territories.

Graduate students have contributed much to the development of the program, especially since the formation of the Graduate Student Organization in 1969. Graduate students are fundamental to our dynamic intellectual community, through their commitment to question and better our societies, understanding of our role as teachers and researchers, and participation in the organization of local and national conferences, symposia, and the visits of guest scholars to KU. Their elected representatives join department meetings and are active in the formulation of administrative procedures and curricular developments.

Our graduate students go on to varied and successful careers in a range of fields in addition to higher education, including politics, non-profits, archival and library sciences work, museum studies, and public education.

Unit Directory

Department Chair

[Dr. Shawn Alexander](#)

Email: shawnalexander@ku.edu

Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. [Araceli Masterson-Algar](#)

Email: aracelimasterson@ku.edu

Graduate Program Coordinator

[Lauren Chaney](#)

Email: lkchaney@ku.edu

Schedule a [virtual advising appointment](#)

Administrative Associates/Office Managers

Sam Moore

Email: samanthamoore@ku.edu

Meghan Allen

Email: mmallen@ku.edu

The Department is headed by a Chairperson, currently Professor Deborah Whaley. The Chairperson is assisted by Administrative Associate, Samantha Moore. General questions about the department, campus, faculty office hours, and whom to contact, may be directed to Samantha.

Graduate programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are overseen by the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA). Students' first contact for most procedural and administrative matters related to the graduate program is the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator, currently Lauren Chaney. Questions regarding University policy, admissions, exam processes, graduation, GTA/GRA/GA appointments, enrollment, or petitions should be directed to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), currently Araceli Masterson-Algar, is the lead faculty member in the graduate program, and should be consulted for matters of Departmental policy and requirements. The DGS also advises students on the content and direction of their individualized program of study along with the faculty advisor.

Core Faculty

Members of the faculty with tenure-stream appointments in American Studies make up the Department's core faculty, and are principally responsible for teaching graduate courses and advising individual graduate students.

[Ben Chappell](#) (Ph.D. University of Texas at Austin), Ethnography, cultural studies, Mexican America, vernacular aesthetics, critical university studies, neoliberalism.

[Elizabeth Esch](#) (Ph.D. New York University), US empire, working class studies, race and racism, transnational studies.

[Neill Gabrielle Esquibel-Kennedy](#) (Ph.D. University of Kansas), racial capitalism, settler colonialism, immigration, intersections of race, space, and place.

[Nicole Hodges Persley](#) (Ph.D. University of Southern California), hip-hop studies, acting and directing, African American performance in theater, film, and television.

[Margaret Kelley](#) (Ph.D. New York University), sociology, survey research, deviance, drugs and crime, alcohol, sports, gender and education, natural mentors.

[Araceli Masterson-Algar](#) (Ph.D. University of Arizona), human mobility and migration, urban cultural studies, social movements, transnational/transatlantic studies, border and borderlands studies, U.S./Mexican borderlands.

[Ray Mizumura-Pence](#) (Ph.D. University of Kansas), Disability studies and civil rights.

[David Roediger](#) (Ph.D. Northwestern University), Working class studies, slavery, race relations, nineteenth century U.S. President, American Studies Association, 2014-2015.

[Ben Schmack](#) (Ph.D. University of Kansas), radical social movements emanating from the radical Left, as well as their repression, throughout the twentieth century in the United States.

[Sherrie Tucker](#) (Ph.D. University of California, Santa Cruz), Improvisation studies, democracy, difference.

[Robert Warrior](#) (Ph.D. Union Theological Seminary), Indigenous studies, Native studies, American literary and cultural studies, theory and method in Indigenous studies, President, American Studies Association, 2016-2017; Founding President, Native American and Indigenous Studies Association, 2009-2010.

[Deborah Whaley](#) (Ph.D. University of Kansas), American literature, history, and culture; the institutional history, theories, and methods of American and cultural studies; 18th century contemporary cultural history; comparative ethnic studies; Black cultural studies; the digital humanities; the medical humanities; film, cinema, popular culture, and the visual arts.

Affiliates to the AMS Faculty

The department maintains informal relations with a number of scholars across campus who work in American Studies or areas closely connected to our field. These are faculty members who have expressed an interest in working with AMS students, in courses or in some cases as a committee member. Students should monitor the course offerings of AMS affiliates. See the list of AMS affiliates in the [Resources](#) section of this document.

University Offices

Your unit's Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Coordinator is your first stop for any questions related to graduate study or requirements. If you would like to research an issue in advance of speaking with your department or if you still have questions, the following offices can provide assistance:

[College Office of Graduate Affairs \(COGA\)](#)

COGA oversees graduate affairs and administers University policy for programs within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The COGA website contains comprehensive information on requirements and processes pertaining to graduate education at KU. Most common questions can be answered with the information provided there, including questions regarding [enrollment changes or forms](#), University policies regarding [exams](#) and committee requirements, and University [graduation requirements](#).

COGA reviews all [student petitions](#) related to University and College policy, issuing decisions on behalf of the College or referring as required to a faculty committee and/or Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. The more common student petitions relate to [enrollment](#), [graduate credit](#), [leaves of absence](#), and [time limit extensions](#).

[Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#)

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs is the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs at KU. The Executive Council of Graduate Studies sets policies and regulations governing graduate study and offers various programs for graduate students throughout the year. While COGA should be your first stop for any questions your department cannot answer, you may be referred to Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs for certain matters, especially for those related to [GTA/GRA/GA appointments and policies](#).

[Office of the Registrar \(OUR\)](#)

Contact OUR for questions related to enrollment (if the question cannot be resolved via the enrollment changes link provided above under COGA), tuition, campus fees, the Academic Calendar, and fee petitions.

[Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)

Contact Financial Aid and Scholarships for questions related to the disbursement of scholarships, fellowship award, loans, and FAFSA.

[International Support Services \(ISS\)](#)

Contact ISS for questions related to international students, including enrollment requirements, international student insurance, obtaining a social security card, I-20 questions, and any issue related to student visas. While other offices on campus such as the Applied English Center, Human Resources, or the Registrar may also handle related matters, because the students' legal status in the country may be affected, it is recommended that students contact ISS first.

[Center for Teaching Excellence \(CTE\)](#)

CTE is a University office dedicated to assisting instructors and GTAs in developing effective instructional techniques and to introducing instructors and GTAs to the pedagogical technology available at the University. CTE specialists work with instructors and GTAs individually and also offer a diverse array of workshops and discussions.

General Department Policies and Procedures

Admission

M.A. & Ph.D. Programs

Prospective students are encouraged to correspond with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Coordinator before they complete an application. It can be especially helpful to visit the campus to discuss the program with faculty and students.

The American Studies graduate program admits students every other year to maintain its strong cohort model. **The next available admission term is Fall 2028.** The application will open in early September 2027 with a deadline of January 5, 2028.

Both the master's and doctoral programs are designed to begin in the fall semester. All application materials must be received via the online graduate application by **January 5**.

The admissions process is rigorous and requires a competitive application to be successful. A complete application must include:

- A completed application form and non-refundable application fee submitted online to [Graduate Studies](#).
- A copy or scan of [official transcripts](#) from each college and post-secondary institution you have attended. Copies of official transcripts should be uploaded directly to the online application. If admitted, applicants will be required to submit official, sealed transcripts directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions within the first semester of enrollment in the program.
- A statement of academic objectives describing your intellectual development, previous academic training, and areas of academic interest.

The statement of academic objectives should make it clear why the student is pursuing graduate study in American Studies, and what kind of work they hope to prepare for through a rigorous, interdisciplinary program. The most effective statements often identify an existing intellectual conversation or problem to which the student wishes to contribute, and at least one faculty member with whom they may potentially work. The statement need not describe a developed research project, but ought to give a good idea of the kinds of questions, topics, and priorities that the student will pursue in building a research agenda. The quality of this statement is an especially important factor in the decisions of our admissions committee.

- A current résumé or curriculum vitae (C.V) summarizing your academic background and relevant work experience.
- Three letters of recommendation from individuals familiar with your academic abilities, potential, and preparation for graduate study (submitted via the recommendation section of the online application).
- A sample of your written academic work. This should be a research paper or article of no more than 35 pages that represents your best work to date. Students who have completed a thesis may submit the introduction.

- If an applicant is not a native speaker of English, they must verify their English proficiency. Please see Graduate Admissions' [English Proficiency Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

American Studies M.A./Urban Planning M.U.P Dual Program

Students seeking admission to the American Studies M.A./Urban Planning M.U.P. dual degree program must meet the established admission requirements of each program, but only one application form is required.

- American Studies M.A. application requirements – listed above
- [Urban Planning M.U.P. application requirements](#)

Non-Degree-Seeking

Students may apply to KU for admission on a non-degree-seeking basis, in order to continue their education. Students who begin as non-degree-seeking but decide to seek regular admission to a degree program must complete the usual application process. American Studies' requirements for non-degree-seeking admission can be found on the department's [website](#).

Funding

Fellowships

The American Studies Department competes with other units across campus for the opportunity to offer graduate fellowships, such as the [University Graduate Fellowship](#), the [Bernadette Gray-Little Doctoral Fellowship](#), and the [Chancellor's Doctoral Fellowship](#). Students are nominated by their home department. These fellowships are often awarded upon admission for the first year.

Students are also encouraged to actively apply for funding from external sources as a routine professional activity. [The Hall Center for the Humanities Grant Development Office](#) and the office of [Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs](#) maintain lists of external funding opportunities.

AMS Assistantships

Doctoral students are awarded five-year funding packages upon admission to the program. In our standard funding package, support for the first year of study comes in the form of a .50 FTE (20 hours/week) Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA). The subsequent four years of financial support may come in the form of a GTA appointment, Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA), or other fellowship. Please note, any funding a student receives from non-AMS sources in the first 5 years will count toward the 5-year financial support package. Students sometimes take longer to finish, depending on personal circumstances and the nature of their projects. In most cases, however, after five years, students are eligible to continue working on their dissertations while enrolled only in a single credit hour per semester, which reduces costs significantly. We will support and encourage students to seek outside funding to supplement the departmental award.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Most departmental funding comes in the form of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs). These are awarded with an emphasis on supporting doctoral studies and the aim of fair distribution of resources. Each spring, students may apply for GTA positions, which usually involve either leading discussion sections for a large lecture course or serving as instructor of record in a smaller course. A teaching assistantship

provides tuition and a stipend, according to the collective contract, called the [Memorandum of Agreement](#). All AMS graduate students are required to enroll in AMS 900: Teaching Seminar each semester for their first 3 years of teaching. All teaching appointments are contingent upon budget and enrollment. See the Information for GTAs section of this Handbook for more information about American Studies' GTA procedures.

Other Assistantships

When individual faculty members have sufficient research funds, they may also appoint students as Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs). In addition, students fill managing and editorial positions at the journal produced by AMS faculty, *American Studies*. The editorial positions are typically Graduate Assistantships (GAs). Tuition support varies with all non-teaching assistantships, and appointments are at the discretion of the supervising faculty members.

Assistantships in Other Departments

Departments such as Anthropology, English, Film and Media Studies, foreign languages, History, Political Science, Sociology, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies have also appointed our students as GTAs. Inquiries about availability of teaching appointments should be made directly to the appropriate department. Appointments made outside of a student's home department require a statement of support from the DGS. Graduate students who are actively seeking funding outside the Department should make this known to the DGS.

Federal Financial Aid

All students who are eligible should apply for [federal financial aid](#). Under certain circumstances, federal funds may be used to support work-study or GTA positions.

Summer Funding

Summer enrollment is generally not required of graduate students, and funding support usually does not cover summers. Students may request to be considered for a limited number of AMS teaching positions during the summer, depending on the annual budget and enrollments. Preference will be given to students in the advanced phases of the Ph.D. Whenever possible, students unable to work outside of the university (i.e. international students) will take priority. The program will release a call for summer teaching applications and course proposals in December each year.

The Office of Graduate Studies also offers [summer scholarships](#) for which the department can nominate students. Interested students should send their application materials to the DGS and Graduate Program Coordinator.

Graduate Student Travel Funding

Each academic year, the department strives to set aside funding for graduate student travel. The requests should be directed to the chair, with a cc to the director of graduate studies. Please indicate: a. name, dates, and location of the conference; b. a couple of sentences explaining how this conference contributes to the students' growth as a scholar; and c. confirmation of acceptance to the conference. Requests will be funded on a first-come first-served basis. Each cycle will run until funds are depleted. This academic year (2026-7), and due to the shortages in departmental budget, the funding can vary from \$100

to \$500 per year per grad student, with preference given to students in later stages of their graduate degree, and/or who have not had the opportunity to attend conferences in the past.

In addition, to be considered for departmental funding for conference presentations, the graduate student:

- Must have discussed the opportunity with the advisor, and have the advisor's support. Sometimes the advisor will request that the student turn in the conference paper earlier on for feedback, or practice their presentation in smaller venues prior to the conference.
- Must first have shown evidence of applying to other venues, including the Graduate Student Travel Fund (<https://graduate.ku.edu/graduate-student-travel-fund>).
- Be in good academic and professional standing in the AMS program.
- Familiarize yourself and comply with KU's travel guidelines (<https://travel.ku.edu/>)

Please keep in mind that conference travel requires 4 to 6 months of planning and preparation.

Research Awards

Students may apply for funding support for specific research projects at various stages. Some examples that have been particularly beneficial to AMS students in the past include the following:

Hall Center for the Humanities Awards

1. Debicki and Martin Travel Awards: funding for domestic or international travel to conduct dissertation research. Limited to PhD candidates, apply in November.
2. Sias Graduate Fellowships in the Humanities: one semester of funding to support dissertation writing. Apply in November.
3. Graduate Summer Research Awards: funding to support full-time research and writing during the summer. Limited to PhD candidates, apply in February.

More information is available from the [Hall Center for the Humanities](#).

Student Debt

Student debt has become a matter of great concern at the University of Kansas in recent years. The Department of American Studies is also concerned and wants to help our students in any way we can to enter the job market debt free.

In the Department of American Studies, we do not have anyone with the training to help students with their finances, but we can facilitate, if necessary, access to KU services where there are staff well- trained in these roles. If students need help planning and organizing their finances, [Financial Aid & Scholarships](#) can provide support for graduate students who need professional advice on student debt and general money management. We can facilitate these contacts, if necessary, but students can request an appointment directly on the [Financial Aid website](#). You may also direct your questions to financialaid@ku.edu.

Grading

A grade of C or higher must be achieved for a course to count toward a degree. Typically, grades in graduate work convey the following assessments:

- A: Excellent work worthy of good standing in an advanced graduate program
- B: Completion of all assignments with work that needs improvement
- C: Work that is passable but not satisfactory at the graduate level

Grades of D or F typically are reserved for cases of seriously unsatisfactory work, disengagement from the course, or academic misconduct.

AMS 999 Dissertation hours are graded based on the following scale:

AMS 999 SP/LP/NP Grading Scale

Grade	Description of Grade	Action by Program
Satisfactory Progress (SP)	The progress made during the semester supports timely completion of the dissertation. The student met the goals for the semester established by the faculty advisor.	No action – the student is making satisfactory progress
Limited Progress (LP)	The progress made may cause delays in the completion of the dissertation. The student was not proactive in reaching out to the advisor(s), and/or did not fully complete the goals agreed upon by the faculty advisor.	If a student receives more than 2 consecutive LP grades, the Graduate Committee will review the student's record and may recommend academic probation and/or the completion of a mentorship agreement. If the student does not meet the terms of their probation, they may be considered for dismissal.
No Progress (NP)	The student did not communicate with their advisor(s), NOR did they show any evidence of progress on the dissertation.	If a student earns a grade of NP, they are not making satisfactory academic progress toward degree. The Graduate Committee will review the student's record and may recommend academic probation, the completion of a mentoring agreement, or dismissal.

*Students should carefully review the University's grading policy found under [Grading](#) in the University Policies and Degree Requirements section of this document.

Academic Integrity & Misconduct

The Department of American Studies expects students and faculty members to demonstrate academic integrity in conducting their coursework and research. This includes acknowledging the sources they use in their academic work with full and correct citations. Not acknowledging the source of an idea, text, or argument constitutes plagiarism. Students should consult with faculty well before due dates if they are not sure how to handle citations.

Academic integrity also means that work on examinations and assignments must be carried out by authorized means. Students are subject to sanctions by the University for Academic Misconduct if they violate these principles. Definitions are provided in the [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USSR\)](#) governance policy.

Good Standing

Periodically the Department will be asked to certify that a student is in “good standing.” For instance, this is sometimes a requirement for certain funding awards. To be in good standing, a student in a graduate degree program in American Studies must meet the following criteria:

1. GPA of 3.0 or higher
2. No more than one outstanding “I” or “WG” grade
3. [Annual review materials](#) submitted for the previous calendar year
4. Making satisfactory progress toward completion of a degree
5. Has an active Mentorship Agreement on file. New students are required to submit the [pre-comprehensive exam mentorship agreement](#) by the end of their second semester of enrollment. All students submit their [post-comprehensive exam mentorship agreement](#) within one month of a successful comprehensive exam.

For additional information on good standing as well as probation and dismissal procedures for those students that do not meet the requirements for good standing, see the [University Policies](#) section of this document.

Annual Review

Every student in the program is evaluated annually. By March 15 of each year, students are required to submit materials for evaluation that reflect their efforts in the current academic year.

1. Updated and complete CV
2. A research statement of 500 words maximum
3. For those students who are GTA instructors of record, we ask that you submit your course evaluations. Should course evaluations not be reflective of your teaching performance, you can accompany them by other evidence of effective teaching.

Later that spring, the DGS will gather feedback from the instructors of the student’s classes on the students’ performance in class, from the faculty advisor on the student’s progress towards the next milestone, and from the faculty who worked with the student in their role as a GTA.

By the end of the summer term, students will receive letters assessing their work, professional activity, and progress toward their degree. If necessary, the letter will also describe any required changes. A student who disagrees with their evaluation letter in a given year may submit a response that will be added to their file.

Advising & Mentorship

The most important faculty role in a student's graduate work is that of the faculty advisor. Each student is expected to identify and ask a faculty member to serve as their faculty advisor. Optimally, this will occur before beginning the second year of study. The Director of Graduate Studies identifies a de facto advisor until a faculty advisor has been selected by the student.

The student is responsible for assuring they have a faculty advisor and is expected to regularly reach out and communicate with them.

Faculty members must consent to take on the student before being named as the faculty advisor and are not required to take on more than their share of advisees, or to advise students working substantially outside their areas of expertise. Students may have to ask more than one faculty member, or adjust their research plans, in order to secure an advisor. When a faculty member has agreed to serve in this capacity, the student should notify the Graduate Program Coordinator via email.

The faculty advisor will work closely with the student to develop a coherent plan of study. The faculty advisor also serves other critical roles such as supervising the student's research and serving as the chair of the master's committee, the comprehensive examination committee, and the dissertation committee as appropriate.

During Enrollment

The faculty advisor will use the appropriate program checklist (M.A. or Ph.D., see appendices) when advising the student on their coursework selections for the upcoming semester. Both the faculty advisor and student are encouraged to keep notes of each advising meeting for recordkeeping purposes. These records may be shared with the Director of Graduate Studies for inclusion in the student's department file.

The student must secure their faculty advisor's approval of their proposed course schedule before enrolling in courses. Upon approval, the student emails the Graduate Program Coordinator, copying their faculty advisor, to request permission numbers to enroll.

Change of Advisor Policy

Students' interests often change throughout their graduate careers and we encourage students to think carefully about which faculty members are a good fit in terms of research interests and receptiveness to larger intellectual and professional goals. Students are free to change advisors at any time during the master's or doctoral program as long as all parties involved are kept informed and the student secures the support of the new advisor before initiating the change. To initiate the change of advisor, students should take the following actions:

- Contact the potential new advisor to confirm they are willing to serve as your advisor.
- Notify your current advisor that you would like to change advisors.
- Contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), and communicate your plans to them; provide a reason for pursuing a change in advisor.
- If your current advisor is the DGS, communicate your plans to the department chair and GPC.
- The DGS and GPC will assist in the transition by verifying the change in advisor with the former and new advisor and communicating the change in advisor to the student's dissertation committee members.

Students are free to communicate independently with their committee members outside of the official communications documented in the steps above. In addition, students can also consult extra-departmental resources such as the Ombuds Office, who can provide support in the process.

Students considering an advisor change also must understand that the new faculty advisor is not accountable for the decisions, advice, and approvals of their colleagues, and may expect changes in the plan of study.

Failure to do so may result in dismissal. A student who is unable to identify and secure the support of a new advisor within a three-month period may be placed on academic probation. Failure to secure a new advisor by the end of the subsequent semester may result in dismissal.

In the event that the student's advisor leaves KU, the student must identify and secure the support of a new advisor by the end of the subsequent semester.

Mentorship Agreements

Incoming students work with their faculty advisor to complete the [AMS Pre-Comp Mentorship Agreement](#), which must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator by the end of the second semester of enrollment. The pre-comp agreement maps out the student's coursework plan, comprehensive exam areas, and future milestones while also setting feedback and professionalism expectations between student and faculty advisor.

Upon passing the comprehensive exams, the student and faculty advisor complete the [AMS Post-Comp Mentorship Agreement](#), which must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Program Coordinator within one month of the completed comprehensive exam. The post-comp agreement maps out the student's plan for the completion of the dissertation.

Regular and Timely Feedback

The Department of American Studies is committed to providing regular and timely feedback to ensure graduate students are aware of the assessment of their academic work and their academic standing in the MA or PhD program.

- Coursework: Feedback on and grades for course assignments are provided according to the schedule included in the syllabus. Final grades are entered by the instructor by the University's grade submission deadline each semester.
- Academic progress: Faculty review all graduate students by the end of the spring semester, and students are provided with feedback generated by this review via email no later than June 30.
- Dissertation work: Faculty advisors provide feedback on chapters within two to three weeks unless otherwise noted in the Mentorship Agreement.
- GTA performance: GTAs are evaluated according to the procedures in the [GTA evaluations](#) section of this handbook.

Professional Development and Research

The aim of the graduate program is not merely to convey information through coursework and assignments, but to develop all students' capacities as professional scholars. To this end, students are expected to attend and participate in the Department's events associated with its mission of research, teaching, and service. Students are strongly encouraged to participate actively in the professional initiatives tied to American Studies and related fields through involvement in regional, national, and international [Associations](#); presentation of work at conferences; and publication. Submitting work for assessment by professional peers and dissemination to broader publics is as important for students' development as meeting departmental requirements. The Department should offer formal and informal guidance on a variety of topics to aid in student's professional development. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of [Graduate Studies' professional development resources for graduate students](#).

American Studies Association of Graduate Students (ASAGS)

Graduate students in American Studies at the University of Kansas automatically belong to the American Studies Association of Graduate Students (ASAGS). This organization seeks to support graduate students in a variety of ways, including representation and regular communication with the department on students' behalf. ASAGS selects representatives who attend Department meetings and provide input on a variety of issues. At least one of these representatives are also part of the Graduate Committee. Students are highly encouraged to participate in ASAGS. The organization typically offers collective and collegial social, intellectual, and writing supports as well as resources that encourage successful outcomes. Officers are elected by the Association annually.

Grievance Procedures

The American Studies Department advises that students make an attempt to resolve issues, e.g. matters concerning grades, directly with the instructor who administered the course. If a grievance arises that cannot be resolved directly with the appropriate party, or if the student does not feel comfortable attempting to resolve the issue with the department chair, the student should follow the department's

official grievance procedures. These procedures have been approved by the University and may be found by following this link: [Department of American Studies Grievance Procedure](#).

Petitions

If a graduate student has a compelling reason to seek exemption from a program requirement or University policy, they may submit a petition to the graduate faculty.

The student should consult with the Graduate Program Coordinator to ensure the petition is necessary and that all appropriate documentation is collected to submit the petition. The Graduate Program Coordinator then forwards the information to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), who then refers the petition to the graduate faculty which will convene to consider the petition.

In cases where the petition relates to a department requirement rather than a University policy, the graduate faculty will issue a final decision.

In cases where the policy or requirement being petitioned is a University policy, the graduate faculty will decide whether to support the student's petition or not. If the faculty agrees to support the petition, they submit it to the College Office of Graduate Affairs (COGA) along with supporting materials as required. The petition form specifies the supporting materials needed for each type of petition. Additional information regarding common University petitions, such as leave of absence, enrollment requirements, and time limit extensions may be found in the [University Policies & Degree Requirements section](#) of this document.

Information for GTAs in American Studies

Baseline Expectations for GTAs

This is intended to articulate ordinary standards of professional practice in university instruction, which are all-too-often assumed and unspoken. Since “ordinary standards” are highly contextual, the lists below are open to ongoing discussion and revision. They do not supersede any extant university policy on GTAs, or any provisions of the GTA contract. Instructors of record may provide additional expectations for work in their own courses.

When appointed as a discussion section leader (“DIS”):

1. Attend lectures and read assigned course materials as if enrolled in the course.
2. Lead discussions in your own sections to support students’ understanding of lecture and reading material, and to help them prepare for graded assignments.
3. Grade assignments and exams as designed by the instructor of record, providing feedback in a timely manner.
 - a. The meaning of “timely” may vary with context, but a good standard is to post grades weekly for small assignments and within a maximum of two weeks for major assignments (i.e. final papers). Students must remain informed of their grade in the class to meet credit/no credit and add/drop deadlines, among other things.
 - b. GTAs are responsible for keeping accurate and updated records of students’ attendance and grades on all evaluated work. These should be accessible in the Canvas grade book. It is imperative that GTAs use the grade recording system designated by the instructor of record.
 - c. When similar assignments or exams occur throughout the term, grades should be returned before the next iteration.
 - d. Students should have an updated report of their grade, reflecting all finished assessments up to that point, at least three times before the end of a course, i.e., monthly in a standard semester course.
4. Carry out the policies and criteria for the course as designed by the instructor of record and described in the course syllabus.
5. Hold all discussion sections as scheduled.
 - a. When the GTA’s absence from a section is unavoidable, they should make alternative arrangements, such as giving a group discussion assignment, asking a colleague to cover, offering supplemental office hours, or other options so that students have the benefit of the scheduled section.
 - b. Alternative plans for a missed section should be made in consultation with the instructor of record.
 - c. Students should be notified of a cancelled section as early as possible, usually least 24 hours in advance of the regular meeting time.
6. Hold regular weekly office hours.
 - a. Each GTA is required to hold three office hours per week. Office hours must be held at different times and on different days for the convenience of the students. GTAs must post their office hours on the door to their office and include them in the class syllabus along with their name, office location and e-mail address. Should you be unable to attend your office hours due to an emergency, please notify both students and the office staff.

7. Provide students and the instructor of record with an email address, and check it daily.
 - a. Generally, GTAs should reply to class-related emails within one workday (24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays) when possible.
 - b. GTAs may provide students with other means of contact. This should be in addition to email, not instead of it, since all enrolled students have email through the university.
 - c. GTAs are not required or expected to share personal contact information beyond the KU email address.
8. Be present for exams. The course coordinator will provide GTAs with the dates and times for their exams. GTAs are required to be on campus through finals week and to follow the directives of the course coordinator and of the University regarding dates, times, and implementation of exams.

When appointed as an instructor of record (“LEC”):

1. Provide students a course syllabus that, in addition to introducing the subject matter of the course, clearly indicates the assignment workload and criteria for evaluation and grading.
2. Hold all scheduled class meetings.
 - a. When the GTA’s absence from a class is unavoidable, they should make alternative arrangements, such as giving a group discussion assignment, asking a colleague to cover, or other options so that students have the benefit of the scheduled class.
 - b. Students should be notified of a cancelled class as early as possible, usually at least 24 hours in advance.
 - c. If it seems that a substantial number of absences (more than two in a regular semester) will be necessary due to medical or other emergency circumstances, the GTA should speak to the department chair as soon as possible.
3. Plan and carry out lectures, presentations, discussions, and other pedagogical activities for the scheduled class time.
4. Assign and evaluate student work as described in the syllabus, providing feedback in a timely manner.
 - a. The meaning of “timely” may vary with context, but a good standard is to post grades weekly for small assignments and within a maximum of two weeks for major assignments (i.e. final papers). Students must remain informed of their grade in the class to meet credit/no credit and add/drop deadlines, among other things.
 - b. GTAs are responsible for keeping accurate and updated records of students’ attendance and grades on all evaluated work. These should be accessible in the Canvas grade book.
 - c. When similar assignments or exams occur throughout the term, grades should be returned before the next iteration.
 - d. Students should have an updated report of their grade, reflecting all finished assessments up to that point, at least three times before the end of a course, i.e., monthly in a standard semester course.
5. Hold regular weekly office hours.
 - a. Each GTA is required to hold three office hours per week. Office hours must be held at different times and on different days for the convenience of the students. GTAs must post their office hours on the door to their office and include them in the class syllabus along with their name, office location and e-mail address. Should you be unable to attend your office hours due to an emergency, please notify both students and the office staff.

6. Provide students with an email address, and check it daily.
 - a. Generally, GTAs should reply to class-related emails within one workday (24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays) when possible.
 - b. GTAs may provide students with other means of contact. This should be in addition to email, not instead of it, since all enrolled students have email through the university.
7. Be present for exams. The course coordinator will provide GTAs with the dates and times for their exams. GTAs are required to be on campus through finals week and to follow the directives of the course coordinator and of the University regarding dates, times, and implementation of exams.

GTAs are not required or expected to share personal contact information beyond the KU email address.

Communications, Office Use, Supplies, and Resources

The American Studies area should be locked when there is no one in the offices. Those students who receive a key, must not share it with anyone. All faculty and graduate students are welcome to use the refrigerator, microwave, and coffee maker, but please help us keep the space tidy and clean.

Graduate students have their mailboxes in the American Studies main area, and should check them at least twice a week. On occasion, undergraduate students might be asked to drop off an assignment in the instructor's box. The student alone, not the office staff, is responsible for properly delivering their assignment to the GTA's office or directly to the instructor's box.

If a student needs to make up an exam, the GTA can ask the office staff to book a date/time for the Conference Room.

Office Keys

Each GTA will receive access to the building (key or KU card activation) from the Administrative Associate to the outside door of Bailey Hall, and to each individually assigned office. We ask graduate students to be very security-conscious, and to please make sure that the office is locked in their absence. There is a replacement fee for a lost key.

Copying, Computer Use, and Supplies

GTAs have access to the all-in-one copier, printer, and scanning device in the Department area at the department's expense, exclusively for course-related documents associated with their employment. GTAs may also request office supplies as needed, like pens, markers, paper clips, rubber bands, staples, tape, etc. from the department administrator, or office staff.

You are required to have your DUO login setup. The IT contact or the office manager will provide DUO instructions. All GTA offices in Bailey have at least one computer to be shared with no more than one other GTA. GTAs may also choose to use computers/receive IT assistance in the various locations in KU buildings. Please contact Ali Yilmaz at aliyilmaz@ku.edu, or call 758-864-8282 for IT Support.

Mailboxes, Mail and E-mail

GTA's are expected to check their e-mail **daily**, and their mailboxes AT LEAST twice a week.

Faculty mailboxes, an outgoing federal, and campus mail drop can be found in the main office. We encourage students to use their home address for federal mail, but should that not be a viable option, the departmental address is:

American Studies
213 Bailey hall
1440 Jayhawk Boulevard
The University of Kansas
Lawrence, KS 66045

Campus Telephones

All university numbers have the prefix 864- or 312-. To dial a campus number from on-campus, dial 4 and then the last four digits of the number. Phones have been replaced by Skype for Business, but numbers have remained the same.

University Online People Search and Personal Information

If you change your home address or telephone number, be sure to notify the office manager. To update your personal information on the KU databases as follows: 1) login to <https://sa.ku.edu/>, go to 'Student Center', then click on 'Personal Information', and finally select 'last Current Jayhawk Address'; and 2) login to <https://hr.ku.edu>, click on 'myKU', select 'HR/Pay', and then select 'Personal Information Summary'. KU People Search is updated each Fall and includes your e-mail and campus address.

Teaching Resources

- [CTE Teaching Resources](#)
- [Academic Achievement and Access Center](#)
- [Center for Service Learning](#)
- [Instructional Development and Support](#)
- [KU Writing Center: Instructor Writing Resources](#)
- [University in the Art Museum: Teaching Resources for Graduate Students](#)
- [Center for Teaching Excellence](#)

GTA Appointment Logistics

GTA Appointment Limits in AMS

Providing that both academic work and teaching are satisfactory and budget and enrollments allow, Ph.D. students will receive support for ten semesters (five academic years).

Students who are required to take additional coursework to make up deficiencies, or under extenuating circumstances, may apply for additional GTA appointments not to exceed a total of eight academic years, or sixteen semesters. Funding beyond the first five years of doctoral study is not guaranteed.

American Studies GTA's may not hold a concurrent FLAS Fellowship.

Teaching Assignments

All 50% GTAs with one-year contracts teach five or six contract hours per semester during the regular academic year. In addition, the Department shares a commitment to assuring that all Ph.D. students are exposed to a variety of courses as part of their professional training. Thus, through the course of the Ph.D. a GTA should have, at a minimum, exposure to three different courses, of which at least one should be above the 200 level. Contingent on enrollments, students might be offered the opportunity to teach a course as instructor of record. Yet, this will only occur following the successful completion of Ph.D. comprehensive exams. With these principles in mind, GTAs will traditionally have two sections of a course of five to six contact hours per week, adding to the equivalent of a 50% GTA appointment. During the first and second year of graduate study, and if conditions allow, students will be assigned to the larger lecture courses, AMS 100 and AMS 110.

Pre-Semester Orientation and Meetings with Course Coordinators

In the week prior to the start of classes, and in addition to the general [Graduate Studies mandatory training](#) GTAs in the Department of American Studies are required to attend and complete a 5 hour orientation with the Graduate Director and Graduate coordinator. Attendance is mandatory. Please contact the Director of Graduate Studies and/or Department Chair if you have any questions about this policy.

In addition, meetings for the purpose of discussing and planning course procedures and assignments (including exams) are convened by the course coordinators, and, on occasion, by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Attendance of these meetings is imperative to ensure the consistency of multi-section courses.

Changing Class Location for a Day, Cancelling a Class, Absences and Substitutions

Classes at the 100- or 200-level must ONLY meet at the regularly scheduled location and time. Beyond the 200-level, instructors (including GTAs and lecturers) must notify the course coordinator and the office staff via e-mail if a class will take place at an alternate location or time. **Instructors can NEVER cancel class for any reason except for emergencies or pre-approved professional obligations.**

If unable to deliver the class due to an emergency or professional obligations, instructors are responsible for arranging a substitute and for notifying their immediate supervisor (i.e., course coordinator, Department Chair), and the office staff via e-mail.

Instructors should notify their supervisors and office staff about their absences at least two weeks in advance. The instructor requesting an absence must provide class materials in advance to the substitute instructor.

In the case of an emergency, the instructor who is being substituted must still fill out the Substitution of Class Request Form and submit it to the office within one week for record purposes.

Examples of emergency situations:

Illness

Accidents

Medical emergencies of children (in the case the instructor is a parent, guardian, or caregiver)

Death of immediate family

Examples of professional obligations

Conferences

Campus visit (job interviews and MA students soliciting PhD programs)

Instructors must seek approval from their immediate supervisor two weeks in advance for a professional obligation. Approval of an instructor's request is contingent on (1) the availability of a substitute, and (2) the instructor's prior request(s) for a substitute. If the instructor's request is approved, they must submit the Substitution of Class Request Form to their supervisor and the front office staff, and documentation of the professional obligation.

In case an instructor requires special accommodations or a flexible attendance policy, the instructor must inform the Chair of the Department and Director of Graduate Studies and will be asked to contact the ADA Resources Center for Equity and Accessibility and follow appropriate protocol.

Helpful Contacts:

Snow days: check www.alerts.ku.edu for updates on cancellations due to snow.

Public Affairs in Strong Hall: 785-864-2700, publicaffairs@ku.edu.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- [Police or Fire/Medical: 911](#)
- [Public Safety Office: 785-864-5900](#)
- [Watkins Health Services: 785-864-9500](#)

Summer GTA Appointments

Note that there is a distinction between Summer on-campus and Study Abroad appointments.

Summer GTA appointments are not guaranteed and are contingent on budget availability and each course meeting minimum enrollment numbers. In addition, the availability of summer teaching is subject to the administration and varies from year to year. The department will inform students when summer GTA appointments become available, as well as of other available opportunities. Positions will be announced no later than late-January. Be aware that last-minute changes may occur contingent on enrollment. The Graduate Studies Coordinator will send the call for applications. Students interested in teaching over the Summer must turn in all materials requested by no later than January 31.

Review of applications: Applications will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee. GTAs are selected to fill these positions on a competitive basis, and the criteria includes, among other factors, consideration of the impact of teaching the course on the students' professional trajectory, as well as the students' access to other employment opportunities during the Summer months.

Students with "incompletes" in any of their courses will not be considered for summer teaching positions.

Please note, to qualify for a Summer GTA position in American Studies, the student must be continuing in the department i.e. enrolled in the following Fall semester.

Observations and Annual Evaluations

As an integral part of professional development, GTAs will receive regular feedback on their teaching. Faculty leading each course will observe GTAs at least once in the semester. In addition, students should seek a faculty member (whenever applicable, the students' graduate advisor), to observe their teaching. Faculty planning to observe a GTA must notify the student and agree on a date. The GTAs will receive feedback on their teaching observations from faculty members following the class session. Copies of the observation forms (See Appendices) and any additional written comments will be turned in to the Graduate Director, and be added to the students' file.

University Policies for GTAs

As employees of the University of Kansas, GTAs must follow all policies for KU employees. Below are some of its most salient stipulations:

Consenting Relationships

As stated in the [consenting relationships policy](#), the University of Kansas disapproves of consenting relationships where a professional power differential exists (i.e., administrator and faculty, faculty and student, supervisor and employee).

Religious Observances

Examinations and tests should not conflict with mandated religious observance days. In cases of conflicts between regularly scheduled class activities and mandated religious observances, the student is responsible for initiating discussion with the instructor to work toward a mutually acceptable solution. GTAs should advise students to identify themselves privately so that necessary adjustments are made.

Privacy and Student Records

According to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), information on a student's academic performance should be made available only to the student, the student's designee (designation in writing), or to those within the institution who need to know the information to carry out their official professional responsibilities. No external (non-KU) website can be used for student submission, grades, or coursework. Below are some of the most salient practices to assure abidance to FERPA:

- Use a secure server for storage of all student information.
- Use secure encryptions and recommended formats provided by the university, (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas).
- Return tests/papers individually, or with a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- Obtain a written release prior to sharing students' work or photo for any purpose.
- Never e-mail student information.
- Never share a students' information—students control their records.
- Never post grades, class photos, nor any information regarding students' records (i.e., student roster).
- System access ≠ permission to read a file! Check with the course coordinator prior to accessing ANY student information. [Student Academic Misconduct](#)

American Studies Degree Requirements

Core Courses

There are four courses in the AMS graduate core. They are taken by students in the graduate certificate, M.A. and Ph.D. programs, and are offered every year.

AMS 801: Introduction to American Studies

An introduction to the field of American Studies through an examination of some of the classic and innovative works, issues, debates, and controversies in the history and the literature of American Studies in written and oral form. As an outcome, students should be able to draw on these debates and situate their work in the field of American Studies. This course includes the development of responsible scholarship awareness of the protection of human subjects, conflicts of interest, data management, mentor/student responsibilities, and appropriate research conduct and research misconduct.

AMS 802: Theorizing America

Drawing from a broad range of perspectives, this course will introduce students to current theoretical debates in American Studies and the concepts that inform them. As an outcome, students should be able to develop research questions grounded in an awareness of these theoretical debates and to articulate this in written and oral form.

AMS 803: Research Methods in American Studies

An introduction to the range of interdisciplinary research methods in American Studies. Students will develop an understanding of the assumptions, logics, and procedures involved in various approaches to understanding American society and culture, enabling them to write and orally present a research proposal that uses these tools. This course includes the development of responsible scholarship awareness of collaborative research, authorship, publication, plagiarism, copyright, peer review, professional practices, and maintenance of confidentiality.

AMS 804: Research Seminar

This seminar focuses on the writing required to ready an article for a peer-reviewed journal or a thesis proposal and provides a forum grounded in interdisciplinary research that facilitates a dialogue among students working on different projects with varied theories and methods in American Studies. Students will set clear goals for the completion of their writing project, learn how to manage time, develop a habit of writing every day, and undertake the writing, research, and analytical skills needed to write and publish a peer-reviewed journal article or thesis. AMS 808 meets with AMS 804.

M.A. Degree Requirements

The Master of Arts in American Studies is a free-standing degree. Some, but not all graduates of the M.A. program apply to pursue their doctorate at KU or another university. Ph.D. students who do not hold an M.A. will earn the M.A. on the way to the Ph.D. The M.A. in American Studies is optional for those who already hold an M.A.

Because the M.A. is a two-year program, the DGS will assign the student to a faculty advisor upon enrollment in the program.

Course Requirements

I. Core Courses- AMS 801, 802, 803, 804 (12 hours)

The AMS graduate core is a three-semester sequence: first-year students should take 801 and 802 during the fall semester of their first year of graduate work, and 803 in the spring semester of their first year of graduate work. Students should take 804 in the fall semester of their second year of graduate work, and work on the master's thesis or a publishable article.

II. M.A. Plan of Study (12 hours)

a. Elective Methods (3 hours)

One course selected by the student and faculty advisor that provides methodological support for the student's research. The methods elective should be taken in the first year in order to enable research in the following summer.

b. Elective Topics (9 hours)

Three courses constitute a coherent concentration, including historical depth in a defined area that prepares the student for the M.A. portfolio. Courses should be selected in consultation with the advisor, and should be numbered 500 or above. If a student intends to apply to continue for the Ph.D., courses numbered 700 or above are preferred.

III. Portfolio Hours- AMS 898 (6 hours or to completion)

After completing required courses, the student enrolls in AMS 898 and continues enrolling in portfolio hours until their portfolio is accepted by their committee. Advisors are free to set deadlines for progress on this work over and above those established by the Department and Graduate Studies. Students should discuss expectations and criteria for these grades with their advisors at the time of enrollment.

IV. M.A. Portfolio and Defense

Students prepare and submit to their M.A. exam committee a portfolio, which includes a research article of publishable quality, research and teaching statements, and a reflection on the graduate experience to date. The article is an original piece of research, and it should be written and formatted for submission to a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal to the topic and approach of the research. The article does not have to be accepted for publication as a requirement of graduation.

The student must complete an oral defense of their portfolio. A majority of the committee members must approve the defense with an assessment of Pass or Pass with Honors in order for the requirement to be met.

The Committee

In consultation with their faculty advisor, M.A. students will select a committee comprised of two additional faculty members, one of whom must be an AMS core faculty member, to oversee and evaluate the master's research. The advisor, who also must be an AMS core faculty member, will chair the committee and will, among other tasks, ensure that the student and all members of the committee share a common understanding of the objectives, substance, and methods of the project throughout its course. In order to complete the degree in two years, students should develop their subject area during their first year in the program and should formulate their research topic with their faculty advisor before the third semester. It is the responsibility of the student to consult with the advisor to determine a process and establish a timeline for the completion of the thesis or article, to seek guidance from committee members, and to update them on progress.

The Portfolio

Students prepare and submit to their M.A. exam committee a portfolio, which includes a research article of publishable quality, research and teaching statements, and a reflection on the graduate experience to date. The Portfolio includes:

Personal Reflection

A personal statement of a maximum of 6 pages in length that serves as a reflection on your learning experience and professional growth to date. Students should introduce their research paper and explain how it is representative of their accomplishments and intellectual growth.

Specificity is most encouraged, and the expectation is that students will include specific examples from their coursework in their narrative. Students may choose to reflect on the three areas expected of faculty in higher education (research, teaching, and service). Some of the questions that can guide the introduction and personal statement include:

- How has the M.A. has contributed to your understanding of the field of American Studies? What skills have you acquired or improved throughout the M.A. experience?
- Were there any overarching themes throughout your classes and M.A. experiences more broadly?
- How would you describe the connections between your courses, and between content material that includes connections between the U.S. and transnational histories, time periods, and perspectives?
- Has your work been particularly influenced by a specific theoretical angle, or do you find that you engage multiple theoretical approaches? Explain.
- How do you intend to use the knowledge and skills you have gained in your future endeavors, both professional and personal?

Updated CV or Resume

Includes education, work experience, awards, community outreach, grants and fellowships, language abilities, and experience abroad among other possible categories. Students are encouraged to seek assistance from [Graduate Studies](#) and/or the [College Office of Graduate Affairs](#).

Research Statement

A 700-800 word research statement in which students outline the questions that guide their research inquiry, their general theoretical framework, methods, key findings, and directions for ongoing critique. Students should outline their research short and long term research goals.

Teaching Statement

A 700-800 word teaching statement in which students articulate their pedagogical approach to the classroom. This narrative will include their perspective about the teaching and learning processes, but also specific examples from their classroom experience. Students should also demonstrate familiarity with current pedagogical methods and should be able to articulate how they have employed these methods effectively in the classroom.

In addition to their teaching statement, students have the option to include supplementary materials such as lesson plans or curriculum development they have completed during the program.

Research Article

The article is an original piece of research and should be around 8,000 words in length. It should be written and formatted for submission to a scholarly, peer-reviewed journal relevant to the topic and approach of the research. Successful completion of the article option requires that the paper be deemed by the committee to be ready to submit to such a journal with the plausible expectation that it might be accepted or recommended for revision. The article does not have to be accepted for publication as a requirement for graduation. Students must deliver copies of the final draft of the article, after all required revisions, to the faculty advisor and to the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator. If the article is published, the student should deliver copies to replace these final drafts.

The M.A. Examination

The student must complete an oral defense of the portfolio. The student must work with the faculty advisor to set a date for the defense, which should be set after committee members agree that the project is ready for defense. Optimally, committee members should be provided a draft of the project at least one month prior to the defense date. This gives the committee two weeks to review and make recommendations that can be addressed prior to the defense. A majority of the committee members must approve the project with an assessment of either Pass or Pass with Honors in order for the requirement to be met.

Graduation Requirements

Students must notify the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator of their intention to defend by the beginning of the semester so they can assist with the scheduling of the defense. Students must familiarize themselves with all graduation requirements and associated deadlines. Please review the [Graduation Requirements](#) portion of the University Policies & Degree Requirements section of this handbook for more information.

Transition to the Doctorate

M.A. students interested in pursuing doctoral studies at KU must apply to the Ph.D. program by **December 1** to be potentially considered a doctoral student in the following fall semester. To apply for admission to the Ph.D. program, M.A. students must submit a letter of no more than 2 pages, including a research statement that details the student's goals and accomplishments to date. Students also must request a brief letter of recommendation from the M.A. advisor or an AMS core faculty member who is willing to serve as the doctoral advisor. These materials will be considered by the Graduate Studies Committee, along with the contents of the student's departmental file. Students will be notified of the result of their application by April 1.

Suggested M.A. Program Timeline

Suggested M.A. Program Timeline

Year	Fall	Spring
Year 1	AMS 801 AMS 802 Elective Topic <i>Faculty advisor assigned by DGS</i>	AMS 803 Elective Methods Elective Topic <i>Select committee members</i>
Year 2	AMS 804 Elective Topic AMS 898	AMS 898]M.A. Examination

Ph.D. Degree Requirements

The Ph.D. is the terminal degree in our field. In the program of study leading to the Ph.D., we seek to train, mentor, and place future educators, researchers, and leaders trained in American Studies and enable them to extend this training to a myriad of positions inside and outside of the academy. We do this by providing advanced education in interdisciplinary research as well as by fostering an intellectual community of students and faculty within the program and across the University. We emphasize the development of independent programs of study while directing and enabling students' professionalization as scholars and teachers.

Although the University of Kansas does not prescribe a minimum number of hours for the doctorate, the Ph.D. degree normally requires a **minimum** of 30 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree: 24 hours of required coursework, 6 or more hours of exam preparation as needed, and post-comprehensive exam hours required by the University for [post-comp enrollment](#) of doctoral candidates. In consultation with the faculty advisor, the student develops a plan of coursework and independent study that will provide expertise in three concentration fields. The student can choose to obtain the M.A. in American Studies upon completing coursework and defending an M.A. article to a committee of three faculty readers. The comprehensive examination certifies the student's preparation in the concentration fields, and readiness to conduct research at a professional level. The Ph.D. program culminates in the completion and defense of the dissertation, an original research contribution to the field.

Course Requirements

I. **Core Courses- AMS 801, 802, 803, 804 (12 hours)**

The AMS graduate core is a three-semester sequence: first-year students should take 801 and 802 during the fall semester of their first year of graduate work, and 803 in the spring semester of their first year of graduate work. Students should take 804 in the fall semester of their second year of graduate work, and work on a master's thesis or a publishable article if they would like to earn an M.A. along the way to the Ph.D.

II. **Graduate Seminars (9 hours)**

Three seminars numbered 700-level or higher. These courses, selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor according to the student's research and professional goals, may be AMS or non-AMS seminars and should inform the students' comprehensive exam fields. Directed readings and independent studies courses cannot fulfill this requirement.

III. **Research Skills Course (3 hours)**

1 elective methods course selected by the student and faculty advisor to provide methodological support for the student's program of research. This may be an AMS or non-AMS methods course. Along with AMS 803, this course fulfills the [Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement \(RS2\)](#).

Comprehensive Examination

The student's preparation in three concentration fields culminates in an oral comprehensive examination. The student must first sit for a written examination to qualify for the oral. Once students have completed all required courses, they enroll in AMS 996: Examination Preparation while preparing for the comprehensive exam.

Concentration Fields

The three exam fields are areas of focus, specialization, and expertise that will advance your research agenda. Preparation in the concentration fields begins during coursework. Students should work with their faculty advisor to select courses and develop reading lists that will support their preparation. Adequate preparation includes an understanding of the current state of scholarship in each field: major prior research and scholarly debates or controversies; the principal theoretical, conceptual, and methodological approaches informing that scholarship; and the directions that contemporary work is taking. At minimum, the fields should be represented by 150 sources across three reading lists. Individual faculty advisors may assign students to produce annotated bibliographies or other writing to demonstrate their preparation in the fields. The student's reading lists should be completed and circulated to all committee members by the time the Comprehensive Exam Application is submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Examination Committee

The committee consists of the faculty advisor, who must be an AMS core faculty member, and at least three other members. The Graduate Studies Representative (GSR), must be a faculty member appointed outside of AMS. A majority of the members must be AMS core faculty members. Please view the [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy](#) for additional information.

Suggestions for Studying

- Start with the syllabi from your coursework to pull sources for reading lists
- Give each field a specific and concise title
- Write characterizations (about 500 words) of each field/reading list
- Prepare possible questions in consultation with your faculty advisor
- Create a syllabus for one or all of your exam fields
- Complete a [critical thinking document](#) for each of your sources

Application

Students intending to sit for the comprehensive exam in a given semester must submit the Comprehensive Exam Application to the Department by the last day of the previous term (by the last day of the summer term for a fall exam and by the last day of the fall term for a spring exam). To complete this application, the student must work with the faculty advisor and committee members to set a time frame for the written exam and a preferred 5-10 day range for the oral exam. All course requirements must be completed before the student sits for the exam, and the student's reading lists should be completed and circulated to all committee members by the time the Comprehensive Exam Application is submitted to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Written Exam

The written exam, which consists of three questions representing your exam fields, is taken over a period of six 24-hour days. The written exam is offered in two formats:

Option 1: Receive all three questions at 9:00 a.m. on day one of your written exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Program Coordinator six 24-hour days later (144 hours).

Option 2: Receive one question at 9:00 a.m. on days one, three, and five of your exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Program Coordinator within 48 hours of receipt of each question.

With the consent of your faculty advisor, you may petition the department for an alternate exam schedule to accommodate personal, professional, or health-related issues.

In the written exam, students respond to questions in order to characterize each field. The expected length for each written response is 25 to 30 pages. Committee members read the written examination answers and assess them with a grade of Pass, Revision, or No Pass. A vote of Pass by at least three committee members qualifies the student to complete the oral examination. A vote of Revision by at least three members requires the student to complete a revision process. A majority vote of No Pass, after either the written examination or the revision, will require the student to sit for a new examination in the qualifying week of the following semester. Students who receive a grade of No Pass on two consecutive written examinations must discontinue from the program.

Revision Process (as needed)

Following a majority vote of Revision, the committee chair collects comments from members and delivers the feedback to the student. The student then revises the written responses as directed and returns the revisions to the committee chair by the first day of the following fall or spring semester. The committee assesses the revision and votes again. A vote of Pass by at least three committee members qualifies the student to sit for the oral examination no less than two weeks after the beginning of the semester.

Oral Exam

When the student has qualified with a majority vote of Pass on the written examination, the oral examination may go forward as scheduled. The oral exam takes place in a meeting of two hours or less with the student and the entire committee. Committee members may participate in the oral examination by mediated communication to the extent allowed by University policy.

The exam usually begins with a brief presentation by the student, about 10 minutes or so. The idea is for the student to show how the written pieces fit into their overall preparation, goals, and plans. A detailed presentation on the dissertation project is not necessary at this stage. The student will talk about how they want to situate themselves in relation to their fields or discourses that are already out there, and will provide a narrative of how the research questions emerged. This creates some space for students to direct things. Then the committee gets to ask questions, which can be about the written portion or any part of their coursework leading up to the exam, including the 800 core courses, as well as unanswered exam questions. The student is dismissed while the committee deliberates.

The committee will assess the student's performance in the oral examination with a grade of Pass or No Pass. A grade of Pass must be supported by at least four members of the committee. The committee may also vote to grant Honors, reflecting a student's outstanding performance on both the written and oral examinations. If four committee members do not vote for a grade of Pass, the student may sit for a second oral examination after a period of at least ninety days, and after completing any additional reading or other preparation recommended by the committee. Students receiving a grade of No Pass after the second oral examination must discontinue in the program. A grade of Pass certifies the student as a doctoral candidate in the Department for a period of up to five years.

Candidacy

Upon successful completion of the oral exam, the student becomes a doctoral candidate. Please review the [College's post-comprehensive enrollment webpage](#) for post-comprehensive exam enrollment instructions and regulations.

Oral comprehensive exams are valid for five calendar years, so students are encouraged to make every effort to defend their dissertation and graduate before their oral comprehensive exam expires.

Dissertation

The dissertation must be an original work of research that advances the interdisciplinary field of American Studies. Upon rising to candidacy with a successful comprehensive examination, students enroll in AMS 999: Dissertation hours until they graduate.

Dissertation Committee

The dissertation defense committee must meet the same [criteria](#) as the comprehensive exam committee, though the individual members may change. The student's faculty advisor serves as committee chair. Changes to the committee must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and reported to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Prospectus

The student must submit to the faculty advisor a brief proposal of the dissertation project, laying out the research questions, conceptual framework, methodological approach, and proposed contributions to the field **no later than by the end of the semester following successful completion of the comprehensive exams**. The prospectus should be no longer than 25 double-spaced pages of text (not including the bibliography, images, etc.) and must include a detailed plan of work for the research and projected dates on which the student will submit a complete draft and sit for the oral defense.

All committee members must review and endorse the prospectus for the project to go forward. The prospectus may be considered by the full committee in an in-person meeting, at the oral comprehensive exam, or it may be circulated via email. This decision is up to the student and the faculty advisor. If the prospectus is considered on the same day as the oral comprehensive examination, the committee must vote on the exam and endorse the prospectus as separate decisions. Endorsement indicates that the

members accept the legitimacy of the project as described. After the prospectus has been endorsed, the student must submit any substantial changes in the character or plan of work for committee approval.

Dissertation Defense

After the student submits a complete draft of the dissertation, a defense may be scheduled with the approval of the committee chair. Students must notify the COGA Graduate Program Coordinator of their intention to defend by the beginning of the semester so they can assist with the scheduling of the defense. The defense, also called the “final oral examination” in University policy, may take place no less than three weeks after all committee members receive a draft of the dissertation. After posing questions to the student about the dissertation work, committee members deliberate and vote on a grade of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. A grade of Satisfactory requires a majority vote, and may be contingent on the completion of specific revisions by a designated due date. Dissenting faculty members are not required to sign the completed dissertation. The committee may also recommend that a student earning a satisfactory grade be considered for Honors by the Department. Honors are conferred at graduation by the Department, reflecting outstanding work in all aspects of the doctoral program.

University Requirements

Throughout the course of doctoral study, the student must fulfill all relevant University policies, such as those concerning doctoral residency, time constraints, continuous enrollment, human subjects review, electronic filing, and graduation. See the [University Policies & Degree Requirements](#) section of this handbook for more information.

Graduation Requirements

Students must familiarize themselves with all graduation requirements and associated deadlines. Please review the [Graduation Requirements](#) portion of the University Policies & Degree Requirements section of this handbook for more information.

In addition to the University’s graduation requirements, the student must submit a copy of their dissertation to the Department by the end of the semester of its completion and defense. Please submit it directly to the Administrative Associate and to the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Suggested Ph.D. Program Timeline

Suggested Ph.D. Program Timeline

Year	Fall	Spring
1	AMS 801 AMS 802 Seminar <i>Select faculty advisor</i>	AMS 803 Elective methods Seminar <i>Select committee members if defending M.A. portfolio</i>
2	AMS 804 Seminar AMS 899 (if completing M.A.) or Additional Seminar	AMS 899 (if completing M.A.) or AMS 996 hours <i>Thesis hours if completing M.A.: defend the article or thesis</i>
3	AMS 996 <i>(Exam preparation; additional electives courses may also inform the exam)</i> Seminar 3 hrs.	AMS 996 <i>Apply for and complete the comprehensive exam</i>
4	AMS 999 <i>Submit the prospectus; begin research</i>	AMS 999 <i>Conduct dissertation research</i>
5	AMS 999 <i>Write the dissertation</i>	AMS 999 <i>Defend and file</i>

Joint M.A./M.U.P. Requirements

The Department supports a joint master's program in American Studies and Urban Planning. This combines research training in the critical, interdisciplinary field of American Studies with an accredited credential that authorizes students to work in the profession of urban planning. Applicants must apply and be granted admission to both the American Studies M.A. Program and the Urban Planning M.U.P. Program. This joint program combines the two-year Master of Urban Planning degree (48 hours) and the normal two-year Master of Arts degree in American Studies (30 credit hours) into a two- and one-half-year program (60 total credit hours; 36 in Urban Planning and 24 in American Studies). See the M.A./M.U.P. checklist for a full list of the joint program's requirements.

Resources

Resources for AMS Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

The Department of American Studies provides the following resources for its GTAs:

- Dedicated, shared office space in 106 BA, 203D BA, 213Q BA, or 2014 WES with internet-enabled computers and access to KU's software systems (including those used for phone and video calls). Office spaces are assigned at the beginning of August each year.
- Access to printer, scanner, copier, fax machine in 213 BA
- Physical mailbox in 213 BA
- Classroom texts for the GTA's assigned course(s)

Campus Libraries

The University of Kansas library system, with more than two million volumes, has several libraries of major importance to research in American Studies.

Watson Library

[Watson Library](#), on the Lawrence campus houses the humanities and social science collections. With subscriptions to the major scholarly journals and micro-reproduction series (e.g., *The American Periodical Series I and II, 1741-1850*, and the *History of Women*) and its book collection, the library is a major research center in the Midwest. In addition to the standard bibliographic reference services offered to graduate students, the libraries offer computer-assisted information retrieval in such fields as history, sociology, and education.

Anschutz Library

Because the University of Kansas is a Federal Depository Library, Government Documents in the [Anschutz Library](#) contains copies of the voluminous publications of the federal and state governments, including legislative hearings and reports, studies by executive branch agencies, and extensive economic and demographic data.

Spencer Library

The [Kenneth Spencer Research Library](#), also located on the main campus, was completed in the fall of 1968. It houses the Department of Special Collections, the University of Kansas Archives, and the Kansas Collection and provides an outstanding environment for graduate research. The Department of Special Collections includes about 160,000 volumes and many thousands of manuscripts in the humanities, the social sciences, and the history of science and technology. In the social sciences, the strongest concentration is in economic history, with significant holdings in radical politics, political theory, and the women's suffrage movement. The Kansas Collection, concerned with the social, political, cultural, and economic history of Kansas and the surrounding region, includes about 78,000 volumes and about three million manuscript pieces. The holdings of the Spencer also include the [Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements](#), extensive [digital image collections](#), and others.

Art & Architecture

The Spencer Museum of Art houses the [Murphy Art & Architecture Library](#), with holdings that run to more than 170,000 volumes documenting the visual arts worldwide and from all ages.

Music & Dance

The [Thomas Gorton Music and Dance Library](#) contains more than 100,000 scores, books, sound recordings, videos, microforms and serials, making it one of the leading music collections in the Great Plains region.

Dole Institute of Politics

The 28,000-square-foot [Dole Institute of Politics](#) on the University of Kansas' west campus, a non-partisan center for politics and the media, houses Senator Robert Dole's papers, state-of-the-art exhibits, broadcast facilities capable of facilitating conferences, lectures, debates, and other programs on a global scale, and meeting rooms capable of hosting nationally significant programs. The 4,000 boxes of Dole's papers comprise the largest congressional collection in the world. The Dole Lecture Series, held each November on successive Sunday evenings, features the nation's top presidential scholars, historians, journalists, former presidents, cabinet members and white house members. Each April, the Dole Lecture features a nationally prominent figure who addresses aspects of contemporary politics or policy. The institute is a great resource for students of 20th-century government and politics.

Others

Other library resources on campus include the [T. R. Smith Map Collection](#), the [School of Law Library](#), and the [Spahr Engineering Library](#).

Journals

[American Studies](#), a leading interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal devoted to scholarly studies of American thought, life, culture, and history, is sponsored by the [Mid-America American Studies Association](#) and the University of Kansas, and is currently edited by KU AMS faculty members Dr. Sherrie Tucker and Dr. Randal Jelks. The journal provides opportunities for graduate students to participate in the publishing process.

Other Journals in the Field

The American Studies Association maintains a [worldwide directory](#) of scholarly journals in the field, including [American Quarterly](#).

Associations

Graduate students in American Studies should become active participants in the scholarly profession beyond campus.

Associations

Faculty and students in American studies have provided leadership to the principal association in our field, the [American Studies Association](#) (ASA), and the Midwest regional section, the [Mid-America American Studies Association](#) (MAASA). KU students fill designated seats on the executive board of MAASA, and may seek nomination to take part in ASA committees.

Conferences

Each year, the Humanities Program at KU hosts the Mid-America Humanities Conference, featuring an invited speaker and reviewed presentations of graduate and undergraduate student research. Other professional conferences frequented by members of the Department of American Studies include

[American Anthropological Association](#)
[American Ethnological Society](#)
[American Literature Association](#)
[Association of Asian American Studies](#)
[Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#)
[Cultural Studies Association](#)
[William Faulkner Society](#)
[Historical Materialism](#)
[Modern Languages Association](#)
[Labor and Working-Class History Association](#)
[Organization of American Historians](#)
[Society of American Music](#)

News and Views

Sources of information on American Studies and the academic profession in general include

[H-Amstdy email listserv](#)
[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#)
[Inside Higher Ed](#)
[Remaking the University blog](#)

Interdisciplinary Campus Resources

Hall Center Seminars

Graduate students are welcome to participate in seminars at the Hall Center for the Humanities. Organized around a variety of topics, the Hall Center seminars host a [series](#) of working paper presentations and discussions from KU faculty and visiting scholars from around the world.

The Commons

[The Commons](#) is a catalyst for unconventional thinking, interdisciplinary inquiry, and unexpected discoveries across the sciences, arts, and humanities. They offer a variety of [programs and series](#) that feature guest speakers as well as student and faculty research.

AMS Affiliates

African and African American Studies

Shawn Alexander

African American social and intellectual history, 19th and 20th Centuries

Tony Bolden

Black popular music, funk, blues, Afrofuturism, African American literature, and black cultural philosophy

Communication Studies

Dave Tell

Memory, race, place, rhetoric, intellectual history, civil rights

Dance

Michelle Heffner Hayes

Critical dance studies, feminist theory, critical race studies, historiography, postcolonial theory, improvisation, embodiment, pedagogy

English

Giselle Anatole,

Caribbean literature, African diaspora, children's/young adult literature, multiculturalism, folklore

Joe Harrington

US literatures, particularly post-1900; US poetry and poetics

Laura Mielke

American literature to 1900, early American Indian and African American literature, theatre studies, performance studies

Paul Outka

19th century poetry, ecocriticism, critical race studies, and postman theory

Marta Caminero-Santangelo,

U.S. Latina/o literature, African-American literature, literature of social justice, and 20th-century U.S. literature

History

Chris Forth (Humanities)

Embodiment, masculinities, sexuality, emotions, materiality, phenomenology, the senses

Tiffany Gonzalez

Mexican American – Latina/o; U.S. Modern Politics; Social Movements; Women and Gender; Borderlands; Oral History and Public History

Jonathan Hagel

Post-Civil War US intellectual and cultural history, racist and antiracist thought, behavioral and social sciences, American movies and sports.

History of Art

David Cateforis

20th-century American art and international contemporary art

Musicology

Roberta Freund Schwartz

African American popular musics (jazz, blues, and rock)

Music Theory and Composition

Brad Osborn

Music videos, recent popular music, gender and race in popular music

Public Affairs and Administration

Chuck Epp

Law and society, policing and race, policy-reform litigation, the state, constitutionalism

Sociology

Robert Antonio

Social theory, macroscopic sociology, economy and society, Marx, the Frankfurt School, Weber, Dewey, Habermas

Kelly Chong

Race/ethnicity, gender, immigration, Asian-American studies, Asian studies, religion

Brian Donovan

Cultural sociology, gender, law, twentieth-century U.S. history

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Katie Batza

Gender, sexuality, health, and politics in the post-WWII US.

Kim Warren (History)

Gender, race, African American, Native American, American education, civil rights

Regional Libraries

Kansas Historical Society

In Topeka, Kansas (30 minutes away), the [Kansas Historical Society](#) has extensive manuscript and newspaper collections, as well as [online collections](#). The Society's [Kansas Museum of History](#) is especially rich in material culture resources.

Harry S. Truman Library

The [Truman presidential library](#) in Independence, Missouri (one hour away), is a branch of the National Archives. It offers quick and easy access to all types of documents, and a large and permanent collection of its own, especially strong in matters relating to the history of American diplomacy.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

The [Eisenhower presidential library](#) in Abilene, Kansas (two hours away), is open to research scholars interested in studies of the Eisenhower Administration and the military aspects of World War II. The library's holdings consist of the papers of President Eisenhower, the papers of many of his associates while he was both general and president, and selected microfilms of official records of his commands during World War II.

National Archives at Kansas City

The [National Archives regional facility](#) in Kansas City, Missouri (45 minutes away), is the depository for the records of the Federal Courts of this region (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska), the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Army Field Establishment, which was created during World War II and the Korean War.

Clendening History of Medicine Library

The [Logan Clendening library](#) at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas (45 minutes away), has large and well-selected holdings in the history of medicine and the basic medical sciences.

Linda Hall Library

The [Linda Hall library of science, engineering, and technology](#) in Kansas City, Missouri (45 minutes away), contains an excellent collection of materials in the history of science with major emphasis on the physical sciences. The library includes an outstanding group of rare editions in early and modern science and an unusually complete set of periodicals of the learned scientific societies of the world.

Western Historical Manuscript Collection

The [Collection](#) is a joint collection of the University of Missouri and the State Historical Society of Missouri. It contains more than 12,000 cubic feet of primary source documents relating to the history and culture of Kansas City, western Missouri, and the Midwest.

Marr Sound Archives

The University of Missouri in Kansas City's [archive](#) holds almost 250,000 sound recordings focusing on the American experience as reflected in recorded sound. Recordings date from the beginning of recorded sound in the 1890s up to 1980.

Black Archives of Mid-America

The [archive](#) serves to collect and preserve the history of African Americans in the Midwest, promoting both scholarly inquiry and public understanding of African American history.

Museums

Various institutions within reach of KU hold important collections for American Studies.

[Spencer Museum of Art](#), University of Kansas

[Cultural Center and Museum](#), Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence

[Watkins Museum of History](#), Lawrence

[Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art](#), Overland Park, Kansas

[Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art](#), Kansas City

[Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art](#), Kansas City

[American Jazz Museum](#), Kansas City

[Negro Leagues Baseball Museum](#), Kansas City

[Wichita Art Museum](#), Wichita

University Policies and Degree Requirements

This section contains information on requirements and policies of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs, hereafter referred to as “the University”. It is not a complete list of all policies pertaining to graduate students. Only those policies that *most commonly* affect graduate students are included.

Policies are described in general terms and are intended to help students understand what is expected. They do not reflect the exact language of the official policy and should not be confused with official policy. Specific information and restrictions as well as links to relevant forms may be accessed by clicking on the policy headings. Links to the official policies in the KU policy library are found at the bottom of each policy description. Students are accountable to and should familiarize themselves with the University's official policies.

General Policies

The following University policies apply to ALL graduate students regardless of degree, program, or department. These are minimum general requirements. Your department or program may have more restrictive policies in any of these areas.

Admission

Degree or non-degree seeking applicants must have a bachelor’s degree (as evidenced by an official transcript from the institution the degree was obtained).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Admission to Graduate Study](#)

English Proficiency Requirements

The University requires all applicants, international or domestic, to demonstrate English proficiency for admission to any graduate program at KU. There are three ways to prove English proficiency:

- Declaration of native or native-like speaker status on the online application for graduate study.
- Official scores from an English proficiency standardized test (e.g. TOEFL, IELTS-Academic, or PTE), sent by the testing agency to the University of Kansas. Official scores must be less than two years old. Scores must be reported to KU directly by the testing service. Self-reported scores or unofficial scores are not accepted. TOEFL scores should be sent by ETS to KU institution code 6871. IELTS should be sent to KU Graduate Admissions via the e-delivery service. PTE score sheets containing the Score Report Code and Registration ID should be emailed to graduateadm@ku.edu for verification.
- Graduation with a baccalaureate degree (or higher) earned in residence from an accredited English-medium college or university or an accredited college or university in the United States. Degrees earned online may not be used to verify English proficiency. Note: this option is not sufficient for employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

- AEC Curriculum: Students who haven't taken one of the listed tests may complete coursework through the KU [Applied English Center](#) (AEC) to demonstrate English proficiency.
- US Military Employment: If you are employed as an officer in the U.S. military with documentation of selection or promotion to the rank of Major or higher (or the equivalent U.S. Navy or Coast Guard rank), then you will be considered fully proficient and will not be required to complete AEC testing.

Additional English Competency Requirements for GTAs:

English proficiency requirements for GTAs are governed by the Kansas Board of Regents and must be met separately from the English proficiency requirement for admission to a KU graduate program. Detailed information on English proficiency requirements for GTAs may be found on Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [Spoken English Competency page](#).

Related Policies and Forms:

- [English Proficiency Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study](#)
- [Spoken English Language Competency of Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants, Kansas Board of Regents Policy](#)

Enrollment

For graduate students, advising on enrollment and course selection take place at the department level. While units within the College may have additional enrollment requirements, for students who are required to enroll full time (e.g. students holding a GTA/GRA/GA appointment, international students on an F-1 or J-1 visa, students receiving federal financial aid, etc.) the University defines full time enrollment is as follows:

Fall and Spring semesters:

- Enrollment in 9 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 6 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;
- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s). *See Doctoral post-comprehensive enrollment.

Summer sessions:

- Enrollment in 6 credit hours;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours plus a GTA, GRA, or GA appointment, regardless of percentage of appointment;
- Enrollment in 3 credit hours for graduate students using the Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty (MGIB-AD) and Post-9/11 GI Bill – Active Duty;

- Doctoral candidates enrolled in dissertation hour(s).

Graduate students are not normally permitted to enroll for more than 16 hours a semester or more than 8 hours in summer session.

While these are KU's definitions of full-time enrollment, other institutions may have different definitions. Be sure to consult with your financial aid and/or health insurance providers before making enrollment decisions.

Students not enrolled by 11:59pm the day before the first day of classes will be assessed a late enrollment fee. The University Registrar then deactivates the KU ID of any not enrolled by the last Friday in October (for Fall) or last Friday in March (for Spring). Students who wish to enroll after that must pay a fee to be reactivated.

Students who wish to leave their graduate program should inform the department of such plans in writing so that a Voluntary Withdrawal form may be submitted on their behalf. Please note that voluntarily withdrawing from your program does **not** automatically withdraw you from coursework. You must also withdraw from all classes in Enroll & Pay via the "Withdraw from the University" option.

Deadlines for adding, changing, dropping, or withdrawing from all courses, as well any fines associated with the change, are set by the University. **Deadlines vary from year to year. Students should carefully review the current [Academic Calendar](#).**

You may also wish to consult the Registrar's page on [Effects of Dropping or Withdrawing on your Transcript](#).

Your graduate program coordinator is available to guide you through any enrollment scenarios or questions that come up. In order to avoid problems on your record, please consult with them prior to dropping or changing enrollment.

Related Policies:

- [Discontinued Enrollment](#)
- [Enrollment](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Graduate Coursework Expiration Dates](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#)

Graduate Credit (Including Transfer Credit)

The University's Graduate Credit [policy](#) defines KU's conditions for the following:

- Definition of graduate credit for the purposes of a course "counting" towards a graduate degree or graduate certificate at KU;
- Transfer of graduate credit to KU from an outside institution;
- Reduction in the required number of graduate hours for master's students;

- Counting credit hours taken as non-degree seeking student towards a later graduate degree at KU;
- Counting credit hours taken as a certificate seeking student toward another graduate degree.

Transfer Credit

The transfer credit option allows master's students to add graduate-level coursework completed at another institution to their KU transcript to count toward their KU degree. Upper level coursework taken as an undergraduate, even courses numbered at the graduate level, is not eligible for transfer in any case. Additional restrictions apply to what non-KU graduate courses and the number of credit hours that can be counted toward a KU master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below, as well as consulting with their DGS. In all cases, transfer credit must first be approved at the department or program level. To begin the transfer process, students should consult with their DGS to submit the required transfer materials. These include a transcript reflecting the courses to be transferred and descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses in question.

No transfer of credits is allowed for the PhD. In circumstances where students enter the PhD program with an MA from another institution or other relevant graduate coursework, it may be possible for students to request a reduction in the number of hours required for the PhD. Students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Reduced Credit Hour Degree

KU policy defines 30 hours as the minimum for master's degrees. Departments may petition for a reduced hour degree master's degree for individual students in cases where they may provide evidence that the student entered the program especially well-prepared to complete a graduate-level degree and the student is able to maintain a superior grade point average. Reduced credit hour degrees must be based on coursework or experiences that can be objectively measured, such as coursework or qualifying internship or study abroad programs. Professional or life experience does not qualify. A reduction in hours is distinct from a transfer of credit and is reserved for students whose prior coursework doesn't qualify for transfer credit (e.g. was already used to fulfill requirements towards a completed degree) and there are no modifications on the transcript.

Restrictions apply to the number of credit hours that can be reduced for a master's degree, so students should carefully review the information provided in the link above and the related policies below. In all cases, a reduction in hours must first be approved at the department or program level, so to begin the process for approval, students should consult with their DGS. Students must also provide documentation of the coursework or experience being used to justify the reduced hours (e.g. transcripts, program descriptions).

Because there is no minimum number of required hours for the PhD, reduction of required hours based on prior degrees or experience is determined solely at the program level. Doctoral students should consult with their DGS about their enrollment plan.

Related Policies:

- [Graduate Credit](#)

- [Co-enrollment](#)
- [Master's Degree Requirements](#) (on Reduced Hour Master's Degree)

Credit/No Credit

The University supports and encourages interdisciplinary study, which may include graduate students enrolling in coursework at the graduate level that is outside of their primary discipline. The Credit/No Credit (CR/NC) is an option for graduate students who are taking a course that is not required for their degree or certificate and who do not wish to have the course grade reflected in their cumulative graduate GPA. Rather than a grade appearing on the transcript, the student receives a designation of CR or NC, which does not factor in the GPA.

No course graded CR/NC will count toward the satisfaction of any graduate degree or certificate requirement. This includes, but is not limited to, courses taken to fulfill the Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship requirement for doctoral students.

Students make the CR/NC election via the Registrar's CR/NC [online request](#) form. Elections and changes to elections can only be made during the specific CR/NC period. For regular semester courses, this period begins after the last day to add a class and extends for approximately two weeks. Exact dates may be found on the current KU [Academic Calendar](#). Please keep in mind, short courses may have [alternate dates](#). The student should consult with their own program advisor about the appropriateness of the course prior to enrolling; however, in cases where CR/NC is elected, the course instructor is not informed of the election unless the student chooses to share this information.

Additional restrictions apply. Students should carefully review the information in the link above.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [University Senate Rules and Regulations \(USRR\), Section 2.3.8](#)

Probation & Dismissal

Probation is an academic status that can be assigned to a graduate student that is not making [satisfactory progress](#) toward completing their degree. The department initiates the probation process and will inform the student of why they are not making satisfactory progress, what they must do to return to good standing, and the deadline for doing so.

Students are most commonly placed on probation due to their graduate cumulative GPA dropping below a B average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale). In these cases, probation occurs automatically and is reflected on the student's record for the semester following the semester in which the student's GPA drops below 3.0. If the student's cumulative GPA is raised to 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester, the student will be automatically returned to good academic standing.

Additionally, the College has set a 2.5 minimum GPA for students to be eligible for a semester of academic probation. In cases where a student's GPA drops below the minimum of 2.5, the student is considered ineligible for academic probation and will be dismissed by the College. Students are strongly advised to

review the [College-specific policy on probation and dismissal](#) for more information about the 2.5 threshold for dismissal.

Students may also be placed on probation by their departments for other reasons that constituting a failure to make satisfactory progress towards degree. These may include, but are not limited to;

- Lack of progress on the thesis, dissertation, or capstone project
- Unacceptable academic performance on program milestones outside of coursework (e.g. exams),
- Unsatisfactory grades or GPA within foundational required courses (despite the overall cumulative GPA)
- An unsatisfactory result in their department's annual progress evaluation
- Nearing or going beyond their maximum time to degree. See the Time Limits section below for more information.

Students should carefully review the [Good Academic Standing policy](#) for graduate students at KU for more information on what constitutes making satisfactory academic progress.

Individual programs may also have additional measures of progress. Students should also consult the Annual Review section of their department graduate handbook or the degree requirements section and with their program advisor for more information.

If a student is unable to raise their cumulative GPA or otherwise meet the communicated terms of the academic probation, the department will reconsider their continuation in the program, in most cases will recommend the student for dismissal. Once dismissed, a student is no longer able to be enrolled in coursework and cannot complete their degree. Students dismissed from any graduate program may not be admitted to any other graduate program at the University of Kansas.

A student on probation or facing dismissal should discuss their status with their advisor.

Related Policies:

- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)
- [Good Academic Standing policy](#)

Grading

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs' [Grading policy](#) governs requirements for the grading of graduate students above those described in [Article II](#) of the University Senate Rules and Regulations. Additionally, individual schools, departments, or programs may have grading policies that are more stringent than those of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Students should carefully review the [College-specific grading information](#), in particular the section on the SP/LP/NP grading scale for thesis & dissertation hours and the impacts of receiving a LP (limited progress) or NP (no progress). Students should also consult their adviser and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information that may affect them.

Students should also consult their faculty advisor and the departmental grading section of this handbook for additional information about department-specific grading policies.

At minimum, for all graduate students at KU, at least a B average is required on course work counted toward any of the master's degrees at KU, and only courses graded A, B, or C (excluding C-) may be counted. Course work counted toward a doctorate, including that for a master's degree if obtained at KU, should average better than a B.

Related Policies:

- [University Senate Rules & Regulations](#)
- [Grading](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Dismissed Enrollment](#)
- [Probation and Dismissal \(CLAS\)](#)

Time Limits

Typically, the University expects the master's degree to be completed in two (2) years of full-time study, the doctorate degree in five (5) years of study, and both the master's and doctorate together in six to seven (6-7) years of study.

Students who anticipate exceeding these targets should review the information in the link above and in the policies below, as well as consult with their program advisor to create a timeline for degree completion. In order to support this process, students are encouraged to use a Mentoring Agreement Template and/or adapt to their own needs to support effective mentoring and a positive mentoring relationship.

Note that the College's Mentoring Agreement is required for doctoral students who are within 2 years of exhausting their maximum time to degree. See the [College Graduate Regulations](#) or talk to your graduate program coordinator for more information.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Degree Program Time Constraints](#)
- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)
- [Doctoral Degree Comprehensive Oral Exams](#) (on exam expiration and recertification)
- [Doctoral Program Profiles with Time To Degree Information](#)
- [KU CLAS Mentorship Agreement Template](#)
- [Univ. Michigan Rackham Graduate School Mentoring Plan Templates](#)
- [KU Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs IDP template](#)

Leave of Absence

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. cases of illness, emergency, financial hardship, military leave, to pursue family responsibilities, or to pursue full-time activities related to long-range professional goals) it may be necessary for graduate students to take a break from their program temporarily, without having to withdraw entirely from the program. An approved leave of absence allows a student to take a temporary break from enrolling in graduate coursework while remaining in good standing with the University and the department and while “stopping the clock” on their time to degree. When a student is on a Leave of Absence, it is understood that they have temporarily suspended their graduate work and therefore will not make use of University resources, including faculty time.

Requesting a Leave of Absence is done through a University petition. University petitions must first be approved and supported at the program level, so students wishing to initiate the petition process should first consult with their Director of Graduate Studies and review their department’s internal petition procedures. Units or the Director of Graduate Study may request documentation to support the student’s need for a leave of absence.

For a Leave of Absence to gain approval, the student must be withdrawn from all active and/or future enrollment. Withdrawal for the purposes of Leave of Absence is still subject to all Registrar deadlines, required forms, and applicable tuition and fees.

Students on a Leave of Absence are automatically reactivated after their leave is over and are eligible to enroll for their intended semester back during the normal enrollment periods. See the KU [Academic Calendar](#) for exact dates that enrollment begins.

If a student’s plans change and they wish to return and enroll before the leave was set to end, they may contact their department to request an early reactivation.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Leaves of Absence](#)
- [GPA Leave of Absence Request Form \(linked at bottom of webpage\)](#)

Required University Milestones

All graduate students must complete one or more exams as part of their degree requirements. In addition to department or program guidelines, the following milestones are required for all students and specific regulations apply:

- Master's Final Culminating Exam (written or oral)/Thesis Defense for Master's degree*
- Doctoral Comprehensive Oral Exam
- Doctoral Final Exam/Dissertation Defense

*A final culminating effort is not required for departments with an approved coursework-only master's degree option in the Academic Catalog (note that programs with a capstone are considered coursework only).

Before a student is allowed to complete any of these three exams, pre-approval from the College is required in advance of the exam date. This pre-approval request will be submitted on the student's behalf by their department after the exam date has been scheduled. The College reviews the student record and verifies all University requirements have been fulfilled. The full list of these requirements may be found via the link in the heading above. Students should work with their departments well in advance of their planned exam date, to schedule their exams in a timely fashion and to ensure that all University policies relating to oral exams are being followed.

There are additional policies requirements for oral exams. The following are University policies pertaining to oral exams:

Oral Exam Committee Composition

All voting committee members must be appointed members of KU's Graduate Faculty. Additionally, a majority of committee members serving on a graduate student oral examination committee must be tenured/tenure-track faculty in the candidate's department or program of study.

Many additional restrictions apply, especially for doctoral exam committees. Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the University policies pertaining to exams, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies when forming an exam committee. Your graduate program coordinator can assist with confirming the qualifying status of any faculty member at KU or outside of KU.

Oral Exam Attendance

Oral Exams may be conducted in-person, remotely, or a hybrid of both. There are no University level requirements for physical presence; however, there are strict regulations on participation.

In all cases, all committee members must be present, either physically or via phone/video conference, for an exam to commence. **If a committee member does not arrive or appear, the exam may not begin and if a committee member leaves or loses connection such that they cannot fully participate, the exam may not proceed. Oral examinations that do not meet these attendance requirements are not valid.**

Master's and doctoral students should carefully review the policies below, as well as consult with their Director of Graduate Studies in the formation of an oral exam committee.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Master's Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition](#)
- [Oral Exam Attendance](#)
- [Graduate Faculty Appointments](#)

Doctoral Degree Requirements

In addition to the student's individual PhD program's degree requirements, the following are University requirements for graduation with a PhD at KU.

Enrollment Requirement

Prior to the semester in which the comprehensive exam is held, all doctoral students must complete a minimum program engagement equivalent to two full-time semesters. This may be accomplished through either of the following:

- Two semesters (fall and/or spring) of full-time enrollment in KU coursework, as defined by University policy
- At least 18 hours of enrollment in KU coursework spread out over several part-time semesters

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Engagement and Enrollment in Doctoral Programs](#)

Continuous Enrollment for Post-Comprehensive Students

During the semester in which the doctoral oral comprehensive exam is completed and each fall and spring semester follows, doctoral students must adhere to very specific enrollment requirements. These requirements may be different than enrollment requirements prior to the oral comp exam.

Failure to properly comply with the enrollment requirements may cause delays to graduation or additional enrollment requirements to make up what was missed, increasing tuition expenses near the end of your degree program.

To avoid delays or additional costs, you are also strongly advised to meet with your graduate program coordinator the semester before your oral comprehensive exam. Your graduate coordinator will work with you to develop an enrollment plan that meets all policy requirements, while also preventing unnecessary or avoidable fees.

Post-comprehensive enrollment requirements also apply to students with GTA/GRA/GA appointments, but these students must be certified to drop their enrollment levels. Departments are responsible for tracking student enrollment will submit the certification form on the student's behalf **at least two weeks prior** to the beginning of the semester in which the enrollment will drop below 6 hours. Students who are certified to reduce hours continue to meet the University's definition of full-time enrollment, as well as the enrollment requirements of their employment contract.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Full-time Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Doctoral Candidacy](#)

Graduate Certificate Requirements

The University offers a variety of [Approved Graduate Certificate Programs](#) to encourage current graduate students to pursue interdisciplinary study, gain a credential for expertise in an outside area of study, or provide an option for a coherent course of advanced study for those not ready to commit to a full degree program. Note that students must be fully admitted to a graduate certificate by the end of the last course that will count to fulfill the certificate. Students wishing to complete the certificate should apply as early as possible. Students whose interests or career goals may be served by a Graduate Certificate should familiarize themselves with the University's policies relating to Certificate programs (found below) early in their graduate career, in addition to individual certificate program requirements.

Related Policies and Forms:

- [Graduate Certificate Programs: Eligibility and Admission Criteria](#)
- [Policies & Procedures for Graduate Certificate Programs](#)

Graduation Requirements (M.A. & Ph.D.)

In addition to all program requirements, students [planning to graduate](#) must complete all University graduation requirements **prior to the published Graduation Deadline** in a given semester. Students should consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for the published Graduation Deadline, which varies by semester.

Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs Graduation Checklists ([Master's](#) | [Doctoral](#))

These graduation checklists provide a comprehensive list of all University requirements for graduation and should be consulted by every graduating master's or doctoral student as soon as graduation is expected. Submission of the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is done electronically. Students must comply with all University requirements for [formatting](#) and [electronic submission](#) of the thesis or dissertation. There is no University requirement that students provide a bound or printed copy of the draft.

"MY GRADUATION CHECKLIST" CANVAS COURSE

If you are graduating with a PhD or a thesis option master's degree, you will submit documents and track the completion of your graduation requirements via your "My Graduation Checklist" site in Canvas. This site will be your online hub for all instructions and resources related to degree completion and graduation.

Your My Graduation Checklist Canvas site will be activated at one of these times, whichever comes first:

- On the 20th day of classes for students who have submitted an Application for Graduation via Enroll & Pay for that semester
- When your department submits your exam date and information for pre-approval

- During the week after the graduation deadline, for students who have applied to graduate for the upcoming semester

We strongly encourage students to submit an Application for Graduation as early as possible, but at minimum prior to the 20th day of classes of the semester you want to graduate so that you can get access to the information and resources in your Graduation Checklist site as early as possible!

If your Graduation Checklist has not been activated yet, you can utilize the Graduation checklists referenced above.

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs Funding Opportunities

Graduate & Postdoctoral Affairs offers funding opportunities in several different categories. Students interested in applying should direct inquiries to the department's Director of Graduate Studies or to GPA. Some of the available funding opportunities include:

[Summer Research Scholarships](#): intended primarily for post-comp doctoral students.

[Graduate Student Travel Fund](#): intended for graduate students presenting a paper at a national or regional meeting of a learned or professional society. A student may receive an award (max \$750) only once per academic year, with priority given to students who have not received the fund previously. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

[Doctoral Student Research Fund](#): Designed to support KU doctoral students who need assistance to carry out research that advances progress toward the degree. Applications for this fund are accepted only for a limited time as funding is available. Students are eligible to receive one award from this fund during their doctoral career. Students should check the link above for additional information and restrictions.

Policies Regarding Freedom of Expression on Campus

Kansas State Law (HB2333) requires postsecondary educational institutions in Kansas to publish in their handbooks and orientation programs the institution's policies, regulations, or expectations of students regarding free expression on campus.

Per KU General Counsel, this includes the following two policies:

- [KU Public Assembly Policy](#)
- [Kansas Board of Regents Statement on Free Expression](#)

Note that the two policies listed above apply to ALL members of the campus community; they are not specific to graduate students.

Appendices

You can find downloadable and fillable versions of these forms and documents on the [AMS Grad Student Documents SharePoint site](#)

M.A. Program Checklist

Required Coursework:

Core Courses (12 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
AMS 801: Intro			
AMS 802: Theory			
AMS 803: Methods			
AMS 804: Research Seminar			
M.A. Plan of Study (12 Hours) – 4 courses, selected in consultation with the faculty advisor based on the student's research and professional interests, constitute a coherent program of study, including historical depth in a defined area that prepares the student for the M.A. portfolio. Courses may be AMS or non-AMS courses, and at least 1 must be a methods course. At least 50% of the student's coursework must be taken at the 700 level or above.			
Methods Course:			
Portfolio Hours (6 Hours)			
AMS 898: Portfolio			

Master's Portfolio and Defense:

Article Title			
Committee Chair			
Reader			
Reader			
Defense Date/Time		Location	

Ph.D. Program Checklist

Required Coursework:

Core Courses (12 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
AMS 801: Intro			
AMS 802: Theory			
AMS 803: Methods			
AMS 804: Research Seminar			
Graduate Seminars - must be numbered 700 or above (9 Hours) These courses, selected in consultation with the student's faculty advisor according to the student's research and professional goals, may be AMS or non-AMS seminars and should inform the student's comprehensive exam fields. Directed readings and independent studies courses cannot fulfill this requirement.			
Research Skills (3 Hours) 1 elective methods course, selected by the student and faculty advisor, to provide methodological support for the student's program of research. This may be an AMS or non-AMS methods course			

Upon completion of coursework, students begin enrolling in AMS 996 – Examination Preparation to prepare for the comprehensive exams.

Comprehensive Exam Concentration Fields:

Field 1	
Field 2	
Field 3	

Comprehensive Exam:

Committee Chair (AMS)	
Committee Member (AMS)	
Committee Member	
<i>Optional Fourth Member</i>	
Graduate Studies Representative (non-AMS)	
Written Exam Dates	
Oral Exam Date	

Dissertation:

Project Title	
Approved (Date)	
Defense Date	

M.A./M.U.P. Program Checklist

Required AMS Coursework:

Core Courses (12 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
AMS 801: Intro			
AMS 802: Theory			
AMS 803: Methods			
AMS 804: Research Seminar			
M.A. Plan of Study (9 Hours) – 3 courses, selected in consultation with the faculty advisor based on the student's research and professional interests, constitute a coherent program of study, including historical depth in a defined area that prepares the student for the M.A. portfolio. Courses may be AMS or non-AMS courses. At least 50% of the student's coursework must be taken at the 700 level or above.			
Portfolio Hours (3 Hours)			
AMS 898: Portfolio			

Required UBPL Coursework:

Core Courses (24 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
UBPL 705: Economic Analysis for Planners			
UBPL 736: Planning Institutions			
UBPL 741: Quantitative Methods I			
UBPL 742: Quantitative Methods II			
UBPL 763: Professional Practice			
UBPL 777: Equity, Justice, and American Cities			
UBPL 780: Climate Change and Hazards Planning			
UBPL 785: History and Theory Planning			
MUP Electives (12 Hours) UBPL recommends completing 9 credit hours in a substantive topic area (housing and development, transportation, sustainable land use, or multidisciplinary planning) and one additional elective. Consult the UBPL Director when choosing elective courses.			

Master's Portfolio and Defense:

Article Title			
Committee Chair (AMS)			
Reader (AMS)			
Reader			
Defense Date/Time		Location	

Comprehensive Exam Guide and Application

Fields

The three exam fields are areas of focus, specialization, and expertise that will advance your research agenda. Preparation in the concentration fields begins during coursework. Students should work with their faculty advisor to select courses and develop reading lists that will support their preparation. Adequate preparation includes an understanding of the current state of scholarship in each field: major prior research and scholarly debates or controversies; the principal theoretical, conceptual, and methodological approaches informing that scholarship; and the directions that contemporary work is taking. At minimum, the fields should be represented by 150 sources across three reading lists. Individual faculty advisors may assign students to produce annotated bibliographies or other writing to demonstrate their preparation in the fields. The student's reading lists should be completed and circulated to all committee members by the time the Comprehensive Exam Application is submitted to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Committee

The committee consists of the faculty advisor and four other members. At least one member, the Graduate Studies Representative (GSR), must be a faculty member appointed outside of AMS. A majority of the members must be appointed in AMS. Please reach out to the Graduate Academic Advisor if you have any questions related to the committee composition policy. [Doctoral Student Oral Exam Committee Composition policy](#)

Suggestions for Studying

- Start with the syllabi from your coursework to pull sources for reading lists
- Give each field a specific and concise title
- Write characterizations (about 500 words) of each field/reading list
- Prepare possible questions in consultation with your faculty advisor
- Create a syllabus for one or all of your exam fields
- Complete a [critical thinking document](#) for each of your sources

Application

Students intending to sit for the comprehensive exam in a given semester must submit the Comprehensive Exam Application to the Department by the last day of the previous term (by the last day of the summer term for a fall exam and by the last day of the fall term for a spring exam). To complete this [application](#), the student must work with the faculty advisor and committee members to set a time frame for the written exam and a preferred 5-10 day range for the oral exam. All course requirements must be completed before the student sits for the exam, and the student's reading lists should be completed and circulated to all committee members by the time the Comprehensive Exam Application is submitted to the Graduate Academic Advisor.

Written Exam

The written exam, which consists of three questions representing your exam fields, is taken over a period of six consecutive 24-hour days. The written exam is offered in two formats:

Option 1: Receive all three questions at 9:00 a.m. on day one of your written exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor six 24-hour days later (144 hours).

Option 2: Receive one question at 9:00 a.m. on days one, three, and five of your exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor within 48 hours of receipt of each question.

With the consent of your faculty advisor, you may petition the department for an alternate exam schedule to accommodate personal, professional, or health-related issues.

In the written exam, students respond to questions in order to characterize each field. The expected length for each written response is 25 to 30 pages. Committee members read the written examination answers and assess them with a grade of Pass, Revision, or No Pass. A vote of Pass by at least three committee members qualifies the student to complete the oral examination. A vote of Revision by at least three members requires the student to complete a revision process. A majority vote of No Pass, after either the written examination or the revision, will require the student to sit for a new examination in the following semester. Students who receive a grade of No Pass on two consecutive written examinations must discontinue from the program.

Revision Process (as needed)

Following a majority vote of Revision, the committee chair collects comments from members and delivers the feedback to the student. The student then revises the written responses as directed and returns the revisions to the committee chair by the first day of the following fall or spring semester. The committee assesses the revision and votes again. A vote of Pass by at least three committee members qualifies the student to sit for the oral examination no less than two weeks after the beginning of the semester.

Oral Exam

When the student has qualified with a majority vote of Pass on the written examination, the oral examination may go forward as scheduled. The oral exam takes place in a meeting of two hours or less with the student and the entire committee. Committee members may participate in the oral examination by mediated communication to the extent allowed by University policy.

The exam usually begins with a brief presentation by the student, about 10 minutes or so. The idea is for the student to show how the written pieces fit into their overall preparation, goals, and plans. A detailed presentation on the dissertation project is not necessary at this stage. The student will talk about how they want to situate themselves in relation to their fields or discourses that are already out there, and will provide a narrative of how the research questions emerged. This creates some space for students to direct things. Then the committee gets to ask questions, which can be about the written portion or any part of their coursework leading up to the exam, including the 800 core courses, as well as unanswered exam questions. The student is dismissed while the committee deliberates.

The committee will assess the student's performance in the oral examination with a grade of Pass or No Pass. A grade of Pass must be supported by at least four members of the committee. The committee may also vote to grant Honors, reflecting a student's outstanding performance on both the written and oral examinations. If four committee members do not vote for a grade of Pass, the student may sit for a second oral examination after a period of at least ninety days, and after completing any additional reading or other preparation recommended by the committee. Students receiving a grade of No Pass after the second oral examination must discontinue in the program. A grade of Pass certifies the student as a doctoral candidate in the Department for a period of up to five years.

Candidacy

Upon successful completion of the oral exam, the student becomes a doctoral candidate. Please note that as candidates, students must be enrolled full-time each fall and spring semester until you have met the 18-hour [post-comprehensive enrollment requirement](#). The term in which a student completes the oral exam counts toward this total as long as they were enrolled in at least 6 hours that term (3 hours for a summer term). After completing 18 full-time hours, doctoral candidates must remain continuously enrolled each fall and spring semester for at least 1 credit hour of AMS 999 until graduation. Summer enrollment is optional.

Prospectus

The prospectus is part of the dissertation process and is not a factor in the comprehensive exam or candidacy. The prospectus must be submitted to the faculty advisor within one full semester of a successful comprehensive exam.

The prospectus should be no longer than 25 double spaced pages of text (not including the bibliography, images, etc.).

Comprehensive Exam Process

Student	Faculty advisor	Committee Members
In consultation with the faculty advisor, develop the three exam fields, create reading lists, and recruit committee members. This should take place at the beginning of the term prior to your exam term	Approve fields, the reading lists for each, and committee members	Consult with the student's faculty advisor and the student to develop reading lists
Submit reading lists to committee members for approval during the term prior to your exam term	Approve reading lists	Approve reading lists
Submit the exam application to the Graduate Academic Advisor by the deadline (last day of the previous term). Obtain approval signatures from all committee members.	Approve application	Approve application
	In consultation with committee members, write at least one question per field for the written exam. Email the questions to the Graduate Academic Advisor at least 24 hours prior to the written exam start time.	Consult the student's faculty advisor on the written exam questions
Complete the written exam. Option 1: Receive all three questions at 9:00 a.m. on day one of your written exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor six 24 hour days later (144 hours). Option 2: Receive one question at 9:00 a.m. on days one, three, and five of your exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor within 48 hours of receipt of each question.	Read the written exam answers and vote "Pass," "No Pass," or "Revision." Collect votes from other committee members and notify Graduate Academic Advisor of final result no more than two weeks after the end of the written exam. If at least three members vote "Pass," inform the student and committee that the oral exam will go forward. If at least three members vote "Revision," collect specific requests and inform the student of the revision process. If at least three members vote "No Pass," inform the student that there will be a new written exam in the next semester.	Read the written exam answers and report to the advisor a vote of "Pass," "No Pass," or "Revision" no more than two weeks after the end of the written exam.
In consultation with the faculty advisor, prepare for the oral exam	Prepare student for oral exam	
Sit for the oral exam	Conduct the oral exam	Conduct the oral exam

Application for the Comprehensive Examination

Students intending to take the comprehensive examination in a given semester **must have their reading lists approved by all committee members** and submit this application to the Graduate Academic Advisor by the last day of the term prior to the exam term (by the last day of the summer term for a fall exam and by the last day of the fall term for a spring exam).

Student Name: _____

Exam Term: _____

Concentration Fields:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Written Exam Plan:

You will have six 24 hour days to complete your written exam. Please select your preferred written exam format and your exam start date.

_____ **Option 1:** Receive all three questions at 9:00 a.m. on day one of your written exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor six 24 hour days later (144 hours).

_____ **Option 2:** Receive one question at 9:00 a.m. on days one, three, and five of your exam. You will email your responses in Word format to the Graduate Academic Advisor within 48 hours of receipt of each question.

Start date of exam: _____

Oral Exam Plan:

Please provide a five to ten day preferred time frame for your oral exam. The Graduate Academic Advisor will handle the scheduling of the oral exam by polling your committee members for their availability during this time frame.

Preferred oral exam date range (5-10 days): _____

Committee Approval Signatures:

Please print and sign your name (electronic signatures are acceptable). The student must circulate their reading lists prior to obtaining committee member signatures.

Faculty Advisor/Chair: _____

AMS member: _____

AMS member: _____

4th member: _____

Graduate Studies Representative (GSR): _____

Dissertation Rubric

Graduate Learner Outcomes Dissertation Rubric

Evaluating the Dissertation Fall 2011

School:	Department:
CLAS	American Studies

Components of a Dissertation and their Characteristics at Different Quality Levels

Components	Outcome Quality Levels			
	Outstanding - 4	Very Good - 3	Acceptable - 2	Unacceptable - 1
Introduction/ Statement of the Problem	Very well written; compelling & insightful Sets up and articulates an interesting question Makes a persuasive, convincing case	Well written Presents well-articulated, interesting and important questions	Provides a general discussion of the question or issues. Shows understanding of the topic	Show a fundamental lack of understanding of the problem Poorly written, incomplete, lacks structure
Grounding in the Literature	Places the work within a larger context Indicates the significance of the research Integrates material from related fields	Provides a meaningful summary of the literature Builds a case for the research and for the hypotheses	Cites most of the key literature and presents good critical analysis and synthesis of it	Inadequate Does not understand the sources; misinterprets or does not understand the literature
Methodology/ Approach	Comprehensive, original, logically consistent & internally coherent Integrates theory, method, & research Synthesizes theories; develops or creates theory	Integrates theory and method in interdisciplinary creative way that provides an original approach to topic or question	Integrates theory and method into a formulation that provides a cogent approach to topic or question	Student cannot explain the theory; uses the wrong methodology or tools Data are not handled carefully.
Results/ Analysis	Robust, meaningful, interesting Analyses map back to the hypotheses Discusses the limitations of the analysis	Analysis is appropriate & sophisticated Results interpret the problem insightfully Theory, method, and results correspond	Substantive and critical analyses are well executed	Evidence does not support the argument Results do not follow from the analysis and are interpreted incorrectly
Discussion/ Conclusion	Identifies the significance and applications Puts the study in larger context Has implications for future research	Well synthesized Conclusions are supported by the evidence Indicates where future research might improve upon what was done	Summarizes the dissertation and evaluates the conclusions. Conclusions are consistent with the results	Insufficient discussion of results Unsupported interpretation of findings Shows lack of understanding and careful thought
Overall	Original & significant; innovative	Well written and organized	Demonstrates competence	Poorly written; does not understand basic concepts

*Adapted from Barbara Lovitts' *Making the Implicit Explicit: Creating Performance Expectations for the Dissertation*, 2007.

GTA Competencies/Performance Factors for Evaluation

GTA Competencies for Evaluation

1. <u>Teaching and Presentation Ability:</u> able to monitor and evaluate student progress and assignments; able to develop and organize relevant teaching materials; able to utilize approved texts or other instructional materials; capable of preparing and administering examinations; provides opportunities for student engagement; team-oriented attitude; regular attendance at other related lectures and course meetings as specified by supervisors; effective working relationships with diverse constituencies; knowledge of student perspectives.
2. <u>Quality of Work:</u> Completes work thoroughly and accurately; pays attention to details; well-organized; completes work on time; provides prompt responses to supervisors, colleagues and students; consistent and high level of performance; accepting of constructive criticism by demonstration of the ability to listen and incorporate the critique of others; understands the importance of confidentiality and the academic and privacy rights of students (e.g., FERPA, University Rules and Regulations); able to provide clear assignment instructions; well-prepared to teach each class.
3. <u>Oral and Written Communication:</u> able to communicate with a diverse range of people; provides accurate information and teaches course content with enthusiasm; deals effectively with stress; active listening skills; courteous and patient; able to understand and constructively respond to student needs; clarity in both oral and written skills with the ability to talk/write at the appropriate level; capable of providing clear and constructive feedback regarding colleagues upon supervisors' request.
4. <u>Accountability and Self-management:</u> Possesses organizational and time management skills; holds office hours at the specified time and location; maintains on-going communication regarding workload to supervisor; able to multitask, prioritize and respond promptly to requests of supervisors (e.g., the submission of grades, meetings to review work, updating of Canvas, etc.); takes responsibility for all aspects of their work; willing to ask for help and to help others; able to adhere to the course outline and schedule on the syllabus; able to meet the department and university criteria for holding a GTA position; punctual and reliable.
5. <u>Subject Knowledge and Learning Ability:</u> demonstrates the ability to learn new content quickly especially new scholarship in the field as it relates to the course; interested in learning more than the basics of teaching pedagogy; capable of responding to student questions in a timely manner; open to new technology related to the implementation of the course (e.g., Canvas, PowerPoint, Excel, laboratory hardware and software, etc.); able to write clear examinations that are consistent with learning outcomes and course goals.

Samples of GTA Assessments

SAMPLE A: BROAD ASSESSMENT

PART I: General Information

Name of GTA:

Name of Supervisor/Reviewer:

Review Period:

Course(s) Taught in this Review Period:

Department or Program Providing Appointment:

Academic Department or Graduate Program Home of GTA:

PART II: GTA Self-Evaluation, Course Observation Evaluation, and Student Course Evaluations

The GTA may provide a self-evaluation (optional) of their performance for the review period. Samples for a self-evaluation, course observation and other online forms can be found at either of the following URLs:

- Policy: <https://policy.ku.edu/human-resources/performance-evaluation-GTA>
- Grad and Student Hourly Evaluations at KU HR: <https://humanresources.ku.edu/performance-evaluations-graduate-teaching-assistants-gra-and-graduate-research-assistants-gra-and>

1. Did the GTA complete a self-evaluation? [Future online version: Upload this document button]

Yes No

2. Did the supervisor or faculty advisor review the specific position description(s) upon which this evaluation is based before meeting with the GTA?

Yes No

3. Did the supervisor or faculty advisor complete at least one course observation evaluation that was also provided to the GTA?

Yes No

4. Were student course evaluations included in this GTA evaluation and, if applicable, made available to the GTA for review?

Yes No

General comments/notes regarding the evaluator's exposure to this students' teaching:

PART III: Evaluation

Please rate the performance of the GTA in this review period only in each of the following five areas. Examples of core competencies or performance factors for each area are available as links or are enclosed at the end of this form.

Evaluation Metrics

- | 1. Teaching and Presentation Ability | Comments |
|--|-----------------|
| ☐ Unsatisfactory | |
| ☐ Needs Improvement | |
| ☐ Satisfactory | |
| ☐ Outstanding | |
| ☐ Exceeds Expectations | |
| 2. Quality of Work | |
| ☐ Unsatisfactory | |
| ☐ Needs Improvement | |
| ☐ Satisfactory | |
| ☐ Outstanding | |
| ☐ Exceeds Expectations | |
| 3. Oral and Written Communication | |
| ☐ Unsatisfactory | |
| ☐ Needs Improvement | |
| ☐ Satisfactory | |
| ☐ Outstanding | |
| ☐ Exceeds Expectations | |
| 4. Accountability and Self-Management | |
| ☐ Unsatisfactory | |
| ☐ Needs Improvement | |
| ☐ Satisfactory | |
| ☐ Outstanding | |
| ☐ Exceeds Expectations | |
| 5. Subject Knowledge and Learning Ability | |
| ☐ Unsatisfactory | |
| ☐ Needs Improvement | |
| ☐ Satisfactory | |
| ☐ Outstanding | |
| ☐ Exceeds Expectations | |

Please provide some specific information related to **the GTA's strengths:**

Please provide some specific feedback on **areas in which the GTA can improve:**

PART IV: Overall Rating

Please rate the overall performance of this GTA for the current review period.

- ☐ Unsatisfactory
- ☐ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Exceeds Expectations
- ☐ Outstanding

Signature of Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Date

_____ Signature of Reviewer	_____ Date
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Sample 1: Instructor/GTA Course Observation Form

Instructor:

Observer and title:

Course:	Section:	Date:	
This course was:	Online	In Person	Hybrid

Rating Scale:

5– Strongly Agree	4 – Agree	3 – Neutral	2 – Disagree	1 – Strongly Disagree
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- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| a. | The GTA actively engages students with the course material(s) and subject matter. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| b. | The GTA uses whole class, group, and/or individual activities effectively. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| c. | The GTA asks questions or makes comments that generate a high level of critical thinking. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| d. | The GTA interacts well with students and addresses students' needs and questions. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| e. | The GTA is knowledgeable in key terms, concepts, ideas, and theories and conveys them in a manner that is understandable to the average student. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| f. | The GTA is professional, appropriately dressed, punctual, and prepared for class. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| g. | The GTA adheres to the course schedule and syllabus. | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |
| | | |
| h. | The GTA makes appropriate use of (technology/instruments/texts/readings). | |
| | 5 4 3 2 1 | |

Overall Assessment of Instruction:

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exceeds Expectations	Outstanding
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Comments:

_____ Instructor's Signature	_____ Date	_____ Observer's Signature	_____ Date
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Provide one copy to the GTA. Retain original in departmental files. New GTAs should be observed a minimum of once a semester, and continuing GTAs once a year.

Sample 2: Instructor/GTA Course Observation Form

Instructor: _____ Class: __ Observer: _____ Date: _____

It takes a lot of hard work and dedication to be an effective instructor/teacher/educator. The professional growth and development of our graduate students is a critical component of our program. This evaluation is one more tool to assure that instructors receive feedback from a professor of their choice (ideally their advisor) to improve their craft, and to add sources to show evidence of teaching during their job application process. It is considered common courtesy to offer the instructor a copy of the completed form, ideally combined with a brief conversation/debriefing shortly after the observation.

Before Observing:

- The instructor will work with the observer to set a date and time for the observation. The instructor should be informed of when the observation will take place. Observations should take place after the first two or three weeks of the semester, when students are still becoming acquainted with the classroom environment and instructor's teaching style.
- As a courtesy, the observer will ask the instructor upon arrival if they have a preference for where they should sit in the classroom, and whether it is ok with the instructor if they move around from group to group during group activities.

Please submit a copy of this completed form together with any additional notes or course materials to the Director of Graduate Studies

I. Rating Scale: 5 – Strongly Agree 4 – Agree 3 – Neutral 2 – Needs Improvement 1 – Unsatisfactory

I. Communication

a. The instructor shows knowledge of the material at hand and communicates in a manner that is accessible to the average student.

5 4 3 2 1

b. The instructor strives to use language accessible to students, applying effective comprehensive input strategies (gestures, visuals, sounds, technologies, i.e.)

5 4 3 2 1

c. The instructor uses *technology/instruments/texts/readings* effectively.

5 4 3 2 1

d. The instructor actively engages students with the course material(s) and subject matter through interdisciplinary connections, use of a variety of sources, and opportunities for a variety of interpersonal and interpretive activities.

5 4 3 2 1

e. The instructor asks questions or makes comments that are appropriate to the student level, and that open venues for high level critical thinking.

5 4 3 2 1

Comments regarding communication effectiveness:

Classroom Atmosphere

a. The instructor creates a classroom environment that feels welcoming, culture rich, and that always encourages use of Spanish.

5 4 3 2 1

b. The instructor uses procedures that maximize instructional time (there is a classroom culture, students know what they are expected to do, and transitions are smooth).

5 4 3 2 1

c. The instructor effectively combines interaction with the whole class, collaborative learning opportunities by working in groups, and/or allowing time for individual activities.

5 4 3 2 1

d. The instructor provides clear expectations to guide student activities.

5 4 3 2 1

e. The instructor is responsive/alert to students' needs and questions.

5 4 3 2 1

f. The instructor is professional (i.e., punctual, thoughtful attire, prepared for class).

5 4 3 2 1

g. The instructor adheres to the course schedule and syllabus.

5 4 3 2 1

Comments regarding classroom atmosphere:

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Unsatisfactory Needs Improvement Satisfactory Exceeds Expectations Outstanding

Based on the observation, please identify or comment on one salient strength of this instructor:

Based on the observation, please identify or comment on one area that could improve:

Other comments/observations:

_____ Instructor's Signature	_____ Date	_____ Observer's Signature.	_____ Date
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Pre-Comp Mentorship Agreement

Department of American Studies

Mentoring Agreement (Pre-Comp Stage)

This Agreement is a tool to support the mentoring relationship between advisor(s) and graduate students at the pre-comp stage of the Ph.D. It should be filled out at least one year prior to the date for the students' Ph.D. Comprehensive exams (i.e. Spring of 2024 for exams scheduled for Spring 2025).

The agreement should:

- Be part of an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and their advisor(s). It should be discussed and agreed upon by both parties in the conversation.
- Outline expectations for the student's performance and for the faculty's process for providing feedback.
- Establish a realistic timeline for the various steps tied to the comprehensive Ph.D. exams, taking into account past performance, the various stages for the exams (development of reading lists, preparation of questions, essay development), the amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to this endeavor, and any extenuating circumstances that might impact progress.
- Be flexible. The student and advisor entirely determine the terms and conditions of the mentoring agreement. They will revisit the contract and adjust as needed.

Some questions that the mentoring agreement should address:

- What will be considered good academic progress toward the comp exams for this student?
- What are the key milestones and what is the timeline leading to the exams?
- What is expected of the student in terms of professional practice? (e.g., what should the student do to prepare for meetings with the advisor(s), how should they submit draft materials, how should the student communicate and follow-up with their advisor? how many meetings should be held each semester, and what should be the turnaround time to respond to feedback?
- What are the expectations for the advisor(s) in terms of professional practice? It should make clear to the student what the advisor(s) agree(s) to do (e.g., turnaround time on feedback, frequency of meetings, nature and extent of comments/suggestions for revision).
- How will the student and faculty member hold themselves accountable to the terms of the agreement?

Department of American Studies

Mentoring Agreement (Pre-Comp Stage)

Student's Name: _____

Advisor's Name: _____

1. **Progress to Date:** Please outline the courses taken prior to the Comp exams. You should have the syllabi and notes for these various courses, as they will be useful in crafting your reading lists.

Coursework Progress

Core Courses (12 Hours)	Term	Grade	Instructor
AMS 801: Intro			
AMS 802: Theory			
AMS 803: Methods			
AMS 804: Research Seminar			
Graduate Seminars - must be numbered 700 or above (9 Hours)			
Research Skills (3 Hours)			
Additional Courses (not required)			

2. **Areas:** What are the theoretical frameworks that run through your coursework and training as a future scholar in American Studies? Part of your reading list will be based on the required AMS graduate courses. The other two areas will draw from additional coursework, including minors, certificates, or simply areas of interest (i.e. Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Film Studies, Labor Studies, Urban Studies, Museum Studies, Indigenous studies, Border studies, etc.).

Area 1: American Studies as a transdisciplinary field

Area 2: _____

Area 3:

3. **Questions:** Outline some of the questions that you seek to address through your reading lists. Think of a set of questions for each of the areas above.

Comprehensive exam areas/research questions

Area 1:	
Area 2:	

Area 3:

4. **Milestones and Timeline:** Please provide detailed information on the expected steps toward the preparation and completion of your comps by semester. (e.g. confirm committee members, solidify reading lists, etc.)

Tasks to be completed with due dates

Tasks to be completed	Semester Due

5. **Feedback and Revisions:** Please explain how feedback will be provided to the student and with what frequency. Outline when the student should seek feedback from their advisor (s), and when from other members of the committee. If members of the student’s exam committee should provide feedback and review student progress, please explain what the student should expect of this process.

6. **Professionalism:** What is expected of the student in terms of professional performance? How should they communicate with the advisor(s), and with what frequency? How should they prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee? What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at this stage of their Ph.D.?

7. **Accountability:**

- a. If the student does not follow the terms of the mentorship agreement, this will reflect in their grade for the independent study comps. preparation course at the end of the semester. In addition, the advisor and student agree that the following steps be taken:

- b. If the faculty advisor does not follow the terms of the mentorship agreement, the following steps will be taken:

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By signing below, all parties acknowledge that they understand and agree to adhere to the expectations outlined in this Agreement.

Student's Name: _____. Signature: _____.

Date: _____

Advisor's Name: _____. Signature: _____.

Date: _____

*Advisor(s) are responsible for keeping copies of the Mentoring agreement. In case of a change in advisor, they must submit the latest mentoring agreement to the new advisor. The Mentoring agreement should act as an orientative tool when submitting semester grades at the end of the semester, as well as when providing information to the Director of Graduate Studies towards the student's annual evaluation.

Post-Comp Mentorship Agreement

Department of American Studies

Mentoring Agreement (Dissertation Stages)

Effective mentoring and intentional planning by both student and mentor are critical during the dissertation writing stage. This agreement is a tool intended to support positive mentoring relationships, the objective evaluation of progress, and completion of the degree in a timely manner.

The agreement should:

- Be part of an extended and ongoing conversation between the student and their advisor(s). It should be discussed and agreed upon by both parties in the conversation.
- Outline expectations for the student's performance and for the faculty's process for providing feedback.
- Establish a **realistic timeline** for completion that takes into account past performance, the work that remains, the amount of time the student can reasonably dedicate to dissertation work, and any extenuating circumstances that might impact progress.
- Be flexible. The student and advisor entirely determine the terms and conditions of the mentorship agreement. They will revisit the contract on a regular basis (semester or annually) and adjust as appropriate.
- Serve as the basis for formally evaluating student progress, including the **final grade for dissertation hours** and the **student's annual evaluation**. In cases where progress is less than what was agreed upon with the advisor and/or may cause delays in timely degree completion, a grade of LP is warranted. In cases where no progress is made that would move the project forward, an NP is warranted.

The final grade for dissertation hours will be considered as **part of the students' annual evaluation**. The DGS will reach out to students who receive a NP, or two consecutive LP to outline a plan of action, and in conversation with the advisor. For more information about grading expectations for dissertation hours, see the College's [Grading Regulations](#) in the academic catalog.

Some questions that the mentoring agreement should address:

- What will be considered good academic progress toward the dissertation for this student?
- What are the key milestones and timeline for completion?
- What is expected of the student in terms of professional practice? (e.g., what should the student do to prepare for meetings with the advisor(s), how should they submit draft materials, how should the student communicate and follow-up with their advisor? how many meetings should be held each semester, and what should be the turnaround time to respond to feedback?
- What are the expectations for the advisor(s) in terms of professional practice? It should make clear to the student what the advisor(s) agree(s) to do (e.g., turnaround time on feedback, frequency of meetings, nature and extent of comments/suggestions for revision).

- How will the student and faculty member hold themselves accountable to the terms of the agreement?

NOTE: This Mentoring Agreement is different from the Graduate Degree Completion Agreement (while similar in content, the Mentoring Agreement is only shared by the DGS and faculty working with the student in the department. Conversely, the Degree Completion Agreement is required of students seeking an extension on the time permitted to complete a graduate degree at KU. COGA will require the mentorship agreement be filled out and submitted as part of the formal request for extensions stemming from extenuating circumstances (i.e. health and family emergencies, visa conditions impeding stay in the U.S.).

Department of American Studies

Mentoring Agreement (Dissertation Stages)

Student's Name: _____

Advisor's Name: _____

8. **Progress to Date:** Please outline in detail any research, writing, or other work toward the dissertation that has been completed to date. For example, you might have a number of research papers that tie to your dissertation, or a published article tied to your larger research, or a wealth of research conducted through a summer grant.

9. **Communication and Engagement:** Describe, in detail, expectations for communications, meetings, and engagement for the student, advisor, and any other parties (e.g. committee members, secondary mentors). Both advisor and student should discuss and come to an agreement on the following: How often will you meet? What is the preferred method of communication outside of meetings? What is the expected response time for communications? What is the expected turnaround time for the advisor to provide edits or feedback after receiving a draft? How and when will the student's committee or other mentors provide feedback or evaluate student progress? How should they prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee? What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at the dissertation stage?

10. **Milestones and Timeline:** Please provide detailed information on the expected steps toward the completion of the dissertation by semester, including the various stages of research, drafts, revisions, and final submissions. This timeline should be **realistic** and take into account extenuating circumstances and barriers that may have prevented progress.

Tasks to be completed with due dates

Tasks to be completed by the student	Semester	Due Date

11. **Professionalism:** What is expected of the student in terms of professional performance? How should they communicate with the advisor(s), and with what frequency? How should they prepare for meetings with the advisor and/or committee? What else should the student know about expectations (sometimes implicit) of a student at the dissertation stage?

12. **Support from faculty advisor and monitoring of progress:** If the student does not follow the terms of the mentorship agreement, they will receive a grade of LP (limited progress), or NP (no progress) at the end of the semester. In what other ways will the faculty advisor support the student and monitor their progress, both for agreed milestones and throughout the semester? (i.e. increase the number of meetings). The advisor and student agree that the following steps be taken:

If the faculty advisor does not follow the terms of the mentorship agreement, the student and faculty advisor agree that the following steps may be taken:

By signing below, all parties acknowledge that they understand and agree to adhere to the expectations outlined in this Agreement.

Student's Name: _____. Signature: _____.

Date: _____

Advisor's Name: _____. Signature: _____.

Date: _____

Advisor's Name (if co-advisors): _____. Signature: _____.

Date: _____

*Advisor(s) are responsible for keeping copies of the Mentoring agreement. In case of a change in advisor, they must submit the latest mentoring agreement to the new advisor. The mentorship agreement should act as an orientative tool when submitting semester grades during the dissertation, as well as when providing information to the Director of Graduate Studies towards the student's annual evaluation.