

American Studies dissertation prospectus guidelines (April 2015)

- The dissertation prospectus should be roughly 12 - 15 pages (3000 - 4000 words) plus a select bibliography that articulates the sources upon which the student will rely to articulate:
 - History of the issue
 - Research methodologies
 - Theoretical approaches
 - Source materials
- In the prospectus, the student should provide a working title for the project and address the following questions, recognizing that your ideas and plan will evolve as you engage in the project:
 - What is the topic? What is the central question or problem?
 - What have other scholars said about the issues you address? How will you engage with their work? How will your proposed study advance the scholarly discussion?
 - What theoretical perspectives will inform your analysis?
 - What kinds of data will you require and what methodological approach(es) will enable you to draw together the necessary materials? How much of your data have you already collected? What practical measures will you need to take to obtain the rest?
 - Chapter outline (How will you shape your work in manageable 30-40 page chunks, each of which treats a portion of your data and develops a section of your argument while contributing to the clear overall point?)
 - Timeline for completing portions and the whole. Plans for applying for funding.
- The student should identify his/her five-person committee following the Graduate School rules: <http://handbook.unc.edu/phd.html>. Students wishing to compose their committee otherwise should request approval from the Graduate Studies Committee well in advance.
- The student should provide a good draft of the prospectus to the committee by April 15 of the semester during which s/he took comprehensive exams and should schedule the defense of prospectus before the end of exams for that semester.
- At the defense the student should ask the committee to fill in and sign parts I and II of the [Report of Doctoral Committee Composition and Report of Approved Dissertation Project Form](#) and should forward this along with the Application for Admission to Candidacy <http://gradschool.unc.edu/pdf/wdcanfrm.pdf> to the DGS.