

UNC Folklore MA Timeline and Requirements (February 2019)

Fall of first year¹

- FOLK 850: Approaches to Folklore Theory
- One course taught by a member of Folklore's core faculty
- One other course
- Periodic conversations with your preliminary advisor, other professors, and the DGS to discuss your interests, identify relevant faculty in other departments, strategize courses to take, discuss applications for summer funding, etc.

Spring of first year

- FOLK 860: The Art of Ethnography
- One course taught by a member of Folklore's core faculty
- One other course
- Identify your thesis topic and thesis committee chair; contact additional thesis committee members²
- April 1—submit your Preliminary Research Plan³ to your thesis committee chair, committee members and DGS; then post this plan on the "Folklore MA Thesis Proposal" Sakai site
- Third Tuesday in April—the deadline to apply for summer funding from the Green, Patterson, and Wilgus funds

Summer between first and second years

- Conduct thesis research and draft critical literature review

Fall of second year

- One course taught by a member of Folklore's core faculty⁴
- One other course (taken in either the fall or the spring)
- FOLK 993: Master's Research and Thesis (register with the chair of your thesis committee; schedule regular meetings)
- By mid-September, submit thesis proposal⁵ and critical literature review⁶ to your thesis chair for feedback; finalize committee members
- By end of September, submit revised thesis proposal and CLR to all committee members and schedule proposal meeting
- By mid-October—proposal meeting.⁷ (At the meeting's successful conclusion, your thesis chair will sign the first two sections of the [Master's Comprehensive Exam Report](#). Please give it to the Graduate Student Services Manager to keep until your defense.) You will find a full schedule of relevant thesis deadlines [here](#).
- Post your approved thesis proposal on the "Folklore MA Thesis Proposal" Sakai site.

Spring of second year

- FOLK 993: Master's Thesis (register with your thesis chair.)
- One other course (if you didn't take this in the fall)
- Meet regularly with your thesis chair to discuss thesis sections/drafts
- January—register to graduate in ConnectCarolina
- By mid-February—submit good full draft to thesis committee chair⁸
- By March 1—receive feedback from your thesis committee chair
- By mid-March—submit a revised version of your thesis to all committee members⁹ and schedule thesis defense
- By last week of March—thesis defense¹⁰ (All committee members will sign last two sections of the Master's Comprehensive Exam Report.)
- Early April— make any final revisions to your thesis and obtain your thesis chair's approval of the final version
- Submit your thesis electronically to the Graduate School¹¹
- April—participate in a symposium with your Folklore peers, at which you'll present your thesis to faculty, students, and guests.

¹ The total coursework for the MA consists of FOLK 850, FOLK 860, 3 courses with Folklore’s core faculty, 3 other courses, and 2 semesters of FOLK 993 (Master’s Research and Thesis). You should consult regularly with your preliminary advisor or thesis committee chair to be sure that you’re on track to complete all the degree requirements. We recommend distributing courses as outlined in this chart, although you may alter this distribution with your advisor’s approval. You may take “other” courses in any department at UNC or—by applying through the [Interinstitutional Program](#)—at Duke, North Carolina Central, or North Carolina State University. To take courses elsewhere, you’ll have to both secure permission of the instructor and work with the DGS to process the paperwork. See the department policy document on our Intranet site for more information.

² Although your preliminary advisor *may* end up chairing your thesis committee, this is by no means required; you may choose any member of Folklore’s core faculty as your chair. Your thesis committee, in turn, must also include at least one other member of the core faculty; the third member (necessarily a PhD) could hail from any department at UNC or another university, or could be a scholar working outside the academy. If you choose a scholar from outside of UNC, you’ll need to get approval by the semester’s end from both your chair and the DGS, so that all the requisite [formalities](#) can be addressed. You may also choose to add a 4th member to your committee; usually, this is someone from the community with whom you are working.

³ Your Preliminary Research Plan—which typically stretches about two pages, with an additional page of bibliography—is essentially a brief review of your thesis research, in which you state your key research question(s), outline your plans for doing the research and obtaining funding to do so, and name the members of your thesis committee.

⁴ If you want to take this course from someone who is *not* a Folklore core faculty member, then you’ll need to consult with your thesis chair about your proposed alternative, and then submit a formal request (with your rationale and a statement of support from your thesis chair) to the DGS for approval.

⁵ Your Thesis Proposal should be roughly 10 pages (2500 words) of prose, plus a detailed bibliography. In it, you should:

- succinctly state your key research question and thesis statement;
- briefly outline the thesis’s central topic and core issues;
- discuss your methodology, describe the data that you’ve already collected, and identify additional research that you need to do;
- briefly situate your inquiry within the relevant factual and theoretical literature; and
- offer a substantial bibliography.

⁶ The Critical Literature Review is a 15-20-page bibliographic essay based on readings you are exploring for your thesis and from first year courses. See separate instructions.

⁷ At the proposal meeting, you should be prepared to defend your Thesis Proposal and to field questions about your Critical Literature Review. Committee members will assess whether you are prepared to undertake the proposed work and will make suggestions about additional research and/or reading that they deem crucial to the project.

⁸ The thesis text should be 35-50 pages long, excluding notes, bibliography, illustrations, and appendices. It should be based on original field and/or archival research and present an argument with the degree of detail and thoroughness represented in our discipline’s major scholarly journals (such as the *Journal of American Folklore*) or other journals suggested as models by your thesis committee chair. We welcome alternative forms of sharing your research results; these might include, for example, a film with adjoining commentary, a CD with extensive liner notes, detailed plans for an exhibition or festival, or a fully developed website. If you plan an alternative “thesis,” be sure to consult with both your thesis chair and your committee members early in the process.

⁹ Your thesis should follow the format specified in the Graduate School’s [Thesis and Dissertation Guide](#).

¹⁰ The thesis defense offers you an opportunity to present and defend your argument, to discuss the thesis with the committee in the context of your broader intellectual development, and to receive instructions for revising your thesis for submission to the Graduate School.

¹¹ You’ll find the thesis submission deadline [here](#). Detailed instructions for this process appear in the [Submission](#) section of the Graduate School’s Thesis and Dissertation Guide.