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Year One

Coursework

In fall of year one, all students take AMST 700 (History and Practices of American Studies) together as a cohort, and two electives that students select on their own. Students may consult
with their advisor, search keywords on ConnectCarolina, or browse course offerings from relevant departments in order to select their electives.

In spring of year one, all students take AMST 701 (Research Methods in American Studies) together as a cohort, and two electives that students select on their own.

**Milestones**

In spring of year one, students planning to earn a MA should work with their advisor to identify a research topic and start to assemble a MA committee of their primary advisor and two additional faculty members from our department.

Students must pass a language exam or proficiency attestation (equivalent to 100 hours of acquiring a skill) by spring of their third year; in their first year, they should begin working with their advisor to identify their best option and form a plan and timeline for passing.

**Funding**

Students will receive Teaching Assistant placements or other work placements in the department (social media, etc). Starting in the fall semester, students should work with their advisors to identify summer funding sources. Students may look towards academic centers at UNC relevant to their research, libraries, and scholarly organizations for grants and fellowships. Faculty may hire students over the summer as Graduate Research Consultants or Teaching Assistants for summer school courses or for research.

**Year Two**

**Coursework**

In fall of year two, students take three elective courses. Students earning a MA will take AMST 901 as one of their electives; 901 is an independent study focused on MA design taught by the student’s advisor. Students working on a MA are encouraged to convene a MA writing group to work together towards deadlines and share insights from their individual 901 experiences.

In spring of year two, all students will take AMST 902/993 together as a cohort, and two electives. AMST 993 is MA Writing and AMST 902 is Project Design. 902 and 993 are taught by the same instructor and meet at the same time. The course results in either 1) a complete MA thesis and conference proposal/presentation for students earning a MA 2) a conference and academic paper for students interested in academic publications or 3) a conference and public facing project (museum, digital, etc.) for students who are not interested in academic publications, or 4) another scholarly product of comparable rigor agreed to by the student and their advisor and/or instructor.
Milestones

In spring of year two, students should work with their advisor to draft comprehensive exam lists and assemble their exams committee of three faculty members, one of whom can be outside the department. Comprehensive exams are comprised of two written exams that are later defended in a single oral defense. Students are allotted 8 hours for each comprehensive exam and a defense typically lasts around 90 minutes. All students take an American Studies exam directed by the instructor of 700 or 701 and drawn from readings in 700 and 701 (30 books) and cohort collaboration (15 books). Each student also takes a specialized field exam directed by their advisor.

In spring of year two, students earning a MA will defend their MA thesis to their MA committee and receive their MA degree from the department.

In summer after year two, students should begin reading for their comprehensive exams.

Funding

Students will receive Teaching Assistant placements or other work placements in the department (social media, etc). Starting in the fall semester, students should work with their advisors to identify summer funding sources. Students may look towards academic centers at UNC relevant to their research, libraries, and scholarly organizations for grants and fellowships. Faculty may hire students over the summer as Graduate Research Consultants or Teaching Assistants for summer school courses or for research.

Year Three

Coursework

In fall of year three, all students will take AMST 903 together as a cohort, a directed reading with the faculty person directing their field exam, and an elective. AMST 903 is dedicated to comprehensive exam preparation for the first half of the semester and dissertation prospectus development for the second half of the semester.

In spring of year three, all students enroll in AMST 994 (dissertation hours).

Milestones

In fall of year three, students schedule, take, and defend their comprehensive exams. Most students aim to schedule their exams before or just after fall break, though committee schedules can affect these dates. After defending exams, students should work with their advisor to assemble a dissertation committee of five faculty members, one of which can be outside the institution and one of which can be a UNC faculty person from a different department.
Students may defend their prospectus at the end of fall semester or in the spring semester. The prospectus is an overview of the student’s research question, sources, core argument, and chapters of the dissertation and is defended before the dissertation committee. Once students have defended their prospectus, they are ABD and advance to candidacy. Students begin dissertation research in the summer of year four.

Funding

Students will receive Teaching Assistant placements or other work placements in the department (social media, etc). Starting in the fall semester, students should work with their advisors to identify summer funding sources and dissertation research fellowships. Students may look towards academic centers at UNC relevant to their research, libraries, and scholarly organizations for grants and fellowships. Faculty may hire students over the summer as Graduate Research Consultants or Teaching Assistants for summer school courses or for research.

PhD candidates are able to teach their own courses as Teaching Fellows. Candidates may begin to teach their own summer school courses in the summer of year four. Teaching Fellows must submit an approved Statement of Teaching before teaching their own class.

Year Four

Coursework

All students enroll in AMST 994 for the fall and spring semesters.

Milestones

Students should meet with their full dissertation committee once a year after successful defense of their prospectus and until successful defense of their dissertation.

Funding

Students without fellowship funding will receive Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant placements or other work placements in the department (social media, etc). Starting in the fall semester, students should work with their advisors to identify summer funding sources and dissertation completion fellowships. Students may look towards academic centers at UNC relevant to their research, libraries, and scholarly organizations for grants and fellowships. Faculty may hire students over the summer as Graduate Research Consultants or Teaching Assistants for summer school courses or for research.
Year Five

Coursework
All students enroll in AMST 994 for the fall and spring semesters.

Milestones
Students should meet with their full dissertation committee once a year after successful defense of their prospectus and until successful defense of their dissertation.

Funding
Students without fellowship funding will receive Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant placements or other work placements in the department (social media, etc).

Departmental Policies and Opportunities
These policies may be updated at the discretion of the Graduate Student Services Manager and the Registrar.

Graduation and Defenses
Students must apply to graduate with the Graduate School via ConnectCarolina in the semester during which the student intends to defend the dissertation:
https://gradschool.unc.edu/current.html

The dissertation must conform to the format outline in the Thesis and Dissertation Guide at the Graduate School. The student files the final dissertation with the Graduate School, here:
https://gradschool.unc.edu/current.html. Student is responsible for finding out filing date; Graduate Student Services Manager can help.

Be sure to check with the Graduate School for all deadlines related to graduate:
https://gradschool.unc.edu/academics/resources/graddeadlines.html

Registration
UNC Registrar: Please see the registrar’s website for instructions on how to register and pertinent deadlines: https://registrar.unc.edu/guide/registration-tasks/
Students must be registered full-time to hold a University Fellowship. This includes Teaching Fellowships, Research Assistantships, Non-Service Awards, etc.

Students who are teaching and enrolled in fewer than three courses are considered under-enrolled by the Graduate School, and this comes with heavy financial penalties.

Full-time registration can also be achieved by registering for nine or more hours (three classes) OR registering for three hours of 992/993/994 (with or without credit hours for other courses).

When students do not register for courses during any given semester, they must apply for readmission.

Auditing of courses is permitted but discouraged. Students must have permission from the instructor to audit.

Dissertation Hours = AMST 994 Directed Readings = AMST 895
You need only register for 3 credits in these classes. You may register for dissertation hours for multiple semesters. It is important to register under the appropriate instructor’s section number when registering for any of these classes. Please contact the Graduate Student Service Manager if you do not see your advisor or instructor assigned to a section.

If a student needs to underload before they are ABD, students may submit a Waiver of Hours form. This form can be found on The Graduate School website and on the departmental Intranet. This form requests to The Graduate School that the student be considered full-time without being enrolled in 9 hours of coursework or 3 hours of 992/993/994. Waiver of Hour forms are used in the following scenarios:

- A student only needs one course to finish coursework requirements and is not yet ABD
- A student only needs two courses to finish coursework requirements and is not yet ABD
- The student’s overall academic involvement, including research projects and stand-alone teaching assignments, combined with six credit hours of course enrollment, is consistent with full-time status

All Waiver of Hour requests must be submitted to the Graduate Student Services Manager no later than 1 week before the start of classes. The form will then be sent to the DGS for assessment based on the graduate student’s progress to degree. Should the DGS approve the waiver request, it will be reviewed and signed by the Chair of the department before being submitted to the Graduate School for further review and approval.

Students who are receiving tuition remission (payment for out-of-state tuition) are responsible for dropping any unwanted classes by the last day to drop a course for financial credit. This is usually two weeks after the first day of classes. If you drop a course during this time, you must inform the Graduate Student Services Manager. See the Registrar’s calendar to find the
Students who drop after this date are responsible for paying for the dropped classes.

Students registered for at least three credit hours on this campus may take graduate courses at North Carolina State University, UNC-Charlotte, UNC-Greensboro, North Carolina Central University, and Duke University. Students must fill out the Inter-Institutional Approval Form and have it approved by the DGS. Tuition will be calculated as if the registration were for a course offered at UNC.

A minimum residence credit of four full semesters, which must be spent in continuous registration on this campus, is required of all PhD students. Two of these semesters must comprise contiguous registration of at least six hours each; the remaining two may be earned over a longer period of time and during noncontiguous semesters, if so desired. All must be earned through UNC-CH registration—transfer credits cannot be applied. Residence credit earned on work for a master’s degree at UNC-CH is applicable as residence credit for a doctoral degree. The residence credit requirement should be completed before the doctoral written examinations and oral exam defense are taken.

Contact Information

It is the responsibility of every graduate student to have a current address and phone number listed in ConnectCarolina.

It is the responsibility of every graduate student to thoroughly read and respond to emails.

All graduate students are assigned mailboxes in the mailroom located in the Bain Staff room (GL 219). Students are encouraged to check their boxes at least once a week.

Conferences and Travel Funding

For students entering the program with a BA, it is reasonable to begin attending conferences after one’s exams. For those entering with an MA, it is reasonable to begin attending conferences starting in your second year. While graduate conferences are enjoyable, they do relatively little for your CV. The department thus recommends that students try to attend regular conferences instead. Talk to your advisor or other mentors about how to apply for a spot at a conference.

Students may apply for travel funding to a conference at which they are presenting once in their tenure as a student with the department. Applications can be found under the “Graduate Forms” tab on the Intranet. There are travel grants available from the Graduate and Professional Student Federation and other campus centers.
Dissertation Fellowships

The Graduate School offers a limited number of dissertation fellowships that release students from teaching to concentrate on writing the dissertation. For more information on the Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships, see https://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/gradschool/fellowshipsandgrants.html

Miscellaneous

If you are an out-of-state student, we ask that you apply for residency for tuition purposes once you are eligible. This significantly reduces the cost of your tuition and allows us to support more students in our program. More information can be found on the Graduate School website.

A graduate student may request a leave of absence from graduate study for up to one year. During an official LOA, the student does not plan to make academic progress. Students should consult with the DGS about their intention to take a leave; DGS and GSSM will assist in submitting the proper forms to the Graduate School for Approval. Students should check the Graduate School website for associated restrictions.

Graduate students are eligible for study carrels located in the book stacks of Davis Library. Students may obtain applications for carrels at the Circulation Desk of Davis. These applications should be signed by the advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies.