

AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATE PROGRAM

HANDBOOK
(Revised April 2023)

William & Mary

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

- A. American Studies Executive Committee
 - Student Petitions to the Executive Committee
- B. Administrative Structure
 1. Program Director
 2. Director of Graduate Study
 3. Academic Advisors,
 - Changing Advisors, Committee Members, and Directors
 4. Program Administrator
 5. Ombudsperson
 6. Students and Student Organizations
 7. Affiliated Research Institutes, Lectures, Workshops

II. POLICIES

- A. General Policies
 - Admission
 - Time-to-Degree for Full and Part-Time Students
 - Extensions on Time-to-Degree
 - Leaves of Absence
 - Medical Leaves and Withdrawals
 - Honor System and Code of Conduct
- B. Satisfactory Progress and Other Academic Policies
 - The Grand Deadline (mid-April)
 - Academic Review and Satisfactory Progress
 - Grade of I (Incomplete)
 - Language Requirement
 - Registering for Classes
 - A Note on Expectations for the Return of Independent and Thesis Work
 -
- C. Tuition, Stipends, and Assistantships
 - Tuition and Registration/ Enrollment Status
 - Health Insurance and Health Care
 - Other Fees and Services
 - Funding packages and Stipends
 - Assistantships

- Satisfactory Performance of Assistantships, Teaching Assistantships
- Annual Review and Renewal of Financial Support
- Sixth-Year Funding Options
- Other Funding Sources and Opportunities
- Program Travel Funds, Program Summer Research Funds, Other William and Mary Resources

IV. COURSES OF STUDY

A. Master of Arts

- Course of Study, M.A.
- The M.A. Thesis
 - The Advisor and Developing the Thesis, Thesis Committee, Thesis Defense, Schedules for Completion of the Degree

B. Doctor of Philosophy - Course of Study, Ph.D.

- Emphasized Fields

C. Advanced Graduate Studies

- The Colloquium and the Ph.D. Qualifying Exam
- Roles of the Advisor, The Committee, Preparing for the Qualifying Exam, Failing the Qualifying Exam in Whole or in Part

The Dissertation, The Dissertation Director, Dissertation Prospectus, The Advisory Dissertation Committee and the Prospectus Colloquium, The Final Dissertation Committee, The Dissertation Defense, Schedules for Completion of Degree

D. Submitting Theses and Dissertations and Graduating

IV. APPENDICIES

- A.** Guidelines for Assistantships in the American Studies Program
- B.** American Studies Graduate Teaching Fellow Proposal
- C.** Non-Teaching Assistantships Graduate Student's Evaluation Form
- D.** Non-Teaching Assistantships Supervisor's Evaluation Form
- E.** Style Guide for Theses and Dissertations
- F.** Honor Code
- G.** College Policy on Sexual Harassment
- H.** College Policy on Consensual Amorous Relations

I. INTRODUCTION

This handbook provides an introduction to the structure and policies of the American Studies Graduate Program. It *supplements* the information found in the *William & Mary [Graduate Arts & Sciences Catalog](#)*, which should be consulted for the most up to date requirements for your degree(s) as well as the general regulations for graduate programs in the Arts & Sciences. (Students should consult the Graduate Arts & Sciences catalog for the year during which they entered the Program, as regulations may change over time but only for students who enroll after said changes are implemented.) While the American Studies Graduate Handbook is intended to be helpful in guiding students through their studies, answers to individual questions may require a conversation with a student's advisor, the Director of Graduate Studies, or the Vice Dean for Graduate Studies. *In the end, it is the student's responsibility to see that all requirements are met.*

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

A. American Studies Executive Committee

The American Studies Executive Committee (EC) is responsible for general oversight of the American Studies Program. It sets policy in curriculum and other matters and determines the broad directions of the Program. It also reviews and approves recommendations from the Graduate Committee (see below) regarding student admissions and progress, financial packages, travel funding, and various awards.

The membership of the EC consists of the Program Director and all faculty with appointments in or affiliation with the Program. At times, representatives from various departments that cooperate with American Studies also serve on the EC. Finally, each year, the American Studies Graduate Students Organization (ASGSO) elects two graduate students to represent student concerns to the EC. The EC meets monthly during the semester.

Student Requests to the Executive Committee

If graduate students, individually or collectively, wish to bring an issue to the attention of the EC or to make a request of the EC, they can contact the Director of Graduate Studies, the ASGSO representatives to the EC, or the Program Director. Students may also approach the EC via their advisor(s) or the W&M [Graduate Arts & Sciences Ombudsperson](#).

B. Administrative Structure

The Program has three administrative officers: Program Director, Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS). All faculty serve as academic advisors,

and thus also have a crucial role in administering the Program. The Director, DGS, DUS, and advisors also collaborate in day-to-day Program operation with the Program Administrator.

1. Program Director

The Director of American Studies manages the flow of work in the Program offices, supervises Program support staff, monitors the budget, transmits personnel evaluations and recommendations to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, appoints Program committees, and oversees the curriculum, searches, and the general operation of the faculty in its professional role. The Director reports to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and to the Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, but may also act as the Program liaison to the Provost and members of the university administration. The Director joins with the DGS in the recruitment of students. The EC elects the Director, who is appointed by the Dean of the faculty of Arts and Sciences.

2. Director of Graduate Studies

The DGS holds primary responsibility for the administration of the graduate program in American Studies. The DGS chairs the Graduate Committee, and in conjunction with that committee, monitors student progress toward the terminal degree. Also in conjunction with the Graduate Committee, the DGS oversees admissions, the assignment of doctoral students to specific graduate and teaching assistantships, and the allocation of research and conference travel funding. The DGS also approves graduate student plans for their thesis, colloquium, qualifying exam, and dissertation committees and forwards documentation of those plans to the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for Dean's level approval. The DGS alerts students if they are failing to make satisfactory progress toward the degree and presents student petitions to the EC and its appropriate sub-committees. The DGS serves on the Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Research's Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS), and presents to this body petitions for the extension of degree deadlines and other matters, as needed. The DGS is elected by the EC and serves a three-year term.

3. Academic Advisors

Upon entering the graduate program, students meet with the DGS to discuss their academic goals, plan of study, and course selections for the semester. They should also meet at this time with their preliminary advisor, who is assigned to them by the DGS.

There is no set number of meetings that students must have with their advisor over the course of any given semester. Often the frequency and type of meetings that students and advisors find necessary changes at different stages during students' courses of study. However, students are urged to maintain regular contact with their advisors and are strongly encouraged to meet with their advisors before registering for classes each semester and to discuss changes and modifications to their academic programs.

4. Changing Academic Advisors, Committee Members, and Directors

The initial assignment of a preliminary advisor is intended to give students guidance and grounding in the Program from the start. However, as a student's academic interests develop or shift, students are free to change advisors and committee members, and they may do so at any time, except between the qualifying examination colloquium and the qualifying examination. It is common for such changes to occur during transitional periods in a student's course of study, such as when they begin to organize a committee for the Master's thesis, the colloquium for the Ph.D. qualifying exam, and the dissertation prospectus. Such changes may also be required when faculty members retire or leave the university for another reason.

Graduate student advisors must hold a formal faculty appointment in the American Studies Program (i.e. must have a current JAMOU; affiliation with American Studies is not sufficient to fill this requirement). If a student wishes to be advised by a faculty member whose appointment resides in another unit or units at W&M, they may do so as long as they also select a co-advisor who holds a formal faculty appointment in American Studies. This requirement for a co-advisor applies even if the chosen faculty advisor is an affiliated faculty member in American Studies.

In order to change an advisor, a student must, first, obtain the consent of a new advisor and, second, notify by email the DGS, the prior advisor, the Program Administrator, and other members of their committee.

The only time students are not permitted to change advisors or committee members is the period between the colloquium and the Ph.D. qualifying exam. To preserve the intellectual integrity of the exam, students cannot alter the composition of their exam committee during this period. If a change must be made, students must hold a new colloquium.

To change dissertation directors after the dissertation colloquium, students must propose a new committee to the DGS, and if appropriate, reconvene the dissertation colloquium, and re-submit the prospectus for approval. The DGS may serve, ex officio, as a substitute advisor in the case of faculty medical or family leave, illness, resignation, or other absences.

If a thesis advisor or dissertation director leaves the Program or university while the thesis or dissertation is underway, for two years they may continue as a co-advisor but must be joined by a formally appointed faculty member in the American Studies Program. After two years, a currently appointed faculty member must be appointed thesis advisor or dissertation director. In the case of a dissertation, the faculty member no longer appointed as faculty in the Program or at William & Mary may still serve on a committee, as a W&M affiliate and not as an "outside reader."

The DGS is available to discuss any questions or issues that may arise when a student is considering changing their advisor or committee members. The W&M [Graduate A&S Ombudsperson](#) is also available for graduate students to consult if any questions or issues arise.

5. Program Administrator

The Program Administrator (PA) is the member of the W&M staff responsible for the smooth and efficient operation of the Program offices and budget. The PA collaborates regularly with the Program officers and faculty on all aspects of Program operation and is responsible for most of the Program's day-to-day interactions with other offices at W&M. The PA often has the clearest understanding of administrative matters, university wide, and is a crucial resource for graduate students. However, when students have questions about their course of study, they should consult their advisors or the DGS.

6. Graduate Ombudsperson

The Graduate Arts & Sciences [Ombudsperson](https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/about/ombuds/index.php) is an independent office whose job is to facilitate problem solving and communications for students when the avenues within the program are, in a student's judgment, not working. Details on Ombudsperson office hours and policies can be found on their website (<https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/about/ombuds/index.php>).

7. American Studies Graduate Student Organization

The American Studies Graduate Student Organization (ASGSO) is composed of all full- and part-time degree candidates in the Program. Through ASGSO, students elect non-voting graduate student members to the American Studies EC and to search committees overseeing the hiring of new faculty. ASGSO also elects a representative to the College-wide Graduate Students Association. ASGSO organizes a variety of social and academic events during the academic year, including Brown Bag workshops at which students may present academic papers and receive feedback on their work (see below). ASGSO also assists with organizing recruitment events and orientation for new graduate students.

8. Affiliated Research Institutes, Lectures, Workshops

During the academic year, the American Studies Program and related departments and programs sponsor lectures and workshops, which the academic community and especially the Program's graduate students are encouraged to attend. These events are designed to keep the academic and professional community abreast of current research in various fields and to provide exposure to a wider variety of material and methods than is available through the curriculum alone. They are considered an integral part of the graduate program.

On a regular basis, the Program hosts a **brown bag workshop**, where graduate students and faculty present papers on ongoing research. This is a key element in the program's intellectual community. In this informal setting, participants have the opportunity to learn about their colleagues' scholarship and to test their own ideas. These workshops offer a forum where individuals can try out papers or job talks before giving them in other settings. Doctoral students are expected to present their research at a brown bag workshop at least once between their

advance to candidacy and the defense of their dissertations. And all graduate students are strongly encouraged to present and to attend and participate in these sessions.

Other programs and departments at W&M host their own seminar series. Announcements of talks of particular interest to American Studies students hosted by other units on campus will be announced via email.

III. POLICIES AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

A. General Policies

1. Admission

Admission to the graduate program is competitive. Preparation in a variety of fields – literature, history, art history, anthropology, and sociology, as well as American Studies – and experience with other interdisciplinary fields such as Africana Studies and Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies – provide appropriate background to aid in admittance. Admission is for the year specified.

2. Time to Degree

William & Mary’s Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) sets university-wide rules for the time students may take to complete their degrees. **Students should take note of the time-to-degree deadline indicated in their letter of admission from the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies.**

MA only students must complete their degree within six years of entrance into the Program (measured from the first day of classes of their first semester), excluding periods of approved leave and military service.

Full-time Ph.D. students must complete their degree within seven years, with the “clock” beginning at the time they begin their Ph.D. coursework, excluding periods of approved leave and military service.

Full-time M.A./Ph.D. students are expected to complete and defend their MA thesis no later than the fourth week of the Fall semester following their first year in the Program. They must satisfy all requirements for the MA by the end of the spring term of their second year in the Program in order to receive continued funding. All requirements for the Ph.D. must be completed within seven years from the first term of enrollment in the M.A./Ph.D. program, excluding periods of approved leave and military service. Requests for extensions beyond the seven-year limit can be filed following the procedures outlined in "Time Limits for Degrees and Extensions" in the Graduate Arts & Sciences Catalog.

Part-time graduate students meet the same program requirements as full-time students but on a modified course schedule developed in consultation with the DGS and their advisor. Part-time M.A./Ph.D. students must complete all requirements for the M.A. within three years from matriculation in order to continue to the Ph.D. program.

Part-time Ph.D. students must complete their course work and hold the colloquium for Ph.D. qualifying examination in seven semesters (three and half years). They have seven more semesters after completing the colloquium for Ph.D. qualifying examination to complete the degree.

3. Extensions

Students who anticipate that they will not be able to complete a degree in the allotted time may petition the DGS and the Graduate Committee for a one-year extension. The student writes a short letter to the DGS that explains 1) why the extension is needed, and 2) what the new schedule for completion will be. They must attach a letter of support from their advisor, as well as an Extension Request Form, available in the section for forms on the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) website: <http://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/forms/index.php>. If the DGS endorses the request, they will forward this material with their own letter of support to the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS), where the petition will be discussed and voted on. Though less frequently granted, students may also petition for subsequent one-year extensions. Extensions are not guaranteed and will be granted only with the support of the advisor, the DGS, the Graduate Committee, the Graduate Dean, and COGS. Both initial and subsequent petitions will be looked upon more favorably if significant progress toward completion of the degree can be documented.

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of time-to-degree deadlines and, when necessary, to petition for extensions. To initiate such a petition, students should contact the DGS.

4. Non-Medical Leaves of Absence

A student may be granted a non-medical leave of absence from the Program upon petition to the DGS and Graduate Committee. Students can request this type of leave of absence at any time, but students should be aware that granting leaves is a formal action of the Graduate Committee, and that it must also be approved by the Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Studies. To apply, a student completes the Leave of Absence form available from the OGS website (<http://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/forms/index.php>) and submits it to the DGS. To this form, they should append a short letter explaining the reasons for the leave of absence and a letter of support from their Advisor. The DGS forwards this material first to the Graduate Committee and then to the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Whenever possible such requests will be considered at the close of an academic year and will be granted for up to one year only. Should students wish to continue the leave for a second year, they must apply again to the DGS and Graduate Committee.

Because of the funding structure at William & Mary, students should not expect to resume their funding after a leave of absence. However, to apply for resumption of funding, students on leave must inform the Graduate Committee by January 1 that they intend to resume studies in the fall term.

A leave of absence is appropriate in any circumstance in which a student expects that they will not be able to make progress toward their degree. A leave of absence stops all time-to-degree “clocks,” but under no circumstances will a leave be granted solely for the purpose of extending the usual time-to-degree schedules.

5. Medical Leaves and Withdrawals

Students considering a parental, family, or medical leave begin the process by consulting with the Director of [Care Support Services](https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/caresupportservices/index.php) in the Dean of Students Office, <https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/caresupportservices/index.php>. Care Support Services can also provide guidance about retroactive withdrawals from a semester when medical challenges have interfered with a student’s progress toward their degree.

6. Honor System and Code of Conduct

Students at William & Mary agree upon matriculation to abide by W&M’s [Honor Code](https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/communityvalues/honorcodeandcouncils/index.php) (<https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/communityvalues/honorcodeandcouncils/index.php>) in guiding their academic and personal behavior. Honorable conduct includes full and honest representation of one’s own academic work, with conscientious citation of the language and contributions of others; adherence to the rules of assignments, as set forth by faculty in specific courses; and respect for the confidentiality of files, transcripts, and grades within academic offices.

Research a student undertakes to satisfy one academic requirement may not be recycled or utilized to satisfy another assignment without explicit permission of the professors involved.

More generally, students in the graduate program are expected to pursue courses and research in a spirit of collaboration with their peers. Despite their different levels of training and experience, faculty and students are colleagues within an intellectual community, joined together in the pursuit of knowledge about American history and culture. In this relation, students and faculty are mutually accountable to one another for their performance inside and outside of class. A similar ethos of collegiality ought to govern relations among students. The American Studies Program encourages students to cooperate in preparing presentations to classes, in conducting research, and in sharing library and other materials necessary for the completion of assignments. Students are, of course, evaluated according to their individual work. But they should take advantage of opportunities to assist and learn from one another.

The American Studies faculty is committed to an intellectually ambitious and rigorous training of its students both inside and out of class. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the

office hours of faculty and to make special appointments for extended conversation. They may also seek out opportunities for independent study with individual faculty. However, graduate work requires considerable initiative and autonomy. Students should respect the time and the privacy of advisors and instructors and consult with them at regularly scheduled times and places. Exceptions to this rule are, of course, a matter for discussion between individual students and faculty.

Finally, and needless to say, all members of the American Studies community are expected to treat each other with the utmost respect. The Program does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or intimidation of any kind. Feel free to consult your advisor, the graduate director, the director, or other program faculty to discuss concerns. For information on W&M's "Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation and Sexual Misconduct," see here: https://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/policies/discrimination_harassment_retaliation/policy/index.php. Resources for reporting are available here: https://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/discrimination_overview/reportingdiscrimination/index.php. Contact information for the Graduate Ombuds Office is available here: <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/about/ombuds/index.php>.

7. Registering for Classes

William & Mary uses an online registration system called Banner. Once a student is enrolled, a link to Banner shows up on the student's myWM page (<https://my.wm.edu>). After the first semester, when incoming students register for classes immediately before the semester begins, students pre-register for classes. The pre-registration windows usually fall shortly after mid-semester (e.g., in late October for registration for spring) and are well advertised. Students should consult with their advisors about their plans before they register, but students are themselves solely responsible for making sure that they register for courses on time.

Students who fail to register or pay any necessary tuition or fees in a timely manner (i.e., during pre-registration, once they have enrolled in the Program) risk being withdrawn from the Program for not being in good standing.

American Studies graduate students may take graduate classes in other graduate programs at W&M (e.g., History, Anthropology). It is always advisable to contact the professor of a class in another department first.

8. A Note on Expectations for the Return of Independent and Thesis Work

In contrast to undergraduate study, significant portions of graduate study – most notably the writing of the Master's Thesis and the Doctoral Dissertation – take place outside the parameters and constraints of the formal classroom and thus outside the deadlines and constraints of the semester system. This fact is central to the value of the independent scholarly work that the Thesis and Dissertation represent. But it can also be a cause of some frustration to both students and faculty. Consequently, we offer here some guidelines.

Drafts of theses and dissertations (and sections and chapters) take time to read and revise. Since faculty readers are teaching a full schedule, working with other graduate and undergraduate students, and doing their own research, students should allow roughly four to six weeks for a thesis or dissertation director to complete reading a draft thesis or dissertation chapter. Different thesis and dissertation directors and committees work differently, but it is common for a student to secure the thesis or dissertation director's approval of the entire work (or perhaps a section or chapter) before circulating drafts to other members of the committee. If this model is followed, then the student can expect other readers to take two to four weeks to read a draft of an M.A. thesis and four to six weeks to read a draft of a dissertation. If, on the other hand, the director, student, and committee choose to circulate the work in advanced of a polished rough draft, then the student can expect committee members to need as much time as the director in reading the work.

In any case, clear and regular communication can help to avoid frustration in the process of doing independent research. Students and directors and committees should develop a clear understanding of how they prefer to work. Students and directors should have a clear sense of deadlines, and students should be aware that missed deadlines may mean a slower faculty turn-around of work. At the same time, faculty must be sensitive to the exigencies of student schedules. When students submit work, they should ask the reader for an approximate date the manuscript will be returned, and the reader should endeavor to meet that date and alert the student of any delays.

Students should ascertain well in advance when readers will be on leave and consult with them on how this will affect their work on the student's behalf. Often a faculty member is willing to continue to work with students while on leave, but this is not always possible or sometimes must occur on an extended schedule. Finally, while students are welcome to inquire about faculty willingness to read work over the summer and winter breaks, they should be aware that this cannot be taken for granted. Faculty availability during these times is at the discretion of individual faculty members.

In instances where a student feels that the process of independent work has broken down and that their efforts to remedy the situation have failed, they should consult with the DGS or, alternatively, the Graduate Ombudspersons to seek assistance.

B. Satisfactory Progress and Other Academic Policies

1. The Grand Deadline (mid-April or early May)

At its final meeting in the spring of each academic year, known as the Grand Deadline meeting, the EC reviews the academic standing of all students and approves the renewal of awards of financial support, based on recommendations of the Graduate Committee and the DGS. Approval

of continued financial support for all students will depend upon satisfactory progress toward the degree and, for funded doctoral students, their professional conduct in their assistantships.

Satisfactory progress for all students requires the maintenance of at least a 3.3 grade point average (a B+ average). Students whose grade point average falls below 3.3 are put on academic probation the following semester. If at the end of the following probationary semester the grade point average remains below 3.3, funded students will lose their funding, and students – funded or not – may be dismissed from the Program.

Satisfactory progress also requires timely accomplishment of degree requirements. For students in the M.A./Ph.D. track, this means the completion of all M.A. degree requirements, including the defense and submission of the thesis, before the end of the third semester of enrollment, and completion of the language exam before the Grand Deadline at the end of the fourth semester of enrollment. In the event that a student encounters difficulty scheduling the defense, they should consult the DGS. For Ph.D. track students, this means completion of the language exam before the Grand Deadline at the end of the fourth semester of enrollment.

If a full-time M.A./Ph.D. or Ph.D. student fails to meet the three-semester deadline for the Master's defense, or the fourth semester deadline for the language exam, they will be put on probation. If the necessary requirements are not completed by the Grand Deadline for the Master's defense, and by the end of the fifth semester for the language requirement, then funded students will lose their funding and students – funded or not – may be dismissed from the Program.

Assistantship assignments, Teaching Fellowships, and Summer Research and Conference Travel Awards are also decided by the EC at the Grand Deadline meeting, if not before. In preparation for this meeting, students will be asked to submit a Grand Deadline report and applications for funding and teaching fellowship opportunities. The Program tries to make the administrative life of students as simple as possible by considering as many types of applications for the coming year all at once at Grand Deadline. However, there will be necessary exceptions to this rule, and **students are responsible for keeping themselves informed of important deadlines.** The Program will announce and provide instructions for applying for all internal opportunities via the student email listserv.

2. Grade of I (Incomplete)

Graduate students in American Studies are expected to finish all courses for which they are registered by the close of each semester in which they are taking these classes. If, because of illness or other extenuating circumstances, a student must postpone work for a course, they may request a grade of I (incomplete) from the course instructor. A grade of I will convert to an F at the end of the semester after the class was taken if the postponed work has not been completed. A grade of I may be extended only under extraordinary circumstances and only with the consent of the instructor and the approval of the DGS and the Assistant Dean of Graduate Studies. (For further information on Arts & Sciences policy regarding

incomplete grades, see the Grading and Academic Progress section of the Graduate Catalog, <https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4227>.)

A grade of “I” is not counted toward the computation of the quality GPA. If more than one “I” is necessitated, the student must consult with the DGS, who may bring the issue to the EC for review. The Vice Dean for Graduate Studies may also consult in case of more than one “I.”

3. Language Requirement

Reading knowledge of foreign languages is essential to teaching and research in American Studies. Students who are candidates for the Ph.D. in the American Studies Program must demonstrate proficiency in at least one language other than English relevant to contemporary critical American Studies scholarship. There is no language requirement for students seeking the M.A. only.

Students demonstrate proficiency in one of three ways: a translation exam administered by the American Studies Program in which students translate a passage in a foreign language into idiomatic English; a grade of B or higher in the fourth semester of a college-level language sequence taken within the two years directly preceding enrollment in the American Studies Ph.D. or M.A./Ph.D. Program; or evidence that a student is a native speaker of a language other than English and has studied at one or more educational institutions that provide most instruction in that other language.

So that they can concentrate on their academic studies and have immediate access to course and research materials in languages other than English, students are required either to take a language exam in the first semester of their graduate program or to petition the DGS and Graduate Committee for an exemption from the exam by providing transcript evidence of coursework satisfying the requirement. **Students wishing to petition for an exemption must do so by the Add/Drop deadline during their first semester of enrollment (usually ten to twelve days after the beginning of fall courses).**

Students will propose to the DGS the language in which they seek to satisfy the requirement. Approved languages are generally modern languages in which a substantial scholarly literature relevant to American Studies has been published. The DGS will then identify an examiner qualified to prepare and assess an exam in that language. At times the Program must make special arrangements to set up an exam in a language not customarily offered, and this can take some time.

Translation exams are typically one to three pages long, to be completed in one sitting of three hours. Students will receive the exam via email on the morning of the day agreed upon between the student and the DGS. Students are allowed to use a dictionary but not online translation programs. The WM Honor Code applies to the language exam, as it does to all work completed by graduate students at any point in the Program. After completion, students return the exam to

the examiner and/or to the DGS, as instructed by the DGS when the exam is sent to them, by email.

M.A./Ph.D. and Ph.D. students are expected to take the exam early during their first semester in the Program. If a student does not pass, they can take the exam again. Full-time students must pass the exam within four semesters in order to maintain satisfactory academic progress, and funded students must do so to maintain their funding. All students must pass the language exam before they are permitted to arrange the colloquium for the Ph.D. qualifying exam.

There is no penalty for failing the exam, but students who do fail should immediately take steps to further their language studies, pass the exam as soon as possible, and thus maintain satisfactory progress in the Program. The DGS will arrange to have follow-up exams offered. Students interested in language instruction should contact the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for information about language exam courses; the DGS can sometimes also provide guidance on language exam preparation.

At the dissertation colloquium, prior to passage of the student's dissertation prospectus, committee members will determine whether or not the student has met requirements for any additional language proficiency that the committee judges necessary for successful completion of the proposed research project.

C. Tuition, Assistantships and Stipends

1. Tuition, Registration, and Enrollment Status

Tuition and fees for each academic year are outlined in the [Graduate Regulations](https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4202) section (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4202>) of the [Graduate Arts & Sciences Catalog](https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4317) (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4317>). This Catalog also defines the distinctions between full- and part-time status and in- and out-of-state residence.

To remain in good standing with the Program and the university, a student **MUST REGISTER** by the scheduled deadlines for the fall and spring semesters each year until they earn their degree. The only exception to this rule is a leave of absence or a medical leave and/or withdrawal (see above). Students who fail to register may be withdrawn from the Program. Students must be registered in the semester in which they wish to graduate; however, a spring registration will cover both May and August graduation.

Research Graduate Status:

After Ph.D. students complete 36 credit hours beyond the M.A., with approval of the Graduate Committee and the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, they qualify for [Research Graduate Status](https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4226#research-graduate-student-status) (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4226#research-graduate-student-status>) and register for 12 hours of either AMST 766 (before exams) or AMST 800 (after exams), which maintains the student's full-time registration and defaults to one credit hour of payment. Terminal M.A. students, with the approval of the Graduate Committee and the Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, qualify for [Research Graduate](#) status when they have completed 24 credits of course work and are completing and waiting to defend their thesis. A Research Graduate Student is not eligible for services that are paid for by fees (e.g., the Student Health Center, the Counseling Center, and the Campus Recreation Center) unless the required additional fees (charged per semester) are paid.

For more information on [Research Graduate](#) enrollment status, see [Graduate Regulations](#) section (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4202>) of the [Graduate Arts & Sciences Catalog](#) (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4317>)

Continuous Enrollment:

Students who have completed all their course work and necessary credits for their degree may opt instead to register for “[Continuous Enrollment](#)” status (GRAD 999), which carries a nominal fee per semester. This status may carry reduced access to certain campus resources and does not defer student loan repayment. For more information, see https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4226#continuous_enrollment_status.

Students who have questions about their registration status should consult the DGS and Program Administrator.

2. Health Insurance and Health Care

All students enrolled at William & Mary are required to be covered by a health insurance policy and are eligible to enroll in the W&M Student Health Insurance Plan (<https://www.wm.edu/sites/studentinsurance/plan/>). Please see “Registration Requirements” under “Regulations” within the Graduate Arts & Sciences Catalog (<https://catalog.wm.edu/content.php?catoid=27&navoid=4226>) for further details, including how to request a waiver from the WM Student Health Plan if you insured through another plan.

3. Graduate Student Funding Packages

Financial support including tuition waivers, a stipend, and a summer fellowship are awarded to full-time candidates for the M.A./Ph.D. and Ph.D. degrees in the American Studies Program. These funding packages are granted at the time of a student's acceptance into the Program and

are renewed for four subsequent years, provided the student makes satisfactory progress towards completion of the degree as set out in this handbook. The exact terms of the aid are specified in individual letters to students at the time of their admission. Annually, students sign contracts, issued by the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, confirming the amounts and provisions of these awards.

At times, the American Studies Program is able to offer assistantships that carry small stipends to MA students, but these are neither guaranteed nor likely for most MA students. They do not carry tuition waivers nor summer fellowships. They do, though, grant any MA student serving in such an assistantship in-state tuition.

4. Assistantships

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in the award letter, doctoral students who receive stipends are expected to reside locally and to undertake assistantships, involving an average of ten to twelve hours of work per week during the academic year. While the American Studies Program requires assistantships of all funded graduate students, it is also committed to ensuring that these assistantships are of high quality. In pursuit of this goal, the Program often develops new graduate student assistantships and phases out older ones.

There are three types of assistantships for doctoral students: graduate assistantships, teaching assistantships, and teaching fellowships. Graduate assistantships may involve research or other work for a project at William & Mary, such as the Lemon Project, the Sharpe Community Scholars Program, Swem Library's Special Collections, or the Graduate Writing Resource Center, or work at a local museum. Teaching assistantships might involve leading discussion sections, grading, and/or possibly offering a guest lecture in a class taught by an American Studies faculty member. Teaching Fellowships, which are available only to advanced doctoral students, involve teaching a seminar of your own design. Doctoral students become eligible to become a Teaching Fellow after completing their qualifying examination and serving as a Teaching Assistant in a prior semester. Every effort will be made to ensure that graduate students have a balanced distribution of these three types of assistantships in the course of their years of funding.

The Program also offers a small number of graduate assistantships for MA students, for instance those offered through a collaboration with the Sharpe Community Scholars Program. These are funded by private, outside sources and as a result may or may not be offered in any given year.

Notification:

The American Studies Program will inform graduate students in a timely fashion of their assignment to specific assistantships. However, on occasion the availability of specific assistantships may change and thus students may have to be reassigned. It should be noted that

the Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Research will issue formal contracts, whose terms are based upon the original award offer, according to that office's own schedule.

The DGS will inform doctoral students of their assistantship status in a letter sent by email within two weeks following the Grand Deadline meeting (i.e., whether or not they have been awarded an assistantship generally). In the same letter, the DGS will inform those graduate students who have been selected for specific assistantships during the Grand Deadline meeting of their assistantship assignment. At the same time, the DGS will notify supervisors of assistantships of these assignments.

The DGS will invite prospective MA students to apply for any graduate assistantship opportunities available in any given coming year and will also notify those prospective students who are being offered an assistantship, along with the supervisor of the assistantship, in writing prior to the beginning of their first semester in the Program and often prior to the prospective student's committing to enroll in the Program. Graduate assistantships for MA students are for one year in duration only.

The American Studies Program strongly recommends that, whenever possible, graduate student assistants contact their supervisors upon notification to discuss the particular requirements of their assistantship. This is especially important for assistantships that begin in the fall semester.

General Guidelines for Assistantships:

When assigning assistantships, the Program seeks to balance the educational and professional development needs of graduate students and the specific needs of each assistantship. Not all assistantship assignments, though, will be equally relevant to a particular student's professional training. The diverse character of American Studies graduate student assistantships requires flexibility from graduate student assistants.

Any individual or agency proposing a new assistantship must submit a written proposal to the Director of American Studies outlining the objectives and requirements of the assistantship. The American Studies EC must approve all such assistantships.

All relevant sections of the American Studies Graduate Handbook regarding the Graduate Arts & Sciences Ombudspersons apply to assistantships as well.

Guidelines for Non-Teaching/Graduate Assistantships:

In general, the terms of graduate student assistantships coincide with the duration of the academic year (through the final exam period of each semester).

The expectation of the American Studies Program is that doctoral student assistants will not commit more than 10-12 hours per week to the assistantships and that this labor will distribute itself evenly throughout the two academic terms. Supervisors are expected to pay attention, and be sensitive, to the time required for and the nature of the work that graduate assistants are being asked to do. Graduate assistantships are not “work for hire” positions. Instead, they are intended to be an integral element of the training of professionals in a variety of disciplines and with diverse career aspirations. Supervisors must assure that students undertake work that contributes to this training, but also be aware that students may bring varying levels of expertise to the particular tasks at hand. This emphasis on training requires, to the degree any given assistantship can offer such opportunities, that supervisor should direct student work toward learning rather than “make-work” tasks.

MA graduate student assistantships should match the expectations listed above for doctoral assistantships, except that MA students should be asked to a maximum of work on average 6-10 hours per week maximum.

Guidelines for Teaching Assistantships:

The American Studies Program assigns teaching assistants to introductory level courses to give graduate students an apprenticeship experience in the classroom and to provide faculty assistance in running and teaching the course. In addition to those teaching duties outlined below, faculty may ask students to perform tasks necessary to the success of the course such as copying, scanning, screening films, and putting materials on Blackboard or reserve.

Students work for one semester only as teaching assistants in fulfillment of their funded, year-long assistantships. Faculty may not ask students to work either before the first day of classes (although they may ask to meet for purposes of planning for a semester ahead) or beyond the grading period of the relevant semester. Because the work of this type of assistantship is compressed into one semester, teaching assistants should expect their work demands at times during that semester to exceed substantially the general expectation of a 10-12 hour per week workload for assistantships.

A teaching assistant’s responsibilities include some or all of the following tasks: attending all lectures; reading the course material; leading discussion sessions with students; grading quizzes, exams and papers; giving a lecture in the course (optional). In addition the TA will meet with the faculty member regularly to discuss the course, discussion sessions, grading, and student issues.

The faculty member supervising a teaching assistant will make explicit their expectations for the course and for the teaching assistant’s work at the beginning of the term; hold regular meetings with the teaching assistant to discuss matters related to the course; make clear the criteria for grading and oversee TA grading; observe one or more discussion sections run by the TA and provide feedback about their performance.

The faculty member will also allow for a reasonable turnaround time for grading and any other work to be completed and be sensitive to the total number of hours required by the assistantship and the student's academic workload.

Prior to beginning work as a Teaching Assistant, a doctoral student must complete the Teacher Training offered annually by the Graduate Center of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. Doctoral students will be invited to participate in this training each year, which is usually held in the week prior to the start of classes in the Fall semester.

Guidelines for Graduate Teaching Fellowships:

In the spring semester of each year, doctoral students will be invited to apply for a Graduate Teaching Fellowship, either as part of the Grand Deadline end-of-year process or earlier. Doctoral students who have successfully completed the qualifying exam colloquium, have already served as a Teaching Assistant, and will have completed the qualifying examination itself before the teaching assignment begins, are eligible to apply.

The application for a Graduate Teaching Fellowship will consist of an application form that will be made available each year by the DGS and a proposed course description and syllabus. Doctoral students who wish to apply are strongly encouraged to discuss their course proposal with their advisor and/or the DGS well in advance of applying.

The recommendations of assignments of graduate teaching fellows are made by the DGS in consultation with the Graduate committee. These recommendations are submitted for approval to the American Studies EC.

The EC of the American Studies Program assigns graduate teaching fellows with attention to specific curricular needs of the American Studies Program and specific requests from outside programs and departments. The EC of the American Studies Program assigns graduate teaching fellows also with the goal of maximizing and increasing the number and range of teaching opportunities for students.

The teaching fellow is a member of the faculty and thus is required to fulfill all the responsibilities related to the course they offer as outlined in the WM faculty handbook. The Handbook can be found here:

<https://www.wm.edu/about/administration/provost/resources/faculty-handbook/index.php>

Evaluation of Non-Teaching/Graduate Assistantships:

The diverse nature of American Studies Program graduate student non-teaching assistantships precludes any detailed assessment equivalent to that of student course evaluations. In general, the American Studies Program is committed to ensuring that these assistantships conform to the same high standards as regular offerings in the curriculum. To this end, supervisors and

graduate student assistants alike should be prepared at the end of the assistantship term to report on the following areas of interest to the Program:

- a. Description of the graduate student's assistantship.
- b. Did the conduct of this assistantship meet their expectations? Why or why not?
- c. General description of the distribution of work throughout the course of the academic year in terms of time required or allotted.
- d. Concrete suggestions for the ways in which this assistantship might be improved or revised to meet more fully the stated objectives of the assistantship.

To facilitate this reporting, non-teaching graduate assistants and supervisors shall each submit an evaluation form describing their experiences to the DGS at the conclusion of the assistantship. These forms will be provided by the DGS each year.

The DGS will keep completed evaluations on file, but these reports will not transfer to graduate student files. These reports will not be used for evaluative purposes except as follows: Although a student's standing in the Program is determined by academic performance, not performance as a GA or TA, failure to complete an assistantship satisfactorily and in a professional manner can jeopardize the award of financial aid.

The DGS will make an annual report to the American Studies EC, which may make recommendations to both supervisors and graduate assistants in regard to the conduct of the assistantship.

The American Studies Program EC encourages supervisors and graduate student assistants to contact the DGS or the Program Director with any questions or concerns about the assistantship. All relevant sections of the American Studies Graduate Handbook regarding the WM Graduate Ombudspersons apply to assistantships as well.

Evaluation of Teaching Assistantships:

A specific question regarding teaching assistants' performance will be placed on the general student evaluation forms for each course that includes a teaching assistant.

The faculty supervisor shall meet with teaching assistants at the end of the semester, just after grades have been submitted and so the evaluations are available, to discuss student comments.

The DGS will ensure faculty compliance with the procedures governing the supervision of graduate teaching assistants. Graduate students may, at any time during the course of the

semester during which they are TAing, meet with the DGS or Program Director to discuss issues relating to their teaching assistantships.

The American Studies Program EC encourages supervisors and graduate student assistants to contact the DGS or the Program Director with any question or concerns about the assistantship. All relevant sections of the American Studies Graduate Handbook regarding the WM Graduate Ombudspersons apply to assistantships as well.

Satisfactory Performance of Assistantships:

Performance of an assistantship is a contractual obligation assumed by the student in exchange for a stipendiary award. In the conduct of such assistantships, students should recognize that they will be considered representatives of the American Studies Program. Students are expected to fulfill the obligations of an assistantship with the same high standards of professionalism and accomplishment expected in their academic work. Failure to do so can jeopardize the continuance of the financial award.

5. Policy on External Employment

Because students require optimal time for their own research and writing, and to help students complete their course of study within their time-to-degree, funded students may not hold other employment or appointment of a remunerative nature during the term of their assistantships or summer fellowships without approval of the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. *Failure to comply with these conditions will lead to revocation of appointments.* Approval from the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for additional employment/appointment of a remunerative nature of no more than 9 additional hours per week will be based on supporting written statements from the student's thesis/dissertation advisor to the DGS explaining the value of the employment opportunity for the student's professional development and confirming that the additional employment is not anticipated to adversely affect the student's progress toward the degree. After the DGS receives the advisor's statement, and if they too support the student's request, they will forward the advisor's endorsement to the Vice Dean along with their own endorsement. The Vice Dean reviews the material and makes the final decision.

Both the American Studies Program and the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies recognize that there are often excellent reasons for external employment beyond assistantship experiences. There are curating, archaeological, cross-cultural, editing and digital publishing opportunities, for instance, that benefit graduate students intellectually, practically, and experientially and prepare them for future careers inside and outside the academy. Therefore, if students have met all their deadlines, their reasonable requests for external employment of no more than 9 hours a week are regularly approved. Students should discuss any questions they have about external employment with their advisor and the DGS.

D. Other Funding Sources and Opportunities for Professional Development

1. Program Travel Funds

Most years the Program awards a number of Research and Conference Travel grants to enable students to present papers at conferences or to acquire first-hand knowledge of collections, archives and similar resources. These funds are administered by the DGS and the Graduate Committee, which seeks to distribute awards as widely as possible. The DGS will issue a call for applications for these funds early in both the Fall and Spring semesters and again with the call for all Grand Deadline materials before the summer. All students – part-time and full-time, funded and un-funded, MA, MA/PhD, and PhD – are eligible to apply. Applications will not ordinarily be considered from students with incomplete grades or from those not making satisfactory progress toward the degree.

2. Other William & Mary Resources for Research and Travel

The Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Provost's Office, the Graduate Students Association (GSA), the Reves Center for International Studies, the Roy R. Charles Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Student Activities Office at William & Mary also offer research and travel funds of varying amounts—from small to large. Students are strongly encouraged to watch for notices of funding opportunities through these sources and to apply for funding. A central site for exploring some of these sources for research and travel funding is maintained on the OGS website: <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/sup-funding-sources/index.php>.

Students are also encouraged to explore external funding opportunities, especially as they develop their dissertations. Professor Alan Braddock created a helpful list of external funding sources, which is listed under “Research” in the Graduate Program's section of the American Studies website: <https://www.wm.edu/as/americanstudies/resources/index.php>.

For information about loans and other forms of financial aid, students should consult the William & Mary Financial Aid Office.

IV. COURSES OF STUDY

A. MASTER OF ARTS: M.A.-ONLY and M.A./Ph.D. TRACKS

1. Course of Study

The Master of Arts program seeks to provide students with both a broad perspective on American Studies as an interdisciplinary field and a focused competence in one of its constituent disciplines. The course of study has three principal elements: (1) AMST 661, Introduction to American Studies, a fall-semester seminar that provides a general framework for the interpretation of American history and culture and the development of American

Studies as a field and that introduces students to interdisciplinary research methods; (2) an exploration of a major area or theme in American culture through a series of courses chosen in consultation with the student's advisor (students may also seek to take independent research courses with faculty members using the AMST 690 course designation, although faculty availability for independent study is not guaranteed); and (3) independent research in primary sources, addressing a significant problem or issue in American Studies, culminating in the presentation of an M.A. thesis.

The requirements for the M.A. degree normally can be satisfied in one full year of study. These include 24 semester hours of graduate course credit (six classes and two semesters of AMST 695 – Directed Thesis Research, three credits each semester); six credits of AMST 700, which are thesis hours, three each semester; the thesis; and the defense of the thesis. **Students must complete at least four courses at the 600 level or higher.** (AMST 700-- thesis hours-- does not fulfill this requirement.) **Always consult the *Arts and Sciences Graduate Catalogue*, dated to your year of entering the program, to check on the most up to date requirements for your degree.**

A full-time program for the M.A. student, whether pursuing the M.A. only or the M.A./Ph.D, track, *typically* follows this pattern:

Full-time M.A. Course of Study

Part-time students should consult with the DGS, the PA, and their advisor about their course loads.

6 courses (4 at the 600 level or above), plus 6 credits of 695 and 6 credits of 700; regular meetings with faculty advisor

Fall semester: 15 credits (12 course credits plus 3 thesis credits)

Introduction to American Studies – AMST 661	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 690, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 690, or 715	3 credits
Independent Research toward thesis – AMST 695	3 credits
MA Thesis preparation – AMST 700	3 credits

Spring semester: 15 credits (12 course credits plus 3 thesis credits)

Topics seminar – AMST 590, 690, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 690, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 690, or 715	3 credits
Independent Research toward thesis – AMST 695	3 credits
MA Thesis preparation – AMST 700	3 credits

Thesis draft due at end of term

Summer:

Revise thesis, **submit no later than first day of Fall semester**

Note: Graduate level seminars offered by the History and Anthropology Departments can substitute for one or more of the courses listed above, with permission from the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. The M.A. Thesis

Students pursuing the M.A. complete a thesis based on original research that makes a contribution to the study of American life. M.A. and M.A./Ph.D. students, in conversation with their advisor, may choose between two options for the form of their thesis. The M.A. thesis will consist of either, 1) one substantial, long essay, usually between 35 and 65 pages, not including bibliography and front matter, focused on one subject, or 2) a portfolio containing two significant research papers and a preface addressing the connections between the two essays that together equal that same length. The purpose of this proposed length is to encourage students to conceive of their theses as article-length scholarly essays or reasonable-length dissertation chapters.

The M.A. thesis must address a topic or topics proposed by the student and approved by the student's faculty advisor. It should demonstrate independent thinking and scholarly competence in the investigation of a limited but significant interdisciplinary problem or problems. The thesis can be on any subject within the broad domain of American Studies. Bound copies of American Studies M.A. theses are available for review in the American Studies Seminar Room in Samuel E. Jones House, Room 5, and an index of titles is available on the Program website.

3. Formatting the Thesis

Theses must be produced in accordance with the Program's style rules, which govern matters such as citation and bibliographic form, and the Arts & Sciences Graduate Studies guidelines for theses and dissertations, which govern broader issues of form (e.g., required formatting for front matter, signature pages, and body of the thesis, etc.) (see <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/thesis-dissertations/physicalstandards/index.php>).

The American Studies Program follows the style guidelines of *American Quarterly*, the journal of the American Studies Association, with two exceptions: Theses must use footnotes instead of endnotes and theses must have a bibliography.

Any recent issue of *AQ* will include useful general guidance on issues of style. *AQ* also supplies a pdf style sheet for guidance on some common issues of preferred spelling, abbreviation, hyphenation, and the like at the journal's website:

<http://www.americanquarterly.org/submit/guidelines.html>

For more specific guidance, consult the AQ's chosen style guide, *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Please note: M.A. theses often do not have chapters. It is fine to use "Section" or "Part" instead of "Chapter" to designate sub-sections (e.g., "Section 1," "Section 2" instead of "Chapter 1," etc.) and section or part titles in the table of contents for an M.A. thesis.

If choosing to complete an MA portfolio, a thesis that consists of two essays, a student has options regarding formatting to consider, options that will be influenced by how closely related the two essays are:

- a. For the thesis **title**, a student may have craft a synthetic title—i.e., one that usefully encompasses both essays—or may choose to title the thesis after the essay they deem the "lead" or "dominant" one of the pair.
- b. For the **abstract**, a student may treat the two essays either collectively, if the two essays are closely related, or may include two distinct abstracts, one for each essay, if this is more suitable (but not exceeding the OGS's maximum length of one page containing not more than 3500 characters, including spaces).
- c. For the **table of contents, the** two essays constitute the "chapters" of the thesis.
- d. The thesis must have a brief **preface** that introduces the essays and explains, in the writer's understanding, their relation to one another and their relevance in American Studies. In some instances, the relationship will be fairly direct in terms of subject matter; in other instances, the relationship may be more conceptual or thematic, in which case the Preface needs to outline these more abstract relations and how they inform the student's research interests.

4. Thesis Advisor

Students will commence the M.A. thesis under the supervision of their faculty advisor. The thesis advisor must be formally appointed as a faculty member in the American Studies Program (i.e. must have a current JAMOU). If a thesis is co-advised, at least one of the co-advisors must be formally appointed as a faculty member in the American Studies Program. If an advisor leaves the Program or university while the thesis is underway, they may continue as a co-advisor but must be joined by a formally appointed faculty member in the American Studies Program; if such co-advising is arranged and the thesis is not completed within two years of the advisor's departure, then the current Program faculty member becomes the sole advisor.

5. Developing the Thesis

The thesis often grows out of and amplifies readings and research undertaken in an ongoing graduate seminar, but it may also represent a separate project independent of existing courses. In either case, students will meet regularly with the advisor on a mutually agreed upon schedule (generally about once every two weeks). In the early meetings, students will work with their advisors to formulate a topic, identify research resources, develop a bibliography, and plan a schedule of research and writing. Should it happen that the student's topic is remote from the advisor's area of expertise and that a more appropriate advisor is available, a change of advisor may be made (see above on Changing Academic Advisors, Committee Members, Directors). Such a change will not, however, alter the deadlines for submitting and defending the thesis.

6. Thesis Committee

As work on the thesis progresses, the student, in consultation with the advisor, will select two additional faculty readers to form the thesis committee. At least two of the committee members must be full-time faculty, and at least two of the committee members must have a formal affiliation with the Program. This committee must be approved in writing by the DGS and the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. To obtain that approval, students must complete a "Committee Member Appointment Form" available on the OGS website (<https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/forms/index.php>) and then email it to the DGS and the PA. Ordinarily, the committee is formed the semester before the student expects to defend the thesis. The make-up of the thesis committee must be approved no later than two weeks before the student intends to defend.

7. Thesis Defense

Once the thesis is completed, the committee and the student convene for an oral defense. This may happen as early as the end of the second semester of classes, but most often the defense takes place at the beginning of the fall semester after the student completes coursework. Students work with their advisors to schedule the defense and must permit the committee at least one month's advance notice.

Students should alert the PA at the start of the defense scheduling process, so the PA can make sure that the necessary paperwork is readied for the defense. The PA may also help schedule a room for the defense.

The student should discuss the exact format of the defense with the advisor, but in general a defense lasts approximately ninety minutes and includes the following: a brief introduction by the student of the aims and arguments in their thesis (five minutes maximum); questions from the committee regarding the student's findings; in-depth discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis; consultation among members of the committee, without the student present, regarding whether or not the thesis satisfies the requirements for an MA; and recommendations to the student regarding any changes that should be made before filing the thesis with OGS.

The final results of the thesis defense are submitted to OGS via a “Defense Examination Form” available on the OGS website (<https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/forms/index.php>), which the student should fill out prior to the defense and provide to the committee at the conclusion of the defense for their signatures.

After any needed revisions, the student submits the final thesis, including an approval page signed by all committee members, to the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. Theses must be produced in accordance with the Program’s style guide, which governs matters such as citation and bibliographic form (see above), and the Arts & Sciences Graduate Studies guidelines for theses and dissertations, which govern broader issues of form (e.g., required formatting for front matter, signature pages, and body of the thesis, etc.) (see <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/thesis-dissertations/physicalstandards/index.php>).

8. Schedules for Completion of the Degree

College policy permits students six years from entering the Program to complete the M.A. Part-time students should consult regularly with the DGS, PA, and their advisors on how to keep their studies moving forward in a timely fashion.

Full-time M.A. students pursuing the M.A.-only track are expected to complete and defend the thesis no later than three terms after their original registration at William & Mary. According to university and Program policies, if a student fails to defend their thesis, the student will then have up to four and a half years to complete and defend the thesis. However, students who find themselves in such circumstances should be aware a) that they place themselves in jeopardy of being judged as not making satisfactory progress, and b) that they may face increasing difficulties securing their advisor’s time and in attracting a committee. Students who miss this key deadline are urged to maintain regular contact with their advisor and the DGS, but they must also remember that it is their responsibility to complete their work in as timely a manner as possible.

Full-time students pursuing the M.A./Ph.D. track are expected to complete and defend the thesis no later than the third term after their original registration at William & Mary. The Office of Graduate Studies policy on time to degree for the M.A. in the M.A./Ph.D. program states that, “MA/PhD students who have not graduated with the MA degree before the beginning of the fifth semester in the program (ie by August of the second year following fall admission) will not be eligible to be considered for stipend or tuition through OSG until all MA degree requirements have been completed. Such students will resume stipend/tuition funding only by recommendation of the AMST program if funding remains available upon completion of the MA degree requirements after the beginning of the fifth semester.”

B. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1. Course of Study

The doctoral program, building on the breadth of knowledge represented by the Master's degree, seeks to provide students with more specialized training and to develop their potential to pursue original research. They are expected to attain a thorough grounding in their chosen field of specialization, competence in a second field, and a broad understanding of the field of American Studies as a whole. They will also demonstrate reading proficiency in at least one foreign language relevant to contemporary critical American Studies scholarship (see "Language Requirements" above).

Coursework leading to the Ph.D. degree includes 36 credit hours of coursework beyond the M.A. requirements. These include the one-semester introductory seminar, taken in the first year of study (if not taken in the M.A. year), and seminars and directed research (American Studies 790), chosen in consultation with the faculty advisor and designed to prepare the student to present major and minor fields for the qualifying examination. The 36 hours are comprised of eight classes, which may include some instances of AMST 790 - Directed Research, and twelve credits of AMST 795 - Independent Research. Students must take at least six credit hours of AMST 800, although these do not count toward the 36 hour requirement. After students have completed the required courses and are preparing for, but have not yet completed, the qualifying exam, they register for AMST 766 has **Always consult the *Arts and Sciences Graduate Catalogue*, dated to your year of entering the program, to check on the most up to date requirements for your degree.** Nonetheless, the full-time program for the Ph.D. student typically follows this pattern:

Full-time Ph.D. and 2nd Year M.A./Ph.D. Course of Study*

Part-time students should consult with the DGS, the PA, and their advisor about their course loads.

PhD YEAR 1: 6 courses and 6 credits of 795

Fall semester: 12 credits

Introduction to American Studies – AMST 661*	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Independent Research/Qual exam prep – AMST 795	3 credits

* Students who have already taken AMST 661 as an M.A. student have the option of repeating the course if it is offered by a different instructor with a different syllabus or replacing it with a topics seminar.

Language exam by end of September

Spring Semester: 12 credits

Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Independent Research/Qual exam prep – AMST 795	3 credits

Meet with DGS by end of Spring semester regarding qualifying examination fields

Summer: Qualifying Exam list preparation

PhD YEAR 2: 2 courses, 6 credits of 795, Colloquium, and Qualifying Exam

Fall Semester: 12 credits

Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Topics seminar – AMST 590, 790, or 715	3 credits
Independent Research/Qual exam prep – AMST 795	6 credits

Qualifying exam colloquium by end of 4th week of Fall semester

Spring semester: 12 credits

Independent Research/Qual exam prep – AMST 766	12 credits
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Qualifying exam (ideally in May, no later than end of 4th week of next Fall semester)

PhD YEAR 3: Research Grad status/24 credits of 800

Fall term: 12 credits

AMST 800 – Dissertation prep	12 credits
(or 12 credits of AMST 766 if Qualifying Exam will not be completed by first day of the semester)	

Dissertation Prospectus Colloquium (by end of finals period)

Spring term: 12 credits

AMST 800 – Dissertation prep	12 credits
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Note: Graduate level seminars offered by the History and Anthropology Departments can substitute for one or more of the courses listed above, with permission from the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Major and Minor Fields

Although students should use seminars, courses, and directed research to explore a range of disciplines and fields, they should also build their program of study toward preparing for their major and minor field of the qualifying examination. Generally, students should think of their

major field as a broad area of scholarship that will define their primary teaching and research expertise. In their preparation, students may choose to emphasize certain historical periods, methods, or materials within the field. However, every student should engage that field comprehensively and critically, ultimately mastering both its content and the debates and practices that give it shape. Minor fields are defined as unified, but often interdisciplinary explorations of periods, themes, issues, methods, and practices that complement and develop the major field. The minor field may not be in the same general discipline as the major field.

The following brief descriptions of possible fields are intended as starting points to help students think about what a field might look like, establish guidelines for taking courses and, in consultation with their advisors, formulating reading lists for the qualifying examination. The fields will be formally determined at the colloquium and approved by the student's advisor. **Students are not limited to the sample fields described here.**

African American Studies Specialization:

African American Studies, broadly defined, is the interdisciplinary study of African-descent populations, cultures, institutions, communities, and movements in the United States in comparison and contrast with African and African-descent peoples in other areas of the world. With advice from the African American Studies advisors, students can specialize in historical, literary, social-scientific, or interdisciplinary approaches to African American Studies. By employing integrative theoretical and methodological approaches to African American Studies research problems, students will be encouraged to engage in creative inquiries that would be difficult to accomplish in traditional, discipline-specific frameworks. Also, students are expected to analyze their research problem in a comparative context, both in terms of the African Diaspora and the experiences of other ethnic populations relevant to their research.

American History Specialization:

A fundamental understanding of U.S. social and cultural history, as well as of developments in the economy, is indispensable for scholarship and teaching in this area. Students are also advised to range across the American past, even as they select particular eras or themes on which to concentrate. They will take care to consider the diversity of historical experience – as reflected in class, gender, racial, and regional identities – within the United States and where possible, to view American life in comparative perspectives. Specific programs of study will vary with the individual and will be worked out in consultation with the student's advisor.

American Literature Specialization:

Students electing a major field in American literature are encouraged to build a general familiarity with the broad range of American writings extending from the seventeenth through the twenty-first centuries. As well as mastering a survey of key texts, students should also attain competency in the major critical practices and debates shaping scholarship in American literature.

In preparing for their qualifying examination, students should master the major texts of American literature and develop a firm grasp of other forms of writing, both popular and elite, that are most relevant to their interests. Finally, they should integrate these texts historically with other forms of culture and with the relevant social history of their chosen period of concentration.

Students electing to minor in American literature should prepare a coherent field of texts, criticism, theory, and history that best serves the interests defined by their major field.

In all cases students are expected to organize their fields, in consultation with their advisors, around those particular genres, themes, and social and theoretical issues they find most pertinent to their long-term research and teaching interests.

Visual and Material Culture Specialization:

This specialization focuses on visual and material modes of expression and production that shape and are shaped by American culture and history. The visual and material culture concentration encompasses wide-ranging approaches to images and objects from the colonial era to the present in a variety of media—photographs, paintings, commercial illustrations, films, sculptures, built environments, and associated technical processes—understood critically in cultural context using pertinent theories of interpretation.

Specific programs of study and particular emphases in the fields will take into consideration student needs and special interests. Overall, the specialization builds on the insights of several traditional areas of endeavor, particularly art history, cinema studies, history, and material culture studies, each of which makes specific contributions to the field and poses special challenges to students. For example, study of the history of American art minimally requires achieving familiarity with the significant literature on American art as well as the grasp in detail of a wide range of works of art broadly conceived (i.e., not only the traditional “fine” arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also the newer, more popular media noted above) from the seventeenth through twenty-first centuries, with an eye to conventional formulations of genre and periodization but also newer critical discourses that have re-shaped art historical inquiry in recent decades (identity and class politics, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, new materialism, etc.). To advance their professional development, students are encouraged, where possible, to undertake museum internships and coursework that will enhance their understanding of the social, historical and cultural contexts of art as well as the material properties of same. Cinema studies challenges students to grapple with “moving pictures,” technologies of mass reproducibility, and formal analysis.

While students concentrating in visual and material culture must demonstrate knowledge of theory and practices in their chosen fields, the Program also encourages students to combine expertise from different areas through interdisciplinary research. Those who undertake a minor field in visual and material culture must meet similar, though more limited, expectations.

However, the minor must also be designed to contribute to work in the student's major field, most especially in history, literature, and cultural studies.

Digital Humanities

The digital humanities specialization involves methods and theories that incorporate computational tools or big data approaches into one's approach to scholarship. Examples include data mining, media annotation, corpus linguistics, cultural analytics, distant viewing, information visualization, social network analysis, GIS mapping, multimodal publication, electronic literature, digital history, procedural rhetoric, or the dissemination of ideas primarily through social media platforms, gaming, or virtual reality. DH specialists are expected to grapple with archival exclusions, algorithmic bias, cyberinfrastructure, and ethical dilemmas about digital access and preservation, particularly when working with precarious communities.

Gender and Sexuality Studies:

The gender and sexuality studies specialization involves methods and theories from gender studies, queer theory, history, literature, anthropology, sociology, government, cultural studies, media studies, performance studies, postcolonial studies, indigenous studies, environmental studies, and other fields. Those completing this specialization are assumed to take an intersectional approach that also considers how theories of race, class, nationality, and ability may also inform the study of gender and sexuality. Topics of study may include patriarchy, the recovered histories of women, transgender people, and queer people, as well as feminist, transgender, and queer theory, intersectionality (including Black, indigenous, and postcolonial feminisms), nonbinary gender identity and expression, asexuality and aromanticism, the personal being political, invisible labor, political economy, the sexual contract, embodiment, affect, abjection, domesticity, masculinity, femininity, motherhood, fatherhood, child development, parental attachment, romantic love, sex work, situated experience, reproductive justice, theories of gender and science, and gendered and/or queered technologies.

Social and Cultural Studies:

The social and cultural studies specialization involves methods and theories from gender and ethnic studies, anthropology, cultural studies, environmental studies, media studies, sociology, performance studies, folklore and folklife, and other fields. Areas of study include local, regional, and ethnic cultures, mass and popular culture, demographic trends, migration and diaspora, interaction patterns and networks of cultural production. Social and cultural studies collect and coordinate the tools to describe, compare, and critique facts of American life "on the ground" and in theory.

3. The Colloquium and Ph.D. Qualifying Exam

The Role of the Advisor:

Students work closely with their faculty advisor to plan and prepare for their Ph.D. qualifying examination. The academic advisor chairs the colloquium and the qualifying exam committee. Students may choose to retain the advisor with whom they worked during the period of coursework or they may decide to select a new advisor prior to the colloquium to chair both the colloquium and exam. This advisor may or may not also serve as dissertation director.

Please remember that students may not change their advisor/director or committee members in the period between the colloquium and Ph.D. qualifying exam (see “Changing Academic Advisors, Committee Members, Directors” above).

The Committee:

Students should assemble a qualifying examination committee and arrange a colloquium to confirm plans for the exam no later than the fourth week of the second year of Ph.D. study (third year in the Program for those students pursuing the M.A./Ph.D. track). There must be four committee members inclusive of the Chair, each of whom typically sets one exam in one field. The committee chair (ordinarily the student’s advisor) and at least one other committee member, must hold a faculty appointment in American Studies (not simply an affiliation). The committee must be approved by the student’s faculty advisor and then reported to the DGS and the PA.

In general, students choose faculty members with whom they have taken courses and whose interests and expertise will contribute to the foundation for the professional life that students will build through intensive study before (and after) the qualifying exam. More specifically, committee members help students prepare to be examined in their major and minor exam fields. Ordinarily, two or three members of the committee will represent the major field of concentration, one or two the minor field or fields.

Students should ascertain well in advance of the colloquium each faculty member’s willingness to serve on the qualifying examination committee, as well as whether they will be available for regular meetings during the period of colloquium and exam preparation.

Most students most often choose as examiners some of the same faculty they expect will serve as members of their dissertation committee. Because students outline initial dissertation ideas for the colloquium and present a dissertation prospectus during the semester following the exam, it is prudent to begin exploring resources and topics for the dissertation with faculty at this time.

The constitution of qualifying and dissertation committees in the American Studies Program is a formal act of the faculty, which is reported directly to the DGS, who approves all qualifying and dissertation committees for the EC. Only after the colloquium is held and its result approved by the DGS is the student’s qualifying examination committee formally constituted.

Changing Advisors or Committee Members after the Colloquium:

After the colloquium, the student may not change advisors or the make-up of the examining committee without holding a new colloquium. In the instance of circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., illness of an advisor or committee member), the student should consult with the advisor and the DGS, and the student may then petition the Graduate Committee for a waiver of this rule.

The Colloquium:

To prepare for the Colloquium, students take the initiative in seeking faculty guidance, preparing written materials, and scheduling meetings. Preparation for the colloquium is, in effect, an extensive assessment by students of what they have accomplished and where they wish to go. To this end, students must prepare three documents to be distributed to all members of the exam committee at least two weeks prior to the colloquium. These are:

- (1) reading lists defining major and minor fields of study for the qualifying exam. These should be preceded by a one-paragraph statement describing the field's main theme and/or broad scope. Students prepare each field's reading list in consultation with the faculty member overseeing that field in the months prior to the Colloquium. **Copies of final lists should be deposited with the PA for reference by future students.**
- (2) an intellectual autobiography (not to exceed 1000 words in length), which traces the student's development through coursework, reading, internships, independent research, etc., from entry into the Program to the final preparation for the colloquium; and
- (3) a one-page summary of the topic or topics that the student anticipates proposing for their dissertation.

It is useful to approach each reading list as a potential resource for the construction of a syllabus for a course that the student might wish to teach in the future. This approach helps to ensure lists that are broad yet coherent and that cover contemporary scholarly approaches to a central theme and problem in various fields and disciplines. This approach also helps students prepare for eventual job applications.

Students should begin as early as possible to build their lists. For the entire qualifying exam, the total number of books and article-equivalents of books generally runs between 200 and 250, and these should be equitably distributed between the major and minor field(s).

The colloquium itself is an advisory meeting of the committee that will administer the exam. Its purposes are: to help students to confirm the exact scope of the qualifying examination fields (based on reading lists which the student has prepared in concert with the advisor and individual committee members); to determine any further coursework, language study

(beyond that required by the Program), or additional independent study that students may need in order to pass the exams in the selected fields; and to help students plan next steps toward a fully developed dissertation prospectus.

Usually, the colloquium takes place four to six months prior to the qualifying examination. The advisor/committee chair will prepare a brief written report of the colloquium (using a form available from the PA), indicating the committee membership, target date, fields of coverage, and areas of concentration and give it, along with copies of the final reading lists, to the PA, who will convey the report to the DGS and place the lists in the Program files for consultation by students and faculty.

The target date for the qualifying exam is set at the colloquium in order to help students budget their study time effectively.

Preparing for the Qualifying Exam:

Preparing for the qualifying exam necessarily involves at least three components: (1) the acquisition of a general familiarity with the subject fields, which may often be accomplished by auditing undergraduate and graduate courses; (2) the mastery of the literature of the student's chosen fields, as specified in the reading lists; and (3) learning to assess fields critically and to articulate arguments concerning their histories, theoretical premises, and potential utility in understanding diverse aspects of American life – in other words, study for the exam builds on and concentrates the work students have already done.

Students determine how best to prepare. Some may wish to prepare alone, and others will establish study groups with peers. It is both common and advisable for students also to schedule periodic conferences with faculty members of their examining committee to discuss readings on their lists. Faculty may request that students submit questions or summaries related to the field or specific readings ahead of such meetings. Faculty advisors should not be expected to lecture, to provide syllabi, or to take the initiative in discussion. Students should come to conferences prepared to talk about specific works and questions relevant to the readings they have been doing. Faculty members, in return, will counsel students regarding the state of their preparation and, ideally, approve the scheduled undertaking of the exam.

The Qualifying Exam:

The qualifying examination requires that students display command of the fields that they have identified as their principal intellectual domains. **The exam will consist of both a written and oral component.**

The written component entails four separate essays or sets of essays, one set written for each of the fields approved at the colloquium. The entirety of the written exam will be completed

within one work week (Monday-Friday), with one field addressed per day and one day of rest. The student will decide on which day of the week they will write for which field.

On the day on which the exam commences, the student will receive via email from the chair of the qualifying exam committee an essay question or set of essay questions from one of their fields and on which they are to work that day. They will receive the subsequent sets of questions for each of their other fields on the subsequent days in the exam week agreed upon ahead of time. Each day, the student may take up to eight hours to work on their writing for that day, those eight hours to be completed within a nine-hour window, with one hour break for meals. They are expected to return their answers for that day to their advisor and the faculty member overseeing that field via email nine hours after receiving the questions. Students are allowed to have only their reading lists with them during the exam. No notes are allowed nor can any online sources be consulted.

A student may also choose to present in advance of the written portion of the exam, course syllabi (no more than two) in the major or minor fields, to be discussed as part of the examination.

After the written exams are complete, the committee members inform that advisor if the student has passed the written portion of the exam. After completing the written essays, the student then schedules the oral examination, which ordinarily will be held within two weeks' time, The student meets with the exam committee for approximately one hour for an oral discussion that focuses on reviewing the exam questions and written responses. All members of the committee will attend and read, and may comment on, the entire examination.

Upon completion of the examination, the committee will deliberate and inform the student of its judgment. Successful performance on the qualifying examination is evaluated as a Pass. Passage marks the formal progression of the student to candidacy for the Ph.D. degree.

Failing the Qualifying Exam in whole or in part:

Should the student fail the examination as a whole or in any part, the chair of the committee will explain the reasons for that failure in person. In this event, students will have one opportunity to retake the exam or the failed section(s). If the student fails to pass more than one section of the general exam, he or she must retake the entire exam. In this case, reexaminations must be scheduled no sooner than one month and no later than the end of classes in the next semester after the initial date of the exam.

If a student fails a single section, he or she must be reexamined in this field no sooner than one month and no later than the end of the following semester. During reexamination, the students must demonstrate proficiency in the section in question and may be required to address its place in the larger context of all exam fields.

The EC will review such students' performance in light of satisfactory progress toward the degree and may at its discretion determine to suspend or revoke financial aid in the intervening period.

4. The Dissertation

The dissertation provides students the opportunity to establish themselves as accomplished scholars, to gain extensive professional research experience, and to demonstrate the ability to conduct research and present the results in an effectively organized and well-written form. The ultimate shape of the dissertation depends on many things (e.g., the primary fields of concentration and the breadth of the topic), but typically a dissertation aspires to be a polished preliminary draft of a book-length scholarly study. Bound copies of American Studies Ph.D. dissertations are available for review in the American Studies Seminar Room in Samuel A. Jones House/College Apartments 5, and an index of titles is available on the Program website.

The common elements in the building of a dissertation are a director, a prospectus, a committee, the completed manuscript itself, and a dissertation defense.

The Dissertation Director:

The dissertation director must be formally appointed as a faculty member in the American Studies Program. If a dissertation is co-directed, at least one of the co-directors must be formally appointed as a faculty member in the American Studies Program. If a director leaves the Program or university while the dissertation is underway, for two years they may continue as a co-advisor but must be joined by a formally appointed faculty member in the American Studies Program.

Often a student's dissertation director and at least some members of their dissertation committee carry over from the qualifying examination committee. If this is not the case, the student should actively seek out supporting faculty. The DGS and Program Director may advise (and, as with any change of advisor, the DGS must be consulted), but the responsibility for cultivating and securing a director and committee ultimately resides with the student.

The Dissertation Prospectus:

Students should submit a dissertation prospectus for their director's approval ideally by the end of their fifth semester of Ph.D. study and no later than six months after the successful completion of the qualifying exam. Students will compose this document under the supervision of the dissertation director.

The prospectus will give a full description of the inquiry to be undertaken. It will identify an issue or problem, explain how this bears upon or intervenes in a particular field of scholarship,

relate the topic to previous and ongoing works, detail the several parts of the project and show their interrelations, name the key primary sources, outline the principle methods, and suggest a timetable for completion. Such a prospectus should run between 3500 and 5000 words (approximately 14-20 pages) and should include as a supplement a bibliography of the principal primary and secondary sources.

In addition to preparing the student to begin full-scale dissertation research and writing, the prospectus is designed to facilitate the submission of applications to outside agencies for dissertation fellowships and will help in securing committee members.

The Advisory Dissertation Committee and the Prospectus Colloquium:

After the dissertation director approves the prospectus, the student will forward it to an advisory dissertation committee of two or three additional faculty members assembled in consultation with the dissertation director and DGS. The student and the committee will then convene to discuss the prospectus. This meeting is not an examination. Rather, the meeting acquaints the student – and the readers – with the views and suggestions of all the participants in the project. The committee will also discuss with the student their expected schedule for research, writing, and completion and also possible dissertation fellowship applications for which to apply going forward. At the end of the dissertation prospectus colloquium, the advisor and student will together obtain signatures on the Dissertation Prospectus Colloquium form and submit it along with the prospectus and the names of the director and advisory committee to the PA and the DGS.

Following the colloquium, primary responsibility for overseeing the dissertation remains with the director. Committee members may be consulted throughout the process of dissertation writing, but they are not obligated to read draft chapters until the advisor recommends the submission of part or the entire dissertation to them for comment. Expectations for how this process will work will be outlined in the prospectus colloquium.

Changing Directors or Committee Members:

For a variety of reasons, membership of the advisory committee will sometimes change as the dissertation develops. Please see “Changing Academic Advisors, Committee Members, and Directors,” above.

The Final Dissertation Committee:

The formal dissertation committee must be constituted no later than the fourth week of the semester preceding the one in which the student expects to defend the dissertation. In most instances, this committee will be the same as or very similar to the advisory committee. Counting the director, it must include at least three William & Mary faculty members (at least two of whom must be full-time and have a formal affiliation with the American Studies Program) and an “outside” reader. This outside reader may be a faculty member from William

& Mary who has no affiliation with American Studies. Most often, however, the outside reader is a faculty member at another university. The outside reader is secured through the collaborative efforts of the student, dissertation director, DGS, and Program Director, but the DGS will formalize and finalize all arrangements.

If a dissertation director or committee member moves to another university during the writing of the dissertation, their status on the committee changes. A dissertation director who moves must be joined by a co-director who is appointed in the Program. If more than two years passes before the completion of the dissertation, then this outside co- director can no longer serve in that capacity (i.e., the “inside” co-director becomes the sole director of the dissertation), though they may serve as a W&M reader. A committee member who moves may still serve on the committee, but they may not serve as an outside reader, if they have overlapped with the examinee

The constitution of this committee is a formal act of the faculty and must be approved by the Vice Dean for Research and Graduate Studies. **As soon as the final committee is established, the student should alert the PA and complete an OGS Committee Member Appointment Form** (<https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/forms/committee-member-appointment.pdf>). The form must be sent to the DGS for their signature, and the DGS must submit it to OGS for approval, a process that has to be completed at the latest two weeks before the student plans to defend.

The Dissertation Defense:

After students have produced an acceptable draft of the dissertation, they will schedule, in consultation with their advisors, a dissertation defense. The defense must be scheduled at least a month in advance. The American Studies Dissertation defense is an oral exam that focuses on the dissertation.

Students should alert the PA at the start of the defense scheduling process, so the PA can make sure that the necessary paperwork is readied for the defense. The PA may also help schedule a room for the defense.

The student should discuss the exact format of the defense with the director, but in general a defense lasts about two hours and takes the form of an intensive examination and discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation. After the defense is completed, if the committee agrees that the student has passed the defense and that their dissertation fulfills the requirements for the Ph.D., each member will sign both the Approval Page of the dissertation and an **OGS Defense Examination Form** (https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/_forms/defense-examination.pdf). It is the student’s responsibility to prepare the form in advance and bring it to the defense, to collect all signatures on the form, to give a copy to the PA, and to make sure that it is submitted to OGS for approval.

The dissertation director convenes the committee and all members of the committee who are faculty at William & Mary are expected to attend. The outside reader may or may not attend

the defense and may or may not teleconference during the exam, but if they are not present in one manner or another, they must submit a short report to the dissertation director regarding the dissertation. After the defense has completed, and if the student has passed and the outside reader has not attended the defense in person, the outside reader must email the Vice Dean of Research and Graduate Studies to authorize the DGS to sign the Defense Examination form on their behalf.

As a part of a successful defense, a student may be required to make changes to the dissertation. These must be submitted to the dissertation director for approval on a schedule agreed to at the defense or afterward.

Formatting and Submitting the Dissertation:

The dissertation must be produced in accordance with the Program's style rules, which govern matters such as citation and bibliographic form, and the Arts & Sciences Graduate Studies guidelines for theses and dissertations, which govern broader issues of form (e.g., required formatting for front matter, signature pages, and body of the thesis, etc.) (see <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/thesis-dissertations/physicalstandards/index.php>).

The final dissertation is submitted to OGS. Please note and follow the crucial, detailed instructions on the OGS website, "Process for Submitting Your Thesis or Dissertations": <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/thesis-dissertations/index.php>

5. Schedules for Completion of the Degree:

All Ph.D. students are expected to hold their Ph.D. qualifying exam in a timely fashion following the colloquium. Ordinarily, the qualifying exam is held at the end of the second or very beginning of the third year of Ph.D. study, which is equivalent to the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth semester of Ph.D. study. All Ph.D. students are expected to complete an acceptable dissertation prospectus and hold a prospectus colloquium no later than the end of the fifth semester of Ph.D. study.

The Program recognizes that there may occasionally be legitimate reasons for students needing to extend these deadlines and will review such occasions on a case-by-case basis in close consultation with directors and committee members.

However, students who miss either of these key deadlines must maintain regular contact with their advisor/director and the DGS, and they must also remember that it is their responsibility to complete their work in as timely a manner as possible. Students who miss either of these key deadlines and do not maintain contact with the Program should be aware that this may put them in jeopardy of being judged as not making satisfactory progress toward the degree, which, for funded students, could also put their continued funding at risk.

Of course, the time required to research, write, and defend a successful Ph.D. dissertation is variable and depends on a host of circumstances, so even rough rules on satisfactory progress on the dissertation are difficult to outline. That said, the Program emphasizes two things: 1) regular contact with the dissertation director and the DGS (in the context of annual review) is required as a sign of continued progress; 2) extensions of the time to degree are not guaranteed and dissertators are responsible for keeping track of their “clocks”; should they come to believe an extension may be necessary in their case, dissertators must plan at least a semester in advance to make the necessary petitions.

Students who believe they will need an extension should consult with their dissertation director and then with the DGS. For more information on petitioning for an extension, see section on “Extensions” above.

V. PREPARING TO GRADUATE

A. Declaring Candidacy

M.A. and doctoral students must declare their intention to graduate at **the start of the semester before** they believe they will graduate. In other words, a student intending to receive an M.A. or Ph.D. at the end of the Spring semester must declare at the start of the Fall semester. The “Intent to Graduate” form used to declare candidacy can be found on the OGS website here: https://wmsas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4VhYQZCikYWFv.

There is no penalty for changing graduation plans, but the student should notify the Graduate Registrar at OGS and the PA by email as soon as their plans change.

Students are responsible for ensuring they declare candidacy in a timely fashion.

B. Depositing the Thesis or Dissertation

There are multiple steps to submitting final versions of theses or dissertations prior to graduation. Detailed instructions are available on the OGS website under “Process for Submitting your Thesis or Dissertation” at <https://www.wm.edu/as/graduate/studentresources/thesis-dissertations/index.php>. Please review and follow these instructions carefully. Failure to meet the deadlines established by OGS will delay a student’s graduation.

In the above instructions, students will find information regarding, first, requirements that must be met no later than two weeks before the scheduled defense, known as the **Pre-Defense Deadline**, and also requirements that must be met by the **Final Submission Deadline**, a date that is determined by the term in which a student plans to graduate.

1. Pre-Defense Deadline

Prior to their defense, students must submit a draft version of their thesis or dissertation for formatting review by OGS. This is done electronically using the online system, the W&M ETD Administrator (<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=705>). Students must also submit a Committee Member Appointment Form and a License and Embargo Form, and they must notify OGS by email of the date for which their defense is scheduled.

2. Final Submission Deadline

After the defense and any required revisions have been made to the thesis or dissertation, students will submit to OGS the final version of their work, using again the online W&M ETD Administrator (<https://www.etdadmin.com/main/home?siteId=705>). They must also submit to OGS the following:

- Institutional Compliance Committee Form
- Thesis or Dissertation Defense Examination Form
- Approval Page

Students receiving doctoral degrees must also fill out a Survey of Earned Doctorates.

C. Conferral of Degrees

William & Mary confers degrees in August, January, and May of each year. The commencement ceremony is held in May. Degree recipients of the previous August and January are recognized at, and invited to attend, the following May ceremony. The Office of Graduate Studies has thirty (30) days from the actual date of degree conferral to submit final paperwork to the University Registrar for degree certification. Diplomas are issued approximately fifteen (15) days after degree certification.

VI. POLICY ON CONSENSUAL AMOROUS RELATIONS

William & Mary's policy on [Consensual Amorous Relations](#) is as follows:

“The Consensual Amorous Relationships Policy prohibits faculty from engaging in romantic or sexual relationships with undergraduate students. It also prohibits faculty from engaging in such relationships with graduate students enrolled in a degree-seeking program in the School or in the case of Arts & Sciences, any department or program in which the faculty member has taught, plans to teach, or holds an appointment. There are mechanisms to obtain an exception to the Policy.

“The Consensual Amorous Relationships Policy is designed to avoid relationships between people without equal power and to avoid conflicts of interest. Violations of this policy will be considered misconduct on the part of the faculty member, but it is not used to discipline

students. Reports of violations of this policy may be made to the department chair or academic Dean.”

https://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/communityvalues/studenthandbook/student_life_policies/consensual_relationships/index.php

For further [guidelines](#) related to this policy, see
https://www.wm.edu/offices/compliance/university-compliance-requirement/consensual_amorousrelations/index.php