

Northwestern University
Department of African American Studies
2010-2011 Guide to Doctoral Study
Revised Winter 2013

2010-2011 Graduate Committee

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1. RESIDENCY, REGISTRATION, AND GRADES

1.1. Course Requirements and Registration Credits

If you are a full-time student in the Graduate School, three course registrations are required for full-time standing in a given quarter. You may take a fourth course without adding to your tuition bill. Consult the current *Bulletin* of the Graduate School for regulations concerning residency and post-candidacy research.

Within the framework of the Graduate School residency requirements, the Department will determine the number and distribution of courses required for your particular program of studies (See current requirements below in Section 2.1.1.). In consultation with your adviser, you will choose your coursework from courses offered in the Department of African American Studies as well as in other departments and programs. The Director of Graduate Studies is also available for consultation on coursework.

You may count the following types of registration toward full-time standing in the Graduate School:

1. 400-level graduate courses. These are standard graduate seminars that form the majority of your coursework.
2. 500-level graduate courses. These are special courses not necessarily more advanced in nature than 400-level courses.
3. 300-level undergraduate courses. These can be taken for graduate credit, provided that they are listed in the *Graduate School Bulletin*. (Some 300-level courses do not carry graduate credit; these are not listed in the *Bulletin*.)
4. 490 Independent Study Registrations. In order to fulfill the 4 track, 4 discipline, and 3 elective course requirements, students may participate in up to 2 independent studies with core or affiliated African American Studies faculty members. In order to work on the dissertation proposal, students may participate in a third independent study with the graduate adviser with the registration number of 490. This proposal-focused independent study can be done in the first, second, or third year of graduate study.

To register for a 490, you must first file with the faculty instructor a formal 490 Proposal, which describes the topic that you will study, the reading list, the frequency of meetings with the instructor, and the requirements for written work. Both the student and the professor must sign this proposal. At the end of the quarter, the instructor should submit a final grade on Caesar.

5. 491 Reading and Pedagogy Registrations. This registration carries no particular assignments but gives students time to work as a teaching assistant (TA). You may register for one unit of 491 for every quarter in which you are serving as a teaching assistant. Based on one's performance as a TA, a grade of Pass/No Pass will be assigned by the supervising faculty member (or the Director of Graduate Studies in the case of TAs completed outside of the department).

6. The Graduate School 500 (Advanced Doctoral Study) - This registration number serves as a catch-all for Qualifying Exam, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation preparation. Third-year students should register for TGS 500 seminar every quarter of the academic year. The fall quarter will be spent reading for the Qualifying Exam, and the winter and spring quarters will be spent preparing the dissertation proposal.

Fourth- and fifth-year students should register for TGS 500 in order to remain in good standing while completing their dissertation research and writing.

While registered as a TGS 500 student, graduate seminars may be taken Pass/Fail, with the understanding that you will do reading and participate in discussions but will be exempt from final research assignments, at the discretion of the instructor. This will allow you to keep your Qualifying Exams and dissertation projects as a first priority.

7. The Graduate School registration 590 is a registration that allows you to take a 2 rather than 3-course load without losing standing as a full-time student. This can only be taken under special circumstances and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies.

8. If you enroll in a course that does not carry graduate credit (for example, a beginning or intermediate language course), you must also carry three graduate registrations in order to maintain full-time standing.

1.2. Grades

The Graduate School will record letter grades with plus or minus distinctions on your official transcript. Any grade below a B should be met with concern as students must maintain a 3.0 GPA to remain in good standing.

1.3. Expectations Regarding Paper Submissions

The same paper cannot be submitted for more than one course. It is the student's responsibility to inform instructors, and gain permission to proceed beforehand, if a course paper engages the same topic as a paper submitted for another course (either a previous course or a course in the same quarter) but from a different angle. We encourage students to use coursework as an opportunity to develop ideas for their dissertations—which might involve the revisiting of themes and topics across courses. At the same time, we do not want students to be overly myopic in their approach to their coursework. Double submissions without the approval of the instructors involved will not be accepted, and the issue will be brought to the Graduate Affairs Committee to resolve in consultation with the affected course instructors.

1.4. Incomplete Work

In order to remain in good standing for fellowships, you must make up any incomplete work from an academic year no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of classes in the following fall quarter. This rule supersedes any rule set down by the Graduate School. We do strongly recommend that you complete all work for your courses before the beginning of the subsequent quarter whenever possible. In cases involving such unavoidable circumstances as illness or a death in the family, you may, on or before the deadline, submit a written petition for an extension to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Be aware also that the Graduate School closely monitors incomplete work (Y, N or X grades). To qualify for summer funding, a student in years 1-4 and on University funding must be in good academic standing by both the Department of African American Studies and Graduate School definitions. The latter requires that the student have no more than one incomplete on his or her record at the end of the spring quarter. Further, if any incomplete is not made up within a year, you will lose the residency credit for the course and will need to register for an additional course at your own expense. You will receive warning letters or probation letters from the Graduate School each quarter in which you have more than one incomplete grade on your record.

The Graduate School further requires that all incompletes be made up by the time you advance to candidacy at the end of the third year. Failure to observe this rule will result in your becoming liable for additional tuition charges, for which the department will not be able to provide funding.

Students who serve in departmental service positions (conference co-chair, Grad Student Rep/Head of Grad Student Council, Undergrad Affairs Committee Representative, Faculty Recruitment Committee Representative) cannot carry an Incomplete in any course for more than one quarter.

1.5. Course Credit from Previous MA Degrees

Under some circumstances, the graduate program in African American Studies will allow up to 6 courses from graduate work from other universities to count towards the 18 course requirement. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Graduate Studies, and the courses must be related to an African American Studies curriculum. A minimum grade of B must have been awarded in those courses. In unusual circumstances, the Director of Graduate Studies has the discretion to accept up to 8 courses from previous graduate work toward the 18-course requirement. However, only 6 of those courses can be applied if the student chooses to file for a Masters of Arts degree in African American Studies from Northwestern to ensure that adequate coursework has been completed at Northwestern to justify a Northwestern master's degree. Students can use DGS-accepted courses toward the fulfillment of their disciplinary, track, or elective course requirements, but not for their core or methods course requirements.

In order to receive previous coursework credit, students are asked to submit a transcript from the previous institution along with a memo explaining which courses should be counted as part of the 18 course requirement and a brief justification for whether they should be applied to the disciplinary, track, or elective course requirements.

Students who receive credit for previous graduate coursework, and consequently complete their course requirements before the end of the second year of study, will be expected to register for independent studies with the goal of working on their dissertation proposals or working on a paper for publication in order to maintain their registration and funding.

1.6. Departmental Evaluations

Each year, every student in the program will be asked to submit to the Director of Graduate Studies a completed Student Advising Dashboard that has been reviewed with the student's adviser as well as a curriculum vita. In addition, for every course students take, the instructor will file a written evaluation on a standard form. For every teaching assistantship from that year, the faculty supervisor will be asked to submit an evaluation. The Student Advising Dashboard, CV, and course performance and TA evaluations will be reviewed annually by members of the department faculty, and each student will be given feedback on his/her performance and future directions at the close of the academic year. A crucial part of students' permanent record in the department, these evaluations are given close attention in deliberations about continuation and fellowships. Students will be given a written summary of the outcome of these evaluations and should use them in measuring their achievement and planning goals. The Graduate faculty—including Graduate Committee members, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair—may consult all student records. Students also have access to their own evaluation records and should consult with the Graduate Departmental Assistant to request viewing. Faculty members are also encouraged to provide students with a copy of their evaluations.

2. THE PH.D. PROGRAM

2.1. The First Year of the Doctoral Program

2.1.1. Course Requirements (for the first two years of study)

The goal is to offer a graduate curriculum that provides a range of graduate students with a firm grounding in a variety of essential texts, materials, methodologies, and traditions. At the same time, there is a built-in degree of flexibility that will enable students to achieve a higher degree of proficiency within a specific sub-field. Consequently, we require all students to take eighteen (18) courses during the first two years of study (all things being equal, an average of three courses per quarter). The specific breakdown of the 18 required courses is as follows:

Six of these courses—the core courses—are required for all students. Three of the core courses—Conceptual Methodologies (AFAM 401), Memory Studies (AFAM 402), and Diasporic Theory and Diaspora Tropes (AFAM 403)—will be taught every other year (in rotation with the other core courses). The three other core courses correspond to our three tracks: Histories; Expressive Arts and Cultural Studies; and Politics, Society, and Culture. These three courses (“Black Expressive Arts, Literature, and Culture” AFAM 420; “Black Historiography” AFAM 440; and “Black Social and Political Thought” AFAM 460 respectively) are being offered this year (2010-2011). AFAM 401, AFAM 402, and AFAM 403, will be offered during the 2011-2012 school year. Descriptions of the core courses can be found on the department’s website: <http://www.afam.northwestern.edu/requirements.html>.

Beyond these core courses, students will take four courses within their chosen track of specialization. The course content should relate to an African American Studies curriculum. We also require that all students take four courses in another discipline in order to establish their competence in the discipline in question (e.g., English, Sociology, History, Theatre, Political Science, Philosophy, etc.) and to enhance their subsequent marketability. These courses do not necessarily have to contain African American Studies content. At least one research methods course is also required. In consultation with their advisers, and depending upon the nature of their research interests, students will choose an appropriate course—or courses—in research methods. Three elective courses beyond these requirements represent the last component of the course requirements. Taking additional research methods courses is certainly recommended and can count as electives or disciplinary courses.

The specific breakdown of the 18 required courses is:

- * 6 core courses
- * 4 track courses
- * 4 courses within one’s chosen discipline of specialization
- * 3 elective courses
- * 1 research methods course

2.1.2. Adviser/Advisee Expectations

All first-year students are assigned an adviser. After that, students are responsible for identifying an adviser for the second-year article. Similarly, students are responsible for identifying a dissertation proposal/dissertation adviser. (Technically, there is no dissertation adviser until you have been admitted to candidacy. However, most students select a dissertation adviser before the written and oral Qualifying Exams.) If the student wishes, and the faculty member agrees, the same faculty member can serve in all three advising roles (First Year, Second-Year Article, and Dissertation). By the same token, both advisers and advisees are free to withdraw from the advising relationship in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Advisers and advisees should meet at least once a quarter regarding the student’s progress through the program. Advisers should supervise and provide feedback to their advisees at every opportunity including assistance regarding course selection; classroom visits to observe teaching (as a teaching assistant or solo instructor after qualifying exams have been passed); and preparing the second-year article. The Graduate Student Advising Dashboard, a document to record student objectives and milestones (see Section 4), should be completed at the first meeting and revised at least quarterly thereafter as the student advances toward graduation. Each student will submit an updated dashboard to the Director of Graduate Studies at the end of each academic year as well as an up-to-date curriculum vitae.

2.1.3. The First Year Review

The satisfactory completion of all courses is a necessary but not sufficient condition for continuation into the second year. That decision rests on the judgment of the Graduate Faculty that you have demonstrated the ability and motivation to plan a substantial scholarly project and carry it to completion within the time

limits for the degree. Ordinarily, the program takes five or six years to complete, but if you and your committee determine that you need more time, provisions can be made for an extension.

The progress of all funded graduate students will be evaluated each year at the end of spring quarter. There will be a mid-year review discussion as well. The department may recommend putting a first year student on probation for the next academic year if it finds evidence of unsatisfactory progress. Unsatisfactory progress includes, but is not limited to, two or more outstanding incompletes at the end of spring quarter; two or more grades of B in course work during the year; and/or faculty evaluations expressing concern over a marked inability to research and write on a graduate level. The department may recommend discontinuation of a first year student who has three or more incompletes at the end of spring quarter; three or more grades of B in course work during the year; and/or faculty evaluations expressing concern over the student's ability to succeed in a PhD program. The department may recommend discontinuation of a second year probationary student who has not shown sufficient academic progress and who had been alerted to the possibility of dismissal no later than winter quarter. A second year student who fails to complete the second year paper by the end of spring quarter will be put on probation and must finish the paper by the end of fall quarter or will be discontinued from the program. A student who fails the third year qualifying exams may be discontinued from the program effective immediately.

The Department, following a vote of the faculty, can exclude from the program students who are not in good standing.

A student may appeal a decision to exclude. A written appeal should be submitted to the DGS within ten days of date of exclusion, who will then take it to the departmental faculty for discussion and a vote. The original decision to exclude can be upheld, overturned on procedural grounds, or overturned due to compelling new information. A majority vote from tenure-line members of the departmental faculty is needed to overturn the original decision to exclude a student. The student can appeal the department's decision to the Graduate School.

Funding beyond the first year usually takes the form of a teaching assistantship. Recommendation of continuation is prerequisite to the award of a teaching assistantship and all other forms of fellowships that involve Northwestern University funds. In addition, the Graduate School requires that you be in good academic standing to be a Teaching Assistant. This is defined as having at least a B average and no more than one incomplete grade. Occasionally, a decision about continuation has to be deferred to the fall quarter of the second year. If this happens, the student will for most practical purposes be ineligible for university funding in that year.

Other circumstances that may jeopardize fellowships include:

- 1) Failing to make up incompletes by two weeks before the beginning of fall term;
- 2) Taking a leave of absence, since aid packages are normally designed for twelve consecutive quarters without provision for "banking" aid for future use;
- 3) Failing to achieve candidacy before the fall of the fourth year, which will cause a student to incur further tuition liabilities which the department will not be able to fund;
- 4) Carrying an incomplete beyond the ninth-quarter candidacy date

2.1.4. Planning the Second Year

If you are at all like other first-year graduate students, you will find that your coursework demands most of your energy. Nevertheless, it will be important for you to look ahead and to think about the directions your studies are likely to take from this point on. In the final weeks of the spring quarter of your first year and over the summer you should think seriously about possible fields of specialization, possible Second-Year Article topics (and how they might be tied to a future Dissertation topic), a possible adviser for the Second-Year Article, and plan some reading to advance you toward your goals. You should also consult the standard Qualifying Exam lists (available from the Director of Graduate Studies) in order to develop a plan of reading for the summer and the second year. You need not be in a rush to come to a decision about fields of specialization, but should move steadily toward it by reading, over the summer, some of the basic texts in the fields that you are considering. You are also recommended to consider that you will be trained as a teacher in your second year. To that end, in the spring quarter of your first year, you may want to arrange to observe an undergraduate class in African American Studies in order to prepare yourself for your initiation into the classroom.

2.2. The Second Year of the Doctoral Program

In the second year of the doctoral program, you should map out a plan for moving toward your field of specialization. Consistent with this goal, you should also begin thinking about the kind of research you wish to undertake and preparing yourself to produce publishable work. In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, you will choose an adviser who will formally supervise your progress toward the successful completion of your Second-Year Article.

2.2.1. Second-Year Article (for cohorts entering Fall 2010 and beyond)

At the end of the second year, each student will submit an article based on independent research (using primary data that the student has collected and analyzed, secondary data collected elsewhere but analyzed by the student, archival sources analyzed by the student, or literary or conceptual analysis conducted by the student). In other words, the articles should provide evidence of a student's capacity to produce research featuring either original data (ethnographic research, archival research, or other relevant forms of data), and/or theoretical and conceptual innovations. The expectation is that, as part of the process of professionalization, the research produced will be submitted for publication, after any necessary revisions, to appropriate journals. After receiving the adviser's approval, the second-year article should be submitted to the Graduate Committee by the first Monday of May of spring quarter for formal approval of this requirement. The article should be approximately thirty pages in length (standard margins, 12 pt. font, excluding footnotes and appendices). Students are welcome to begin working on this article as soon as their first year.

In order to support the process of writing the Second-Year Article, students are encouraged to enroll in a "collective writing" course offered by many graduate departments across campus (e.g. History 570, Sociology 490, Political Science 404). These courses support a group of students as each works on an independent research project prior to working on the dissertation. For students unable to enroll in such a course, an Independent Study with the Adviser is recommended to work on the article.

Second-year students will be expected to present their article as part of a Departmental Symposium to take place in May. Faculty members of the Graduate Committee can vote to honor one paper through a Second-Year Paper Award.

2.2.2. Masters Degree

Students entering the African American Studies doctoral program fall 2010 or later are eligible for a Masters of Arts degree when they complete the program's 18-course requirement and a Second Year Article that has been approved by the Graduate Committee. Students in earlier cohorts (entering fall 2006-fall 2009) who have completed the 18-course requirement for the Ph.D. degree and the First Year Paper shall be eligible for a Masters Degree. Students must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in the required 18 courses to be eligible for the Masters Degree. Up to 6 courses can be transferred from other graduate institutions to count towards the 18-course degree requirement.

To obtain a master's degree, students should submit the Application for Degree and a Master's Degree Completion form via TGS Forms in CAESAR by the deadlines published for degree awarding for a given quarter. Students must complete all the requirements for the master's degree within five years of the date of their initial registration in The Graduate School.

2.2.3. Teaching Assistantships

You are likely to hold a teaching assistantship in your second year. In preparation for teaching, you are expected to attend training events offered by the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence. You should also plan to meet with the supervising faculty member to discuss expectations and to receive tips on classroom teaching and organization. You will probably find the experience of teaching rewarding and exhausting. As you learn the basics of pedagogy, you should keep in mind that a teaching assistantship is a part-time position (approximately 15 hours per week), and that your primary responsibility will be to move steadily toward your degree. Do not allow teaching to become all-consuming.

As a teaching assistant you hold an appointment in the Graduate School with duties assigned by the Department. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of all Graduate School regulations that relate to the appointment, remuneration, tax status, and academic standing of teaching assistants. The Graduate School's Handbook for Teaching Assistants provides information and advice on these and other matters. Appointments will generally be made in the spring quarter of the year before.

2.2.4. Teaching Assistant Responsibilities in the Department of African American Studies

As a teaching assistant you will support instructors in large undergraduate courses. Your duties include:

- Reading all assigned texts in the course;
- Attending all lectures;
- Possibly leading up to two discussion sections (depending on course enrollment numbers), with a combined total of no more than fifty students;
- Grading student papers and exams (at the instructor's discretion);
- Holding conferences with students and maintaining two regularly scheduled office hours per week;
- Returning the papers and exams of students in your section;
- Assisting the instructor in other tasks involved in running a lecture course;
- Giving at least one of the lectures in the course, if the instructor so desires.

Teaching assistants will be assessed on a P/NP—i.e., pass/fail—basis. Your teaching supervisors will also be asked to submit a written evaluation for your annual review. For further details about teaching assistant duties, please consult the *Teaching Assistant Handbook* distributed at the start of each academic year. The

assignment of teaching assistants to particular courses is the responsibility of the Director of Graduate Studies and depends ultimately on enrollments at the undergraduate level. The Director of Graduate Studies shall make every attempt to give you assignments that fit your interests, but the needs of the undergraduate curriculum must take precedence over other considerations (as it does for professors).

2.3. The Third Year of the Doctoral Program

The third year of the doctoral program is in many ways the most challenging, because during the summer you will have started an important transition. You will have moved from completing specified assignments for particular courses and other set tasks to working more independently on goals of much greater scope, which you will have a far greater role in setting for yourself. While you will still receive guidance from faculty members (and should never hesitate to seek it at any point during the year), your achievements will depend increasingly on your own discipline, organization, ambition, and imagination. The third year formally completes your preparation for the largest task of your graduate study: the research and writing of your dissertation. In doing so, it advances you toward your ultimate goal of becoming a mature, self-motivated scholar, critic, thinker, and writer.

By the end of your third year, you will also be expected to have completed all of the requirements of the Graduate School for admission to candidacy: receiving a “pass” on the Qualifying Exam, gaining approval of the Dissertation Proposal, and completion of all course work and the Second-Year Article.

2.3.1. The Qualifying Exam

The Qualifying Exam is administered during the fall quarter of your third year. The purpose of the Qualifying Exam as a whole is to test your command of the primary source material and your grasp of the relevant empirical, historical, and theoretical contexts in the field of African American Studies. The Qualifying Exam is thus designed to certify your ability to teach in the field of African American Studies. It asks that you demonstrate in-depth familiarity with a list of core texts across the three tracks (and reflecting your readings from the six core courses). The exam consists of two parts: a take-home written exam and an oral exam. The Department will, with the advice of the Graduate Committee, award at its discretion, and in extraordinary cases, a “Pass with Distinction.”

You may register for one unit of TGS 500 during the fall quarter in order to give you additional time to prepare for the exam.

2.3.2. The Dissertation Proposal

Before the end of your third year, you will also be required to present an oral defense of your dissertation proposal. Students may defend their dissertation proposal before the end of the third year and should not feel bound to wait until they have passed their qualifying exams as the two processes—becoming sufficiently familiar with the literature in order to be able to teach and identifying and articulating a dissertation topic—are separate projects. The language in this section assumes that the dissertation proposal will be defended after the qualifying exams have been passed as that is the standard pattern but, again, students may certainly defend the dissertation proposal at an earlier juncture.

Upon passing the Qualifying Exams, you may register for two additional units of TGS 500 (for P/N credit). You may take one unit each in the second and third quarters of your third year. The joint product of both units will be your proposal. You should meet with all faculty members who will likely serve on the proposal committee at the beginning of the quarter to work out a course of action, and you should have at least one meeting toward the end of the quarter to review progress and make sure that there is agreement among you on what remains to be done. You may also meet separately and regularly with each member throughout the quarter to keep him or her updated on your progress.

While much of the work in the winter quarter will be concerned with background reading and bibliographical groundwork, it will be important for you to turn in several written drafts of your ideas. You are expected to submit a first draft of your proposal by the start of the spring quarter, at the latest, and to meet with your committee members soon after that. This draft will probably be quite rough, and it may take several drafts to be satisfactorily polished; but it is important that you commit yourself to a topic firmly and early.

Again, in order to work on the dissertation proposal, students are encouraged to participate in an independent study (AFAM 490) with the graduate adviser in the first, second, or third years of graduate study.

2.3.2.1. The Format of the Dissertation Proposal

The proposal establishes a blueprint for the major accomplishment of your career in the doctoral program, the writing of the dissertation. A concise and precise program for the chapter-by-chapter drafting of the dissertation, the proposal allows both you and your committee to conceive of the dissertation project as a whole. Additionally, the proposal places the dissertation in the context of current scholarship in the chosen field of study; it thereby indicates how the dissertation contributes to and potentially changes this field. Chiefly, the proposal gives you an opportunity to anticipate and articulate the framework for your dissertation: the question(s) it will pursue, the logical articulations of why the question is important to pursue, the topic's linkages to previous research, and the methods by which the line of argument will be elaborated with reference to evidentiary materials. In some cases, understandably, the nature of scholarly fieldwork will preclude the possibility of a detailed dissertation proposal and an explicit thesis or argument. In such cases, some of the points mentioned here are not applicable and students will, in consultation with their advisers, generate a more suitable template.

In other words, the proposal should do the following: 1) describe the topic under consideration and formulate the argument to be proposed (if appropriate); 2) identify the methodological principles on the basis of which the research will be conducted; 3) specify the scope of the inquiry; 4) briefly explain the relation of the dissertation to major scholarly achievements and contemporary trends in the field; 5) outline the chapters (if appropriate), with a brief exposition of what each one seeks to accomplish; 6) provide an extensive bibliography that includes both primary and secondary material. The bibliography is especially important; indeed, the entire proposal is contained, so to speak, in its bibliography. Different fields require different kinds of bibliographies, with different degrees of inclusiveness. But, in general, a bibliography should include every item that would make a difference to the dissertation. Because the proposal is a formal professional document, the bibliography should be presented in formal bibliographical style.

In general, a proposal is 3,000-5,000 words (10-15 pages) in length, not including the bibliography.

2.3.2.2. Approval of the Dissertation Proposal

When your dissertation committee members judge the completed draft of your proposal to be acceptable for defense, and have signed it, an oral examination given by your committee members will be scheduled. The examination will be based on your proposal and the bibliography submitted along with it. The committee members will determine if the candidate has satisfied this requirement and will inform the Director of Graduate Studies in writing once a graduate student's dissertation proposal has been successfully defended.

Proposals should be approved by May 15th of spring quarter of your third year. Proposals sent back for revision and resubmission must be approved by the dissertation committee members no later than one week before the beginning of the fall quarter of the fourth year. When your committee members have approved your revised and resubmitted proposal, the committee chair will notify you and record a passing grade for the two units of 500.

2.3.3. Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy is a procedure of the Graduate School, which means that you have met all degree requirements except for the writing of the dissertation. You will advance to candidacy if you finished all course work, completed an approved proposal, and passed the Qualifying Exam. Some students, depending on their projects, will also be required to have attained competence in a foreign language by this point. The need for foreign language skills will have been determined by the candidate, the candidate's committee, and the Director of Graduate Studies at the beginning of the student's course work. Having fulfilled these requirements, you must file with the Graduate School the form entitled "Application for Admission to Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy." See the Director of Graduate Studies about this form.

Graduate students will be eligible to teach their own stand-alone courses within the department after they have been admitted to candidacy. Students should submit a syllabus to their adviser for approval and speak to the Director of Undergraduate Studies about the possibility of placement on the upcoming teaching schedule. This should ideally be done during the spring of the third year for classes to be offered in the fourth year of graduate study. While the course proposal may therefore arrive before one is admitted to candidacy in the third year, the course cannot be taught until after the dissertation proposal defense.

If you do not achieve candidacy by the beginning of your fourth year, you will be held responsible for additional tuition costs and may be ineligible for future funding. Graduate School policy states, "It is not appropriate to appoint fourth year students who have not been admitted to candidacy as Teaching Assistants." The Graduate School requires that you achieve candidacy by the end of your twelfth quarter and may exclude you from further graduate study if you do not meet this requirement.

2.4. The Fourth Year of the Doctoral Program

Once you are admitted to candidacy, your progress toward the degree will depend very much on your own pace and initiative. While we would like you to make significant progress toward completing your dissertation within one year, most students take a second year to finish.

It is increasingly expected that one publish during one's graduate career in order to get a job. A well-placed publication, ideally with a peer-reviewed journal, always strengthens your credentials. The second-year article should provide the foundation for the successful publication of an article in an appropriate scholarly venue. We also strongly urge you to consider submitting some version of a dissertation chapter for publication, ideally, in time for the piece to be accepted (not necessarily published) before your fall job search gets in full swing. You should plan to consult closely with your committee in this effort.

Registration for each of the three quarters in the fourth year is TGS 500.

2.4.1. The Dissertation Committee

In writing your dissertation you will be guided by your committee, who will be both advisers in the process of research and composition and judges of the final product. As stated in the Graduate School Bulletin:

The [Dissertation] examination committee must include no fewer than three full-time members of the Northwestern University faculty, two of whom, including the [committee] chair, must be members of the Graduate Faculty.

With the approval of The Graduate School, a faculty member who leaves the University may serve as one of the three full-time Northwestern Faculty members for one year following departure from the University.

If appropriate, a fourth member may be added to the dissertation committee.

2.4.2. The Dissertation Proposal and the Dissertation

It is useful to think of your proposal as a memorandum of understanding between you and your committee about your dissertation. The proposal is not a contract specifying provisions to be fulfilled (especially in those cases where fieldwork precludes the possibility of any such certainty). You will undoubtedly change your mind on many aspects of your dissertation as you proceed, and your committee members will expect such changes. But you must seek their advice and approval if you envisage substantial departures from the scope or method of your original proposal, and you may be asked by your committee to incorporate such changes in an amended proposal. Such formal revision of the proposal is especially important if you intend to reduce the scope of your dissertation, delete topics, or make significant changes in your coverage and treatment of secondary literature.

2.4.3. Completing the Dissertation

2.4.3.1. Communication with your Director and Committee

Formally your communication with your committee will be through your dissertation director, who chairs your committee and has the major responsibility for supervising your progress. It is the director's responsibility to make sure that the parts of your dissertation are presented to the committee in a sufficiently coherent and substantial form to permit evaluation and advice. No member of your committee is required to read any part of your dissertation until it has been reviewed by the director.

While your dissertation director has the leading role as your adviser, all members of your committee are equal judges of the final product, and each member must certify by his or her signature that she or he is willing to accept your work as meeting the standards for a doctoral dissertation in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University.

Within this framework, it will be up to you to develop a relationship with your committee that will work best for your dissertation. Some candidates will work mainly with their director, with other members of the committee serving primarily in a review function. There may be other cases in which interests and expertise on the committee are balanced in such a way that all members are actively involved at all stages of the dissertation. Whatever particular relationship you develop, it will be important for you to get your committee's criticism and advice on the bulk of your dissertation sufficiently early to take full advantage of it.

2.4.3.2. Changes in your Dissertation Committee

If a member of your committee leaves the University or resigns from your committee, the Director of Graduate Studies will appoint a replacement after consultation with you, your committee and the Graduate Committee. If you would like a faculty member who has left the University to continue on your committee and the faculty member has agreed to do so, the Graduate Committee will normally comply with your request if your dissertation is well underway, within the restrictions defined by the Graduate School. In exceptional circumstances, with TGS approval, you may also be permitted to continue working with a dissertation director who has left the University for up to one year after the faculty member's departure.

If a member of your committee is presenting difficulties such that a change in committee membership is in order, you are advised to seek the assistance of the dissertation adviser or the DGS. Every effort will be made to ensure that students are supported by an engaged and constructive group of dissertation committee members. The Graduate School also offers mediation services to help facilitate relations between students and dissertation committee members.

2.4.3.3. Time Span for Reading Dissertation Chapters

Your committee members have an obligation to read individual chapters of your dissertation within three weeks (even if they are on leave), but you are required to give them advance warning of your timetable in order for them to meet this schedule. If you plan to hand in an entire dissertation at once, you must provide a month's notice if you expect the three-week rule to be followed (and allow for a certain degree of flexibility).

2.4.3.4. Preparation of the Dissertation

The Graduate School regulations concerning the preparation of dissertations are stated in the pamphlet *Instructions for the Preparation of Dissertations*. You must also consult the latest version of the Bulletin concerning relevant requirements and deadlines for the submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School.

Your dissertation is required by the Department and the Graduate School to follow with care and accuracy the latest edition of an approved model of scholarly citation. You may choose *The Chicago Manual of Style*, *the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, *The Thesis Writer's Handbook*, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or *Kate Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Your director is required to review your dissertation for scholarly accuracy and careful editing and to sign a certificate approving it before you receive your degree. It is very much to your advantage to choose one of the approved formats for footnotes and bibliography for your dissertation early on and to follow it meticulously throughout the stages of preparing your dissertation.

2.4.3.5. Dissertation Defense and Assessment

Your last examination as a degree candidate will be the oral defense of your dissertation. After this examination, your committee will comment on your dissertation, assessing in reasonable detail its strengths and weaknesses and making recommendations concerning possible publication.

2.4.3.6. Time Limits

We hope very much that you will never have a need to worry about the Graduate School regulations concerning time limits for the Ph.D., let alone the provision for an extension. You should be aware, however, that these rules are firmly administered and that extensions require additional registrations for which the department cannot provide fellowships. Consult the current edition of the Bulletin for these regulations. All students at the end of the sixth year must submit to the Graduate School a "statement of progress toward the degree," describing plans for completion of the dissertation. This must be signed by both the student and the adviser. As of May 15, 2000, the graduate faculty policy was as follows: "All students must complete the Ph.D. within eight years of initial registration. Date of candidacy will no longer be relevant. If you do not meet the eight-year deadline, you may petition for an extension. The petition must be based on a meeting between the student and the dissertation committee, in which the student reviews the progress made on the dissertation and proposes a timetable for completion. All members of the committee must sign the petition, which if granted secures an extension of up to two years." For further details, please visit the Graduate School's website.

3. FUNDING

3.1. Funding in the Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Years

Fellowships and Assistantships are available only to students admitted to the doctoral program. The Department provides support through the fifth year for every doctoral student who has been continued into the second year and who remains in good standing in subsequent years. Full support typically means a yearlong teaching assistantship (or research assistantship with specific faculty) for second and third years (with the option by the department of assigning students to TA, RA, or teach their own course in the fourth year). The fifth year is typically available for solely dissertation research and writing.

3.2. Support Beyond the Fifth Year

In conjunction with teaching assistantships and competitive research and dissertation fellowships offered through the university, the Department also makes every effort to assist students in obtaining funding beyond the fifth year. This is provided that the student continues to remain in good academic standing and makes significant progress toward the degree. Advanced students, in turn, are encouraged to apply for external funding for their sixth year (if necessary). Many doctoral students beyond their fifth year have traditionally been able to secure part-time appointments in Northwestern's School of Continuing Studies. The demand for such teachers is unlikely to slacken, but the state of the job market has made such opportunities rarer than they used to be. It is fair to say that the School of Continuing Studies gives some preference in its appointments to qualified Northwestern doctoral students, but it is important to remember that all appointments of this kind are at the discretion of the Dean.

3.3. Fellowships

Research and Dissertation Year Fellowships

The Graduate School conducts a university-wide competition for Research Fellowships and Dissertation Year Fellowships. The deadline for this competition is usually in winter quarter. Since the Department of African American Studies is only allowed to nominate a limited number of students for each competition, students submit their applications, along with supporting letters, to the Graduate Committee in advance of the University deadline. The Director of Graduate Studies will publicize the exact dates for the competition and provide information about the application process to all students.

3.4. Other Grants

There are various sources of funds inside and outside the Department and the Graduate School to help you with extraordinary expenses for research fieldwork, travel to professional conferences to deliver papers, and other research-related expenses. Announcements of grants are posted regularly, and the Director of Graduate Studies works with the Head of Graduate Professionalization to keep both an electronic and a print listing of grant sources. In addition, the Department of African American Studies allocates \$400/year per student to present their work at a research conference. Applications for this funding should be submitted to the department chair (cc Suzette Denose and graduate adviser). The funds are not bankable from year to year. Students should consult with their advisers before applying for these funds to ensure that the selected conference is an advisable option.

3.5. Jobs in Undergraduate Housing

Graduate students may apply for positions in the Undergraduate Housing System as counselors, advisers, or

assistants to the masters of residential colleges. These positions may carry room and board, and/or a cash stipend.

3.6. Fellowships and Good Standing

Teaching assistantships and other fellowship commitments by WCAS and the Graduate School are subject to your remaining in good standing as a full-time student. The Graduate School and the department define good standing as having at least a B average and no more than one incomplete grade.

As mentioned above, other circumstances that may jeopardize your fellowships include:

- 1) Failing to make up incompletes by two weeks before the beginning of fall term;
- 2) Taking a leave of absence, since aid packages are normally designed for twelve consecutive quarters without provision for “banking” aid for future use;
- 3) Failing to achieve candidacy before fall of your fourth year, which will cause you to incur further tuition liabilities that the department normally will not be able to fund;
- 4) Carrying an incomplete beyond your candidacy date, which will cause you to incur further tuition liabilities that the department normally will not be able to fund. The Department will assign you low priority in the award of teaching assistantships if you fall behind schedule in meeting the expected or required deadlines for the Proposal, and/or the completion of course work, and/or the Qualifying Examination.

4.0. Graduate Student Advising Dashboard

Advisers and advisees should meet at least once per quarter to discuss student progress using the Advising Dashboard. Students are responsible for arriving to the advising meeting with the Dashboard completed to the best of their abilities. Faculty advisers will then discuss each metric with students and recommend goals and areas for development. During the student evaluation discussion at the end of the year, each student will submit a completed Dashboard (and a CV) for review by the faculty.

Student Name _____
Year of Graduate Study (1st, 2nd, etc) _____
Adviser Name _____

FALL Meeting Date _____
WINTER Meeting Date _____
SPRING Meeting Date _____

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

18-COURSE PROGRESS – Please list course titles below

Requirement	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5	Course 6
6 Core Courses						
4 Track ¹ Courses						
4 Discipline Courses ²						
3 Electives						
1 Research Methods Course						

¹ In order to fulfill the 4 track, 4 discipline, and 3 elective course requirements, students may participate in up to 2 independent studies with core or affiliated African American Studies faculty members. In order to work on the dissertation proposal, students may participate in a third independent study with the graduate adviser. Students are strongly encouraged to use the independent study as a mechanism to spend concentrated time on the dissertation proposal.

² Courses within one’s chosen discipline of specialization

I AM CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENT
(Second Year Article, Qualifying Exam, Dissertation Proposal, and Dissertation):

*

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES (for the current academic year)

METHODS CLASSES (IN ADDITION TO ONE REQUIRED COURSE)

- 1.
- 2.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 1.
- 2.

PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS

- 1.
- 2.

RELEASED PUBLICATIONS

- 1.
- 2.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP WITH A FACULTY MEMBER:

- 1.
- 2.

EXTERNAL FUNDING (APPLIED FOR):

- 1.
- 2.

EXTERNAL FUNDING (RECEIVED):

- 1.
- 2.

INTERNAL COMPETITIVE FUNDING (APPLIED FOR):³

- 1.
- 2.

INTERNAL COMPETITIVE FUNDING (RECEIVED):

- 1.
- 2.

LIST TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS FOR THIS YEAR (List course, faculty mentor, & quarter)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

LIST SELF-DESIGNED COURSE TAUGHT THIS YEAR (Please submit syllabus to faculty adviser for review)

*

HAS YOUR TEACHING BEEN OBSERVED AND EVALUATED THIS YEAR BY A DEPT. FACULTY MEMBER?

*

OTHER ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS FOR FACULTY ADVISER

- 1.
- 2.

STUDENT'S GOALS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR

- 1.
- 2.

³ These are fellowships outside of the standard 5-year Graduate School Fellowship offered by the university or the \$400 conference fund allocation provided by the department. These are competitive fellowships offered throughout the university.

5. DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

5.1 Expected Standards of Collegiality

The Department of African American Studies expects members of its intellectual community to interact in a mutually respectful, constructive and inclusive manner. Our project of African American Studies brings together a diverse range of individuals from different parts of the United States and the wider world, working on many contested issues, such as identity, race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion and nationality. It is important that the dynamic discussions that can arise from these issues are conducted with mutual tolerance. We are committed to maintaining an engaging and collegial atmosphere in which sensitive and controversial ideas can be debated while acknowledging the intellectual and personal integrity of the participants. We expect our graduate students to uphold these standards of collegiality.

Graduate students should see themselves as stakeholders and citizens of the department. Accordingly, they are encouraged, like faculty members, to attend departmental events such as talks, seminars, workshops, and conferences, whenever possible. These activities should be seen as opportunities for professional development.

5.2. Department Organization

The Graduate Program of the Department of African American Studies operates under the authority and rules of the Graduate School. Responsibility for curricular matters, admissions, fellowships, and other academic and financial matters rests with the Graduate Faculty of the Department, but much of the day-to-day business is delegated to the Graduate Committee. The Director of Graduate Studies is the executive officer of the Graduate Program.

The Director of Graduate Studies will regularly hold meetings with the graduate students. Students are also encouraged to raise any concerns they might have with the Director of Graduate Studies as the need arises.

The Graduate Studies Committee will be comprised of the Director of Graduate Studies, the Head of Graduate Professionalization, the Head of Graduate Admissions, a departmental affiliate member, and at least one representative from among the graduate student body. The Graduate Affairs committee reserves the right to move into faculty-only executive session.

5.3. Prizes

The Department of African American Studies will annually award, at its discretion, a prize for the best Second-Year Article written by a second-year graduate student (following the advice of the Graduate Committee). This prize carries an award of \$300. This prize will not be necessarily awarded every year.

The Department will also award, at its discretion, a prize of \$500, for a distinguished dissertation. Nominations must be submitted by the director of the candidate's dissertation committee and will be judged by a panel appointed by the Graduate Committee. This prize will not be necessarily awarded every year.

5.4. Placement Services

Ideally, graduate training in African American Studies culminates in the attainment of a tenure-track job at a research university or a liberal arts college. While the vicissitudes of a difficult job market complicate the achievement of this goal, we believe that three vital milestones reached before graduation will put students in the strongest possible position: 1) a provocative and original dissertation; 2) publication of at least one article in an important journal in the field; 3) presentations of academic papers at national conferences.

The Head of Graduate Professionalization, the Director of Graduate Studies, your dissertation director along with your other teachers and advisers, and the departmental faculty in general aim to provide all possible assistance to Ph.D. candidates in their fifth year and beyond who are seeking academic positions. The Head of Graduate Professionalization will function as a placement coordinator and will hold meetings to discuss placement issues and workshops for putting together CVs and letters of application for positions. She or he will also review your dossier at the Placement Office, conduct practice interviews to help you prepare for actual interviews, and be available for consultation about specific issues as they arise. It is important that students who plan to go on the fall job market begin compiling a job application file (CV, cover letter, dissertation synopsis, writing sample, and statement of Teaching Philosophy) during the summer, in consultation with their Dissertation director.

The Department of African American Studies Guide to Doctoral Study supplements the Graduate Student Bulletin, which contains general regulations and deadlines on a wide range of academic and financial matters pertaining to study. The Guide contains information about departmental regulations and requirements for the doctoral program and degree. When departmental regulations concerning a particular aspect of the program change during your tenure of study at Northwestern, you will ordinarily follow the rule in effect when you matriculated, except by permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. The Guide sometimes refers to general regulations of the Graduate School, but it must always be used in conjunction with the most recent edition of the Bulletin.

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