

Graduate Handbook

Spring 2018



American Studies

Doctoral Program
Brown University

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Important Dates

March, Year 1

Students pursuing MA in American Studies with 8 credits or more file for graduation.

December, Year Two

Deadline to submit AMST 0190 Course Syllabus and Course Proposal to the DUS.

February 28th, Year Two

Deadline to submit Field Proposal materials to the DGS.

March, Year 2

Students pursuing MA in Public Humanities or American studies MA students with less than 8 credits in Year 1 file for graduation.

1st Semester, Year Three

Preliminary exams are taken within the first semester of a student's third year.

2nd Semester, Year Three

The dissertation proposal should be submitted to the DGS within one semester of completing the preliminary exams.

[More details available on corresponding pages](#)

PhD in American Studies

The Department of American Studies at Brown University undertakes the interdisciplinary and transnational study, analysis and presentation of the diverse cultures, groups, and experiences that make up American life. One of the oldest American Studies programs in the nation, its graduate students and faculty represent a community of innovative and publicly engaged scholars committed to defining new directions in research and teaching.

The primary goal of the PhD program in American Studies is to train students to become knowledgeable, engaged, and productive scholars and public humanists. Graduates of the department now teach in a range of college and university departments including history, English, women's studies, ethnic studies, urban studies, environmental studies, communications, and American Studies, as well as hold jobs in archives, museums, historical societies, and other cultural institutions.

The PhD program includes:

- Coursework including two required courses.
- Preliminary Examinations in three fields.
- Teaching as a Teaching Assistant and Teaching Fellow.
- Dissertation Proposal
- Dissertation

The Ph.D. program in American Studies provides students with rigorous training in the frameworks and methods of interdisciplinary work while allowing them the freedom to develop and follow their own academic interests and goals. Graduate students design their own course of study within the guidelines set up by the department, working with the DGS and faculty in American Studies and across the University.

Course Requirements

Students must receive at least 24 credits to advance to candidacy. Generally, during their first two years, graduate students seeking the PhD in American Studies will take eight or nine seminars; five or six reading courses; and two advising independent study courses. In the third year, students take six reading courses as they prepare for their preliminary exams and write their dissertation proposals. In year four they take three more reading courses in the fall semester, for a total of 25 credits. This is a suggested trajectory; individual schedules may vary.

Suggested First Three Years of Study

Year 1 Fall	Year 1 Spring	Year 2 Fall	Year 2 Spring	Year 3 Fall	Year 3 Spring
AMST 2010	Seminar	AMST 2520	Reading or Seminar	Reading	Reading
Seminar	Seminar	Reading or Seminar	Reading	Reading	Reading
Seminar	Seminar	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
Advising (Independent study with the DGS)	Advising (Independent study with the DGS)	Reading	Reading	Preliminary Examination Preparation	Dissertation Proposal
		T.A.	T.A.	T.A.	T.A. or T.F.

Two Required Seminars:

AMST 2010: (usually taken in Year 1)

Students will be introduced to models of interdisciplinary scholarship and interdisciplinary methods. By interacting with a variety of disciplines, students build dynamic new approaches to their topics of study. The instructor of AMST 2010, a member of the faculty appointed in the Department of American Studies, will take into account the interests of first year students when designing the course and include foundational texts that might appear on field lists.

AMST 2520: (usually taken in Year 2)

Students learn the contours of the field of American Studies; interdisciplinary pedagogy; and begin the conceptualization of their own intellectual interests as they develop their preliminary exam lists and prepare a draft of a syllabus. The syllabus will be submitted as part of the preliminary exam process and used as the basis for a course that students may teach in their third or fourth year.

Six to Eight Other Seminars:

(usually five in Year 1 and one to three in Year 2)

Taken around the university, most seminars will feature small groups of students discussing texts, so PhD students can hone reading, writing, discussion and analytical skills as well as understand the methods, historiography, and content of their fields. Other seminars might focus on proficiencies needed as students enter the academy or public humanities, including language, digital or publication skills. We expect that students will include at least three disciplines that are part of the American Studies project. At the end of these six seminars, students should have written at least three papers or prepared public projects (or a combination of the two) that could be revised for conference presentation, journal publication, inclusion in a dissertation, or become part of a public humanities portfolio and should choose their six seminars to ensure that happens. Students should consider how these papers/projects contribute to their development as scholars.

Two Advising Independent Studies: (taken in Year 1, one each semester)

Taken with the DGS, these courses represent the individual and group advising done by the DGS with the first year students, in which students receive guidance on course selection, including the preparation of at least three papers or projects; departmental expectations; professionalization; discussion of possible preliminary examination topics and advisors; preparation of a summer reading list leading to preliminary exam field essays; and information on choosing a dissertation topic.

Fourteen to Sixteen Reading Courses — AMST 2920: (usually five to seven in Year 2, six in Year 3 and three in Year 4)

Taken with preliminary exam and dissertation advisors, these courses each include a schedule of meetings, agreed on by the student and the faculty members, designed to prepare the student to take examinations and write a dissertation proposal on the timetable outlined below. Two of the readings in the second year—one in each semester—can be preliminary in nature and carry a lighter load than the others. Three designate the work undertaken to begin the dissertation in year 4.

Language Study:

The department encourages students to gain or maintain expertise in more than one language. Students may replace one seminar (and as many reading courses as necessary) with language courses at any level. Those beginning a new language necessary for their scholarly work will need to spend at least one summer studying language. The Department will assist in locating funding for such study.

Year 1 Semester 1: AMST2010; Two Seminars; Advising Independent Study with DGS

Semester 2: Three Seminars; Advising Independent Study with DGS

Year 2 Semester 1: AMST2520; Three Reading Courses (or substitute one Seminar) toward preliminary exams

Semester 2: One Seminar; Three Reading Courses (or substitute one Seminar) toward preliminary exams.

Year 3, Semester 1: Preliminary Exam Preparation; Three Reading Courses.

Semester 2: Dissertation Proposal; Three Reading Courses.

Master's Degrees

Brown University PhD students receive a Master of Arts on the way to the PhD.

American Studies students choose one of two MA degrees (but may not receive both degrees).

MA in American Studies

Students will receive an MA in American Studies after passing eight courses, usually at the end of Year 1. In anticipation of good progress toward the degree, students should file petitions with the Graduate School in March in expectation of completing eight courses in Year 1.

Those who don't complete eight courses in the first year, may petition in March of Year 2 to receive their MA at the end of Year 2.

MA in Public Humanities

Some students seek the M.A. in Public Humanities. These students must complete the following requirements:

- AMST 2650 Introduction to Public Humanities (taken as one of the eight seminars)
- AMST 1550 Methods in Public Humanities (if taken in Year 1, substitutes for one of the advising independent study courses; if taken in Year 2, substitutes for a reading course)
- Practicum (taken in the summer after Year 1 in consultation with the Public Humanities program)
- One or more Preliminary Exam fields must substantively treat public humanities

Students will petition the Graduate School in March of Year 2 for the M.A. in Public Humanities.

Students pursuing the MA in Public Humanities should consult the separate MA in Public Humanities Handbook for further information.

Schedule to Preliminary Exams

Year 1: Students will work with the DGS to consider their courses in light of possible fields and dissertation topics. The DGS will help students prepare a summer reading list.

Summer: Begin conceiving three fields. Students pursuing MA in Public Humanities complete practicum.

Year 2, First Semester: Students will begin reading courses with potential preliminary exam advisors to locate beginning books and questions; in AMST2520, students will workshop their field questions and beginning books, as well as draft a syllabus.

Second Semester. Students will present to the Department of American Studies for review by February 28th, the following:

- Three field essays laying out important questions
- Three field lists, see options below.
- Three signed cover sheets
- One overview essay explaining how the fields fit together and how they help prepare them for teaching and research

Year 3, First Semester:

- One month before the exam, students send the committee a copy of their syllabus.
- One week before the exam, students send the committee their dissertation pre-proposal.
- Students will take their preliminary exams by the end of the first semester of their third year.

Preliminary Exams

Students will design preliminary examinations in American Studies to train them as scholar/teachers able to present their ideas as part of a course design and/or as the beginnings of a scholarly project. The examinations will allow students to:

- Gain a broad overview of three fields of study enabling them to teach introductory courses in one or more University departments or interdisciplinary programs
- Provide an understanding of the state of scholarship allowing the location of both potential models for their own work as well as possible dissertation topics
- Prepare a syllabus to show mastery of teaching and present a pre-proposal for a dissertation.

The exams will last for two hours.

Examiners will be three members of the Brown faculty. Former members of the Brown faculty are eligible with permission of the chair.

Preparation of Preliminary Exams

Option 1: Building Out

Students and advisors agree on a topic and series of questions to explore. Students and advisors begin with five to ten texts and then expand the list as they continue to meet. Field lists may eventually include a range of different

kinds of texts, in addition to scholarly monographs, including, but not limited to: films, broadcasts, exhibits, websites, fiction, poetry and plays. Students and faculty will meet several times to select the beginning books and to draft an essay that explains the questions to be considered and how this reading will prepare students to teach, do research, and present public projects in both disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields. When the field list and field essay have been approved by the faculty of the Department of American Studies, the student and faculty will continue to meet to prepare for the exam.

The American Studies faculty believe there are several forms preliminary examinations might take, according to the pedagogical aims of the examiner, the disciplinary conventions of the field, and the interests of the student. Providing options for designing the fields will push students to reflect on their learning process, and questions of methodology important for an interdisciplinary scholar. Below, we have outlined three different possibilities. Students will prepare fields with three faculty advisors and they and their advisors may choose from the options below, combine the options, or come up with an entirely new method. Each field could have a different format.

Option 2: Traditional Lists

Students and advisors meet several times to discuss the field as the advisor outlines it and as the student modifies it to meet his or her interests. Together they come up with a list of books to be read. The student prepares a field essay, attaches the list, and submits it to the faculty of the Department of American Studies for approval.

The student and the advisor meet regularly, often as the student finishes reading a subset of the list of books. Sometimes the advisor asks the student to prepare questions, essays, or a syllabus, based on the books on the list, and these writings serve as the basis of the discussion, both before and during the exam.

A summary of the American Studies' field process is available on the website for distribution to advisors in other departments.

Option 3: Essay/Project Based

Students and advisors choose a scholarly paper or project previously completed by the student and base their reading and discussions on a revision of the paper or project.

Students might read contextually, as they consider how to revise the paper for publication or exhibition; might consult new primary sources; might consider a theoretical framework for the research; or all three, as they prepare their reading list. Students and faculty meet several times to select books and to draft an essay that explains the questions to be considered and how this reading will prepare students to revise the paper. This essay, including an abstract of the paper or project to be revised, and a beginning list of books to be read, will be submitted to the faculty of the Department of American Studies for approval.

Students and advisors will continue to meet to discuss readings and revisions. At the exam, the student will present the thesis, evidence, and method of the proposed scholarly paper or project, how it enters the existing scholarly conversation and/or addresses the public, and discuss with the advisor further possible revisions and publication or presentation plans.

The field essays may differ somewhat depending on which exam option students choose, but each student will prepare either a short list of beginning texts or a complete list of texts to be read; an essay (1-2 pages) about each of the three fields; and an overview essay. The individual field advisor will sign off on each field essay and list of books. The overview essay will explain how the fields fit together, how they are interdisciplinary and fit into the field of American Studies, and how they prepare students as scholar/teachers, able to teach introductory courses, conduct research and/or make public presentations. The field essays will state the questions that have guided the building of the field list and discuss how the list was designed (including which option was chosen). The overview essay, the field essays, the lists of books, and the signed cover pages will be reviewed by the faculty of the Department of American Studies to ensure that students are making good progress and finding the advisors they need. The DGS will inform students of the process for receiving approval for the preliminary exam proposals.

Field Essays

With each option, students will present the field essays, as signed by advisors, plus an overview essay, for review by the Department of American Studies faculty by February 28th of Year 2. They will take the exam by the end of the first semester of Year 3.

Teaching

The Department values the development of teaching skills in addition to original scholarship. Over the course of their time in the program, graduate students serve as teaching assistants and usually have the opportunity to develop and teach undergraduate courses reflecting their own research and scholarship. The Graduate School requires that doctoral students serve at least one semester as a Teaching Assistant. The Department may require additional teaching assistantships and assignments as students advance in the program. In the required AMST 2520 course, students prepare and present a course of their own design, which, after approval from the University, may be taught after successful completion of the students' preliminary examinations. The Department recommends that students start participating in the programs of the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning in their second year.

While the experiences of teaching assistants vary by course and instructor, responsibilities delegated to a T.A. should not exceed the Graduate School's limit of 15-20 hours per week on average.

Teaching Assistantships

Each semester the DGS surveys potential TAs to determine their teaching preferences for the following semester. Taking into account previous assignments, the DGS will make every effort to award students their first or second choice.

The most common T.A. appointments in American Studies involve attending a faculty-led lecture twice a week and leading two discussion sections on Fridays. Larger lecture courses will often have more than one T.A. As part of your training, the faculty member to whom you are assigned may ask you to prepare and deliver a lecture, help with the designing of assignments, manage or respond to online discussion posts, or participate in class discussions.

Teaching Assistants are required to hold weekly office hours arranged in consultation with the faculty member. Faculty members should hold regular meetings with T.A.s to plan sections, discuss readings, review grading, etc.

Decisions about final grades ultimately rest with the faculty member. T.A.s with concerns regarding their appointment should speak to the DGS.

AMST 0190

American Studies graduate students design and teach a freshman/sophomore course. Students will work on the syllabus in AMST 2520 and submit it for approval from the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the curriculum committee at the close of the fall semester of their second year. A revised version is submitted to the student's advisory committee one month in advance of the preliminary exam. AMST 0190 courses are taught during the third or fourth year of study.

AMST 0190 is a freshman/sophomore writing course in the Department of American Studies which means:

- Several (at least 3, but probably 5 is better) short writing assignments of different types – one should come quite early in the semester.
- 20-30 pages of writing in total and you may want to include the possibility for students to revise their work.
- You may want to include some reading on writing strategies.
- No more than about 100 pages of reading a week.
- Remember this is a seminar course and proceeds by way of discussion on a focused topic.
- An interdisciplinary course includes a range of different kinds of texts and assignments.
- This course will fit into a Brown University category of “Writing Designated Courses” and should meet those requirements. (See below).*

***Writing-designated (WRIT) courses** provide students with feedback about their writing and opportunities to apply that feedback on the same assignment or when completing writing assignments later in the course. Offered in nearly all departments, WRIT courses for a particular semester may be viewed in the Banner class schedule by selecting "Writing-Designated Courses" in the Attribute Type section.”

The Sheridan Center for Teaching & Learning

Students will receive teacher training through their teaching assistantships and discuss pedagogical methods and inclusive pedagogy and course design in AMST 2520.

Additional training is available through the Sheridan Center, which offers a four module Teaching Seminar. Students who complete it receive a Teaching Certificate and qualify to move on to a subsequent Course Design Seminar.

The Sheridan Center also offers workshops and other programs throughout the year on subjects like teaching literature or teaching foreign languages.

Dissertation Proposal

During Year 3, Semester 2, students will prepare a dissertation proposal addressing questions generated during the Preliminary Examination. The DGS will call at least one meeting of the cohort to review the process and provide advice. The proposal should be ten to fifteen pages consisting of a key question as well as a discussion of evidence and method. A short bibliography of crucial texts should be included, but the proposal itself should not be simply or centrally a review of the literature, but rather in the form of a proposal explaining the project's scholarly contribution. The proposal should also include a one paragraph abstract.

Students should present a draft of the proposal to their committee, including one faculty member who will serve as chair and two who will be readers. Committee members may be current Brown faculty or former Brown faculty by permission of the chair. In preparation for approval of the proposal, the chair should call a dissertation proposal meeting before the end of Year 3, Semester 2.

At the Dissertation Proposal Meeting, the students and faculty should discuss a research agenda and timetable for completion, as well as the challenges of the particular project. The student and faculty should agree on how and when the faculty will:

- meet with the student,
- review chapters and comment, and
- discuss needed changes in drafts.

After the meeting, students must file a copy of their dissertation proposal with the DGS, who will make it, and an abstract of the project, available to the other faculty members in the department.

While preparing their dissertation proposal in Year 3, Semester 2, students will sign up for three reading courses.

Dissertation

Students should begin their dissertations in the summer after their third year. Dissertations (including format, content, and length) may vary depending on disciplinary conventions and students should consult the chair of the dissertation committee for advice. The Department of American Studies expects that students will meet with the chair of their dissertation committees at least once a semester (and probably more frequently) and recommends that the dissertation committee chair call a meeting of the entire committee with the student once a year, even if some of those in attendance need to phone or Skype into the conversation.

Progress

The primary responsibility for meeting all benchmarks rests with the student. The Department's Director of Graduate Studies will serve as the primary advisor for first year students and oversee the advising of all other students, particularly with regards to interactions with the Graduate School and issues of progress toward degree. The instructor of AMST 2520 will assist in advising second year students. Once students have located a preliminary exam and/or dissertation advisor, that faculty member serves as the student's primary scholarly advisor. Students are expected to consult with the DGS at regular intervals and to keep the DGS apprised of any issues that would prevent them from meeting deadlines. Grades of incomplete should be resolved as soon as possible and certainly within a semester. Any student not meeting the deadlines outlined above will be considered not in good standing and will receive a letter of explanation from the DGS, sent on behalf of the department. Should a student be out of good standing for two consecutive semesters, and after consultation with the Graduate School, the Department will mandate either a Leave of Absence or termination.

The faculty will meet once a year, in a March meeting called by the DGS, to consider preliminary exam proposals and the progress of each of the current PhD students enrolled in the program. Faculty will review the preliminary exam proposals to ensure they have the breadth and depth needed to certify expertise in American Studies. The discussion of the work of other students will be undertaken in order to make suggestions to the DGS and the student for possible publication or presentation of projects; flag potential problems and suggest possible solutions; and consider changes to the graduate curriculum.

SEMESTER ONE (YEAR ONE, FALL)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete AMST 2010 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Two Seminars
For students pursuing a Public Humanities MA one seminar will be AMST 2650 <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with DGS for independent advising (AMST 2920) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Graduate Student Mentor at least once. • Try to make time for some campus events like those scheduled by the Grad Consortium, Center for Public Humanities, Sarah Doyle, the LGBTQ Center, GSC and attend some guest lectures, job talks, or conferences. |
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SEMESTER TWO (YEAR ONE, SPRING)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Three Seminars
Public Humanities Students will register for AMST 1550 either as one of these seminars or in the place of a reading course in the fall of year two. <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with the DGS for independent advising (AMST 2920) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students not pursuing the MA in Public Humanities file for spring graduation. • Decide whom you want to conduct your two reading courses with. Speak to these faculty to see if they are interested and available and, if so, begin planning what your reading courses will entail. |
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SUMMER ONE (BETWEEN YEARS ONE & TWO)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Begin preparatory prelim reading; Public Humanities summer practicums | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start thinking about what your AMST 0190 topic will be. |
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SEMESTER THREE (YEAR TWO, FALL)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TA <input type="checkbox"/> Complete AMST 2520 <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Two Reading Courses and One Seminar or Three Reading Courses. PH students who have not already done so, complete AMST 1550. <input type="checkbox"/> Course Proposal and Syllabus for AMST 0190 due to the DUS by the end of the semester. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on the three field essays and accompanying lists and overview essay of all three fields that will be due, signed by advisers, on Feb. 28 of semester 4. • Start reading for fields • Complete Sheridan Certificate One |
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SEMESTER FOUR (YEAR TWO, SPRING)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TA <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Three Reading Courses or Two Reading Courses and One Seminar (you need to take a seminar in either the fall or spring but not both). <input type="checkbox"/> Submit Field Essays to DGS by Feb. 28th | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise a plan for completing fields exam preparation. |
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SEMESTER FIVE (YEAR THREE, FALL)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TA <input type="checkbox"/> Take Preliminary Exams <input type="checkbox"/> Submit syllabus to Exam Committee (one month prior to exam) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit pre-dissertation proposal to Exam Committee (one week prior to exam) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Sheridan Certificate One if you haven't already |
|--|--|

SEMESTER SIX (YEAR THREE, SPRING)

REQUIREMENTS

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SUGGESTIONS

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teach AMST 0190 or TA <input type="checkbox"/> Complete Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> Decide when you will take your fellowship year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Come up with a plan of work for your dissertation • Decide if you would like to have dissertation readers on your committee from other institutions. |
|--|---|

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR DISSERTATING YEARS

- Revise and publish a seminar essay as an article. Summer Years 2 - 4
 - Publish a dissertation chapter as an article. Year 4+
 - Enroll in advanced Sheridan Certificate Programs. Years 3+
 - Present at a graduate conference. Any year (especially 1-4)
- Present at a regional or national conference. Any year (especially 3+)
- Participate in workshops or un-conferences outside of Brown. Any year
- Make an appointment to go over your CV at the Career Lab. Years 2+
 - Apply for summer research travel grants. Years 2+
 - Attend the annual ASA meeting. Years 3+
- Submit a paper or organize a panel to submit to ASA. Years 3+
- Take a service position in the department or university. Years 2+
- Apply for the Brown Executive Scholars Program, if interested in administrative work. Years 4+
 - Submit final draft of Dissertation in semester 11
 - Conduct job search in semester 12

Funding

Students who are admitted to Brown's doctoral programs are guaranteed [five years of support](#), including a stipend, tuition remission, health-services fee, and health-insurance subsidy. The Department seeks to provide students with a sixth year of funding, providing they remain in good standing, but encourage students to seek internal and external sources of funding for the 6th year and throughout their grad career.

For funding after the fifth year students must fill out the [Dissertation Completion Proposal or Dissertation Extension Proposal](#). See the Grad School site for [calendars](#) of due dates and forms.

The Graduate School, as part of its [incentive](#) program, guarantees a sixth year of funding if a student receives a full year of funding from an outside competitive source at any point in their study, or is accepted into the Open Graduate Ed. program.

Internal Funding Sources

The Graduate School offers a number of competitive sources of [funding](#). These include Interdisciplinary Opportunities Fellowships at one of the campus research Centers, Deans Faculty Fellowships and other [opportunities](#). See the Grad School website for details and deadlines and consult with the DGS on procedures for applying. Other opportunities on campus include:

[Cogut Center for the Humanities Graduate Fellowships](#)

The Cogut Center for the Humanities selects a few graduate fellows each year. The application period is early in the spring semester and is open to any students who have advanced to candidacy. The application includes a dissertation abstract, a statement, two letters of recommendation, a letter of support from your DGS, and a writing sample. Selected fellows are expected to participate in Cogut workshops and work closely with the fellows and faculty at the center.

[Open Graduate Education](#)

The Open Graduate Education Program allows students to pursue a master's degree in a secondary field. Students interested in pursuing a master's in one of the participating programs must submit their application materials early in the second semester of the year previous to entering the program. See the Grad School website for due dates and more information.

External Funding

Brown's [Office of Vice President for Research](#) provides information about various resources for external funding. American Studies students may find [Grants.gov](#) and the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) of particular interest. The [library](#) also keeps track of some external funding databases.

Travel Funding

Students may seek travel funding from the following sources:

The Department:

The department strives to provide all graduate students with noncompetitive support for travel to conferences and for dissertation research and other professionalization needs. Amounts and guidelines are announced each year.

The Graduate School:

From the Grad School: Graduate students who present at academic conferences can apply to the Graduate School for up to \$650 to cover related travel expenses. Given funding limitations, application does not guarantee support.

Eligible doctoral and master's students will be approved and reimbursed through the Conference Travel Fund for up to \$650 per year (July 1 through June 30) as determined by the end date of travel. Reimbursement will not be granted for merely attending a conference, but students may use the funds for multiple conferences in one year.

In order to insure that the Graduate School's limited conference-travel funds are distributed as equitably as possible, only doctoral students in their first through fifth years of study and master's students are automatically eligible to apply for conference travel funding. On a case-by-case basis, the Graduate School will consider applications from sixth-year doctoral students, but the application must be signed by the student's DGS and must include a brief statement from the DGS regarding how the conference will assist the student in the timely (i.e. within the 6th year) completion of graduate studies.

The Graduate Student Council:

Individuals who are ineligible for financial support from the Graduate School of Brown University may request conference funding from the GSC. The individual requesting money from the GSC must be a currently enrolled graduate student. Individuals may make one funding request per school year for up to \$250. Applicants may only request funding for prospective conferences.

Outside Sources:

Many conferences offer competitive graduate student travel funding.

The ASA [Baxter travel grant](#) offers up to \$300 in travel reimbursement to advanced students presenting at the annual meeting. Other professional organizations—OAH, MLA, etc.—have similar programs.

Research Funding

[The Graduate Research Travel Grant](#)

The Grad School provides **supplemental** funding for scholarly research travel. Students in their first through fifth years of study are eligible for a Graduate Research Travel Grant. Applications from sixth year students will be considered if accompanied by a brief letter from the student's director of graduate study or research advisor regarding how the research will assist the student in the completion of doctoral studies. Grants of up to \$1,800 match dollar-for-dollar awards for research travel from external or University resources outside of the Graduate School. See the link above for more information.

[Joukowsky Summer Research Award Program](#)

"Students conducting research or traveling for other academic purposes during the summer months may be eligible for this award. Academic purposes could include attending language programs, summer workshops, or other activities. Doctoral students applying for summer research after the first through fifth years of study are eligible for the awards." Applications are due February 28th.

[The International Travel Fund](#)

From the Grad School: "Provides funding for graduate student conference presentations and research studies abroad. Awards range from \$200 to \$1,000. Funding decisions are based on the distance of the international conference from the continental United States, the budget requested, and the availability of funding at the time the request is received by the Graduate School.

Only one award will be made per student within an award cycle (September-August). Master's students and doctoral students in years 1 through 5 of their studies are automatically eligible to apply for the international travel fund award.

Doctoral students in the sixth year are also eligible but are required to have a letter of support from the Director of Graduate Studies of the home program, in addition to the international travel fund application."

External Funding

The same resources listed for full year funding may assist students in allocating short-term research travel funds. The [library](#); Brown's [OVPR](#) ; [Grants.gov](#) ; [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) ; [The Smithsonian Institute](#).

Status

The following serves only as a summary of the University's leave policies. Please consult the links herein and the Graduate School [Handbook](#) for further details.

[Leaves of Absence](#)

During the course of graduate study a student may need to request a leave of absence. [Applications](#) for leaves of absence (with the exception of urgent medical or psychological leaves) should be sent to the Graduate School at least four weeks before the start of the semester in which the leave is to be taken.

Leaves of absence are normally granted for one to two semesters and a summer. To return to active status, and to be eligible for funding in the next academic term, students must notify the Graduate School in writing by May 1 for a fall-semester return or November 1 for a spring-semester return.

Categories of Leave

- Parental Relief Leave:** This leave is granted for childbirth or adoption. (See next page for more details.)
- Family Leave:** This leave is granted for family needs. (See next page for more details.)
- Medical or Psychological Leave:** This leave is granted for a serious physical or psychological problem encountered by a graduate student.
- Professional Development Leave:** This leave is granted for an approved educational or professional development opportunity that advances the student's pedagogic goals.
- Probationary Leave:** This leave is granted to students for problems with academic performance.
- Personal Leave:** This leave is an elective leave taken for personal reasons.

All leaves except personal leaves (except in exceptional cases and by petition) allow students to defer funding commitments and should not affect their academic progress or standing.

[Parental Relief Policy](#)

Graduate students in good or satisfactory academic standing who are supported by a stipend are eligible for parental relief for the care of a newly born infant or an adopted child. Graduate students may request parental relief up to two times during their tenure as a student at Brown. The relief provides a stipend for one semester or a summer and “stops the clock” on the student’s academic requirements. See the link above for full details, procedures, and application forms.

Eligibility: All students in good or satisfactory standing who are supported by a stipend are eligible for parental relief for the care of a newly born infant or adopted child under 16 years of age. May be requested twice during tenure as a grad student.

Length of Leave: One semester or a summer.

Financial Terms: Fellowship stipend or TA stipend continues and is funded by the Graduate School.

[Family Leave of Absence](#)

A student in the Graduate School at Brown University may take an unpaid family leave of absence for the birth or adoption of a child, for childcare, or for care of an immediate family member (spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent) with a serious health condition. Students may take a family leave of absence for one or two semesters.

Eligibility: Any currently enrolled student with a family emergency. Limit of one student per family.

Length of Leave: Up to 2 semesters, duration to be determined in consultation with the advisor and DGS. Extensions or multiple leaves can be requested.

Financial Terms: No financial support given during the leave period, but “clock” is stopped.

Sexual Harassment and Student Conduct Resources

Sexual and Gender Based Harassment

The American Studies Department, its faculty and staff, is committed to a harassment-free educational and work environment. Our policies on harassment follow those of the university. According to the Grad School: “Brown is committed to promoting a safe, welcoming and inclusive campus culture. It is the responsibility of every member of the Brown University community to foster this type of environment. This requires our community to be able to identify and address prohibited conduct. Prohibited conduct under our Title IX policy includes gender and sexual harassment, sexual violence, relationship and interpersonal violence, and stalking. This type of conduct will not be tolerated.”

Visit the [Sexual Misconduct and Title IX](#) page for the most up-to-date information about Brown University's *Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship and Interpersonal Violence and Stalking Policy* and resources for students affected by these issues.

In the American Studies Department, the Chair and Director of Graduate Studies as well as the rest of the faculty are designated as “Responsible Employees” under Title IX regulations. They have undergone training that qualifies them to respond to student reports of prohibited conduct. Please see the specific sections of the University [policy](#) for more information and procedures for reporting. The Grad School publishes a [guide](#) for students as well.

For immediate aid or information students can call the Sexual Assault Response Line, administered by University Counseling and Psychological Services at **401-863-6000** for confidential crisis support.

See the [student resources page](#) for other sources of immediate support.

For general rules of student conduct, see the Grad School’s guidelines for [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#).

See also the Grad School’s resources for [crisis support](#).

Graduate Consortium

The Graduate Consortium is a long-standing student-run collective within the American Studies PhD program. Each year doctoral students in American Studies elect two of their colleagues to serve both as representatives to the Graduate Student Council and as facilitators of the consortium. The consortium typically holds monthly meetings to discuss matters of interest to graduate students. Consortium representatives also attend monthly faculty meetings and serve as liaisons between faculty and student needs. In the past the consortium has advocated for student interests regarding curricular standards, office space, and student rights and responsibilities as teachers, teaching assistants and workers. The consortium also helps facilitate mentoring relationships and plan events aimed at social cohesion or professional development.

Student Mentoring

In their first year of study, each incoming PhD student is paired with an advanced graduate student who shares their intellectual interests. New students meet with their mentors at least once in the fall of their first semester and typically again as a group in the spring. Through their mentoring relationships, incoming students establish lines of communication that will continue to help them navigate graduate study as they advance.

Resources

American Studies Chair: Matt Guterl
Matthew_Guterl@brown.edu

Director of Graduate Studies: Sandy Zipp
Samuel_zipp@brown.edu

Director of the Center for Public Humanities: Jim Egan (Interim)
James_Egan@brown.edu

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Beverly Haviland
Beverly_Haviland@brown.edu

Department Manager: Jeff Cabral
Jeffrey_Cabral@brown.edu

American Studies Specialist Librarian:
 Christopher Geissler
Christopher_Geissler@brown.edu

[American Studies Library Guide](#)

[The Graduate School](#)

Dean of the Graduate School: Andrew Campbell
Andrew_Campbell@brown.edu

Payroll Specialist: Gail Lee
Gail_Lee@brown.edu

[Graduate School Handbook](#)

[Academic and Student Conduct Codes](#)

[Psychological Services](#)

[Health Insurance](#)

[CareerLab](#)

[Student and Employee Accessibility Services](#)

[Graduate Student Council](#)

[Brown Athletics and Recreation](#)

[Rhode Island Public Transit Authority](#)

GSC [Listserve Subscriptions](#)

[The Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](#)

[Computing and Information Services](#)

[Library Graduate Student Resources & Carrel Reservations](#)

[Open Graduate Education Program](#)

[Public Humanities](#)

[Teaching with Technology Canvas Tutorials](#)

[Registrar](#)