



## THE W. E. B. DU BOIS DEPARTMENT OF AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

180 Infirmary Way  
329 New Africa House  
Amherst, MA 01003

### **Guidelines for Graduate Study 2018-2019**

Total Requirements: 16 Graduate Courses; Qualifying Exam Credit; 10 Dissertation Credits

#### **The First Year**

All first-year graduate students in the Du Bois Department take Major Works in Afro-American Studies, a one-year-long, team-taught seminar. Major Works counts as a double seminar (2 courses) each semester. This seminar meets on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 – 5:00 p.m. AfroAm 701 and 702, Major Works I & II, are open only to first-year students in the Du Bois Department. The seminar is structured around the two graduate program tracks: History/Politics and Literature/Culture. In it you will receive an introduction to some of the critical issues, ideas, and readings in African American studies, with an emphasis on the culture, politics, history, and literature of African Americans in the U.S. with some attention paid to other African diasporic communities in the Western Hemisphere. The Major Works seminar affords you an opportunity to meet faculty members in the department. We encourage you to schedule time with those individual professors whose scholarship is of particular interest to you.

Your academic advisors will be the Major Works Coordinators:

History/Politics = Professor Traci Parker

Literature/Culture = Professor Yemisi Jimoh

Required Courses: AfroAm 701/702 Major Works in Afro-American Studies I and II  
AfroAm 692A Literary Theory or AfroAm 630 Critical Race Theories  
AfroAm 691F Black Political Struggle and the American Political System  
AfroAm 691C Historiographical Methods

**Fall (2 courses):** ● AfroAm 701: Major Works in Afro-American Studies I (9 credits/2 courses)

**Spring (3 courses):** ● AfroAm 702: Major Works in Afro-American Studies II (9 credits/2 courses)  
● One elective course (or) a required course

#### **The Second Year**

In your second year, you will take courses in the Department more in line with your particular academic interests. The GPD, in consultation with you, will assign you an advisor before your second year begins. The Department will provide students with the required registration materials. Your advisor and the GPD must sign the registration forms before you can register for courses. If in your second year you wish to take courses in another department, you must receive the approval of the GPD. Also, during the second year you should take the required courses in black politics, literary theory or critical race theories, and historiography.

\*Students who receive approval to take courses outside the Department must register for those courses themselves.

**Fall (3 courses):**      ●Two (2) elective courses  
                                 ●One (1) required course

**Spring (3 courses):** ●Three (3) elective courses  
                                 OR  
                                 ●Two (2) elective courses and a required course

### **The Comprehensive Examination**

All second-year students will take the Comprehensive Examination in September during the first week of the Fall term of the second year. The two-part examination will focus on your readings in Major Works and will require you to demonstrate a critical understanding of the content of the readings in history and politics and literature and culture.

Students must receive a pass from the readers of the Comprehensive Examination before advancing beyond coursework in the Department. In the event of a split decision on one section of the exam, the GPD will request a third reader. Students who receive two negative assessments on one or both parts of this exam may continue to take classes, but must re-take the unsuccessful parts. If necessary, a second exam review committee will be formed by the GPD in consultation with the faculty. This committee will determine the content of the exam and, in consultation with the student, the date of the exam. Students who fail to pass any part of the exam twice must petition the graduate faculty for consideration of a third attempt.

### **The Language Requirement**

Consult the Language Requirement handout for information on satisfying this requirement for the PhD in the Du Bois Department. If you believe that you have met this requirement, or if you are unsure, you should consult with the GPD. You must satisfy the Language Requirement before you can be scheduled to take the Qualifying Examination.

## The Third Year

In the third year, you should begin to focus your course work on a possible dissertation topic. You should look at relevant courses in other departments. We strongly encourage students to take at least one course in an outside department. This will help you in selecting an outside faculty person for your dissertation committee. Consult with your advisor in selecting courses. Also, you should be preparing for the Qualifying Examination, which you generally will take after completing your third year of course work. If you will have met all of the requirements to take the examination at a time set in consultation with your advisor and the faculty readers, you should register for the Qualifying Exam credit, AfroAm 696A. This course will provide an opportunity to compile and complete your reading list for the exam. The Department will provide all students with the required registration materials. Your advisor and the GPD must sign all registration forms. Students taking outside courses must register themselves.

**Fall (3 courses):**

- Two (2) elective courses
- One (1) required course
- Five (5) Dissertation Credits\*

**Spring (3 courses):**

- Two (2) elective courses
- AfroAm 696A Qualifying Exam Credit
- Five (5) Dissertation Credits\*

**\*Dissertation Credits:** Students are required to have ten (10) dissertation credits. Since funding is not guaranteed for fourth year students, we will schedule you for five (5) dissertation credits each semester during your third year.

### **Independent Study**

Sometimes students have special interests that they will not be able to pursue through the regularly scheduled courses in the Department or elsewhere on campus. Students also may find that the lack of availability of a course will delay their progress. In such cases, students can satisfy their intellectual interests by taking Independent Study courses with faculty members who have expertise in the topic. Each student may take Independent Study courses as are necessary to further their development in a specific area.

### **The Qualifying Examination**

Students may take the Qualifying Exam if they have achieved the following:

- \*Completed successfully (16) approved graduate courses, including all the required courses.
- \*Satisfied the language requirement.
- \*Passed the Comprehensive Examination.

The Qualifying Exam will be scheduled at a time set in consultation with your advisor and the faculty readers.

In preparation for the Qualifying Exam, you must select a faculty member with whom to work as your lead or first reader. This person should be someone who could serve on your dissertation committee. In consultation with the lead reader, you will prepare a reading list of a minimum of twenty-five (25) books and/or selections. After you and your first reader have agreed upon the reading list, the GPD will schedule the exam in accordance with the wishes of the faculty readers and the student.

Two faculty members will read your exam. You will select the second reader in consultation with your advisor and notify the GPD.

Students who fail to pass the Qualifying Exam may retake it. After two failed examinations, students may request a new exam committee. If a student fails on the third attempt, she/he may petition the entire faculty and request a decision on his/her progress in the graduate program.

### **Terminal Master's Degree**

In addition to offering a Master of Arts degree to our doctoral students, the W.E.B. Du Bois Department offers a terminal MA to students who satisfy the course requirements. Master's students will take 46 credits in courses over two years. Students will take the Comprehensive Examination after the first year based on the Major Works seminars unless they choose to write a Master's thesis.

### **Master's Degrees for Doctoral Candidates**

Students may submit an application for the Master's Degree for Doctoral Candidates to the GPD after completing twelve graduate courses and passing the Comprehensive Examination. The link below provides information on The Graduate School's master's degree application process:

### **The Fourth Year Onward**

You have five years to complete your dissertation. The Graduate School is reluctant to extend students' years to completion beyond ten (10) years after their admission. You must maintain continuous enrollment while completing your dissertation by enrolling as a Program Fee student after completing the required ten (10) dissertation credits. Students are responsible for registering themselves for the GRADSCHL 999 Program Fee course.

**Fall:**           ●GRADSCHL 999 (Program Fee must be paid prior to add/drop)

**Spring:**       ●GRADSCHL 999 (Program Fee must be paid prior to add/drop)

### **Your Prospectus Approval Meeting and Selecting Your Dissertation Committee**

After passing your Qualifying Exam, you should form your dissertation committee. The faculty member who agrees to chair the prospectus committee should also chair your dissertation committee. All prospectus and dissertation committees must be chaired by members of the Du Bois Department. In

addition to the chair of your committee, you must select two to three additional faculty members for your prospectus and dissertation committees. Your committee must have at least one faculty member from an outside department on this campus or from any of the Five Colleges. Faculty from other colleges or universities beyond UMass and the Five Colleges can only be "members" on your committee; they cannot serve as "outside members".

You should consult in advance with prospective members of your dissertation committee. Upon securing their agreement to serve, the formal request should come from you. After approval of the dissertation prospectus by the committee, the chair will submit the original prospectus and the cover sheet signed by the committee members to the GPD. The GPD will complete the paperwork for submission to the Graduate School.

### **Scheduling your Dissertation Defense**

You must discuss the process of submitting your chapters to committee members with your dissertation chair. Your dissertation chair is responsible for explaining this process to you and to the other members of your committee. It is highly unusual for a student to turn in a dissertation that requires absolutely no revisions. Revisions to the dissertation, including those from all committee members, must be done in consultation with the chair of the dissertation committee. After your dissertation chair has secured the approval of the dissertation committee, you will schedule the oral defense of your dissertation.

The oral dissertation defense is a presentation of your scholarship to members of the department and to fellow students. The chair of your dissertation committee will arrange a date for your oral defense. Your dissertation chair will convey to the GPD the name of the student, the requested date for the defense, and the title of the dissertation. This information must be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the date requested as required by University and Graduate School regulations. The Graduate School has three deadlines for oral defenses and the submission of all materials for their degrees: April 15th for completion in May; August 31st for completion in September; and December 15th for completion in February.

You must be enrolled as a student in the semester that you defend your dissertation. If you have completed ten (10) dissertation credits, you may enroll as a Program Fee student.

### **Transferring Courses**

Generally, students cannot transfer any credits that were used to obtain a graduate degree at another university. A student may petition to transfer specific courses to substitute for one or more of our requirements, except for the language requirement where such petitions will be granted only in the most unusual circumstances.

### **Review of Graduate Students**

The faculty as a whole reviews the progress of each graduate student at the end of the Fall and Spring terms. You will receive a memo conveying the faculty's assessment and specifying any perceived weaknesses and corrective actions to be taken.

## **Academic Honesty Policy**

Each student should obtain and read a copy of the Graduate Student Academic Policy. It is available from the Ombuds Office, Faculty Senate, and the Graduate School. In addition each student should obtain and read the Academic Honesty Policy (available at the Graduate Dean's Office, the Ombud's Office or online at: [http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/handbook/univ\\_policies\\_regulations\\_a.htm](http://www.umass.edu/gradschool/handbook/univ_policies_regulations_a.htm)) These documents contain the possible sanctions and the review and appeals processes in cases of alleged breaches of appropriate academic conduct.

\*Doctoral students who receive outside funding equivalent to the stipend, tuition waiver and health benefits that the department offers will not be eligible for additional support.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions about any of the above policies and guidelines feel free to consult with your advisor, the GPD, and, if necessary, the Department Chair.