

Department of Global & Sociocultural Studies

Continuing Graduate Student Handbook

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PREFACE

Entering graduate students will quickly learn that they have joined a massive bureaucracy as well as an institution of higher learning. Be ready to fill out forms, meet deadlines, and chase signatures from the day you enter the program until the day you file your dissertation. The staff, faculty, and, especially, your fellow students will help you navigate these processes. Nonetheless, it is each student's responsibility to be familiar with the university's forms and deadlines. Missed deadlines can be costly in terms of both time and money. It is each student's responsibility and in their best interests to become very familiar with the website of the [University Graduate School](#) and anticipate the deadlines for filing forms and applications. Anticipating deadlines, among other things, means that forms need to be ready for faculty signatures at least two weeks in advance of UGS deadlines.

FUNDING

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

The department offers teaching assistantships on a competitive basis, typically upon a student's admission to the doctoral program. Masters students are not eligible for teaching assistantships. The department renews assistantships annually up to a maximum of four years. Annual renewal is based on satisfactory performance in the assistantship and progress toward degree completion. Teaching assistantships include a 12-month stipend, subsidized health insurance, and tuition for 24 credit hours per year (nine credit hours each for Fall and Spring Semesters, 6 for Summer Sessions). Please consult the University Graduate School's (UGS) Graduate Assistant Handbook (<https://gradschool.fiu.edu/students/funding/assistantships/>) for further details.

Assistantship Responsibilities

Assistantships require a maximum of 20 hours per week dedicated to teaching duties and full-time enrollment (nine credit hours). Generally, assistantship responsibilities and study demands will fluctuate throughout the term. Therefore, it is important that students remain in close communication with their assigned professor to coordinate and balance study with teaching duties. The 20-hour requirement is best read as an average over time, rather than as a regularity week to week.

Among other responsibilities, teaching assistants may be asked to:

- Assist in preparing course materials and exams
- Attend all class sessions for one course
- Complete the readings, video viewings, and any other required course materials.
- Meet with students on a regular basis
- Proctor exams
- Grade exams and papers
- Enter grades and attendance
- Serve as classroom instructor as needed and appropriate

Graduate Research Assistantships

Faculty with external research grant funding occasionally hire research assistants from among enrolled graduate students. Length of appointments and responsibilities will vary depending on the research project requirements. Similar to teaching assistantships, research assistantships are a maximum of 20 hours per week and include a stipend, subsidized health insurance, and tuition. Research assistantships count toward the department's maximum four years of assistantship funding.

University Fellowships

The university offers competitive fellowships for both prospective and current students. Details can be found on the UGS website under "[Fellowships](#)". Fellowships for current students help fund students' doctoral dissertation research and dissertation writing, respectively called the Doctoral Evidence Acquisition Fellowship (DEA) and Dissertation Year Fellowship (DYF). Both are highly competitive, both within the department and the university. Therefore, one should plan and prepare in consultation with the dissertation committee chair well in advance of submission.

External Grants and Fellowships

Students are encouraged to apply for external funding for their pre-doctoral and doctoral research. Not only are external grant awards vital sources of financial support, they are also important scholarly accomplishments in their own right, much like an academic publication. Successful external grant applications often require a timeline of one to two years of submitting and resubmitting proposals.

Students should discuss possible sources of funding with their dissertation chairs and committee members. They should also consult with other graduate students and conduct their own research into funding sources. UGS's "[External Funding](#)" webpage is a good place to start. Common dissertation funding sources include the National Science Foundation, Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Social Science Research Council, Organization of American States, U.S. Fulbright Program, Inter-American Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Newcombe Fellowships.

Students should consider applying to multiple sources, because it increases one's chances of receiving funding and because programs fund different aspects of research (e.g. equipment costs, travel, or living stipends). Students should think creatively and broadly about potential funders and not be constrained by ideas of disciplinarity. Providing that one meets the qualifications and criteria of the funding program, disciplines are of secondary importance. For example, it is not unusual for non-anthropologists to receive funding from the Wenner Grenn Foundation for Anthropological Research.

THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

One of the most important processes that graduate students undertake is the formation of the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee should be formed *within the first two years* of students' entry into the doctoral program. The university requires that dissertation committee

chairs and all members hold “Graduate Faculty” status. The UGS website maintains an [up-to-date listing](#) of the status of every faculty member at FIU.

Forming the Committee

The process begins with the identification of the dissertation committee chair from among the GSS faculty by mutual agreement of the student and a faculty member. The chair should be identified *by the end of the first year*, because the chair serves not only as dissertation supervisor, but also as academic advisor and professional mentor. Due to the chair’s multiple roles, they are alternately referred to as the “major professor,” “advisor,” or “supervisor.” Students officially declare their dissertation chair by filing the GSS Department’s D-0 form, “Appointment of Dissertation Chair.” Please contact the GSS Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) to request the form.

In addition to the chair, the committee is composed of three FIU faculty members, two from the GSS Department and one from another department. The latter is commonly called the “external member.” Students select their committee members in consultation with their chairs, who will help students match their research interests with the expertise of the faculty. With special approval and proper justification, students can include on their committees a member from another university. The committee is officially designated with UGS online form, “[Appointment of Dissertation Committee](#),” previously known as D-1.

Once formed, the committee works collectively to guide the student through their course work, professional development, and the development of the doctoral dissertation research. The committee also serves as the examining committee for the candidacy exam. The dissertation committee helps oversee and guide the student’s writing of the dissertation and, ultimately, conducts the student’s dissertation defense.

Changes to the Committee

It is not uncommon for students to revise the composition of their dissertation committees, including their chairs, typically when a member leaves FIU’s faculty. It may also happen that a student’s research focus changes or a committee member’s expertise is subsequently found to be mismatched with a student’s research. In any case, the committee’s composition is not set in stone, though changes to the committee should not be undertaken lightly or without careful deliberation. It is advisable to consult with the GPD, committee members, or other faculty members prior to making changes. If a change to the committee is made, there are, of course, forms to be completed. These are the GSS Department’s D-0r, “Change of Dissertation Advisor” (contact GPC to request) and UGS’s D-1r, “[Appointment of Revised Dissertation Committee](#).”

Expectations of the Dissertation Committee and the Student

- During their first three years in the program, the student is expected to meet regularly with their dissertation chair to plan their course of study and develop their dissertation research proposal. Committee members are individually involved in the student’s development process to a degree that may vary considerably among and within committees.

- The chair supervises the student in their dissertation research and the writing of the dissertation. The chair also serves as a professional mentor and academic advisor to the student throughout their degree program.
- The committee convenes annually to review the student's progress in the program and conduct an official evaluation that is filed with UGS.
- Committee members are expected to provide feedback on all aspects of the dissertation, including the candidacy exam, dissertation research proposal, and dissertation.
- Students should provide committee members ample time, minimally two weeks, to read and comment on the review drafts of required writing. It is important for students to keep in close contact with committee members regarding plans to submit writing for formal review.
- Students are responsible for keeping track of department and UGS deadlines and requirements and for scheduling required meetings for the annual evaluation, dissertation research proposal defense, and dissertation defense.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The GSS Department offers two terminal MA degree programs and the Ph.D. degree program. The MA and Ph.D. programs have separate degree requirements and are treated separately here and in the FIU annual Graduate Catalog. In all cases, the [FIU Graduate Catalog](#) is the official and final say in all program requirements. Students should consult it regularly as they plan their progression toward their degree.

GSS MA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The GSS MA requires only coursework, of which 15 credits (5 courses) are common core and 21 credits are elective. Students are advised to take *ISS 6346 Theory and Inquiry* and *ISS 6305 Research Methods and Design* during their first year. *ISS 6306 Writing Research Proposals*, which is offered in spring semester, should generally be taken in the second year. The other core requirements should be taken when available. The [FIU Graduate Catalog](#) is the official and final say in all program requirements. Students should consult it regularly as the plan their progression toward their degree.

GSS-APPLIED INTERDISCIPLINARY MA DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The GSS MA-Applied Interdisciplinary Social Science Research Track requires coursework and a research project undertaken with a designated advisor. The common core requirements (24 credits) include *ISS 6346 Theory and Inquiry* and *ISS 6305 Research Methods and Design*, which should be taken the first year. In this track, the emphasis is squarely on all areas of research, from case selection and techniques to analysis and presentation, capped off with a student designed, faculty-supervised research project, culminating in an executive report and public presentation. The [FIU Graduate Catalog](#) is the official and final say in all program requirements. Students should consult it regularly as the plan their progression toward their degree.

GSS DOCTORAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Coursework

The Ph.D. program consists of 75 semester hours of course work. Students acquire competencies in theory, methods and proposal writing during the first two years of the Ph.D. program by successfully completing a common interdisciplinary core curriculum of 12 hours of coursework. The four core courses are designed to be taken in sequence in the first two years. One consequence of this arrangement is that students move through the program as a cohort.

The sequence of required courses is year 1 fall: *ISS 6346 Theory Inquiry* and year 1 spring: *ISS 6305 Research Methods and Design* followed by year 2 fall: *ISS 6317: Social Research Quantitative Methods* and year 2 spring: *ISS 6306 Writing Research Proposals*.

In addition to the common core curriculum, each Ph.D. student declares a major in Geography, Sociocultural Anthropology or Sociology. Beyond the common core curriculum each major consists of the corresponding disciplinary theory course; one approved methods course; one additional theory course in a non-major discipline; a minimum of two discipline-based seminars; and a dissertation supervised by a faculty member from the major discipline. Each disciplinary theory course is offered every 4 semesters – i.e., a fall 2021 course will be taught again in spring 2023. A student may declare only one major. A grade of “B” or higher must be earned in all courses and a cumulative average of 3.0 or higher must be maintained. After completing 36 credit hours including the common core courses, Ph.D. students may request that they be awarded an MA in GSS en route to the Ph.D.

The [FIU Graduate Catalog](#) is the official and final say in all program requirements. Students should consult it regularly as they plan their progression toward their degree.

Candidacy Exam

“Candidacy exam” refers to the process that qualifies the doctoral student for “doctoral candidacy.” Doctoral candidacy means the student has completed all of the requirements for the doctoral degree except for the dissertation, a status commonly known as “All but Dissertation” or ABD. The exam is a rite of passage that signals the student’s new standing as an independent scholar and potential academic peer. It takes many forms across departments and universities, but usually includes some combination of a written examination, a dissertation research proposal, and an oral examination or “defense”. All three of these components, detailed in the following subsections, collectively comprise the GSS Department’s candidacy exam.

Two Area Statements

In the GSS doctoral program, the written examination portion of the candidacy exam—referred to in the [Graduate Catalog](#) as the “Ph.D. General Examination”—consists of two “area statements.” The area statements require the student to demonstrate reasonable mastery of at least two areas or fields of knowledge. An area statement is a scholarly treatise of approximately 8,000 words on the areas of knowledge in which the student claims expertise. These knowledge areas, while recognizable among scholars, are not fixed and do not pre-exist in standard form. Rather, they are constructed by the student under the guidance of their committee.

Students will prepare their statements in close consultation with their dissertation committee members. Often both statements are written under the direction of the dissertation chair. Occasionally a committee member may take the lead in directing a statement, depending on faculty's expertise. Typically, at least one statement addresses theory (e.g. feminist, Marxist, postcolonial). The second statement addresses either theory, methodology (e.g. ethnography, statistical modeling, GIS), geographic area (e.g., Andean indigeneity, EU immigration) or topical literature (e.g. stigmatization in public health, food sovereignty).

The two fields should differ sufficiently to demonstrate breadth of expertise. Area statements establish not only the student's command of literatures, but also demonstrate their own proposed contribution to advancing their designated fields of knowledge through their dissertation research.

Students should write each statement at a level of publishable quality. "Publishable quality" does not mean that statements must be published as stand-alone articles or chapters. Rather, it means that students should strive toward the standard of academic writing used in funded research proposals and peer-reviewed scholarly journals. It is not uncommon, however, for all or parts of these statements to provide content for proposals, dissertations, and journal article manuscripts. Therefore, they should not be viewed as a separate hurdle to clear before conducting research and writing the dissertation, but rather as integral and necessary parts of the dissertation process.

Achieving mastery of a field of knowledge is not something one accomplishes in a directed reading of a semester's duration. Mastery is achieved over years of study, representing the culmination of a focused effort. We therefore advise students to begin thinking, reading, and writing about their area statements in their first year of the doctoral program. Students may not have a clear idea of the specific fields of knowledge at the beginning of their studies, but they should always be thinking about their research interests and how those interests might be directed toward advancing knowledge. Keep careful reading journals and build annotated bibliographies from your seminars and directed readings. Consider all of your required seminar readings to be potential contributions to your statements, even if their relevance is initially unclear. Take time to review and reflect on your journals and bibliographies. Locating and achieving mastery over fields of knowledge is an iterative, occasionally messy, and always anxiety-producing process. Take heart. Many people before you, including your committee members, have successfully navigated it.

Dissertation Research Proposal

As with the area statements, students should be thinking about their proposed dissertation research in their first year. Identifying a committee chair, selecting electives, and applying for preliminary research funding all require that the student has a general idea of their dissertation research very early in their studies.

This is not to suggest an inflexible fixation on a single dissertation topic or idea from semester one. The point of doctoral study is to grow intellectually, which often means that early research ideas may shift considerably. Most of those who came before you struggled with defining their dissertation research projects and many changed their research course as they gained knowledge

through their studies. In sum, students should not postpone the journey toward the dissertation proposal, but remain open to unexpected turns in the road along the way.

Writing a dissertation research proposal is perhaps the most difficult task facing doctoral students. Among other things, it signals that the student is ready to conduct independent scholarly research with the potential to make an original contribution to a field of knowledge. This is a necessary qualification for a Ph.D. degree, which is why the proposal is the centerpiece of the candidacy exam. A successful proposal, therefore, will go through various revisions based on feedback from professors, colleagues, and anonymous peer reviewers. This process will span several semesters. Multiple rounds of revisions will make the proposal stronger and more competitive for funding. When possible, students should use their seminars and directed readings as opportunities to draft, revise, and hone their dissertation proposals in the semesters leading up to the candidacy exam.

The GSS Department, recognizing the centrality of the dissertation proposal, requires all students to complete the “Writing Research Proposals” seminar in the spring semester of their second year in the program. Ideally, students will enter the seminar with a solid idea of their proposed research and take the opportunity to produce a foundational draft of the research proposal to be defended in the exam. The typical proposal will address the research purpose, objectives, background and context, significance, potential scholarly contribution, theoretical framework, methods, and bibliography. It should be approximately 7,000 words, not including the bibliography or supplementary documents (charts, maps, illustrations).

In addition to the department’s requirements, UGS also requires students to submit a standard five-page proposal for the Graduate Dean’s approval. Students should consult UGS’s [proposal format and submission guidelines](#) well in advance of scheduling the oral defense and filing the D-3 form (see following subsection).

If the dissertation research involves human subjects in any capacity, the student must also file an application for clearance with FIU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). Students must complete this process prior to filing the D-3 form. No proposal will be accepted by UGS or the department without this approval form unless the dissertation involves no human subjects. For more details on human subjects requirements, see the IRB’s [guidelines for research approval](#).

Oral Defense

The oral defense serves as the examination proper. Once the committee deems the area statements and dissertation research proposal to be of defensible quality, both will be the subject of an oral examination with the emphasis on the proposal.

Preparation for the candidacy exam begins in earnest following the completion of the “Writing Research Proposals” seminar. By the end of that seminar, not only should students have a working version of their dissertation proposal, but also have identified their dissertation committee members and filed a “[Dissertation Committee](#)” online milestone form (previously known as D-1) with UGS. They should also have a firm sense of their two intended knowledge fields. Ideally, the committee will have reviewed the draft proposal and discussed the student’s exam preparation plans at the student’s second year annual evaluation.

Over the course of their second-year summer and into the fall semester of their third year, the student assembles, in consultation with their committee, a bibliography for each field. The bibliography should serve as a “map” to navigating the historical development, key voices, and central debates of each field. Once the committee reviews and approves the bibliographies, the student moves forward on completing the two area statements.

Students should expect to submit, revise, and resubmit their area statements and dissertation research proposals until their committee members are satisfied with their level of scholarship. This process should be completed during the third year with an eye toward conducting the candidacy exam in the spring semester of the third year. If a student fails to submit defensible statements and a proposal on schedule, the dissertation committee will meet to decide whether to allow the student additional time to submit or recommend dismissal from the doctoral program.

The dissertation committee members serve as the oral examiners at the defense. Once the committee members find the statements and proposal acceptable, the student consults with them to agree upon a defense date. The focus of the defense will be the dissertation proposal, though the area statements are also considered examinable.

The oral defense is a public event open to members of the department, university, and community at large. It begins with a 20-minute professional presentation by the student of their proposed dissertation research. Upon completion of the presentation, the chair opens the discussion with questions from the floor. Following that, each committee member in turn questions the student on the proposed research and, when relevant, the area statements. When the committee has finished this portion of the examination, the room will be cleared in order to allow committee members to convene in private to decide whether the student passes or fails. Following this private deliberation, students are invited back into the room and are informed of the decision and of any further required revisions to the proposal. If the examination is considered failed, the committee must decide if a second examination would produce a different result. If not, the student will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

The candidacy examination process marks a significant change in a student’s status in the academy, so there are, yet again, forms to be completed. Once the student passes the examination, they file the “[Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy](#)” online milestone form (previously known as D-2), which serves as the application for doctoral candidacy. At the same time, the student also files the online milestone form, “[Dissertation Proposal](#)” (previously known as D-3). In the GSS doctoral program, the D-2 and D-3 are filed simultaneously, since the proposal defense functions as a central component of the candidacy exam.

Responsibilities of Students and Committee Members

It is the student’s responsibility to produce proposals and statements that are written in clear, properly punctuated and grammatical English, with well-defined structure and properly formatted citations. All students, especially those who are not native-English speakers, should have a third party read and edit their drafts, apart from their committee members readings. The Writing Center at the Green Library is a good resource, as are fellow graduate students.

Students should provide adequate time for their committees to read and review completed drafts. Two weeks turn-around time is the rule of thumb. Students should also consider allowing extra time for feedback in the final two weeks of semesters and understand that most faculty are not in residence during summer terms. Students should avoid planning for summer exams.

For their part, advisors and committee members agree to provide critical and constructive feedback in a timely manner. They also agree, given sufficient notice, to meet with the student when required and to provide professional letters of reference.

The Dissertation and Dissertation Defense

Once the student passes the candidacy exam and achieves doctoral candidacy status, they are eligible to register for dissertation credit hours with their dissertation chair. The student continues to register for dissertation credits as they conduct their dissertation research and write their dissertation under the guidance of their committee. It is *very important* that students consult UGS's [ETD Preparation Manual](#) before they begin writing in order to comply with university guidelines from the beginning and avoid having to revise later.

Writing one's dissertation is a challenging task. Typically, the student's committee will begin by asking the student to write a dissertation prospectus, essentially a plan for content, organization, and a timeline for completion. Students can expect to submit, revise, and resubmit multiple drafts of individual chapters to their chairs and sometimes, depending on agreements between the students and the committee, individual committee members. This process will take months until there is a complete dissertation draft deemed "defensible" by all members of the dissertation committee.

Once the student and their chair have in sight the completion date of a defensible draft, it is time to schedule the dissertation defense. Yes, you are correct! There is an online UGS form to complete, called the "[Preliminary Approval of Dissertation and Request for Oral Defense](#)", or D-5. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the defense with their committee members. Students are also responsible for delivering the complete defense draft to their committee well in advance of the defense date. The GSS Department requires students to provide a complete copy of their dissertation to committee members at least 30 days in advance of the scheduled defense. We strongly recommend that students submit their manuscripts well in advance of the 30-day minimum to allow time for revisions by the deadlines.

Similar to the proposal defense in the candidacy exam, the dissertation defense is a public event open to members of the department, university, and community at large. Indeed, students are required to prepare a public announcement in UGS's standard format, which the GSS Graduate Program Coordinator circulates. Also similar to the proposal defense, it begins with a professional presentation by the student, followed by rounds of questioning by attendees and the dissertation committee. In private deliberation, the committee will determine whether the student passes or fails the defense. There are no conditional passes. The committee will also determine whether to allow a second defense attempt, the date for which is set by the committee. Failure of the second defense attempt will result in dismissal from the program.

Upon passing the defense, the student prepares the final version of their dissertation to be submitted to UGS and housed at the FIU library. Students can expect that there will be additional revisions required by the committee before they sign off for final submission. The extent of these revisions and the process under which they are reviewed varies from dissertation to dissertation and committee to committee.

When the committee deems the dissertation ready to submit, the student prepares the final version in compliance with UGS's [ETD Guide](#). One last online milestone form! Complete UGS's "[Final Electronic Dissertation Approval](#)" form, submit the electronic copy, and that's it. You are a "doctor" now.

Annual Progress Evaluations

Each year, students are required to document their annual progress in two written formats: 1) The GSS Internal Evaluation Form and 2) The UGS Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan.

GSS Internal Evaluation Form

The GSS Graduate Program Coordinator annually distributes via email the Internal Evaluation Form during spring semester. Students fill out the form and return it to the Graduate Program Coordinator by the announced deadline. The GSS faculty then meet to evaluate students' annual progress in the doctoral program. This annual review is critical for students' continued standing in the program. It is also an important way for students to communicate their achievements to the GSS faculty.

UGS Annual Student Evaluation and Mentoring Plan

UGS conducts the [Annual Student Evaluation](#) entirely online. The deadline for online submission is typically near the end of spring semester. Please check early in spring semester on the UGS website for the annual deadline. It is *the student's responsibility* to initiate the process of completing the online form, in consultation with the dissertation chair and committee members. Once the online form is approved by the student, chair, and committee members it is forwarded for approval to the GPD, the SIPA Graduate Dean, and finally the UGS Dean. The form provides a venue for the student to report to the advisor and committee and receive feedback, guidance, and advice. It also provides documentation regarding which degree requirements have been met during the academic year, as well as the goals for the next academic year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a doctoral student, you are part of a professional network that operates at multiple scales, including your department, your university, other universities, and also regional, national, and international academic associations. First, it is important to have a curriculum vitae (CV) in an academic style. Faculty and fellow students will be happy to share theirs with you and there are many examples online. Second, consider your profile on social media and your public presentation, for example, your voicemail message and your online presence. Make sure these

reflect the way you want to be seen and heard as a professional, a scholar, and a potential colleague.

Professionalization Seminar

During students' first fall semester, the department requires that they register for and attend the weekly one-hour Professionalization Seminar (ISS 6690-U0), which is zero-credit and zero-cost. The purpose of the seminar is to 1) inform students of the tasks at hand: making progress in the program, choosing a chair, the path to candidacy, etc. 2) to acquaint students with the practices of academia (the ins and outs of journal rankings, strategies for publishing, seeking external funding, conference presentations, etc. 3) introducing students to the faculty and the department's research areas and strengths and 4) supporting the incoming cohort while integrating them into the graduate student network including SAGGSA (see below).

GSS Graduate Student Organization: SAGGSA

Over the years, GSS graduate students created and developed the Sociology Anthropology Geography Graduate Student Association (SAGGSA), which plays an important role in the GSS Department and the graduate program. SAGGSA officers and members organize numerous workshops and in consultation with faculty advisors, arrange the department colloquium. SAGGSA also initiates social events for GSS graduate students and holds regular coffee hours open to all GSS graduate students.

Professional Associations

Students should join at least one of the three disciplinary associations: the American Anthropological Association, the American Association of Geographers, or the American Sociological Association. Within these organizations there are dozens of specialty groups students can choose to join that focus on specific research areas. These organizations are critical to developing networks with researchers in their areas of interest, which will be helpful when applying for jobs, dissertation funding, or various awards granted by professional organizations for such activities as graduate student presentations and publications. Attending professional meetings is essential. Given the availability of departmental funds, students who are presenting papers at professional meetings may apply for travel funds from the department. The GSS associate chair is in charge of the allocation of travel funds.

Publications and Conference Presentations

Jobs in academia and outside academia are extremely competitive. A strong record of research, publication and academic presentations will help prospective applicants stand out from others. Students should discuss with advisors/mentors what areas of research can be developed into publications. From the start, students should strive to develop research and present findings at academic conferences.

In terms of publications, the academic gold standard is the double blind, peer reviewed journal article. Book chapters that are blind peer reviewed, in books with established scholars as editors, and published at university presses or major commercial publishers are a close second. Most doctoral students, however, do not start at the top when building their academic CVs. Book reviews, in major academic journals have traditionally been a good way to start an academic

publishing record. Publications in non-indexed, non-peer reviewed journals, online sites, and newsletters can also be good CV-starters. However, neither book reviews nor non-refereed publications carry much scholarly weight and should be minimized until one has established a record of peer-reviewed academic publications. Op-eds and feature writing for established media outlets (newspapers, magazines, well-respected news sites), as well public exhibit curation and documentary film-making, are also increasingly seen as desirable, especially for those considering something other than an academic career.

TIMELINE TO Ph.D. COMPLETION

Academic Year 1

- Fall Semester
 - Take ISS 6346 (Theory & Inquiry)
 - Attend “First Year Professionalization Seminar” Thursdays at 3:30
 - Look for appropriate theory/methods courses
- Spring Semester
 - Take ISS 6305 (Research Methods & Design)
 - Look for appropriate theory/methods courses
- Summer Semester
 - Take language training if appropriate; do preliminary research; organize reading lists related to your future research topic.
- AY Progress Goals
 - Begin formulating your research topic.
 - Choose committee chair (file GSS D-0 with GPA), decide on disciplinary major (file form with GPA).
 - Start looking for an external committee member
 - Use courses to advance research topic (literature reviews)

Academic Year 2

- Fall Semester
 - Take ISS 6317 (Social Research Quant Methods 1)
 - Choose classes/professors that fit your interests
 - This could include a course outside the department relevant to your research interests that will help you find an external committee member
 - Look for appropriate theory/methods courses
- Spring Semester
 - Take ISS 6306 (Proposal Writing)
 - Choose classes/professors that fit your interests
 - Look for appropriate theory/methods course
- Summer Semester
 - work on bibliographies for the two area statements.
- AY Progress Goals
 - File D1 (committee form) by academic year end (including the outside member).

- Finish required coursework.
- Use courses to advance dissertation topic
- Good year to present at first outside of FIU conference

Academic Year 3

- Fall
 - Take Exam Prep Hours (6 max)
 - At most take one seminar!
 - Write/Rewrite your two area statements: These are high quality literature position papers, one on your disciplinary subfield (e.g. environmental anthropology; feminist geography); the other on your topic specialization (e.g. development, sea level rise, diasporic identity, popular culture)
 - Defend Proposal in Fall or Spring
 - Prepare IRB proposal one month in advance of dissertation proposal defense
- Spring
 - Submit for UGS's Dissertation Evidence Acquisition (DEA) Fellowship & other funding proposals
 - Preliminary Fieldwork (local, archival, etc.)
- Summer
 - Apply for the for DEA Fellowship if you didn't do so in Spring
- AY Progress Goals
 - Submit Forms D2 and D3 to UGS upon defense of your proposal and advance to candidacy (ABD).
 - Present at a conference external to FIU this year if you have not already done so.

Academic Year 4

- Fall through summer
 - Finish Dissertation Fieldwork
 - Prepare outline for Dissertation
 - Begin writing sections of dissertation
- AY Progress Goals
 - Fieldwork supported by external grants or FIU's DEA Fellowship
 - Present Paper at Conference
 - Apply for the DYF (Dissertation Year Fellowship)
 - Submit a paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal

Academic Year 5: complete and defend dissertation!!