HANDBOOK FOR SOCIOCULTURAL STUDENTS Ph.D. PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to help you navigate through the years of study and research that will lead to a Ph.D. degree in anthropology at Columbia. It is hoped that these explanations and the outlining of procedures will help you in planning your studies. For more information about the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) regulations and procedures you should regularly refer to its official website: http://gsas.columbia.edu/

The Ph.D. in our department typically requires 3 years of course work; the third year is taken up with Admission to Candidacy Exams, prospectus writing, and grant submissions (additional coursework at a less intensive pace is to be continued during this third year, as well); 1-2 years of dissertation research; and 1-2 years of dissertation write-up. The ideal time frame for completion is 5-7 years, but circumstances vary, particularly when ethnographic fieldwork comes into the picture. GSAS, however, has a “seven-year rule” which bars further funding and continuance in university housing after seven years; after seven years, students are also not eligible to be regular Teaching Fellows and must look for other sources of funding. Please be aware that the receipt of external funding does not defer or extend the seven-year rule. Additionally, GSAS has recently instituted a 9-year maximum for the completion of ALL Ph.D. requirements, including the approved dissertation. Students who do not finish within 9 years will not be allowed to finish their Ph.Ds.

When you enter the program, your first year is arranged in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. By the end of the second year at the latest, each student chooses an advisor and two additional faculty members in order to form a committee. (See below, “Advising”). Your program and progress is reviewed annually by the entire departmental faculty; each student receives an end-of-the-year letter assessing academic progress and including suggestions for the coming year. The Department expects students to maintain at least an A- average and to complete all course work and other requirements for candidacy for the Ph.D. (culminating in the M.Phil.) in three years (note that the GSAS requirement is four years; our department, however, has a requirement of three years; if you do not finish your M.Phil. by the end of your third year without faculty permission, you will not be in good academic standing). All funding, whether from GSAS or from the department, is contingent upon being in good academic standing. Good academic standing means that you are completing courses in a timely manner, maintaining an acceptable grade average, and fulfilling all requirements as the department and GSAS schedules stipulate. If you do not do so, the GSAS and the Department may withhold stipends or delay registration until requirements are fulfilled. In extreme cases of unsatisfactory progress, a student may be asked to leave the program.

Please make yourself at home in and help maintain the Anthropology Department Graduate Student Lounge. Other facilities primarily intended for your use are the Sheldon Scheps departmental library, recently renovated and reconfigured.
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for the M.Phil., which is intended to be granted at the end of the third year in residence (and at the end of all course requirements, Advanced Certifying Examinations/Admission to Candidacy Examinations, and completion of the dissertation prospectus), students must successfully complete at least eight departmental courses for credited letter grades. These courses must be regular courses; Independent Study courses do not count as one of these eight courses. Students must understand, however, that the Department does not expect students to take ONLY these eight courses. Students must take courses every semester they are in residence before their M.Phil. is completed (a standard load is 3 courses--excluding language courses--per semester the first year; 2-3 per semester the second year; and 1-2 each semester the third year, the year when students prepare for their examinations and prospectus defense). Students take a wide array of courses, both within and without the department, both for letter grades and for R credit (see below).

Beyond this basic requirement of eight Departmental courses for a letter grade, after their first year, students may take other departmental offerings and courses outside the department and outside the university, via the NYU, New School and CUNY Consortium, or by other arrangement. Independent study courses (9000 level) may be taken with the agreement of individual faculty members and are often part of the preparation for the Advanced Certifying Examinations (A.C.E.s). One or two courses in any division of the university also may be audited per term, with instructor approval. Approval for audit must be sought at the Office of Academic Records and Registration, 205 Kent Hall. An audited course will not appear on the student’s record and it is not possible to turn an audited course into a credit course after the fact. A course also may be taken for “R” credit (registered for the course, no qualitative grade assigned), as long as the student makes this request to the professor early in the term. There is an official form that the professor must sign to allow students to take a course for R credit; once this form is signed, a letter grade cannot be assigned (conversely, if the form is not signed and submitted, a letter grade must as assigned). "R" credit cannot be awarded after the fact to resolve incompletes in courses taken for letter-grade credit. A pattern of incomplete work in courses on a student’s academic record will be a cause for faculty concern and possible dismissal from the program. **Please note:** In all cases, incompletes must be resolved within six months of their assignment, or the incomplete will automatically convert to a permanent “F” grade; this is now a firm rule of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Again, three courses per semester is a standard load and is required for all first-year students in order to earn the M.A. degree by the end of the first year (and, again, language courses are in addition to these three courses). Only in exceptional circumstances would a student be allowed to take fewer than three courses the first year, and then only in consultation with the Director of Graduate studies. First-year students must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies at the beginning of each semester in order to have their course selections approved. Second-year students will have a meeting with members of the Graduate Studies Committee at the beginning of the fall semester of their second year to discuss their progress and their plans. In addition, second-year students will meet with the DGS at the beginning of spring semester to have their course selections approved. After their Committees are formed (required
by the end of the second year), students should seek the advice of their committee members; they should obtain specific approval each semester from their Sponsor (Advisor).

**Core Course**

A required introductory two-semester core course sequence for incoming first-year Ph.D. students will be offered every year and is designed to acquaint students with disciplinary history, debates, and texts. This sequence is limited to Ph.D. students in our department.

**LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT**

The department language requirement is a high level of proficiency in one language other than English. This may be demonstrated by fourth-year level course work or by an equivalent examination.

The department is committed to the fundamental importance of language skills for anthropological research, whether for gaining access to secondary literatures in a foreign language, to utilize works in other intellectual traditions, or in primary research. Evidence of appropriate language training is now required by granting agencies, and advanced language skills are a requisite for making contributions in many fields of anthropological inquiry. Language training should be considered central to a student’s program of graduate training. Language courses are not generally calculated as part of the regular course load, and they do not satisfy the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences requirements for graded courses.

First- and second-year students should seek the advice of the Director of Graduate Studies about gaining advanced proficiency in a principal research language so as to satisfy the departmental requirement. Thereafter, committee members should be consulted.

**REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

The GSAS PhD fellowship lasts for five years and funding for the ordinary anthropology trajectory is structured thusly:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fellowship Type</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DEAN’S FELLOWSHIP (no teaching requirement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TEACHING FELLOWSHIP (TF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>EXTERNAL FUNDING (for field or laboratory research)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>DISSERTATION FELLOWSHIP (DF. No teaching requirement). NOTE: Students may take their DF in year 5 and their last TF in year 6 should they choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Students who have completed their 5 year fellowship but are within the 7 year rule may apply for GSAS fellowships if department enrollments allow for this. <em>This funding is not guaranteed</em> and cannot be assessed until enrolments are known at the beginning of the semester.</td>
</tr>
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The following special terminology is used at Columbia:
**M&F**  Matriculation and facilities: a reduced tuition category covering health insurance and compulsory facilities fees for students requiring only reduced on-campus services. You cannot take classes for credit if you are registered for M&F. Each year you are enrolled and *until you receive your PhD* you are responsible for paying M&F fees. If you are on a TF or DF fellowship these fees are paid for you. If you receive external funding while within your 5 year fellowship they will also be paid by GSAS. However, should you not have any internal or external fellowships GSAS you will be charged these fees until you graduate. The exception to this is that the department will pay M&F fees for students in their semester of defense and deposit.

| Residence Unit | A tuition-based unit. One residence unit is equated with one full-time semester. Admission to candidacy and receipt of the M.Phil. degree requires six residence units (four or five with Advanced Standing). All Ph.D. students must register full time during the coursework phase of their studies; that means one residence unit per semester. |
| Extended Residence | A reduced tuition category for students finished with coursework but requiring on-campus services. You will, for example, be required to be registered for extended residence when you receive your M.Phil. degree, if the degree was not conferred when you earned your sixth residence unit (your sixth semester in residence). Students in extended residence may take classes for credit. |
Points Credits. Please note that registration always has a dual dimension. You must register for BOTH the residency unit (i.e., for a particular tuition status) and for courses in each semester.

Sponsor Advisor

TA/TEACHING FELLOWS

The department regards teaching experience as a graduate student Teaching Fellow as an integral part of the intellectual training of Ph.D students in anthropology as well as a professional training in pedagogy that is essential for obtaining future academic positions. GSAS has developed a specialized teaching program involving workshops and online resources to enhance this aspect of graduate training. There is also a GSAS Teaching Center (http://teachingcenter.gfas.columbia.edu), which hosts a special program of fellows on a competitive basis, for more comprehensive exposure to new pedagogical methods and opportunities.

In a 5-year GSAS funding package, Teaching Fellowships are held in the second and third years and in one of the final two years in the program (after returning from dissertation field research). A student is thus meant to have no teaching responsibilities the first and last years of GSAS support in the current 5-year fellowships. Unless students have Advanced Standing or outside fellowships which relieve them of the necessity to be teaching fellows, all Ph.D. students in our department, then, will be Teaching Fellows for 3 years (and GSAS requires all students, even those with outside funding, to serve as Teaching Fellows for at least two semesters).

Students who are entirely funded with grants and fellowships from outside of the university (i.e., who are not on a GSAS fellowship or a top-up basis with partial funding from outside) funding must complete a minimum of one year of teaching, as part of their preparation and training for the doctorate. No doctoral students can be completely exempted from teaching.

Other teaching opportunities include work as a Core Curriculum instructor (to be applied for during the fourth or fifth year, and potentially in addition to GSAS support), occasional teaching fellows in other departments (e.g., MEASAAS) or programs (e.g., IRWAG: CSER), teaching in the Columbia Summer school, and posts at other universities or colleges (e.g., Barnard).

SUMMER FUNDING

Your GSAS fellowship provides you with an annual stipend for summer research. Supplementary funds are available from the department for summer preparatory research or language study. The amount of summer money may vary yearly according to the funding package put together by GSAS. A brief proposal and a budget must be submitted in the spring to the Academic Departmental Administrator for review. A report detailing research results and activities must be submitted to the Department at the completion of summer research.

Based on enhanced language skills, preliminary visits to potential sites and archives, and contacts
with colleagues and research institutions. Summer funding can also be used for language training, if sufficient justification is supplied.

**WORK-STUDY**

Work-study jobs are available in the department and at other locations on campus. You need first to establish your eligibility with the Graduate School (107 Low Library). You can then see the Academic Departmental Administrator for possible openings in the department. Be sure to get the eligibility paperwork done early. Such funding is only available to United States citizens and permanent residents.

**ANNUAL FORM FOR DEPARTMENT FUNDING**

Every year you must request support for the following year. Failure to submit the required form, even when in the field, indicates that you do not intend to be enrolled or do not need financial assistance during the semester. Resources that might have been available to you will be allocated to other students in need. Do not delay in submitting the form if you plan to be continuing in the program.

**APPLICATIONS FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING**

GSAS requires that students apply for at least one academic-year external award during years one through four of their GSAS fellowship years. These may include FLAS awards available from some of the regional institutes at Columbia. See below for information about grant applications.

**M.A. DEGREE**

Students in the Ph.D. program who have successfully completed one year's residency by taking 2 residence units and earning at least 30 credits (10 courses, typically) with letter grades and at least an A- average are eligible to receive the degree Master of Arts. In order to receive this degree you must submit an application form, which is available on the Registrar’s website at [http://registrar.columbia.edu/registrar- forms/application-degree-or-certificate](http://registrar.columbia.edu/registrar-forms/application-degree-or-certificate) and return it to the Diploma Division in Kent Hall if delivering a hard copy, or sent electronically to diplomas@columbia.edu Our Department's Graduate Secretary (currently, Marilyn Astwood) will send a reminder; you should consult with her if you have any questions. Students who already have an MA from Columbia or an MA in anthropology from another university are not eligible for this degree en route to the doctorate.

**TRANSFER CREDIT**

If you entered the program with a Master's Degree or some graduate work from another university, you may be eligible to have some of the courses you took for your prior degree be recognized toward the fulfillment of your requirements. This does not have any bearing on your overall fellowship monies, or on your eligibility for summer funding. To determine which of your prior studies may be granted credit, you must consult with the Director of Graduate Studies,
and show evidence of the course content (syllabi and assignments) and official transcripts indicating your grades for the course.

**ADVISING**

Advising relationships are basic to the department’s graduate program. In the first two years before a committee is formed, students must discuss their course selections and academic progress with the Director of Graduate Studies at the beginning of each semester. At the beginning of the second year of study, each student will meet briefly with the Graduate Studies Committee as a whole, rather than just the DGS, to discuss his or her progress and plans for study in the coming year. By April the second year, a committee must be formed. A student’s departmental committee is composed of an Advisor (Sponsor) and two committee members; all must be faculty in the Department of Anthropology. By the end of the second year, relationships with these three committee members must be formalized and reported to the Graduate Secretary on the appropriate form with the faculty signatures. A one-hour meeting with the committee must then be scheduled and held with the committee before the end of the second year; in that meeting, the student’s plans for research, grant applications, and examination schedule for the following year should be discussed. Although continuity is desirable in advising relationships, students may change the membership of their committees and faculty members likewise are free to remove themselves from committees. Such changes must be reported to the Graduate Secretary. Oversight for the advising system is provided by the Director of Graduate Studies.

A committee is expected to provide tailored advice and support concerning such matters as course selection, language training, examinations, grant applications, and dissertation research, together with general intellectual guidance and critical input in preparation for a professional career. Based on their particular interests and objectives, students may be advised concerning possible sources of funding and the gamut of possible careers, ranging from the multi-field generalist to one of the many types of specialization. Committee members also will prepare letters of reference and recommendation in support of advisee applications of various types.

At the end of each academic year, the annual faculty meeting for the evaluation of students represents the collective effort of the faculty to monitor progress through the graduate program. In advance of this meeting (usually held in late May), students should communicate with their committee members, seek letters of recommendation as necessary, and check their academic records for accuracy. In accordance with the discussions at this meeting, the Director of Graduate Studies will send letters to each student commenting on his or her progress and detailing steps to redress any problems going forward.
At Columbia the dissertation defense committee is not the same thing as the student's departmental dissertation committee. A dissertation defense committee consists of three faculty members from within the student's department and two outsiders. The defense committee is convened after the dissertation has been approved for defense by the three members of the departmental committee. Thus, the departmental committee, consisting of three faculty members from within the anthropology department (including the sponsor), is the group with whom you work on your dissertation. You may include faculty from other departments in addition to the three internal committee members as faculty with whom you work on a regular basis, and up to two of these may serve as outside readers on the defense committee.

You may have any full-time faculty member (in anthropology), tenured or non-tenured, as your sponsor. It is advisable that a committee consist of at least one tenured faculty member and include individuals with relevant areal and theoretical expertise. GSAS rules provide that dissertation sponsors who for some reason leave the University may continue in their role as sponsors. The University will pay airfare for a dissertation sponsor who is no longer employed at the University, but only for the sponsor. Other committee members who have left the University may serve as insiders on the committee but their airfares are not typically covered.

It is important to know that your sponsor and the dissertation defense committee Chair must be two different people. The sponsor supervises your research and the Chair, who is typically a secondary reader from the department, is responsible for directing the oral examination and submitting the results to the university.

SECOND YEAR REVIEW

Students must select their Sponsor (Advisor) and the two other members of their committee by April of their second academic year; paperwork for the formal selection of the committee, including obtaining the signatures of each committee member, must be submitted to the Department. In addition, students are then required to meet with their newly formed committees to review their general progress by the end of the second year. The purpose of these meetings is to lay the groundwork for the third year by discussing the viability of students' ethnographic projects for dissertation research. Preparations will be made for Advanced Certifying Exams (ACEs) and for writing grant proposals and the prospectus.

THIRD YEAR

A. Advanced Certifying Examination (A.C.E.)

Prior to writing a dissertation prospectus, students must demonstrate scholarly excellence by passing two preparatory exams. These are based on comprehensive bibliographies created by the students in consultation with their advisors and committee members. Each exam is evaluated by two readers, only one of whom may evaluate both exams; usually, the student's advisor reads and evaluates both exams. Readers are members of the student's committee. One exam might
focus on the ethnographic area relevant to your dissertation project (e.g., China, Middle East, etc.), while the other could focus on the theoretical area most relevant to your research, although the exam topics and their precise scope will be determined in discussions between students and their advisors.

Exams are taken as two week-long (7-day) take-home exams, scheduled by the department in March and/or early April. You are given a choice of questions, based on the bibliographies and student-proposed questions, although you will not see the exact exam questions prior to the beginning of the examination period. Each exam should entail answers amounting to about thirty pages (15 pages for each of two questions, 10 pages each for three), although the length of the examinations can vary on approval by the committee.

Following this written portion, the A.C.E. examination process culminates in a dedicated 1-2 hour comprehensive oral examination attended by the examination readers.

Three grades are possible: High Pass, Pass, and Fail. In the event of a Fail, students may be asked to retake the exam at a date determined by the readers. Failure in both exams may be grounds for dismissal from the program. Upon successful completion of the exams, the committee will recommend to the department to advance the student to Ph.D. candidacy. An M.Phil. degree will be granted if all requirements have been met (i.e., successful completion of the A.C.E. exams, eight courses taken for letter grades, satisfaction of the language requirement, and no outstanding incompletes in courses taken). Students are not authorized to leave for the field to begin their dissertation research until they have fulfilled all the requirements necessary in order to receive the M.Phil. degree and successfully completed the dissertation research prospectus defense as outlined below.

9000-level courses are often used to prepare for the A.C.E. exams and/or the Dissertation Prospectus. The nature and amount of work for such directed courses will be determined in consultation with your advisor.

**B. Dissertation prospectus**

After successful completion of the A.C.E. examinations, a dissertation research prospectus is to be submitted for provisional approval by each of the three faculty members working with the student. This prospectus is longer and more detailed than the proposals submitted to granting agencies to obtain research funds. The student will discuss the proposed research in a dedicated dissertation prospectus defense before the student's committee (at least three faculty members), of some two hours. The committee will assess the feasibility and merit of the proposed research and make suggestions for improvement where necessary.
The dissertation prospectus must be completed and accepted in advance of dissertation research, and it is a requirement for the M.Phil. degree. In the event that a student undertakes research other than that for which candidacy is granted, she or he must rewrite and resubmit a new dissertation proposal and it must be approved by the student's committee. Failure to do so can be grounds for denial of the Ph.D. degree by the Provost of the University. All prospectuses are submitted and registered by the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

The form, length and style of the dissertation prospectus is worked out between the student and his or her committee members. A final draft must be submitted to the committee members at least one week in advance of the dissertation prospectus defense.

Successful completion of the ACEs, the Dissertation Prospectus, and the fulfillment of the Language Requirement (along with successful completion of 8 graded courses in the Department along with other courses AND no incompletes) form the basis for the awarding of the M.Phil., which is required for the pursuit of dissertation fieldwork and for grants, and which, in our department, must be completed by the end of the third year in residence.

C. Grant Writing

You will seek outside funding for your dissertation research project and to this end; you will prepare a variety of grant proposals at the beginning of your third year. The department also will offer an annual grant-writing workshop and periodically a course on research design and grant writing. The single university-wide source is the Columbia Traveling Fellowship, which has a deadline (typically the first Monday in February). There may be other Columbia University-based sources that are specific to area or topical specializations (for example, the Weatherhead East Asian Institute or the Shincho Fellowship, co-sponsored by the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures and the Donald Keene Center of Japanese Culture). Please be sure to look closely to locate all viable sources of dissertation research funding.

A good resource for finding out about funding is the Anthropology Newsletter, published by the American Anthropological Association. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included in Association membership. For information call (703) 528-1902, ext. 3031 or visit their website at www.aaanet.org (under ‘Student Resources’, ‘Grant and Funding Resources’). See also see the extensive Graduate School of Arts and Sciences list of External Fellowships at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas// - click on fellowship search.

Possibilities include:
Social Science Research Council
Fulbright (2 varieties)
American Council of Learned Societies
National Science Foundation
Tinker Foundation
Wenner Gren Foundation
International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)

There are also grant guides in Columbia’s libraries. A reference librarian can point to them quickly. Most granting agencies have websites.
Human Subjects Research Review

An Institutional Review Board at the university must approve all funded or unfunded dissertation research projects involving human subjects. The aim is to protect such subjects from harm. The process is cumbersome, technical, and unavoidable. Students should not wait until after they receive grants to start the process of approval. Approval should be sought along with grant applications themselves, or soon thereafter. The URL for the IRB on the main campus is:

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/

The application site is:

https://www.rascal.columbia.edu

and the Rascal help line is 212-870-3480


Dissertation advisors also are involved in this approval system as Principal Investigators. For more information, see the website of the American Anthropological Association:

http://www.aaanet.org

See there the “Statement on Ethnography and Institutional Review Boards” (June 4, 2004)

Our Department has its own IRB representative, currently Professor Ellen Marakowitz em8@columbia.edu. Please contact her for any questions or concerns about the IRB process.

FIELDWORK

The vast majority of students will undertake fieldwork for a period of at least one year, usually longer. During that time, you will be pursuing a particular research interest. It is advisable that you maintain copious notes during your tenure away from the University, and that you make duplicate copies—whether you are "taking notes" in a notebook or on a computer. These should be kept separately; one copy may even be forwarded to your dissertation sponsor or elsewhere for safekeeping. It may also be advisable to email your notes to yourself on a gmail account, or something comparable, thereby maintaining a password-protected data archive available from anywhere you have access to the internet. Maintaining contact with your advisors during fieldwork is crucial. Often, they can detect lacunae in your research, or they can help you to redirect or reformulate your research agenda as you encounter new and unpredicted circumstances. They can also help you to maintain a sense of perspective during a period that
can be extremely demanding, both intellectually and personally.

You should also maintain contact with the Academic Department Administrator or the Graduate Secretary, who will help to ensure that you are appropriately registered and receiving any University funding that is due to you. It is essential that you advise the Department of your field address or an appropriate contact for you. It is also crucial to inform the Department when you intend to return, with sufficient lead-time to permit registration, the assignment of teaching duties, and the allocation of department funds where appropriate. It is your responsibility to ensure that you remain in good standing with the University while away from campus for the purposes of research. Also, remember to inform U.S. (or other, as relevant) embassy officials of your residency in the country of your research, so they know where to locate you in the event of an emergency.

**Visas** - Most countries require that researchers apply for and obtain permits to undertake research over extended periods. The procedures for obtaining such permission vary from country to country and may require that you submit a version of your research proposal. You should consult the relevant embassy for information on local requirements. Be aware that some countries may delay your entry for as much as a year while they process your application. Apply early.

**Foreign sponsor** – Some countries require that you have a co-sponsor or even project director from that country in order to conduct research there. Be sure to determine if such a relationship is required, as some granting agencies may request documentation of permission to conduct research prior to awarding funding.

**Health and vaccinations** - The University Health Service offers advice about travel health risks, and provides vaccinations and prophylaxis as appropriate. You should be sure that your health insurance would cover any medical costs you might incur if you are outside of the U.S.

**Columbia Apartments** - Students who are in Columbia apartments must understand that if you give up your apartment while away from campus, you are not guaranteed a space upon your return. You can, however, keep your apartment by arranging, in accordance with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences housing policy, to sublet the apartment while you are away.

**DISSERTATION WRITING**

The challenges of writing a dissertation are as great as the intellectual rewards. Sustaining an argument and maintaining good writing over such a long piece can be daunting. Analyzing and then finding ways to integrate diverse material from ethnographic and archival research take effort. There are several things you can do to make the process go more smoothly. First, the work you do for your A.C.E.s and dissertation proposal should be useful for the dissertation. The more care you devote to them, the more you will be able to use them as resources. Second, while in the field you should try to correspond regularly with your committee. Even if they do not have the opportunity to respond at length, the process of formulating your ideas and thinking about what you are learning will be invaluable to you.
Finally, when you return from the field and are trying to write, you should ask your advisor and other committee members to read drafts of chapters or sections. Faculty vary in their willingness to read rough drafts or preliminary chapters; some faculty are willing to read only polished versions, although most are willing to have extended conversations about the dissertation. Your advisor’s approach to reading dissertation chapters is something you should clarify early on in your relationship. Please know that your advisor is expected to be your primary reader; it is not appropriate to expect other members of your committee, particularly junior members, to do most of the reading and commenting on your dissertation if your advisor is not also doing so.

Many students have found it rewarding to organize thesis-writing groups in which work can be shared and critiqued, deadlines suggested, ideas engaged, the mechanics of writing and structuring arguments discussed, and a sense of community created. In addition, GSAS mandates that departments sponsor official dissertation-writing groups and seminars, and that each student on GSAS funding must participate at least once per year (by circulating a piece of writing from their dissertation and/or presenting it in person to a community of their peers. In the Department of Anthropology, a TA position is annually assigned to an advanced PhD student who will organize this activity and prepare reports on it to the GSAS.

There are some sources, internal (Lindt) and external (Charlotte W. Newcombe, Spencer Foundation, American Association of University Women) for funding dissertation writing. These are very competitive and high-level awards. It is most effective to apply for these after you have a substantial amount of your dissertation completed.

**SEVEN-YEAR RULE**

Permission to register each term is contingent, in part, on the faculty's judgment that progress in the degree program is satisfactory. A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress may have his or her candidacy terminated by the GSAS. The Graduate School considers progress minimally satisfactory when progress is at a rate that will allow a student to complete the M.A. /M.Phil. /Ph.D. within seven calendar years. Students who receive credit for an M.A. completed elsewhere must complete the Ph.D. within six. This time limit for the M.A. /M.Phil. /Ph.D. is known as the *Seven-Year Rule* for the Ph.D.

Note that the Seven-Year Rule is enforced by GSAS in the sense that financial support or housing extensions are not granted after seven years of registration. Only with permission of the department and the dean may a Ph.D. student register for an eighth or later year of study. Additionally, as stated earlier in the Handbook, GSAS now requires that a student—even one with permission to continue past the seventh year—must complete ALL requirements for the Ph.D., including the approved dissertation, within nine years (18 semesters). Students should thus plan to complete all requirements within nine years, understanding that financial and housing support are not generally available after the seventh year, although the Department makes efforts to help post-seventh-year dissertation writers find alternative teaching or research appointments.

Satisfactory progress is assessed annually by the department faculty on the basis of academic performance, including the timely completion of all language examinations and all
certifying and comprehensive examinations and thesis requirements, grades, and performance in teaching. NOTE: Again, although GSAS mandates that all requirements for the M.Phil. be completed by the end of the EIGHTH semester, the Department of Anthropology requires that all requirements for the M.Phil. be completed by the end of the SIXTH semester. The Department has this requirement because of the special demands our students face in undertaking fieldwork: students need to begin their fieldwork in the 4th year, in order to leave enough time to complete their dissertations by the end of the 7th year (see "Seven Year Rule" above).

REPORT ON PROGRESS IN CANDIDACY

(From the GSAS website): "Each year, post-M.Phil. students and students in their eighth semester who are required to complete the M.Phil. by the end of the semester must submit the Report on Progress in Candidacy online through SSOL. The dissertation sponsor reviews the student’s report, determines whether or not the student is making satisfactory progress, and reports this evaluation of progress to the GSAS Dean’s Office via SSOL in the spring semester. Students have access to the online report from mid-January through mid-March, and faculty have access until mid-April; specific deadlines can be found on SSOL. Paper reports are not accepted." Please see http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/progress-candidacy-and-dissertation-proposal for further information.

THE DEFENSE AND Ph.D.

Please take time to read the excellent and extensive information provided on the GSAS website and pay particular attention to all deadlines.

Before a defense is ready to be scheduled, several steps must be completed. First, you must select your committee, which is comprised of five members. Three of these members must be ‘internal’ or within the department. One has to be ‘external’ which can be a faculty member from within Columbia in another department or a faculty member from another university. The fifth member can be either internal or external. Responsibility for approaching external faculty to serve on the committee belongs to the sponsor, not to the PhD candidate. The names of the defense committee must be submitted to GSAS for approval. Details for the composition of the defense committee can be found here.

Second, your sponsor and two or three internal (departmental) committee members should have read and approved your dissertation draft for defense. You should provide sufficient time for your committee members to read thoroughly, and you must distribute the final version of your dissertation one month prior to the defense.

Third, there are official GSAS forms you must submit, most notably the "Intent to Distribute and Defend" form and the Application for the Dissertation Defense form. The Dissertation Office will schedule a defense if the application is filed by their deadlines (about November 14 in the fall and 14 March in the spring); otherwise, this must be handled between you and your sponsor in consultation with the Dissertation Office. In any case, the "Application for the Dissertation Defense" must officially be submitted by the department All this information, and much more, is detailed on GSASs Dissertation Office website

The four possible outcomes of the defense are: Approved as submitted; Approved pending revisions;
Referred; and Fail.

Approved as submitted means that only minor revisions are needed. These will be detailed by the sponsor, provided to the student and should be completed within one month of the defense.

Approved pending revisions involves more substantial revisions. These will be provided in writing to the student and revisions must be completed within 6 months and assessed by the sponsor.

Referred means the committee believes that substantial revisions are necessary for the dissertation to be accepted. A sub-committee of three will be formed from the original committee. A detailed written description of the revisions will be provided to the student and these must be completed within one year of the defense and presented to the sub-committee.

Fail means the committee feels that the dissertation is not acceptable and the student will not be recommended for the degree.

Again, as in, all matters related to the dissertation and the dissertation defense, please consult the GSAS website. In addition, please feel free to call staff at the Dissertation Office with your queries (or consult, as well, with the Graduate Secretary in our department). Please consult this link for additional information: http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/distribution-defense-and-deposit-ten-steps