

*Revised 12/20 by
DGS, Fennell*

HANDBOOK FOR PhD STUDENTS
SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Columbia University Department of Anthropology. This handbook is intended to help you navigate through the years of study and research that will lead to a PhD degree in anthropology. We hope that the outlining of procedures and defining of terms will help you in planning your studies. This handbook focuses largely on the policies and procedures of the Department. 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 PhD in our Department typically requires 3 years of course work. Coursework during the third year progresses at a slightly less intensive pace in order to accommodate Admission to Candidacy Exams (ACEs), prospectus writing, and grant submissions. The third year is followed by 1-2 years of dissertation research and 1-2 years of dissertation write-up. The expected time frame for completion is 7 years, but circumstances vary, particularly when ethnographic fieldwork comes into the picture. For more on the timeline to completion and, in particular, the GSAS seven-year rule, please see "Seven-Year Rule," p. 21.

Students' first year is arranged in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). By the end of the first semester of the second year, each student chooses an advisor and two additional faculty members in order to form a committee (see also: "Advising," p. 14). Students' program and progress is reviewed annually by the entire departmental faculty, and each student receives an end-of-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 PhD (culminating in the MPhil) in three years. Please note that while the GSAS requirement is four years, the Department's requirement is three. If a student's MPhil is not complete by the end of the third year (without faculty permission), the student will not be in good academic standing (see also: "Good Academic Standing," p. 11).

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, the TA room, and others. More information can be provided by the departmental administrative staff in 452 Schermerhorn Extension.

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STRUCTURE OF THE PHD

This is the structure of a typical student's PhD career. The program requires students enroll in 9 courses within the Department, all of which must be taken for a letter grade (i.e. not pass/fail or R). Independent studies do not count as courses.

First year

Fall semester

- Three graduate seminars
- Questions in Anthropological Theory I
- Language training *
- No requirement for teaching (TF)

Spring semester

- Three graduate seminars
- Questions in Anthropological Theory II
- Language training*
- No TF

Summer

- Students travel to potential field sites to narrow down their research topic and/or pursue language training

Students in their first year must take courses within the Department of Anthropology unless granted an exception by the DGS, who also serves as first-year students' advisor. Students pursuing language training should begin in their first semester. As language course(s) do not count as graduate seminars, students should bear these courses in mind when considering course load.

Students planning to conduct primary research that involves human subjects should submit their proposals to [IRB Human Subjects Review](#).

Second year

Fall semester

- 2-3 Graduate seminars
- Language training*
- TF
- Students form their advisory committee by the end of the semester

Spring semester

- 2-3 Graduate seminars
- Compulsory grant writing seminar-- "Second Year Doctoral Proposal Seminar"
- Language training*
- TF

- Students prepare their preliminary exam lists by the end of the semester

Summer

- Students travel to potential field sites to narrow down their research topic and/or pursue language training

Second-year students can take courses in other departments or at other universities through the [Inter-University Doctoral Consortium](#).

At the end of the fall semester students form a dissertation committee comprised of a sponsor, who serves as a primary advisor, and two other advisors selected from within the department. Before the end of the fall semester, the committee must meet formally. During the spring semester, students prepare a preliminary draft of lists for their qualifying exams in discussion with their dissertation committee.

Students undertaking language training must pass their language proficiency exam by the end of their second year.

Except in very unusual circumstances (e.g. outside funding that stipulates students need not serve), students in their second-year work as Teaching Fellows, supporting teaching in undergraduate classes. This is an integral part of student intellectual and professional development.

Any student planning to conduct primary research involving human subjects should submit their proposal for IRB Human Subjects Review.

Third year

Fall semester:

- Apply for field research grants.
- 1 graduate seminar (often for R credit)
- Finalize exam lists
- TF

Spring semester

- Prepare, take, and defend qualifying exams
- Prepare, take, and defend dissertation proposal
- 1 graduate seminar (often for R credit)
- TF

The fall semester is dominated by grant application and the finalizing of exam lists. Please note, students are expected to apply for a major external grant, and encouraged to apply for any grant for which they are eligible even if it is more modest. Students' exams are scheduled for the week before spring break, with the oral defense scheduled no later than the first week in April. Students submit their dissertation proposals by early April and defend the proposal by the end of the spring semester. Students must complete all other requirements for the M.Phil (language training,

requisite amount of coursework). Additionally, students must complete the IRB Human Subjects Review.

Fourth Year

- Field research

During this year, students should also apply for dissertation write-up grants if they expect to be writing already in year five.

Fifth Year

For some students, continue field research.

Fall semester

- Meet with dissertation committee, submit timetable for writing-up.
- Take dissertation writing practicum seminar
- Dissertation writing commences
- Submit write-up grant applications.
- TF or DF

Spring semester

- Dissertation writing
- Practicum
- TF or DF

Students are required to meet with their committees within 1 month of returning from the field. During this meeting, students provide a brief summary of their completed research and prepare a timetable for dissertation completion to be filed with the department

Students in their fifth year may choose either a Dissertation Fellowship (DF) or a Teaching Fellowship (TF) for their funding. A DF does not require teaching; a TF does. Students should also apply for write-up grants.

Sixth Year

- Dissertation writing
- Present advanced chapter in the Dissertation Workshop
- TF or DF
- apply for dissertation write-up funding as eligible.

Seventh Year

- Dissertation writing
- Present advanced chapter in the Dissertation Workshop
- Apply for jobs and postdocs
- TF or DF
- Complete, distribute, defend, and deposit their dissertation.

*Please note that while GSAS requires that students demonstrate proficiency in one language besides English, the Department requires training in a language specific to students' anthropological research. For more on this requirement, see page 8.

Summer Funding

In their first years, students are strongly encouraged to investigate possible dissertation topics by travelling for preparatory research or language training to potential field sites. (For more information on the Department's language requirement, please refer to page 9 of this handbook.) A small departmental fund exists to offset the cost of summer research; first- through fourth-year students are eligible for up to \$1500 in research funding and fifth- through eighth-year students are eligible for up to \$1000. This is in addition to summer funding available from GSAS. We also encourage students to apply for other summer funds from within the University as appropriate to their area and project (for more on research funding resources, please refer to pp. 15-16 of this handbook). Please note, to be eligible for summer research funds into years six, seven, and eight, students need to demonstrate evidence of progress toward completing their dissertation and circulating its emerging findings, for instance, by participating in/ or organizing workshops, panels etc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In order to qualify for the MPhil, 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 nine departmental courses for credited letter grades. These courses must be regular courses; Independent Study courses do not count as one of these nine academic departmental for credited letter grades. Of these nine courses, three are compulsory: Questions I and II taken during the first year, and the doctoral proposal writing seminar, taken during the second year. Please note that while these courses are required, they are not the *only* courses students are expected to take. Students must take courses every semester they are in residence before their MPhil 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 during the third year (these courses are often taken for R credit), 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 nine 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 ACEs. 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 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 DGS. First-year students must consult with the DGS at the beginning of both semesters 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. Students must form their dissertation committees prior to the end of the first semester of their second year. After their committees are formed, students should seek the advice of their committee members; they should obtain specific approval each semester from their sponsor/advisor.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK

Questions in Anthropological Theory I and II

A required introductory two-semester core course sequence for first-year PhD 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. This sequence counts as two courses toward the 9 required departmental academic courses.

Proposal Writing Course

A required proposal writing course will be taught each spring. Students must have completed this course by the end of their second year. This course counts toward the 9 required departmental academic courses.

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 DGS about gaining advanced proficiency in a principal research language so as to satisfy the departmental requirement.

Thereafter, committee members should be consulted. Students must pass their language requirement exam prior to their proposal defense, and students are responsible for organizing their language requirement exam in a timely manner so this can be completed by the time of the proposal defense. It is typically the case that all MPhil requirements, including the language requirement, are fulfilled when all MPhil requirements are by the end of the second semester of the third year).

Registration and Financial Matters

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

Year

- Year 1: Dean's Fellowship (no teaching requirement)
- Year 2: Teaching Fellowship (TF)
- Year 3: TF
- Year 4: External/Competitive Funding (for field or laboratory research)
- Year 5: TF
- Year 6: 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.
- Year 7: 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. This funding is not guaranteed and cannot be assessed until enrollments are known at the beginning of the semester. For this reason, these students are strongly encouraged to apply for external write-up fellowships during year 6.

Fieldwork Research Grant

The Department offers two awards to support the fieldwork of students within the Department of Anthropology. The amount of the award is set to equal that of the most prestigious granting body in anthropology, the Wenner-Gren Foundation. Proposals for are judged on the following four essential characteristics:

- A well-defined research question
- A detailed description of appropriate evidence to answer the research question
- A feasible plan for gathering and analyzing this evidence
- The significance of the research to important theoretical and methodological issues in anthropology

Eligibility:

- Department of Anthropology students in their 3rd or 4th years
- Students will be engaged in field research for a minimum of one academic year
- Who have applied for but not received any other major awards, including the GSAS International Travel Award as well as awards from the Social Science Research Council, the National Science Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Application procedure:

The grant application must include general information about the project, an abstract of proposed research, answers to five project description questions, a detailed budget, a bibliography, and the student's CV. Applications will be reviewed and awardees determined by the Graduate Committee of the Department of Anthropology. Applications should be emailed to Marilyn Astwood with Jeanne Roche in CC April 15th.

TERMINOLOGY

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.

Graduate students are required to maintain continuous registration via M&F. Every semester you are enrolled and until you receive your PhD, you are to register for M&F.

- Year 1: M&F is paid by GSAS.
- Years 2 and 3: while on a TF, GSAS pays M&F.
- Year 4: GSAS pays M&F if you receive an external or competitive department grant.
- Year 5 and 6: M&F is paid by GSAS if you are taking a TF or DF
- Year 7: any remaining TF or DF may be used; some TF positions may be available contingent on enrollment. If you are on a TF or DF these fees are paid for you.

Health & Insurance Fees

These refer to compulsory fees for health insurance and access to Medical Services on campus. They can be waived if a student has proof of other Health Insurance.

Each year you are enrolled and *until you receive your PhD* you are responsible for paying M&F and Health and Insurance fees. If you are on a TF or DF these fees are paid for you. GSAS will cover these fees for students who receive an external award if they are within their GSAS 5-year fellowship. For students in their post GSAS funding years, GSAS will cover the M&F fees if the student has an external award.

If a student engaged in field research seeks to stay for a semester beyond the term of their fellowship, the student should first contact the funding organization to obtain an extension to the grant period. If successful, the student's M&F will be paid by GSAS. If unsuccessful, GSAS and the Department will pay the cost of M&F fees.

The Department will pay M&F fees for students in their semester of distribution. Registration after the semester of distribution is not required.

Good Academic Standing

All funding, whether from GSAS or from the Department, is contingent upon being in good academic standing. Good academic standing is defined as:

- (1) completing courses in a timely manner
- (2) maintaining a grade point average of 3.0 or higher
- (3) fulfilling all work requirements as a TF as the Department and GSAS requirements stipulate.

Students who do not maintain good academic standing may have their stipends withheld or registration suspended until requirements are fulfilled. In extreme cases of unsatisfactory progress, a student may be asked to leave the program.

Residence Unit

A tuition-based unit. One residence unit is equated with one full-time semester. Admission to candidacy and receipt of the MPhil 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

A student's primary advisor on his/her dissertation committee.

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.gsas.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 PhD 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). It is often, but not necessarily, the case that students will work as TFs once their GSAS five year fellowship has expired. As these fellowships are contingent on enrollment; it is not guaranteed but permitted so long as students are within 7 years of entry into the Program.

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 are 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., MESAAS) or programs (e.g., IRWAG, CSER), teaching in the Columbia Summer Session, and posts at other universities or colleges (e.g., Barnard).

SUMMER RESEARCH SUPPORT

Your GSAS fellowship provides you with an annual stipend for summer research. Supplementary funds are available from the Department. These can be used for summer preparatory research, language study, or travel to conferences. In their first years, students are strongly encouraged to investigate possible dissertation topics by travelling for preparatory research or language training to potential field sites. (For more information on the Department's language requirement, please refer to p. 8 of the handbook.) A small departmental fund exists to offset the cost of summer research: first- through fourth-year students are eligible for up to \$1500 in research funding and fifth- through eighth-year students are eligible for up to \$1000. The amount of summer money may vary yearly according to the funding package put together by GSAS. This is in addition to summer funding available from GSAS. Students are also encouraged to apply for other summer funds from within the University as appropriate to their area and project (for more on research funding resources, please refer to p. 16 of the handbook). Please note, students seeking summer research support into years six, seven, and eight must be able to show evidence of progress toward completing their dissertation and sharing its emerging findings, for instance, through participation in workshops and panels.

For the department funds, students must complete and submit the Request for Summer Research Support Form (see Appendix) to the DAAF, currently Jeanne Roche, for review. A report detailing research results and activities must be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant at completion.

LETTERHEAD

The Department allows students to use Department Letterhead for job search related purposes or for research purposes. Please check with the DGS to ascertain if your purposes align with this policy.

BUSINESS CARDS

The Department recommends that all students apply for business cards listing their affiliation with Columbia University and our department before they travel. The Department will cover the costs of these cards. To order business cards, please follow the steps listed at <https://print.columbia.edu/content/business-cards>. The Department's DAAF can provide payment information.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

The University and Department require that all students register foreign trips with Columbia's ISOS service. ISOS is a free service that provides emergency medical and other help. Students have to register their trips ahead of time. Registration and information can be found at: <http://globaltravel.columbia.edu/>

WORK-STUDY

Work-study jobs are available in the Department and at other locations on campus. Students need first to establish their eligibility with the Graduate School (107 Low Library). From there, students should contact the DAAF 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.

DEDICATED STUDENT SPACES

Please make yourself at home in and help maintain the Anthropology Department Graduate Student Lounge. The lounge can be opened during business hours by signing out a key from the Anthropology Offices, 452 Schermerhorn Extension. Other facilities primarily intended for graduate student use are the Sheldon Scheps departmental library, the computer room, and the TA offices on the 8th floor. There are also study carrels open only to PhD students in the ISERP offices of the International Affairs Building. As the exact location of this space changes year to year and is available only to students whose name is on ISERP's list (provided by the DAAF), please see Courtney to obtain access.

ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Students must submit the "Annual Fellowship Report" to the Department every spring (circa March). This report is important because it confirms that you are requesting fellowship support for the following year and lists the names of your committee members. 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 continue in the program. This form will be provided through the Department.

APPLICATIONS FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING

GSAS requires that students apply for at least one academic year external award during years 1-4 of their GSAS fellowship. 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 will have successfully completed one year's residency by taking two residence units and earning at least 30 credits (10 courses, typically) with letter grades and at least an A- average **by the end of a given semester** are eligible to receive the Master of Arts degree. In order to receive this degree, students should apply during the semester in which the 30 credits/2 residence units will be complete. (This is typically, but not always, the spring of a student's first year.) To do so, students must submit an application form, which is available on the Registrar's website at <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. The Department's Graduate Program Assistant (currently Marilyn Astwood) will send a reminder; students 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

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

transcripts indicating your grades for the course. Typically, only coursework that did *not* count towards completion of the other degree (i.e. taken over and above the minimum required for graduation) can be counted for transfer credit.

ADVISING

Advising relationships are essential to the Department's graduate program. As previously discussed, the DGS serves as the primary advisor to students in their first and second years. At the end of the first year, students will meet the Graduate Studies Committee as a whole, rather than just the DGS, to discuss their progress and plans for study in the coming year. By the end of the first semester of the second year, students must form a committee. 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 first semester of the second year, relationships with these three committee members must be formalized and reported to the Graduate Program Assistant on the Dissertation Committee Form (see Appendix) with faculty signatures. A one-hour meeting with the committee must be held before the end of the first semester; in that meeting, the student's plans for research, grant applications, and examination schedule should be discussed. In the second semester of the second year, students will produce a draft reading list for their qualifying exams in discussion with their committee. 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 Program Assistant. Oversight for the advising system is provided by the DGS.

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 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 early 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 DGS 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 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 Department of Anthropology (including the sponsor), is the group with whom students on their dissertations. Students may include faculty from other departments in addition to the three internal committee members as faculty with they work on a regular basis, and up to two of these may serve as outside readers on the defense committee.

Students may have any full-time faculty member in the Department, 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 the end of the first semester of their second 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 required to meet with their newly formed committees to review their general progress by the end of the first semester of their 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 ACEs and for writing grant proposals and the prospectus. By the end of the second semester students should outline to their committee their plan for completed Human Subjects (IRB) review.

THIRD YEAR

Grant-writing

The first semester of the third year is dedicated to preparing and submitting grants to support field research. Sample successful grants can be found in the grant archive that you may access by registering for the "Wednesday Seminar" and we encourage students to look for various sources for funds depending on their regional and topical focus. The intellectual rationale, significance, and intended plan for research that is outlined in grant applications will form the basis for the prospectus.

There are three potential sources of financial support for fieldwork:

Outside Funders (include but not limited to):

- 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)

Columbia Fellowships

Second, there are Columbia-based fellowships. The single University-wide source is the Columbia Traveling Fellowship, which has a deadline of (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.

Departmental Grants

Lastly, the Department offers two competitive grants, both of which are eligible only to students who did not receive either an external award or a Columbia fellowship. Competition for both grants will fall annually in April upon the close of competition for other grants.

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.

There are also grant guides in Columbia's libraries. A reference librarian can point to them quickly. Most granting agencies have websites.

Please be sure to look closely to locate all viable sources of dissertation research funding.

Advanced Certifying Examination (ACE)

Prior to writing a dissertation prospectus, students must demonstrate scholarly excellence by passing a preparatory exam, the "ACE." This exam is based on comprehensive bibliographies (or "lists") created by the students in consultation with their advisors and committee members. These bibliographies must be approved by the student's advisor and should largely be completed by the end of the first semester of the third year to allow students to complete the readings on their lists.

The ACE is a two-part examination:

1. A week-long, take-home written examination during which the student will be presented with five questions, and asked to answer three. Each answer will consist of a 10-12 double-spaced page essay.
2. An oral defense of the written exam, **two-hours in length**, to be scheduled with the PhD committee. The orals should be scheduled **no later than the first week in April**. The student should come to the oral defense with a prepared 5-10 minute opening statement that includes: a summary account of what was argued in the written exams; what the student might have learned or thought about since completing the written portion of the ACEs, and might want to add/clarify; questions or difficulties raised by the exams.

The ACEs is scheduled, annually, to take place the week before Spring Break.

II. Preparation for the ACE:

The student will prepare **one** reading list, consisting of **three “domains” of interest**. Two domains will be designed and organized around conceptual and theoretical interests, that is, intellectual conversations within anthropology and beyond that are central to the student’s intellectual work and training in the discipline. The third domain will focus on historical and/or anthropological literatures specific to the student’s region of study. Note: in the case of a “multi-sited” ethnography, the “region” may refer to institutional histories—such as of international courts or NGOs—instead of an “area studies” literature. Neither the “region” or “area” of study, nor the conceptual/theoretical domains are given *a priori*. Each domain is to be defined and delimited by the student in conversation with the committee. The entire list should consist of **75-100 citations**.

The student is to provide a narrative of a few paragraphs in length that articulates their substantive concerns with and interests in the intellectual conversations and specific texts chosen. The **brief** narrative should state the conceit of first, **the list as a whole**, and subsequently, the framework or logic **of each domain**. In addition, the student will provide four or five questions that frame their thinking about each domain, and that will guide them in studying for the exam.

The due date for a final, approved list is December 1st of any given academic year (or the first day of the week following, if December 1st falls on a weekend).

The student’s dissertation committee will draft the examination questions. Insofar as this is **one exam**, the questions may be designed such that they cross-reference each of the domains, encouraging the student to think about her list as a whole.

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 may be grounds for dismissal from the program. Upon successful completion of the exam, the committee will recommend to the department to advance the student to PhD candidacy. An MPhil degree will be granted if all requirements have been met (i.e., successful completion of the A.C.E. exam, nine 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 MPhil degree and successfully completed the dissertation research prospectus defense as outlined below.

9000-level courses are often used to prepare for the ACEs and/or the dissertation prospectus. The nature and amount of work for such directed courses will be determined in consultation with your advisor.

Dissertation Prospectus

After successful completion of the ACEs, 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 and typically runs to 25-30 pages, though the final length should be decided with the student’s committee. For approximately two hours, the student will discuss the proposed research

in a dedicated dissertation prospectus defense for the student's committee. The committee will assess the feasibility and merit of the proposed research and make suggestions for improvement as necessary.

The dissertation prospectus must be completed and accepted in advance of dissertation research, and it is a requirement for the MPhil 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 PhD 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.

By the prospectus defense meeting, students should have completed all requirements for the MPhil and are ready to begin field research. This involves: successful completion of the ACEs; the Dissertation Prospectus; fulfillment of the Language Requirement; successful completion of 9 graded courses (including the proposal writing seminar) in the Department; no incompletes in these or other courses; and completion of IRB review. Evidence of the completion of all these requirements must be presented at this meeting and forms the basis for the awarding of the MPhil, which is required for the pursuit of dissertation fieldwork, for receipt of grants, and which, in our Department, must be completed by the end of the third year in residence.

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH REVIEW

The Institutional Review Board of 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 IRB's site can be found at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/>

The application site is: <https://www.rascal.columbia.edu> and the Rascal help line is 212-870-3480

An IRB statement relevant for overseas projects is "International Human Subjects Research: Interim Guidelines" (March 11, 2003)

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, students will pursue a particular research interest. It is advisable that students maintain copious notes during their time away from the University, and that they make duplicate copies, whether "taking notes" in a notebook or on a computer. These should be kept separately; one copy may even be forwarded to a dissertation sponsor or elsewhere for safekeeping. It may also be advisable to email notes to oneself on a personal account, thereby maintaining a password-protected data archive available from anywhere you have access to the internet. Maintaining contact with advisors during fieldwork is crucial. Often, they can detect lacunae in research, or they can help redirect or reformulate research agendas as new and unpredicted circumstances are encountered. They can also help maintain a sense of perspective during a period that can be extremely demanding, both intellectually and personally.

Students should also maintain contact with the DAAF and/or the Graduate Program Assistant, who will help ensure that they are appropriately registered and receiving any University funding that is due. It is essential that students advise the Department of their field addresses or an appropriate contact. Students must also inform the Department of when they intend to return, with sufficient lead-time to permit registration, the assignment of teaching duties, and the allocation of departmental funds where appropriate. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that she or he remains in good standing with the University while away from campus for the purposes of research. Also, students must remember to inform US (or other, as relevant) embassy officials of their residency in the country of research, so they know where to locate you in the event of an emergency.

Visas

Many 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 students submit a version of the research proposal. Students should consult the relevant embassy for information on local requirements. Be aware that some countries may delay entry for as much as a year while they process an application. Apply early.

Foreign Sponsor

Some countries require that visitors have a co-sponsor or even project director from that country in order to conduct research there. Students are advised 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. Students should be sure that student health insurance would cover any medical costs incurred outside of the US.

Columbia Apartments

Students residing in Columbia apartments who give up their accommodations while in the field are not guaranteed a space upon their return. Students may, however, arrange a sublet of the

apartment while they are in the field, in accordance with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences housing policy.

ISOS

As noted on p.13 above, the Department requires that all students register field research trips with ISOS. <http://globaltravel.columbia.edu/>

Dissertation Writing

Within one month of returning to Columbia, students must schedule a formal meeting with their committee. Either at that meeting or within 10 days of it, they must submit a short (5 pages) report on research covered while away and a timetable for completion of the writing, broken down by chapter. This will form the basis for the discussion with the committee as to the student's plans. This form must be filed with the Graduate Program Assistant within 10 days of the meeting.

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 significant effort. There are several things students can do to make the process go more smoothly. First, the work done for the ACEs and dissertation proposal should be useful for the dissertation. The more care devoted to them, the more utility they have as resources. Second, while in the field, students should correspond regularly with their committees. Even if they do not have the opportunity to respond at length, the process of formulating ideas and thinking about learning will be invaluable. Third, the Department provides a required dissertation writing seminar to aid in the transition from field research to completing successful chapters.

Finally, when returning from the field and trying to write, students should ask their 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. An advisor's approach to reading dissertation chapters is something that should be clarified early on in the relationship. Please know that your advisor is expected to be one's primary reader; it is not appropriate or respectful to expect other members of a committee, particularly junior members, to do most of the reading and commenting on a dissertation if an 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, this requirement takes the form of the Scheps Lectures. A TA position is annually assigned to an advanced PhD student who will organize these activities 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, American Council of Learned Societies, School of Advanced Research, Ford) for funding dissertation writing. These are very competitive and high-level awards. It is most effective to apply for these after a substantial portion of the dissertation is completed.

Practicum Seminar

Post-field students are required to take a practicum seminar. This is designed to aid in preparation for a post-Columbia career and involves preparation of job letters, CVs, postdoctoral applications, and job talk presentations, among other issues.

SEVEN-YEAR RULE

GSAS has a “seven-year rule” that bars further GSAS funding and continuance in university housing after seven years. The seven-year rule also prevents students from being eligible to serve as Teaching Fellows (TFs) beyond seven years, and students 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. Field research is typically funded from external fellowships, as well as competitive Department and University grants. Students in their seventh year are often funded on Teaching Fellowships. However, this is not guaranteed but dependent upon course enrollment. GSAS requires all students complete the PhD degree within 9 years unless particular exemptions are granted; such exemptions are rare. Students who do not finish within 9 years will not be allowed to finish their PhDs. Please note that medical, personal, and parental leaves will affect what constitutes a registered semester toward the “seven year rule.” Please consult GSAS for details.

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 MA/MPhil/PhD within seven calendar years. Students who receive credit for an MA completed elsewhere must complete the PhD within six year. This time limit for the MA/MPhil/PhD is known as the Seven-Year Rule.

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 PhD student register for an eighth or ninth year of study. Additionally, as stated earlier in the Handbook, GSAS requires that a student—even one with permission to continue past the seventh year—must complete ALL requirements for the PhD, 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. Again, although GSAS mandates that all requirements for the MPhil be completed by the end of the *fourth* year, the Department of Anthropology requires that all requirements for the MPhil be completed by the end of the *third* year. 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.

REPORT ON PROGRESS IN CANDIDACY

Per GSAS, each year, post-MPhil students and students in their eighth semester who are required to complete the MPhil 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 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 PhD

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, a student must select his or her 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, the sponsor and two or three internal (departmental) committee members should have read and approved the dissertation draft for defense. Students should provide sufficient time for committee members to read thoroughly, and students must distribute the final version of their dissertations one month prior to the defense.

Third, there is an official GSAS form to submit, the [Application for the Dissertation Defense](#) form. The Dissertation Office will only schedule a defense if the application is filed by their deadlines (see GSAS's Dissertation Office website for deadlines as they change each year); otherwise, this must be handled between students and their sponsors in consultation with the Dissertation Office. In either case, the Application for the Dissertation Defense must officially be submitted by the Department. All this information, and much more, is detailed on [GSAS 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 faculty 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 queries (or consult, as well, with the Graduate Program Assistant in the Department). Please consult the [Distribution, Defense, and Deposit page](#) on the GSAS site for additional information.

AGSA

The department considers AGSA to be the representative student body that advances the concerns of anthropology graduate students to the Department—usually the DGS and/or Chair. Should situations arise that affect some (but not all) students these concerns can still be presented by AGSA. If issues arise that AGSA deems necessary to bring to the attention of the entire faculty (not just Chair and DGS) they should appoint two students to represent these issues and consult with the Chair about presenting the concerns to faculty at a Department faculty meeting.