

UCLA African-American Studies M.A. Students

<http://www.afam.ucla.edu>

GUIDELINES FOR M.A. PROGRAM

What does the African-American Studies Master of the Arts Program provide?

- ✦ The interdisciplinary program gives students the opportunity to gain expertise in African-American studies. Students focus on a specific disciplinary concentration within the overall field of African-American studies, for instance students may focus on a historical, literary, musical, political, or sociological emphasis, among others.
- ✦ The program provides a theoretical base of knowledge, exposure to methods of research, and a context for analyzing and interpreting the African-American and diasporic experience.

What does the African-American Studies M.A. Program entail?

- ✦ A two-year terminal Master of Arts degree.

What are the requirements for the African-American Studies M.A. Program?

COURSES (*www.registrar.ucla.edu*)

- ✦ A total of 12 graduate courses for a letter grade with a minimum of 3.0 average.
- ✦ Successful completion of thesis or comprehensive exam.
- ✦ A language requirement. (If a student has taken two full years of a language as an undergraduate, they may petition to waive out of the requirement).
- ✦ However, if they did not complete two full years of a language at the undergraduate level, they must successfully complete the language exam. (See language requirement section).
- ✦ There are six core courses, which are normally taken during the first year of study. Students are then expected to choose a complementary specialization within a discipline from among the program's nine participating departments:
 - Anthropology
 - English
 - History
 - Linguistics
 - Ethnomusicology
 - Philosophy
 - Political Science
 - Psychology
 - Sociology
- ✦ Appropriate petitions for the above requirements must be filed with graduate division before graduation (see Petitions section).
- ✦ How and when do I register for courses?
 - 1) Register for courses online via MyUCLA (www.my.ucla.edu) * Recommended: 3 courses per quarter.
 - 2) Courses that don't begin with the title "AF-AMER" may have enrollment restrictions.
*Contact the individual professor teaching the course in order to enroll in these courses.
 - 3) Enrollment in courses that require special permission will need a Permission To Enroll (PTE number) in order to be included in a class. You may have to wait until the first day of class before the professor gives you the PTE number.

DISCIPLINARY SPECIALIZATION

- ✦ Do you have to have a disciplinary specialization?
 - 1) Decide on your disciplinary specialization and begin taking courses in that department

ADVISOR/COMMITTEE(S)

- ✦ Do I need a faculty advisor?
 - 1) Yes. Entering students will be assigned a temporary faculty advisor whose expertise is compatible with the student's disciplinary focus.
 - 2) Arrange initial meeting with assigned advisor and schedule additional meetings as necessary. Later, if desired, a student may choose another advisor.
 - 3) During students' second year, they are required to choose three faculty members to be on their thesis or comprehensive exam committee.

LANGUAGE

- ✦ What is the language requirement?
 - 1) Two full years (no fewer) of language courses at the undergraduate level (no graduate or high school courses), or pass a proficiency exam at UCLA.
 - 2) One UCLA course with "C" or better.
 - 3) The language requirement is necessary in order to obtain an Af-Am M.A. degree.
 - 4) Students may select from a range of languages.
 - 5) Students must schedule an appointment with the Af-Am Office to report and confirm their language status. Please bring an undergraduate transcript if you have taken two full years of language courses.

PETITIONS

- ✦ What petitions are due before graduation?
 - Student Advisor Eboni Shaw will send out email notifications.
- ✦ When are the petitions due?
 - 1) Generally the petitions are due before the second week of the quarter it is filed.

M.A. THESIS

- ✦ What is the M.A. thesis option?

The M.A. thesis is a research paper of approximately 60-80 pages in length on a single topic. This option provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of a single topic. The M.A. thesis option is usually selected by students who wish to get a Ph.D. and write a dissertation.
- ✦ Where do I get information about Thesis writing filing procedures and meetings?

Check for information about Thesis writing filing procedures and meetings at (<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/thesisintro.htm>). You should attend the thesis meeting before the quarter you intend to file.
- ✦ What steps need to be taken to select my M.A. thesis committee?
 - 1) Submit names of potential faculty whom you would like on your M.A. thesis committee.

- 2) Committee must consist of three or more tenure-track UC faculty from at least two departments (must be from AF-Am).
 - 3) One member is assigned as chair (Chair person directs overall thesis committee).
 - 4) A lecturer may be a fourth committee member.
 - 5) Please indicate professor's name, department and professorial rank.
 - 6) Submit the list of faculty members to the Af-Am Office for approval.
 - 7) After faculty names are approved, fill out M.A. thesis committee form; (www.gdnet.ucla.edu/forms). Click on Nominate Masters Committee.
 - 8) Return to Af-Am office. The Af-Am office will submit to Graduate Division.
- ✦ What qualifications are required for the committee members?
- 1) The chair and at least one other member must be African-American Studies tenure-track faculty. Faculty must have one of the following ranks:
 - i. Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor
 - ii. Professor emeritus
 - iii. Professor-in-residence
 - iv. Acting professor
 - v. Acting assistant professor (may serve as regular member, but not as chair on thesis committee)
 - 2) Faculty members from other UC campuses holding one of the above tenure-track titles may serve as one of the three regular faculty committee members.
 - 3) Speak with Eboni Shaw for approved faculty.
- ✦ Once I have requested committee members, what do I do?
- 1) Meet with advisor and finalize members.
 - 2) Submit Masters Committee Petition to Afro Am office and Grad Division.
 - 2) Get the form in PDF format at:
(<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/nominintro.htm>)
 - 3) Submit tentative thesis topic via email or in person to student's thesis committee chair.
- ✦ What does my thesis preparation consist of?
- 1) Finalize thesis outline and abstract with *all* committee members.
 - 2) If time permits, give a conference paper at a Grad Student conference.
 - 3) It is advisable to begin your thesis preparation within the first year of the program. Be sure to download the "Regulations for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation" handbook on-line at (www.gdnet.ucla.edu)
- ✦ When do students begin working on their thesis, and what is a typical timeline?
- 1) Frequently thesis research begins during the winter quarter of your second year upon completion of the 12 required courses.
 - 2) Students normally complete the first draft of their thesis by the fourth week of spring quarter. Faculty will read and recommend modifications, and typically students submit their final copy to the Grad Division during the first week of June. (See university deadlines).
- ✦ What steps need to be taken in order to write my thesis?
- 1) Submit tentative thesis topic via email or in person to student's thesis committee chair.
 - 2) Once chair approves thesis rough abstract (brief idea of thesis topic), submit it to the rest of the committee members.
 - 3) Once abstract is approved by the entire committee, then the student submits a research timeline.
 - 4) Upon research timeline approval, the student begins more in depth research.
 - 5) The student meets frequently with committee members to confirm that they have compiled sufficient research to begin writing the thesis. Committee members provide feedback on

appropriate sources, and provide further suggestions.

6) Students complete first draft and submit for committee review and comments.

7) Student makes appropriate revisions.

✦ What if I need to interview human subjects in order to complete my thesis, what university procedures are involved?

1) If you plan to do interviews, you must receive university approval of your proposed procedures.

2) Usually students take a UCLA Human Subjects prep workshop.

3) Fill out Human Subjects questionnaire, petition, and submit to the IRB (Institutional Review Board) Office.

4) Submit to Human Subjects Office.

5) File approved petition with Grad Division.

✦ Are there any thesis writing workshops or courses?

1) While there is no formal thesis writing courses, there are helpful thesis writing workshops. While writing your thesis, you may enroll in AAS 598- Thesis Writing with an approved professor from your committee. This course does not count as one of your 12 courses for graduation. It is a category to tell the university that you are writing your thesis. You get an S/U grade for it.

2) Graduate Student Resource Center offers workshops & tutoring.

✦ What are individual study courses?

1) There are three individual study courses which entails one student working individually with a single professor. The course numbers are 596, 597, 598.

596 (Thesis Preparation and Research) is a course whereby a student conducts research for their thesis under the supervision of a professor of their choice. Ideally, you would take the 596 course during winter of your second year, just before you write your thesis. The professor should be on your M.A. thesis committee.

597 (Comprehensive Exam Preparation) this course is designed to allow students to study for and take their comprehensive exam, however it will not count towards the 12 required courses. Students can sign up with one or more individual professor(s) who must be on their exam committee. Check with Afro-Am Studies for approval of professors.

598 (Independent Study- Thesis writing) this course is designed to allow you actually to write your thesis, but it will not count towards your 12 required courses. You sign up with an individual professor or professors who must be on your M.A. thesis committee. If you do not finish writing in one quarter, you may also register for an additional 598 for the next appropriate quarter. The 598 is a variable unit course and you can register anywhere from 4-12 units per quarter.

Special option for the 596 course:

Occasionally students can not find a required course to be available, in which case they may create up to two of their own individual study courses (under the 596 heading) in which they work with a single professor to study the required topic. In this case only, the additional 596 will count for credit as part of your required courses.

✦ What is the required length of a M.A. thesis?

1) The required length of a thesis paper will vary. However, most papers range in lengths between 60-70 pages.

CONFERENCE PAPER

- ✦ What is the conference paper?
The conference paper is a research paper that graduate students may present at academic conventions on a certain topic.
- ✦ Is a conference paper required?
No, a conference paper is completely optional and may be done if time permits.
- ✦ How is the conference paper different from the M.A. thesis?
A conference paper is generally only 7-10 pages in length while the M.A. thesis is typically 60-80 pages in length. In addition the M.A. thesis does not require an oral presentation as does the conference paper.
- ✦ What needs to be done for the Conference Paper?
If you know your thesis topic, begin researching
 - 1) Rewrite your best course paper to submit for a conference.
Apply to Bunche Center for conference funding (up to \$750).
 - 2) Secure a faculty reader for draft conference paper before mailing.

M.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION PLAN

- ✦ What is the Comprehensive Examination Plan?
 - 1) The comprehensive exam may be elected by students instead of the Thesis to complete the M.A. degree.
 - 2) The comprehensive exam is usually taken during the **spring quarter of your final year**.
 - 3) If you choose the exam option rather than the thesis, you must provide the IDP with at least one quarter's notice.
 - 4) The exam, consisting of three parts, is based on coursework and related reading.
 - 5) Two days are allotted for completion, over a weekend's time period, usually during 6th week.
- ✦ What does the Exam cover?
The exam is given in three disciplinary areas:
 - 1) Historiography (professor who taught the course writes the question);
 - 2) the student's area of concentration; and
 - 3) an area of the student's concentration or Afro-American Studies.

*You must indicate the possible examination committee (professor name, department and professor rank) who will write the questions
- ✦ What are some Individual Study Courses that will help prepare students for the Exam?
 - 2) Students may elect to take the **597- Comprehensive Exam Preparation**, this course is designed to allow students to study for and take their comprehensive exam, but it will not count towards the 12 required courses. Students can sign up with one or more individual professors who must be on their exam committee. Check with Afro-Am Studies for approval of professors.

FELLOWSHIP

First Year Students:

- ✦ How should first year students prepare to apply for their second year fellowship(s)?
First year students may not apply for the Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program;
 - 1) The Graduate Opportunity Fellowship Program (GAFP) is open only to incoming

graduate students and is good for only one year. It cannot be renewed for your second year. Students may apply for other fellowships or funding to cover their second year. You must do so during winter quarter of your first year.

- 2) Graduate division does not guarantee that all second year M.A. students will receive additional fellowships or funding. Students may have to take out loans or seek employment.
- 3) Check for possible fellowships and deadlines at (www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm)
- 4) Download applications from website listed above.
- 5) Talk with your faculty advisor and the Afro-Am Office.
- 6) Get letters of recommendation from current UCLA faculty and/or update letters of recommendation from previous M.A. admission application. For highest academic consideration letters of recommendation should be from faculty members.
- 7) Update Statement of Purpose to include accomplishments during first year of M.A. program.

✦ When are second year fellowship applications due?

- 1) First year students must submit second year fellowship applications in winter/spring of their first year.

Second Year Students:

✦ I am considering whether to apply to a Ph.D. program, where do I begin?

- 1) Research the right programs for you (www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm), and begin studying for the GRE subject test, if necessary. Approach professors about recommendation letters, look into fee waivers, and work on personal statement.

✦ Will the Af-Am M.A. Program eventually include a Ph.D. program?

- 1) Currently, the Af-Am program does not include a Ph.D. program.
- 2) M.A. students may apply to continue with Ph.D. studies in another department within UCLA. Another online application and supplementary material is required.
- 2) Students may possibly continue working with their present faculty committee, once they move to the UCLA department with the Ph.D. program.
- 3) Students pursuing a Ph.D. need to apply for fellowships during second year of M.A. program.

✦ How should future Ph.D. students prepare for fellowships?

- 1) Students should check with the department that they wish to enter for possible fellowships.
- 2) Also, check for possible fellowships and deadlines at (www.gdnet.ucla.edu/grpinst.htm)
- 3) Download applications from website listed above.
- 4) Talk with your M.A. Committee and the Afro-Am Office.
- 5) Get letters of recommendation from current UCLA faculty. For highest academic consideration letters of recommendation should be from faculty members only.
- 6) Update Statement of Purpose to include accomplishments during your M.A. program.

M.A. TEACHING/RESEARCH ASSISTANT

✦ Are you required to be a teaching or research assistant during the M.A. program?

- 1) Investigate possibilities for second year teaching assistant or research assistant positions

Additional Questions:

What needs to be done to secure housing?

- 1) Search for and secure housing off-campus.
- 3) Call UCLA Graduate Housing to inquire about possible last minute vacancies at (310) 398-4692.
(* The earlier the better).

How do you go about getting on-campus parking?

- 3) If necessary, sign up for on-campus parking
*Apply online: (<http://www.parking.ucla.edu/appmain.htm>)

How do you go about getting a Bruin Card?

- 4) Get Bruin Card at Kerckhoff Hall Room 123 *available early September
If you have any questions, check the website (www.bruincard.ucla.edu), or send an email to (bruincard@finance.ucla.edu).