

# University of Nevada, Las Vegas

## Department of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies

### MA Student e-Guidebook

Welcome to UNLV and the Department of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies. To help guide you along the path toward your graduate degree, we have created this guidebook. Here, you will find timelines that will help you chart your expected progress toward your degree (Part I). You will find information regarding course requirements (Part II). You will find information about becoming a graduate assistant (GA) (Part III) as well as administrative requirements, including forms that must be turned in to the department or the Graduate College (Parts IV and V). You will also encounter suggestions about professional development (Part VI). We hope this information helps propel you toward success in graduate school and beyond.

The graduate program in anthropology at UNLV provides each student with the educational background necessary for participation in the field as a professional. Students who receive an MA degree receive a grounding in all four subdisciplines of the field by taking the Core Seminars and a thorough understanding of the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of their specialty. Completion of the MA thesis demonstrates the student's ability to define a problem for study, summarize the relevant professional literature, systematically collect and analyze data, and interpret the results in light of contemporary theory.

A student with the MA is prepared for employment as a professional anthropologist by government agencies or private firms. Many MA students teach introductory anthropology courses in a university, college, or community college, usually as a part-time instructor.

## I. Timeline to Degree Progress

### Year 1:

*Required coursework:* Take Core I and II (ANT 703/704) and Proseminar I and II (ANTH 799).

*Suggested coursework:* Full-time students are expected to complete 18 credits each year.

*Administrative requirements:*

#### **Forms to be completed:**

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| Appointment of Advisory Committee Form:  | <a href="http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/AdvisoryCommittee.pdf">http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/AdvisoryCommittee.pdf</a>     |
| Proposed Masters and Specialist Degree Program Form:<br>(before finishing 16 hours of course work) | <a href="http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/MastersProgramPart1.pdf">http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/MastersProgramPart1.pdf</a> |
| Annual Progress Form:  | <a href="http://anthro-ets.unlv.edu/forms/annualprogressform.pdf">http://anthro-ets.unlv.edu/forms/annualprogressform.pdf</a>                   |

Students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits during each calendar year.

*Professional development suggestions:*

Be active in attending regional and national meetings. Develop a thesis topic and begin background research for the proposal.

Plan for pilot thesis research (if relevant).

The first year of graduate education is designed to ensure that all students have a comprehensive understanding of the four subdisciplines of the field of anthropology by successfully completing the Core sequence. These courses are team taught by two faculty members per semester. Successful completion of the Core sequence is required for continued participation in the graduate program. By the end of the first year, the student should:

- identify a subject for the MA thesis
- request and obtain the cooperation of a faculty member to serve as chair of the MA committee
- with the advice and consent of the committee chair, form a thesis committee consisting of

three members of the anthropology faculty and an outside member of the University Graduate Faculty

### **Year 2:**

Required coursework: Take at least four courses/seminars meeting department requirements and in consultation with your advisor.

Administrative requirements: Forms to be completed:

- Prospectus Approval Form
- Annual Progress Form

Students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits each calendar year.

Professional development suggestions: Be active in attending and possibly presenting in regional and national meetings. Begin applying for internal and external funding for your project.

MA students must also write and successfully defend to your advisory committee a research proposal. The style of the proposal should be determined in consultation with the chair of the advisory committee, and will usually follow a widely used granting agency format (e.g., NSF, NIH, Wenner-Gren).

Minimum requirements for the departmental proposal include: general aims, hypothesis or research questions, methods, and significance. Students must successfully defend their proposal before taking thesis credits and conducting research.

After a successful defense of his or her proposal, a student must enroll in six credits of Thesis (ANT 797) as a required part of a student's 33 credits for the MA. A student may enroll for more than 6 credits of Thesis during a graduate career, but the additional work will not be counted as part of the master's requirement. Up to 6 credits of Directed Reading (ANT 701), Independent Research (ANT 799), and Archaeology Field Practicum (ANT 688) may be included in the student's program.

In addition, students should carefully note the requirements that:

- 6 credits must be taken in the student's subdiscipline
- coursework must include a designated course in research design
- an introductory course in statistics must be completed if the student did not have such a preparation at the undergraduate level

### **Year 3 and onwards:**

While the Graduate College states that you must complete your MA in six years, the faculty expects you to have completed your MA in two to three years. Required coursework: All required coursework should have been completed by the end of year 2.

Suggested coursework: Consult with your advisor about possible additional coursework.

Administrative requirements: Complete an Annual Progress Form. Students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credits each calendar year.

Professional development suggestions: Be active in attending and possibly presenting in regional and national meetings. Write up results of your research for your thesis, and potentially for publication. Look for jobs or apply to PhD programs to continue your education. Consult regularly with your advisor and thesis committee.

## **II. Course Requirements**

Course requirements are given in the Graduate Student Catalog:

(<http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/current/publications/>)

### **III. Administrative Requirements**

These requirements have been listed throughout this guidebook under the appropriate year. To find electronic copies of these forms, go to <http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/forms/>. At the end of each year, you are required to submit the Annual Progress Form found at the back of this guidebook to your advisor.

To remain as a student in good standing, a student must

- complete a minimum of 6 credits each calendar year
- maintain a grade point average of 3.0
- receive no more than one grade of C or lower in a course that is part of the graduate program
- complete the progress form at the end of this handbook and present it to his or her advisor before the end of each Spring semester.
- complete the ANT 703/704 sequence during the two semesters following admission to the program
- submit a proposed graduate program to the graduate college prior to the completion of 16 hours of graduate credit.
- successfully defend a research proposal within one semester after completing all required coursework

### **IV. Graduate Assistantships (GAships)**

Each semester the Department of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies offers several Graduate Assistantships to Masters students. Each student can apply for up to four semesters of assistantship. The GA will perform no more than 20 hours of work that is shared between two departmental professors.

These GA positions are highly competitive and there is no guarantee that each MA student will receive an assistantship or the full four semesters. There is a UNLV wide teaching course offered at the start of each semester that is required for all new GAs. At the end of each GA semester the student will receive an evaluation (see attached) from the professors to whom they have been assigned. These performance evaluations and the student's standing in the department (e.g., GPA) will be drawn upon for allocations of future GAships.

### **V. Committee Organization**

#### **Advisor Assignment**

Upon admission to the Graduate College, you are assigned an advisor by the anthropology faculty. The faculty takes great care in selecting an advisor for each graduate student by carefully considering how your interests match with those of the faculty. In addition, as we want to ensure that each student is provided with the necessary guidance throughout their career at UNLV, the faculty also considers the relative number of students each faculty member is currently mentoring when matching students with an advisor. If you should wish to petition for a change of advisor, speak with the graduate coordinator. If the graduate coordinator is your advisor, then you should speak with the department chair. While you have the option to petition for a change of advisor, these requests cannot always be accommodated.

#### **Committee Selection**

By the completion of your second semester of study (12 credits of coursework), you must have, in consultation with your advisor, selected two members of the Anthropology and Ethnic Studies faculty to serve as your thesis committee as well as one faculty member from another department to function as the Graduate College Representative. If you elect to do so, you may request permission from the Graduate Dean to place one additional member from outside the Department of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies on your thesis committee.

When you have received consent from the selected faculty members, you must submit the Appointment of Advisory Committee Approval Form to the Graduate College. This form can be found at the following URL:

[http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF\\_Docs/AdvisoryCommittee.pdf](http://graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/AdvisoryCommittee.pdf)

## **VI. Professional Development**

In your second and third years, attend the relevant academic conferences including national and regional meetings (e.g., American Anthropological Association, Society of American Archaeologists, Physical Anthropology, Southwest Anthropology Association). At these conferences, you will encounter the cutting-edge in theory and empirical research—the latest ideas that may not yet have appeared in print. Exposure to these ideas will undoubtedly shape your research. You will also have opportunities to network with graduate students, professors and others who share your interests. These networking opportunities can yield important collaborations. They also begin making you a known commodity, an important factor when you subsequently look for a job.

Present professional papers and/or posters at these and other local professional conferences. Try collaborating with a faculty member to initiate opportunities to present at conferences; talk with your advisor or other faculty members about getting involved in this critical part of professional development. It is required that you gain the approval of your committee chair to present your work at any conference. While it is important to share the knowledge you are gaining through your research, it is equally important that your research is ready for this stage of your professional development. Participation in conferences without your committee chair's approval will be taken into consideration in evaluating your progress in your program as well as in any applications for Graduate Assistantships, scholarships, and the like.

Apply for grants for your research. Without funding, how can you conduct your research? Grant writing is a skill that you need to succeed in gaining support for your research in graduate school, but also beyond. Common sources of funding are internal (The Alumni Association Scholarships, Graduate and Professional Student Association Grant, Edwards and Olswang Scholarship, Rocchio Scholarship; see your advisor for further information) and external (National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, the Wenner-Gren Foundation, the Social Science Research Council; see the American Anthropological Association website for additional suggestions) institutions and agencies. There are also many funding opportunities for exemplary graduate students (for instance, to pay for travel to conferences or various awards and fellowships) through disciplinary associations.

Talk with your advisor and other faculty members about their grant writing activities. There are no inconsequential grants; remember, money tends to follow money. It is important to begin your track record of being able to get funding for your academic pursuits.

If you are in or wish to proceed with a Ph.D. program or continue academic pursuits, submit manuscripts for publication while you are in graduate school. Collaborating with your advisors can be an excellent way to co-author papers. Share your manuscripts with fellow graduate students, advisors, and other experts in your field, asking for honest, constructive feedback to help you publish your research. Publishing your work takes much time and effort but demonstrates to granting institutions that you are producing scholarship. And as with grants, there are no small publications, all of them count toward your training and intellectual development. Talk with your advisor and other faculty members about their scholarship and publishing accomplishments and the strategies they practice.

Develop your talents as an instructor. Many of the skills required to effectively teach are beneficial in any career path you take. As a teacher, you advance your verbal skills. You seek creative ways to engage students of varied backgrounds, and develop abilities to integrate technology like PowerPoint into the classroom. The university offers resources to help you hone your teaching skills (the teaching center in Lied Library: <http://tlc.unlv.edu/links.html>).

Become a member of the anthropological community. There are many opportunities to become involved in the life of the anthropological community. There are local opportunities, such as your own UNLV Anthropology Society. These associations with your graduate colleagues can be incredibly satisfying and a critical part of your professional development. There are also

opportunities to get involved in service work such as with the Anthropology and Ethnic Studies Department (i.e., as a graduate student representative). You can also find many opportunities to become involved in service at the regional and national levels; professional associations offer various seats on boards to graduate students. Taking advantage of service positions while a graduate student is an important part of training and a unique opportunity to network with a wide range of faculty. Talk with more advanced graduate students that have successfully worked to integrate themselves into anthropology with their research, scholarship, instruction, and service activities.