



Western

Program in
American Studies

**Graduate Program Handbook
2017-2018**

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WELCOME MESSAGE

On behalf of the American Studies program, I would like to wish you a warm welcome to the Program in American Studies at Western University, and congratulate you on your acceptance to our MA program. We are very excited to be the only university in Canada to offer a Master of Arts degree in American Studies, and are looking forward to meeting and working with you in the year ahead.

We hope this handbook will serve as a guide to the program curriculum, and provide some basic information about Western and answer some of the questions you may have as a graduate student.

If you have any questions that are not outlined herein, please feel free to contact either of us, or our Graduate Program Advisor, Kara Brown.

Sincerely,

Professor Laurel Shire

Director, Program in American Studies
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lshire@uwo.ca

Graduate Program Advisor

KARA BROWN

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THE MA PROGRAM IN AMERICAN STUDIES

Program Description

The MA in American Studies is a one year (12 month) program beginning in September and divided into 3 terms (Fall, Winter & Summer).

Program requirements

- Four one term (0.5) courses (or the equivalent in two-term courses) taken in the first & second terms:

Requirements

- American Studies 9050A: Method and Practice
- Three optional courses taken from participating departments (which may include a reading course at the graduate level)
- A Master's Research Project (American Studies 9075) of approximately 50 pages in length, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography, to be undertaken during the second and third term, and completed the middle of July.

In **April 2018** we will be holding our annual **Graduate Colloquium Series** in which students will meet with their MRP supervisors, other American Studies affiliate faculty, and fellow students to present and discuss their research projects.

MA PROGRAM IN AMERICAN STUDIES - TIMELINE 2017-18

Late August/Early September	Students meet individually with the Program Director
September 5, 2017	Welcome & orientation meeting: 1:00pm, LWH 2270C Refreshments at the Grad Club following meeting!
September 7, 2017	Fall term classes begin
First week of September	GTA/GRA appointments completed; GTA offices assigned
End of second week of September	Fall term course selection must be completed
October 31, 2017	Deadline to provide name of MRP Supervisor
Third week of October	SSHRC Doctoral (scholarship) applications due to Graduate Program Advisor (Kara Brown) - http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/fellowships/doctoral-doctorat-eng.aspx Begin CGS-M applications (SSHRC Masters) if you plan to apply to other MA programs for next year - http://www.nserc-crsg.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp
November 30, 2017 (or next working day)	MRP proposal due – hand in/email to the Graduate Program Advisor and your Supervisor
December 1, 2017	CGS-M (scholarship) applications due - http://www.nserc-crsg.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM_eng.asp
December 8, 2017	Classes end; All first term course requirements must be completed
January 4, 2018	Winter term classes begin
End of second week of January	Winter term course selection must be completed
Monthly meetings in Winter term	With Program Directors and your cohort of MA students in American Studies – for support and trouble-shooting
April 11, 2018	Classes end; All course work requirements must be completed
April 12, 2018	Graduate Colloquium presentations
May 31, 2018 (or next working day)	Completed first draft of MRP due – hand in to Supervisor
July 15, 2018 (or next working day)	Final draft of MRP due – hand in printed or electronic copy to the Graduate Program Advisor
Mid- August, 2018	Student offices must be vacated

THE MASTER'S RESEARCH PROJECT (MRP): American Studies 9075

Objectives of the Master's Research Project and Departmental Expectations

In addition to completing the prescribed course work, all students in the MA program in American Studies are required to complete a Master's Research Project (American Studies 9075). The Master's Research Project (MRP) will require the use of both original and secondary sources. The finished paper is expected to be approximately 50 pages in length, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography. The MRP allows a variety of research approaches (analysis of primary sources, assessment of historiography, critical review of secondary literature) as well as other creative products (exhibition script, policy brief, website, documentary film, etc.)

The Master's Research Project is the final test of an MA student's abilities, and the best indicator of suitability for further graduate education. The MRP is an MA student's 'masterpiece' – the project should represent the best work of which the student is capable at the time of writing, providing evidence of their mastery of material and methods learned to this point and of future promise.

This is a significant undertaking and students are required to begin working on their MRP early in their program. Students will be supervised by one of the American Studies faculty affiliates and will have the opportunity in the second term to present and discuss their research to date with fellow students and faculty at our Graduate Colloquium Series.

Choosing an MRP Supervisor

Following consultation with the program director(s) in September, students should ideally contact the appropriate faculty supervisor during the first term of study, and a supervisor should be in place no later than **October 31**. A list of all American Studies faculty affiliates and their areas of research can be found on the American Studies website: http://cas.uwo.ca/faculty_listing.html.

If you need help choosing an appropriate supervisor for your MRP, please contact Professor Shire for guidance. It is recommended that the student arrange with their supervisor a schedule for the submission of draft segments of the Research Project.

The relationship between the student and supervisor is extremely important to the student's successful completion of the degree, and continuity of supervision is an integral component of this relationship. Therefore, a change in supervisor is usually made only in exceptional circumstances, based upon strong and compelling reasons, and following appropriate consultation by all parties involved. All such changes must be approved by the program director(s).

MRP Timeline and Guidelines

The student should submit a 7-10 page proposal of the MRP's area of focus by **November 30**. The proposal should contain a thesis statement, a breakdown of chapters, a list of primary and secondary resources, and an annotated bibliography. The proposal should be handed in to the Graduate Program Advisor.

Students will be expected to present their works in progress during the **Graduate Colloquium Series** to be held in **April**. This will give the students experience in presenting their research, and will provide a forum for them to give and receive feedback from faculty supervisors and fellow students.

A completed first draft of the Research Project will be due on **May 31**. Hand it in to your supervisor. The MRP draft is not graded.

The finished project is due on **July 15** and should be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor. The text must be double-spaced and single-sided, with a one inch margins. Include a title page, an abstract, and a table of contents.

Policy on Extensions and Late Assignments

Only under exceptional circumstances, or with appropriate medical documentation, will MRPs handed in past the due date of **July 15** be accepted for grading, without penalty.

If a student requires an extension, it is the student's responsibility to negotiate an extension with the faculty member prior to the due date, and to inform the program director(s) of this extension.

In the event a student does not hand an assignment in on time or does not negotiate an extension prior to the due date, the MRP will be given a 2% grade deduction per day, including weekends, up to a maximum of 10 days. After this 10 day calendar period, the MRP will not be graded except under unusual circumstances.

Submission Guidelines

One paper copy, unbound and unstapled and one electronic copy are to be submitted to the Graduate Program Advisor. A cover note should indicate the name of your supervisor.

The MRP is not the kind of project that can be successfully completed in the weeks just prior to the deadline in July. Steady progress, based on an agreed structure, is therefore a condition for success in this assignment.

Evaluation of the Master's Research Project

- MRP Proposal: 20%
- Oral Presentation (Graduate Colloquium): 20%
- Finished Project: 60%

The final project will be assessed and graded by a supervisor and one other faculty member (chosen by the Graduate Committee), receiving the average of their two marks. If the grade discrepancy is greater than 10%, the project will be submitted to a third reader (chosen by the program director(s)) to be assessed.

GRADUATE COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Overview

As part of their final grade for the Master's Research Project (American Studies 9075), each student will present their research to date at a mini-colloquium to be held in April. **Students will be expected to attend every session.** MRP supervisors are invited to attend all sessions, but are only required to attend their own student's presentation. The schedule of presentations will be finalized in March.

Format and Guidelines

The format will mimic a standard academic conference. Each student will be given approximately 30 minutes for presentation and questions combined. Students should prepare an oral presentation of 15-20 minutes in length that describes their research project, their findings, and their conclusions to date. This will be followed by 10-15 minutes of questions from the audience.

The committee recognizes that the MRPs are still works in progress. It is fine to acknowledge this and even to use the colloquium as a way of getting feedback or advice on how to complete the project. Still, each talk should outline a clear research question and argument and give a sense of what the research to date has found.

Time limits will be enforced! Students should not try to squeeze their entire MRP into a 20 minute talk. Instead, they should describe the big questions they are asking, the arguments they are making, and make a case for the significance of the project, illustrated or illuminated by a few specific points or examples from their research.

Students should probably speak from notes but are discouraged from writing out and then reading the entire text of their talk. PowerPoint slides or other A/V material are welcome—though one should always be prepared to do without such technology in the (surprisingly common) event that it fails.

Grading

Presentations will be graded by the student's MRP supervisor. Additional comments may be supplied by other faculty members in the audience. Content, presentation, and ability to respond to questions will all be assessed. **The presentation is worth 20% of the final MRP grade.**

PROGRAM REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Graduate Courses

Instructors are required to plan the course content of their graduate course to ensure that all assignments are due by the last day of classes each year.

Assignment deadlines for the first term are to be made known in writing to students by the end of the first week of October, for second term by the first week of February.

Grades of “Incomplete” (INC) will not be assigned without the instructor setting a deadline for the outstanding work to be completed, this deadline being recorded in the student’s file. When the deadline for a grade of “Incomplete” has expired and no work is forthcoming, a grade of F will be assigned. Note that under the regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, a course cannot remain “Incomplete” beyond the grade submission deadline of the term following the one in which the INC was awarded. If a mark is not submitted by this deadline, the INC becomes a Failure.

Regulations Regarding Withdrawal from Graduate Courses (WDN)

Courses dropped within one month of the official beginning of term will not appear on transcripts. When students withdraw after this date but within eight weeks of the beginning of term, the course stays on the transcript along with the notation “WDN” (withdrawn). Courses dropped after eight weeks from the beginning of term are recorded as failures.

Graduate Reading Courses

From time to time, students will develop reading courses with faculty members in subject areas that are not offered as regular courses for graduate students. The total amount of reading assigned should be as close as possible to that of equivalent half or full year graduate seminars, and the course grade should be assigned largely, if not exclusively, on the basis of a major paper (25 to 30 pages). The written requirements for reading half courses should not be less than one essay of at least 25 pages or equivalent. Flexibility in these requirements is acceptable, within reason, but it is imperative that the grades for reading courses be based substantially on the student’s written work.

Program Progression

To continue in the MA program, students must have a cumulative average of 70% or higher, with no grade below 60%.

Students attaining an average mark of 78% or higher continue to be eligible for scholarship funding.

Grading Guidelines for Graduate Programs

The grading guidelines outlined below are consistent with those of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

85% or higher	An excellent result, indicating that a student has considerable talent for academic work, and might well consider progression to a PhD program.
80% - 85%	Indicates a 'good paper' and this result should be taken to indicate that some potential exists.
78% - 80%	This is a 'good pass' and the student might have the ability to be considered for progression.
70% - 75%	This is a 'fair pass', and when a grade in this range is assigned this should be taken to signify that a student probably does not have the aptitude for further graduate education.
60%	Is a pass, equivalent to a 50% for undergraduate work.
< 60%	Is a failing grade.

Final grades for fall term half courses are required to be submitted by the professor by **January 13**. Final grades for winter term half courses and full year courses are required to be submitted by the professor by **May 15**. Final grades for the Master's Research Project are due by **August 31**.

Western University Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects

All research involving humans conducted by faculty, staff or students at Western must be approved by the [Office of Research Ethics](#) on behalf of Western's Research Ethics Board. Please contact the program director(s) if you plan to conduct interviews as part of your MRP research.

FALL REGISTRATION PROCESS

Funding Package

Included in your offer of admission is a funding package consisting of:

- A Graduate Teaching Assistantship/Research Assistantship, to be paid in the fall and winter terms. GTA and GRA payments will be made in eight monthly installments, with the first payment being made at the end of September, and the last at the end of April.
- The remainder of your funding will be in the form of a Western Graduate Research Scholarship (WGRS). WGRS payments are applied **directly toward your tuition**. You will be responsible for paying the balance of each tuition payment in September, January and May. Any credit balances

(where applicable) will be forwarded to the student in the form of a cheque/direct deposit some weeks after tuition payments are due.

Payment of Fees

All fees must be paid at the beginning of each term as indicated on your Student Center (student.uwo.ca) account. If you are receiving a Western Graduate Research Scholarship (WGRS), this money is automatically paid towards your tuition each term. If your fees are more than the amount of your Western Graduate Research Scholarship, you are expected to pay the difference by the deadline. Fee schedules can be found on the [Office of the Registrar's website](#).

Important Note: Your first installment of tuition will be due in **the first week of September**, whereas your first payment as a GTA or GRA will not be until **the end of September**. Please make arrangements to have your fall tuition ready for payment by the deadline to avoid late fees.

As a graduate student, you pay by the term, not by the course. You must maintain continuous registration in each successive term from initial registration until the end of the term in which requirements for the degree are completed, i.e. you pay each and every term until you graduate.

Please note: There are three registration periods in the MA program: **Fall (September 1), Winter (January 1) and Summer (May 1)**. The onus lies with the student to ensure that registration is completed each term.

September Orientation

Appointments for an individual meeting with the program director(s) will be scheduled for the first week of September. During this meeting you will be given your TA or RA assignments, and discuss possible MRP topics and supervisors. You will be notified of your individual appointment date during the summer. The School of Graduate and Professional Studies typically holds an Orientation for all new Graduate students on campus during the first week of class (often on the Tuesday after Labour Day).

Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)

The program determines who will be offered employment as a teaching assistant from among eligible students admitted to the MA program. A tentative appointment will be made during a meeting with the program director(s) in late August or early September based on your preferences, the needs of the department, and your own course schedule. In order to be eligible, you must have a minimum admission average of 78% (B+) based upon the marks of the last two years of study. Teaching assistants are expected to perform up to 140 hours of work per term, including not more than three classroom hours per week, during the fall and winter terms.

Duties- Graduate Teaching Assistants

The University's Collective Agreement with the Teaching Assistants' Union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, sets out both rights and responsibilities for teaching assistants. Each year, the Department offers guidance of a more detailed kind at an orientation meeting held in early September. Specific assignments

of tasks will be made by the course instructor with whom you are working and agreed to in a Duties Specification Letter completed before the third week of the term.

Any concerns, questions or issues arising under the Collective Agreement – about, for example, appointments, conditions of work, hours of work, leaves – should be referred to the “person designated” under clause 11.01(a) of the Collective Agreement. During 2017-18, “person designated” refers to the director(s) of the American Studies program.

Courses

Fall term classes for the 2017-18 academic year begin **September 7, 2017**. Please refer to Graduate Course listings in English, History, Political Science, Music, FIMS, Women’s Studies and Feminist Research, or other departments of interest or use to your plan of research. You must request and receive permission to register from the course instructor, and also clear your course selections with the American Studies program advisor and director(s). In general, any graduate course with U.S. content is a potential elective.

Course outlines will be available from the instructors in class and posted with graduate course offerings on department websites when available.

The Graduate Program Advisor will register you into all of your courses each term. In July you will receive an email from the Graduate Program Advisor asking for your preliminary course selections.

Your course selections will be confirmed at your meeting with the program director(s) in early September.

Course Add/Drops

If you wish to make any changes to your course selections, please inform Kara Brown no later than **September 15** in the fall term and **January 15** in the winter term.

You can find the list of American Studies textbooks on the UWO bookstore website:

<http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca/>

Academic Integrity Module

All incoming graduate students are required to complete an online, mandatory Academic Integrity Course. The 30 minute module will cover the basics of academic integrity and academic dishonesty, detail specific scholastic offences, and explain the ways that Western University detects and deals with offences. It will also present case studies for students to consider. When finished with the course, they will be required to complete a 10-question test designed to evaluate their knowledge of academic integrity. All new graduate students are required to complete this module in order to progress to the following term. Students will have an unlimited amount of opportunities to pass the module. More information about the [Academic Integrity Module](#) can be found on the SGPS website.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Speakers' Series

Each year, American Studies Speakers' Series invites diverse and dynamic speakers to Western to engage students and faculty in discussions about American culture, history, politics, and current events. Graduate students are not obligated, but are highly encouraged, to come out to these events; there are often opportunities to meet our guest speakers, and to attend dinners or other events with the speaker and American Studies faculty members.

Social Events

Students are invited to attend American Studies social events held throughout the year.

ADMINISTRATION

Graduate Student Mail

Mail for graduate students can be delivered to the History Department office (LWH 2201). Individual mailboxes for each graduate student have been assigned in the mailroom adjoining LWH 2201.

Office Space – Regulations

Shared office space is provided for all MA students in Lawson Hall. Please remember that this is your professional office so it is important to treat it as such. Please note that the consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited in the graduate student offices. Students must vacate their assigned offices by mid-August, at which time the offices must be cleaned up (including emptying garbage pails and getting rid of unused books and paper). If students would prefer individual space, they can apply for a study carrel in the D. B. Weldon Library. Information on the Policy for Assignment of Study Space can be picked up at the Reference Desk of the D.B. Weldon Library.

Office Access

Graduate Student offices are accessed by a number code; please see Kara Brown to obtain this code. After hours, Lawson Hall can be accessed by card swipe using your Western One Student ID card. The Graduate Program Advisor will activate your card when your office has been assigned. You will have 24 hour access to your graduate student office.

Computer Facilities

A computer and printer are available for graduate student use in the Footnote Graduate Student Lounge in Stevenson Hall. Graduate Students are also allowed to use the computing facilities of the Social Science Computing Lab, Room 1038, Ground Floor. The Computer Lab also offers courses and instruction at various levels and operates a helpful consulting desk in Room 1012, Social Science Centre. For more details, see <http://ssts.uwo.ca/>.

The Footnote (Graduate Student Lounge)

The Footnote is located in Stevenson Hall Room 2159. (See Kara Brown for the access code to enter.) The Footnote contains a kitchen area with fridge and microwave, a seating area, and a computer/printer. There is also a cupboard stocked with donations of canned goods and other grocery/household items, for anyone who finds themselves in need. Please feel free to use this lounge, but if you do, please help to keep it clean and tidy.

E-mail

All Western students are assigned a personal computer account upon registration. **Important:** Please check your Western e-mail frequently, or forward your Western e-mail if you prefer to use another email account. The University's Administration gets in touch with students by their Western e-mail regarding late fees, parking fines, library fines, sealing of records, etc. Please advise the Graduate Program Advisor of the e-mail address you would like listed as part of the American Studies e-mail group and on the departmental website.

Should you have any issues or difficulties with e-mail, information and assistance is provided through Information Technology Services, Support Services Building. To obtain access to the Social Science network, please ask the receptionist of Social Science Technology Services in SSC 1008.

Payroll

Teaching Assistants and Research or Graduate Student Assistants are paid monthly (September to April) on the second last banking day of the month. Payment is made by "direct deposit" into the student's account at the bank, credit union or trust company of their choice. The Compensation Department requires complete and accurate documentation from each student before the deposit can be made. **Important:** You must sign up for direct deposit payments on the Human Resources system, no later than **September 12, 2017**. If direct deposit is not set up by this date, a cheque will be generated and mailed to the address submitted on your admission application. To complete the necessary paperwork, go to www.uwo.ca/humanresources. Your e-mail username and password is required to access [My Human Resources](#). Please ask Kara if you need help setting up your banking information.

Student Cards (Western One card)

All graduate students **must** have a photo-I.D. student card before they can use any university services (libraries, sports facilities, etc.) Your Western ONECard is more than just a Photo ID Card. The Western ONECard functions as an identification card for [exams](#), [bus pass](#), and [Campus Recreation](#). It is also a [library card](#), [meal plan card](#), and can be used for door access and vending machine purchases. Please go to Room 1120 Western Student Services Building to obtain your student card.

Parking

If you are a student registered in a graduate program and wish to park your vehicle on campus you will need to purchase a permit. Graduate Students at Western are eligible to obtain a parking permit for the

Perimeter (grey) lots. Perimeter Non-Reserved permits are valid in the Non-Reserved sections of any other lot within the same zone (grey or green). Western Parking & Visitor Services:

<http://www.uwo.ca/parking/index.html>

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Additional information concerning University regulations can be found in the School of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies Calendar: <http://grad.uwo.ca>

Society of Graduate Students (SOGS)

Information about benefits and services available to all Western graduate students can be found on the SOGS website: <http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/About/>

Teaching Support Centre

Western's Teaching Support Centre (located in the D. B. Weldon Library), in partnership with the School of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies, provides programs and resources to support graduate students. Offered throughout the year, these programs address a variety of topics, including effective teaching techniques, improved communication skills, and preparation for both academic and non-academic careers. For more information: http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/teaching_assistant.html

Graduate Student Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director, or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/module.html. This module is 30 minutes in length and provides participants with a basic understanding of mental health issues and of available campus and community resources. Topics include stress, anxiety, depression, suicide and eating disorders. After successful completion of the module, participants receive a certificate confirming their participation. This module is not mandatory.