

**RICE ANTHROPOLOGY GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK  
FOR CANDIDACY AND ATTAINMENT OF THE PHD IN SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY  
REQUIREMENTS, OPPORTUNITIES & EXPECTATIONS**

~ Revised August 2023 ~

**I. REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN CANDIDACY FOR THE PHD IN SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**1. Required Coursework**

(a) To complete sufficient graduate coursework for the PhD students are expected to enroll in a full load of coursework each semester (3 courses of 3 credits each) for the first three years of their program. All students must also enroll in 9 hours of ANTH 800 each summer through the completion of the PhD. All of the requirements for PhD candidacy (and thus eligibility for an MA earned in progress toward the PhD), must be completed no later than the end of the eighth semester of enrollment in the program. Please see Appendix A for further details on Enrollment Requirements and stipend disbursement.

(b) Undergraduate courses, including language courses, cannot be utilized to satisfy graduate coursework.

(c) Sociocultural graduate students must take at least four courses within the Anthropology Department that are designated as 400/600 or 300/500 level courses (in addition to the six designated courses listed below); this is a total of ten required graduate courses in the program.

Sociocultural graduate students must take the following six required courses:

ANTH 506 History of Anthropological Ideas  
ANTH 507 Anthropological Directions from Second World War to the Present  
ANTH 598 Ethnographic Research Methods  
ANTH 601 Proseminar in Anthropology  
ANTH 602 Anthropology Proposal Writing Seminar  
ANTH 650 Pedagogy (see Appendix A for further details on ANTH 650)

**2. Successful Completion of End-of-Year Report** each year prior to achieving candidacy. At the end of each academic year before obtaining candidacy, students will submit a 2-3 page (double-spaced) summary of their achievements for the year, note any areas of improvement they identify and their plans for the summer and following year. This report is to be emailed to all sociocultural faculty by the second Sunday of April; a faculty panel will be assembled to discuss

progress with each student, to be scheduled in advance and held at the end of the spring semester.

**3. Selection of a Candidacy Committee** by the end of spring semester of the student's second year in the program. At least two members of the 3-member candidacy committee must be regular faculty in the department (tenured or tenure-track). The candidacy committee is often composed entirely of regular faculty in the department. It should be noted who will Chair the student's candidacy committee. The Chair will normally remain the same through the Dissertation Committee.

**4. Successful Completion of Qualifying Exams or Essays.** By the end of the spring semester in their second year, students must decide upon which option they would like to take and share this information with the DGS and their Candidacy Committee. In both cases, students will develop an extensive bibliography, or "reading list" related to their research. Please see Appendix A for further details, in "Qualifying Exams and Essays."

**5. An Approved Dissertation Proposal** of 10-12 pages (double-spaced) is to be submitted to the Candidacy Committee and approved by all members no later than the last week of the spring semester of the student's third year. (A complete grant proposal for NSF or Wenner-Gren can be used to fulfill the dissertation proposal requirement).

**6. A Language Examination** is required for all students not bilingual in both English and their field research language. Language competency will be tested in the pertinent field language, required for research. If the student's research is being conducted primarily in English, an examination must be completed in a major scholarly language (e.g. Cantonese, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Modern Standard Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, etc.). The examination period is 90 minutes and must result in (at least) 1,000 words of translation into English; use of a dictionary is allowed, but online translation services are not. The material for translation will be a portion of an academic journal article in anthropology or a closely related social science; the article must be approved by both the expert evaluator and the DGS prior to the examination. Expert evaluators must be invited by the student themselves and be (a) an expert in the language (such as a college-level language instructor) or a native speaker who holds a PhD (in any discipline).

**7. An Undergraduate Syllabus** on a topic of the student's choosing, to be developed in ANTH 650. The syllabus must be submitted to the DGS within 2 weeks of completing ANTH 650. Please see Appendix A "Syllabus" for further details on content.

**8. Maintenance of Good Academic Standing.** The departmental requirements for good academic standing are more stringent than those set by the university. The department will consider any student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 in any semester to be on academic probation. Any student whose grade point average falls below 3.0 for two

consecutive semesters will be dis-enrolled from the program. Good academic standing is also evaluated in the end of year faculty panel and self-report.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTAINMENT OF THE PHD IN SOCIOCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

**1. Selection of a Dissertation committee.** Faculty serving on the dissertation committee should be invited and confirmed by the end of the student's third year. A dissertation committee chair should also be officially named and recorded with the Anthropology administrator and DGS. The Dissertation Committee *must* include two regular (tenured or tenure-track) faculty in the department and one Rice faculty member from outside the department. Seating an extra-departmental member from outside the university is possible, but must be coordinated well in advance and several restrictions apply. Official signatories for the dissertation are the two departmental faculty Dissertation Committee members and the Rice faculty member (non-departmental). Students must have three Dissertation Committee members, with one additional member possible for a maximum of four.

**2. Ninety Semester Hours** of graduate coursework.

**3. Successful Completion of Extended Fieldwork**, including regular reports back to the Dissertation Committee. Students cannot undertake sustained fieldwork for the PhD until they have completed all candidacy requirements.

**4. A Public Presentation** of the student's research findings in the form of a mock job talk in the department colloquium series; scheduling of the talk will be initiated by the student in coordination with the Colloquium Series Committee faculty members. The talk will be formally presented over the duration of approximately 40 minutes to be followed by questions and answers.

**5. Successful Completion of the Dissertation** in accordance with the expectations of the Dissertation Committee. When writing the dissertation, students are to be enrolled in ANTH 800 under the DGS's name to ensure that they will obtain 90 units of graduate course credit required for the PhD. See Appendix A on Dissertation Guidelines.

**6. A Public Oral Defense** of the dissertation material with all faculty Dissertation Committee members present. Invited outside observers may also attend, as can students and faculty in the department.

## II. OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

**1.** Upon entering the graduate program, each student will be paired with one sociocultural faculty member to serve as an initial advisor. This is an initial placement only and there is no expectation that the faculty will be on the candidacy committee or guide the student's research in a substantive way.

2. Each student will be provided with space in an office, usually shared with another graduate student in the department. Students leaving for the field or who will otherwise be away from campus (officially categorized as “away students”) should vacate their offices before they depart and must let the Department Administrator know how long they intend to be away so that office space can be reassigned.
3. Students may use the copying and scanning services free of charge in the copy room, being mindful about excessive use or wastage.
4. Students may check-out books from the Anthropology Library; please register books removed from the library on the check-out sheet managed by the Department Administrator.
5. Students may have an opportunity to teach a course in the department once they have their master’s degree (from the department) in hand (and thus have achieved candidacy). In some cases, students with 18 hours of graduate course credit completed, and in good standing in the department, may be invited to teach a course.
6. Funding is available for graduate students who either present a paper at an academic conference or participate in a workshop or similar (non-presentation) event at an academic conference for which the student is registered. Documentation is required for either of these forms of participation.

Students are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses for up to *four separate academic years*, starting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of graduate study. Funding of up to \$800 is available for those presenting a paper, and up to \$300 for those participating in a workshop or similar (non-presentation) event. Funds are not available for conference attendance alone.

Only one form of funding can be utilized in a given academic year (e.g. either \$800 for presentation or \$300 for a workshop) and either will count toward one the student’s four years of conference funding.

All requests for funding must be made prior to the event (at least 1 month in advance with suitable documentation) to the department Chair and DGS with a cc to the Department Administrator. Please submit receipts for reimbursement promptly after returning from the event. Receipts must be itemized and formal in order to be accepted by the Rice accounting office.

7. Graduate students are provided preliminary research funding of up to \$3000 to be used for research expenses incurred during preliminary field work. Preliminary research funding is for pre-candidacy students and must be used before candidacy is achieved; in practice, preliminary research takes place in the first and second summer of the student’s program. The process for securing these funds is as follows: graduate students **must apply** for [Pre-dissertation Research Grant with the Social Science Research Institute at Rice](#) (there both fall and spring application

deadlines). Students who are not awarded funds through this process will then submit the same application to the Chair and DGS and the Department will fund them.

**8.** Students may make use of the water cooler, refrigerator and microwave in the department's photocopy room. Please be sure not to leave old food in the refrigerator and to wipe down the microwave and surfaces as well. It is not appropriate to expect the cleaning staff to clean up mess from our food and drink. Coffee is also available for a donation of 25 cents per cup.

### **III. EXPECTATIONS**

Students are expected to:

- 1.** Attend classes in accord with the syllabus.
- 2.** Take courses with a variety of sociocultural faculty to create a broad and diverse pedagogical experience in their graduate education.
- 3.** Be in residence at Rice until they have achieved candidacy and have the consent of the faculty to undertake dissertation fieldwork.
- 4.** Attend all department-sponsored talks, colloquia and dissertation defenses barring exceptional circumstances.
- 5.** Contribute to the collaborative environment by volunteering for committees (e.g. colloquium speakers' committee; website committee; visiting weekend coordination, etc.) and other tasks that may need attention, including participation in social media posting for the department during their first and second years in the program. Students are expected to balance their scholarly work with extracurricular activities.
- 6.** Recognize that the department is invested in cultivating a collaborative, courteous, and nondiscriminatory space. In classrooms, professional offices, and other collegial settings it is expected that graduate students comport themselves in such a way that they do not impede the intellectual and professional development of their peers or negatively affect the collegial dynamics within the department more broadly.
- 7.** Report any concerns wherein a graduate student may feel unsafe, intellectually inhibited, or disconnected from collegial dynamics within the department in any way. Students are welcome and encouraged to contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Department Chair, or other faculty member(s) as soon as possible. Such communications will remain confidential and appropriate support will be immediately sought.
- 8.** Heed and comply with all university deadlines concerning enrollment and the submission of required forms. It is the responsibility of students to be informed about deadlines and

requirements and to allow adequate time for faculty to respond. For example, a request for a letter of recommendation should be made at least two weeks in advance of the deadline.

#### **IV. PROTECTIONS**

Rice encourages any student who has experienced an incident of sexual, relationship, or other interpersonal violence, harassment or gender discrimination to seek support. There are many options available both on and off campus for all graduate students, regardless of whether the perpetrator was a fellow student, a staff or faculty member, or someone not affiliated with the university.

Students should be aware when seeking support on campus that most employees are required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to Title IX professionals on campus who can act to support that student and meet their needs. The therapists at the Rice Counseling Center and the doctors at Student Health Services are confidential, meaning that Rice will not be informed about the incident if a student discloses to one of these Rice staff members. Rice prioritizes student privacy and safety, and only shares disclosed information on a need-to-know basis.

If you need assistance or would like to talk to someone, please call Rice Wellbeing and Counseling Center, which includes Title IX Support: (713) 348-3311. Policies, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Student Code of Conduct, and more information regarding Title IX can be found at [safe.rice.edu](http://safe.rice.edu)

#### **APPENDIX A, in alphabetical order.**

##### **(a) ANTH 650:**

After having completed a minimum of 18 hours of graduate credit hours, students will enroll in ANTH 650 (Pedagogy) in the semester it is being offered in conjunction with a designated large undergraduate lecture course (such as Introduction to Sociocultural Anthropology or Medical Anthropology), usually in the student's third year of the program. The DGS will assign each student to the appropriate course based on considerations of class size and topical focus. Students are expected to assist the instructor of the course to which they are assigned in matters of grading, lecturing, conducting review sessions, etc. according to the instructor's direction; this may include course development and website content management according to the instructor's needs. During the semester it is being offered students will also (a) attend three specialized pedagogy workshops curated by the Center for Teaching Excellence and (b) develop an undergraduate syllabus on a topic of their choosing (see below).

##### **(b) DISSERTATION GUIDELINES:**

Please note that the organization and content of the dissertation are to be developed by the student in consultation with their faculty dissertation committee. The text must be at least 75,000 words including endnotes and bibliography. It is not recommended that the dissertation text exceed 110,000 words. Students are responsible for keeping the members of their committee informed about the nature and progress of their research. They also must establish a schedule for thesis completion and review. It is the responsibility of the student to contact each of the committee members (within and outside the department) and inquire as to when they would like to receive drafts of the dissertation (eg. chapter by chapter as they evolve, or a finished first draft). Before an official defense date can be scheduled, the entire dissertation committee must have affirmed that the dissertation draft, including expected revisions, is defensible. It is the responsibility of the student to be in contact with each of the committee members to confirm that the draft is defensible before proceeding with defense scheduling.

It is recommended that the dissertation follow The Chicago Manual of Style, per the social sciences. The Chicago Manual of Style is available on line. The journal *Cultural Anthropology* also follows these guidelines, meaning that any article in the journal can be used as a convenient shorthand for many style related questions.

Rice has clear requirements for PhD Dissertation formatting and adherence to these guidelines will be required prior to filing the completed and approved dissertation; the guidelines can be found on the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website:

<https://graduate.rice.edu/thesisformat>

#### **(c) ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

To maintain their stipend, students *must* be enrolled in at least 9 credits of graduate study hours each academic semester in the program. Students must also enroll in 9 credits of ANTH 800, under the DGS's name or the name of their advisor, each summer.

#### **(d) SYLLABUS:**

The undergraduate syllabus developed in ANTH 650 may be on any thematic and gauged to any level of undergraduate education (e.g. survey/introductory or seminar/advanced). Students will begin developing their syllabus in a CTE training session and topical feedback will be provided by the DGS and the student's committee Chair. When it is finalized the syllabus will be submitted to the DGS and Department Administrator within 2 weeks after the end of the ANTH 650 semester.

The syllabus must:

1. Be organized in a coherent and logical fashion.
2. Have written and reading assignments distributed appropriately across the semester.
3. Ensure that instructions for assignments and expectations are clearly articulated.

4. Have reading assignments composed of texts appropriate to the topic.
5. Demonstrate that the academic level of reading assignments is well-suited to the undergraduate course level being taught.
6. Ensure that the quantity of assigned readings is appropriate for the undergraduate course level being taught.
7. Have written assignments tailored to the thematics of the course.
8. Ensure that written assignments are appropriately scaled to of the level of the course (eg. page length).
9. Have assignments include active participation from students.
10. Have assignments (reading, written or otherwise) generally form a coherent whole that reflects the learning objectives of the course.
11. Have assignments designed to allow of multiple learning styles (eg. visual, verbal, etc.)
12. Demonstrate attention to one or more key issues in the field of cultural anthropology.
13. Articulate clear learning objectives for the course.
14. Follow the syllabus format guidelines as outlined by Rice University, including language on accessibility for differently abled students.

**(e) THIRD YEAR INDEPENDENT STUDIES:**

In the third year of the program, students may enroll in two independent study (IS) courses (one in fall and one in spring). The fall IS will be undertaken with a faculty member conversant in the topic of the student's research (and who must be invited to and agree to conduct the IS). It is the student's responsibility to develop a reading list comprised of 25-40 texts to be shared with the faculty member prior to enrollment. The list will consist of work that focuses closely on elements of the student's research case, particularly the context of the field research: the historical and intellectual terrain of the case, including pertinent elements of the site/s, the history/dynamics of the region and the substantive and theoretical issues that prefigure the research to be undertaken. The reading list for the Fall IS should be significantly different from the reading list for the qualifying exams/essays. At the end of the Fall IS course, the student will submit a 15-page paper and annotated bibliography (containing those texts that don't appear in the paper), to the supervising faculty for a grade.

The spring course will be largely independent, based upon the student's reading lists for qualifying exams which will have been created in collaboration with the student's candidacy committee, and focused upon preparing for, and taking, the qualifying essays/exams. Further details below.

**(f) QUALIFYING EXAMS/ESSAYS:**

**Option 1. Qualifying Exams.** Students will write two 15 page double-spaced essays responding to two questions developed by their Candidacy Committee. The exam will be open book and take place on consecutive Saturdays (9a-6p each day) near the end of the spring semester of the student's third year. The Saturdays must be scheduled in advance with the Candidacy

Committee. The exam questions will be received at the beginning of each exam day. The final exam, should not exceed the page limit (the bibliographic reference list does not count toward the overall page count). Following the completion of the Qualifying Exams students will meet with their Candidacy Committee to discuss the Exams and the overall intellectual project. This meeting too must be scheduled well in advance on the student's initiative and will be one hour in length beginning with a 5-minute introduction from the student.

**Option 2. Qualifying Essays.** Students will write two 25-30 page double-spaced essays based on two questions provided by the Candidacy Committee at the beginning of the Spring semester, one week following Martin Luther King Day. Over the course of the spring semester, students will write, revise and edit their papers (no preliminary drafts are to be sent to the faculty). The finished essays will be submitted to the Candidacy Committee toward the end of the spring semester, to be determined with the committee. With at least a two-week allowance after submitting the Qualifying Essays, students will meet with their Candidacy Committee to discuss the Essays and the overall intellectual project.

**For both Exams and Essays:** The reading list for the qualifying exams and essays will be developed by the student and reviewed by the Candidacy Committee before finalizing. The lists must be submitted to the Candidacy Committee one week prior to Martin Luther King day for those students doing Essays, and two weeks later for those doing Exams. The list should be divided into logical thematic sections and areas of inquiry that the student's project engages. This should be thought of as an exercise in consolidating the areas of expertise necessary for a nuanced, sophisticated analysis of the case, both theoretically and substantively. The list, as a whole, will be comprised of 50-75 texts, with a balance of books and articles. Questions generated by the Candidacy Committee for both the Exams and Essays will be constructed based on the list comprehensively; essays and exams should aim **not** to repeat texts across the essays, or only very minimally if needed.