**Doctoral Comprehensive Examination**

While doctoral students are completing their required coursework and continuing after it is completed, they begin to work toward candidacy. There are three parts to this process: preparing annotated bibliographies; writing two bibliographic essays; and defending the research proposal.

I. To demonstrate their comprehensive knowledge, students will prepare three sets of annotated bibliographies that engage with broad theoretical topics, an ethnographic area, or other topics appropriate for their subdiscipline. The reading lists will be developed by the student in consultation with their PhD committee, and each set will contain 30 sources with no more than 15 pages of annotations in each set. Students may begin to prepare their annotated bibliographies as early in their doctoral studies as they and their committee are able to do that. The annotated bibliographies are prepared by the student under the direction of their committee, which approves the topics, the reading lists, and the completed bibliographies. The annotated bibliographies are not subject to examination, but they are useful for students as they write their research proposal, undertake research, write their dissertation, and possibly design and teach courses.

II. Under the supervision of their committee and based on their readings and annotations, students will proceed to write two bibliographic essays of between 4000 and 6000 words each, exclusive of references cited, that identify the major contributions to two of the theoretical topics or ethnographic areas that they have focused on in their annotated bibliographies. The two topics for the bibliographic essays will be selected in consultation with the student’s advisory committee. The suggested time to write the essays is one month. The suggested month-long period was selected so as to provide enough time for students to organize and write two essays on topics they are familiar with, while not posing a barrier to their advancement to candidacy and the start of their research. These written essays will be similar to those in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* in delineating current developments and main themes of research (including not only a critical analysis of existing literature, but also a discussion of emerging directions, gaps and opportunities for advancing areas of knowledge). The bibliographic essays differ from the annotated bibliographies in being coherent essays drawing on multiple sources that represent established and contemporary research on major themes in the field. In writing their essays students are expected to focus on sources identified in their annotated bibliographies, but some other sources may also be included. The student’s supervisory committee approves the bibliographic essays as completed to a competent standard, and they will do that within two weeks of their completion. Once approved by the student’s supervisory committee, the written essays are not subject to further examination. The student’s PhD committee should meet with the student to provide feedback on the essays in the period between the completion of the essays and the student's defence of their research proposal

III. In consultation with their supervisory committee, students will prepare a research proposal of between 5000 and 8000 words, exclusive of references cited. The research proposal will summarize previous work on the topic, explain the significance of the proposed research, and clearly describe how the work will be carried out. Once all the revisions to the proposal that the supervisory committee requests have been completed, the committee will recommend that the student proceed to a defence of their research proposal. The supervisor must submit a memo to the Anthropology Graduate Studies Committee (AGSC) chair and copy the Graduate Program Coordinator to affirm that the annotated readings, bibliographic essays, and research proposal have been completed.

The format of the PhD proposal defence is similar to a dissertation defence. The AGSC appoints two examiners (normally Anthropology faculty) with relevant expertise in the student’s area of research, as well as an examination chair. The examiners will have at least two weeks to read the research proposal and prepare for the defence. The examiners do not examine the annotated bibliographies or the bibliographic essays that the student has written. (Those are approved by the student’s committee before the research proposal is submitted to the AGSC.) The examining committee is only concerned with the written research proposal and the student’s presentation of their research proposal. At the defence, the student gives a 20 to 30-minute presentation on their proposed research without reading from their proposal. The examiners then ask two rounds of questions about the proposed research. The examination chair may also ask for questions from the audience at the end of the first round of questions. After the second round of questions the student and audience leave the room while the examining committee deliberates. The examination is evaluated both on the strength of the written proposal and the strength of the student’s presentation. The committee may: (1) decide to pass the research proposal without revisions; (2) ask for minor or major revisions either under the supervision of the student’s committee or under the supervision of the entire examining committee; or (3) fail the student on the examination. The examination chair may cast a deciding vote if the committee is divided in their assessment. If a student fails their examination, they may revise their research proposal and schedule a second examination, which would be their final opportunity. Students who successfully complete the defence of their research proposal will be advanced to candidacy and are approved to begin their dissertation research, subject to ethical review approval if relevant.

These new provisions for the comprehensive exam process in the Department of Anthropology will go into effect as of *March 31, 2023*. Students who began their PhD studies in 2022 or earlier have the option of taking a written comprehensive examination under the previous provisions if they so choose.