

Guidelines for Cultural Studies 270 series

The 270s series are individually guided research seminars. These graded units form an integral part of the graduate education of Cultural Studies graduate students. In each sequence of the 270 series, students work with a professor to develop a list of readings in a given area that will be covered during that quarter.

The research seminar is intended to serve three important functions:

- To enable students to work intensively with individual faculty members to develop expertise in the three areas of study on which they will be examined in the written part of the qualifying examination. In most cases, these three professors will form the core of their qualifying examination committee.
- To develop a detailed bibliography of the foundational texts that will form the core of the literature review of the student's dissertation and will serve as the bibliography for their Qualifying Exam.
- To provide students with sufficient time and motivation to complete a viable dissertation prospectus. This prospectus will serve as the basis for one of the main components of the oral portion of the qualifying examination. The other main component of the oral exam will address the issues raised in the written part of the exam.

Faculty have found many ways to structure these independent studies in ways that make them valuable research opportunities for both students and professors. Because these are graded units, generally 20-25 pages of written text are expected by the end of the quarter. These can include weekly précis of the readings, annotated bibliographies, a final paper incorporating the themes of the class, detailed revisions of the dissertation prospectus that incorporates the texts covered, or some combination of all of these elements. Generally, professors meet with students between 10-20 hours over the course of the quarter. And reading lists are typically the same as that required for a graduate course.

Before the quarter begins, students should discuss the proposed reading list and assignments with the faculty member. Faculty members are encouraged to add or delete texts from this initial proposed list in order to make this exchange as productive to both parties as possible. Together they will fill out and sign a 270 Learning Contract that outlines the texts and assignments. Faculty will submit their grades in the same manner as they submit other grades, the course will appear as CST 270A, B, or C.

A note to faculty off campus: Our students have successfully completed 270 classes with several scholars working at other universities. These have used email, webcam, scheduled telephone meetings, and occasional face-to-face meetings as creative alternatives for regular weekly meetings. The Chair of Cultural Studies is happy to discuss with you a range of strategies to work out the logistics, or to provide references for individual students.