**Department of Anthropology**

**Non-Thesis (Portfolio Track) Guidelines**

The Department of Anthropology has revised its MA program, adjusted its track options, and eliminated the comprehensive exam required in order to complete the program. For those students who opt for a non-thesis, the department offers a new alternative to the comprehensive exams for non-thesis track students, which we have titled the portfolio track. This track asks students to do the following:

* 1. Students **choose 3-5 papers**/projects from classes they have taken in their graduate program to represent what they have learned in the program.
     1. Not all need to be written papers, and videos and other types of projects should be included.
     2. At least one should be a written paper to demonstrate this skill to future employers/project directors/PhD programs.
     3. The projects should represent at least some diversity of topics/subjects to demonstrate the expected breadth of someone completing the program and should include at least one project from the core class or elective outside the student’s concentration.
     4. The paper/projects must have received a grade of B or higher from the course instructor.
  2. **Student must write a retrospective statement (ca. 5 pages)** that talks about the projects, demonstrates a consideration of deep connections in terms of how they fit together, and how the student positions themselves within the important questions of their field. A rubric (see the end of the document) will be used to grade the retrospect and the attached papers and will be presented to the students ahead of time, so they understand the expectations. **The grade will be pass/fail.**
     1. The retrospective paper (accompanied by the projects) will be graded by a **three-person committee**. All three members of the committee must agree that the student has passed to receive their MA degree.
     2. The student must declare their intention to submit the portfolio at the beginning of the semester through a mechanism similar to the one currently used to declare intent to take the comprehensive exams (**the last day to defend depends on the Graduate Education deadlines of the semester**).
     3. The students will provide a 5-10min presentation of their work to department faculty and their peers at the Anthropology Department portfolio fair. The presentations are not graded, but students are expected to participate in person or via Zoom. The date for the fair will be announced within the first two weeks of every semester. This presentation format is designed to provide students an opportunity to develop concise presentation skills, engage with faculty and other graduate students on important anthropological topics, foster departmental community, and provide a ceremonial ending to their graduate studies.

**Prerequisite:**

There are THREE (3) prerequisites for submitting the Comprehensive Project.

**First**, the student must form a graduate committee (**minimum of three members**). The student should discuss this step with their advisor. Each member of the committee should be asked to confirm that they are able to serve to avoid issues with faculty being unable to serve during the semester of portfolio presentation due to research leave, Family Medical Leave, or sabbatical leave.

**Second**, the student must sign up by the date specified at the beginning of the semester, signaling their intent to submit the portfolio. **For fall or spring semester graduation, depends on the deadlines set forth by Graduate Education.**

**Third**, the student must gather a minimum of three (3) and maximum of five (5) projects from classes they have taken that count toward the MA degree (**consultation with your faculty committee should occur in picking these projects**). **The projects must fulfill the following requirements**:

1. They must cover a diversity of topics with at least one of the projects being a written paper.
2. At least one of the projects must be from a class outside the student's field of study/concentration. Papers/projects from disciplines outside anthropology will be accepted if they are clearly integrated with anthropological themes or topics.
3. The papers/project should represent a mix of different theoretical and methodological issues.
4. Papers/projects must have received a grade of B or higher from the course instructor to be included in the portfolio.

**Retrospective Paper**:

The retrospective paper/project talks about the projects and discusses how they tie together and how they demonstrate the student’s position on important questions in the field. The following rubric is used by the committee to determine if the paper and gathered projects is a pass or fail (you must pass every section and the decision must be unanimous). Early drafts of the paper can be submitted, and the paper rewritten as long as the deadline for submitting the graduate exam form is made. Students should work with their faculty to ensure this deadline is met.

**Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pass | Fail |
| Deep Connection Between the Projects | Paper demonstrates that the student understands the links between the paper through reference to important paradigm/theoretical/methodological issues in the field | The discussion of the links between the projects is superficial and does not reference underlying paradigm/theoretical/methodological principles. |
| Positioning in the field | In the discussion of underlying themes/paradigm/theories/methods, the paper relates the projects and the student’s position/opinion in terms of important issues/questions in the field beyond the local and specific methodological concerns | The discussion of the positioning of the student/projects in terms of issues/questions remains at the local or specific methodological level and lacks connection with important issues in the greater field |
| Literature Citation | The paper cites appropriate literature in the discussion of underlying paradigm/theories/methods and important issues/questions; references papers from more than one course represented in the projects or from additional sources that were not part of coursework; is written in an acceptable format (see below). | The paper does not cite the appropriate literature in the discussion of underlying theories/paradigms/methods and important issues/questions; cites only literature from a single course |
| Writing | The paper is written in Standard American English, is coherently organized, lacks grammatical and spelling errors and is in a format that may be acceptable to the major journals in the field. Examples of journals include, but are not limited to, *American Anthropologist, American Antiquity, American Journal of Biological Anthropology, Medical Anthropology Quarterly, Journal of Archaeological Science, Visual Anthropology*. | The paper is poorly organized, contains numerous grammatical and spelling errors and/or is in a format that would not be acceptable to the major journals in the field. |

**Oral Defense of the Portfolio:**

The final step in the portfolio process is an oral defense of the portfolio. This defense will satisfy the requirement of the graduate school for a graduate exam. **For fall or spring semester graduation, depends on the deadlines set forth by Graduate Education.**

**The student will give a 5-10 min presentation** of their work to department faculty and their peers at the Anthropology Department portfolio fair **(Date determined by department faculty on 10.30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)**. Students must participate in person or via Zoom. Two weeks before the fair, the student must submit the **Request for Graduate Exam Form** to generate the final paperwork needed by their committee to certify fulfillment of the requirement to the university. **Students must attend the fair** to fulfil their graduation requirements. The presentation will provide a brief summary of the projects, how they are integrated, and how they fit into larger anthropological paradigms, theories, or methodology. The presentations are not graded; this is meant as an opportunity to engage with faculty and other graduate students on important anthropological topics, foster departmental community, and provide a ceremonial ending to their graduate studies.