Welcome to the Florida Studies Program
at USF St. Petersburg

Graduate Student Handbook

August 2018
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Introduction
For everyone who lives, works, or studies in Florida, the best way to understand our state and the issues we face is to put them in the context of our history, distinctive regional culture, and unique ecosystems. The Florida Studies Program (FSP) brings together faculty from history, literature, geography, and other disciplines to create an integrated, in-depth exploration of our state’s changing identity as a part of the American South as well as a bridge to the Caribbean Basin.

From environmental policy and resource management to political challenges and immigration reform, Florida presents distinctive issues that merit close attention. Students from any discipline can benefit from Florida Studies courses as they prepare for careers ranging from urban planning to social work, from historic preservation to international business. For anyone who is interested in how our state fits into matters of regional and global significance, this program presents the ideal opportunity to use the State of Florida as a teaching and research laboratory.

What we Offer
We offer an interdisciplinary Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) degree with a concentration in Florida Studies. Graduate students in our program often interact with and take classes along side students in other programs, but it is important to keep in mind that each graduate degree program has its own requirements. Remember, the USF St. Petersburg graduate catalog is the ultimate authority on degree requirements, but this handbook is intended to help both incoming and returning graduate students fulfill graduation requirements by highlighting significant university requirements as well as rules and policies of the Florida Studies Program.

Moreover, some prospective students earn a master’s degree from us with an eye toward teaching at the college level. This is possible, but students have to remember two things. First, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools demands that all instructors of lower level college classes have at least a master’s degree that includes at least 18 graduate credit hours in the field one intends to teach. For example, students who want to meet minimum qualifications to teach history at the college level must have a master’s degree that includes at least 18 graduate credit hours in history classes. Second, meeting the minimum qualifications for teaching at the college level is good, but each college/university has its own standards and makes its own hiring decisions. Reach out to the human resources office of schools where you might like to teach.
**Admission to the Florida Studies Program**
Degree-seeking students admitted to the FSP are normally required to have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution, and have an overall undergraduate grade point average of 3.0. A limited number of exceptions to these requirements can occasionally be authorized. For example, those applicants whose undergraduate grade point average (GPA) is less than 3.0 might demonstrate their suitability for graduate study by taking the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) and earning a score of at least 153 on the verbal section and 144 on the quantitative section. Alternatively, applicants with GPA’s below 3.0 might consider taking up to twelve (12) credit hours of graduate level coursework as a non-degree seeking student. Solid performance in such classes is not a guarantee of admission to the FSP, but it helps provide evidence of suitability for graduate study. Finally, several of our students have already engaged in much graduate level study elsewhere before applying to the Florida Studies Program. Students with prior graduate level coursework are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but in general, no more than two approved courses taken at other institutions can be transferred to any graduate program at USF St. Petersburg.

The Florida Studies Program also requests a 1-2 page letter outlining your academic interests, your goals and objectives related to graduate school and beyond, and relevant life experiences. We would also like to know which faculty member appears to have academic interests closest to your own, because this professor would be more likely to serve as your academic mentor. This letter, along with your application form and fee, writing sample, two letters of recommendation, as well as transcripts should be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies at USF St. Petersburg (NOT the Tampa campus). GRE scores (if available) may be sent to “USF” because graduate admissions staff members at USF St. Pete have access to these. Only after the Office of Graduate Studies deems your application complete will we receive your materials. Applications for admission to the Florida Studies Program are welcome throughout the year because in most cases, the Program reviews these shortly after they are received. Prospective applicants should note that we cannot guarantee a timely decision on any application packet received less than one month before the start of any given term.

**Program Highlights**
All students in the Florida Studies Program are required to take the core course *Florida and Regional Studies*, an *Internship* (or Independent Study for those satisfied with their employment), and either *Thesis* or *Directed Research* (in which students work on a culminating research project; more on the difference between thesis and directed research later). We offer several classes that focus entirely on, or contain significant content
about, some aspect of the Florida experience—but we also offer many other classes that treat Florida on the periphery or not at all. Florida is the glue that ties the program together, but it is not the only ingredient: the FSP teaches intellectual breadth and interdisciplinary scholarship. Recent courses include:

*Florida and Regional Studies; Sports and American Culture; History of the Modern South; The Civil Rights Movement; American Culture in the 1960s; Florida Media; Early Florida History; Modern Florida History; Florida and World War II; Food and History; Conquistadors; Spanish Florida: Myth and History in Early America; Early Florida Literature; Spanish Paleography; Nature Writing; Ecology of Florida; Seminar in Advanced Regional Geography (Florida); Seminar in Advanced Human Geography (Human-Animal Relations); Wetlands, People and Public Policy; Water Quality Policy and Management; Florida Springs; Advances in Water Resources; Florida, Fishing Capital of the World.*

Moreover, you should know that most graduate-level classes are different from those you took as an undergraduate student. For starters, you will probably read more in each class than you have ever read in your life! Indeed, most of our classes are taught as seminars, meaning you will be expected to contribute regularly to class discussions based on weekly reading assignments. Students learn from professors, but they also learn from each other. You will also have the opportunity to write more than ever before—and many of your papers will be longer than you have written in the past. This requires deep familiarity with your subjects (hence the need to read a lot!). More than just reading and writing, however, you will learn how to make use of information and evidence to tell a story or build an argument. Research is not just reading what everybody else has already written, it is discovering how things work or why things happened the way they did.

Finally, you will have the opportunity to learn outside the seminar room. The program occasionally hosts guest speakers and you can be sure that several of your classes will take you into the field in order to connect with many of the things you are reading about. In recent years, our students have visited the state archives and capital in Tallahassee; traced the footsteps of civil rights activists from the 1960s; we have taken trips to the Everglades National Park and the rapidly vanishing scrub habitat of Archbold Biological Station near Lake Placid; we’ve crossed the St. Johns River via ferry boat; we’ve eaten seafood in Apalachicola, jumped into some of the state’s fabulous springs, and toured Florida’s most significant hydroelectric power plant near Chattahoochee. And we have taught students to appreciate local environments by canoeing on (and occasionally in!) several central Florida rivers; we’ve also tramped through Ybor City, Weedon Island, Egmont Key, and the Green Swamp.
Perhaps our favorite place is Chinsegut Hill, a former plantation (with restored manor house and modern cabins for overnight stays) just north of Brooksville.

**Academic Advising and Mentorship in Florida Studies**

New students in the Florida Studies Program are initially provided academic and curricular guidance by the Program Director. Before each semester, the Program Director will distribute a list of graduate level courses (usually posted to the program web page) that can be counted toward your master’s degree with the Florida Studies Program. If you are interested in a course not on that list, please ask the Program Director if that class can be counted toward your degree requirements.

Sometime before you complete 12 credit hours, you should formally adopt a major professor who will provide you research and curricular guidance for the rest of your master’s degree program. Your major professor can be any full-time, tenure-line, USF St. Petersburg faculty member with a Ph.D., although the most likely candidates are the professors with doctoral degrees that appear on the list of Florida Studies contributors listed below. Just fill out a simple signature form (at the end of this handbook), get your major professor’s signature, and deliver this form to the Snell House for the Program Director’s approval before completing 12 credit hours. It is that simple. Get over being shy and get to know the Program’s faculty during the early part of your academic career so that you can adopt a major professor sooner rather than later!

**USF St. Pete Faculty contributing to the Florida Studies Program:**

**Dr. Ray Arsenault** (History): political, social and environmental history; Southern history; civil rights; regional culture; modern Florida history.

**Dr. Julie Armstrong** (Literature): literature of the civil rights movement; African American and Southern literatures, 19th and 20th century American literature; Women’s Literature; Creative Non-Fiction.

**Dr. J. Michael Francis** (History): early Florida history, Colonial Latin America; Spanish Paleography; Atlantic World.

**Dr. Thomas Hallock** (Literature): early American and Florida literature; William Bartram; experiential learning, nature writing.

**Dr. Rebecca (Johns) Krishnaswami** (Geography): community organizing around economic or environmental issues; gender; labor; globalization.

**Dr. Christopher Meindl** (Geography): environmental historical geography; wetlands; springs; water management; geography of Florida.

**Dr. Gary Mormino** (Professor of History Emeritus): modern Florida history; immigration history; World War II; food and history.
**Dr. Brandon Shuler** (Courtesy Assistant Professor and Executive Director of the Outdoor Writers Association of America): Florida, fishing capital of the world; marine resource management; Florida literature.

* Dr. Gary Mormino has formally retired from USF. Although he still teaches on occasion, and he can serve on thesis committees, he is not required to sit on any committees and University policy prevents him from serving as committee chair.

** Dr. Brandon Shuler teaches part-time at USFSP. He can sit on thesis and non-thesis committees, perhaps serving as co-chair (but not committee chair).

**Continuous Enrollment and Time Limit to Degree Requirements**
USF St. Petersburg is committed to helping students graduate in a timely manner. To help ensure this happens, students are required to register for at least SIX credit hours in each three consecutive semester period after they have been admitted to the program. Although the summer is divided into A, B, and C terms, coursework taken during any of these terms is, for the purposes of this requirement, credited to the “summer semester.” For example, if students take three credit hours during the fall term, and zero credit hours during the subsequent spring term, they must take at least three credit hours during one of the summer terms in order to meet the university’s continuous enrollment requirement. If you violate this policy, the university will drop you from the FSP and you will have to re-apply to get back in. Better just to stay in!

Of course, life occasionally intrudes and forces students to back away from school for more than a few months. In these cases, it is best to contact the Office of Graduate Studies and apply for a leave of absence. This can keep you in the program even if you are not taking classes for up to a year.

Also, graduate students must complete all degree requirements within FIVE years of admission into the program. Part-time students in particular are expected to keep track of their progress, and if they encounter circumstances that prolong their course of study, they should discuss with their major professor the possibility of applying to the Office of Graduate Studies for a time-limit extension.

**Classes and Seminars at USFSP—and Transfer of Credit**
The Florida Studies Program began in 2003 as an interdisciplinary program, and we still offer an interdisciplinary track. We view this as an intellectual strength. At the same time, some students may wish to concentrate on a particular academic discipline or field of inquiry. Our
campus generally offers sufficient coursework to prepare students for doctoral level study in history, geography and literature.

Keep in mind that most graduate level courses demand much time reading and writing outside of class, and that NINE credit hours (three classes) in any given semester is considered a full-time course load.

From time to time, USFSP faculty members not on the list above will offer courses that are appropriate for Florida Studies students. If you find an interesting graduate course in the USFSP class schedule, please ask the Program Director if it can be counted toward your MLA in Florida Studies. Remember, although classes need not be about Florida per se, if you take classes without first receiving approval from the Program Director, you risk not being granted credit for those classes in the Florida Studies Program.

Some graduate level classes are offered only once every two years, so students should always make every effort to take the required Florida and Regional Studies class (or any others they are very interested in) when they are offered. Do not assume that any class will be offered next term or even next year!

The vast majority of our classes and seminars are available at night (beginning at 6:00 pm), so it is possible to work during the day and complete degree requirements in the evening.

The FSP is preparing to experiment with classes offered in hybrid and online formats. Hybrid classes usually feature a limited number of longer class meetings, sometimes on Saturdays, and sometimes combined with online work. As of fall 2017, it is not possible to earn a master’s degree with us by taking only hybrid and online courses—but we are inching in this direction.

Finally, students may occasionally take classes elsewhere and apply to have such classes counted toward their master’s degree in the Florida Studies Program. In general, no more than TWO approved courses, passed with a grade of at least B at institutions outside the USF System, can be transferred to any graduate program at USF St. Petersburg, including Florida Studies. On rare occasion, FSP students may be authorized to transfer as many as 12 credit hours from USF Tampa into their master’s degree program at USF St. Pete. Do not assume anything: ask your major professor or the Program Director before you take any coursework at USF Tampa or elsewhere.
**Academic Program**

ALL graduate students in the Florida Studies Program shall complete a total of *at least 33 credit hours* of coursework, at least 23 of which must be at the 6000 level. Graduate students are NOT permitted count any classes below the 5000 level toward the minimum of 33 credit hours required for the master’s degree. Moreover, at least 20 credit hours must be in regularly scheduled classes (not counting independent study, research or thesis).

Beginning in Fall 2017, **ALL** Florida Studies students are **required** to take and pass the following (9-12 credit hours):

AMS 6026 Florida and Regional Studies 3
(take at first opportunity)
AMS 6940* Internship 3 **OR**
AMS 6908* Independent Study 3
(only if satisfactorily employed)
AMS 6971* Thesis 6 **OR**
AMS 6915* Directed Research 3
(for students pursuing the non-thesis option).

*Note: prefix and course number may vary depending upon which of the following tracks a student chooses. For example, students attempting to specialize in history might opt for thesis credit hours using an HIS 6971.

Students are then directed to pursue one of three tracks (and each of these three tracks has both a thesis and non-thesis options):

*History*  
*Geography/Environment*  
*Interdisciplinary*

**HISTORY TRACK**

**Required Courses (15-18 credit hours):**

AMS 6026 Florida and Regional Studies 3
AMS 6940 Internship 3 **OR**
HIS 6908 Independent Study 3
HIS 6914 Directed Research 3 **OR**
HIS 6971 Thesis 6
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Early Fla. History 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Modern Fla. History 3

**Elective Courses (15-18 credit hours):**

HIS 6939 Spanish Paleography I 3
HIS 6939 Spanish Paleography II 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: Incas, Mayans and Aztecs 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Spain, Inquisition to Civil War 3
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: Conquistadores Conq. Of Am.  3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: Spanish Fla.: Hist. and Myth....  3  
HIS 6939  Seminar in History: Slavery and Captivity  3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: Food and History  3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: US from 1914 to 1946  3  
HIS 6939  Seminar in History: World War II and the Holocaust  3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: US since 1945  3  
HIS 6939  Seminar in History: Civil Rights Movement  3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: American Culture in the 1960s 3  
HIS 6925  Colloquium in History: Am. Politics, Kennedy to Trump 3

Additional history courses may be offered. Please consult your major professor before registering for any courses not listed above.

**GEOGRAPHY/ENVIRONMENT TRACK**

**Required Courses (18-21 credit hours):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMS 6026</td>
<td>Florida and Regional Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6944</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>3 OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6908</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6918</td>
<td>Directed Research</td>
<td>3 OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6971</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6113</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Methods</td>
<td>3 OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS 6100</td>
<td>Advanced Geographic Information Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6116</td>
<td>Perspectives on Environmental Thought</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6428</td>
<td>Sem. in Adv. Human Geog.: Human/Animal Relations</td>
<td>3 OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEA 6195</td>
<td>Seminar in Advanced Regional Geography: Florida</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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**Elective Courses (12-15 credit hours):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6605</td>
<td>Contemporary Urban Issues (emphasis on Fla.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEO 6286</td>
<td>Advances in Water Resources (emphasis on Fla.)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6216</td>
<td>Advances in Water Quality Policy and Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6876</td>
<td>Wetlands, People and Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6072</td>
<td>Florida Springs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6936</td>
<td>Seminar in Environmental Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6937</td>
<td>Seminar in Environmental Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVR 6934</td>
<td>Global Climate Change</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC 6932</td>
<td>Florida Ecosystems</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS 6038C</td>
<td>Remote Sensing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIS 6306</td>
<td>Environmental Applications of GIS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students may take as an elective the “OR” course in the required section. Additional geography/environment courses may be offered. Please
consult your major professor before registering for any courses not listed above.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY TRACK**

**Required Courses (18-21 credit hours):**
AMS 6026 Florida and Regional Studies 3
AMS 6940 Internship 3 OR
AMS 6908 Independent Study 3
AMS 6915 Directed Research 3 OR
AMS 6971 Thesis 6
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Early Fla. History 3 OR
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Modern Fla. History 3
GEO 6428 Sem. in Adv. Human Geog.: Human/Animal Relations 3 OR
GEA 6195 Seminar in Advanced Regional Geography: Florida 3
AML 6017 Studies in Am. Lit. to 1860: Fla.&Colonial Imagination 3 OR
LIT 6934 Special Topics in Lit. Study: Fla & the Global South 3

**Elective Courses (12-15 credit hours):**
HIS 6939 Spanish Paleography I 3
HIS 6939 Spanish Paleography II 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: Incas, Mayans and Aztecs 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Spain, Inquisition to Civil War 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: Conquistadores Conq. Of Am. 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Slavery and Captivity 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: Food and History 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: US from 1914 to 1946 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: World War II and the Holocaust 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: US since 1945 3
HIS 6939 Seminar in History: Civil Rights Movement 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: American Culture in the 1960s 3
HIS 6925 Colloquium in History: Am. Politics, Kennedy to Trump 3
GEO 6605 Contemporary Urban Issues (emphasis on Fla.) 3
GEO 6286 Advances in Water Resources (emphasis on Fla.) 3
EVR 6216 Advances in Water Quality Policy and Management 3
EVR 6876 Wetlands, People and Public Policy 3
EVR 6072 Florida Springs 3
EVR 6936 Seminar in Environmental Science 3
EVR 6937 Seminar in Environmental Policy 3
EVR 6934 Global Climate Change 3
BSC 6932 Florida Ecosystems 3
GIS 6038C Remote Sensing 3
GIS 6306 Environmental Applications of GIS 3

Students may take as an elective the “OR” course in the required section. Additional geography/environment courses may be offered. Please
consult your major professor before registering for any courses not listed above.

**Thesis or Non-Thesis Option Final Paper**

All Florida Studies Program students are expected to engage in research before they graduate. The FSP offers two options for completing the required capstone research: a *thesis* option and a *non-thesis* option.

**THESIS OPTION**

Graduate students pursuing the thesis option take at least 27 credit hours of course work, *and* at least SIX credit hours of thesis for a grand total of at least 33 credit hours. A thesis is strongly recommended for those who think they might ultimately pursue doctoral level study, or who might want to write a book in the future.

Graduate students may take more than 6 credit hours of thesis during their academic career (although only 6 credits are counted toward one’s master’s degree requirements), and they may take small numbers of thesis credits spread over more than one term—but ALL graduate students must be registered for at least TWO credit hours of thesis in the term they intend to defend and submit their thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies for final processing.

The University requires that students must register for at least TWO credit hours (of anything at the graduate level) in the semester they intend to graduate. In most cases, students register for two or more credits of thesis because this is their last requirement; however, if students complete and submit their thesis in a term **before** they intend to graduate, they still have to register for at least TWO credit hours of coursework/independent study in the term they intend to graduate.

**THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Before beginning serious work on a master’s thesis, students are required to prepare a *thesis research proposal* and seek approval for the proposed work from your thesis committee. Such committees shall consist of at least three faculty members; the chair shall be the student’s major professor. A research proposal should be roughly 15 pages long (see your major professor for details), and outline the proposed major elements of the thesis including introduction to the topic, problem statement, literature review, research question(s), proposed research methods and sources of data/evidence, expected findings or contributions to knowledge/the creative arts, and bibliography. It is expected that virtually all of the proposal can be used in the thesis; the proposal serves as the first crude and abbreviated draft of the thesis.
THESIS PROPOSAL DEFENSE and COMPREHENSIVE EXAM
Faculty committee members must receive a copy of the thesis proposal at least SEVEN days before the defense. A thesis proposal defense exercise begins with a brief presentation of a student’s proposed research project. This presentation is open to other students and faculty in the Florida Studies Program. After presentations, students may field questions from those not on the committee. After responding to these questions, the audience is excused and the student’s committee continues the questioning. Since this defense exercise also serves as a comprehensive exam, committee members will ask broad-ranging questions related to research methods and literature related to the student’s track—in addition to detailed questions about the proposed research.

A thesis proposal defense must occur at least one full semester before a student intends to graduate. Thesis proposals are not considered approved until they are successfully defended and students deliver the appropriate form to the Snell House and the Program Director signs off (see forms at the end of this document).

THESIS
Six credit hours of thesis generally calls for more effort than that associated with a pair of 3-credit hour seminars! You should know that unlike most writing assignments for classes, thesis writing involves frequent revision as students receive guidance from their major professor and other committee members. Students pursuing the thesis option should submit to their major professor a complete draft of their thesis not later than the end of the fourth week of the term in which they plan to graduate. This ensures that major professors can help students revise their draft before sending it to the rest of the committee.

THESIS DEFENSE and FINAL APPROVAL
After the major professor and other committee members agree that a draft of the student’s thesis is essentially complete, students will participate in a thesis defense, a public event where students summarize and answer questions about (“defend”) their work in front of their thesis committee, as well as any other interested faculty and students. Major Professors should schedule the defense and inform the Program Director of the defense date at least SEVEN days in advance—but in any case, at least TEN days before the deadline for submission to the Office of Graduate Studies. This is because despite much revision before the defense, the defense process usually exposes the need for further revisions.

Finally, the USF St. Petersburg Office of Graduate Studies maintains strict deadlines each term for submission of faculty-approved theses (usually one full month before the end of each term), which must meet
format guidelines before being accepted by the university. Your faculty thesis committee is responsible for the intellectual content of your thesis, but the Office of Graduate Studies is responsible for the format of your thesis document—and just as you must make whatever revisions your faculty thesis committee calls for, you must make whatever format revisions the Office of Graduate Studies calls for (and in the time frame they call for them) in order to graduate. In an ideal world, you will work with the Office of Graduate Studies as you begin to write your thesis in order to minimize revisions at the end of the process.

**NON-THESIS OPTION**

Graduate students pursuing the non-thesis option must take at least 30 credit hours of coursework and at least THREE credit hours of Directed Research for a grand total of at least 33 credit hours—and then submit an acceptable final paper. The non-thesis option is often best for students who do not want to continue with doctoral study or write books.

The University requires that students must register for at least TWO credit hours (of anything at the graduate level) in the semester they intend to graduate. In most cases, non-thesis students register for three credit hours of Directed Research because this is their last requirement; however, if students complete and submit their non-thesis final paper in a term before they intend to graduate, they still have to register for at least TWO credit hours of coursework/independent study in the term they intend to graduate.

**DIRECTED RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

Before beginning serious work on the non-thesis option final paper, students are required to prepare a research proposal and seek approval for the proposed work from their committee. Such committees shall consist of at least TWO faculty members; the chair shall be the student’s major professor. A research proposal should be at least 10 pages long (see your major professor for details), and outline the proposed elements of the research project including introduction to the topic, problem statement, preliminary literature review, research question(s), proposed research methods and sources of data/evidence, expected findings or contributions to knowledge/the creative arts, and bibliography. It is expected that virtually all of the proposal can be used in the final paper; the proposal serves as the first crude and abbreviated draft of the final paper.

**DIRECTED RESEARCH DEFENSE and COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

Faculty committee members must receive a copy of the Directed Research proposal at least SEVEN days before the defense. A Directed Research proposal defense exercise begins with a brief presentation of a student’s proposed research project. This presentation is open to other
students and faculty in the Florida Studies Program. After presentations, students may field questions from those not on the committee. After responding to these questions, the audience is excused and the student’s committee continues the questioning. Since this defense exercise also serves as a comprehensive exam, committee members will ask broad-ranging questions related to research methods and literature related to the student’s track—in addition to detailed questions about the proposed research.

A research proposal defense must occur at least 90 days before a student intends to graduate. Research proposals are not considered approved until they are successfully defended and students deliver the appropriate form to the Snell House and the Program Director signs off (see forms at the end of this document).

**NON-THESIS FINAL PAPER—FINAL APPROVAL**

A student’s Directed Research “course” will culminate in the production of a 25 to 40-page essay appropriate for submission to an academic journal. This final paper may not be as long as a thesis, and it need not be defended, but it will have to be a high quality product that must be approved by the student’s major professor and at least one other Florida Studies faculty member. Indeed, non–thesis students should work closely with their major professors to prevent unpleasant surprises before the end of the term. Final papers should be submitted to the committee no less than TEN days before the beginning of final exam week. Mere submission by the deadline is NO guarantee of approval (see approval form at the end of this document).

Florida Studies students pursuing the non-thesis option need not feel shackled by the format outlined above. We welcome creative research projects (production and analysis of maps, novels, poetry, film, photography, and so forth), but these should include a critical introduction (20-30 pages) that situates the work within the appropriate geographic, artistic, historical and/or cultural context. Note: students pursuing non-traditional research projects should have a demonstrated background, or have completed courses, that prepare them to work in that medium.

**Funding for Graduate Students**

**Graduate Assistantships:** The Florida Studies Program usually has some funding to provide a small number of full-time graduate students (at least 9 credit hours) part-time work as graduate assistants (which can include a heavily subsidized health insurance policy). Graduate assistants work 15-20 hours per week; some are assigned to the Snell House and maintain the Program’s web page, monitor the Program’s
Facebook page, and provide faculty assistance with a variety of tasks. Others are assigned to work with cultural institutions in St. Petersburg, and still others work directly with professors on specific research projects. Both new and returning graduate students are usually invited to apply in the middle of the spring term, and graduate assistantships are usually awarded for the following school year (subject to satisfactory academic and work performance in the fall semester). Such assistantships call for enrollment in at least nine (9) credit hours of coursework (which can include thesis credits), with the exception that students in their last semester may register for as few as two (2) credit hours.

**Gary R. Mormino Endowed Fellowship**: Thanks to friends of the Florida Studies Program and the efforts of Dr. Gary Mormino, one of the founding co-directors of the FSP, we are now able to make modest funds available to selected students to help them complete the Florida Studies Program. A limited number of modest awards can be made on a competitive basis to thesis and non-thesis students who are in their final year of study and who are registered for at least FIVE credit hours. The FSP will announce procedures for this award at least one month before application materials are due.

**USF Tampa Florida Studies Center Scholarships**: USF St. Pete Florida Studies students are encouraged to examine the requirements of two different USF Tampa Florida Studies Center awards at: [http://www.lib.usf.edu/florida-studies/awards/](http://www.lib.usf.edu/florida-studies/awards/)
These scholarship programs are administered by USF Tampa, but USF St. Petersburg students are eligible to apply.
MAJOR PROFESSOR FORM

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS with a concentration in FLORIDA STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST PETERSBURG

Date _________________ USF ID# _____________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

(Student name) First                                         Middle                                       Last

requests that __________________________ from the Department of _______________
(print faculty member name here)            (print Dept. name here)

serve as his/her Major Professor and chair of their faculty advisory committee.

____________________________________________________________________________________

Major Professor   (Signature)     date

Florida Studies Graduate Student (Signature)  date

Program Director (Signature)                date

Date received by the Florida Studies Program _________________
THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS with a concentration in
FLORIDA STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST PETERSBURG

Date _________________ USF ID# _____________________________________

(Student Name)  First                                         Middle                                       Last

Proposal Title (print or type):

We, members of the above-named student’s faculty advisory committee,
have read and approved the proposed thesis research project (attached) to be
used in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the Master of Liberal Arts
degree with a concentration in Florida Studies. This form must be signed by
the student’s major professor and at least one other committee member.

Major Professor (print) (signature) date

Thesis Advisory Committee member (print) (signature) date

Thesis Advisory Committee member (print) (signature) date

Program Director (print) (signature) date

Date received by the Florida Studies Program ____________________
NON-THESIS OPTION
FINAL PAPER RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS with a concentration in
FLORIDA STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST PETERSBURG

Date _________________ USF ID# _____________________________________

(Student Name) First                                         Middle                                       Last

Title of Proposed Non-Thesis Option Final Paper
(print or type):

I have read and approve of this student’s proposed non-thesis option final paper research project (one page minimum; attached) to be used in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the Master of Liberal Arts degree with a concentration in Florida Studies. This form must be signed by the student’s major professor and at least one other faculty advisory committee member.

Major Professor (print)                                     (signature)                                   date

Advisory Committee member (print)                           (signature)                                  date

Program Director (print)                                    (signature)                                  date

Date received by the Florida Studies Program

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NON-THESIS OPTION
FINAL PAPER APPROVAL FORM

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS with a concentration in
FLORIDA STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST PETERSBURG

Date _________________ USF ID# _____________________________________

(Student Name)  First                                         Middle                                       Last

Title of Non-Thesis Option Final Paper (print or type):

I have read and approve of this student’s non-thesis option final paper research project (attached) to be used in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the Master of Liberal Arts degree with a concentration in Florida Studies. This form must be signed by the student’s major professor and at least one other faculty advisory committee member.

Major Professor (print) (signature) date

Advisory Committee member (print) (signature) date

Date received by the Florida Studies Program ____________________
Florida Studies Program
Graduate Student Checklist

Term/Year Completed | Required classes for ALL Florida Studies Program graduate students:

_____ | AMS 6934 Florida and Regional Studies

_____ | AMS 6940 Internship OR AMS 6908 Independent Study

_____ | AMS 6915 Directed Research OR AMS 6971 Thesis

_____ Select your Major Professor and submit the signed Major Professor Form to the Snell House before you complete TWELVE credit hours of course work.

_____ Select appropriate track: History, Geography/Environment, or Interdisciplinary

_____ Continuous enrollment: make sure that you are registered for at least SIX credit hours in any three consecutive semesters after being accepted into the graduate program.

Complete SEVEN or EIGHT courses for your selected track (including required classes in that track):

Term/Year _________ course number and name:

Term/Year _________ course number and name:

Term/Year _________ course number and name:

Term/Year _________ course number and name:

Term/Year _________ course number and name:

Term/Year _________ course number and name:
Term/Year __________ course number and name:

Term/Year __________ course number and name:

Term/Year __________ course number and name:

_____ Defend a thesis research proposal OR a directed research proposal and submit the appropriate Research Proposal Form (with proposal) to the Snell House before you begin work on your thesis or non-thesis final paper.

_____ For non-thesis students: Submit your final paper to your committee no fewer than TEN days before the beginning of final exam week in the term you intend to graduate.

_____ For thesis students: Register for at least TWO credit hours of thesis in the semester you plan to defend and submit your thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies for final processing.

_____ For thesis students: Have your major professor schedule a thesis defense, and successfully defend your thesis no more than FIVE years after you begin graduate study at USFSP. Thesis defenses should generally be scheduled not less than TEN days before the deadline to submit theses to the Office of Graduate Studies (because the defense almost always generates addition revisions to your thesis).

_____ For thesis students: Submit an electronic copy (as a pdf) of your committee-approved thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies here on the St. Pete campus by the deadline posted on the Graduate Studies web page.

_____ For thesis students: Complete any further edits of your thesis requested by the Office of Graduate Studies and submit (electronically) the finally revised edition to that office before the deadline posted for that semester.

_____ For ALL students: Register for at least TWO credit hours in the term you intend to graduate.