



BA Thesis Guidelines

BA Thesis

Your BA thesis will be a piece of academic writing that explores an issue or question relevant in the field of American studies. Your thesis should proceed from a specific research question or interest, employ methods and theories relevant in American studies, reflect on your choice of methods and sources, and include your own analysis and evaluation of the material.

Supervisors and Readers

For your thesis, you will choose a supervisor and a second reader. Your supervisor will be your chief advisor in your work on your thesis: S/he will discuss the topic of your thesis with you as well as your work-in-progress, and s/he will be available for your questions. Your supervisor can also suggest possible second readers for your thesis. Both your supervisor and your second reader will grade your thesis.

Your supervisor as well as your second reader generally will be American Studies Leipzig faculty. You can find out about available supervisors and readers on the faculty page and on the downloads page. It is possible, however, to nominate as your supervisor a member of the University of Leipzig faculty outside American Studies (if s/he works in a field relevant to American Studies), and/or for your second reader, an instructor from another university. Generally, at least one of the two needs to be regular American Studies Leipzig faculty. Nominations of supervisors or readers not on the above list require approval by the Exams Committee (Prüfungsausschuss).

Please be aware that there is a maximum number of projects to be supervised per instructor at American Studies Leipzig, so talk to your desired supervisor **early** to ask for the conditions to have your work supervised by him/her.

Topic

As a first step of your work, you need to propose a topic to your supervisor for his/her approval. This involves a three-step process.

- First, you should present your (up to three) preferred topics as general ideas to your supervisor. Together with you, s/he will single out one topic for you to pursue further.
- Second, you will prepare an official proposal for your supervisor **and** your second reader. This proposal should be about two to three pages long and include:

- A short description of what your thesis will focus on, what you hope to find out (research interest), and what makes your project relevant in the context of American Studies
- A brief working bibliography, consisting of both primary and secondary sources. Please contact your supervisor about the minimum required number of sources
- Third, your supervisor discusses your proposal with you and may suggest changes in your project scope, etc. If the supervisor finds the proposal and overall project to be promising, s/he will officially okay your proposal and sign the registration form for the Exams Office (Prüfungsamt). You will also need a signature from your second reader.

Procedures and Deadlines

The deadlines for handing in the official application at the exams office are published online at http://americanstudies.uni-leipzig.de/curriculum/degree_exams. If you plan to hand in your thesis during the summer term, you should make sure to meet your supervisor and agree on a topic with him/her early on in the winter term. Likewise, for handing in your thesis during the winter term, you will need to meet your supervisor and decide on your topic early in the summer term. The necessary form for your application is available for download from the above website.

Once you have filed the (accepted) registration with the exams office, you will have 23 weeks to write, revise, and hand in your thesis. The Prüfungsamt will tell you the final deadline for submitting your thesis.

To hand in the registration form, you need to have completed 120 credits (Leistungspunkte) or need to credibly show that you will be able to have 120 credits by the end of the term in which you register. For example, if you want to hand in your thesis in the summer term and thus register in the winter term, you will need to have completed 120 credits by the end of that winter term. Should you unexpectedly fail to complete 120 credits, your BA thesis will be graded, but you will not receive the 10 credits for the thesis. In that case, you may not be able to complete your BA by the end of that term.

Please submit your BA thesis at the Exams Office (Prüfungsamt) by handing in **two printed and bound copies**. Additionally, submit one **electronic (pdf-format) copy to americanstudies@uni-leipzig.de** with the subject line “BA Thesis Electronic Version by {your name}.”

Format and Length

Generally, theses may be submitted in English or German. Individual instructors may stipulate you use either of the two.

Your thesis should be about 10,000 words, excluding notes and bibliography. Unless your supervisor requires you to use a different style sheet, formatting and quotation style must consistently follow the MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style.

The completed BA thesis must include an “Eigenständigkeits- und Übereinstimmungserklärung” (Declaration of Originality and Correspondence) in which the student declares that the work submitted has in no way, partial or otherwise, been plagiarized. Any doubts as to whether passages could be construed as plagiarized should be clarified with the supervisor of the thesis.



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The instructors may utilize plagiarism detection software as part of the grading process. The form for the “Eigenständigkeits- und Übereinstimmungserklärung” Declaration of Originality and Correspondence) can be downloaded from the American Studies website.

You should also include at the beginning of your BA thesis an abstract of approximately 250 words, single spaced, in which you outline your theme, thesis, and main points and findings.

