Department of Modern Culture and Media

Graduate Student Handbook

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I. Introduction

Welcome to the Ph.D. program in Modern Culture and Media. This handbook is intended to present a clear set of guidelines and expectations for the program, answer some of the most frequently asked questions before they are asked, and help students at all stages plan their individual experience of the program effectively. No such written guide can, however, foresee every programmatic, administrative, or scholarly detail that might arise. Furthermore, plans of study in the program are individualized and distinctive scholarly combinations are possible. So while this handbook provides a framework, you are encouraged to consult actively and consistently and with your faculty advisor, department staff, and fellow graduate students throughout your time in the program. More generally, we urge you to engage in regular and collegial conversation with MCM faculty and graduate students.

It is every student’s responsibility to be aware of the contents of this handbook; please consult it from time to time when questions or problems arise, and/or when preparing for the next stage of the program. Because MCM faculty and the profession itself are continually changing, these guidelines may be revised on a regular basis. When changes have been approved, they will be introduced as quickly as possible.

II. Arrival on Campus

Initial Contacts

Your principal initial contacts at MCM are the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), the Department Manager, Susan McNeil, and the Program Coordinator, Liza Hebert. Susan McNeil and Liza Hebert are in the Department office. Introduce yourself to them when you arrive on campus. They will be helping you with the administrative and bureaucratic niceties of being a graduate student during your years here, and they know a lot about how the Department and the program works.

Also, immediately upon your arrival on campus, let the DGS know that you are in town and schedule an appointment to discuss your program and any other matters of concern you have at that point. The DGS will be your first advisor, up to an including the Qualifying Review, at which point you will be advised by the faculty members composing your Preliminary Exam and Dissertation Committees. The DGS will remain, however, an important person for you as you progress through the program. S/he chairs the department’s faculty Graduate Committee, which oversees graduate program policy and is the decision-making body for any special questions or ambiguities affecting you. The DGS will also be involved with you on a number of other important matters, ranging from how you fulfill course and language requirements to teaching assignments and the makeup of your Preliminary Examination and Dissertation Committees. The Department Graduate Committee is composed of MCM Faculty and one graduate student representative.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the DGS is Professor Joan Copjec.

Notes about First Year
**Academic/Social**: Every university is different, and MCM is a distinctive program. It may also be that the resources here differ significantly from those of your undergraduate or M.A.-granting institution. As you will see below, you will take 6 of the required 13 courses your first year in the program, and by the end of the second year (or earlier for those arriving with an M.A.) you already have to begin thinking about a Preliminary Examination Committee. You should use your first year as an opportunity to get to know the modes of research and criticism on offer in MCM, as well as the individual faculty members practicing them. The best way to do that is to take courses from a variety of MCM faculty. You may also find that graduate work requires you to change ways of reading texts, kinds of writing, and the research methods with which you are already familiar. Consider what kinds of scholarship available in the Department are especially pertinent to your interests, but also be on the lookout for unexpected directions that enrich your original concerns.

In early September, MCM throws a fall party to celebrate the beginning of the new academic year. You are strongly encouraged to use this and any other opportunity to become acquainted with faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students in the Department. More generally, a truism of doctoral education is that social scholarship—informal discussion and collaboration with one’s fellow graduate students—makes a central contribution. Enjoy and benefit from the presence of your peers.

**General Note on Courses and “Shopping”**: The approximately two-week-long period between the beginning of classes and the deadline for course registration without a late fee each term (see the Academic Calendar) is known colloquially at Brown as the “shopping period.” Traditionally during this period, many Brown students sample a variety of courses before making a final decision about which ones they (agreement with “Brown Students”) will commit to for the semester. This can be a useful process for you, but there are some things to keep in mind. Though faculty members sometimes adjust their syllabi to account for early-term shoppers, be somewhat cautious about shopping, as keeping current with extra upper-level classes can be overwhelming, even for the short, two-week shopping period. Also, be sure to register for your full load of classes before the shopping period. Faculty members are under no obligation to enroll shoppers, and many courses are over enrolled in pre-registration. If you decide to change a course and the professor agrees to allow you into the class, you can then change your schedule easily through the standard drop-add process. Finally, discuss any course changes with your advisor, the DGS, before finalizing them. Brown has an on-line course registration system called Banner. You will use the on-line banner system to register for courses ([http://brown.edu/web/intranet/banner/](http://brown.edu/web/intranet/banner/))

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) is the primary political and social voice of graduate students from all departments. The GSC holds various activities and social events throughout the academic year and the summer.

While Brown is a lively and active community, Providence itself also has a thriving local arts, film, and music scene. You are encouraged to explore events and facilities outside of the Brown
community, for example at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and at local concert, cinema, and gallery spaces such as AS220 (115 Empire St.), the Avon Cinema (260 Thayer St.) and the Columbus Theatre (270 Broadway) among others.

Boston, New York, and Newport, RI are also easily accessible by various forms of public transportation. See the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Bonanza Bus Lines, Greyhound, Amtrak, and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) for details.

**Housing:** The University Auxiliary Housing Office maintains a list of housing opportunities both on and off campus. Other good sources for housing include Craigslist Providence, The Providence Journal’s Classifieds Section, the Brown Graduate Student ListServ (subscribe here) and postings at local cafés. The rental market in Providence can be a challenging one, and choosing among the city’s many diverse neighborhoods can be difficult. Other graduate students and some faculty can provide you with useful advice.

**III. General Description of Program**

The Department of Modern Culture and Media (MCM) is committed to the study of media in the context of a broader examination of cultural, social, and political formations. We understand media as intimately interwoven with technical modes of production and reproduction; we thus study: print insofar as it is connected to mass dissemination, photography, sound recording, cinema, video television, and digital media. These media are defined not in a narrow sense but as immanent to the phenomena they produce and record.

The Department offers a graduate program in Modern Culture and Media, which is the main concern of this handbook. Our graduate program is a Ph.D. program. Doctoral candidates who do not enter the program with an M.A. earn one on their way to the Ph.D. There is no stand-alone, terminal M.A. program for those applying to the program from other universities.

The Ph.D. in Modern Culture and Media is aimed at: (1) Preparing students to engage in rigorous scholarship and teaching in the theory, history, and critical analysis of one of more media, in ways that encompass diverse cultural contexts, practices, and historical periods, within a methodological framework that includes awareness of modern textual, cultural, and social theory; (2) Preparing students to seek academic positions in a market that increasingly offers positions to media and culture specialists both in identifiable media disciplinary units (e.g., Film Studies, Television Studies, Media Studies, etc.); in units with newer labels such as Cultural Studies, Visual Studies, Comparative Media, New Media, and also in other kinds of programs which may have expanded concerns (e.g., certain English, Foreign Language, and Comparative Literature Departments).

Mission Statement of the Department.
IV. Requirements for the Ph.D.

There are three major stages to your work in the program: (1) Preparation for Candidacy, which includes Coursework, the Qualifying Review and fulfilling the Foreign Language Requirement; (2) Advancement to Candidacy, which includes the Preliminary Examination and writing an approved Dissertation Proposal; and (3) Writing the dissertation in completion of the degree.

1) Preparation for Candidacy

Coursework

1. At least 13 courses taken while a graduate student are required of doctoral students. One media production course may count toward this total. Plans of study are individualized. You will choose courses in consultation with your DGS, based on your scholarly and teaching interests. At Brown, 2000-level courses are designated as graduate courses, while 1000-level courses are designated as upper-level undergraduate courses that may also be taken for graduate credit. Courses numbered below 1000 may not count for graduate credit or towards the degree. It is also possible to organize individual and group independent study projects with MCM faculty, but of course this depends on the availability of individual faculty, the constraints on their time, and their interests. The rubric MCM 2980: Independent Reading and Research in Modern Culture and Media is reserved for such projects.

2. Students normally take 6 courses in the first year, 4 courses in the second year, and 3 courses in the third year. Students entering the program with an M.A. may apply to accelerate their coursework and their progress through the program by transferring no more than three credits from prior coursework that is relevant to their planned course of study at Brown. Transfer requests must be approved by the DGS. In such cases students entering the program with an M.A. may complete their coursework as early as the end of the fourth semester.

3. Among these 13 courses, students are required to take at least one graduate level course (i.e., course number 2000 or higher) offered by MCM in each of the following three areas:

*Theory (A course in theories of textuality, subjectivity, culture, the social and/or a specific medium in relation to any of these.) Normally fulfilled by one of the following: MCM 2100, MCM 2110, MCM 2120.

*Textual Analysis (A course that addresses a single medium or genre conceived as a textual object, a mode of cultural production, or a form.) Normally fulfilled by one of the following: MCM 2300, MCM 2310.

*Historical/Cultural Locations (A course that assists students in understanding how the production, circulation, and reception of media forms operate within and across specific social contexts, periods, geocultural sites, and/or communities.) Normally fulfilled by one of the following: MCM 2500, MCM 2510.
First year students will receive an evaluation of their work from the DGS after their first and second semesters. All other students will receive an annual evaluation of their progress toward the degree.

**Qualifying Review and the M.A.**

Upon successful completion of 8 courses (6 for those entering with an M.A. and transferring course credits), students will be subject to a qualifying review, administered by a Qualifying Review Committee of three faculty members. The Qualifying Review Committee is formed by the DGS. In addition to the DGS, it will consist of a faculty member with research and/or teaching specialities that overlap with those of the students, and one other member with other research and/or teaching specialities. The Qualifying Review Committee will review the student's progress, reports by instructors and the DGS, and a sample of work submitted by the student (normally a seminar paper).

The Committee will meet with the student for 90 minutes. The substance of the meeting will be both retrospective and prospective: retrospective in that it will include discussion of the student’s work at Brown to up to that point and prospective in that it will consider ways forward, including how to go about selecting fields of study for the Preliminary Examination fields and choosing the Exam Committee members.

The Qualifying Review Committee will then make one of the following decisions for students who entered the program with a B.A.: (a) award of an M.A. and a determination that the student may proceed towards advanced candidacy; or (b) award of a terminal M.A.

Students who enter the program with an M.A. in hand and have been approved to transfer course credits may elect to take the qualifying review after completing 6 courses. In such cases, the Qualifying Review Committee decision will be either (a) a determination that the student proceed towards advanced candidacy; or (b) termination of studies.

**Foreign Language Requirement**

Students are required to demonstrate reading and research competency in one foreign language. Additional languages may be required of individual students based on their research interests. This requirement may be met by one of the following methods:

1. Passing a translation exam administered by MCM faculty or qualified faculty in other departments.

2. Earning a grade of B or better in a 1000-level or higher course offered by a foreign language department, for which the professor attests that teaching and reading assignments were
preponderantly in that language. (This course will count towards the 13 required courses only if its content coheres with the student’s scholarly interests.)

3. Passing a graduate level reading course offered by a Foreign Language Department.

Summer Foreign Language reading courses are offered by Brown for graduate students. You should satisfy the foreign language requirement as early as possible in your program. In no case will a student be allowed to take the Preliminary Exam without satisfying this requirement.

Teaching Requirement

A minimum of two years of teaching experience is also required for the degree. See the section on teaching below.

2) Advancement to Candidacy

The Preliminary Examination

Virtually all doctoral programs require some form of a general examination after the completion of a student's coursework. This is the point of the Preliminary Examination. It is a culminating moment in your studies. It asks you to demonstrate conceptual as well as bibliographical control over a range of scholarly interests and areas in which you plan to do research and teach. In the lead-up to the exam, you will help to identify those areas. In that sense, this is a moment where you formulate an intellectual self-definition.

Students entering the program with a B.A. take the Preliminary Examination at the end of the sixth semester, before Commencement. Students entering the program with an M.A. who are permitted to transfer three credits may take it at the end of the fourth semester, before Commencement. Passing this exam authorizes the candidate to proceed with the dissertation proposal. The Qualifying Review, all course requirements, and the foreign language requirement, must be successfully completed before the Preliminary Examination may be taken.

It is important not to delay arrangements and preparations for the Preliminary Examination. Since plans of study are individualized in MCM, much of the responsibility for this devolves upon the student. You should begin thinking about Preliminary Exam areas before taking your Qualifying Review, which will include discussion of possible Preliminary Exam areas. No later than October 1, if you complete your qualifying review in the spring, or February 1, if you complete your qualifying review in the fall, you should establish a faculty Preliminary Exam committee. As explained below, this will normally be three MCM and/or MCM-affiliated faculty. You will begin preparation for the Preliminary Exam by working with committee members to finalize definitions of three exam fields including their bibliographical and media lists. The nature of these fields is also explained below.
There are three phases to preparation and completion of the exam: (1) defining the exam fields and constituting a Preliminary Examination committee; (2) preparing and providing materials for the exam in consultation with the committee; and (3) taking the exam before Commencement.

1. Defining the fields and constituting a committee: As noted above, by the end of the second year for those entering the program with a B.A. or the end of the first year for those entering with an M.A. who are permitted to transfer three credits, you will have to constitute your faculty committee and define three fields for the Preliminary Exam.

The exam committee will consist of at least three faculty members, all of whom should be MCM or MCM-affiliated faculty. You must designate a chairperson of the committee. You will work with committee members in constituting and preparing the three exam fields. Each committee member takes primary responsibility for working with you on one of your fields. It is the student’s responsibility to approach faculty and ask if they are willing to serve on the committee. It is also the student’s responsibility to make arrangements to work with committee members to prepare for the exam.

Taken together, the three exam fields should delimit academic area(s) in which the student is preparing to teach, as well the scholarly context(s) for the student's projected research. The configuration of the fields for all students will be as follows:

*Field 1: in the history and theory of a medium.
*Field 2: in modern cultural theory.
*Field 3: an elective field that is designed to provide a comparative perspective.

2. Materials provided by the student: Before the Preliminary Exam, the student will produce

- Three Field Lists, one for each field composed of approximately 40 key scholarly books, or the equivalent composed of articles, chapters, and/or books. In addition, the core bibliographies of Fields 1 and 3 will include a comparable body of pertinent mediatexts. All of these texts will be chosen in consultation with committee members and the final lists must be approved by the committee chair.

- A Fields Essay, written in consultation with the committee. The maximum length of the body of this text (i.e., not counting footnotes) will be 6250 words. The final approved version of the field essay is due two weeks before the exam. This essay should articulate a broad but knowledgeable conception of the scholarly area(s) in which the student plans to teach and write. The essay will inevitably make references to specific items on the field lists; however, the purpose of the essay is not to cover or comment exhaustively or encyclopedically on the entirety of the lists—something that would be impossible within these length limits. Your goal should be to explain the overall coherence and/or the conjunctions of the three fields as a focus in relation to established academic fields. It should indicate key arguments and problematicsthat
structure scholarly debate in that area. The essay should indicate the kinds of research questions and scholarly discussions in which the student is preparing to intervene. In sum, this essay constitutes a kind of intellectual and professional self-definition at the conclusion of your coursework and as you look forward to your first large-scale scholarly work, the dissertation. A file of Field Lists from previous Preliminary Examinations is kept in the MCM Department office. It is available for you to consult as you prepare for your exam. You should bring a copy of your essay with you to the exam.

3. **The Exam:** The Preliminary Examination is a 3-hour oral exam. If the candidate so chooses, the exam may begin with a brief statement concerning the fields essay and preparation for the exam. This statement is not required and should be no more than three to five minutes in length. The exam covers the Fields Essay and the field bibliographies. It will probe the student's understanding of his or her fields and debates within them. The purpose of the exam will be to establish both the breadth and the depth of the student's competence and knowledge in areas where they plan to teach and do research. Upon completion of the exam, the committee will come to one of the following determinations: (a) Pass; or (b) directed to retake the exam. Students may retake the exam once.

**The Dissertation Proposal**

After passing the preliminary examination, the candidate proceeds to the dissertation proposal. They forms a *dissertation committee*, produces a dissertation proposal, en route to writing the dissertation and finishing the degree.

It is the student's responsibility to approach prospective faculty and ask if they are willing to serve on the committee. When the candidate constitutes a dissertation committee, they designates one committee member as the dissertation director. The dissertation committee normally consists of three faculty, at least two of whom must be MCM or MCM-affiliated faculty. (In some cases, a candidate may request an additional faculty member—even, in exceptional cases, one from another university—when it is necessary to cover unusual interests or fields pertinent to the dissertation.) The dissertation committee is often the same as the Preliminary Examination committee, but this is not required.

The candidate then writes a dissertation proposal in consultation with committee members. The dissertation proposal will indicate the problem(s) or issue(s) as well as the objects of study of concern of the work, the scholarly context and bibliography within which it positions itself, and the organization and structure of the study.

The dissertation is generally a book-length study. It must be an original contribution to its fields of concern and meet the highest standards of scholarly competence. Even if you have a firm idea about your dissertation topic, do not assume that you can write the proposal quickly and gain fast approval of your committee. This is probably the first time you have worked on a project of this scale, and your committee will want to ensure that your proposal has intellectual
and scholarly depth, range, and significance. It will also be concerned that your conception of the project is practical and doable in a reasonable amount of time.

When the candidate and the dissertation director believe the proposal is ready, the committee will hold a dissertation proposal meeting with the candidate. This meeting should take place no later than November 15. The committee will either approve the proposal or recommend revisions. A file copy of the final approved proposal, with a cover sheet signed by all members of the committee, should be provided by the student to the Director of Graduate Studies no later than December 15. (A file of previous dissertation proposals is kept in the MCM Department office. It is available for you to consult.)

3) Writing the Dissertation

During work on the dissertation, continued regular consultation with committee members is highly advisable. It is especially crucial that the candidate keep the dissertation director informed of the state of the work. MCM does not require a formal dissertation defense, so all committee members must independently approve the final draft in order to complete the degree.

The candidate should be conversant with Graduate School guidelines for dissertations. These include regulations governing the format of the final draft as well as administrative matters that are the responsibility of the candidate. See the Graduate School’s page of rules and regulations for details.

V. Financial Support and Teaching

Financial Support

The Department only admits doctoral students it can support. While decisions about who to support are those of the Department, the funding actually comes from the Graduate School. Therefore, Graduate School regulations and budgeting govern the administration of this support.

MCM doctoral students are awarded a five-year financial support package that consists of a first-year fellowship including tuition and a September-May living stipend (with no teaching responsibilities), followed by three years of teaching assistantships, which include tuition and September-May stipend, and a fifth-year dissertation fellowship (for the Graduate School’s explanation of the relation of graduate student support to tuition requirements, click here). Students also receive four years of summer support. Some candidates do not finish the dissertation until the sixth year. In these cases, the Department seeks support for sixth-year students from the Graduate School.

In addition to the first year fellowship and teaching assistantships, advanced graduate students are eligible for dissertation fellowships. **No one is eligible for a dissertation fellowship until their dissertation proposal is approved.** In order to be considered for a dissertation fellowship in their fifth year, graduate students should submit a dissertation proposal by December 15 of
their fourth year (seventh semester).

Graduate students may also apply for proctorships and fellowships offered by various units within the University, but in most cases it is advisable to gain support from MCM whenever it is available.

The Graduate School encourages candidates who have possible sources of support from outside the university. Those who come with outside support or who attain it while at Brown must make the Department and Graduate School aware of it. It may result in modification of the terms of funding from the Graduate School; however, you should end up better off than when you started. It is the policy of the Graduate School that the candidate should not be penalized for obtaining outside support. See the Director of Graduate Studies if any of this pertains to your situation.

Graduate Students are also entitled to various forms of travel support for research and conferences. [Click here](#) for more information.

**Teaching**

Teaching is considered a vital part of doctoral education in this program. Experiences of candidates in MCM as well as formal studies conducted across the university by the Graduate School suggest that teaching is an important component of intellectual development and personal satisfaction for Brown graduate students. It is also of benefit on the academic job market.

A minimum of two years’ teaching is required for the degree. In practice, most financial aid packages involve more teaching than this. Normally, doctoral students do not teach during their 1st year. They usually serve as teaching assistants during their 2nd and 3rd years. In subsequent years, much of their support is also likely to take the form of teaching assistantships, depending on the type of funding made available to students and the Department by the Graduate School. The Department tries to provide opportunities for candidates to teach in areas related to their specific interests, but the need to cover courses or broaden the graduate student’s teaching experience may affect assignments.

Many of the teaching assistantships are in undergraduate core courses. These include MCM 0100: Screens and Projections: Modern Media Cultures, MCM 0150: Text/Media/Culture: Readings in Theory, MCM 0230: Digital Media, MCM 0240: Introduction to the Study of Television, MCM 0250: Visuality and Visual Theories, MCM0260: Cinematic Coding and Narrativity, and MCM1110: Theory of the Sign. Sometimes large enrollments make T.A.’s necessary in other courses such as MCM 1200: Special Topics in Modern Culture and Media. MCM graduate students will most often have their first teaching experience in MCM 0150, whose subject matter makes it an excellent conceptual introduction to teaching in MCM fields.
Being a teaching assistant generally entails conducting discussion sections and grading. You may also be asked to give a lecture, in order to broaden your own teaching experience. It is the general practice in MCM for faculty to conduct weekly conferences with their teaching assistants, covering pedagogical goals, objectives, and strategies, course materials, and grading.

The Department also tries to provide all doctoral candidates with the opportunity to teach a course of their own, normally under the rubric of MCM 0900: Sophomore Seminars. This almost always occurs in the 4th year of study, but may be later, depending on the teaching needs of the Department. If you think you may be interested in teaching your seminar at a later date, you should discuss this with the DGS at the beginning of your third year, when planning for MCM courses for the upcoming year gets underway.

Since MCM 0900 is a seminar, its subject matter varies with the instructor. You will choose your course topic in conjunction with your advisor, though undergraduate curricular constraints may also have to be considered (for example, a similar or identical course might be planned by a faculty member.) Candidates are strongly encouraged to design a course related to their dissertation area, and to consult with their advisor and other appropriate faculty when designing the course. The course must be approved by the Department, and then the undergraduate College through the College Curriculum Committee (CCC). Plan ahead. The CCC requires a formal application, which should be made the year before the course is to be taught so that it can be listed in the on-line Banner System. It is best to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies and the Department Administrator about these procedures early in your third year.

**Teaching Resources and Opportunities**

- Sheridan Center workshops and Certificate programs: [https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/sheridan-certificate-programs](https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/sheridan-certificate-programs)

- Summer pre-college teaching opportunities in the School of Professional Studies: [http://www.brown.edu/academics/professional/faculty/](http://www.brown.edu/academics/professional/faculty/)

- Deans’ Faculty Fellows Program: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/deans%E2%80%99-faculty-fellows-program](https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/deans%E2%80%99-faculty-fellows-program)

- Brown/Wheaton Faculty Fellows Program: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/teaching-fellowships-advanced-students/brownwheaton-faculty-fellows-program](https://www.brown.edu/academics/gradschool/academics-research/teaching-fellowships-advanced-students/brownwheaton-faculty-fellows-program)

- Brown/Tougaloo Faculty Fellows Program: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/tougaloo/programs/faculty-fellows-program](https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/special-programs/tougaloo/programs/faculty-fellows-program)

- English for International Teaching Assistants Program: [https://www.brown.edu/academics/language-studies/english-international-teaching-assistants-program](https://www.brown.edu/academics/language-studies/english-international-teaching-assistants-program)
VI. Year-by-Year Summary

The Department and the Graduate School consider five years to be the optimum period for completion of all Ph.D. requirements. It is also recognized, however, that for some students an additional year might be necessary. As noted above, financial support in the form of fellowships, proctorships, and teaching assistantships is usually not guaranteed for a sixth year. When a sixth year is necessary to complete the dissertation, a candidate will have to apply for an extra year’s support. Assuming the candidate is making good progress towards completion, the Department will try to support such applications. Candidates should also look into any possibilities for external funding.

The following represents ideal progress towards the Ph.D. for those who do not enter the program with an M.A.

1st Year

- **Fall Semester**: 3 courses
- **Spring Semester**: 3 courses
- **Summer**: Students often use the summer after their first year to begin preparing for the Foreign Language Exam, which must be passed before the Preliminary Examination can be taken.

2nd Year

**Fall Semester**: 2 courses
- Successful execution of TA responsibilities
- Successful completion of Qualifying Review

**Spring Semester**: 2 courses
- Successful execution of TA responsibilities

**Spring-Summer**:
- Formation of Preliminary Examination committee and fields
- Progress on field lists and Preliminary Examination preparation

3rd Year

**Fall Semester**: 1 or 2 courses
- Successful execution of TA responsibilities
- Completion of field lists for Preliminary Examination
- Progress on fields essay and Preliminary Examination preparation
- Preliminary formation of MCM 0900 course if it is to be taught in 4th year
Spring Semester: Remaining 1 or 2 courses
  • Successful execution of TA responsibilities
  • Completion of fields essay and successful completion of Preliminary Examination

4th Year

Fall Semester: Successful completion of MCM 0900 course (if not taught in spring) or successful execution of TA responsibilities
  • Completion and approval of dissertation proposal by December 15

Spring Semester: Successful completion of MCM 0900 course (if not taught in fall) or successful execution of TA responsibilities
  • Substantial progress on dissertation

5th Year

Fall Semester: TA or dissertation fellowship
  • Substantial progress on dissertation (If it appears that a sixth year will be necessary to complete the dissertation, discuss application for support from the Graduate School with the DGS and research any possibilities for outside funding.)

Spring Semester: TA or dissertation fellowship
  • Completion of dissertation

Students Entering with an M.A.

The timetable for students entering the program with an M.A. is slightly different. While the pace of coursework is the same as for those entering with a B.A., the candidate may have the third-year courses waived. Since the Preliminary Examination is taken upon completion of coursework, this means that it would be taken a year earlier (at the end of the second year). Everything else is accelerated by a year, including the teaching and funding timetables.

In addition, the Qualifying Review will take place after the student has completed 6 courses instead of 8.

VII. Graduate Student Travel, Exchange Programs, and Leaves

Graduate Student Travel Support

Graduate School Travel Funds for Presenting Papers at Conferences: The Graduate School makes $650 available to support travel to graduate student conferences per year. This sum can be used for multiple conferences or until exhausted and is no longer restricted to a single conference. Students in their first through fifth years of study are automatically eligible to apply for both conference and international travel funding; students in the sixth year must include the approval of the DGS in the application. Applications must be submitted online using the UFUNDS online module.
Separate funding is available through the Graduate School for international conference travel. Additional funding for conference travel is also available through the Graduate Student Council.

**Exchange Programs**

The Graduate School has negotiated the following exchange arrangements with some of Brown’s peer institutions. MCM students may participate if the exchange permits types of coursework unavailable at Brown, and if that coursework is especially useful for the student’s plan of study. A student should only engage in an exchange arrangement if it is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

**Exchange Scholar Program**: After completion of one year at Brown, graduate students are eligible to enroll for one or two semesters in the Graduate Schools of the following universities: University of California at Berkeley, University of Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell University, Harvard University, MIT, Princeton University, Stanford University, and Yale University. You will continue to pay tuition at Brown. Note that participation in this program may affect your financial support from Brown; for example, if your support is in the form of a teaching assistantship and you cannot fulfill your teaching responsibilities while studying at the other institution, you will not receive your stipend. [Click here](https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/health/services/fees-and-insurance) for more information from the Graduate School.

**Cross-Registration at Harvard**: There is a long-standing agreement between Harvard and Brown to allow cross-registration of graduate students without paying tuition to the host institution. To do this, you must get the proper forms from the Registrar’s office at each university, and signatures from the director of each Graduate Program and a dean from each Graduate School. If instead of one course you want to take an entire semester’s course work at Harvard, then you need to enroll in the Exchange Scholar Program.

**Traveling Scholar Status and Leaves of Absence**

The university defines a Traveling Scholar as a graduate student whose research (for example, on a dissertation) requires that they must be away from Brown in order to pursue studies full time. The advantages include a very modest registration fee and health insurance support. There is a time limit of one year, though it may be extended in exceptional cases. For more on traveling scholar status, click here: [https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/health/services/fees-and-insurance](https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/health/services/fees-and-insurance)

Students who are studying abroad are strongly encouraged to register the trip with the Brown University Global Assistance Program. This program provides 24-hour worldwide medical, security, and travel assistance, including emergency evacuation. Please visit the website for
more information and the access code to Brown’s International SOS portal: https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/safety/resources/international-sos

Traveling Scholar status should not be confused with a **Leave of Absence**. A Leave of Absence assumes that the candidate is *suspending their studies*. If a student believes they may have to suspend studies for any reason, that student should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible. A Leave of Absence should only be taken for the most serious of reasons, and in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. Regulations regarding such leaves, readmission, tuition consequences, and so forth are summarized here.

**VIII. Facilities and Offices, Resources, Contacts, Important Websites**

**Facilities and Offices**

**Faculty and Administrative Offices:** Most MCM faculty and administrative offices are located at 155 George St. In 2004, MCM expanded into a second building at 135 Thayer St., just around the corner from the first building. The second building houses production facilities, screening rooms, and classrooms.

**Graduate Student Offices:** TA offices are in the basement of 155 George St. The main office room is a communal space with seven iMacs, including access to wireless printing, a mini-fridge, and a microwave. A single office is available next door for students to hold office hours, which are assigned via a sign-up sheet at the beginning of each semester. Priority for using the single office defers to the sign-up schedule.

**Mail:** Every graduate student is assigned a mailbox in the department office. Significant notices and information from the Department and other university offices such as the Graduate School are sent there, so you should regularly check your mailbox. Mailboxes are located on the first floor of 155 George St.

**Your Brown mailing address is:**

Your Name  
Department of Modern Culture and Media  
Brown University  
Box 1957  
Providence, RI 02912

**Building Access:** The exterior doors of MCM and the TA offices are on the Card Access system, which means your Brown ID Card is your key. After getting your ID card, you will need to speak to the Department Administrator to arrange card access to the building and offices. Entry to 135 Thayer is limited to those taking or teaching classes in that building. It works through the same Card Access system.
**Libraries:** The main library is the Rockefeller Library (10 Prospect St.), whose holdings include Humanities and Social Sciences. The other large general use library is the Science Library (201 Thayer St.), which includes materials on psychoanalysis, and the history of science and technology among other things. If you wish, you may apply for a carrel assignment in the Rockefeller Library. Ask about this at the circulation desk of the library.

[Click here](#) for a list of hours and locations of Brown’s libraries.

Brown students also have borrowing privileges at the RISD Library (2 College St.). Ask about this at the Rockefeller Library, as the RISD Library requires a letter of introduction from Brown.

The Brown library participates in various Ivy League, area, and national library consortium arrangements. Furthermore, interlibrary loan has become quite fast and can sometimes deliver journal articles to you electronically. You should explore the library website and become familiar with these resources.

**Brown Media Archive:** The Brown Media Archive, located at 155 George St., is a constantly expanding pedagogical and research collection of film and television/video materials covering both U.S. and international media. As of this writing, it includes more than 800 16mm film prints, 1400 videotapes, and hundreds of DVDs. It is a significant research resource whose holdings are not open to the general public. MCM’s Media Archivist is located on the first floor of 155 George St.

**Video Checkout Room:** Videos and DVDs from the Archive may be viewed in the Video Checkout Room in the basement of 155 George St. Its academic year hours are Monday-Friday, 9:30 am—4:30 pm. It is closed during the summer. Smaller classes may be assigned to analyze materials there, so a viewing station may sometimes be unavailable; consult in advance about using it. MCM’s TA offices are also equipped with VCRs and DVD players.

**Computing:** During orientation, Computer and Information Services (CIS) provides an orientation for graduate students, which may well be useful for you. You should be aware of the specific software CIS supports and consider changing to supported word processing, internet browsing and e-mail software if you do not already use it. Many of these programs are available on networked computers such as those in Department offices. [Click here](#) for support Information from CIS.

**Important:** No matter what your software, you should establish a **NetID and password** through CIS as soon as you have your Brown ID card. Your NetID and password are required for using the computer clusters, gaining access to individual information such as grades, and using the Brown library system from off-campus. [Activate your account here](#).

**The Malcolm Forbes Center:** The Malcolm S. Forbes Center for Media and Culture sponsors conferences and lectures organized by MCM faculty. Topics of some conferences that have been sponsored by the Center include: Television and Nationality; Modernism and Modernity;
The Archaeology of Media; Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project*. The Center has also sponsored or supported several public events that exhibit media texts normally difficult to access in the U.S. Examples include: a festival of Portuguese and Lusophone cinema; a festival of Turkish diaspora cinema in Germany; and annual festivals of French/ Francophone cinema, and contemporary African cinema. The Center also supports the Modernist Journals Project, which is constructing fully-searchable online editions of English-language journals and magazines that were important in shaping modes of art and literature that came to be called modernist.

**Resources**

**Multi-disciplinary resources:** MCM has a long history of interdisciplinary collaboration across departmental lines. The Department maintains ties with many other university units, such as the Africana Studies Department, the American Civilization Department, the Comparative Literature Department, the English Department, the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women, the Visual Art Department, and others.

Depending on their interests and coursework and with the approval of their advisor, candidates may count work in other Brown departments towards their course requirements. Students may include one faculty member from another department on their examination and/or dissertation committees. In addition, other units offer speakers, symposia, exhibits and conferences that are often pertinent to the concerns of MCM graduate students, sometimes with support from MCM.

**Workshops:** The Department regularly holds professional development workshops for graduate students. Workshop topics include publishing, archival research, external fellowship and grant applications, and job market preparation.

**Student and Employee Accessibility Services:** Inform your DGS if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodation or modification of any of these course procedures. As part of this process, you should be registered with Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) and provide the department with an academic accommodation letter from them. For more information, contact SEAS at (401) 863-9588 or SEAS@brown.edu.

**Wellness and Support Resources:**
- Students seeking more information about Medical Leave should contact Student Support Services (Graduate Center E, 4th floor).
- Diversity Initiatives provides assistance with recording a lived or chosen name change into University systems to support T* students (Graduate Center, 4th floor).
- Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS) coordinates and facilitates services for students with physical, psychological, and learning disabilities, and temporary injuries (20 Benevolent Street, 1st floor).
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free confidential counseling (Page-Robinson Hall, Room 512, 401-863-3476). CAPS offers Saturday appointments for
graduate students from 9 am to 4 pm during the academic year at Health Services, 13 Brown Street.

Contacts
Prof. Anthony Cokes
Department Chair
Anthony_Cokes@brown.edu
(401) 863-3988

Prof. Joan Copjec
Director of Graduate Studies
Joan_Copjec@brown.edu
(401) 863-6987

Susan McNeil
Department Manager
Susan_McNeil@brown.edu
(401) 863-3535

Regina Longo
Archivist
Regina_Longo@brown.edu
(401) 863-7886

Liza Hebert
Program Coordinator
Liza_Hebert@brown.edu
(401) 863-2853

Important Websites
Brown University
The Graduate School
Department of Modern Culture and Media
Registrar’s Office
Courses @ Brown
Brown E-mail Access
Information Technology and Computing
Brown University Libraries