

**Welcome to the  
Florida  
Studies  
Program**

**at USF St. Petersburg**

**Graduate Student  
HANDBOOK**

**JULY 2020**

# **TABLE of CONTENTS**

<b><u>Introduction</u></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b><u>What we Offer</u></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Admission to the Florida Studies Program</u></b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b><u>Program Highlights</u></b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b><u>Academic Advising and Mentorship in Florida Studies</u></b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b><u>USF St. Pete Faculty contributing to the Fla. Studies Program</u></b> ..	<b>6</b>
<b><u>Continuous Enrollment &amp; Time Limit to Degree Requirements</u></b> ..	<b>7</b>
<b><u>Classes and Seminars at USFSP—and Transfer of Credit</u></b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b><u>Academic Program</u></b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b><u>Thesis or Non-Thesis Option</u></b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b><u>Research Proposal</u></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><u>Research Proposal Defense and Comprehensive Exam</u></b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b><u>Thesis</u></b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b><u>Thesis Defense and Final Approval</u></b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b><u>Non-Thesis Option</u></b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b><u>Funding for Graduate Students</u></b> .....	<b>14</b>



### **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. Those with more than 6 graduate credit hours in another USF graduate program who are interested in Florida Studies are encouraged to speak with the program director.

The Florida Studies Program also requests a two-page letter outlining your academic interests, your goals and objectives related to graduate wiburg.

### **Program Highlights**

All students in the Florida Studies Program are now required to take two core courses: HUM 6814 *Introduction to Graduate Study* and HUM 6815 *Research Seminar*. Students are also required to take any three of the Florida Studies Concentration courses from a menu of classes (discussed later). 12 credit hours of electives complete the coursework. Finally, all students will take at least 6 credit hours of *Thesis or Directed Research* (in which students work on a culminating research project; more on the difference between thesis and directed research later).

The practical significance of these requirements is that you may focus on a particular academic discipline, or you can pursue a more interdisciplinary program. The choice is yours.

Moreover, “consolidation” of the three campuses of USF means that it should be easier to take courses on other campuses. Courses on other campuses may still require pre-requisites, particular academic background, or permission of the instructor—but they might be options for you. Let us know if you want to take a class in Tampa.

Keep in mind that 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 rigorous scholarship.

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have visited the state archives and capital in Tallahassee—and archives in Spain(!); 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, Fla.

**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 (u

**Dr. John Arthur** (Anthropology): archaeology and coastal archaeology; beer production; Ethiopia; Weedon Island.

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

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

**Dr. Rebecca Johns** (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): environmental law; environmental lobbying; marine resource management; Florida literature.

*\* Dr. Gary Mormino has formally retired from USF. Although he still*





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. 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 outside the USF system.

### **Academic Program**

ALL graduate students in the Florida Studies Program shall complete a total of *at least 33 credit hours* of coursework. 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. On-line and hybrid classes are considered "regularly scheduled" for the purposes of this requirement—BUT independent study, directed research or thesis credits do **not** count toward the 20 credit hours of "regularly scheduled" coursework rule. The Fla. Studies academic program has *four*

mind, however, that we cannot offer every course, every semester! Recent elective courses include, but are not limited to:

*History of the Modern South*  
*The Long Civil Rights Movement*  
*American Culture in the 1960s*  
*Environmental History*  
*Food and History*  
*Finding Soto: Understanding the Hernando de Soto Expedition*  
*Spanish Florida: Myth and History in Early America*  
*African American Literature*  
*Nature Writing*  
*Florida Ecosystems*  
*Seminar in Advanced Human Geography: Human-Animal Relations*  
*Perspectives on Environmental Thought*  
*Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*  
*GIS for non-majors*  
*Qualitative Research Methods*  
*Wetlands, People and Public Policy*  
*Water Quality Policy and Management.*

**4)** Beginning in Summer 2020, ALL Florida Studies students are required to take at least 6 credit hours of **Thesis\*** or **Directed Research\***

\*Note: the specific prefix and course number may vary depending upon the academic discipline of the supervising professor. For example, students working with a history professor shall take thesis credits using HIS 6971; those working with a geography professor may take thesis credits using either GEO 6971 or EVR 6971, and so on and so forth.

### **Thesis or Non-Thesis Option**

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

Graduate students must take at least SIX credit hours of *thesis* or *directed research*. You can take more than 6 credits of thesis or directed research, but only 6 credits will count toward your total of 33 credits required for the master's degree. Both thesis and directed research are essentially supervised independent studies. Writing a thesis, usually a 75 to 120-page study, is recommended for strong writers who think they might ultimately pursue doctoral level study, or who might want to write a book in the future. The non-thesis option is a shorter (25-40 pages) but



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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. IF YOU MISS DEADLINES, YOU WILL HAVE TO REGISTER AND TRY AGAIN THE FOLLOWING SEMESTER! Check out the following web page for deadlines and format guidance: <https://www.usf.edu/graduate-studies/students/electronic-thesis-dissertation/current-etd-deadlines.aspx>.

### **Non-Thesis Option**

Graduate students pursuing the non-thesis option will also have to successfully defend their research proposals and ultimately register for at least 6 credit hours of directed research. For most non-thesis students, your work 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 the final product 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. Although students need not follow the strict deadlines for thesis submission, non-thesis students should work closely with their major professors to prevent unpleasant surprises before the end of the term. Submission of your paper is not the same thing as faculty approval of your final paper!

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.

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