



American Studies Leipzig

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Staatsexamen Thesis Guidelines (“Wissenschaftliche Arbeit”)

Staatsexamen Thesis

Your thesis will be a substantial piece of academic writing in which you pursue a specific research question or interest in the field of American studies. In an extended analytic project, your thesis gives you an opportunity to display your understanding of methods and theories relevant in American studies, as well as to reflect on your methodological choices and selection of sources.

Supervisors and Readers

For your thesis, you will choose a supervisor and a second reader. Your supervisor will be your chief adviser 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.

If you want to write a thesis with American studies, you should choose your supervisor among the professors at the institute. They are generally available to supervise theses in the following fields:

- Prof. Katja Kanzler: American literary studies; American cultural studies (especially popular culture)
- Prof. Pisarz-Ramirez: American literary studies; American cultural studies (especially immigration, history and cultures of minorities)
- PD Dr. Olaf Stieglitz: American society, history, politics

In certain cases, you might be able to choose one of the postdoctoral researchers working at the institute as your adviser, but their capacity to supervise theses is generally limited. The institute's faculty list (<http://americanstudies.uni-leipzig.de/faculty>) can help you determine if there is somebody whose research focus might be applicable to your project.

Generally, if you want to write your thesis in American Studies, at least one of your two advisers needs to be regular American Studies Leipzig faculty.

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 discuss your preferred topics as general ideas with your supervisor. Together, you will identify the most promising one to pursue further.
- Second, you will prepare an official proposal for your supervisor and your second reader. The proposal should be submitted about 3 weeks before you have to hand in your application. It should be about two to three pages long and include:
 - A short description of what your thesis will focus on, your research interest, and what makes your project relevant in the context of American Studies;
 - The methodologies you plan to employ;
 - A brief working bibliography, consisting of both primary and secondary sources.
- Third, in consultation with your supervisor, your proposal goes through a final round of revision, after which s/he will officially approve your proposal and sign the application form.

Procedures and Deadlines

All official details and information regarding deadlines for handing in the official application at the Exams Office and all other regulations are administered by the Landesamt für Schule und Bildung. For more information, please consult the website of the ZLS: <http://www.zls.uni-leipzig.de/906.html>.

Format and Length

Your thesis should be about 20,000 words, excluding notes and bibliography, i.e. 40-60 pages of text in 1.5 spacing. For students training for elementary school teaching, the workload should be smaller, therefore your thesis should be up to 40 pages. 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. For more details regarding formalities, see the [regulations on the ZLS website](#).

The completed thesis must include an "Affidavit / Eidesstattliche Erklärung" in which the student declares that the work submitted has in no way, partial or otherwise, been plagiarized. The instructors may utilize plagiarism detection software as part of the grading process. The form for the "Affidavit / Eidesstattliche Erklärung" can be downloaded from the American Studies website.

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