

Final Oral Exam

B.A. British and American Studies

Oral exams can be scheduled at the beginning or the end of each semester, usually in the last week of the semester break and the first week of classes, and again in the last week of classes and the first week of the semester break. The next exam period is posted on the [department website](#).

The oral exam is 30 minutes in length and comprises two parts:

- (1) the discussion of two research topics
- (2) the discussion of a British and/or American Studies reading list.

Prior to registering for the exam, the candidate contacts potential [examiners](#) to find a primary and a secondary examiner. The examiners can, but do not have to, be the supervisors of the bachelor's thesis. The candidate then obtains the registration form from the examination office, secures the primary examiner's approval of the reading list, and submits the signed form to the examination office. Candidates are encouraged to start this process at least one month before the exam. The exam can only take place after the candidate has submitted the bachelor's thesis.

(1) Two Research Topics in British and/or American Studies

The candidate decides on two focused research topics, one with each examiner, ideally drawn from seminars taken with the examiners in modules 7 or 8. For each topic, the candidate submits a brief outline with 2-3 debatable research statements or theses (approx. one paragraph per statement) and a brief bibliography of primary/secondary texts that provide the basis for the exam. The bibliography should be discussed with the examiner and might comprise, for example, two primary and two secondary texts for each topic. The thesis and bibliography need to be submitted to the examiners at least two weeks ahead of the exam. The topics and texts must not overlap with those of the written bachelor's thesis.

For each topic, the allotted examination time is 10-12 minutes. The examination does not include an oral presentation of the research statements. Instead, it consists of questions that ask the candidate to argue the position taken in these statements or to explain aspects of the topic in more detail.

(2) Reading List British and/or American Studies

The candidate makes a selection of nine works of British and/or American literature that ideally cover three different periods (before 1700; 1700 to 1900; after 1900) and three different genres (poetry, prose fiction, drama, etc.). The [department website](#) provides a list of key texts to choose from, but candidates can also suggest works that are not covered on this list.

The allotted examination time for the reading list is 6-10 minutes. The discussion of the list focuses on the candidate's ability to contextualize literary/cultural texts with respect to their generic affiliation, cultural-historical period, and overarching patterns or themes in British and/or American Studies. The goal is to demonstrate breadth of literary knowledge and an awareness of British and/or American cultural history.