

PhD Roadmap (August 2011)

First Fall Semester -

- Work hard in classes.
- Start scoping out who might be a good advisor for you. Ask around about advisors. Look at faculty members' websites. Note that just because you really link into a professor's teaching style does not mean you will link in the same way with their advising style. You want to find the advisor that is the best fit for you.
- If you have an idea of what you want to do, go ahead and take that breadth course first so that you don't get behind. Also, if you find out that area is not your strength, you can switch before it is too late.
- **Tip:** Consider allocating your courses so that you can take a prelim during the summer (pending that you feel confident and do well in those classes).

First Spring Semester -

- Work hard in classes
- Finish your breadth classes.
- Decide what field you want to pursue, and pick your advisor. Pick your advisor as early as possible! Advisors can quickly fill up with students, and an advisor that would have been happy to work with you earlier in the semester may tell you he/she is full later in the semester. The first-year seminar is this semester, where prospective advisors present interesting projects they are working on, and this can be a help. *When you do pick an advisor, let Kris Hunnicut know!*
- **Note:** It is also a good idea to have your *final* transcript sent to the graduate school from your undergraduate institution during this semester. The graduate school must have your final undergraduate transcript before you graduate.

Summer -

- Take a summer course.
- Try to take a prelim IF your advisor recommends it and you feel confident.
- Work on your research/do preliminary reading with your advisor.
- If your professor does not feel it is best to do research with you during the summer, consider an internship. However, it can be very nice to have your first prelim already out of the way after your first summer.

Second Fall Semester -

- Take classes relevant to your emphasis area and continue working on your project/thesis research. At this point, you will be in your advisor's hands.
- MAKE SURE you get your final transcript to the graduate school and double-check with Kris Hunnicut to make sure she has it.
- Fill out the GS2-14 form (assuming you want your master's degree along the way to a PhD). Include all the courses that you will use toward your masters, and no extras. Unless if you take an overload semester this should be every course you take in the first two years. (The graduate school will not accept your PhD GS-2 if you count the same course on the GS2-14 and PhD GS-2)
- Fill out the GS4 Diploma order form at <http://www.clemson.edu/gradweb/>
- Form your committee (your advisor will give you good suggestions on who to pick).

Winter -

- Consider taking another prelim if possible (again, if your advisor recommends it and you feel confident).

Second Spring Semester -

- Order Cap, Gown, etc. (this should be done online or in the bookstore around the end of January/beginning of February)
- Wrap up the research on your project/thesis.
- Fill out the MS presentation form from Kris Hunnicut at least two weeks before giving the presentation.
- Try to give a talk in GSS or somewhere else to practice your final presentation/defense.
- Give Final Masters Presentation/Defense
- Email Kris Hunnicut the final, *signed* pdf copy of your Master's Project/Thesis. If you do a Master's Thesis, you also need to submit it online to the graduate school.
- If you decide to switch advisors between your masters and PhD, this semester is the time to scout around. Be very careful and considerate, of course, if you decide to switch advisors.

Summer -

- Try to take another prelim (if successful, this could be your third and last prelim!). Once you pass your final prelim, you are not required to take 3 classes per semester to maintain your teaching assistantship as you are before you pass your third prelim.
- NOTE: Once you finish your third prelim, you have, in general, 1 year in which to present your final, oral, comprehensive exam.
- Take one more class. At this point, you will have around 12-16 graduate 800-level courses depending on how many credits you took earlier in the semester and during the summer sessions.
- Start PhD research.

Third Fall Semester -

- Determined by you and your advisor. Note that at this point, you have 12 - 24 hours of classes left (4 - 8 classes) to meet the department's 20 800-level course minimum. Moreover, you will need to take at least 2 courses in each major area of math offered at Clemson. The exact courses you take in each area will be determined by you and your advisor. You also have a minimum of 18 hours of research left to meet the department's 18 hour research minimum. These are listed as MTHSC 991 hours.

Winter -

- Research

Third Spring Semester -

- Again, determined by you and your advisor.
- Definitely complete comprehensive fourth exam if you finished the prelim during the previous summer. In general, you have two semesters after passing the third prelim to complete your fourth exam.
- At least 2 weeks prior to your fourth exam, fill out the fourth exam form from Kris Hunnicut.

Summer -

- Research and possibly an internship.

Fourth Fall Semester -

- Determined by you and advisor.

Fourth Spring Semester -

- Continue research with your advisor.

Fifth Summer-

- Research and possibly an internship.

Fifth Fall Semester-

- Begin working very seriously on dissertation.
- Continue research.
- Start applying for jobs.

Fifth Spring Semester-

- Order Cap, Gown, etc. (this should be done online or in the bookstore around the end of January/beginning of February)
- Finish dissertation.
- Continue research.
- Fill out the PhD defense form from Kris Hunnicut at least two weeks prior to giving your defense.
- Defend dissertation.
- Submit your PhD thesis to the graduate school and to Kris Hunnicut with the signed title page.

DISCLAIMER: This schedule does not include all deadlines nor does it include by any means all possible combinations or contingencies that could arise in the course of pursuing a PhD. It is meant to merely be a chronological compilation of helpful insights and does not officially represent the department, SIAM, GSS, or any single graduate student.

For official policy, please check with Dr. Kulasekera: mthgrad@clemson.edu

For the official graduate school deadline website, visit: <http://www.grad.clemson.edu/Deadlines.php>