I would like to work toward my PhD as a part-time student. Are there a minimum number of credits I need to take?

If you are not going to be a full-time student there is no requirement on the minimum credits per semester. Obviously, since most courses are 3 credits that is typically the minimum level you'd be taking - at least at first when completing your course work. Later, when you are doing your research it is possible to register for just 1 credit of pre-dissertation credit per semester (EECE698) and then later still you can register for 1 credit of dissertation per semester (EECE699). There really is no requirement on the number of credits of 698 and 699 you must complete... you just need to complete the research needed to write your dissertation and then actually write it!

**There are some limits on how long you are allowed to take to complete a few milestones:**

A student in a doctoral program must be admitted to candidacy within five years of admission to the Graduate School if entering directly into a doctoral program or within five years after award of a master’s degree at Binghamton University. You are admitted to candidacy after completing your course work and passing the comprehensive exam.

Doctoral candidates must complete all requirements for the degree, including the dissertation, within five years after admission to doctoral candidacy.

So... you've got 5 years to get to from entrance to candidacy and another 5 years from candidacy to completion of dissertation and all degree requirements.

So your plan of taking one 3-credit course each Fall and Spring gets you to candidacy in 4 years. It is possible to also take a 3-credit independent study in the summer and that would get you to candidacy in 3 years.