Ph.D. Handbook
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Wayne State University

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Caroline Maun
Interim Director of Graduate Studies
caroline.maun@wayne.edu
(313) 577-7694
5057 Woodward Ave, Ste. 9408.1
Department of English
Wayne State University

Kay Stone
Graduate Program Specialist
aj2343@wayne.edu
(313) 577-7702
5057 Woodward Ave, Ste. 9407.4
Department of English
Wayne State University
Ph.D. PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

English is one of the largest Ph.D. programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Wayne State with a graduate faculty of over 30 and a graduate student population of nearly 150 actively pursuing degrees. Our program is designed around three primary concentrations—Literary and Cultural Studies, Film and Media Studies, and Rhetoric and Composition Studies—with numerous subspecialties within and across these three areas.

REQUIREMENTS

Course Work

The Ph.D. program requires 90 semester hours of course credit, which must include:

a. 60 credit hours of course work (up to 30 hours may be transferred from an earned M.A. in English or a related subject)

b. Completion of distribution requirements within and outside concentrations (see below)

c. 30 credit hours of dissertation courses (English 9991, 9992, 9993, 9994)

Ordinarily all courses will be at the 7000 or 8000 level; permission from the Director of Graduate Studies is required to take courses at lower levels unless such courses are required by the English Department (e.g., English 6001 for graduate teaching assistants).

Distribution Requirements and Student Advising

Each doctoral student must select the concentration for their Ph.D. studies—Literary and Cultural Studies, Film and Media Studies, or Rhetoric and Composition Studies—early enough in her or his program to fulfill the advising practices and course distribution requirements described below.

1. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) acts as a student’s advisor upon matriculation into the PhD program. Working with the DGS, each student will formulate a plan of course work. The DGS’s signature will be required on the plan. In advance of a student’s registration for the Qualifying Examination, they will choose a faculty advisor from their concentration who will head the committee for his or her Qualifying Examination and dissertation. (NOTE: A student may also change advisors at any point thereafter, assuming the new advisor’s willingness to serve, but doing so at any time after the completion
of the Prospectus Examination requires filing a Change of Committee form with the Graduate School.)

2. Each student will also be given a handbook specifying Ph.D. requirements, fields, and emphases (see below) as well as providing “sample” paths through to the dissertation stage.

3. All new Ph.D. students are required to take an introductory course (“Issues in Critical Theory,” English 7001), usually in their first semester of studies. This course will cover fundamental theoretical texts and critical methods pertinent to all three concentrations. English 7001 is offered each fall semester. The course also provides education in professional development and practice in some of the characteristic genres of the profession, thus serving as a semester-long site of orientation for new Ph.D. students.

4. Each Ph.D. student must take at least two courses in her or his concentration, usually at the 7000 level (students need permission from their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies to take courses below the 7000 level; the maximum number of 5000-level courses permitted at the Ph.D. level is two). 7000-level courses are designed to provide students with a broader coverage of representative texts and issues in a particular field or sub-field.

5. Each Ph.D. student must take at one course each in primary department concentrations that are not their declared emphasis (e.g., a student with Literary & Cultural Studies as their declared research emphasis must take at least one course in Film & Media Studies and one course in Rhetoric & Composition Studies). (NOTE: Courses at other institutions may be counted towards this requirement, with permission of the Director of Graduate Studies.)

6. Each Ph.D. student must take at least two 8000-level seminars in her or his concentration. Seminars are understood to be more specialized explorations of a research problem within the professor’s area of expertise.

7. Each student must take at least two course focused on contemporary pedagogical theory and best practices in teaching (e.g., ENG 6002: Teaching of Literary and Cultural Studies or ENG 7064: Teaching of Writing). Consult the Director of Graduate Studies for a list of approved classes.

8. Each Ph.D. student who holds a teaching assistantship must take ENG 6001 (Teaching Practicum) in the first semester in which she or he
holds the assistantship; ENG 6001 fulfills one of the pedagogical course requirements described above.

9. Each Ph.D. student must fulfill the foreign language requirement (a demonstration of reading proficiency in the language selected). The foreign language requirement can be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

   a. Passing a translation examination administered by an appropriate individual; a template is available from the Director of Graduate Studies. This is the preferred method.
   
   b. Scoring 600 or better on the ETS Test in a Modern European Language.
   
   c. Taking and passing with a grade of B or better two appropriate 5000-level (or higher) courses in a foreign language. Two advanced non-translated literature courses or one intensive language course (e.g. Greek 5000 for 3 credits or more) and one non-translated literature course (5000 level or higher, 3 credits or more) in the same language fulfill this requirement. Credits earned do not count toward the 60 class credit hours required for the degree unless they fulfill, in whole or part, the cognate requirement.

10. Prior to the semester in which she or he plans to take the Qualifying Examination, each Ph.D. student chooses an advisor and declares the field and emphasis in which she or he plans to take the Qualifying Examination (plan to be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies). The field reflects the current division of the discipline as found in such sources as the Job Information Lists published by the Modern Language Association. Emphases are designed to underscore for students the necessity of embedding doctoral work in ongoing critical debates among the various disciplines and sub-disciplines that make up English studies. An emphasis should identify a topical or thematic category and/or articulate a theoretical or methodological approach. Emphases must be grounded in course work; along with the advisor’s approval, a student will need to list the two (or more) courses that support the declared emphasis. The department will maintain and publish a list of recent and suggested emphases. Courses in one’s emphasis may also count towards other area and concentration requirements.

NOTE: Students should be advised that the full description of university rules is to be found in the Graduate Bulletin. The following description covers the Department of English’s procedures and some, but not all, of those of the university.
Plan of Work

The Director of Graduate Studies will serve as primary advisor prior to the formation of a Qualifying Examination committee. Upon the completion of forty credit hours (including credits transferred from previous degrees), students must, with the assistance of the Director of Graduate Studies, complete a Plan of Work (the form is available on the Graduate School and English Department websites).

Qualifying Examinations

The Qualifying Examination measures and validates competence in a standard professional field and in a student’s emphasis. Standard professional fields are those in which the Modern Language Association Job Information List and/or the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Career Center routinely offers positions. Preparation for and completion of the Qualifying Examination takes place through the steps listed below.

1. The Qualifying Examination occurs at the point at which the student has completed at least 50 hours of course credit hours and no later than the semester following the completion of course work.

2. To form their Qualifying Examination committee, the student selects a director/committee chair from the faculty (the faculty member must accept this appointment) and they work together to identify the areas in which the student shall be examined. The student then submits a Qualifying Examination Committee Request to the Director of Graduate Studies that identifies his or her committee director and the 2-3 areas that will form the sections of the QE reading list. At least one of these areas must be a standard professional field as identified above; additional areas may be composed of theoretical approaches, methodologies, and/or more specific areas of study. Including the director, the Qualifying Exam committee must consist of at least two members holding current Graduate Faculty appointments. The final decision on the composition of the Qualifying Examination Committee rests with the Graduate Committee.

4. The Qualifying Examination Committee works with the student to construct the list of texts on which she or he is to be examined. When the list of texts is completed and approved by the Examination Committee, a copy must be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies at least two weeks prior to the written exam date. Previous lists are archived and available as precedents or models for the student and the committee (consult the Director of Graduate Studies for access to such lists). Lists should consist of roughly 100-120 book-length works (or the equivalent in books, scholarly articles, and other media), with
an approximate 6:4 ratio for lists covering two areas and an approximate 5:3:2 ratio for lists covering three areas. If the list areas for the exam change from those identified on the students’ Qualifying Examination Committee Request, that change must be approved by the Graduate Committee prior to the written exam.

5. The Qualifying Examination Committee composes questions for a written examination. The student may use books and notes. No Internet-equipped devices, including phones, may be used during the examination. The exam will be word-processed. The written examination consists of one question per area of the Qualifying Examination list (which may be selected by the student from a greater number of questions, depending on the preference of the Qualifying Examination Committee). In cases in which the Qualifying Examination list covers two areas, the written examination will be composed of two three-hour exam sittings; in cases in which the list covers three areas, the exam will be completed during three two-hour sittings. In both cases, the student will be given only the question(s) under review for the sitting at the start of each exam. While the exams may be taken in one day, all exams must be completed within seven calendar days from the start of the student’s first exam.

6. Within one week after taking the final written exam, the student will take a 90-minute oral exam. The nature of this exam will be contingent on the committee’s evaluation of the written portion of the exam.

7. The student passes or fails the Qualifying Examination in its entirety. The committee votes at the end of the oral exam. The decision is based upon a majority vote and is recorded in a Report on Doctor of Philosophy Oral Qualifying Exam form submitted to the Graduate School. If the student fails, the entire examination must be re-taken. A re-take of the Qualifying Exam must take place at least four months after the failed exam and a student is entitled to only one re-take. The results of the Qualifying Examination are reported to Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School. Passing the Qualifying Examination advances a student to Ph.D. candidacy and permits registration in “Candidate Status: Doctoral Dissertation Research and Direction” courses. **(NOTE: In order to register for ENG 9992 after passing the Qualifying Examination, a student’s Candidacy Form with the signatures of the student’s dissertation committee members, including their outside reader, must be on file with the Graduate School; see below for the rules governing the selection of outside readers and the formation of dissertation committees.)**
Prospectus Approval Process

No later than one month after successful completion of the Qualifying Examination, the student selects a dissertation committee consisting of three members of the English Department faculty and one appropriately qualified individual who is not a member of the Wayne State Department of English (the dissertation committee director must be a member of the department’s graduate faculty, as must be at least one other English faculty member on the committee). Members of this committee may or may not have been members of the student’s Qualifying Examination Committee. To insure satisfactory progress towards the Ph.D., the student should have their prospectus approved by the committee no later than six months after passing the Qualifying Examination. While a meeting is not required to approve a prospectus, it is a popular practice in the department for the student and his or her dissertation committee to meet at least once to discuss a final or near-final draft of the prospectus prior to its formal approval.

The prospectus must be a document of 15-20 pages containing the following sections:
- Overview/Research Questions
- Scholarly Context
- Methodology
- Significance
- Chapter Descriptions
- Works Cited

THE DISSERTATION

After receiving approval of the dissertation from her or his committee, the student then files a “Doctoral Dissertation Outline and Record of Approval” and a Conflict of Interest Form with the Director of Graduate Studies who reviews and approves both documents. The Director of Graduate Studies then forwards the documents to the Graduate School. (NOTE: The dissertation will not be approved until the student has completed all preliminary requirements—e.g., course distribution requirements, the foreign language requirement, sixty hours of completed course work; a completed Conflict of Interest Form must also be submitted alongside the Ph.D. Prospectus and Record of Approval Form following successful Prospectus Examinations.)

The dissertation provides an opportunity to carry through an extended research and critical project on an idea developed by the student and approved by faculty. The dissertation should make an original contribution to knowledge in the field of English Studies. It demonstrates the student’s ability to handle primary and secondary source material, to employ standard bibliographical and scholarly techniques, and to present a clearly written and cogent argument. Students are
strongly encouraged to develop dissertations that test disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries and utilize contemporary methods of criticism in order to advance knowledge. The dissertation should incorporate issues currently of interest to the profession.

Upon completing and having the dissertation approved by her or his committee, the student must submit one copy of the finished dissertation to the Director of Graduate Studies. Following the committee’s approval of the dissertation, the student will make a required oral defense before the dissertation committee and any guests who may wish to attend. The Director of Graduate Studies must be notified at least one month in advance of the date of the oral defense. (NOTE: At least two weeks prior to the defense, dissertation advisors must complete the first part of the Final Defense Report Form and also submit a memo to the Director of Graduate Studies certifying that a SafeAssign check has been performed on the dissertation; a completed Conflict of Interest Form must also be submitted alongside the completed Final Defense Report Form after successful dissertation defenses, even if the student and committee involved already completed a copy of the former after the Prospectus Examination.)

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

As mentioned above, in addition to all departmental requirements for the Ph.D. program, English Ph.D. students must also abide by all of the following university-level requirements.

Residency: The Ph.D. requirement of one year of residence is met by the completion of at least six graduate credits in course work, exclusive of dissertation, in each of two successive semesters. In addition, all doctoral students must have taken at least 30 hours of course work (exclusive of candidate status credits) at WSU.

Distribution of Credits: A minimum of 90 credits is required for the Ph.D. including a minimum of 60 hours in coursework that satisfies the following requirements:

• A minimum of 12 hours in the major
• At least 30 credit hours at the 7000-8000 level or above (the remaining credits may be course work, directed study, or research distributed over the major or cognate areas)
• Four semesters of consecutive enrollment under Candidate Status (English 9991, 9992, 9993, 9994).

Directed Study Credits: No more than eight credits of Directed Study courses may be counted toward the minimum credits requirement for the Ph.D. degree.
**Course Load:** The typical course load for full-time graduate students (including holders of Graduate Professional Scholarships and Graduate Fellowships) is eight hours per semester. The maximum allowable is 16 credit hours per semester. The course load for Graduate Teaching or Research Assistants is a minimum of 6 credits each semester.

**Transfer Credits:** A maximum of 30 credit hours may be transferred from another institution. Only courses for which the final grade was B or better may be used for transfer credit. To request transfer credits, the student must submit a Transfer of Credit form along with the Plan of Work.

**Plan of Work:** The Plan of Work, which lists courses completed and proposed, must be submitted to the Graduate Office for approval before 40 credit hours have been completed. The Plan of Work is devised by the student under the supervision of the Director of Graduate Studies and is submitted on a special form.

**Dissertation Credits:** No course work is involved in taking Candidate Status registration numbers (Eng 9991, 9992, 9993, 9994). As well, students near or at the end of their coursework may register for English 9990 for up to ten credits in order to prepare for the Qualifying Examination.

**Time Limit:** The time limit for completion of the Ph.D. is seven years dating from the end of the first semester in which classes are taken as a doctoral applicant. The form for requesting extensions to this limit is available on the Graduate School website.
COURSE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

All Ph.D. students must take 60 credit hours of coursework (composed of credit hours in our program and, when applicable, credit hours transferred from a previously earned M.A. degree). Students’ final 30 credits are earned through registering for Dissertation Research and Direction courses (ENG 9991, 9992, 9993, and 9994), leading to the 90 credit hour minimum for the degree. In addition to equaling 60 credits, all Ph.D. students must also satisfy the following course distribution requirements:

- ENG 7001
  3 credit hours

- *2 7000-level English courses inside concentration
  6-8 credit hours

- 2 8000-level English seminars inside concentration
  6-8 credit hours

- *2 7000-level courses outside concentration
  6-8 credit hours

- 2 6000- or 7000-level courses in pedagogy
  6 credit hours

- *Electives
  27-33 credit hours

TOTAL:

60 credit hours

*(NOTE: * = may be transferred from previously earned M.A. degree)*