

University of Texas at Arlington

Graduate Handbook

General Information

All graduate students should familiarize themselves with the policies, procedures, and deadlines specified in the general section and in the English Department section of the Graduate Catalog (which is available online). The purpose of this Handbook is to supplement the Graduate Catalog by specifying those policies and procedures adopted by the English Graduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Advisor.

WEBSITES AND EMAIL

Updated versions of the Graduate Student Handbook, as well as information about the English Department, the Graduate Faculty, graduate course offerings, and the graduate programs are available online at <http://www.uta.edu/gradcatalog/english.php>. The Graduate Advisor also sends periodic e-mails to graduate students: please inform the Graduate Advisor when your email address changes!

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Check the Graduate [Calendar online](#), or the course schedules, or the Graduate Advisor's bulletin board for a list of all Graduate College deadlines-for registration; for scheduling exams; for thesis/dissertation defenses, for graduation.

REGISTERING FOR COURSES

Graduate course offerings are posted on paper and on line; course descriptions are available online. Every semester, graduate students must get "advised" by the Graduate Advisor before they can be cleared to register for classes. Advising can be done in person or by telephone, during the Graduate Advisor's office hours, or via email. You must give the Advisor 1) your social security # and 2) the courses you plan to take. Do not put off advising until the last minute. There is NO Graduate Advising during December or January and the advising schedule for the summer varies year by year. (The English Department staff CANNOT clear graduate students to register.) Seminars fill up, so register early.

ADVISING

Along with clearing graduate students for registration, the Graduate Advisor helps students plan their programs of work, select classes, select committee members, negotiate through the graduate program, and prepare for the academic job market. All graduate students, however, should work closely with their committee members

and their directors-they are the most important advisors.

FORMS

All forms are available from the Graduate School, the English Department's Graduate Advisor, and the English Department's main office. All forms must be filled out carefully and completely and submitted to the Graduate Advisor and/or the Graduate School well before the Graduate School's deadlines. It is your responsibility to ensure that all forms are completed.

The MA in English

OUTLINE OF ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following steps must be taken, in the order given, to satisfy the administrative requirements of the English Department and the Graduate School:

- 1.** File Tentative Program of Work. Before the completion of 12 hours of Master's study, each student must complete a Tentative Program of Work form for the Graduate School, and submit to the Graduate Advisor a brief statement indicating how this tentative program relates to intended intellectual and career goals. Each student should meet with the Graduate Advisor to discuss the relation of his or her goal statement to his or her Tentative Program of Work.
- 2.** Establish three-member Supervising Committee or thesis Committee. Each student should consult with the Graduate Advisor about selecting his or her committee members before the completion of 18 hours of Graduate Study. Note: A student's committee selection and his or her Tentative Program of Work should be approved before the completion of 18 hours. Consult the Graduate Advisor regarding any changes in the direction of graduate study or committee composition.
- 3.** If the student would like to pursue the Thesis Option he or she must file an Application for MA Thesis Option during the 24th hour of coursework. He or she must also submit a copy of the Thesis Prospectus approved by the thesis committee to the Graduate Advisor. Only the thesis option requires a prospectus. This document must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the end of the semester preceding enrollment for thesis credit.
- 4.** File Final Program of Work, complete the Application for Graduation, pay diploma fee. See Graduate School deadlines.

NOTE: No course for which a student receives a C or lower will carry credit toward a MA in English.

- 5.** Request Thesis Defense or Master's Examination, with Request to Hold Final Master's Exam form. Consult Graduate School deadlines.
- 6.** Submit Final Master's Exam Report after successful completion of a thesis defense or exams. For thesis students, work with the Graduate School to submit the

MA thesis according to their specific requirements (templates may be available online).

CORE COURSE

All MA students, thesis and non-thesis alike, must take the required core course ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice in English Studies during the first 12 hours of graduate study. It is best to take 5300 during the first semester of graduate work. No substitutions are permitted for this course. Within the first 12 hours of graduate study, GTAs must take the Summer II GTA Institute; ENGL 5359: Argumentation Theory; and ENGL 5300.

LITERARY PEDAGOGY REQUIREMENT

If GTAs wish to teach sophomore literature for the first time in Fall 2005 or later, they must complete the Literary Pedagogy course with a grade of 'B' or better. Completion of the course does not guarantee assignment of teach sophomore literature. Literary Pedagogy will be counted toward the 30 hours needed to complete PhD coursework. It will be counted toward MA coursework as well. GTAs in sophomore literature courses, however, must hold the MA.

INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

Students may earn a limited amount of credit for courses in topics not ordinarily offered in the Department by arranging with a professor to organize such a course under the catalog designation ENGL 5391, INDEPENDENT STUDY, subject to approval by the Department Chair and the Graduate Advisor. Before registering for 5391, a student must have his or her professor complete a Conference Course Documentation form and return the form to the Graduate Advisor for approval. Ordinarily, students may apply no more than six hours of 5391 to their MA Final Program of Work.

ENROLLMENT IN UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH COURSES

Under extraordinary circumstances, graduate students may enroll in undergraduate English courses when no graduate courses are available to meet their needs. Such enrollments will earn graduate credit (Under ENGL 5391) if students meet the extra requirements specified by the instructor, who must have Graduate Faculty status. Graduate enrollment in undergraduate English courses is treated like any other section of 5391.

COURSES IN OTHER UNITS

With the approval of their supervising committee and of the Graduate Advisor, students may apply a maximum of 6 hours of graduate coursework in other university units to their Final Program of Work.

MA IN ENGLISH: NON-THESIS OPTION

The Non-Thesis Option allows MA students to take the broadest range of English graduate courses. Students choosing the Non-Thesis Option (36 hours of coursework/12 courses) should select their three-member MA committee in consultation with the Graduate Advisor and faculty members upon completing 18 hours (6 courses) of graduate study. This committee will administer the Final MA exam.

FINAL MASTER'S EXAMINATION (NON-THESIS OPTION)

A student's committee chair is responsible for supervising the committee's preparation and evaluation of the Final Master's Examination and the student's preparation for taking it.

The student is responsible for giving copies of course lists, syllabi, and other relevant materials to the committee chair, who will then distribute them to the other committee members so that they will be well acquainted with the student's course background. The chair should then discuss the student's course background with the committee and supervise the committee's construction of the examination. Questions will be based on student's coursework, though students will be expected to make cross-course comparisons. Students should be given some choice in each exam. The chair is also responsible for clarifying the nature of the exam for the student and giving the student appropriate guidelines for it. These may include general study questions or topics that will be related to the specific questions on the exam.

All the Final Master's Examinations for non-thesis students will be written, essay question examinations lasting approximately five hours, spread out over two days or more, not necessarily consecutive, but within a one-week period. Each MA exam will be divided into sections.

Students may write their exams on a computer available in the department. They may not use texts or notes during the exam. Chairs should ensure that time-limits for individual parts of the exam are observed. Possible grades for the examination will be pass, fail with the option of retaking specific sections, or fail. A student may only retake the entire exam or individual sections of the exam once. All appropriate forms must be filed, within graduate school deadlines, once again, when retaking the exam.

According to Graduate School regulations, all students must be enrolled during the semester in which they are taking their exams. ENGL 6191: INDEPENDENT STUDY, which is a 1-credit course, may be taken during the semester that the student takes the MA exam, if the student was unable to take the exam during previous semesters.

MA: THESIS OPTION

The thesis option (24 hours of coursework and a minimum of six hours of thesis credits) is recommended only for those students who have a clear thesis project early in their program of work, and who show that they can do this thesis project in a single semester. If the student would like to pursue the Thesis Option he or she must file an Application for MA Thesis Option during the 24th hour of coursework. The Graduate Advisor, based on the recommendations of the faculty with whom the student has taken graduate courses, will determine whether or not the student may pursue the thesis option. If the Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the graduate faculty, determines that the student is not prepared to write a thesis, the student must pursue the Non-Thesis option in order to complete the MA degree.

A Master's thesis should be a 50-60 page original essay informed by knowledge of relevant scholarship. It should be the product of a well-informed, original analysis of the available materials. If previous scholarship on the material exists, one is obligated to be thoroughly familiar with that scholarship; if no such scholarship exists, one is obligated to be thoroughly familiar with the previous scholarship on closely-related materials. In either case, setting one's analysis within the context of previous scholarship is essential if the thesis is to be regarded as a contribution to scholarship.

Your thesis may be: a presentation of research; an essay in primary or secondary bibliography; an argumentative essay; a study of pedagogy or classroom dynamics; a study of the writing process; a critical reading of a text or other cultural object; a hypermedia composition; or another kind of essay along the lines of those published in major journals in rhetoric, composition, critical theory, or cultural studies. You should think of your thesis as a document that could be revised for submission to an academic journal.

After approval of the Graduate School's Tentative Program of Work, and after approval of the Application for the MA Thesis Option, each student should decide on a thesis topic so that a Thesis Committee (a Chair and two Readers) can be established. To establish a Thesis Committee, the student should make an appointment with the Graduate Advisor, who will assist in identifying appropriate professors. The student should also thoroughly acquaint themselves with the background, interests, and scholarship of the Graduate Faculty (brief summaries are available at the English Department website). The student must then ask each professor so identified to serve on the thesis committee. Students should communicate with other members of their committee through their chair, who will keep other members informed about the student's progress and will disseminate copies of the Thesis Prospectus and drafts of the thesis in a timely fashion.

Once the committee has been established, the student must formulate a Thesis Prospectus (see format below) and have it approved by that Committee. Once the prospectus has been approved, the student must deliver a copy of it to the Graduate

Advisor. (Because this procedure involves the participation of many people, it is wise to begin it as soon as possible.) The student can then enroll for thesis credit (5398 or 5698) and proceed to write the thesis. Students must be enrolled in 5698 the semester that they defend and complete the thesis, because only 5698 allows the grade of "P" for successful completion of the thesis.

Once the student has written a draft of the thesis, he or she should give it to their chair. Once the chair has decided that the thesis is ready for the other two committee members to read, the student may give them copies. Each member of the thesis committee may require major or minor revisions of the thesis. Students should expect faculty members to take at least two weeks to read a draft of a thesis—more time is required over summer or winter break, when faculty are often not in town. At the end of this process, the student and his or her committee will meet for an oral defense of the thesis.

FORMAT FOR THESIS PROSPECTUS

1. Description of Thesis. In one page, explain the importance of your project. Describe what you will do and address the "so what" question: why will readers find your work valuable and interesting?
2. Preliminary Review of Scholarship. Summarize, in no more than four pages, the outlines of scholarship on the subject of your thesis. Show prima facie evidence that your project is distinct from previous work.
3. Methodology. In no more than three pages, identify your critical methodology. Indicate how you will investigate the subject of your thesis, and show why this is an appropriate method.
4. Feasibility. Show very briefly that you can get access to resources that you need to complete this thesis in one semester.
5. Preliminary Bibliography. No length limit. List, in MLA style, sources relevant to your thesis project.

The PhD in English (beginning Summer 2004)

Note: Admission to the PhD program in English at UTA requires a Master's degree. Students holding or expecting an MA from UTA must make a special application for admission if they seek to enter the PhD program. Please contact the Graduate

Advisor for details.

Administrative Requirements

The following steps must be taken, in the order given, to satisfy the administrative requirements of the English Department and the Graduate School. Please note: all forms are available from the [Graduate School's Virtual Advisor](#).

- 1.** File Graduate School Tentative Program of Work. Before the completion of 12 hours of doctoral study, each student must complete a Tentative Program of Work form for the Graduate School. These forms may be found in the Graduate Advisor's office.
- 2.** Establish five-member Supervising Committee. Each student should consult with the Graduate Advisor about selecting his or her committee members before the completion of 18 hours of graduate study. During their second semester of coursework, students should begin assembling their supervising committee, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor. The student must first ask a graduate faculty member whose research closely relates to the student's dissertation topic to chair the committee. The chair of the committee will then assist the student in assembling the rest of the committee. Four of the five committee members must be from UTA's English Department. All five members of the committee will read and assess the comprehensive examination and the dissertation prospectus. For the dissertation, three members will serve as primary readers and two will serve as secondary readers.

Note: A student's committee selection and his or her Tentative Program of Work should be approved before the completion of 18 hours. Consult the Graduate Advisor regarding any changes in the direction of graduate study or committee composition.

- 3.** Submit proof of completion of language requirements to the Graduate Advisor.

The PhD track in English requires basic proficiency in translation in one natural language other than English. The language must relate to the student's dissertation research and career goals. Some committees may require an additional language, depending on the student's area of specialization. Basic proficiency may be demonstrated in the following ways:

- a) successfully passing an examination prepared by an appointee of the Dean of Graduate Studies

b) making an acceptable score on the Educational Testing Service Graduate School Foreign Language Test

c) earning a grade of B or higher in two 4000 level language courses or equivalents

d) passing FORL 5301 with a grade of B or higher. FORL 5301 may not be applied to any degree program in English. The language requirement must be fulfilled before requesting the Comprehensive Examination.

e) passing Old English with a grade of B or higher (upon approval by student's committee).

4. File Final Program of Work and Request for Comprehensive Examination Form. See deadlines in Graduate Catalog.

NOTE: No course for which a student receives a C or lower will carry credit toward a doctoral degree in English. For information about C, D, F, Incomplete, and other types of grades, consult the "Course Grades" section of the Graduate Catalog.

5. Submit Comprehensive Examination Report.

6. Submit copies of the Dissertation Prospectus approved by the supervising Committee to the Graduate Advisor during the first semester of dissertation enrollment.

7. Apply for Graduation, Pay Diploma Fee. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog.

8. Request Dissertation Defense. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog.

9. Submit Approved Dissertation and Dissertation Defense Report to the Graduate School. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog.

10. Submit Approved Dissertation and Dissertation Defense Report to the Graduate School. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog. Relevant form is available from the Graduate Advisor.

Academic Requirements

Course Requirements

Thirty semester hours of course work beyond the MA, followed by a minimum of nine hours of dissertation work (ENGL 6999), are required. All students are required to take ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice during their first semester unless they have already taken 5300 while in the MA program and received a grade of B or higher. All students are also required to take 5311: Foundation of Rhetoric OR 5359: Argumentation Theory as early in their programs as possible. Students must consult with the Graduate Advisor and the chair of their dissertation committee to carefully construct a coherent focus for their course work and comprehensive examinations.. Students are allowed to take 9 hours of coursework outside the English department.

Please note: every semester before you can be cleared for registration you must be "advised" by the Graduate Advisor. This means, at minimum, you must give the Graduate Advisor your social security # and a list of the courses you plan to take. After you have been cleared for registration, you can actually register. Be sure to register early as classes do fill and the department does not ordinarily allow overloads.

LITERARY PEDAGOGY REQUIREMENT

If GTAs wish to teach sophomore literature for the first time in Fall 2005 or later, they must complete the Literary Pedagogy course with a grade of 'B' or better. Completion of the course does not guarantee assignment of teach sophomore literature. Literary Pedagogy will be counted toward the 30 hours needed to complete PhD coursework. It will be counted toward MA coursework as well. GTAs in sophomore literature courses, however, must hold the MA.

DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

During the first year of coursework all students must pass English 5300 with a grade of B or higher in order to remain in the program. After a student completes the first year of coursework, the Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the graduate faculty, will determine whether the student has demonstrated the potential to successfully complete the program and, consequently, whether the student will be allowed to continue in the program.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

After completing course work and satisfying the foreign language requirement, the student will take a written comprehensive examination. While studying for the comprehensive exams students may enroll in English 6391: Graduate Readings, supervised reading for the PhD exam, graded R.

The comprehensive examination is meant to test the student's knowledge of three areas of study, in order to determine that the student is prepared to conduct research and to teach in those areas. The scope of the comprehensive examination should be much broader than the dissertation topic. In consultation with the committee, the student must develop reading lists of approximately 50-80 books

and articles, which will include both primary and secondary readings, for each of the three fields of specialization.

The exam will be taken over a period of three days, five hours each day. The student will be examined on one field each day. Students may use a personal computer available in the department to take their examination. They may not use texts or notes during the exam. Chairs should ensure that time-limits for individual parts of the examination are observed.

After the written examination is evaluated by all five of the committee members, they may require an oral examination, in which case the student would be asked to further develop and clarify the written portion of the examination. The options for the results of the examination are the following: A) approval and recommendation to proceed to the dissertation prospectus; B) approval to remain in the program conditional upon the student's meeting certain specified additional requirements; C) failure, with permission to retake the examination after a certain period as specified by the examining committee; or D) failure with expulsion from the program.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

By the end of the first semester after successfully completing the comprehensive examinations, the students must submit a dissertation prospectus to their committee. For the format of the prospectus, see the appendix at the end of this Handbook.

DISSERTATION

The dissertation must be an original, substantial, and significant contribution to a scholarly field. Students should work closely with the chair of their committee while researching and writing their dissertation. The chair and the primary readers will read a draft of each chapter and suggest revisions. While researching and writing the dissertation, students must enroll in dissertation hours (ENGL 6399, 6699, or 6999). In the final semester of dissertation work, students must enroll in ENGL 6999.

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

Once the student, the chair of the committee, and the primary readers agree that the dissertation is sufficiently completed, the student may schedule the defense. The student must furnish each committee member with a copy of the dissertation, including notes and bibliography, at least three weeks prior to the defense date. The defense of the dissertation is oral. The defense is open to all members of the faculty, graduate students, and invited guests of the university community. Questioning of the candidate will be directed by the student's dissertation supervising committee, but any person attending the defense may participate. Committee members may request that the dissertation be further revised and may withhold final approval of the dissertation until the revisions have been made.

A final note on registering for independent studies, readings courses for the comprehensive exam, and dissertation credits: In order to register for independent study courses, graduate readings courses or dissertation hours, you must still be cleared to register, by informing the Graduate Advisor of your social security #, the course number, and the name of the faculty member with whom you wish to work. Please consult with the faculty member (usually your dissertation director) before setting up the independent study, graduate readings, or dissertation hours. Please consult the graduate catalog in order to determine the appropriate course number.

Appendix: Dissertation Prospectus Format

The prospectus typically includes the following: a cover sheet for the signatures of all five committee members, plus:

1. Statement of Problem, Research Question, or Thesis

Research begins with the discovery of a problem needing solution, an unanswered question, a claim needing proof, a topic, or a set of texts to be studied in a way that will advance knowledge and understanding. Specify the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated.

2. Summary Review of Scholarship Relevant to the Dissertation

Briefly summarize what is already known about the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. If the problem has been previously investigated, specify what is distinctive about the proposed study.

3. Significance of the Research

Indicate why the research should be considered important or worthwhile. Specify how it will contribute to knowledge.

4. Methodology

Indicate the manner in which the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated will be researched, and show why this is an appropriate method.

5. Tentative Organization

In a brief outline including possible chapter titles, indicate what each chapter will cover.

6. Preliminary Bibliography

Provide a preliminary bibliography listing investigations to date on, in the area of, or otherwise supportive of the project proposed. When appropriate, indicate whether sufficient resources for the research project are readily available.

Caveat:

This handbook is not an official publication and the contents hereof are not official policy of The University of Texas at Arlington or of the Texas System. In all matters, the Rules and Regulations of the Regents of The University of Texas System, The

Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Arlington, and the Graduate Catalog of The University of Texas at Arlington shall supercede this handbook.

Phd in English (Prior to Summer 2004)

Administrative Requirements for both Rhetoric and Literature tracks (unless otherwise indicated)

The following steps must be taken, **in the order given**, to satisfy the administrative requirements of the English Department and the Graduate School:

- 1.** File Graduate School Tentative Program of Work. Before the completion of 12 hours of doctoral study, each student must complete a Tentative Program of Work form for the Graduate School. These forms may be found in the Graduate Advisor's office.
- 2.** Establish five-member Supervising Committee. Each student should consult with the Graduate Advisor about selecting his or her committee members before the completion of 18 hours of graduate study. During their second semester of coursework, students should begin assembling their supervising committee, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor. The student must first ask a graduate faculty member whose research closely relates to the student's dissertation topic to chair the committee. The chair of the committee will then assist the student in assembling the rest of the committee. Four of the five committee members must be from UTA's English Department. All five members of the committee will read and assess the comprehensive examination and the dissertation prospectus. For the dissertation, three members will serve as primary readers and two will serve as secondary readers.

Note: A student's committee selection and his or her Tentative Program of Work should be approved before the completion of 18 hours. Consult the Graduate Advisor regarding any changes in the direction of graduate study or committee composition.

- 3.** Submit proof of completion of language requirements to the Graduate Advisor.

The PhD track in Literature requires basic proficiency in translation in one natural language other than English. The language must relate to the student's dissertation research and career goals.

The PhD track in Rhetoric requires students to demonstrate basic proficiency in translation in two foreign languages related to their dissertation research and/or career goals. (A language used for satisfying an MA requirement may satisfy one requirement.) These languages must be approved by the Graduate Advisor and the Student's committee. (As a special case, an appropriate computer-programming language--to be approved as are the natural languages--may substitute for one natural language requirement.)

The Graduate Advisor and the student's committee must approve of the language(s). Basic proficiency may be demonstrated in the following ways:

- a) successfully passing an examination prepared by an appointee of the Dean of Graduate Studies
- b) making an acceptable score on the Educational Testing Service Graduate School Foreign Language Test
- c) earning a grade of B or higher in French, German, or Russian 4331 and 4332, or equivalents
- d) passing FORL 5301 with a grade of B or higher. FORL 5301 may not be applied to any degree program in English. The language requirement must be fulfilled before requesting the Comprehensive Examination.

4. [Rhetoric track]: submit to the Graduate Advisor evidence that the dissertation Prospectus has been submitted to the Supervising Committee Chair.

5. File Final Program of Work and Request for Comprehensive Examination Form.

NOTE: No course for which a student receives a C or lower will carry credit toward a doctoral degree in English. For information about C, D, F, Incomplete, and other types of grades, consult the "Course Grades" section of the Graduate Catalog.

6. Submit Comprehensive Examination Report.

7. [Literature track]: submit copies of the dissertation Prospectus approved by the supervising Committee to the Graduate Advisor during

the first semester of dissertation enrollment.

8. Apply for Graduation, Pay Diploma Fee. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog.

9. Request Dissertation Defense. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog. Relevant form is available from the Graduate Advisor.

10. Submit Approved Dissertation and Dissertation Defense Report to the Graduate School. See deadline in the Graduate Catalog. Relevant form is available from the Graduate Advisor.

Academic Requirements: Rhetoric Track (prior to Summer 2004)

The Rhetoric Track requires a minimum of 30 semester hours of organized course work beyond the MA followed by at least nine hours of dissertation research (ENGL 6999): In consultation with his or her committee and the graduate advisor, each student will select a focus and a ratio of courses that will define his or her comprehensive examinations. For example, the focus might be determined by historical period (Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, or Modern), by comparative approaches to composing processes or to rhetorical criticism, by conflicts (rhetoric vs. philosophy, orality vs. literacy), by canon, or by a combination of these.

I. Course Requirements (two options):

Option I : With an organized course requirement

- a. 3 hours ENGL 5311: Foundations of Rhetoric and Composition
- b. 21 hours of Rhetoric/Composition courses; 6 hours of Criticism courses

Option II: With secondary focus

- a. 3 hours ENGL 5311: Foundations of Rhetoric and Composition
- b. 18 hours of Rhetoric/Composition courses; 9 hours of Literature courses or 9 hours in a coherent grouping from other fields that provide a cultural context for the specific literature being studied. These 9 hours may include ENGL 5300.

II. Diagnostic Evaluation

All students are expected to satisfy this Graduate School Requirement: "During the student's first year of doctoral program work, the student must demonstrate potential to successfully complete a degree program." (UTA Graduate Catalog 1998-2000 LXXXI, no. 4, 26.) To satisfy this requirement, the English Department stipulates that during the first year of doctoral work all students pass the required course, ENGL 5311, with a grade of B or higher. It stipulates, in addition, that before approving a student's continuation in the program the Graduate Advisor must consult with the faculty members who taught the courses in which the student enrolled during his or her first year of work.

III. Prerequisites for Comprehensive Examination: Foreign Language Requirement and Prospectus

Prospectus

After completing the foreign language requirement and prior to taking the Comprehensive Examination, students will submit a preliminary dissertation prospectus to their committee chair only. Evidence must be given to the Graduate Advisor that this preliminary prospectus has been submitted. (Additional information on the prospectus appears below under V.a. in connection with the dissertation requirement.)

IV. Comprehensive Examination

After completion of course work, satisfaction of the foreign Language requirement, and submission of a preliminary dissertation prospectus to their committee chair, students will take a written Comprehensive Examination.

The Comprehensive Examination is an intense, broadly-based written performance. Its purpose is to verify the student's immersion in and conversance with the academic topics and literature in the fields of study in which the degree is to be granted. The examination will constitute evidence that such a relation with topics/literature has been attained. The range of the examination will extend beyond the student's course work (see below under "Examination Guidelines") and will require the grasp and integration of materials from wide independent reading.

Scheduling

The student arranges the date of the examination in consultation with his or her committee chair. At least two weeks prior to the examination, the student must file a Request for Comprehensive Examination. This can be filed only after the student has completed both language requirements and completed a Final Program of Work signed by all committee members and appropriate administrators.

The exam will be taken on three separate days, which may be staggered, but must fall within a 7-day period.

Examination Guidelines

1. The student working within the option "Organized Course Requirement" will be tested comprehensively in Rhetoric/Composition, that is, over the entire field of study, including areas not specifically covered in course work. Testing in the secondary area, criticism, will be restricted to course work.

The student working within the option "With Secondary Focus" will be tested comprehensively in Rhetoric/Composition. Testing on the secondary area, including study in disciplines outside English, will be restricted to course work.

2. The precise scope and content of the examination will be decided by the individual student's committee chair in consultation with the committee. The chair plans the examination with the following in mind: covering the student's primary and secondary tracks, avoiding duplication of questions, encouraging synthesis of related questions, ascertaining that at least one question from each committee member submitting one or more questions will be answered by the student, and apportioning questions according to recommended time guidelines. The chair then requests questions in specific subject areas from specific committee members.

3. The component parts of the examination are tentatively apportioned as follows, with the amount of time finally devoted to answering the questions at the discretion of the committee chair.

a) 6-8 hours devoted to questions in the candidate's primary area of study.

b) 4-6 hours devoted to the candidate's secondary area of study.

4. Students may use a personal computer available in the department to take their examination. They may not use texts or notes during the exam. Chairs should ensure that time-limits for individual parts of the examination are observed.

5. All committee members will read and assess all of the examination, and the chair will request evaluations of each answer from each committee member. Following the written exam, an oral one may be requested if the student's committee wishes the student to further develop and/or clarify

the written exam. Such an oral exam will be 1-2 hours in length and address only questions asked on the written exam.

The following are the available options for the results of the comprehensive examination: a) approval and recommendation to proceed to dissertation research and preparation; b) approval to remain in the program conditional upon the student's meeting certain specified additional requirements; c) failure, with permission to retake the examination after a certain period as specified by the examining committee; d) failure with recommendation not to continue in the program. The student is advanced to candidacy for the degree after successfully completing the comprehensive examination and prospectus.

6. Upon the student's completion of the examination and its evaluation by the committee, the committee chair will submit to the Graduate Advisor a Comprehensive Examination Report indicating the basis for the exam results: unanimous or majority. If not unanimous, the vote should be indicated.

V. Dissertation

a) Prospectus

Procedure

Before proceeding to the dissertation proper, students will have the dissertation prospectus approved and its cover sheet signed by all committee members, and filed it with the graduate advisor. This procedure protects both students and committee from possible later disputes by informing the committee, and placing on record its approval of what the dissertation will deal with and how it will proceed with its investigation. Typically, the student works primarily with the committee chair in drafting the prospectus, which the chair then circulates to the committee for comments and/or requests for changes. Alternately, the chair may convene a meeting of the committee to discuss specific points and agree on changes requested. The student then finalizes the prospectus and submits it to the chair for re-circulation to the committee. It is important that faculty be attentive to details at this stage in order to save faculty and student time during the writing of the dissertation. When major changes are made in scope, methodology, or topics during the writing of the dissertation, a revised prospectus should be circulated to the committee.

Format

Dissertation formats may vary due to the potential disciplinary and methodological

diversity of the Rhetoric Track. For the most part, however, the following overview and guidelines will serve as a general orientation to the prospectus and as an outline for setting it up. The committee chair supervises and retains final direction over the form of the prospectus.

A dissertation prospectus is similar to prospectuses composed for books and articles, and committee chairs may use such prospectuses as models. Students may be referred to abstracts of publications as well for guidance in planning a prospectus. Whatever its format, the prospectus should summarize the major topics, subjects, scope, methodology, theses, or arguments to be developed/questions to be examined, and the purpose of the dissertation. Following this summary, it is helpful to have a synopsis of each chapter. Committee chairs supervise the student's meeting the prospectus and dissertation requirements.

Guidelines

A dissertation prospectus is a combination of research proposal, rationale for proposed research, outline and brief summary of the investigation proposed, and selected list of scholarly works that have grounded investigation of the subject matter to date. The prospectus should demonstrate the student's close familiarity with the subject area. It should specify clearly and succinctly what the student wishes to investigate, the importance or necessity of the investigation, and how the project will be carried out.

Prospectus format

b) Dissertation proper

Once the student's prospectus is approved, the student will work closely with the chair as well as other members of the committee. It is generally understood that students will write a dissertation in standard academic prose and that it will be thoroughly researched. In some cases, however, special approval may be given to students who wish to work on non-traditional dissertations, such as one in an electronic medium. In these cases, a petition with fully developed justifications will be submitted to and must be approved by the student's committee, the English Department Graduate Studies Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

While researching and writing the dissertation, students must enroll in dissertation hours (ENGL 6399, 6699, or 6999). In the final semester of dissertation work, students must enroll in ENGL 6999.

As the dissertation progresses, the chair may, at her or his discretion, circulate it to committee members--either in the form of completed chapters, or as a whole--for their comments.

c) Dissertation defense

Upon completion of the dissertation, and after its circulation to the committee by the chair, the student will orally defend the dissertation at a session open to all members of the university faculty, graduate students, and invited guests of the university community. Questioning of the candidate will be directed by the student's dissertation supervising committee, but any person attending the defense may participate. If at this time the dissertation still requires modifications, the committee may convey its final wishes to the student as requirements to be fulfilled before the dissertation is submitted to the Graduate School.

Academic Requirements: Literature Track (prior to Summer 2004)

Coursework

Thirty semester hours of course work beyond the MA, followed by a minimum of nine hours of dissertation work (ENGL 6999), are required. All students are required to take ENGL 5300: Theory and Practice during their first year, unless they have already taken 5300 while in the MA program and received a grade of B or higher. Students may choose to distribute their courses in either of the following ways:

1. Literature and Criticism: 21 hours of Literature courses and 6 hours of Criticism courses

2. Literature with a Secondary Focus:

18 hours of Literature courses and 9 hours of Rhetoric/ Composition courses or 9 hours from other fields that provide a cultural context for the specific literature being studied

Students must consult with the Graduate Advisor to carefully construct a coherent focus for their course work and comprehensive examinations. For example, the focus might be defined by a national literature (American or British), by a comparative literature approach, by a particular time period, by critical approaches to the literature, or by a combination of these.

Diagnostic Evaluation

During the first year of coursework all students must pass English 5300 with a grade of B or higher in order to remain in the program. After a student completes the first year of coursework, the Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the graduate faculty, will determine whether the student has demonstrated the potential to successfully complete the program and, consequently, whether the student will be allowed to continue in the program.

Comprehensive Examination

After completing course work and satisfying the foreign language requirement, the student will take a written comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination is meant to test the student's knowledge of a few cohesive and complementary fields of study, in order to determine that the student is prepared to conduct research and to teach in those fields. While the scope of the comprehensive examination should be much broader than the dissertation topic, the subjects should be closely related.

In consultation with the committee, the student must develop reading lists for each of the subjects of the examination. All committee members must approve the reading list before the student can schedule the examination. The committee members may provide the student with study questions or topics.

The examination will be taken over a period of three days, which may be staggered, but must be taken within seven-day period. Each committee member will construct one question for the examination. The examination may be structured in one of two ways: A) first day: a five-hour examination over one question; second day and third days: five-hour examinations in which the student is allowed to choose between two questions; or, B) first day: a five-hour examination over one question; second day and third days: two two-and-a-half hour examinations over both questions, both days.

Students may use a personal computer available in the department to take their examination. They may not use texts or notes during the exam. Chairs should ensure that time-limits for individual parts of the examination are observed.

After the written examination is evaluated by all five of the committee members, an oral examination may be requested, in which case the student would be asked to further develop and clarify the written portion of the examination. The options for the results of the examination are the following: A) approval and recommendation to proceed to the dissertation prospectus; B) approval to remain in the program conditional upon the student's meeting certain specified additional requirements; C) failure, with permission to retake the examination after a certain period as specified by the examining committee; or D) failure with expulsion from the program.

Dissertation Prospectus

By the end of the first semester after successfully completing the comprehensive examinations, the students must submit a dissertation prospectus to their committee. For the format of the prospectus, see the appendix at the end of this Handbook.

Dissertation

The dissertation must be an original, substantial, and significant contribution to a scholarly field. Students should work closely with the chair of their committee while researching and writing their dissertation. The chair and the primary readers will read a draft of each chapter and suggest revisions. While researching and writing the dissertation, students must enroll in dissertation hours (ENGL 6399, 6699, or 6999). In the final semester of dissertation work, students must enroll in ENGL 6999.

Dissertation Defense

Once the student, the chair of the committee, and the primary readers agree that the dissertation is sufficiently completed, the student may schedule the defense. The student must furnish each committee member with a copy of the dissertation, including notes and bibliography, at least three weeks prior to the defense date. The defense of the dissertation is oral. The defense is open to all members of the faculty, graduate students, and invited guests of the university community. Questioning of the candidate will be directed by the student's dissertation supervising committee, but any person attending the defense may participate. Committee members may request that the dissertation be further revised and may withhold final approval of the dissertation until the revisions have been made.

Appendix: Dissertation Prospectus Format

The prospectus typically includes the following: a cover sheet for the signatures of all five committee members, plus:

1. Statement of Problem, Research Question, or Thesis

Research begins with the discovery of a problem needing solution, an unanswered question, a claim needing proof, a topic, or a set of texts to be studied in a way that will advance knowledge and understanding. Specify the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated.

2. Summary Review of Scholarship Relevant to the Dissertation

Briefly summarize what is already known about the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated. If the problem has been previously investigated, specify what is distinctive about the proposed study.

3. Significance of the Research

Indicate why the research should be considered important or worthwhile. Specify

how it will contribute to knowledge.

4. Methodology

Indicate the manner in which the problem, question, claim, topic, or texts to be investigated will be researched, and show why this is an appropriate method.

5. Tentative Organization

In a brief outline including possible chapter titles, indicate what each chapter will cover.

6. Preliminary Bibliography

Provide a preliminary bibliography listing investigations to date on, in the area of, or otherwise supportive of the project proposed. When appropriate, indicate whether sufficient resources for the research project are readily available.

Caveat: This handbook is **not** an official publication and the contents hereof are not official policy of The University of Texas at Arlington or of the Texas System. In all matters, the Rules and Regulations of the Regents of The University of Texas System, The Handbook of Operating Procedures of The University of Texas at Arlington, and the Graduate Catalog of The University of Texas at Arlington shall supercede this handbook.