

# Graduate Handbook

Department of English  
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The Graduate Handbook is a guide to the policies and procedures of graduate programs in English. This handbook is the official word on departmental procedures in the graduate program, and the Graduate Program Director will answer any further questions that students or faculty might have. The handbook exists in concert with the Graduate School Bylaws, Regulations and Procedures, available at: <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/faculty/council/>

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# Introduction to Graduate Students

The Graduate Handbook is the essential guide to the policies and procedures of graduate programs in English. Graduate students in all programs should read it carefully and discuss any questions that they might have with either their advisors or the Graduate Program Director. As in most large programs, there is much lore and urban legend among students and faculty about requirements and procedures, and this lore is sometimes not current or entirely accurate. This handbook is the official word on these matters, and the Graduate Program Director will answer any questions that students have. The handbook exists in concert with the [\*Graduate School Bylaws, Regulations and Procedures\*](#).

# Introduction to Graduate Faculty

The Graduate Program at Illinois State University is distinct in ways that may be unfamiliar and thus confusing, especially to those faculty who earned their graduate degrees from more traditional literature-centered programs. Making sense of these distinctions will help faculty navigate their responsibilities as Graduate Faculty members successfully.

First, ours is an English Studies Department wherein the various facets of the study of reading and writing are valued equally. This does not mean, however, that we are a department of interdisciplinary generalists; on the contrary, our faculty is composed of specialists in the fields of children's literature, composition, creative writing, English education, linguistics, literature and culture, publishing, professional writing and rhetorics, rhetoric, TESOL, and pedagogy who are dedicated to exploring the intersections and interactions among our various foci. As such, we require our graduate students to pursue coursework in several areas of English studies in addition to their declared areas of emphasis or specialization. We offer two advanced degrees: the Ph.D. in English Studies and the Master's in English. There are some 30 Graduate Faculty and some 100 graduate students, a mix that allows us to offer 20-25 graduate courses each semester and to support a wide range of specializations and interests. In addition, there are several hundred undergraduate students in English major and minor programs.

Underpinning the English Studies model is a strong dedication to pedagogical innovation that has distinguished Illinois State University since its early days as a teacher's college. The majority of our undergraduate students are preparing for careers as teachers. This devotion to pedagogical excellence is manifested systematically at the graduate level in two ways, with greater emphasis at the doctoral level:

- 1) **All Ph.D. candidates are required to complete internships.** All Ph.D. students design and complete a pedagogically-focused internship under the Eng. 591 course number. These teaching internships may be shaped by one of two general emphases: **1) Research in the Classroom** or **2) Course Design and Teaching**. The teaching internship is an integral part of the Ph.D. in English Studies, formally requiring the student to reflect on and analyze a course or teaching situation. The internship involves the close direction by and consultation with a faculty member who serves simultaneously as mentor and evaluator (i.e. the director of the internship assigns a grade for Eng. 591), and it often affords the opportunity to teach new courses or to teach in new situations. In most cases, the internship is conducted to facilitate dissertation research. In every case, there must be clear connections between coursework, the internship, the student's career, and the dissertation.

- 2) The dissertation for the Ph.D. in English Studies at Illinois State includes a pedagogical component. No matter what area(s) of English Studies the student is working in, it must be clear that the knowledge produced applies in some direct way to teaching or learning. For example, the introductory chapter may frame the central issues of the dissertation in terms of (a) pedagogical concern(s), and subsequent chapters may develop more fully that concern.

The high placement rate (around 90% over the past twenty years) of our Ph.D.'s in full-time positions in secondary or higher education is due in large part to the rigorous degree to which we prepare our students as critically-informed and experienced teacher-scholars.

Given our dual emphases on English Studies and Pedagogy, faculty who familiarize themselves not only with the courses offered in their field, but also with those offered across the spectrum of English Studies, are best prepared to serve as faculty advisors. In addition to course catalogs, the Description of Courses posted online each semester supplements extensively the sparse information contained in the University Course Schedule or Graduate Catalog. The Description of Courses is published online prior to each registration period, and contains a detailed entry for many courses: the texts required, the specific focus of and issues addressed in each course, the course requirements, and information about meeting times, registration and prerequisite coursework.

# Master's in English

The Department offers a Master's in English, with several different advising tracks. The Master's in English serves teachers, prospective teachers, and individuals who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding of various areas of English studies. Graduates sometimes continue in doctoral programs.

Nearly all full-time students graduate in approximately two years; many full-time students receive assistantship support, as well as teaching or professional writing experience. Master's students, however, may attend on a part-time basis (less than 9 credit hours a semester). While part-time students generally require longer than two years to complete the degree, all master's students, part-time and full-time, must complete the degree within six years after entry to the program. For interrupted time and extended time, please consult the Graduate School's policies.

## **Overview of the Program**

### **Master of Arts Degree Requirements from the [ISU Graduate School Catalog](#)**

The Master of Arts degree is awarded to a student who has completed an appropriate degree program and met the foreign language requirement for this degree at the college level. This requirement may be met by:

- 1) Completing a minimum of four semesters (or its equivalent) in a foreign language. The requirement may be met by earning a C or better (or Credit or Pass) in the courses at either the graduate or undergraduate level.
- 2) Obtaining a satisfactory score on a University administered language examination approved by the Graduate School available in German, French or Spanish. For additional information, visit <https://registrar.illinoisstate.edu/testing-services/mape/>
- 3) Students whose native language is not English may, with departmental approval, petition the Graduate School to substitute proficiency in the English language as fulfillment of the language requirement. Proficiency is met by achieving the university or program minimum, whichever is higher, minimum total score on TOEFL or IELTS, or Duolingo exams. Academic English Program/Pathway students who have completed Illinois State Academic English Level 5 will also qualify.
- 4) Students wishing to use American Sign Language as the language requirement may do so if they have completed four semesters of ASL for credit at an accredited college or university (no adult education courses). Proficiency may also be tested by requires the use of an outside consultant. A fee will be assessed if a proficiency test is needed.
- 5) Other methods as determined by the department or school with approval by the Graduate School.

### **M.A. vs. M.S. and the Language Requirement**

The Department currently offers both a Master of Arts and a Master of Science; the degrees are essentially the same, but for one difference: the M.A. requires the completion of a minimum of four semesters (or its equivalent) in one foreign language up through second year, second semester mastery. The requirement may be met through one of the methods detailed above. Students should consult with the Graduate Program Director if they have any questions about

which degree to pursue, though generally the Master of Arts is the preferable degree for those who intend to pursue graduate study at the doctoral level.

## **Progressing Through the Program**

### **The Role of Advisor: Master's Level**

All students are advised initially by the Graduate Program Director. After they complete 18 credit hours (or earlier, if they prefer), students choose a permanent advisor from the Graduate Faculty with whom they will consult during every stage of their graduate work.

Typically, each student's graduate advisor directs the student's internship (if applicable) and thesis (if they choose to write one), or works closely with the student in preparing reading lists and synthesis statements for the comprehensive exam if the student chooses the exam option. In addition, advisors meet with their advisee(s) at least once each semester to discuss course selection and academic and career goals. Detailed information about each of these responsibilities is provided below, by subject heading (i.e., Comprehensive Exams, etc.) after the descriptions of the various Master's degrees and their requirements.

When faculty and students consider working together in an advisor/advisee relationship, both parties want to be sure to consider carefully the match between the faculty member's field of specialization and the student's interests. While two people may enjoy an amicable working relationship, there may be other faculty members who are better suited professionally to the student's needs. The department encourages faculty to advise prospective advisees of their options.

Information about the role of advisor at the doctoral level appears below, in the section on the Ph.D. in English Studies.

## Emphases in English

All Master's students are required to meet the following requirements to complete their degree:

- 1) **11 courses** (reduced to 10 for students electing to write a thesis, which is optional)
  - a. Required Courses include **401**: Introduction to Graduate Study and, for students with teaching assistantships, **402**: Teaching Composition;
  - b. 50% of all non-thesis hours (Eng. 499) must be at the 400 level;
- 2) A comprehensive examination or thesis.

Master's students are also required to meet certain requirements in their own emphases, as listed below.

### *Children's Literature*

All Master's students working with an emphasis in children's literature are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- One course in the history of children's literature (often **372**);
- One course in critical theory (preferably **471**, although **384** or **482** can substitute);
- Three to four courses in literature for children or adolescents;
- Four to six courses in literature, language, composition, or approved cognate fields (up to 6 hours from fields such as Fine Arts, Psychology, C&I, History, or Sociology).

### *Creative Writing*

Students are admitted to the creative writing option by portfolio, which they submit as part of their application to the program. **Admission to the creative writing option depends upon the commitment of a creative writing faculty member to work with the student through completion of a creative thesis.** Students are welcome to enroll in creative writing workshops each semester.

Students must be formally admitted to the creative writing program in order to write a creative thesis. Admission to the program means that faculty will commit to working with the student for two academic years as they complete a thesis.

Students who are currently enrolled in a Master's program in the department but who have not been admitted to creative writing must be formally admitted to the program in order to write a creative thesis. Such students must submit a portfolio by the same deadlines each semester as all new applicants. Faculty will judge their portfolios against the other writers applying.

All Master's and Ph.D. students are invited and encouraged to enroll in English 447.01 or 447.02, regardless of their degree programs or interests, although consent of the instructor is required in all cases. Except for students formally admitted to creative writing, admission to 447 is by the invitation of the instructor. Several weeks before the semester begins, interested students must submit a portfolio of creative work to the professor teaching the workshop. A cover note should be included that explains, among other things, how the professor may contact the student.

Students in creative writing also need to meet the following requirements:

- **At least** one course in poetics or narrative theory (such **403** or **404**);
- **At least** one course in the pedagogy of creative writing or approved substitute;
- Two or three elective courses, such as hypertext or visual rhetoric, in literature, language, rhetoric, and/or theory, including one course in the genre in which the student will write the thesis;
- One elective in an area related to the thesis offered by departments other than our own;
- Three courses in creative writing;
- A creative thesis with a critical preface.

### ***English Studies***

All Master's students working with an emphasis in English Studies are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- One literature course;

- One linguistics or TESOL course;
- One course that foregrounds pedagogical issues and practices;
- Six or seven additional courses including work in at least two areas of the department.

### ***Literary and Cultural Studies***

All Master's students working with an emphasis in Literary and Cultural Studies are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- At least three literature courses in periods before 1800;
- At least three literature courses in periods after 1800;
- At least four elective courses (note that 402 may be counted as an elective).

### ***Rhetoric and Composition***

All Master's students working with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- Composition Theory (at least 2 courses from the following: 409, 445, 494, 496, 497);
- Rhetorical Theory (at least 2 courses from the following: 350, 391, 392, 483, 496);
- Rhetoric and Composition Electives (at least 2 courses from the following: 351, 355, 384, 445, 449, 451, 452, 453, 459, 466, 467, 483, 485, 498);
- Other Electives: 2-3 elective courses in literature, linguistics, creative writing, and/or TESOL.

### ***Technical Writing and Rhetorics***

All Master's students working with an emphasis in Technical Writing and Rhetorics are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- Technical Writing (12 hours) ENG 449 plus 3 courses selected from 350, 351, 451, 452, 453, 459, 467, 498
- Rhetorical Theory (six hours) from ENG 350, 391, 392, 483, 496
- Elective Courses (six hours)

### ***TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)***

All Master's students working with an emphasis in TESOL are required to take these courses for their 11 courses (if they choose the comprehensive exam option) or 10 courses (if they choose the thesis option).

- One literature course;
- One linguistics course;
- One course that foregrounds pedagogical issues and practices;
- Six or seven additional courses, at least four of which are courses in TESOL and at least one of which is in another area of the department.

## Options for Completing the Master's in English

Master's students have two options for completing their degree: a thesis or comprehensive exam. More information about these options are included below. **Please note:** Students emphasizing in Creative Writing must complete a thesis, so the comprehensive exam option does not apply to them.

### ***1. Overview of the Thesis Option for the Master's in English***

A thesis is optional for the Master's in English, except for the Creative Writing Option, which requires the thesis. **Students electing the thesis option take ten courses rather than eleven.**

The thesis is most often selected by students who wish to pursue a Ph.D. or by those who wish to pursue a relatively extended research project. To write a thesis, the student must have an approved proposal. The Master's thesis proposal is a 10-20 page description (including bibliography) of the intended project identifying the following issues:

- a statement of the argument of the thesis;
- a review of the literature;
- the methodology or theories to be employed; a chapter outline;
- a time schedule;
- and a bibliography.

There is more detailed information in the "Information Common to Both Master's and Ph.D. Programs" section below about the thesis approval process. Ideally, this proposal will be completed during the fall of the student's second year in the program, while working closely with their advisor. Students who elect to write a thesis often do not finish their degrees until the summer of their second year in the program.

Certain areas of the Master's tracks allow for a professional thesis in lieu of the more traditional academic thesis. Consult your advisement sheet and advisor to discuss this option.

What the proposal should contain and how it should be organized is largely a function of the type of project the student plans to undertake. The proposal should explain the context of the work, including a discussion of those writers and texts against which the thesis is to be read. It should also describe the contents, form, and conception of the original work that is being

proposed. The proposal should convince its readers that its author is sufficiently well-read and able to talk critically and reflectively about their writing.

Students may enroll for up to three 3 hours of thesis credit for the purpose of developing a proposal; to do so, they need the permission of the Graduate Program Director.

Students may not sign up for more than three hours of thesis credit until their proposal has been approved.

## ***2. Overview of the Comprehensive Exam Option for the Master's in English***

The Master's level comprehensive examination is designed to provide students with a culminating intellectual experience in which they demonstrate their ability to synthesize what they have learned during their course of study. The comprehensive exam also provides students the opportunity to reflect the writing and research skills that they have developed, to show their critical and/or theoretical engagement with the current context of their discipline, to demonstrate their ability to participate in the professional dialogue, and to provide students with an opportunity to address a specific intellectual problem that they have identified within their field.

Students electing to take a comprehensive examination instead of writing a Master's thesis will fulfill the requirement by following the procedures outlined below. The examination may be taken only three times. The examination lasts three hours, with additional 10 minutes for proofreading and a brief break. The exams may be written longhand or on computers in arranged classrooms. In each semester, there is a specific deadline for asking to take the exam; these are published on the Graduate Program website each semester. **Students must register with the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Studies Administrator for the comprehensive examination at the beginning of the semester in which they wish to take the exam.**

Before the beginning of the semester in which the candidate plans to take the exam, the candidate should meet with their advisor to create a reading list for the comprehensive examination. The reading list should be comprised of 25-30 texts (books, articles, etc.) that pertain to the student's topic. The reading list may be comprised of materials that students have read previously in classes, or it may be comprised of materials that are entirely new to the student (or some balance of the two). The reading list should include a balance of general texts in the field and texts specific to the student's topic.

About six to eight weeks before the examination, the candidate must complete a synthesis statement, indicating the following:

- A statement of the problem that the student will explore in the comprehensive exam;
- A synthesis statement that reflects how the student's course of study has prepared the student to address this problem;
- A review of the literature pertinent to that problem that includes justifications of the choices of the material on the reading list.

Synthesis statements are generally 10-15 pages in length. The statement might sketch a particular set of issues or problems or topics, explaining what they are and why they are significant (e.g., English Studies and gender or class, revision and the composing process, the idea of the audience/reader, genre issues, language acquisition and teaching, literacy, new historicism and literary studies, the relationships between rhetoric and poetics, narrative voice in fiction or poetry, specific issues in teaching writing or literature, the idea of the author and authoring, portfolio assessment, and so on). Students should expect to revise their synthesis statements in dialogue with their advisors.

Once the advisor has approved the synthesis statement and the reading list, they sign their approval. The student then submits the approved/signed synthesis statement and reading list **that does not contain identifying marks** to the Graduate Studies Administrator no more than four weeks prior to the departmentally scheduled date for the comprehensive examination. These submissions may be included as electronic attachments with the advisor's electronic signature or an email from the advisor saying that they approve the synthesis and reading list.

After the Graduate Program Director has received the approved synthesis statement and reading list, they will ask a member of the Graduate Faculty, often but not always the advisor, to prepare an essay question designed to test the candidate's knowledge of and synthesizing abilities over the materials they have identified and discussed. The student has three hours in which to write a response to the question. The synthesis statement and reading list will not be available to the student during the exam. The candidate's response will be evaluated in a double-blind assessment process by at least two qualified members of the Graduate Faculty, based on the following criteria:

- Has the student directly answered the question they were asked?
- Has the student engaged professionally in the ongoing scholarly conversations required by the question?
- Does the response reflect the breadth of knowledge required by the question?

- Does the response reflect the level of detail specified by the question?
- Is the response articulated as a rhetorically sound argument and written in language that is appropriate for the student's academic audience?

Copies of sample synthesis statements can be found on the Graduate Program Canvas site or from the Graduate Studies Administrator.

### ***3. Overview of the Portfolio Option for the Master's in English with a Focus on Technical Communication***

This section outlines the required steps toward completion of the portfolio option.

1. **Portfolio Committee:** The semester prior to graduating (or earlier), the student must assemble a portfolio committee to assist in planning, developing, and assessing the portfolio. This committee should consist of at least two faculty members who share the student's research and/or pedagogical interests and must include a director (a faculty member in the Department of English who will serve as the primary advisor and chair of the committee) and at least one other member.
2. **Portfolio Proposal:** Similar to the thesis option, students pursuing the portfolio option must complete a proposal. This proposal should be developed and submitted no later than the semester before graduation. The proposal is a 10-20 page document that includes the following: an introduction to the purpose and audience of the portfolio; an introduction to the areas of expertise/concentration the portfolio will demonstrate; the specific goals for the portfolio; the plans toward completing the portfolio (i.e., proposed deliverable(s), interface, design, resources, print and/or digital artifacts; delivery and timeline for completion); summary of the value of the project (i.e., an overview as to how the work in the portfolio contributes to specific areas of inquiry related to professional writing and rhetoric studies); works cited/references, and—where necessary—appendices. All members of the portfolio committee must agree that the student is ready to defend the proposal before moving ahead with scheduling a defense date.
3. **Portfolio Proposal Defense:** Please see the section of the Graduate Handbook that describes the "Thesis Proposal Defense." Portfolio proposal defenses follow the same procedures.
4. **After** the proposal has been vetted by the committee, the student must print out two copies of the proposal. The chair of your committee must sign both copies (which

signifies their confidence that the student is ready to defend their proposal); then the student submits them to the English Department's Graduate Secretary. The Graduate Secretary will send the proposal out to a member of the English Department's Graduate Committee and will notify the student of the member's name and e-mail. Upon this notification, it is the student's responsibility to schedule a mutually agreeable date and time to orally defend the proposal. This date and time should be scheduled approximately 2-3 weeks after the English Department's Graduate Committee representative has been assigned to the defense, and this defense must transpire no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate. For the defense itself, the student should obtain a copy of the Proposal Approval Form [same form for thesis] from the English Department's Graduate Secretary, complete the top half of the form, and bring it to the defense. The student should be prepared to briefly summarize the project, ask any questions of and/or address any issues that the committee may have, and answer questions or address issues that the committee has. Students are expected to take notes, audio, and/or video to document feedback from the committee. Once the committee approves of the proposal, the student will circulate a Memo of Understanding that summarizes the discussion held at the defense, along with the Proposal Approval Form, for signatures. Upon approval of the portfolio proposal, the student has the option to register for up to 9 hours of thesis credit (with permission from the Director of Graduate Studies), although only four will count towards the completion of the degree.

5. **Memo of Understanding:** Within 24 hours of the portfolio defense, the student must complete a memo of understanding that details how s/he plans to address the issues raised by the committee in the defense. The student first sends the MOU to the committee chair for feedback/approval. Once the advisor/committee chair is satisfied with the document and s/he has signed it, the student circulates it for signatures from the remaining defense committee members (portfolio committee + the English Department's Graduate Committee representative). The student will make 3 copies of the signed memo, saving one for his/her records, giving one to the committee chair, and giving one to the English Department's Graduate Secretary.
6. **Portfolio Completion:** With guidance from the committee chair, the student will complete the portfolio per the approved plan outlined in the portfolio proposal and memo of understanding. Once the portfolio committee chair is satisfied that the portfolio is ready to defend, the student may submit it for Committee Review.
7. **Portfolio Committee Review & Format Check:** The student must submit the portfolio to the committee no later than at least two weeks before they plan to defend it, along with

a copy of the original portfolio proposal, the memo of understanding, and the Master's in Writing Portfolio Format form, which can be obtained from the Graduate Secretary. If all committee members agree that the student has met the portfolio requirements and that the work is ready to be on display within the Department, the student schedules the defense date and time with the Department Secretary at least a week in advance of the defense. If the student is employing multimedia for the defense, they should make certain to reserve the appropriate space and bring (or arrange for the Department to provide) the appropriate media for sharing the portfolio project. As soon as the defense is scheduled, the student should contact the Graduate Secretary with the details, and s/he will notify the Department that your portfolio is on display (either on the Web or in the main office) for review for at least five working days prior to your defense meeting.

8. **Portfolio Defense:** The portfolio meeting should transpire by the last week of classes of the semester in which the student plans to graduate. The student is responsible for bringing a hard copy of the Defense Approval Form to the meeting with the top portion of the form completed. For the defense itself, students should keep in mind that it is open to all members of the University community. Thus, while presenting the portfolio project, the student should summarize the purpose, goal(s), argument(s), identity, artifacts, and value of the portfolio for your audience. Once the student is finished presenting the portfolio and answering questions, the portfolio committee will deliberate on the defense of the project. If the committee is satisfied with the defense, the student circulates the Defense Approval form for signatures. (After the defense, the student will make 3 copies of the signed form, saving one for the student's records, giving one to the committee chair, and giving one to the Graduate Secretary.) If the committee is not satisfied with the defense, the student will be asked to revise and reschedule another portfolio format check and defense.
9. **Final Portfolio Submission:** The student must submit the final version of the portfolio by the Friday of final examination week of the semester in which the student plans to graduate. If completing a digital portfolio, the student must e-mail the URL of the portfolio and submit a CD-ROM (with title, name, and date on the CD and plastic jacket) with all of portfolio files burned to it to both the committee chair and the Graduate Secretary. If completing a print portfolio, the student must submit a black, 3-ring black binder (with title, name, and date on the spine and front cover) that contains all portfolio materials and a CD-ROM (with title, name, and date on the CD and plastic jacket) with all of portfolio files burned to it to both the committee chair and the Graduate Secretary.

## The Master's Thesis

The Master's thesis is an original scholarly or creative work, **usually 50 to 100 pages** in length. It is written under close guidance of a thesis director and one other member of the Graduate Faculty serves as Committee Member. The second member is formally appointed by the Graduate Program Director, following close consultation with advisor and student. The thesis is required for all students in the Master's of English with an emphasis in creative writing. It is optional for all other Master's students. Students who successfully defend their Master's thesis need not take a written comprehensive exam.

### *The Thesis Proposal*

Before beginning the thesis, the student must submit a proposal for approval. The Master's thesis proposal is a 10-20 page (including bibliography) description of the intended project identifying the following issues: a statement of the argument of the thesis; a review of the literature; the methodology or theories to be employed; a chapter outline; a time schedule; and a bibliography. There is more detailed information in the "Information Common to Both Master's and Ph.D. Programs" section below about the thesis approval process.

Certain of the Master's tracks allow for a professional thesis in lieu of the more traditional academic thesis. Consult your advisement sheet and advisor to discuss this option.

Graduate students in the English department have the opportunity to review their proposal with their committee and one member of the Graduate Committee during a thesis proposal defense that is intended to help students improve their project in a supportive intellectual dialogue with faculty. It is considered a professional courtesy for all members of the committee to have reviewed and approved the proposal before it goes to defense. Once the student and advisor have consulted with the Graduate Program Director about the selection of a second reader for the thesis committee, and once the GPD has received a copy of the thesis proposal signed by the advisor (to signify the advisor's approval of the proposal), the GPD will appoint a member of the Graduate Committee to attend the defense, which is to be scheduled some time two weeks after the GPD's receipt of the proposal. The Graduate Committee member's role at the proposal defense is to ensure the rigor of the proposal and to ensure that faculty expectations placed on students are fair. The Graduate Committee representative also advises the student to keep a list of suggested revisions to the proposal that occur during the defense. Students are expected to circulate that list, in a Memo of Understanding, after the defense, to all members of the committee and the Graduate Committee representative for approval. The committee and Graduate Committee representative may require the student to revise the

proposal, or they may require the student to consider their suggestions for improvement as the student begins writing the thesis. Either way, the student has the following responsibilities:

- 1) Scheduling the defense so that all committee members and the Graduate Committee representative can attend;
- 2) Circulating for approval a Memo of Understanding that lists suggested changes to the project;
- 3) Circulating the form signifying that the committee and Graduate Committee representative have approved the thesis proposal.

### ***The Thesis***

Once the proposal is approved, it is the student's responsibility to carefully study the guidelines for thesis preparation on the Graduate School website:

<https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/>

This website contains specific directions for the format of the thesis and procedures required by the Graduate School.

Students are also responsible for checking the Graduate School's "Important Dates and Deadlines" schedule (<https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/deadlines/>) to determine the deadline for proposals, defenses, and so on. Guidelines and sample thesis proposals are available from the Graduate Studies Administrator. Students should familiarize themselves with exemplary models of the logic and methodology they wish to use. Students should expect to adjust their research design under the guidance of their director.

No deadlines issued by the University are more important than the judgment of the thesis committee that the student has completed his or her thesis.

If a student is completing their thesis in absentia, after they have completed the required number of thesis hours but have not finished the thesis, they must continuously register for one hour of ENG 499. The student must have an approved proposal on file.

The Graduate School grants permission for this enrollment.

The student and their thesis director will decide when to submit chapters to the rest of the committee as the thesis writing progresses; together they may choose to submit chapters as they are written to other committee members, or the director and student may decide to submit work to the other members only after the student has revised it to the director's

satisfaction. Whatever approach the thesis director and student choose to follow, it should be made clear to the whole committee at the time of the proposal defense. Thesis directors meet regularly with their advisees to discuss suggested revisions.

### ***Oral Defense of Final Draft of Master's Thesis***

Only after the thesis has been accepted by the committee may the candidate begin the process of scheduling their defense. Once this material and the applicable deadlines have been reviewed, the student must adhere to the following procedure:

- 1) Assuming that committee members have regularly read chapters or sections of the work, several weeks should be allowed for the committee to read the entire final version. The committee may request revisions of this final version. The quality of the thesis must be of sufficient quality to merit the degree.
- 2) When the thesis has been accepted by the committee and all committee members have a copy of the final revised version of the thesis, the student may begin discussing possible defense times with committee members; they should work carefully with their thesis director to schedule the defense.
- 3) Once the thesis director and the entire committee agree that the student is ready to move towards defense, the student should obtain a Right to Defend form from the graduate school, available at [\[https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/\]](https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/). The Right to Defend form is submitted to the Graduate School and at the same time the student will submit an entire draft of the thesis to Proquest. A Proquest tutorial is available at <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/writing/>. This initial upload to Proquest will also serve as a format check. Students should schedule a review of their format check with the Graduate School. At this stage the submission is only a draft; revisions are allowed any time after this initial submission until final submission. In fact, revisions are almost sure to be made in consideration of suggestions/corrections made during the defense, or from the author's own proof-reading.
- 4) Once the Right to Defend form is approved by the Graduate School, the student (and the thesis director) will receive an email message outlining the next steps toward defense. If the entire thesis committee is in agreement, then the student may set up their defense. The student should obtain the Defense Outcome form available at <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/forms/>, and bring that copy to their defense.

- 5) No fewer than 5 working days before the oral defense the student should submit to the department Graduate Studies Administrator one copy of the thesis and the right to defend form, along with a note to the administrator indicating the time they request for the defense. The administrator will help arrange a place. The departmental review copy may be either electronic or hard copy. If submitting a paper copy of your thesis for department review, please note that it may be reviewed and annotated by faculty members; one copy with light corrections will be acceptable.
- 6) After the student successfully defends their thesis, the thesis director or co-directors (chair or co-chairs) will sign the printed out copy of the Right to Defend message that they received from the Graduate School to indicate that the defense was successfully completed. The English Department requires a unanimous decision from the Committee for a passing defense.
- 7) After the oral defense the student must make all corrections and/or revisions requested by the committee. The student is responsible for proofreading the final version of the thesis.
- 8) The student should follow the applicable deadline posted on the Graduate School web site to file final copies of the thesis. By this deadline, the student must upload the final copy of the thesis to Proquest and submit the signed Outcome of Defense form to the graduate school.

All Master's candidates are required to submit to the departmental office a final electronic version of the thesis. All completed theses and dissertations are available through Proquest.

## The Master's Comprehensive Exam

The Master's level comprehensive examination is designed to provide students with a culminating intellectual experience in which they demonstrate their ability to synthesize what they have learned during their course of study. The comprehensive exam also provides students the opportunity to reflect the writing and research skills that they have developed, to show their critical and/or theoretical engagement with the current context of their discipline, to demonstrate their ability to participate in the professional dialogue, and to provide students with an opportunity to address a specific intellectual problem that they have identified within their field.

Students electing to take a comprehensive examination instead of writing a Master's thesis will fulfill the requirement by following the procedures outlined below. The examination may be taken only three times. The examination lasts three hours, with additional 10 minutes for proofreading and a brief break. The exams may be written longhand or on computers in arranged classrooms. In each semester, there is a specific deadline for asking to take the exam; these are published on the Graduate Program website each semester. **Students must register with the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Studies Administrator for the comprehensive examination at the beginning of the semester in which they wish to take the exam.**

Before the beginning of the semester in which the candidate plans to take the exam, the candidate should meet with their advisor to create a reading list for the comprehensive examination. The reading list should be comprised of 25-30 texts (books, articles, etc.) that pertain to the student's topic. The reading list may be comprised of materials that students have read previously in classes, or it may be comprised of materials that are entirely new to the student (or some balance of the two). The reading list should include a balance of general texts in the field and texts specific to the student's topic.

About six to eight weeks before the examination, the candidate must complete a synthesis statement, indicating the following:

- A statement of the problem that the student will explore in the comprehensive exam;
- A synthesis statement that reflects how the student's course of study has prepared the student to address this problem;
- A review of the literature pertinent to that problem that includes justifications of the choices of the material on the reading list.

Synthesis statements are generally 10-15 pages in length. The statement might sketch a particular set of issues or problems or topics, explaining what they are and why they are significant (e.g., English Studies and gender or class, revision and the composing process, the idea of the audience/reader, genre issues, language acquisition and teaching, literacy, new historicism and literary studies, the relationships between rhetoric and poetics, narrative voice in fiction or poetry, specific issues in teaching writing or literature, the idea of the author and authoring, portfolio assessment, and so on). Students should expect to revise their synthesis statements in dialogue with their advisors.

Once the advisor has approved the synthesis statement and the reading list, they sign their approval. The student then submits the approved/signed synthesis statement and reading list **that does not contain identifying marks** to the Graduate Studies Administrator no more than four weeks prior to the departmentally scheduled date for the comprehensive examination. These submissions may be included as electronic attachments with the advisor's electronic signature or an email from the advisor saying that they approve the synthesis and reading list.

After the Graduate Program Director has received the approved synthesis statement and reading list, they will ask a member of the Graduate Faculty, often but not always the advisor, to prepare an essay question designed to test the candidate's knowledge of and synthesizing abilities over the materials they have identified and discussed. The student has three hours in which to write a response to the question. The synthesis statement and reading list will not be available to the student during the exam. The candidate's response will be evaluated in a double-blind assessment process by at least two qualified members of the Graduate Faculty, based on the following criteria:

- Has the student directly answered the question they were asked?
- Has the student engaged professionally in the ongoing scholarly conversations required by the question?
- Does the response reflect the breadth of knowledge required by the question?
- Does the response reflect the level of detail specified by the question?
- Is the response articulated as a rhetorically sound argument and written in language that is appropriate for the student's academic audience?

Students must register with the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Studies Administrator for the comprehensive examination at the beginning of the semester in which they wish to take the exam.

## Sample Timeline

Most full-time graduate students take courses during the summer as well as fall and spring. Graduate students on assistantships during the academic year receive automatic tuition waivers during the following summer term. The following is an example of a timeline for a full-time student completing the Master's degree in 2 years.

First year, fall semester

- Course work
  - English 401 (required; 3 credits)
  - English 402 (required if the student has a teaching assistantship in composition; 3 credits)
  - Elective that meets requirements for emphasis (3-6 credits)

First year, spring semester

- Course work
  - (recommended) English 445 and/or a research methods class, if appropriate to student's program
  - Electives that meet requirements for emphasis (6-9 credits)
- Tasks
  - Student chooses an advisor appropriate to their program track and compatible with their interests. (Student may wish to wait until the fall of second year.);
  - Student begins to arrange an internship, if appropriate to their program. If the internship is to take place in the fall, the proposal must be approved by August 1.

Summer semester, between first year and second year

- Course work
  - Electives that meet requirements for emphasis (3-6 credits)

- Tasks
  - Student should begin thinking about whether they want to complete the thesis or comprehensive exam option
  - Student should begin thinking about whether they want to apply for doctoral programs or work towards the job market to prepare to make decisions during the fall semester,

Second year, fall semester

- Course work
  - Electives that meet requirements for emphasis (9 credits)
- Tasks
  - Student conducts internship (may also be conducted in spring), if the degree program requires one;
  - Student chooses a thesis director and completes thesis proposal, if a thesis is appropriate to their program;
  - Student consults with the Graduate Program Director to complete and file the Degree Audit;
  - Student completes Graduate School applications in December and January, if applying for doctoral programs.
  - Student completes vita/resume and job placement file, if applying for jobs.

### **Note on Applying to Doctoral Programs**

The student should look online for program catalogs in July. The design of the program should be considered, as well as the faculty who specialize in the student's areas of interest and the cultural dynamics of the university. The most highly rated program may not be right for every person in every field. Students should make arrangements for campus visits if at all possible. Many doctoral programs have deadlines of mid-January for admission the following fall; most will require the GRE, so be sure to take the exam early enough that the scores will be reported to the applicable schools by the various deadlines, bearing in mind that students often do better when taking the test for a second time. Students will strengthen their applications by

working steadily on mastering a second language. Many programs prefer a third-year ability in one language to second-year ability in two. Most schools ask for a sample of sustained analytical writing. The expenses for applying may run as high as \$100 per school. The application process should be completed during winter break.

Second year, spring semester

- Course work
  - Elective(s) that meets requirements for emphasis (3-6 credits);
  - Thesis hours (3-9 credits, depending on how many courses student needs to finish to meet the 10 course requirement);
- Tasks
  - Student signs up for and takes the comprehensive exam, if applicable;
  - Student completes thesis.

## **Master's Students Assistantships and Fellowships**

The department aspires to offer an assistantship to most full-time students admitted to the Master's Programs. The large majority of these assistantships are for teaching. A Master's-level assistantship is awarded for two years only. The Graduate Program Director will notify continuing Teaching Assistants each spring of their appointment for the following academic year. Persistent academic problems, including low grades, incompletes, failed exams, or excessive absenteeism may result in the assistantship being withdrawn. Additionally, teaching that is considered substandard as indicated by consistently low teaching evaluations, Writing Program Director concerns, or ongoing complaints from students over the course of multiple semesters may result in the withdrawal of the assistantship. The assistantship may also be withdrawn from students who unsatisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Any graduate student's first responsibility is the completion of their degree. Students who accept a graduate teaching assistantship must be willing to prioritize graduate study while at the same time fulfilling the contractual obligations of the graduate assistantship. At no time should a student's employment outside of the university interfere with either graduate study or the contractual obligations demanded by the terms of a graduate assistantship.

### **Teaching Assistantships**

Most teaching assistantships are in the writing program, although some are in Department of English and the Publishing Unit. All writing courses are taught in one of the department's computer networked computer classrooms. All teaching assistants have an office equipped with a computer with network access. The university equips the computer with standard Microsoft Office software and provides technology support as needed. Master's level students typically teach one course each semester. In their first semester, master's students are assigned as course assistants in order to become familiar with teaching in the Writing Program. Students also take English 402, Teaching Composition, during that first semester. In subsequent semesters, Master's students are assigned to their own section of a writing class, typically English 101.

Assistantships for Master's students carry a modest stipend for 9 months and a full tuition waiver. Assistantships elsewhere in the University are also available to Master's students.

Graduate teaching assistants are required to administer teaching evaluations in every semester that they teach, including during summer session.

The instructor's manual for first-year writing describes the attendance policy, which applies to all instructors on graduate teaching assistantships:

All instructors must be in class in every session they are assigned to teach unless they have made prior arrangements with their Program Assistant (PA), the Director, and/or the Assistant Director. If you are ill or leave campus to attend a professional conference, contact either the Writing Program Director (if you are teaching a class in the Writing Program), the Graduate Director/Coordinator, or the Chair. Also let us know what arrangements you have made. If you are taken ill suddenly and are unable to arrange for a substitute, call the English Department Office (438-3667) and arrange to have your class cancelled. Then immediately contact your PA and/or the Assistant Director and/or Director of the Writing Program.

The Department of English reserves the right to rescind the graduate assistantship of any student who does not adhere to this policy.

### **The Sutherland Assistantships in Creative Writing**

Sutherland Assistantships are awarded to a small number of creative writing Master's students. During their first year, Sutherland Assistants work in the Publications Unit. During their second year, they are invited to teach creative writing (English 227) under the supervision of a professor in creative writing if they have taken at least two graduate-level creative writing workshops and the creative writing pedagogy course.

### **Publications Unit**

A small number of assistantships at the Department's Publications Unit are available for students interested in publications work. The stipends include a full tuition waiver.

## **Sample Master's Advising Emphases Worksheets**

(for faculty and student use)

## Literature Emphasis Advising Worksheet

- Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and either a comprehensive examination or a portfolio, the contents of which are to be determined by the student.
- Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course number for the Master's thesis.

Course Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
<b>Three Courses in Literature Before 1800</b> (and semester/year completed) 1) 2)	9	
<b>Three Courses in Literature After 1800</b> (and semester/year completed) 1) 2)	9	
<b>Four elective courses</b> 1) 2) 3)	12	

### Requirements

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Thesis Option

## Graduation Requirements

 ENG 499 (4 hours) Degree Audit Filed and Approved Applied for graduation Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

<sup>1</sup> Some literature courses in the department have contents that change from semester to semester or straddle 1800. Students should stipulate how the courses will count, providing a copy of the syllabus and, if requested, a copy of course papers showing that the course emphasized one period. A list of courses that are frequently variable follows:

332, 336, 352, 360, 372, 373, 375, 381, 417, 428, 454, 486, 487

<sup>2</sup> Students completing a thesis under this option may substitute six hours of English 499 (thesis) for elective courses.

## Creative Writing Emphasis Option Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

- Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours.  
ENG 499 is the course number for the Master's thesis.

Course Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition  (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
One course in the pedagogy of Creative Writing or approved substitute	3	
Either ENG 403 (Studies in Poetic Forms and Conventions) or 404 (Studies in Narrative Form and Theory), to be determined by the genre in which the student will write the thesis	3	
<b>Two or three elective courses</b> , such as hypertext or visual rhetoric, in literature, language, rhetoric, and/or theory, including <b>one course in the genre in which the student will write the thesis</b> 4) 5)	6-8	
One elective in an area related to the thesis offered by departments other than our own, to be approved by the student's advisor.  For example: this area might be music, visual arts, philosophy, history, journalism, or foreign-language literature. Departments include, but are not limited to, Foreign Languages, Communication, Theatre, or Arts Technology.	3	

<p><b>Three courses in creative writing</b> (one per semester for full-time students) prior to thesis hours</p> <p>5)</p> <p>6)</p>	9	
<p><b>Creative thesis with critical preface</b></p> <p>The creative thesis will, in some form acceptable to both advisor and student, critically address some aspect of poetics or aesthetics pertinent to, but not necessarily about, the student's work.</p> <p>The creative thesis will also include a bibliography of literary and theoretical works that have informed the student's artistic practices</p>	4	

### Requirements

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Option

ENG 499 (4 hours)

Graduation Requirements

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Thesis proposal approved

Applied for graduation

Thesis sent to graduate school for first check

Copies of thesis placed in Dept. office

Thesis defense completed

## English Studies Emphasis Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

- Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and either a comprehensive examination or a portfolio, the contents of which are to be determined by the student.
  
- Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course for the Master's thesis.

Course Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
One literature course (semester/year completed)	3	
One linguistics or TESOL course (semester/year completed)	3	
One course emphasizing pedagogy (semester/year completed)	3	

Six or seven courses (18 -21 credit hours) distributed in at least two areas of English studies (and semester/year completed)

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

Requirements

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Option

Graduation Requirements

ENG 499 (4 hours)

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Applied for graduation

Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

## TESOL Emphasis Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

- Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and either a comprehensive examination or a portfolio, the contents of which are to be determined by the student.
  
- Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course for the Master's thesis.

Course Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
461 Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics	3	
441 The Linguistic Structure of English for the TESOL Professional	3	
440 Studies in English Linguistics <u>or</u> 342 Sociolinguistics	3	
One literature course	3	
One course emphasizing pedagogy	3	

3 TESOL Courses, chosen from among 343, 344, 345 and 346  1)  2)	9	
One elective course, which may be in linguistics or TESOL	3	

### Requirements

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Thesis Option

ENG 499 (4 hours)

#### Graduation Requirements

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Applied for graduation

Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

## Children's Literature Emphasis Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

- Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and either a comprehensive examination or a portfolio, the contents of which are to be determined by the student.
  
- Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course for the Master's thesis.

Course Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
372 Origins of Modern Literature for Young People (required)	3	
One course in critical theory (471 preferred; can substitute 384 or 482)	3	
At least 3 courses in literature for children and adolescents 1) 2)	9	

<p>At least 4 elective courses in literature, language, composition, or approved cognate fields (up to 6 hours from fields such as Fine Arts, Psychology, Curriculum &amp; Instruction, History, Or Sociology) *</p> <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p> <p>3)</p>	12	
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\* In order to provide students in children's literature with historical context, faculty recommend that students who have not already done so as undergraduates take one or two courses in nineteenth-century British or American literatures, at least one in African-American literature and/or other global or minority literatures, and one in linguistics (such as 410 or 461).

#### Requirements

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Thesis Option

ENG 499 (4 hours)

#### Graduation Requirements

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Applied for graduation

Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

## Rhetoric and Composition Emphasis Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

**Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and either a comprehensive examination or a portfolio, the contents of which are to be determined by the student.

**Thesis Option:** 10 courses (3 hours each) and a thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course for the Master's thesis.

Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
Composition Theory Choose 2 ENG courses: 409, 445, 494, 496, 497	6	
Rhetorical Theory Choose 2 ENG courses: 350, 391, 392, 483, 496	6	
Rhetoric and Composition Electives Choose 2 ENG courses: 351, 355, 384, 445, 449, 451, 452, 453, 459, 466, 467, 485, 492, 498	6	
English Studies Electives Choose 2 ENG courses at the 300 level or above*	6	

\*Students who choose the Comprehensive Exam Option will choose 3 ENG courses (9 hours) at the 300 level or above to meet this requirement.

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Option

ENG 499 (4 hours)

Graduation Requirements

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Applied for Graduation

Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

## Technical Writing and Rhetoric Emphasis Advising Worksheet

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

- Comprehensive Exam Option:** 11 ENG courses (3 hours each) for a total of 33 hours and a comprehensive examination
- Thesis Option:** 10 ENG courses (3 hours each) and thesis (4 hours) for a total of 34 hours. ENG 499 is the course for the Master's thesis.

Requirement	Credit Hours	Date Completed
<b>ENG 401:</b> Introduction to Graduate Studies	3	
<b>ENG 402:</b> Teaching Composition (Required to hold a Teaching Assistantship)	3	
Technical Writing Choose 4 ENG courses: 350, 351, 451, 452, 453, 459, 467, 498	12	
Rhetorical Theory Choose 2 ENG courses: 350, 391, 392, 483, 496	6	
English Studies Electives Choose 2 ENG courses at the 300 level or above*	6	

\*Students who choose the Comprehensive Exam Option will choose 3 ENG courses (9 hours) at the 300 level or above to meet this requirement.

At least 15 hours (excluding thesis, portfolio, or comprehensive exam) must be at the 400 level:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Option

ENG 499 (4 hours)

Graduation Requirements

Degree Audit Filed and Approved

Applied for Graduation

Comprehensive exams or thesis successfully completed date

## Ph.D. in English Studies

During the past 20 years, many our Ph.D. graduates have placed in full-time positions including in four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, and secondary schools. Our program has a long-standing approach to preparing college and university teachers with a broad background in all facets of English Studies to complement their areas of specialization.

The Ph.D. program admits approximately twelve students each year. Coursework can be completed in 24 months; the desired time of degree completion is 4 to 5 years. Candidates are encouraged to complete the comprehensive examination and to have the dissertation well begun before entering the job market.

Internships and dissertations in the Ph.D. program connect research with pedagogy. Recent dissertations have been in technical writing, creative writing, developmental and advanced composition, literature, children's literature, business writing, ESL, and the management of writing and learning centers.

## Overview of the Program

### Ph.D. Requirements

The Ph.D requires a minimum of 12 courses and a teaching internship (ENG 591), with those courses distributed as below, a Comprehensive Examination, and at least 15 hours of dissertation credits. Some students will be required to take more courses if they do not have certain prerequisites. Many students will find it desirable to take more than the minimum number of courses, especially when doing so allows them to build credentials that will be important in finding tenure-line teaching positions. Coursework for the Ph.D. is required in each of the following three areas:

#### Area 1: English Studies

- 540: Seminar in Linguistics & Language Study;
- 560: Seminar in Literature & Culture; it is strongly recommended that students who have not had any graduate-level course work in literature & culture take at least one course in the area before enrolling in 560
- 590: Seminar in Rhetoric & Composition Studies; it is strongly recommended that students who have not had any graduate-level course work in rhetoric & composition take at least one course in the area before enrolling in 590;
- Pre-requisite to 540: 461 (Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics) or the equivalent; Students may have completed this prerequisite in a Master's program;
- 402 for students with teaching assistantships in composition
- 6-9 hours of English Studies Electives (461 can count for 3 of these hours)

#### Area 2: Specialization

- 5 or more courses related to student's major field and teaching interests, at least one of which must be related to early historical developments in their specialization, and at least one of which must provide global/multicultural perspectives or contexts related to that specialization.

#### Area 3: Pedagogy

- 510: Seminar in English Studies Pedagogy;
- 591: Practicum (Internship) in College Teaching;

- Two courses from the minimum of 12 total courses must have a significant pedagogical focus; 402 typically counts as one of the two, and the second may count doubly in this category and in English Studies Electives or Specialization.

## **Progressing Through the Program**

### **The Role of Advisor: Doctoral Level**

All students are advised initially by the Graduate Program Director. By the second semester of their first year in the program, students may choose a permanent advisor from the Graduate Faculty whom they will consult during every stage of their graduate work. A student may wish to wait until their second year in the program to choose a faculty advisor. The graduate advisor is also likely to serve as the student's internship advisor, as advisor for one component of the student's comprehensive exam, and as the student's dissertation director. It is recommended that they will meet with their advisee(s) each semester to discuss course selection and academic and career goals. Detailed information about each of these responsibilities is provided below, by subject heading (i.e., Dissertation, etc.).

When faculty and students are considering working together in an advisor/advisee relationship, both parties want to be sure to consider carefully the match between the faculty member's fields of specialization and the student's interests. While two people may enjoy an amicable working relationship, there may be other faculty members who are better suited professionally to the student's needs. The department encourages faculty to advise prospective advisees of their options.

## Pre-Dissertation Milestones

Prior to working on their dissertations, Ph.D. students must complete two comprehensive exams and one teaching internship.

**Important Note:** Students are expected to produce different arguments for the internship essay, the specialization component of the comprehensive exam, and the English studies component of the comprehensive exam.

### *The Ph.D. in English Studies Teaching Internship*

The teaching internship is an integral part of the Ph.D. in English Studies. More often than not, degree candidates will already be teaching as part of an assistantship or a job. The Internship differs from such normal teaching assignments. It formally requires the student to reflect on and analyze a course or teaching situation. It involves the close direction by and consultation with a faculty member who serves simultaneously as mentor and evaluator. It often affords the opportunity to teach new courses or in new situations. (For example, students may request to teach more advanced courses in the department or in a literary area not customarily assigned to Ph.D. students.) We encourage off-campus internships. In most cases, the internship is conducted to facilitate dissertation research. In every case, there must be clear connections between coursework, the internship, the student's teaching career, and the dissertation.

Students may choose one of two emphases for the internship

- 1) Research in the Classroom
- 2) Course Design and Teaching

These two emphases, which differ in terms of their aims and intended outcomes, represent points on a continuum of research and teaching, of theory and practice. "Research" internships will almost certainly involve course design and teaching, and "Teaching" internships will likely have an evaluative or reflective component. Distinctions are made here purely to suggest a range of possibilities for interested students.

### Internship Emphasis 1: Research in the Classroom

This option is intended for students who wish to carry out empirical research in a course they are teaching. By “empirical research,” we mean a range of methodologies, including case studies, ethnographies, experimental designs, quantitative and formalistic designs, and so on. One aim of this emphasis is to generate data that will lead directly to a dissertation. The research project may be a pilot study leading to the dissertation proposal, and it may be directional and not definitive.

#### Policies and Procedures

- 1) **The internship advisor will exclusively handle the internship in development, conduct, and evaluation.** In most cases, the internship advisor is the same faculty member who will serve as the student’s dissertation director. This is not a policy, however, and the various faculty advisory roles need to be determined by the student in conversation with those faculty members whose areas of expertise seem to be the best match for the student’s intellectual interests and professional goals.
- 2) **The internship may be proposed for teaching on or off campus, according to the needs and interests of the student.** An internship in a two-year college is clearly desirable for students who wish to teach in such institutions. Off- campus arrangements must be made at least six months prior to the start of the term in which the internship will take place. Students should consult their internship advisor, who may be able to provide contact information about setting up internships off-campus, especially at two-year colleges. Students interested in TESOL internships should consult the appropriate faculty in linguistics and TESOL.
- 3) **Completion of all four seminars**, including English 510, is a prerequisite to the internship.
- 4) **Students must complete an internship request** prior to completing their internship proposal, one year before the internship is to take place.

Students who wish to do their internships in English 101 or 145, in the department, or in the English Language Institute, must inform the Graduate Program Director by letter in the semester before the desired internship semester.

Students who wish to do their internships in the department in a course other than English 101 or 145 must request that assignment of the Graduate Program Director TWO SEMESTERS

before the desired term. This is due to the fact that courses need to be scheduled well in advance. Typically, students are encouraged to design internships at the 100-level.

The internship request should consist of a brief letter, addressed to the Graduate Program Director, stating the course and semester the student would like to teach and providing a one-paragraph rationale for the request. The rationale should note how the internship relates to the dissertation, research, or professional goals. The letter should be signed by both the student and the student's internship advisor if they have one at this point in their course of study. If the student does not yet have an internship advisor, the letter may be signed by the student's general academic advisor— if they have one—or by the Department's Graduate Program Director.

Students will be informed if the request can be accommodated.

- 5) In the semester before the internship is to take place, the student must submit an acceptable, formal proposal to their internship advisor. If the student has not yet secured an internship advisor, they should meet with the Graduate Program Director at the beginning of the semester before the anticipated internship to discuss possible faculty members whom the student might contact to discuss their internship ideas. The internship advisor may accept, reject, or request revisions of the proposal.

The internship proposal should describe the prospective research study (both its rationale and methodology) and relate that research to the thesis or dissertation. Proposals should be five to ten pages long and should include a bibliography.

(Please note that "internship request" and the "internship proposal" are two different documents, with two different intended audiences. The "internship request" is a mechanism by which students communicate with the department's administration about the logistics of scheduling; the "internship proposal" is a statement of intellectual goals that is to be negotiated between the student and their internship advisor.)

- 6) **After the internship advisor approves the internship proposal**, they should sign the "Internship Approval" form and file it, along with a copy of the proposal, with the Graduate Program Director in English. This must be before the internship begins, normally by **August 1 for the fall semester**, by **January 1 for the spring semester**, and by **June 1 for the summer semester**.

Once the internship advisor and the Graduate Program Director in English have signed the approval form, the student may register for English 591 (4 credit hours), which is required of all doctoral students in English.

Depending on the situation that is most helpful to the student's progress toward degree, the student will enroll in ENG 591 either in the semester during which they teach their internship class or more rarely after the semester immediately following the internship. **Students will not be allowed to enroll in English 591 until the internship proposal and, if applicable to the type of research in which the student will be engaged, the IRB form, have been approved.**

- 7) The internship will be part of a graduate assistant's regular teaching load if they are on campus and will be a regularly scheduled class if they are at a community college or high school. Students doing off-campus internships regularly maintain their departmental assistantships during this period.
- 8) During the course of the internship, the **internship advisor will review course syllabi and materials and attend at least one class meeting**, unless distance precludes that possibility, in which case the student is required to remain in close contact with the internship advisor. The student and internship advisor will regularly discuss issues related to teaching in the class and emerging research questions, as well, perhaps, as related readings.
- 9) At the end of the semester in which the student enrolls in ENG 591, they will turn in to the internship advisor **an essay of 20 to 30 pages in length, including a bibliography**, that
  - a. **situates a discussion of pedagogical issues** raised during the internship in the context of broader scholarly conversations about pedagogical issues reflected in texts that the student has included in their bibliography;
  - b. **identifies pedagogical questions** raised during the internship that the student would like to investigate further in the future; and
  - c. **articulates the potential impact of the work** conducted during the internship on the student's dissertation project.

The student's internship advisor will evaluate this essay and record a grade for ENG 591. Since the essay is a reflection on the internship experience and since the taking of 591 and the internship class coincide, the student may not have sufficient time to prepare the essay before the internship director is ready to submit the grade for 591. Therefore, it is regular for

internship students to receive a grade of Incomplete for 591 and to prepare the essay in the weeks following the class. It is strongly recommended that the student and advisor establish a finite timeline for completing the essay and that the timeline not extend beyond six weeks after the internship teaching is completed. A copy of the internship paper with the advisor's signature indicating passing work must be turned in to the Graduate Office in order for students to be considered as having completed their comprehensive examinations.

## **Internship Emphasis 2: Course Design and Teaching**

This option is intended for students who wish to implement some theoretically-sound strategies in planning and teaching a course. The proposed pedagogy may, for example, represent innovations not easily available under existing course requirements. Or the internship may provide an opportunity to teach at a different type of institution or to teach a course not normally assigned to graduate teaching assistants. The aim of this emphasis is theoretical and pedagogical.

### *Policies and Procedures*

The policies and procedures for this option are the same as those for Emphasis 1, with two differences:

- 1) **The internship proposal should describe the course and pedagogical approaches to be used.** This description should include a justification in terms of current theory and research, a draft syllabus, and representative assignments and activities. The proposal should also explain the relationship between the internship and the student's coursework, thesis or dissertation, and career goals.
- 2) At the end of the semester in which the student enrolls in ENG 591, they will turn in to the internship advisor an essay of 20 to 30 pages in length, including a bibliography, that
  - a. situates a discussion of pedagogical issues raised during the internship in the context of broader scholarly conversations about pedagogical issues reflected in texts that the student has included in their bibliography;
  - b. identifies pedagogical questions raised during the internship that the student would like to investigate further in the future; and
  - c. articulates the potential impact of the work conducted during the internship on the student's dissertation project.

The student's internship advisor will evaluate this essay and record a grade for ENG 591. A copy of the internship paper with the advisor's signature indicating passing work must be turned in to the Graduate Office in order for students to be considered as having completed their comprehensive examinations.

### **Important IRB Information**

All students (and faculty) who plan to do research that involves human subjects, such as in the teaching internship, must have their plans approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before they begin the research. Early in the semester before the internship is to take place, the student should arrange to meet with one of the department's IRB representatives to discuss the research and the preparation of the IRB protocol. Faculty who have not served as an internship advisor or as a principle investigator should also attend this meeting with the graduate student. **All students are required to complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol before conducting an internship unless the nature of their internship under Emphasis 2—Course Design and Teaching—does not involve their students or their students' work produced for the class as research subjects.** IRB forms may be downloaded from the University's Office of Research and Sponsored Project's Research Policy and Compliance division. The department's IRB representative must forward that completed form to the university-level committee for approval, so this process can take up to two or three months for final approval.

Compliance with federal research regulations is crucial to our ability to receive federal grant funds. Research and some teaching activities involving the use of human subjects and live vertebrate animals are overseen at Illinois State University by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) respectively. To demonstrate our commitment to research ethics, the IRB and IACUC have instituted mandatory CITI training requirements. CITI is a comprehensive online training program free to all ISU users and their non-ISU collaborators. To enroll in these courses, please follow the instructions on the Research Ethics and Compliance (REC) website at: <http://research.illinoisstate.edu/ethics/>. Course completion report numbers will need to be included on protocol forms after the dates below. If you have any questions, please refer to the REC website or contact the REC at 438-2520 or 438-2529. Individuals who have completed CITI training at other institutions should contact REC for information on reciprocity.

**Human Subjects: Effective January 1, 2011**, all principal investigators and co-PIs on new IRB protocols will be required to have completed the "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with Human Subjects" (Basic) course. Also effective January 1, 2011, all undergraduate and graduate students listed on new protocols that are designated as Exempt or Expedited Review will be required to have completed either the "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with human subjects" course or the "Students conducting no more than minimal risk research" course. Students on new protocols that are designated as Full Review will be required to have completed the full "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with human subjects" basic

course. Human subjects CITI courses are valid for three years, after which refresher courses must be taken to continue research.

### ***Comprehensive Examination: Doctoral Level***

Doctoral students complete comprehensive exam activities in two areas:

- 1) a focused area of specialization within English studies that pertains to the student's anticipated dissertation topic; and
- 2) an area of issues in English Studies that demonstrates the student's interdisciplinary knowledge gained from coursework in multiple areas of English Studies and, in some instances, from coursework taken in other departments.

Once the student has identified a primary area of specialization, they will select two members of the Graduate Faculty in the English Department to serve as advisors for the specialization and English studies components of the comprehensive exam. The student's internship advisor may also serve as one of the student's comprehensive exam advisors.

### **Goal of the Doctoral Comprehensive Exams**

The goal of the English Department Graduate Faculty in administering the doctoral comprehensive exams is to assess the student's readiness to begin work on the dissertation and the process of positioning themselves in a field of expertise informed by a depth and breadth of interdisciplinary knowledge, as well as to help the student prepare for this work and this process.

### **To Begin the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam Process**

The student must declare their intention to begin work on comprehensive exam activities and meet with the Graduate Program Director to discuss the exam process no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which they conduct the required teaching internship. At this time the student will verify with the Graduate Program Director that they have completed—or will complete during the internship semester—all required course work for the degree. During this meeting, the student will also notify the Graduate Program Director of the two faculty members who will serve as their comprehensive exam advisors.

### **ID# for Comprehensive Exam**

After meeting with the Graduate Program Director, the student must send the Graduate Studies Administrator an e-mail indicating that they intend to begin the comprehensive exam process. The student should also notify the Graduate Studies Administrator of the two faculty members who will serve as their comprehensive exam advisors. The Graduate Studies Administrator will then assign the student an ID# for their exam and e-mail that number back to

them. The student will use the same ID# for both components of the exam.

The examination formats and processes will be as follows:

### **Primary Specialization**

The student will consult with their advisor and prepare a reading list and a 3-5 page rationale for the selections on that list in a primary specialization (for example, "TESOL," "children's literature," "rhetoric," "twentieth-century American literature," and so on).

The reading list will normally consist of approximately 25-30 books or the equivalent combination of books and articles. After approval by the advisor and the Graduate Program Director, the reading list and rationale will form the basis of the primary specialization area of the comprehensive exam activities.

Once the reading list and rationale have been approved, students will have four weeks to problematize a specific issue or group of issues within that field in a 15 to 20 page paper that demonstrates a professional understanding of and ability to articulate the complexities involving the issue or group of issues within the primary specialization.

The period in which the student consults with their advisor to produce an acceptable reading list and rationale constitutes the extent of the advisor/advisee relationship during this component of the comprehensive exam process. Over the course of the four-week exam period, students may not consult their advisors about the exam, and advisors may not offer to read drafts of the exam. Students are, however, welcome and encouraged to consult with their graduate student peers during this part of the exam process.

The student's Primary Specialization advisor and a Graduate Faculty member appointed by the Graduate Program Director will render a judgment of "Pass" or "No Pass" approximately two weeks after the student completes this portion of the comprehensive exam. This two-week evaluation timeline will not always be possible given the many responsibilities of a Graduate Faculty member, but faculty evaluators do recognize that time is of the essence in terms of students progressing through the comprehensive exam process. The Graduate Program Director will notify the student of the outcome immediately upon receiving the judgments of "Pass" or "No Pass," unless a third faculty member is needed to evaluate this component of the exam. If that is the case, the student will be notified of the outcome approximately four weeks after completing this portion of the exam.

Evaluators of the specialization component of the comprehensive exam will base their assessment of the exam on discipline specific criteria, any qualitative assessment they may choose to include on an attached sheet, and the following general questions:

- Has the student problematized a specific issue or group of issues in a manner that demonstrates a professional understanding of and ability to articulate the complexities involving the issue or group of issues?
- Has the student engaged professionally in the ongoing scholarly conversations, demonstrated awareness of the emergent questions in the field pertinent to the topic, and advanced a new perspective on these discussions?
- Is the response to the topic appropriately broad?
- Is the response appropriately complex?
- Is the response articulated as a rhetorically sound argument and written in language that is appropriate for the student's academic audience?

In the event that an advisor and a faculty member appointed by the Graduate Program Director disagree about the merit of the specialization component of the comprehensive exam, the Graduate Program Director will appoint an additional Graduate Faculty member—based on areas of expertise—to evaluate the exam. A final determination of pass or fail will be determined by the majority of evaluator ratings.

Should a student fail the specialization component of the comprehensive exam, they may retake the exam no sooner than one month and no later than two months after the initial attempt. To initiate the process of retaking a failed specialization exam, the student must first arrange a meeting with their advisor to discuss the first attempt at the exam. No sooner than one month and no later than two months after this meeting, the advisor of the specialization exam will turn in to the English Department Graduate Studies Administrator an exam question based on the student's reading list and rationale. Once this question has been turned in, the student will have four weeks to respond to the question in a 15-20 page paper.

In brief, the process for taking the Specialization component of the exam is as follows:

- 1) Write reading list and rationale with input from your advisor.
- 2) Send an electronic copy of your rationale and reading list copying your advisor requesting their approval to the Graduate Studies Administrator. This copy

should have your assigned ID# at the top of the first page. There should be no other identifying marks for the specialization exam.

- 3) Once the Graduate Studies Administrator receives the approved copy of the reading list and rationale, you may no longer consult your advisor about the exam and will have four weeks to complete the exam. At the end of the exam period, please send the Graduate Studies Administrator a final electronic copy (**do not put your name on the exam response-use your assigned ID# only**).

### **English Studies Exam**

The English Studies component of the comprehensive exam is constituted of three distinct genres:

- a **proposal**, written and revised under the guidance of a faculty advisor, that demonstrates how the student will make an interdisciplinary argument-informed by the texts on the reading list-that engages with significant conceptual questions and issues about a particular topic;
- an **abstract**, which is a one-page summary of the student's presentation that will enable faculty examiners to prepare questions in advance; and
- an interdisciplinary **presentation** (either face to face, on zoom, or in hybrid form) followed by a question and answer session.

The following timeline for this component of the comprehensive exam is applicable:

- 1) **Preparing for the Exam:** Students work under the guidance of an English Studies advisor to draft a reading list (approximately 25-30 books or the equivalent combination of books and articles), study the texts on that list, and write a proposal for a presentation on the material. The proposal, which should be from 4-6 pages in length, should articulate how the student will make an interdisciplinary argument—informed by the texts on the reading list—appropriate to a diverse English Studies audience that crosses disciplinary boundaries. The proposal and reading list, which the advisor will sign off on to signify approval, will be turned in to the Graduate Studies Administrator. The Graduate Studies Administrator will then notify the student that the four-week timeline for the exam has begun. The ES presentation should take place within that four-week time period.

- 2) **Consulting with The Faculty Advisor:** Once the four-week timeline for the exam has begun, the student may not consult with their advisor on matters relating to this exam.
- 3) **The Abstract:** Two weeks from the start of the timeline for the exam, the student will turn in a one-page abstract for the exam to the Graduate Studies Administrator. This abstract is then distributed to the two selected graduate faculty evaluators and the Graduate Director. The abstract does not need to be approved by the student's faculty advisor for the exam. On the date the abstract is received by the Graduate Studies Administrator, the process of scheduling for the exam presentation begins.
- 4) **Exam Evaluators:** One evaluator for the exam should be the students' advisor. A second evaluator should be a graduate faculty member who has expertise in topics and disciplines that are the focus of the exam.
- 5) **Scheduling the Exam:** Once the abstract has been received, there is a two-week window of time during which the exam presentation should be scheduled. (i.e., Overall, this means that the exam should occur within the 30-day window following the start of the exam timeline). The graduate student is responsible for contacting the graduate director and the two examiners (the student will be notified of which faculty are assigned as evaluators) to find a day and time for the exam that works for all participants (the student, the Graduate Director, and the two evaluators). Exams can take place face-to-face, on zoom, or in hybrid form, depending on the preferences of the participants.
- 6) **IMPORTANT NOTE ON PREPARATION:** The exam schedule outlined here means that students should be prepared to present their material at any time after they turn in their exam abstract, since the actual exam may be scheduled for any time within the two weeks after the abstract is submitted, though efforts will be made to schedule as close to the full one-month period as possible.

The student's presentation, open to the academic community of graduate students and faculty, will be no shorter than twenty minutes and no longer than thirty minutes in duration. Following the student's presentation, the English Studies exam format will be as follows:

- 1) The Graduate Program Director or their designee will ask audience members who are not on the Graduate Faculty in English to leave the room to enable the Graduate Faculty evaluators and other interested Graduate Faculty in English to verbally test the student on the contents of the presentation and the English Studies reading list. This part of the exam will be thirty to forty-five minutes in duration.

- 2) At the conclusion of the Graduate Faculty question/answer session, the student and Graduate Faculty members who are not evaluating the student will leave the room to enable faculty evaluators and the Graduate Director or Director's designee from the Graduate Committee to confer about the merits of the exam and determine whether the student has passed the exam. The Graduate Program Director will facilitate that discussion.
- 3) In the case the same decision is reached by both of the faculty evaluators present during the exam the student will be invited back into the room immediately after faculty evaluators have conferred about the student's performance on the exam. At that time, the faculty members will discuss with the student the merits of the exam and the reasons for the final evaluation. This discussion will ensure transparency in the evaluation process. If the faculty members were split in their determination of the exam's merits, the Graduate Director or Director's designee from the Graduate Committee will explain the differences in evaluations to the student.
- 4) In the case that the two faculty evaluators are split in their decision for a passing or failing exam, the Graduate Director will act as the tie breaker.

Faculty evaluators will base their assessment of the English Studies component of the comprehensive exam on discipline specific criteria, any qualitative assessment they may choose to include on an attached sheet, and the following general questions:

- Has the student engaged professionally in the ongoing scholarly conversations, demonstrated awareness of the emergent questions in the field pertinent to the topic, and advanced a new perspective on these discussions?
- Was the student's presentation appropriately broad enough to engage an interdisciplinary, English Studies audience?
- Was the student's presentation appropriately complex?
- Was the student's presentation delivered as a rhetorically sound argument in language appropriate for the student's academic audience of people with interests and expertise across the various areas of English Studies?  
(Evaluators recognize that there may be multiple appropriate modes of delivery.)

- Did the student handle faculty evaluators' questions with a level of professionalism commensurate with being an advanced doctoral student in English studies?

Students should practice the presentation ahead of time to ensure that it does not go over the 30 minutes of allotted time. The general rule for presentations is two minutes per double spaced, 12-point font page, so plan accordingly. The title, date, time, and location of the presentation will be advertised on the department web site and listserv.

\*\*\*The period in which the student consults with their adviser to produce an acceptable reading list and proposal constitutes the extent of the advisor/advisee relationship during this component of the comprehensive exam process. Over the course of the four-week period in which the student prepares to make the presentation following approval of the reading list and proposal, the student may not consult their advisors about the exam, and advisors may not offer to read drafts of the presentation or listen to versions of the presentation. Students are, however, welcome and encouraged to consult with their graduate student peers during this part of the exam process. \*\*\*

If the student presents original poems, fiction, or other creative work for this component of the comprehensive exam, they also must frame that creative work interdisciplinarily with pertinent theory and scholarly criticism.

If the student fails this component of the comprehensive exam, they will have two months to revise the presentation and present it in a closed meeting to their advisor, the faculty evaluator appointed by the Graduate Program Director, and the Graduate Program Director or their designee from the Graduate Admissions Committee.

In brief, the process for taking the English Studies component of the exam is as follows:

- 1) Write reading list and proposal with input from your advisor.
- 2) Four weeks before you intend to deliver your oral presentation, send an electronic copy of your proposal and reading list, copying your advisor requesting their approval, to the English Studies exam to the Graduate Studies Administrator (include both your name and ID#). Please work with the Graduate Studies Administrator upon turning in your reading list and proposal to schedule a day, time, and location for your presentation. Once you turn in the approved proposal and reading list, you will work independently on preparing your

presentation. During the four weeks leading up to your presentation, you may not consult with your advisor on matters relating to your exam.

- 3) Two weeks before your presentation/examination, turn in to the Graduate Studies Administrator a one-page abstract of your English Studies presentation. The abstract, which should clearly articulate what the presentation will be about, does not need prior approval by your advisor.

It is the expectation of the Graduate Faculty that the student will be able to complete the two components of the comprehensive exam over the course of two semesters, and that the student will be well poised to write and defend the dissertation proposal by the end of the second semester in which the comprehensive exam activities are completed.

The teaching internship, comprehensive exam activities, dissertation proposal, and dissertation proposal defense should be completed by the end of the student's third year in the doctoral program. The student may choose the order in which these activities are completed, but it is likely that they will complete the dissertation proposal/defense last, since it should be informed by the other activities. We expect, further, that the student will emerge from this process with clear momentum toward the dissertation and the academic job market. For example, the primary specialization component of the exam may well prove to be the foundation of the dissertation proposal and a subsequent introductory chapter in the dissertation. The internship essay may well be integrated into the dissertation and position the student to articulate to academic hiring committees how pedagogy informs and is informed by their primary area of specialization. Finally, the English Studies component of the exam may help to qualify the student for academic positions that are not defined specifically by the student's primary area of specialization.

## The Dissertation

### *Requirements of the Dissertation*

#### Pedagogical Component

The dissertation for the Ph.D. in English Studies at Illinois State University must include a pedagogical component. Whether the subject of investigation of the dissertation is in an area of children's literature, creative writing, literary and cultural studies, linguistics, rhetoric, or writing, it must be clear that the knowledge produced applies in some direct way to teaching or learning. For example, the introductory chapter may frame the central issues of the dissertation in terms of (a) pedagogical concern(s), and subsequent chapters (especially the last) may develop that concern. Examples of previous dissertations are available for review in the department office, as are sample proposals. The extent of the pedagogical component of the dissertation will be determined by the student in consultation with their dissertation director and other committee members.

As the student completes their coursework, the internship, and comprehensive examinations, they should begin developing a dissertation proposal. Dissertation should grow naturally out of the coursework and internship research; students typically explore possible topics beginning in their first semester of studies. After the comprehensive examination is passed, the student should work closely with their director to develop a dissertation proposal and have it approved through the process described in detail below.

## ***Dissertation Proposal***

The dissertation proposal is typically a 10-20 page (including bibliography) description of the intended project identifying the following issues: a statement of the argument of the dissertation; a review of the literature (if pertinent); the methodology or theories to be employed; a chapter outline; a time schedule; and a bibliography. There is more detailed information in the "Information Common to Both Master's and Ph.D. Programs" section below about the dissertation approval process.

Graduate students in the English department have the opportunity to review their dissertation proposal with their committee and one member of the Graduate Committee **during a proposal defense that is intended to help students improve their project in a supportive intellectual dialogue with faculty**. It is considered a professional courtesy for all members of the committee to have reviewed and approved the proposal before it goes to defense. Once the student and advisor have consulted with the Graduate Program Director about the selection of a second and third reader for the dissertation committee, and once the GPD has received a copy of the dissertation proposal signed by the student's advisor (to signify the advisor's approval of the proposal), the GPD will appoint a member of the Graduate Committee to attend the defense, which is to be scheduled some time two weeks after the GPD's receipt of the proposal. The Graduate Committee member's role at the proposal defense is as follows:

- 1) to ensure the rigor of the proposal;
- 2) to ensure that faculty expectations placed on students are fair;
- 3) to instruct the student to keep notes at the meeting in preparation for circulating the Memo of Understanding described below;
- 4) to advise the student as to the available departmental resources available to students preparing for a job search. (The Graduate Committee representative may wish to share the pages of this handbook involving what a job search entails, for example.)

After the successful completion of the defense, students are then expected to **circulate a Memo of Understanding**, after the defense, to all members of the committee and the Graduate Committee representative for approval. The committee and Graduate Committee representative may require the student to revise the proposal, or they may require the student to consider their suggestions for improvement as the student begins writing the dissertation. Either way, the student has the following responsibilities:

- 1) Scheduling the defense so that all committee members and the Graduate Committee representative can attend;
- 2) Circulating for approval Memo of Understanding that lists of suggested changes to the project;
- 3) Circulating the form signifying that the committee and Graduate Committee representative have approved the dissertation proposal.

Students are responsible for downloading from the Graduate School's website a copy of the "Guide for Writers of Theses and Dissertations" and following it closely. Students are also responsible for studying the extensive information about the [dissertation completion process](#) and following the [applicable deadlines](#) on the following websites:

Doctoral students must register for 15 hours of 599; some of these dissertation hours may be devoted to developing a proposal. It is possible to take more than the 15 hours of 599 although only 15 hours are counted toward the degree. If the student is completing the dissertation in absentia and has completed 15 hours of 599, they must continuously register for one hour of 599. They may do so only with an approved proposal on file. The Graduate School approves this registration.

As the student writes their dissertation, they and the director should submit chapters to the committee on a regular basis. Exactly how this proceeds (for example, waiting until the director has approved a chapter before circulating it to other committee members versus distributing each draft simultaneously to all) should be made clear at the time of the proposal defense. The director will meet with the student regularly to discuss suggested revisions.

### ***Oral Defense of Final Draft of Dissertation***

The convention within the English Department is for the dissertation to go to defense **only after** it has been accepted by the entire committee.

- 1) Assuming that committee members have regularly read chapters or sections of the work, several weeks should be allowed for the committee to read the entire final version. The committee may request revisions of this final version. The quality of the dissertation must be of sufficient quality to merit the degree.
- 2) When the dissertation has been accepted by the committee and all committee members have a copy of the final revised version of the dissertation, the student may begin discussing possible defense times with committee members; they should work carefully with their dissertation director to schedule the defense.
- 3) Once the dissertation director and the entire committee agree that the student is ready to move towards defense, the student should obtain a Right to Defend form from the graduate school, available at <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/forms/>. The Right to Defend form is submitted to the Graduate School and at the same time the student will submit an entire draft of the dissertation to Proquest. A Proquest tutorial is available at <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/thesis-dissertation/writing/>. This initial upload to Proquest will also serve as a format check. Students should schedule a review of their format check with the Graduate School. At this stage the submission is only a draft; revisions are allowed any time after this initial submission until final submission. In fact, revisions are almost sure to be made in consideration of suggestions/corrections made during the defense, or from the author's own proof-reading.
- 4) Once the Right to Defend form is approved by the Graduate School, the student (and the dissertation director) will receive an email message outlining the next steps toward defense. If the entire dissertation committee is in agreement, then the student may set up their defense. The student should obtain the Defense Outcome form available at <https://grad.illinoisstate.edu/students/forms/>, and bring that copy to their defense.
- 5) No fewer than 5 working days before the oral defense the student should submit to the department Graduate Studies Administrator one copy of the dissertation and the right to defend form, along with a note to the administrator indicating the time they request for the defense. The administrator will help arrange a place. The departmental review copy may be either electronic or hard copy. If submitting a paper copy of your dissertation for department review, please note that it may be reviewed and annotated by faculty members; one copy with light corrections will be acceptable.

- 6) After the student successfully defends their dissertation, the dissertation director or co-directors (chair or co-chairs) will sign the printed out copy of the Right to Defend message that they received from the Graduate School to indicate that the defense was successfully completed. The English Department requires a unanimous decision from the Committee for a passing defense.
- 7) After the oral defense the student must make all corrections and/or revisions requested by the committee. The student is responsible for proofreading the final version of the dissertation.
- 8) The student should follow the applicable deadline posted on the Graduate School web site to file final copies of the dissertation. By this deadline, the student must upload the final copy of the dissertation to Proquest and submit the signed Outcome of Defense form to the graduate school.

### **Presentation Copies**

All doctoral candidates are required to submit to the departmental office a final electronic version of the dissertation. All completed theses and dissertations are made available through Proquest (at a cost) or the ISU equivalent website.

## **Doctoral Students Assistantships and Fellowships**

A doctoral assistantship is awarded for four years and is renewed each of those years without further application procedures, so long as there is steady progress toward the degree and acceptable teaching. The Graduate Program Director will notify continuing graduate teaching assistants each spring of their appointment for the following academic year. Persistent academic problems, including low grades, incompletes, or failed exams, may result in the assistantship being withdrawn, as may excessive absenteeism. Additionally, teaching that is considered substandard as indicated by consistently low teaching evaluations, Writing Program Director concerns, or ongoing complaints from students over the course of multiple semesters may result in the withdrawal of the assistantship. The assistantship may also be withdrawn from students who unsatisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Doctoral students who have completed comprehensive exams and defended their dissertation proposals by the end of their fourth year in the program, no later than May 15th, will be eligible for a fifth year of assistantship funding. To indicate their desire for this fifth year of funding, students will send a brief letter to the Graduate Program Director by January 25 of their fourth year in the program indicating that they have successfully completed the comprehensive exam and will have defended their dissertation proposal by the end of the second semester of their fourth year, no later than May 15th. The letter must also be signed by the student's Dissertation Director. An offer of a fifth year of funding is contingent on these accomplishments and will be withdrawn if they are not met.

Support beyond five years is very rare and contingent on the needs of the department and the exceptional quality, promise, and progress of the student.

Most teaching assistantships are in the writing program, with some fewer in the English Language Institute and Publishing Unit. Doctoral students occasionally teach literature, creative writing, or linguistics, especially as an internship. All writing courses are taught in one of the department's eleven computer networked computer classrooms. All teaching assistants have an office equipped with a computer and network access. The university equips the computer with standard Microsoft Office software and provides technology support as needed.

Doctoral students teach two courses each semester. Assistantships for doctoral students currently carry a modest stipend for 9 months and a full tuition waiver. In general, full-time doctoral students are admitted only in the case that the Department is able to offer assistantship funding, although the program does admit part-time students who do not request funding as well.

Any graduate student's first responsibility is the completion of their degree. Students who accept a graduate teaching assistantship must be willing to prioritize graduate study while at the same time fulfilling the contractual obligations of the graduate assistantship. At no time should a student's employment outside of the university interfere with either graduate study or the contractual obligations demanded by the terms of a graduate assistantship.

Graduate teaching assistants are required to administer teaching evaluations in every semester that they teach, including during summer session.

The instructor's manual for first-year writing describes the attendance policy, which applies to all instructors on graduate teaching assistantships:

All instructors must be in class in every session they are assigned to teach unless they have made prior arrangements with their Program Assistant (PA), the Director, and/or the Assistant Director. Do not miss a class without communicating with us first. If you are ill or leave campus to attend a professional conference, contact either the Writing Program Director (if you are teaching a class in the Writing Program), the Graduate Director/Coordinator, or the Chair. Also let us know what arrangements you have made. If you are taken ill suddenly and are unable to arrange for a substitute, call the English Department Office (438-3667) and arrange to have your class cancelled. Then immediately contact your PA and/or the Assistant Director and/or Director of the Writing Program.

The Department of English reserves the right to rescind the graduate assistantship of any student who does not adhere to this policy.

## **The Job Search for Faculty Positions**

The Graduate Program energetically helps Ph.D. graduates secure tenure-line appointments, sharing job information, holding seminars on writing vitae and cover letters, conducting mock interviews, and making available extensive information. Our success is reflected in the high placement rates of our graduates. Our faculty are also prepared to be supportive of Master's or Ph.D. candidates searching for jobs at community colleges or in the professions, such as technical writing or teaching public school. Below are guidelines for how the job search might typically be conducted. Job searching for faculty positions generally starts a year before the student anticipates graduating; other job searches may be begun the semester the student anticipates graduating.

### ***Stage 1: Gearing up/Goal setting***

*during late spring*

Students meet with their advisors to discuss start-up procedures, review timeline, and develop a job strategy.

What's a job strategy?

Developing a signature(s):

- A "signature" is that set of characteristics which helps distinguish one job candidate as unique among all others.
- The student and advisor analyze what distinguishes or best characterizes the student as a job candidate.
- They think and write about how the student's work intervenes in and contributes to the field.
- They translate the student's teaching/service/administrative experiences into language that the search committee can understand.

Developing a target(s):

- Students and their advisors devise a list of job variables (institutional type, teaching load, administrative duties, types of courses, student populations & levels—undergraduate, MA, Ph.D.) that matter to the student in their search.

- They discuss what specific conditions may affect the job search (partner considerations, geographic).
- They develop the priorities that the student will bring to the search (e.g., "I'm looking for a 3-3 position in technical writing at an MA- granting institution in the Pacific Northwest.") Students who are more flexible in defining their priorities are more likely to be successful on the national market.

Stage 1 To do:

- 1) The student reads through last year's MLA Job Information List (JIL) or Chronicle of Higher Education, looking at both the types of positions advertised as well as the language used to advertise them.
- 2) Recognizing that faculty are often not on contract during summer months, the student meets with the advisor and/or dissertation/thesis committee, asking several of them if they are willing to write letters of recommendation in the fall.
- 3) The student reviews sample letters of application, colleagues' CVs, and academic homepages.

### ***Stage 2: Preparing the application package***

during summer

Developing Application Materials

Most application materials are quite generic. Students will have to think about how to balance their distinctive qualities with the demands of the genre. The earlier they begin to think about this, the better.

Over the summer, the job applicant should accomplish the following:

- 1) Drafting at least one application letter.
- 2) Updating and revising the CV.
- 3) Creating and/or updating an academic homepage, including an online teaching portfolio, taking care to monitor personal commentaries available to the public on the web, such as blogs or listservs.

Toward the end of the summer, the job applicant should:

- 1) Open up a placement file at the Career Services office, planning ahead for the cost of this service. For a fee, Career Services sends out the official dossier, which includes such materials as recommendation letters and transcripts.
- 2) Solicit letters of recommendation from faculty here and at the student's MA institution (if applicable). Students will probably need 3-5 letters, and they will need to provide deadlines and addresses for their letter writers. Students should give faculty at least one month to write these letters, and they should ask that faculty file those letters with Career Services, where they will be added to the student's dossier.
- 3) Begin thinking about writing sample(s) and getting them into shape. The writing sample should probably be a dissertation chapter, but the student may also wish to include an off-print of an article, or an article or book chapter under review. Creative writers should include in their dossiers a sample of their creative work, preferably photocopies of their published work, if at all possible.

### ***Stage 3: Revising the application package***

during August-September

The student should share drafts of the letter, CV, and portfolio materials with their dissertation advisor/committee and get critical feedback.

Advertisements typically begin to trickle out in September, and flow steadily in October. Job applicants should collect and prioritize these ads according to the strategic targeting that developed at the beginning of the summer.

Managing Time

The end of summer is a crucial time for job applicants to be organized. They will have to balance three activities (writing the dissertation, teaching courses, preparing the job search), any one of which can be a challenge. Even students who are not regular keepers of a calendar will find it worth their time to keep one, if only for the fall semester. Students on the job market should block out time for each of these activities; the ratios among them will change from week-to-week, certainly, but job applicants will need to make progress (or keep up) with each in order to make it through the semester.

### ***Stage 4: Active application***

during October-November

The first installment of the MLA Job Information List comes out in October, but students should also check the Chronicle of Higher Education and any field-specific listservs for jobs in community colleges and specialized positions. The department provides students with access to the MLA JIL. Job applicants who aren't subscribed to listservs in their subfield might want to subscribe in order to get access to more job listings.

### ***Stage 5: Mock interviews and beyond***

during December-April

To do:

- 1) Students can prepare for interviews by being able to describe their research in one or two sentences for an audience who is not steeped in their work or even their subfield of English Studies.
- 2) Either the GPD or the advisor will be willing to stage a mock interview.
- 3) Students can begin preparing a job talk and/or teaching presentation, ideally using a live audience of fellow students for critical feedback.

Sample Timeline:

**Late December:** MLA interviews and phone interviews.

**January-February:** Campus visits and/or send out further applications. (Students should ensure that all the classes that they teach are covered while they are attending interviews.)

**March-April:** Possible second round of interviews/campus visits.

### ***Stage 6: Job offers***

can come as soon as days after the interview or as late as weeks afterwards

Students should consult either with the GPD or with their advisor when they are in the enviable position of receiving one or more job offer. The student should remember that they are both a buyer and a seller in this process: students have the right to ask for job accommodations that will ensure a greater chance of career success.

# Information Common to Both Master's and Ph.D. Programs

## General Information

### Course Descriptions

During the first week of preregistration, the graduate program publishes a detailed Description of Courses. The Description of Courses supplements extensively the sparse information contained in the University Course Schedule, and students should consult the department's Description of Courses with their advisor before selecting courses and registering. The Description of Courses contains an entry for each course, and each entry lists the texts required, discusses the specific focus and issues of each course, describes the course requirements, and provides information about meeting times and registration.

### Registration

Students may register for courses through Campus Solutions. They will receive information from the university registrar on how to do this. Each semester there is a pre-registration period for the following term, and students receive a notice in the mail about the earliest time they are able to register. They may register for classes any time after that time, so they needn't choose hastily. In any event, students must get their advisor's approval of courses they wish to take before registering, and they should consult the Description of Courses. Students give their course selection form to the Graduate Studies Administrator. If they have an advisor other than the Graduate Program Director, that advisor must sign the course selection form. The preregistration period usually lasts about 40 days. The residual registration period is the week before classes begin. If students are anticipating financial aid checks and fail to register for classes during the early registration period, they run the risk of having their check delayed because the university doesn't know they intend to enroll. Students anticipating financial aid should register during the early registration period. Even if a student meets with a faculty advisor to determine coursework for the semester, the student should still arrange to meet with the Graduate Program Director, who will review those courses in light of the overall plan of study, program requirements and time to degree.

## Independent Study

Independent studies must be approved by the Graduate Program Director. Students must complete an independent study form (available from the Graduate Studies Administrator) and get the approval of the faculty member who will direct the study.

## Progress Toward Degree

Students should select their courses carefully. The Graduate Committee expects students to have a mix of A's and B's in their program. Under special circumstances a professor may grant an Incomplete. Independent study is limited to advanced students. Transfer of courses requires a special university procedure. University time limits are listed in the Catalog. It is a University requirement that students maintain a 3.0 GPA. Students who fall below 3.0 will be placed on probation, and if the grades are not improved, they may be dismissed from the program.

## Readmissions

University policy regarding readmitting former students who have been inactive in completing their degree reads as follows:

Graduate students in good standing who wish to return to the university after a lapse of one calendar year should apply for readmission through the admissions office. Students who are not in good academic standing and who have not maintained continuous enrollment (excluding summer terms), and who wish to return to the university are required to apply for readmission as students on academic probation.

### PROCEDURE FOR READMISSION OF FORMER ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:

- 1) **WHOSE TIME LIMIT FOR COMPLETION OF DEGREE HAS EXPIRED:** Before readmission can be approved, a Request to extend Time to Complete Graduate Degree Program must be completed by student, Graduate Program Director, and if applicable, thesis chair, and submitted to the Graduate School for approval/denial.
- 2) **WHO CAN APPLY TO A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM:** Former Illinois State students requesting a new degree program on their applications will not have the opportunity to be admitted into that program at the time of readmission. The Admissions Office will complete an admissions decision form and send it, along

with other academic information, to the new department/school. The new department/school will evaluate the student's eligibility for the program and return the admissions decision form to the Admissions Office. If eligible, the Admissions Office will admit the transfer into a different program.

English department procedures for readmission involve these same processes, plus consultation with the appropriate department committee. Thus, when a student seeks readmission, the Graduate Program Director consults first with the student's former advisor, and if one is available, the student's thesis/dissertation committee to ensure that the student's performance in the program has warranted readmission. In the absence of a sitting advisor or committee, the GPD consults with the Graduate Committee. When it is logical to do so, the GPD also consults with any former Director(s) of Graduate Studies who might have knowledge of the student's suitability for continuing in the program. Readmission to the department requires the following:

- The student must have left the program in good academic standing.
- The appropriate committee must approve the decision, indicating that the student is still suitable for the program.
- Students who have been out of the program for five years or more must either provide evidence of grounding in current theories and practices in English studies or expect to update their competencies through additional coursework. The latter situation will have the consequence that such students cannot simply complete the remaining work as if they had been continuously enrolled. They may need to re-take comprehensive examinations or take additional coursework that will help them to become current in the knowledge of the field.
- The faculty serving in the department at the time of the readmission must be able to meet the student's academic needs appropriately.
- The department must still have available resources to support the student academically.

Readmitted students are also subject to the university's policies regarding time-to-completion of their degrees.

## **Dissertation and Theses Information**

### **Constituting a Committee**

Whether a student is working on a Master's degree or a Ph.D., they will need to select an advisor to direct their examinations. (Sometimes advisors are referred to as "committee chairs" or "thesis directors" or "dissertation directors.") Master's students who are writing theses and all Ph.D. students need to constitute a committee that will oversee the writing of the thesis or dissertation. Typically, students select their advisor (i.e., "director") first, and in consultation with that advisor, they invite other faculty who have pertinent expertise to sit on the committee. Those faculty who join the committee generally have knowledge that complement the director's expertise. The Graduate School requires a minimum of two faculty members per thesis committee and a minimum of three faculty members per dissertation committee. Although the director of the thesis or dissertation committee has the ultimate responsibility in the oversight process of the project, the second (and third or fourth) reader has the right to request that students revise their project to keep it in line with the appropriately rigorous standards of the field in which the project is situated. The director and the student should be in close contact during the stages of proposal writing and thesis or dissertation drafting. During the proposal defense, the director and student should clarify what process the second (and third or fourth) reader's role will follow in reading chapters that the director has approved for distribution to the committee. Students who wish to invite a faculty member from outside the department or from another university to sit on a committee may consult the Graduate Program Director about the Graduate School's protocols for enabling such additions to the committee.

## The Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Approval Process

After the student has worked closely with their thesis or dissertation director to draft and revise a proposal, they are ready to begin the formal approval process.

- 1) The student prepares a title page that follows this general format:

Title [Centered Roughly in Top Third of Page]

Proposal for a Master's Thesis / Ph.D. Dissertation

.

.

.

Submitted by

Student's Name

[centered in middle of page]

Date

.

.

[centered roughly in bottom third of page]

Proposal approved for defense by Chair [insert name]

---

[line for signature, date]

Committee Members: [insert name(s) X, Y, Z]

- 2) Student makes two copies of the proposal and cover sheet and gives both to the thesis or dissertation director.
- 3) The thesis or dissertation director approves the proposal as ready for defense. She or he does so by signing the cover sheets and giving both copies to the Director of Graduate Studies. At this time the student should also give copies to other members of the defense committee. It is considered a professional courtesy for all members of the committee to have reviewed and approved the proposal before it goes to defense.
- 4) The Director of Graduate Studies appoints a member of the Graduate Committee to join the candidate and the committee for a defense of the proposal. The student is responsible for arranging a meeting of everyone for the defense. Of course, the thesis/dissertation chair may help facilitate this process.
- 5) The student and the proposal defense committee will meet for about an hour. The Chair of the Committee should chair this meeting, which has five related purposes:
  - a. Establish agreement that the project is worth doing. In other words, the committee and student determine that the project responds to or creates some rhetorical exigency within English Studies, that it will lead to a written work that members of the profession will recognize as a meaningful part of ongoing scholarly or artistic discourses.
  - b. Establish that the student is likely to complete the work. In other words the committee and student determine whether the student is sufficiently well-read, that the project is of a manageable scope, that the methods proposed or plans for writing are reasonable, and so on.
  - c. Share advice and strategies. Committee members may recommend readings, may suggest that the student foreground certain issues or drop others, may provide strategies for organizing the work or conducting the research and so on.
  - d. Reassure the student that the committee understands their project and is willing to commit to it. Any disagreements among committee members or between committee members and the student should be discussed at this time so that there is a clear sense of everyone's positions and roles.
  - e. Establish procedures for such matters as when and how committee members are going to read drafts. In approving the proposal, committee members are agreeing to work in good faith to help the student complete a thesis or

dissertation along the general lines of that proposed. As the meeting draws to a conclusion, the student should summarize orally the main points that faculty have made in making their suggestions for improving the project.

Unless there are major and substantive objections raised at the defense, there is no need to rewrite the proposal; it is important to have worked with the thesis or dissertation director extensively before the formal meeting and to have consulted with other committee members. However, in rare cases, the committee may require a revision.

- 6) Following the meeting, the student should write an approximately one-page memorandum of understanding, addressed to the committee. In the memo, the student should summarize the main points raised at the defense so that there is a record of the meeting and so the committee is assured that the student understands the issues. Further, the student should explain how they will modify the project based on these points; if they contest the advice of the Committee, they should justify their position. At the end of the memo, the student should include the following statement, with places for signatures:

Thesis/dissertation proposal approved by:

---

Chair

---

Second Reader

---

Member (needed only for Ph.D.)

---

Graduate Committee Representative

- 7) Route a copy of this memo to all members of the committee. If there is some time constraint (a scholarship application, for example), the student might hand carry the memo from member to member for signatures. Because some committee members will rightly wish to review the memo carefully before signing, the student may want to print copies for everyone and distribute them before gathering the signatures. Committee members who feel they cannot approve the proposal as written and discussed in the

memo should schedule a meeting with the candidate and the thesis/dissertation director.

- 8) At the same time that the student is circulating the memo for signing, they should also circulate the Graduate School's "Proposal Approval Form." The student may get this from the Graduate Studies Administrator.
- 9) When the student has gathered signatures on both the memo and the "Proposal Approval Form," they return both to the Graduate Program Director, who will sign and then send the form to the Graduate School. At this point, the proposal is formally approved and that approval is recorded.

## Approval for Research Involving Human Subjects

**Important IRB Information:** All students (and faculty) who plan to do research that involves human subjects, such as in the teaching internship, must have their plans approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before they begin the research. Early in the semester before the internship is to take place, the student should arrange to meet with one of the department's IRB representatives to discuss the research and the preparation of the IRB protocol. Faculty who have not served as an internship supervisor or as a principle investigator should also attend this meeting with the graduate student. **All Ph.D. students are required to complete an Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol before conducting an internship unless the nature of their internship under Emphasis 2—Course Design and Teaching—does not involve their students or their students' work produced for the class as research subjects.** IRB forms may be downloaded from the University's Office of Research and Sponsored Project's Research Policy and Compliance division. The department's IRB representative must forward that completed form to the university-level committee for approval, so this process can take up to two or three months for final approval.

Compliance with federal research regulations is crucial to our ability to receive federal grant funds. Research and some teaching activities involving the use of human subjects and live vertebrate animals are overseen at Illinois State University by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) respectively. To demonstrate our commitment to research ethics, the IRB and IACUC have instituted mandatory CITI training requirements. CITI is a comprehensive online training program free to all ISU users and their non-ISU collaborators. To enroll in these courses, please follow the instructions on the Research Ethics and Compliance (REC) website at: <http://research.illinoisstate.edu/ethics/>. Course completion report numbers will need to be included on protocol forms after the dates below. If you have any questions, please refer to the REC website or contact the REC at 438-2520 or 438-2529. Individuals who have completed CITI training at other institutions should contact REC for information on reciprocity.

**Human Subjects: Effective January 1, 2011,** all principal investigators and co-PIs on new IRB protocols will be required to have completed the "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with Human Subjects" (Basic) course. Also effective January 1, 2011, all undergraduate and graduate students listed on new protocols that are designated as Exempt or Expedited Review will be required to have completed either the "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with human subjects" course or the "Students conducting no more than minimal risk research" course. Students on new protocols that are designated as Full Review will be required to have completed the full "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with human subjects" basic

course. Human subjects CITI courses are valid for three years, after which refresher courses must be taken to continue research.

## Fellowships and Awards

### *University Awards*

The **University Foundation Fellowship** is an award of \$1,000 to students who have demonstrated potential for academic excellence at the graduate level. Applications will be accepted from those applying for, or already admitted to, a degree program; however, at the time of the award, applicants must not have begun work on a degree program. New applicants are encouraged to contact the department before February 1 about the Illinois State University Foundation Fellowship.

The **Ora Bretall Scholarship** is for students whose proposals for Master's theses or doctoral dissertations deal significantly with issues of educational theory in pedagogy, educational foundations, curriculum, and educational administration. Eligible students from all colleges of the University may compete for an Ora Bretall Award. Generally, Master's thesis awards are \$1,000 and doctoral dissertation awards are \$2,000. Deadline: September 15 and March 15 each year.

The **Ada Belle Clark Welsh Scholarship**, for women, provides an award of \$2,500 to "mature women of good community standing with undergraduate degrees who show promise and are deserving of a graduate educational opportunity" in the field of "liberal arts and humanities, including study for teacher preparation or improvement." Specific criteria shall include, in order of importance: a) a record of academic excellence, b) evidence of career orientation, and c) financial need. Deadline: September 15 and March 15 each year.

Other university awards include the Donald F. McHenry Fellowship for minorities, the Winegardner Fellowship for International Students, the Julia N. Visor Book Scholarship, the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Fellowship, and the University Club Scholarship. Graduate students in English regularly receive these awards.

Beyond these awards, English graduate students regularly win college and university-level thesis and dissertation competitions.

For more information or application forms for these scholarships contact the Graduate School Office, Hovey 310, Phone: 438-2583. Information is also available on the Graduate School's website.

### ***Department Awards and Fellowships***

Department awards include

- the George Canning Award for Excellence in Literature (currently \$250);
- the Anna Keaton Award for Excellence in English Studies (approximately \$1000);
- the Taimi Ranta and Glenn Grever Awards for Outstanding Teaching;
- the Excellence in ESL Award; the Maurice Scharon Scholarship in Rhetoric;
- the Dorothy Bryan Schemske scholarship in creative writing and teaching;
- the Tom Kuster Creative Writing Award;
- the Taimi Maria Ranta Children's and Adolescent Literature Scholarship; and
- the William Morgan Award in Poetry and Poetics.

Information about applying for these awards is available on the [department's website](#).

### ***Ranta and Grever Outstanding English Graduate Student Teaching Awards***

Each year the department selects outstanding graduate student teachers. Up to three awards can be made: 1) Taimi Ranta Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Ph.D. Candidate; 2) Glenn Grever Award for Outstanding Teaching by a Master's Candidate; 3) Master's Level Teaching Initiative Award.

The Ranta Award is for a Ph.D. student with sole responsibility for instruction in a course. The Grever Award is for a Master's student with sole responsibility for a course, and the Master's Level Teaching Initiative Award is for students who serve in any capacity that supports another instructor in work such as directing discussion groups, tutoring, responding to student writing, etc., in a course taught by another teacher. (GTAs assisting in English 101.10, for example, should apply in this category.)

Each of the three winners will receive a cash award and a certificate, will be recognized at the department banquet, and will be entered in a University competition. In addition, the Selection Committee (which is a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee) may recognize runners-up.

The Ranta and Grever awards will be given to teachers who have sole responsibility for instruction in a course.

### ***Nomination Procedures***

All Graduate Teaching Assistants are invited to nominate themselves for an award. Additionally, nominations may come from peers or from faculty members. Typically, the award nomination deadline is **April 1**.

### ***Application Materials***

The following information is required to apply

- 1) A letter of nomination.
- 2) A letter of reference from a faculty member, preferably a teaching supervisor who is in a good position to describe the nominee's teaching assignment and assess their appointment. Note that this letter may also serve as a letter of nomination.
- 3) A teaching portfolio, which should contain, at a minimum, a statement of teaching philosophy, course materials (including a syllabus), and pertinent supporting materials that demonstrate the graduate student's teaching accomplishments.

### ***Selection Process***

A committee comprising representatives from the Graduate Committee will make decisions based on the application materials. Winners will be announced in early May. Students who win at the Departmental level are then forwarded to the College. College winners are sent to the University level. Teaching portfolios for University awards should follow the "Portfolio Preparations Guidelines" available at <http://ctlt.illinoisstate.edu/awards/university/portfolio/>.

## Support for Graduate Student Travel

Graduate students who plan to present a paper at an international, national or regional conference, who are invited to make presentations of original, creative work, who plan to attend a conference for a job interview, or who plan to travel to conduct archival or field research as part of their program of study may apply—once every academic year— for financial support from the Department of English.

Students should submit to the Office Administrator, a completed Graduate Student Travel Encumbrance Funding Request form along with one of the following: either a paragraph describing how the trip is conducive to their programs of study/progress toward degree/professional development or the title and abstract that will be presented if applicable, no later than November 1. Students meeting this deadline will be given priority consideration. However, applications will be accepted beyond the deadline in the event that additional travel funds become available.

English Department Travel funds are extremely limited. Travel expenses up to a maximum of \$200.00 will be reimbursed according to the university guidelines on the Comptroller's Office website: <https://travel.illinoisstate.edu/reimbursements/>. The graduate program is committed to supporting all eligible requests for funding; therefore, travelers should expect to receive a percentage of the costs of their trips. Travel within a 50-mile radius of Bloomington-Normal is excluded. Awards are contingent on availability of funds.

Students must present evidence of conference presentation, invitation to present creative work, archival or field research, or job interview before travel funds will be released. This can consist of, for example, your name on the conference program or a letter of invitation.

Occasionally, and depending on available resources, rental of a university vehicle may be covered by the graduate program for groups of three or more students attending the same regional conference or scholarly event. Groups should apply directly to the Graduate Program Director.

### Application Guidelines:

After July 1<sup>st</sup> each academic year, all applicants should submit to the Office Administrator:

- 1) a completed Department of English Graduate Student Travel Encumbrance form (Copies are available from the Office Administrator.)
- 2) proof of acceptance to present at a conference or invitation to be on a panel

3) a paragraph/rationale for the funding or the title and abstract of the paper to be presented, if applicable

4) Students asking for research funds must additionally furnish a short statement about their research project and the purpose of travel. Their faculty advisors should also submit a note about the project.

- The deadline for priority funding consideration is November 1.
- No money will be released to the traveler until the traveler has turned in a properly completed non-employee travel voucher form, with required documentation and in the case of research travel, a brief report on the trip. Within 30 days after your trip, you will need to submit a completed, signed Non-Employee Travel Voucher and receipts to the Office Administrator for reimbursement. Current Non-Employee Travel Voucher forms are found on the Comptroller's website: <https://travel.illinoisstate.edu/forms/>

If you anticipate your travel expenses will exceed \$200.00, you may wish to apply for travel funds from the College of Arts and Sciences. Up-to-date information can be found after September 15 at <https://cas.illinoisstate.edu/studentlife/travel/>. If you receive a travel grant from the College, the funds will be transferred to the Department of English, and your reimbursement will be processed by the Office Administrator.

## Graduate Tuition Waiver Guidelines

Adopted April 1999

Occasionally, the department has money to grant tuition waivers to part-time and full-time students not otherwise on assistantship. These funds, however, are very limited.

### ***Application Process***

Students will complete an application form and submit it to the Graduate Studies Administrator. We strongly recommend that students submit applications before the semester of the award begins; however, they are welcome any time up to the last date acceptable in the University. Forms may be downloaded from this web site:

[http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/tuition\\_wavers/graduatetuitionwaiver.pdf](http://grad.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/tuition_wavers/graduatetuitionwaiver.pdf)

### **Tuition Waiver Eligibility Criteria**

Note that these are the normal conditions under which tuition waiver monies are awarded. The English Department and the Graduate Program Director maintain the flexibility for extenuating circumstances that might warrant the award of tuition waivers.

All waivers are contingent upon available funds:

- 1) GPA minimum of 3.0
- 2) PhD students after 4 or 5 years of funding may receive a one-credit tuition waiver for two semesters of continuous enrollment.
- 3) PhD students who are admitted but do not seek an assistantship may receive a 3 or 4-credit tuition waiver for six semesters.
- 4) Master's students who are admitted but did not seek an assistantship may receive a 3-credit tuition waiver for four semesters.
- 5) PhD students who are admitted on an assistantship, but relinquish that assistantship before five years of funding, may receive a 3 or 4-credit tuition waiver up to five years (ten semesters) of enrollment in the program.
- 6) Master's students who are admitted on an assistantship, but relinquish that assistantship before two years of funding, may receive a 3-credit tuition waiver up to two years (four semesters) of enrollment in the program.

**Decision Process**

Tuition waivers will be granted on a rolling basis. The Graduate Program Director shall evaluate applicants' materials and make award decisions. The Graduate Program Director shall report those decisions each semester to the English Graduate Committee.

# Graduate Faculty Advising Guide

Department of English, Illinois State University

## **Overview**

Graduate Faculty who are directing theses, portfolios, dissertations and/or serving as advisors for doctoral teaching internships and/or doctoral comps should familiarize themselves with the following information and share the information with their students (students also have access to much of this information on the graduate program web site):

### ***Graduate School Dates and Deadlines:***

<http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/> (the link to the dates and deadlines pdf file is at the top of the Graduate School's home page)

Please note—and alert your advisees to the fact—that the Graduate School is strict with deadlines.

### ***Master of Arts Language Requirement***

Please tell your advisees in the Master's program that if they wish to earn the M.A. rather than the M.S., they must have completed (either as an undergraduate or graduate student) a minimum of four semesters (or its equivalent) in one foreign language. The student must have earned a grade of C or better in these courses. The student may also fulfill the language requirement by passing a language proficiency exam offered through Testing Services:

<http://ucollege.illinoisstate.edu/testing>

### ***Master's Thesis***

To write a thesis, the student must first have a proposal approved by the advisor and then defend the proposal before the thesis committee and a representative of the Graduate Committee. The Master's thesis proposal is a 10-20 page (including bibliography) description of the intended project identifying the following issues: a statement of the argument of the thesis; a review of the literature; the methodology or theories to be employed; a chapter outline; a time schedule; and a bibliography. Once the advisor approves the proposal, the student should submit two copies of the proposal (signed by the advisor) to the Graduate Studies Administrator, who will work with the student and Graduate Program Director to schedule the Thesis Proposal Defense.

In two of the master's tracks—Rhetoric and Composition and Technical Writing and Rhetorics—students, in consultation with the advisor, choose one of two thesis types: academic or professional. Requirements for the academic thesis appear above in the “Master's Thesis” section. A student writing a professional thesis must prepare a portfolio. To begin such a project, a student must first have a proposal approved by the advisor and committee members and then defend the proposal before the thesis committee and a representative of the Graduate Committee. The proposal is a 10-20 page document that includes the following: an introduction to the purpose and audience of the portfolio; an introduction to the areas of expertise/concentration the portfolio will demonstrate; the specific goals for the portfolio; the plans toward completing the portfolio (i.e., proposed deliverable(s), interface, design, resources, print and/or digital artifacts; delivery and timeline for completion); summary of the value of the project; works cited/references, and--where necessary--appendices. All members of the thesis committee must agree that the student is ready to defend the proposal before moving ahead with scheduling a defense date. Once the advisor and other committee members approve the proposal, the student should submit two copies of the proposal (signed by the advisor and committee members) to the Graduate Studies Administrator, who will work with the student and Graduate Program Director to schedule the Thesis Proposal Defense.

### ***Doctoral Dissertation***

To write a dissertation, the student must first have a proposal approved by the dissertation director and then defend the proposal before the dissertation committee and a representative of the Graduate Committee. The dissertation proposal is typically a 10-20 page (including bibliography) description of the intended project identifying the following issues: a statement of the argument of the dissertation; a review of the literature (if pertinent); the methodology or theories to be employed; a chapter outline; a time schedule; and a bibliography. Once the director approves the proposal, the student should submit two copies of the proposal (signed by the advisor) to the Graduate Studies Administrator, who will work with the student and Graduate Program Director to schedule the Dissertation Proposal Defense.

### ***Role of Graduate Committee Representative at Proposal Defenses***

The Graduate Committee representative's role at the proposal defense is to ensure the intellectual rigor of the proposal and to ensure that faculty expectations placed on students are fair. The Graduate Committee representative may request that the student revise the proposal if they believe revisions are warranted.

***Degree Audit (formerly called "Plan of Study")***

Please advise your students that the graduate Degree Audit form can be downloaded from the Graduate School web site. Students should fill out the degree audit form (basically a list of courses the student has taken while in the program, the number of credit hours attached to those courses, and the grades received) and send it as an e-mail attachment to the Graduate Program Director in English during the semester preceding the semester of graduation. Once the student completes the form, the Graduate Program Director checks it against the student's record on the university mainframe, then submits it to the Graduate School. Next a Graduate School official checks it again against the degree requirements as articulated in the Graduate Catalog and either accepts it or bounces it back to the Graduate Program Director with questions. Often, any problems with the Degree Audit that the Graduate School identifies can easily be resolved. From time to time, the solution is not so easy. In either case, the Graduate Program Director will consult with the student and/or the student's advisor to try to resolve the problem.

***Evaluation of Master's and Doctoral Comprehensive Exams***

All Graduate Faculty will be assigned to evaluate, throughout the semester, Master's and Doctoral comprehensive exams. Faculty will not, generally, be asked to evaluate exams over the summer unless they are teaching a summer class and therefore being paid by the university. To ensure that students move through their programs of study expeditiously, faculty should, if it is possible, return graded exams within two weeks of receiving them.

## **Doctoral Advising**

### **Advising Students about the Doctoral Comps Process**

Please advise your students to follow this process:

#### **For the Specialization Exam:**

1. Write reading list and rationale with input from advisor.
2. Send an electronic copy of your rationale and reading list copying your advisor requesting their approval to the Graduate Studies Administrator. This copy should have your assigned ID# at the top of the first page. There should be no other identifying marks for the specialization exam.
3. Once the Graduate Studies Administrator receives the approved copy of the reading list and rationale, you may no longer consult your advisor about the exam and will have four weeks to complete the exam. At the end of the exam period, please send the Graduate Studies Administrator a final electronic copy (do not put your name on the exam response—use your assigned ID# only).

#### **For the English Studies Exam:**

1. Write reading list and proposal with input from your advisor.
2. Four weeks before you intend to deliver your oral presentation, send an electronic copy of your proposal and reading list, copying your advisor requesting their approval, to the English Studies exam to the Graduate Studies Administrator (include both your name and ID#). Please work with the Graduate Studies Administrator upon turning in your reading list and proposal to schedule a day, time, and location for your presentation. Once you turn in the approved proposal and reading list, you will work independently on preparing your presentation. During the four weeks leading up to your presentation, you may not consult with your advisor on matters relating to your exam.
3. Two weeks before your presentation/examination, turn in to the Graduate Studies Administrator a one-page abstract of your English Studies presentation. The abstract, which should clearly articulate what the presentation will be about, does not need prior approval by your advisor.

## Advising Students about Doctoral Teaching Internships

Please advise your students to follow this process:

1. Approximately one year from the start of the anticipated internship, the student should submit an internship request to the Graduate Program Director (normally, this request should be submitted at the start of the doctoral student's second year in the program). The internship request should consist of a brief letter stating the course and semester the student would like to teach and a one-paragraph rationale for the request. The rationale should note how the internship relates to the dissertation, research, or professional goals. The letter should be endorsed/signed by the internship advisor, if the student has one, or by the student's general academic advisor, or by the Graduate Program Director. Students will be informed if the request can be accommodated. Before being allowed to sign up for internship credit, however, they must have an approved internship proposal.
2. In the semester before the internship is to take place, the student must submit an acceptable formal proposal to their advisor. The advisor may accept, reject, or request revisions of the proposal. The internship proposal should describe the prospective research study (both its rationale and methodology) and relate that research to the thesis or dissertation. Proposals should be 5-10 pages long and should include a bibliography. (The internship request and the internship proposal are two different documents, with two different intended audiences. The internship request is a mechanism by which students communicate with the department's administration about the logistics of scheduling; the proposal is a statement of intellectual goals that is to be negotiated between the student and their advisor.).
3. After the internship advisor approves the internship proposal, they should sign the "Internship Approval" form and file it, along with a copy of the proposal, with the Graduate Program Director in English. This must be before the internship begins, normally by August 1 for the fall semester, by January 1 for the spring semester, and by June 1 for the summer term. Students will not be allowed to enroll in English 591 until the internship proposal and, if applicable to the type of research in which the student will be engaged, the IRB form, have been approved. Effective January 1, 2011, all principal investigators and co-PIs (ie; you and your advisee!) on new IRB protocols will be required to have completed the "Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with Human Subjects" (Basic) course. Also effective January 1, 2011, all undergraduate and graduate students listed on new protocols that are designated as Exempt or Expedited Review will be required to have completed either the "Educational, Social and

Behavioral Research with human subjects” course or the “Students conducting no more than minimal risk research” course. Students on new protocols that are designated as Full Review will be required to have completed the full “Educational, Social and Behavioral Research with human subjects” basic course. Human subjects CITI courses are valid for three years, after which refresher courses must be taken to continue research. To enroll in these courses, please follow the instructions on the Research Ethics and Compliance (REC) website at: <http://research.illinoisstate.edu/ethics/>. Course completion report numbers will need to be included on protocol forms after January 1, 2011.

4. During the course of the internship, the internship advisor will review course syllabi and materials and attend at least one class meeting, unless distance precludes that possibility, in which case the student is required to remain in close contact with the advisor. The student and internship advisor will regularly discuss issues related to teaching in the class and emerging research questions, as well, perhaps, as related readings.
5. Effective for all students beginning doctoral internships in fall 2012 and after: On April 18, 2012, The Graduate Faculty in English approved the Graduate Committee's proposal to replace the pedagogy component of the doctoral comprehensive exam with a more extensive, intellectually rigorous Internship Essay that will better poise students for the pedagogical work of the dissertation.

Under this new model, depending on the situation that is most helpful to the student’s progress toward degree, the student will enroll in ENG 591 either in the semester during which they teach their internship class or the semester immediately following the internship. At the end of the semester in which the student enrolls in ENG 591, they will turn in to the internship advisor an essay of 20-30 pages in length, including a bibliography, that

- A. situates a discussion of pedagogical issues raised during the internship in the context of broader scholarly conversations about pedagogical issues reflected in texts that the student has included in their bibliography;
- B. identifies pedagogical questions raised during the internship that the student would like to investigate further in the future; and
- C. articulates the potential impact of the work conducted during the internship on the student’s dissertation project.

The student's internship advisor will evaluate this essay and record a grade for ENG 591.

Note: This revision will not be applicable to students who completed teaching internships prior to the fall 2012 semester.