A HANDBOOK FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE IN ENGLISH AT USF
# Table of Contents

THE USF ENGLISH GRADUATE PROGRAM ................................................................. 1
SOME HELPFUL HINTS .......................................................................................... 3
WHERE TO GET ADVICE ..................................................................................... 5
THE PHD IN ENGLISH: Aim of the Program and Admission Requirements .......... 6
GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS ........................................... 7
COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD DEGREE IN ENGLISH: Literature Track ...... 11
TIMELINE FOR THE PHD DEGREE IN ENGLISH: Literature Track ......................... 13
PHD QUALIFYING EXAM: Literature Track ............................................................. 14
PREPARING FOR THE PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION IN LITERATURE ............ 17
COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD DEGREE IN ENGLISH: Rhet/Comp Track .... 18
TIMELINE FOR THE PHD DEGREE IN ENGLISH: Rhetoric and Composition Track .... 20
PHD QUALIFYING EXAM: Rhetoric and Composition Track .................................... 21
PHD DISSERTATION GUIDELINES ........................................................................ 23
THE DISSERTATION: COMPONENTS & PROCEDURES .......................................... 24
GRADUATION PROCEDURES ............................................................................. 32
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ................................................................................... 33
APPENDIX A: PhD Literature Exam Rubric ............................................................. 34
APPENDIX B: PhD Rhetoric and Composition Exam Rubrics: Part I & Part II ......... 35
APPENDIX C: Dissertation Rubric (Literature and Rhetoric & Composition Tracks) .... 36
The USF English Graduate Program

In the Carnegie Foundation categories for higher education, the University of South Florida is classified as Very High Research and Community Engaged. The department of English shares these commitments with a productive graduate faculty engaged in creative and critical publishing, and a dynamic and growing program that features Literature and Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, Rhetoric and Composition, and Creative Writing.

Graduate studies in English at the University of South Florida includes five degree programs: Literature (PhD and MA), Rhetoric and Composition (PhD and MA) and Creative Writing (MFA). The department also administers graduate certificates in Teaching Composition, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, and Professional and Technical Communication. In conjunction with the World Languages and Humanities and Cultural Studies departments, the English department is developing a graduate certificate in Film Studies. Additionally, graduate students in English can earn certificates in related fields such as Women’s Studies and area studies including Africana, Cuban, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, or Library Science.

We have approximately 130 students in our program who work closely with a dynamic and growing faculty of internationally recognized scholars and award-winning teachers. The program features small seminar-style graduate classes and offers opportunities for directed research and professional development. The department is home to journals for undergraduate and graduate students as well as Saw Palm, a literary annual focused on Florida authors and themes produced by members of the Creative Writing program, the Norman Mailer Review, and the newly established Aphra Behn Online interactive journal.

Graduate degrees in English are professional degrees in that they prepare students for professional activities in scholarly or creative publications and pedagogy. The Master of Arts degree is a generalist degree that builds upon the literary or writing experiences from the student’s Bachelor’s program. It involves students in increasingly complex critical inquiry and analysis, and introduces them to the implementation of methods, standards, and conventions of scholarship in the field. It has broad-based distribution requirements but also the flexibility for students to study cutting-edge theories and newly emerging fields of interest, including cultural and comparative studies, genre studies such as film, rhetoric and technology, and theories of composition. Currently the program is designed with two options for its capstone: a comprehensive exam or a thesis.

The Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing is a graduate-level program offering concentrations in fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. The program emphasizes the craft of writing and concentrates on the student's original work. The MFA requires 45 hours of coursework and typically will take three years for the full-time student to complete. Our goal is to help MFA students produce publishable theses and secure teaching or editing positions upon graduation.

The PhD is the highest level of training for studies in English, and it prepares students to be scholars and teachers in recognized fields, including emergent fields with high marketability. Less focused on coverage, this degree allows students to develop depth in primary and secondary fields and to become expert scholar-teachers in the subdiscipline of choice. Students work closely with a faculty advisor whose scholarly training and publication record provides a model for the student’s development. The degree concludes with the writing of a dissertation, a substantial work of literary
scholarship that solidifies the student’s professional identity.

We have placed many MA and PhD graduates in teaching positions throughout the state and country. Our doctorates have recently earned tenure-track positions at institutions such as the University of Central Florida, Florida Atlantic University, College of the Bahamas, Albany State University, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Nova Southeastern University, St. Cloud University, and Edge Hill University, England. Because many of our graduates go on to tenure-track jobs at teaching institutions, we emphasize theories of pedagogy and training in instruction through practica in Composition, Literature, and Professional and Technical Writing. Many of our students are offered teaching assistantships for First-year Writing courses, and there are opportunities for advanced graduate students to teach general education courses in literature and writing. Graduate student instructors build a supportive network through such activities as the monthly Teaching Discussion Group.

The department benefits from the collegial interaction of our three tracks with colloquia and speaker series that bring them together. Our active English Graduate Student Association sponsors a monthly colloquium in which students from Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, and Creative Writing each read from their work. Additionally, the EGSA annually hosts a national interdisciplinary graduate conference centering on current disciplinary topics. Faculty members share their works-in-progress in a monthly brown-bag lunch series. All of these organizations and events, and many more, are announced in the monthly graduate program newsletter.

With help from courses on professional topics such as Scholarly Writing and Research and workshops on preparing for the job market by our placement committee, our graduate students publish their work in a variety of scholarly and literary venues; our creative writing students have won national awards including the O. Henry Prize for short fiction. The department provides some support for students to present their work at conferences, and additional funds are available from the Graduate and Professional Student Council. Our teaching assistants consistently garner the university’s highest distinction, the Provost’s Award for Outstanding Teaching, and the department annually honors our top students for their accomplishments in scholarship, writing, and instruction with twelve or more named monetary awards.

For more information on the program and opportunities for graduate students, please visit the department website: http://english.usf.edu/.
Some Helpful Hints

The purpose of this handbook is to help you plan your graduate studies in English and to prepare you for entrance into an academic career. In addition to examining these materials, you may also want to consider the following resources:

**Become Active in The English Graduate Student Association.**
The EGSA sponsors academic and social events that will help you become an active member of the department.

**Consider submitting your required papers.**
Write required course papers as possible articles for publication, and then submit them to appropriate journals. For your shorter papers, consider submitting as papers for conferences.

**Monitor the Canvas Organization for English Graduate Students.**
As a graduate student, you will automatically be placed in the Canvas organization “English Graduate Students Information.” The organization is accessed through Canvas (https://my.usf.edu) under the Student Life tab. This site is regularly updated by the graduate director and the graduate program specialist. It includes department forms, course information, handbooks, degree information, discussion boards, and more. Semester deadlines are also posted to the site each semester.

**Read the Graduate Newsletter.**
Inklinks is the monthly newsletter for the graduate program in the English Department at USF. It includes important information on deadlines, changes, updates, and announcements related to graduate studies. It also has columns that feature graduate student activities, faculty and student accomplishments, alumni news, department news (including interviews with new professors), CFPs and conference announcements, and a calendar of events.

**Monitor your USF email account, and don’t let it become full.**
While we may have personal email addresses on file for students, the default means of communicating with students is through USF email. Student email addresses are often used by department staff and administrators, and they are posted on the current graduate student listing of the department website. Students are responsible for actively monitoring their USF email accounts and ensuring that they do not become full.

**Get to know faculty and consult with them on a regular basis.**
Our faculty members are interested in helping you. Feel free to seek advice from them on topics for articles, conference papers, or dissertations. The list of faculty (http://english.usf.edu/faculty) and their specialties will help you to identify those who might be familiar with scholarship in a given area.

**Attend regional and national conferences.**
Attending conferences is an excellent way to provide you with access to the latest scholarship, an opportunity to meet students and faculty from other institutions, and the opportunity to acquaint yourself with particular areas of specialization. For upcoming conferences, see the MLA Announcements website (member access only) and the University of Pennsylvania CFP website, as well as the monthly newsletter. **Note:** If you are taking a full course load and teaching, you should
not try to present at more than one conference per semester because it takes away from your ability to succeed in coursework, which should be your first priority.

Read the important journals and scholarship in your area of interest.
Before joining the scholarly “conversation” in your field, know what has been and is being said and by whom. Ask the faculty in your field what the most important journals are. In addition to joining MLA, consider becoming a member of relevant associations, such as American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Respond to calls for news.
We will publish news of your accomplishments in the monthly newsletter when you publish an article, present a paper, or receive an honor or award.

Prepare well in advance for your PhD Examination.
Early in the program, begin to think of the areas in which you will be tested. Consider the works from your classes that you’ll want to see on your exam reading lists so you’ll later have working lists to present to your exam committee members. Practice composing one-hour exam essays based on the sample exam questions available on the English Graduate Students Information organization on Canvas. Attend department workshops on preparing for your PhD exams.

Begin early to think of a dissertation topic.
Don’t wait until the last minute; give yourself ample time to develop an area and topic of interest. You should have this identified by the end of your first year in the two-year MA program. Meet with the Master’s Advisor in your first year to discuss this process.

You should meet regularly with your PhD program advisor in your first two years to plan your coursework and discuss potential dissertation topics and advisors.

Begin now to prepare for your career.
As you begin your graduate study, keep in mind that you are already preparing for your career. Collect materials as you go, and don’t assume you can always do it later. Work on building an impressive curriculum vita that will distinguish you from other qualified applicants. Join professional organizations, read papers at conferences, submit articles for publication, and apply for scholarships and honors. Because so much depends on the professionalism of the documents in your dossier, spend ample time perfecting them. Also remember that if you are going on the academic job market, you will need to collect three or more letters of recommendation from professors and administrators who can speak knowledgeably about your teaching and scholarship.
Where to Get Advice

The graduate director should be the first stop in your progress through the PhD. The graduate director will help you go through the checklist of PhD requirements, select the areas of concentration for your qualifying exams, select a committee and fill out the appropriate form for your exam, and form your dissertation committee.

For literature students, the graduate director is also the program advisor. For rhetoric and composition students, the Coordinator of Rhetoric and Composition is the program advisor.

Students are also encouraged to seek advice on an informal basis from individual graduate faculty members until they establish primary mentors who will serve as their dissertation directors. Although dissertation directors should be the ones helping students prepare for job applications, the department also has a placement committee that offers a variety of services to get students ready for the job market.
The PhD in English

The Aim of the Program
The aim of the PhD program in English is to produce teacher-scholars who possess a sound general background in literature or rhetoric and composition, an intensive specialized background in their field of concentration, and experience in reading and scholarly writing. Finally, the program aims to provide pedagogical and practical experience so that each student will be well prepared to excel as a professor in the college classroom at every level.

PhD Admission Requirements
Admission to the English PhD program is dependent on the applicant’s previous academic performance, GRE scores, recommendations of former instructors, demonstrated writing ability, the recommendation of the departmental Graduate Admissions Committee, and the approval of the graduate director. All candidates must apply through the Admissions website at http://www.usf.edu/admissions/graduate/index.aspx. GRE scores and transcripts are sent to the Graduate Admissions Office.

⇒ Deadline: Admission to the PhD program occurs in the fall only, and the deadline for application is January 1. Earlier applications are encouraged for eligibility in USF scholarship and fellowship programs.

⇒ Criteria: A successful applicant will normally be expected to possess the following basic qualifications:
  • a competitive Verbal score and a target 4.5 Analytical Writing score on the GRE General Test;
  • an MA in English from an accredited university;
  • and a graduate GPA of at least 3.7.

⇒ Additional Application Materials
A complete application must contain the following materials:
  • a two-to-three page statement describing the student’s background, purpose for obtaining the degree, and career goals;
  • a critical paper representing the student’s work (unless published, this work should be a paper that the student has written for a university graduate English course, and it should be accompanied by a note from the professor confirming the course for which the paper was written);
  • and three letters of recommendation, at least two of which should be from professors who have taught the applicant at the graduate level.

⇒ Where to Submit the Additional Materials
All supplementary application materials (i.e., statement, writing sample, and letters) may be submitted electronically through the online application.
GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Internship

As part of our effort to expand professional opportunities for and enhance the job placement of our graduate students, we offer a graduate internship, ENG 6946 Internship [Proposed], for MA, MFA, and PhD students in all tracks. Based on the undergraduate internship in Professional and Technical Writing coordinated by Dr. Michael Shuman (http://mshuman.com/internships/), this is a semester-long, elective course. The department has created relationships with an impressive list of sponsors in the Tampa Bay area from industry and technology to the arts, law, and education. Internships create valuable opportunities to enhance your job skills to prepare you for non-academic careers.

ENG 6946 Internship [Proposed] consists of supervised work-and-learning experience in professional and technical communication or other related fields under the direction of a USF faculty member and an employee of a participating firm. Ten to 12 hours per week of student time is expected during a standard 16-week semester; 13 to 16 hours per week is expected during a 10-week Summer C semester; 30 to 36 hours per week is expected for Summer A or Summer B semesters, although internships during these shorter terms normally are not available.

Students must arrange an internship placement prior to the start of the course and are encouraged to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies at least one semester prior to enrolling in the course. PhD students must have the approval of their major professor. Enrollment is contingent upon the availability of suitable internship sponsors based on the student's academic and career goals. Students are placed according to specific academic and experiential qualifications, including GPA, courses taken, previous employment history, and interviews with the Director of Graduate Studies, the Coordinator of Professional and Technical Writing Internship Program, and a representative of the prospective internship sponsor. This internship course may not be repeated. Enrollment is by permit only. This class is Pass/Fail (S/U).

Prerequisites: Graduate students enrolled in the MA or MFA program must have completed with a grade of B or higher 18 credits of coursework toward the degree. Students enrolled in the PhD program must have completed 27 credits of coursework and be scheduled to take their qualifying exams. PhD students also require the consent and recommendation of their major professor.

The principal goal of ENG 6946 Internship is to transfer graduate-level skills in research, analysis, text production, course management, as well as oral and written communication into job preparedness and practice by providing students on-the-job experience in non-academic work environments.

Transferring Hours

- Up to twelve (12) hours of graduate coursework taken by the student at USF as a non-degree-seeking student may be applied toward the degree when the student becomes a degree-seeking student or candidate. More than twelve hours will not be applied.
• A student may transfer as many as nine (9) hours of graduate credit in English from another accredited university with approval from the graduate director.

**English Department “I” Grade Policies**

While the Office of Graduate Studies sets a minimum for the university, they also authorize departments to set standards fitting their program. Graduate Studies policies can be found at [http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp](http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp).

• An Incomplete grade indicates incomplete coursework and may be awarded to graduate students at the discretion of the instructor, only when a small portion of the student’s work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade.

• To receive a grade of Incomplete, the student and the professor for the course must complete an **Incomplete Grade Contract** (available on the Forms page of the Graduate Studies website: [http://www.grad.usf.edu/](http://www.grad.usf.edu/)), a copy of which must be placed in the student’s file. The contract describes the work to be completed, the date it is due, and the grade earned including a zero for the incomplete portion. The instructor must file a copy of the contract in the department before the date grades are due.

• Graduate students cannot take more than one grade of Incomplete at a time.

• Graduate students cannot carry an “I” for more than one term, including summer. For example,
  o An Incomplete incurred in the fall term must be completed no later than the following spring.
  o An Incomplete incurred in the spring term must be completed no later than the following summer.
  o An Incomplete incurred in the summer term must be completed no later than the following fall.

• Failure to conform to this policy will constitute a failure to maintain satisfactory progress toward degree and thus a failure to maintain **good standing**.

• Students who have Incomplete grades (I [Incomplete], IF [Incomplete Failing], IU [Incomplete Unsatisfactory], or MU [Missing Unsatisfactory]) will not be eligible to take the PhD qualifying examination.

• Students who fail to complete the assigned work within one term will be placed on Academic Probation for the semester following the term in which the grades were earned. Standard policies for completing the incomplete courses will apply. Students will be taken off probation when the Incompletes are satisfied; this status changes at the start of the semester following the completion of the Incompletes. Graduate Assistants who have failed to satisfy the Incomplete grades after one semester will lose their USF funding (assistantship and/or fellowship).
“Good Standing” – Graduate Studies Policy

- To be considered a student in good standing, graduate students must
  - maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken as a graduate student, and
  - maintain an overall minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (on a 4.00 scale) in all courses taken in each of the student’s degree-seeking programs.

- No grade of C- or below will be accepted toward a graduate degree [see additional department policy below]. Students must meet the requirements to be in good standing to graduate. A student will not be certified to graduate if an “IF” or “MF” is on the transcript, unless the student requests to “accept” the “IF” or “MF” grade and the request is signed and approved by the student, program, college, and Graduate Studies. “IF” or “MF” grades that are “accepted” will never be changed.

- Any student who is not in good standing at the end of a semester shall be considered on probation as of the following semester. The college or program may also place students on probation for other reasons as designated by the college or program. Notification of probation shall be made to the student in writing by the department, with a copy to the College Dean.

- For further information on Academic Probation, consult the Graduate Catalog.

“Good Standing” – English Department Policy

- All students must meet with the graduate director for a progress check before they can take the PhD exam.

- All PhD degree requirements must be completed within seven years from the date of admission. Students who exceed the time limitation must request a time limit extension from Graduate Studies.

- Any course in which a student earns a grade below a B- will be disqualified from counting toward the degree requirements, though it will be calculated in the GPA. There is no grade forgiveness at the graduate level. Students should be aware that in the event that they earn a grade lower than a B-, they will need to take additional coursework to complete their degree requirements.

- While students will usually be notified on a periodic basis (around the first third of each semester) if they are in any of these categories, it is entirely the students’ responsibility to keep track of their own GPA and Incompletes by checking their grades on OASIS.

- English graduate students who are not in good standing may be refused graduate assistantships the following semester.

- Students who are not in good standing, according to either the Graduate Studies definition or that of the English Department may be recommended for dismissal from the program.
Minimum Enrollment, Leave of Absence, and Inactive Status

- All students must enroll in a minimum of six (6) graduate hours in any twelve-month/three-semester time frame to maintain continuous enrollment, including summers.

**Examples:**

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<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
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<th>Summer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>no enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>no enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>no enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no enrollment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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- Doctoral candidates must enroll in a minimum of two (2) dissertation hours each semester (including summer) until the degree is earned.

- Students requiring time off from the program should request an official Leave of Absence, the form for which is located on the Forms page of the Graduate Studies website (http://www.grad.usf.edu/). The completed form is then submitted to the graduate program specialist. Time that is taken away from the program when not on an approved Leave of Absence counts toward the student’s time limitation.

- Students who neglect to enroll in three consecutive semesters will become inactive and must reapply for admission to the program, subject to the current admission criteria and degree requirements in place.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD IN ENGLISH

Literature Concentration

The following requirements must be met in order to complete the doctoral degree:

• A student must have completed a minimum of thirty (30) hours of coursework beyond the MA degree, exclusive of the following:
  o credits devoted to the foreign language
  o directed research hours (unless approved by the graduate director)
  o doctoral dissertation hours

• A student must have completed a minimum of ninety (90) hours after the BA degree, which may include the following:
  o credits devoted to the foreign language
  o directed research hours
  o doctoral dissertation hours

• Course Requirements: Included in these required hours must be the following courses (if not already taken at the Master’s level):

  ENG 6005 (3) — Scholarly Research and Writing
  ENG 6018 (3) — Criticism & Theory I or ENG 6019 (3) — Criticism & Theory II
  1 Theory-rich course*

*Theory-rich: A course may be designated as theory-rich if at least one-third of the primary texts on the syllabus are theoretical in nature. This is distinguished from a primarily literature course that includes supplementary theoretical and critical readings. For purposes of consistency, the graduate director will review syllabi of courses that have been designated theory-rich by the instructor. Please note: a student can satisfy this requirement by taking the second theory survey (that is, the student would take both ENG 6018 and ENG 6019, at least one of these during the PhD program).

• Additional Course Requirements:

  ENG 7939 (2) — Doctoral Seminar (must be taken twice in conjunction with a course)

• Doctoral Seminar Requirement (ENG 7939):
  PhD students are required to take two 6000-level courses in their chosen field(s) of specialty as doctoral seminars. By the second year of PhD coursework, the student should identify the courses to be applied to the seminar requirement. He or she will register for the regular three-credit course; additionally the student will register for a one-credit seminar
hour (ENG 7939) that will be taken in conjunction with the approved course. The student should take this 6000-level course in his or her dissertation area with one of his or her major professors. The student should meet with the instructor as soon as he or she has identified this course as a seminar course, and the two should agree in writing on the details of the work to be done for the seminar hour. The graduate program specialist will manage registration for seminar hours.

While taking the 6000-level course, the seminar student is expected to do extra work in preparation for writing a dissertation. For example, he or she could be responsible for teaching or leading a portion of a class on a particular work and writing a 25-30 page essay based in research on material from the class, which would substitute for one of the writing assignments in the 6000-level course. Satisfaction of this requirement must be approved by the instructor and the graduate director.

- **Foreign Language Requirement**: Before taking the PhD qualifying examination, a student must fulfill the foreign language requirement. The student may fulfill this requirement by demonstrating a reading knowledge of a foreign language. English may not be used to fulfill this requirement even for those students for whom English is a second language. Students of early English Literature are strongly encouraged to learn Old English in addition to their one foreign language.

Reading knowledge of a foreign language must be demonstrated at the PhD level; work from a previous degree will not satisfy the requirement (although it may enable a student to pass a proficiency examination You don’t want anyone coming to you having failed a proficiency exam and saying, “But the Handbook says I ‘should’ be able to pass from my previous work!”). Reading knowledge may be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

- Place beyond level IV in a language placement test (administered by the World Languages Department)
- Earning a "B" or better in the special courses Reading for French, Spanish, or German offered for graduate students
- Earning a "B" or better in two semester courses of an intermediate foreign language (i.e., Spanish III and Spanish IV)
- Earning a “B” or better in a fourth semester foreign language course or a second semester Latin course

- In light of the reduction of the foreign language requirement (from two to one), students are strongly encouraged to pursue a graduate certificate, particularly in Rhetoric and Composition. Work toward a graduate certificate would not need to be completed before the semester when the student takes the PhD exam.
TIMELINE FOR THE PHD IN ENGLISH

Literature Concentration

PhD in English/Literature (no summer)

Four-Year Timeline:

- Semesters I & II – One Critical Theory course, one course + doctoral seminar credit, four additional courses
- Semesters III & IV – Scholarly Writing and Research, one theory-rich course, one course + doctoral seminar credit, language requirement, two additional courses
- Semester V – Exam preparation/examination
- Semester VI – Dissertation hours
- Semesters VII & VIII – Defense/graduation

PhD in English/Literature (with summer)

Four-Year Timeline:

- Semesters I & II – One Critical Theory course, one course + doctoral seminar credit, four additional courses
- Summer – Two courses or directed readings, or language requirement
- Semesters III & IV – One theory-rich course, one course + seminar credit, language requirement, Scholarly Writing and Research, two additional courses
- Summer – Exam preparation
- Semester V – Exam preparation, exam
- Semesters VI & VII – Dissertation hours
- Semester VIII – Defense, graduation

These timelines are idealized and true course scheduling will be affected by the availability of required or desired courses during each semester.
PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Literature Concentration

By the end of their first year of coursework, PhD students will identify a major area* and a minor area. In conference with the graduate director, students will identify three professors who will serve on their examination committee. Students should have readings lists for both areas defined by the end of their second year so that independent reading and exam preparation can be conducted in a timely manner.

*Major area—this is defined by any two contiguous or contemporaneous historical periods from the following list. Please note: the literary areas are defined by terms rather than dates in recognition that chronological boundaries are often arbitrary and can be determined by the individual needs of the student. Further, the terms designating a literary area are themselves contentious, and it is intended that PhD students consider the implications of nominating their field of choice.

Medieval
| Early Modern
| Restoration and Eighteenth-century— Early American*
| Romantic and Victorian Eras — Nineteenth-century American*
| \ Postcolonial
| / 
| Modern and Contemporary British — Modern and Contemporary American*

* American refers to literature of the Americas in its global and hemispheric contexts and cannot be conceived as solely the traditionally defined British-American canons.

A minor area should be determined in consultation with the major professor and with reference to the following list and approval of the graduate director. Choice of a minor field should be made with an eye toward PhD marketability and/or dissertation research:

- Critical Theory (e.g. feminist or queer theory, psychoanalytic, narrative, pedagogical)
- Genre (e.g., poetics, film, drama/theatre, novel)
- Interdisciplinary Study (e.g., linguistics, media studies, religion, women’s studies, popular culture)
- Ethnic Literatures (e.g., African American, Latino/a)
- Rhetoric and Composition
- Any literary field not selected as part of Major
Oral Component:

After the exam committee has reviewed the written exam, the committee and the student will meet for an oral examination. Ordinarily this will take place within three weeks of completing the written exam. Although the committee will have evaluated the written portion of the exam, the oral is intended to provide an opportunity for the student to amplify, correct or clarify answers from the written exam, and so a final evaluation will not be determined until after the oral. Therefore, the student will be unaware of the results of the written exam prior to the oral.

The oral exam is not a public event, and only the three examiners and student will be present. The graduate director has the right to attend if invited or agreed upon prior to the event. The exam takes one to two hours, and it covers the categories of the written exam, but it is not limited to the questions asked on the written exam. This oral component also gives the student and examiners an opportunity to review material not covered in the written answers.

The students’ oral examinations will be evaluated as part of the overall performance on the exam, according to the criteria of content, critical thinking and communication as indicated on the rubric for the oral exam. A detailed grading rubric for the PhD exam is available in Appendix A of this handbook.

Upon conclusion of the oral exam, the committee will confer on the evaluation for the three components of the exam (days 1, 2, 3). The committee should submit to the graduate director the following:

1. a cumulative evaluation for content, critical thinking and writing with comments for each day of the written exam, AND

2. an overall assessment of fail, pass minus (Pass with Deficiency), pass, and pass plus (Pass with Distinction).

Students receiving a “Pass with Distinction” will have this commendation placed in their permanent file. In the case of deficiencies, the exam committee must assign a deadline for additional work, usually within the following semester, and the student must abide by this requirement or risk academic dismissal. When students have a deficiency that remains beyond the term in which the exam is taken, they will be put on probation 1 for the next term (this includes summer). If a student continues to carry the deficiency beyond the term following the exam, these students will be on probation 2 and a hold will be put on their registration and teaching assistantship. These students MUST confer with the graduate director to register and continue as an assistant. Failure to remove deficiencies by the end of the second term following the exam will result in dismissal from the program.

An exam fails if there are deficiencies in all three areas. Students who fail the exam may retake the exam one time within approved time limits. Students who fail the exam and remain in the program will be on probation for the term following the exam (including summer). If students do not pass the exam in the term following the exam, they will be put on probation 2 and a hold will be put on their registration and teaching assistantship. These students MUST confer with the graduate director to register and continue as an assistant. Failure to pass the exam by the end of the second term following the exam will result in dismissal from the program. Students on assistantship must take
their PhD exams by the end of their third year or they will lose their funding.

When students pass their examination (minimum score of Pass), they are ready to submit paperwork to advance into candidacy. Students must have completed all coursework requirements, including the foreign language requirement, prior to being admitted into candidacy.
PREPARING FOR THE PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION IN LITERATURE

Students entering the PhD program should have an idea of what areas they want to develop as an expertise. Students should begin to think of this expertise in terms of the three areas in which they will be examined prior to entering candidacy. Students should select courses for their degree that develop knowledge in the areas chosen for the qualifying examination. Not only does coursework help prepare students for the examination, but it also gives students a chance to develop relationships with the faculty in their chosen areas who may serve on their examination committees. Thus, preparation for the qualifying exam should begin when a student enters the PhD program.

A PhD student must take at least 30 hours of coursework beyond the MA, not including the language requirement. A full course load is considered three courses or nine credits in fall and spring, and two courses or six credits in summer. Without summer coursework, a student should complete coursework by the end of his or her second year in the program. By the start of the student’s second year, he or she should have a meeting with the graduate director to finalize the areas for the exam and to determine who will serve on the examination committee. Students will be discouraged from choosing an examination area in which they have had no coursework. Students should meet with the faculty who will serve on their committee to determine an adequate reading list for each area. Students are expected to generate the list in consultation with the faculty, and students will be responsible for reading the works on their own. The lists should be established by the end of the second year of coursework, and students will have the summer months to read.

During the first term of the third year, a student may elect to take directed readings with the members of his or her examination committee. A student is allowed to take pass/fail directed readings in preparation for the exam. These directed readings require a contract, which can be downloaded from the English department website. Although the details of the readings need to be worked out between the individual students and professors, it is recommended that students have their reading lists fully complete prior to the start of the term and that they establish some form of regular communication regarding the progress of readings throughout the semester. For students who require more substantial direction in their preparation, please see suggested guidelines for intensive study for the qualifying exam, available on Canvas.

- If a student elects not to take directed readings with the members of his or her examination committee, it is recommended that the student meet with the faculty member who is the chair of the committee at the beginning of the term of the examination. The student should meet all the members of the examination committee at least once well in advance of the examination date to guarantee that there will be no misunderstanding concerning the specific material for which the student is responsible, or the depth of knowledge that will be expected by the examiners. This is not to suggest that faculty will tell the students what is on the exam, nor is it to put the responsibility for preparation on the faculty member. It is the student’s responsibility to be conversant in the field in which he or she is examined, and the parameters of the examination are suggested by the reading list. Some examples of previous examination questions are available on Canvas.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PHD IN ENGLISH

Rhetoric and Composition Concentration

The following requirements must be met in order to complete the doctoral degree:

• A student must have completed a minimum of thirty (30) hours of course work beyond the MA degree, exclusive of the following:
  o credits devoted to the foreign language
  o directed research hours (unless approved by the graduate director)
  o doctoral dissertation hours

• A student must have a completed a minimum of ninety (90) hours after the BA degree, which may include the following:
  o credits devoted to the foreign language
  o directed research hours
  o doctoral dissertation hours

• Core Requirements: Included in these required hours must be the following courses (if not already taken at the Master’s level):
  ENC 6336 (3) — Studies in the History of Rhetoric
  ENC 6421 (3) — Studies in Rhetoric and Technology
  ENC 6700 (3) — Studies in Composition Theory
  ENC 6720 (3) — Studies in Composition Research
  ENG 6005 (3) — Scholarly Research and Writing

• Additional Course Requirements:

  ENG 7939 (2) — Doctoral Seminar (must be taken twice in conjunction with a course)

• Doctoral Seminar Requirement (ENG 7939):
  PhD students are required to take two 6000-level courses in their chosen field(s) of specialty as doctoral seminars. By the second year of PhD coursework, the student should identify the courses to be applied to the seminar requirement. He or she will register for the regular three-credit course; additionally the student will register for a one-credit seminar hour (ENG 7939) that will be taken in conjunction with the approved course. The student should take this 6000-level course in his or her dissertation area with one of his or her major professors. The student should meet with the instructor as soon as he or she has identified this course as a seminar course, and the two should agree in writing on the details of the work to be done for the seminar hour. The graduate program specialist will manage registration for seminar hours.

  While taking the 6000-level course, the seminar student is expected to do extra work in preparation for writing a dissertation. For example, he or she could be responsible for teaching or leading a portion of a class on a particular work and writing a 25-30 page essay based in research on material from the class, which would substitute for one of the writing assignments in the 6000-level course. Satisfaction of this requirement must be approved by
the instructor and the graduate director.

- **Foreign Language Requirement**: Before taking the PhD qualifying examination, a student must fulfill the foreign language requirement. The student may fulfill this requirement by demonstrating a reading knowledge of a foreign language. English may not be used to fulfill this requirement even for those students for whom English is a second language. Students of early English Literature are strongly encouraged to learn Old English in addition to their one foreign language.

Reading knowledge of a foreign language must be demonstrated at the PhD level; work from a previous degree will not satisfy the requirement (although it may enable a student to pass a proficiency examination). You don’t want anyone coming to you having failed a proficiency exam and saying, “But the Handbook says I ‘should’ be able to pass from my previous work!”). Reading knowledge may be demonstrated in one of the following ways:

  - Place beyond level IV in a language placement test (administered by the World Languages Department)
  - Earning a "B" or better in the special courses Reading for French, Spanish, or German offered for graduate students
  - Earning a "B" or better in two semester courses of an intermediate foreign language (i.e., Spanish III and Spanish IV)
  - Earning a “B” or better in a fourth semester foreign language course or a second semester Latin course

In light of the reduction of the foreign language requirement (from two to one), students are strongly encouraged to pursue a graduate certificate, particularly in Rhetoric and Composition. Work toward a graduate certificate would not need to be completed before the semester when the student takes the PhD exam.
TIMELINE FOR THE PHD IN ENGLISH

Rhetoric & Composition Concentration

PhD in English/ Rhetoric & Composition (no summer)

Four-Year Timeline:

- Semesters I & II – Three required courses, one course + seminar credit, two additional courses
- Semesters III & IV – Scholarly Writing and Research, one course + seminar credit, language requirement, three additional courses
- Semester V – Exam preparation/examination
- Semester VI – Dissertation hours
- Semesters VII – Dissertation hours
- Semester VIII – Defense, graduation.

PhD in English/ Rhetoric & Composition (with summer)

Four-Year Timeline:

- Semesters I & II – Three required courses, one course + seminar credit, two additional courses
- Summer – Two courses
- Semesters III & IV – Scholarly Writing and Research, one course + seminar credit, language requirement, three additional courses
- Summer – Exam preparation
- Semester V – Exam preparation, exam
- Semesters VI & VII – Dissertation hours
- Semester VIII – Defense, graduation

These timelines are idealized and true course scheduling will be affected by the availability of required or desired courses during each semester.
PHD QUALIFYING EXAMINATION

Rhetoric and Composition Concentration

After completing 30 hours of coursework, the language requirement, and all incomplete grades, a student may take the PhD examination. The standardized exam will be offered twice each academic year for all eligible students and consists of the following:

Part I. A 24-hour take-home exam divided into four written sections (1500 words a piece), the content of which corresponds to the four core courses: Composition Theory, Research Methods, Rhetoric and Technology, and Historical Rhetorics. Questions will be picked up in the English office at 9:00am on the day of the exam. Questions will be digitally submitted to the exam chair by 9:00am on the following day for SafeAssign submission in Canvas.

Evaluating Part I:
All exams will be assessed by a rotating committee of at least three Rhetoric and Composition faculty representing different areas of disciplinary expertise. Every exam question will be graded by each member of the committee, although emphasis will be placed upon readers’ areas of specialization when determining the final score for each question. A detailed grading rubric for the PhD exam is available in Appendix A of this handbook.

Any answer exceeding 1500 words will receive a “fail” evaluation and count as a deficiency on the exam. Students’ names will be removed from both Parts I and II of the exam so that, as much as possible, the faculty evaluating the exams will not know the identity of individual students. Each of the four questions will be evaluated by two faculty with expertise in the area and by the program director. Typically, this means that the faculty member who last taught the core course that corresponds to the exam area, e.g., History of Rhetoric, will evaluate the history question along with another faculty member with specialized expertise in history of rhetoric and the program director. A detailed grading rubric for the PhD exam is available in Appendix A of this handbook.

A student who receives a Pass Minus or Fail grade on two or more of the four questions on Part I of the exam will have to retake the whole exam the following semester when a new exam is provided to the students. If the student receives a Pass Minus or a Fail on two or more of the four questions a second time, the student will be dropped from the program. When a student is taking Part I of the exam for the second time, the Graduate Director will be part of the evaluation process.

A student receiving a Pass Minus or a Fail on one of the four questions in Part I of the exam will be required to make up the deficiency according to the recommendations of the committee. The exam committee must assign a deadline for additional work, usually within the following semester, and the student must abide by this requirement or risk academic dismissal. When a student has a deficiency that remains beyond the term in which the exam is taken, the student will be placed on Probation 1 for the next term (this includes summer). If a student continues to carry the deficiency beyond the term following the exam, the student will be placed on Probation 2, and a hold will be put on their registration and graduate assistantship. These students MUST confer with the Graduate Director to register and continue as a graduate assistant. Failure to remove deficiencies by the end of the second term following the exam will result in dismissal from the program.
Part II. A manuscript suitable for publication in a specified scholarly journal (7,000-8,500 words) to be turned in at the same time as the 24-hour exam. The topic of the manuscript should be based on the student’s specialization in Rhetoric and Composition. This manuscript can be a revision of a course paper or conference paper or an extension of their project from the Scholarly Writing and Research class. It must contribute to the discipline by advancing scholarly discussions in Rhetoric and Composition studies and offering new knowledge.

Students may waive Part II of the exam if they have already published a research article of 7000 or more words in one of the disciplinary journals included on the list of 29 appropriate journals compiled by the rhetoric and composition faculty. The publication must be on a topic in rhetoric or composition, and it must be a research article reporting original research rather than a review essay, a commentary, or any other genre.

Journals acceptable for the waiver of the qualifying exam Part II:

The journals listed here are the only journals approved for this waiver.

College Composition and Communication
College English
Composition Studies
Computers and Composition
Computers and Composition online
Community Literacy Journal
Enculturation
IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication
JAC; A Journal of Composition Theory
Journal of Basic Writing
Journal of Business and Technical Communication
Journal of Business Communication
Journal of Literacy and Technology
Kairos
Philosophy and Rhetoric
PreText
Programatic Perspectives
Quarterly Journal of Speech
Research in the Teaching of English
Rhetoric Review
Rhetorica
Rhetoric Society Quarterly
Technical Communication
Technical Communication Quarterly
Teaching English in the Two-Year College
Western States Speech Journal
Writing Center Journal
Written Communication

Dissertation
A student may not register for dissertation hours until officially admitted to candidacy. In order to be admitted, the student must have successfully completed the following steps: finished all class work, fulfilled language requirements, passed the qualifying exam, and established a PhD dissertation committee that has been approved by the department, College, and Graduate Studies. This committee should consist of one major professor and three additional members. The graduate student’s first obligation once admitted to candidacy will be preparing a prospectus.
PHD DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

Admission to Candidacy
As soon as the student has successfully completed the PhD qualifying exam, the student is eligible to be admitted to doctoral candidacy. But admission is not granted until the student’s dissertation committee (Graduate Student Supervisory Committee) has been established and approved by the graduate director, the Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, and Graduate Studies (the dissertation committee can also be formed prior to taking the qualifying exam). It is the student’s responsibility to meet the deadline for admission to doctoral candidacy, which is established by Graduate Studies for each semester. The candidacy processing schedule is printed on the admission to candidacy form, which is available on the Forms page of the Graduate Studies website. A student cannot enroll in dissertation hours until officially admitted to doctoral candidacy.

Initiating the Formation of the Dissertation Committee
The student should consult with the graduate director in his or her second year to select and organize the dissertation committee. Before meeting with the graduate director for this purpose, the student must have selected a probable topic for the dissertation.

The Committee Itself
University policy dictates that a dissertation committee consist of a director and three additional readers. University policy also dictates that the director must be credentialed to direct a dissertation, a status that the graduate director of each department establishes in consultation with the graduate committee or graduate faculty. For this reason it is essential for the student to consult with the graduate director after deciding on a topic and before contacting any professors who might be willing to direct such work—the graduate director or Program Coordinator knows which faculty are credentialed to be on the committee or to be a director, as well as which faculty are best qualified in the student’s area of interest. As many as two members of the committee may be from other departments or universities, but if the major professor or director is from another department or university, he or she must be a co-major professor with a USF professor. The dissertation director must be a specialist in the area being discussed in the dissertation.

How the Committee Functions
The director will have primary responsibility for working with the student. The committee members will be expected to provide further assurance that the standards of competency expected in the particular area are being met. In case a dissertation topic covers two normally discrete areas, then a reader knowledgeable in the secondary area of investigation must be appointed to the committee. The graduate director must approve the selection of any dissertation committee members from outside the department or the university when such a selection is justified by the nature of the topic. The other committee members may be either specialists in the area or generalists whose primary task is to read the dissertation for its general effectiveness, logical coherence, scholarly and critical methodology, and relation of content to style, etc. Again, once the committee has been satisfactorily established, it must be approved by the College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean’s office, whereupon the student is officially admitted to candidacy and may begin taking dissertation hours in the next semester.
THE DISSERTATION: COMPONENTS

The Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus should reflect considerable preliminary investigation of the topic and should be a detailed but not restrictive description that defines, outlines, and justifies the research objectives. Although the prospectus is a preliminary document drafted at an early stage of a large research project, it should propose provisional arguments or general hypotheses about the objects of study. The prospectus should also identify the contribution the project will make to the field and should note the study’s limits and/or limitations.

The prospectus should normally run 15-40 pages, though some projects and/or directors may require documents of differing lengths. The student should work closely with the dissertation director to draft a prospectus that is appropriate in length and scope and that fulfills the primary functions of this important document. The prospectus sketches out a plan for the dissertation and provides an opportunity for committee members to provide input and direction at an early stage of the project. To accomplish these objectives, the prospectus should normally include the following:

- **Definition of Purpose**: a clear, concise discussion of the purpose of the research. The prospectus should outline one or more research questions or identify a research problem. The dissertation itself will strive to answer these questions or resolve, resituate, or otherwise address the identified research problem.

- **Review of the Critical Literature**: an evaluative survey of the pertinent, significant critical literature, with a clear statement concerning the contribution of the dissertation to the study of the proposed topic. As with every component of the dissertation, the student should seek and follow the advice of the dissertation director regarding the length and scope of the literature review. Generally speaking, the literature review should
  - summarize and synthesize current, relevant scholarship in germane and related fields;
  - frame the research questions in the context of the discipline or subfields;
  - justify the new research being proposed in light of existing scholarship;
  - distinguish the project as a unique but connected contribution to scholarship.

- **Description of Methodology**: a description of the tentative plan for organizing the dissertation, together with a specification of the methodology to be used in the study.

- **Identification of Objects or Texts to be Studied**: the prospectus should clearly identify the primary objects or texts to be studied and should include some justification or rationale for these choices.

- **Outline of Chapters or Major Components**: an outline or sketch of each of the dissertation’s chapters, sections, or other major divisions or structural components. It may include (as appropriate to the project, and as requested by the director and members of the committee) the primary argument of each chapter, the focus of each component, or the content of each
section; an indication of the core primary and critical literature to be employed in these divisions; an explanation of how the methodology is to be applied; an articulation of the anticipated conclusions or expected findings of the study; an articulation of the study’s engagement with existing relevant work and/or contribution to an identified field.

• **Notes and Bibliographies:** endnotes (if necessary) referring to the text of the dissertation proposal, a bibliography of sources cited in the prospectus, and a selected list of important primary and secondary sources, presented in a format consistent with an appropriate citation system. This should be considered a working bibliography for the project. Bibliographies may be organized in various ways, and the student should work with the director to select the most effective organizing scheme for this portion of the prospectus.

• An oral presentation and defense of the prospectus is highly encouraged. If the dissertation director or any one member of the committee requests an oral defense of the prospectus, a defense will be scheduled. The defense should be scheduled when all members of the committee have indicated a preliminary approval of the prospectus. At this meeting, the committee members will discuss with each other and with the student any issues that need clarification and will agree to the content, scope, method, and work plan for the project. The student may be asked to do minimal revisions to the prospectus before filing it with the Graduate Director. The committee should sign their approval of the prospectus at this stage.

**The Dissertation Itself**

• The dissertation should be at least 37,500 words long, exclusive of bibliography.

• The review of relevant criticism included in the prospectus *need not be included in the dissertation* unless it is particularly germane to the subject of the dissertation or is recommended by the director or committee. In this case, the literature review may be incorporated into the first chapter in order to (1) frame the research question in the context of the discipline and existing scholarship; (2) justify the basis and need for the new research project; and (3) distinguish the project as a unique but connected contribution to scholarship. In any case, the student must work out with the director and the committee how much of a literature review is appropriate for inclusion in the dissertation. As always, the committee’s requirements for the dissertation should be framed so as to facilitate the publication of the dissertation as a scholarly work.

• Students must be proficient in the main language or languages of primary texts central to their dissertations. Standard translations are acceptable for supporting and secondary texts. Exceptions to this rule can only be made by the dissertation director (major professor) in conjunction with the Graduate Director.
The Dissertation Defense
When the dissertation committee has inspected the final draft of the dissertation and found it suitable for presentation, the committee will complete a form requesting the scheduling and announcement of the oral defense of the dissertation:

- The scheduling of the defense must occur at least seven weeks before the end of the term, or by the deadline established each semester on the Semester Deadlines page of the department website.

- The date of the defense itself must be at least five weeks before the end of the term.

- It is the student's responsibility to fill out and obtain signatures on the Dissertation Defense Request form, which must be submitted to the graduate program specialist at least three weeks prior to the defense. The form is available on the Forms page of the department website.

- The Dissertation Defense Request Form may be submitted at the same time that the complete draft of the dissertation is circulated to the full committee; however, members of the committee may, upon reviewing the dissertation, request specific revisions to the document or determine that it is not yet ready for presentation. In this (rare) case, the committee may, in consultation with the director, elect to postpone the defense (in which case, the Graduate Director should be notified of the decision to postpone. A new Defense Request Form will need to be submitted when the committee has deemed the project ready for presentation).

THE DISSERTATION: PROCEDURES

While many of the guidelines for writing a dissertation are flexible because each dissertation is a unique creation with its own requisites and criteria, there are a number of considerations and procedures common to all dissertations that must be observed by all students and their committees. Students should work closely with their directors and committees to craft a dissertation that is appropriate to their field of work, that meets institutional requirements, and that attains an acceptable level of quality.

A. General
- Normally, the dissertation will be written in one of the student's areas of specialization—one of the areas of the qualifying examination.

- Committee members should transmit their comments on all drafts through the dissertation director, who will communicate them to the student on behalf of the committee.

- Whether committee members read and comment on all chapters as they are written is a matter of practice to be decided in consultation with the director. The director and all members of the committee will decide—at the time the prospectus is approved—the procedure and the expectations for commenting on and approving individual chapters. In some cases, the arrangement may be that members of the committee comment only on the first completed chapter and the final completed dissertation; in other cases, it may be agreed that committee members will read and comment on each chapter in draft after it has been preliminarily
approved by the director. Whichever procedure will be followed should be clearly laid out and agreed to when the prospectus is approved, and that procedure is to be adhered to until the dissertation is complete.

• After the prospectus has been approved, alterations to agreed-to procedures or to the content or form of the dissertation project may be made only if all members of the committee agree to such changes in writing.

• All members of the dissertation committee must be given sufficient time to read and respond to all documents circulated to them for comment (namely the prospectus, first chapter, and completed dissertation). It is unreasonable to expect that a dissertation will be written, approved, and defended within a single semester. A committee should not be given the first chapter for comment in the same semester the student plans to defend the dissertation. Under no circumstances should the committee be given the completed dissertation before they have had the opportunity to comment on the first chapter.

• In the unusual case that a student is in his or her final year of eligibility (approaching the seven-year time limit to degree or nearing the end of a time-limit extension granted by the Office of Graduate Studies) and has completed less than half of the dissertation, the dissertation director should convene the committee to discuss the current state of the project and to agree on a plan and a timeline for completing the dissertation. These plans should be agreed to (in writing) prior to the student’s last semester of eligibility.

• If a dissertation director will be on leave and not regularly available to work with the student, a co-director should be appointed to direct the work and provide any necessary signatures or authorizations during that period of absence.

• In the event that a member of the committee is unable to see the project through to completion, he or she should contact the dissertation director, the student, and the Graduate Director as soon as possible. Should a member voluntarily withdraw from the committee, the dissertation director will need to locate a replacement and submit a signed Change of Committee Form to the Graduate Director. Alterations to the committee should normally be made prior to the completion of the dissertation. Only under extreme and unforeseeable circumstances will a committee member be replaced after the defense has been scheduled. To avoid last-minute complications, students should, at the beginning of their final semester, notify the entire committee of their intention to defend that term. This should be the final point at which a committee member voluntarily withdraws from the committee.

• Should a change be made to the composition of the dissertation committee, the entire committee and Graduate Director will be notified at the time the change is made. No committee member will be added or removed without due notice.

B. Prospectus

• The student will usually begin writing the prospectus for the dissertation after the director and committee have been chosen.

• The prospectus will be written and revised under supervision of the director. It will often go through several drafts before it is ready for discussion and approval by the committee.
• The director will review the prospectus before it is sent to the rest of the committee.

• All members of the committee will review and comment on the prospectus. They may require specific revisions at this stage, returning the prospectus to the student for additional work. Alternatively, the members of the committee may approve the prospectus but with specific directions or requirements that the student will need to observe in drafting the dissertation.

• All members of the dissertation committee must review and approve the prospectus of the dissertation, usually within one year of the student entering doctoral candidacy. Ideally, the prospectus should be approved by all members of the committee prior to the student beginning work on the dissertation proper. In the event that a new member is added to the committee at a later date, the new member should read and approve the prospectus.

• An oral defense of the prospectus is not required; however, any one member of the committee (including but not limited to the director) can request a meeting of the full committee and the student to discuss the prospectus prior to approving it. In this case, the dissertation director will arrange a prospectus meeting. This meeting should take place after all members of the committee have indicated preliminary approval of the prospectus and agree that it is ready for presentation. The defense should be a face-to-face meeting, but members who cannot attend in person may use telephone, Skype, or other technology to be virtually present at the meeting. At the prospectus defense, the committee may (among other things) ask questions; clarify content, scope, and method; suggest or require specific alterations to the prospectus; agree to procedures for reviewing and commenting on the work in progress; and sketch out a timeline for completion. They may require revisions to the prospectus before it is filed with the Graduate Director. The committee should be able to sign approval of the prospectus at this time.

• A prospectus approval form and a sample prospectus are available on Canvas. The approved prospectus will be placed in the student’s file.

• In the event that a dissertation departs markedly from the plan laid out in the prospectus, the entire committee should be notified and given an opportunity to comment on the proposed alterations to the agreed-upon plan. The director may, in rare cases, require a revised prospectus to be distributed and filed.

• In order to be eligible for a fifth year of funding, PhD candidates must have their prospectus approved by the committee by the end of their fourth year of funding.

C. Chapter Drafts
• The director should review the first chapter before it is sent to the rest of the committee. All members of the committee must read and approve the first chapter before the student continues with the dissertation. The objective here is to protect the student against any lack of communication or agreement among the committee members.

• The director should review each draft of each chapter of the dissertation, providing comments and direction at every stage of the drafting process.
• The rest of the committee might wish to see the last or penultimate chapter before being presented with the final draft of the entire dissertation; however, the entire committee need not approve every draft of every chapter of the dissertation prior to completion. In the event that a member of the committee requests to see drafts of individual chapters, that committee member and the director should agree on a review procedure. If the committee members are to read drafts of chapters in progress, they should agree to a timely response period.

D. Completing the Dissertation

• The student should not submit drafts of the completed dissertation to all committee members. The dissertation director will distribute the completed draft of the dissertation to the rest of the committee.

• Members of the dissertation committee should be allowed four weeks to read the final draft of the dissertation (four weeks between the distribution of the completed dissertation and the anticipated date of defense). It is the job of the dissertation director to see that the members complete this review in a timely fashion.

• Committee members who see significant problems or issues with the dissertation should communicate their concerns to the director—not the student—well in advance of the defense so that the student has time to revise the work and/or postpone the defense if necessary. Normally, the committee should raise significant concerns at least three weeks prior to the scheduled defense.

E. Resolving Conflicts

• If serious disagreement arises among members of the dissertation committee or between the student and members of the committee concerning the suitability of the student’s effort, and if the committee seems incapable of resolving the differences, the dissertation director or the student may request that the Graduate Director mediate the dispute and provide some reasonable solution to the dilemma.

• In the case of differences, the student and the committee must abide by the advice and decision of the Graduate Director.

• If only one member finds the student’s work unacceptable while the other members find it acceptable, the student may petition the Graduate Director to replace the dissenting member. Again, the final decision will rest with the Graduate Director. But if the Graduate Director can find no alternative solution, he or she will have the authority to dissolve the dissertation committee and appoint a new one.

F. Defense

• After the student has completed an approved draft of the dissertation, the dissertation director should schedule a defense. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain signatures and to submit the necessary defense request form by the established deadline, posted each semester at http://english.usf.edu/graduate/currentstudents/deadlines/.

• There will normally be no defenses during the summer term.
• The defense will be chaired by an associate professor or higher from outside the department who will serve as examination chair.

• The examination chair will be appointed by the dissertation director in consultation with the graduate director.

• The responsibility of the examination chair is to preside over all functions, including introducing the candidate and describing the questioning procedures.

• The meeting for the dissertation defense must include all members of the committee. Arrangements can be made for a maximum of one member who is not physically able to be present to participate via phone or video. This allowance does not extend to the dissertation director: the dissertation director must be physically present at the defense; if the dissertation has two co-directors, at least one of the co-directors must be physically present at the defense.

• The student must be physically present at the defense. No allowance is to be made for a student to participate in the defense via phone, Skype, or other communicative technology.

• Other faculty members and students are also encouraged to attend the defense.

• The examination period should begin with a summary presentation by the candidate of the thesis and methodology of the dissertation.

• Following this presentation, the examination chair should open the floor to questions from the members of the dissertation committee in rotation. The examination chair may ask questions, but must leave ample time for the members of the committee to ask their questions. As a general practice, the examination chair will hold his or her questions until after the first two rounds of questioning by the committee have concluded.

• Normally, each examiner should attempt to limit questioning on the initial round of questions. If desired, a short break may be taken prior to the next round of questions.

• Finally, questions from other attending faculty and students should be requested. The scope of this questioning will also be monitored by the examination chair.

• Following completion of these proceedings, the student and all spectators will be asked to leave the examination room.

• The examination chair will preside over the deliberations of the committee.

G. Assessment

• The dissertation director will record the SACS data for the dissertation and defense using the rubric found in Appendix B of this handbook. Three assessments will be submitted to the Graduate Director for department records only. The committee will determine an overall assessment of the dissertation as Pass Plus, Pass, or Pass Minus, to be related to the candidate.
• The examination chair has the responsibility of informing the candidate of the final grade.

• The examination chair will then convey the decision of the committee to the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences on the Successful Defense form, which is to be submitted to the Graduate Program Specialist.

H. Filing the Dissertation
• Students are responsible for meeting all deadlines set by the Office of Graduate Studies. In particular, students should pay attention to ETD deadlines, as they determine whether students will be able to graduate in a given semester.

• After the dissertation has been fully revised and is ready for final submission, it is to be transmitted electronically to the dissertation director, who will submit it to Turn It In for plagiarism checking. The first page of the Turn It In report should be printed and given to the student, who will attach it to the signed ETD form and submit the package to the Office of Graduate Studies. Students are cautioned that they will need to gather several signatures at this stage and should allow ample time to do this in advance of the final submission deadline set by the Office of Graduate Studies. To streamline the process, the student should bring the ETD form to the defense, where the committee’s signatures may be easily gathered.

• Students are responsible for making sure that the final copy of the dissertation complies with all requirements—including but not limited to formatting—set by the Office of Graduate Studies.
GRADUATION PROCEDURES

At the start of the graduating term, students must complete the following steps:

- Within the first four weeks of the student’s graduating term, the student must complete and submit a Graduate Degree Graduation Application. This form is available on the Registrar’s website at http://www.registrar.usf.edu/ (click on Registrar’s Office Forms on the right). The form should be submitted to the graduate program specialist for processing with the college and Registrar’s Office.

- Also within the first four weeks of the student’s graduating term, the student must attend an ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation) workshop with Graduate Studies. The workshop may be attended in person or online. Information on workshops is available on the Graduate Studies’ online ETD Resource Center at http://www.grad.usf.edu/ETD.

- Students who plan to attend commencement must register for commencement online at http://usfweb2.usf.edu/commencement/. Students who do not submit a graduation application within the first four weeks of the semester are not eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies. Likewise, students who do submit the graduation application but do not defend the dissertation and submit a final manuscript are not eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies.

**Graduation Checklist**

- Form dissertation committee
- Submit approved prospectus for filing
- Write dissertation
- Attend ETD workshop semester prior to graduation
- Apply for graduation
- Register for commencement
- Submit final draft to director
- Request oral defense
- Orally defend dissertation
- Submit final dissertation to Graduate Studies
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial Assistance in the form of scholarships, fellowships, and grants is available through Graduate Studies (http://www.grad.usf.edu/), the College of Arts and Sciences (http://www.cas.usf.edu), the Office of Financial Aid (http://usfweb2.usf.edu/finaid/), and external sources. It is wise to check all sources to be fully aware of the programs for which you may qualify.

Additionally, a comprehensive database containing a wide array of funding opportunities, maintained by the Community of Science (COS), is available at http://www.cos.com.

Graduate Assistantships

The Department of English annually awards a number of Graduate Assistantships. GAs usually teach between two and four sections (normally of First-Year Composition) per year. GAs must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA in all courses they take throughout their tenure in the program. Students with fewer than 18 credit-hours in English may hold teaching assignments but cannot be the instructors of record. Such students will further be classified as Graduate Teaching Assistants (class code 9550) and be assigned a mentor. Qualified Graduate Assistants will receive a tuition payment in addition to a stipend. To be eligible to teach and receive a tuition payment, which covers tuition (but not mandatory fees), a student must hold at least a .25 FTE (10 hours per week/one course per semester) appointment or higher, which is equivalent to teaching one course, and must register for nine credit-hours of coursework in the fall and spring terms. In order to qualify for a GA assignment in the summer, a student must be registered for six hours of course work during the summer terms (summer assignments are not guaranteed and should not be counted on). Students in their final semester of enrollment may register for only two credit-hours and still keep eligibility for the assistantship. Students in good standing may teach and receive the tuition payment for a maximum of two years while working toward the MA degree, three years while working toward the MFA, and four years while working toward the PhD. (Doctoral students who have achieved candidacy status may apply for a fifth year of funding, which is contingent upon evidence of satisfactory progress towards degree.) To be eligible for health insurance benefits, a student must hold at least a .25 FTE (10 hours per week) appointment. More information on graduate student health insurance is available at http://www.grad.usf.edu/health-insurance.php.

Graduate Assistant Requirements

Graduate Assistants will also be required to attend a two-week training and orientation, conducted by the Director of Composition and the Assistant Director of Composition, prior to the start of the fall semester.

All Graduate Assistants will be required to take ENC 6745, Practice in Teaching Composition, during their first semester of employment. This course counts as elective credit toward the 33 required credits for the MA degree.

Applicants may express interest in an assistantship in their personal statement. A detailed description of the First Year Composition program is available at http://fyc.usf.edu.
# APPENDIX A

## PhD Literature Exam Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pass Plus</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Content</strong></td>
<td>Answers questions correctly, with sufficient and apt support in primary materials, demonstrates depth of knowledge in field, appropriate contexts, solid knowledge of history, genre, author and/or theory; demonstrates facility with related information.</td>
<td>Demonstrates reason and logical thinking in a clear argument based in accurate knowledge of primary material. Demonstrates insight into the question and the materials and offers a plausible, well defended interpretation. Draws on appropriate research to support claims and references a range of critical opinion.</td>
<td>Engagingly, concisely written with few, if any, grammatical or stylistic problems. Voice is appropriate for audience. Style is consistent throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>(competence in interpreting and evaluating primary and theoretical texts in three areas)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Answers questions correctly with sufficient support in primary materials, demonstrates good knowledge of the field, but with fewer references; includes some appropriate context, knowledge of history, genre, author or theory.</td>
<td>Establishes a clear argument based in accurate knowledge of primary material. Demonstrates insight into question, but argument relies on some generalities or unsubstantiated claims. Refers to appropriate research to establish context but without fully engaging its claims.</td>
<td>Concisely and correctly written with only minor grammatical or stylistic problems. Voice appropriate for audience. Some inconsistency in style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Minus</strong></td>
<td>Answers questions, but makes some errors in knowledge of primary materials; minimal references to context, history, genre, author or theory; or references with some inaccuracy.</td>
<td>Provides a plausible argument that lacks clarity or substantiation in primary material. Demonstrates some insight into the question, but either makes errors of interpretation or fails to connect argument to examples or support.</td>
<td>Writing is inconsistent, with some major grammatical or stylistic problems; voice may be inappropriate for audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fail</strong></td>
<td>Does not address question or shows lack of knowledge of the subject; many errors in references to primary materials, context, history, genre, author or theory.</td>
<td>Does not establish an argument; answer lacks interpretation and offers minimal summary of material.</td>
<td>Writing shows consistent problems in grammar, style, and voice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX B

**PhD Rhetoric and Composition Exam Rubric: Part I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD R/C Exam Rubric Part I: A 24-hour take-home exam</th>
<th>Primary Content</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Plus</strong></td>
<td>Answers question correctly; demonstrates broad and deep knowledge of area; demonstrates mature and insightful understanding of materials discussed; situates answer in relevant history and theory; incorporates a number of appropriate sources,</td>
<td>Demonstrates mature insight into the question and the materials; provides a judicious assessment of theories, potential controversies or alternate positions; offers a plausible, well-defended interpretation; draws on appropriate research to support argumentative claims; references a range of critical opinion.</td>
<td>Organizes a great deal of material concisely and clearly; engagingly written without grammatical or stylistic problems; voice is appropriate for audience; style is consistent throughout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Answers questions correctly; demonstrates good knowledge of the area; demonstrates a working understanding of material discussed; includes some appropriate historical and theoretical context; provides only adequate support in the scholarship, and with fewer references.</td>
<td>Understands the question and materials; offers some assessment of theories and acknowledges controversy or alternate positions; Interpretation is not wrong and depends on unexamined generalities; refers to appropriate research to establish context but without fully engaging its claims.</td>
<td>Concise and organized though not as powerfully organized as pass plus; with only minor grammatical or stylistic problems; voice appropriate for audience; some inconsistency in style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Minus</strong></td>
<td>Answers questions, but makes some errors in knowledge of primary materials; demonstrates uneven or inadequate knowledge of the area; demonstrates uneven or poor understanding of materials discussed; little reference to historical or theoretical context; relatively few or erratic references to the</td>
<td>Demonstrates little insight into the question and material; offers reductive interpretation that does not engage controversy or alternate opinions where they exist; makes errors of interpretation or fails to connect argument to examples or support. Provides a plausible argument but lacks adequate support in the</td>
<td>Writing is inconsistent, with some substantial organizational, grammatical or stylistic problems; voice may be inappropriate for audience.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scholarship.</td>
<td>scholarship; does not engage critical opinion.</td>
<td>Writing shows consistent problems with organization, clarity, grammar, style, and voice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Does not address question or shows lack of knowledge of the subject; incorrectly interprets materials discussed; Makes incorrect claims; makes few references to specific scholarship; ignores historical and theoretical context.</td>
<td>Misunderstands or fails to address the question; lacks a clear interpretation or offers a wrong interpretation of the material; oversimplifies the material; ignores controversy or differences on position; does not establish an argument; lacks adequate references to published scholarship.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### PhD Rhetoric and Composition Exam Rubric: Part II

#### PhD R/C Exam Rubric Part II: A manuscript suitable for publication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Content</th>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Methodology (for empirical research only)</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Plus</strong></td>
<td>Identifies a significant topic; addresses a new topic or advances existing knowledge; makes original claims; interprets the literature correctly</td>
<td>Establishes the importance of the topic and the need for the article by citing, as appropriate, the relevant literature; articulates a clear purpose and thesis; provides appropriate and adequate evidence for claims; is clearly organized and developed; articulates a conclusion warranted by the analysis or discussion.</td>
<td>Research design in sound; methodology is sufficient to support conclusions; research design is clearly and appropriately described</td>
<td>Grammar, lexicon, style and format are professional and appropriate for the target journal; Writing is mature and fluent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Identifies a current topic that is of interest to the field; makes some contribution to the scholarly</td>
<td>Addresses the question of the importance of the topic or need for the article by citing some relevant literature; identifies a general thesis and purpose, though may</td>
<td>Research design is sound; conclusions are not incommensurate with methods;</td>
<td>There are not significant problems with grammar, lexicon, style and format; writing is adequate to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>Argument and Audience</td>
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<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
<td>Identifies a research topic, but not one that is significant or important to contemporary scholarship; reviews rather than creates new knowledge; makes claims that are derivative or not in dispute; has significant problems interpreting the literature.</td>
<td>Does not adequately establish the need for the article and cites little relevant literature; has only a general and unclear thesis and purpose; has evidence for claims but not enough; has some problem with organization; needs a better conclusion.</td>
<td>Research design is weak; methodology is inadequate to the conclusions; research design in not discussed adequately.</td>
<td>There are some problems with grammar, style, lexicon, or format for the journal; writing has some inadequacies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Minus</strong></td>
<td>Identifies a research topic, but not one that is significant or important to contemporary scholarship; reviews rather than creates new knowledge; makes claims that are derivative or not in dispute; has significant problems interpreting the literature.</td>
<td>Need clarification; provides evidence for claims; is organized and offers a specific conclusion.</td>
<td>Research design is introduced if not clearly articulated</td>
<td>the argument and audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fail</strong></td>
<td>Does not identify a clear topic or identifies a topic that is not important, current or new; does not advance the scholarship; makes reductive or outdated claims; misinterprets the literature.</td>
<td>Does not establish the need for the article and fails to cite relevant literature; has no clear thesis or purpose; lacks evidence for major claims; is not well organized; lacks a conclusion or offers an inappropriate or unsubstantiated conclusion.</td>
<td>Research design is absent or faulty; methodology is inappropriate for conclusions; methodology is not addressed.</td>
<td>There are significant problems with grammar, style, lexicon or format for a professional journal; writing is poor and inadequate to the professional context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX C

### Dissertation Rubric (Literature and Rhetoric & Composition Tracks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD Dissertation Rubric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Content</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Plus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PassMinus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
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