Department of English at the University of Arkansas

Handbook for M.A. and Ph.D. Students

2026 - 2027

Welcome to the Graduate Program in English at the University of Arkansas!

This handbook is developed to answer your initial questions as an incoming graduate student in English, as well as additional questions you may have as you progress through your respective degree programs.

Please review at your convenience, and let Dr. Szwydky or Dr. Sparks know if you have any questions!

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After You've Been Admitted and Are Preparing to Attend

Applicants to the English M.A. and Ph.D. programs are notified of their admission decisions in the spring before their first fall semester of degree coursework. Those offered admission to the program are asked to confirm their decision (to attend or not) by no later than **April 15th.**

After being offered admission and accepting that offer online, incoming graduate students in English will be contacted about preparing to attend the University of Arkansas.

Listed below are some types of communication that incoming graduate students will receive from the Graduate Program in English in the months leading up to their starting their program of graduate study:

- an email from the Director of Graduate Studies notifying each student that they have been admitted and requesting that they sign and send to the Director of the Rhetoric and Composition a TA contract (if the student is being offered a teaching assistantship)

- a phone call from the Director of Graduate Studies welcoming each student to the program

- a request for information and an image to be included on our graduate student profile page

- an email to schedule a Zoom or in-person advising session over the summer to get each incoming student enrolled in fall classes or to discuss any advising hold(s) still appearing on a student's university account and the way(s) to resolve such hold(s) so that the student can be enrolled before the fall semester begins

- an email from the Director of the Rhetoric and Composition Office regarding the schedule for the week of TA Orientation (which happens the week before the beginning of each fall semester)

  Note: Incoming international graduate students need to arrive in the U.S. two weeks before the start of the fall semester. All incoming graduate students who are also incoming TAs *must attend all days of the TA Orientation week* to be allowed to start teaching at the beginning of their first fall semester.

- additional correspondence regarding issues such as finding housing, getting university IDs, purchasing parking permits, and submitting documentation (official transcripts, other required materials) to the Graduate School to allow for matriculation and enrollment in fall classes

Moving to Northwest Arkansas and Getting Set Up on Campus

Exploring Housing Options

If you are interested in possibly connecting with another graduate student to share housing, contact Dr. Szwydky, Director of Graduate Studies, and Dr. Sparks, Associate Director of Graduate Studies, and they will try to connect you, though they cannot predict whether this will be possible. If you do not already live in Fayetteville, you should start looking for housing as soon as possible after being admitted to the graduate program and deciding to attend. It can take some time for you to find affordable housing that also meets your specific needs (like needing to be near a bus stop, a grocery store, etc.). If you are an international student, some properties in Fayetteville may allow you to confirm your housing in advance of traveling to the U.S. Listed below are a few websites for local apartment complexes and rental houses that you might want to contact as you start your search (but many more resources are available online):

- UARK Off-Campus Housing
- Jordan Living - Affordable Apartments in Fayetteville
- Elevation Real Estate and Management
- Garden Park Apartments
- College North Apartments
- Pierce Properties
- Axis on Futrall
- Sweetser Properties
- South Creekside Apartments
- Bel Air Sapphire (has some houses and some townhouse-style apartments)
- Experience Fayetteville
- Hill Place

Additional Information for International Students

New international graduate students in English may want to check out the two pages linked below, which provide helpful information about preparing to travel to the U.S.:

- Pre-Arrival Information
- Incoming Scholars Information

Submitting Your Official Transcript and Other Required Documents to Matriculate and Be Enrolled in Fall Classes

If you submitted an unofficial transcript with your initial application to the Graduate Program in English, the Graduate School will ask that you have an official copy of your transcript sent to their office directly from your previous academic institution(s). If the Graduate School contacts you to let you know that other materials are required before you can be matriculated, those documents should be sent to the Graduate School as soon as possible.

Once you have access to your online student account through Workday, check that you do not have any holds on your account that may prevent you from beginning your classes, such as holds for missing immunization records, missing official transcripts, an incomplete financial agreement, a balance owed to the Treasurer's Office, etc. If there is an advising hold on your account, this will be lifted at the time you meet with the Director or Associate Director over the summer or before you begin the graduate program.

Note: All F-1 and J-1 students are required to attend an Immigration Basics session in order to have the INS hold on their Workday account lifted. International students should register for an Immigration Basics session. Incoming international students who are also incoming TAs will likewise need to visit the Human Resources office (probably on the same day they attend the Immigration Basics session) to get their tax status confirmed and to set up to be paid.

Getting Your University ID

Get your University of Arkansas ID as soon as possible after arriving on campus by contacting or going by the Razorback ID Office.

Purchasing Parking Permits

Information on How to Purchase a UA Parking Permit
Student Permit Information
Purchase Permit / Manage Your Parking Account
2026-2027 UA Parking Map
You can also look at the parking map to see where the student parking lots are (in green). It's about a 15- to 20-minute walk from the parking lots near the football stadium to Kimpel Hall and the Department of English. Or, you could take a UA bus from the parking lot into the center of campus (the Student Union).

Advising Schedule

Incoming M.A. and Ph.D. students in the Graduate Program in English visit with the Director of Graduate Studies or the Associate Director of Graduate Studies during the summer before the fall that they begin in order to confirm their fall class schedules and get enrolled. All incoming graduate students in English who also have teaching assistantships (unless they are incoming doctoral students who have already been TAs in the master's program) are required to enroll in **ENGL 50003 (Composition Pedagogy)** during their first fall semester. All incoming M.A. students are also required to take **ENGL 52003 (Introduction to Graduate Studies)** during their first fall semester.

In addition, early in their first fall semester, all new graduate students in English attend a meeting at which the Director and Associate Director of Graduate Studies review the requirements and recommended timelines for completing the M.A. or Ph.D. programs.

Throughout their graduate careers, students continue to meet with the Director (Ph.D. students) or Associate Director (M.A. students) every fall semester and every spring semester to discuss the students' class schedules, answer any questions the students may have about completing program requirements, and confirm students' submission of all required department and Graduate School paperwork.

Early in the semester that students intend to graduate, they should contact the Director or Associate Director to receive guidance on meeting all official deadlines for graduation and completing all final paperwork required by the Department of English and the Graduate School.

Dr. Lissette Szwydky
Director of Graduate Studies

Dr. Leigh Sparks
Associate Director of Graduate Studies

2026-2027 Program Requirements for the M.A. Program in English

The following requirements are from the university's graduate catalog.

In addition to the general requirements of the Graduate School, the department stipulates that the following conditions be met:

1. Each candidate must complete a total of 30 credit hours.

2. Each candidate must take:
    a. ENGL 52003 Introduction to Graduate Studies, one course emphasizing theory, and two courses at the seminar (60000) level
    b. ENGL 52103 Portfolio Workshop (and successfully present a portfolio for the final project) or six thesis hours (and successfully defend a thesis for the final project)
        i. The candidate's portfolio or thesis, which will be used to fulfill the comprehensive exam requirement for the degree, is evaluated by faculty committee and scored Pass/Fail.

3. Each candidate must also select either the Generalist Concentration or the Specialist Concentration and take the following courses:
    a. Generalist Concentration (Portfolio Track)
        i. Two courses selected from two of the following three areas: Medieval Literature and Culture; Renaissance Literature and Culture; Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture
        ii. Three courses selected from three of the following five areas (at least one course being in British literature and at least one course being in American literature): Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Culture; Modern and Contemporary British Literature and Culture; American Literature and Culture before 1900; Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture; World Literature and Culture in English
        iii. Three elective courses offered by the Department of English or as approved by the student's graduate advisor
    b. Generalist Concentration (Thesis Track)
        i. Two courses selected from two of the following three areas: Medieval Literature and Culture; Renaissance Literature and Culture; Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture
        ii. Three courses selected from three of the following five areas (at least one course being in British literature and at least one course being in American literature): Nineteenth-Century British Literature and Culture; Modern and Contemporary British Literature and Culture; American Literature and Culture before 1900; Modern and Contemporary American Literature and Culture; World Literature and Culture in English

iii. Two elective courses offered by the Department of English or as approved by the student's graduate advisor

c. Specialist Concentration (Portfolio Track)
   i. Five courses in one of the following areas of specialization: Cultural Studies; Environmental Literature, Writing, and Culture; Ethnic and Regional Literatures; Gender and Sexuality; Medieval Literature; Religion and Literature; Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy
   ii. Three elective courses offered by the Department of English or as approved by the student's graduate advisor

d. Specialist Concentration (Thesis Track)
   i. Five courses in one of the following areas of specialization: Cultural Studies; Environmental Literature, Writing, and Culture; Ethnic and Regional Literatures; Gender and Sexuality; Medieval Literature; Religion and Literature; Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy
   ii. Two elective courses offered by the Department of English or as approved by the student's graduate advisor

4. Each candidate must demonstrate a reading knowledge of a language other than English that is relevant to the student's area of study. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Ancient Greek, and Latin are the normally acceptable choices, although other languages may be used with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. (For details about this requirement, see section 2, a-c, under Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree.)

5. Each candidate must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.33 for the total number of hours presented for the degree and may take a maximum of one course at the 40000 level for credit with approval from the Director of Graduate Stud

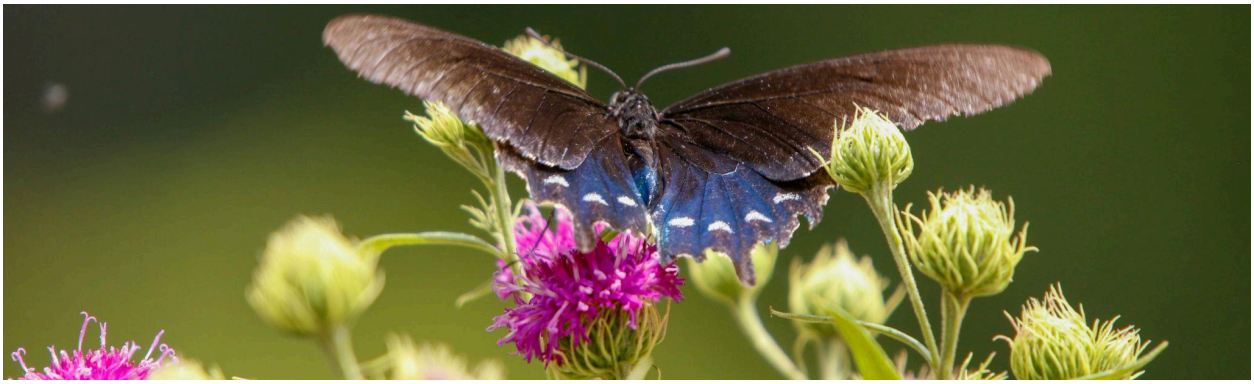


Photo by Alla Kemelmakher

Year-by-Year Schedule for the M.A. Program in English

FIRST YEAR

Fall Semester – English M.A. students begin their course work, including Composition Pedagogy and Introduction to Graduate Studies.

Spring Semester – English M.A. students continue with their course work and should try to take **a theory course** and a **seminar.** It is also recommended that students fulfill their **foreign language requirement** (if they have not already) by the end of this semester. If M.A. students plan to complete the **thesis option** (to conclude their degree program), they should ask a faculty member to be their committee chair by the end of the semester.

Summer Sessions – Few TA positions are available over the summer. If English M.A. students have a TAship for the summer, they should take a course over the summer that fulfills one of their area or elective requirements for the degree. M.A. students pursuing the **thesis option** should communicate with their committee chair over the summer in order to complete their thesis research, build a bibliography, and draft a thesis prospectus by the end of the summer. M.A. students pursuing the **portfolio option** should begin considering the types of documents that they might want to include in their final portfolio project (to conclude their degree program). M.A. students planning to apply to one or more **doctoral programs** in the fall of their second year should also use this summer (of their first year) to begin drafting or collecting their application materials, as well as developing their application packets.

SECOND YEAR

Fall Semester - English M.A. students continue with their course work. M.A. students pursuing the **thesis option** should get their thesis prospectus approved by their chair (first) and then their other committee members by early in the fall. M.A. students pursuing the **portfolio option** should use the fall semester to continue considering the documents that they may want to include in their portfolio.

Spring Semester – English M.A. students continue with course work, wrapping up thesis hours if they are pursuing the **thesis option** or taking the portfolio workshop course if they are pursuing the **portfolio option.** M.A. students must also make sure that they have completed a second **seminar** by this semester if they have not done so already, as well as have fulfilled their **theory** and **foreign language requirements** if they have not done so already. M.A. students pursuing the thesis option will need to defend their thesis to their committee by no later than the beginning of April (in order to graduate in May) in order to graduate. M.A. students pursuing the portfolio option will need to complete their portfolio and submit it to their committee (who will give it a Pass or Fail) by the deadline given by the professor teaching the portfolio workshop course in order to graduate.

2026-2027 Requirements for the Ph.D Program in English

The following requirements are from the university's graduate catalog. In addition to the general requirements of the Graduate School, the department stipulates that these requirements be met:

1. A student who begins doctoral study here may be required, at the discretion of the Director of Graduate Studies, to take certain designated deficiency courses in lieu of electives. However, these hours will count toward the 24-hour course requirement for the doctoral degree.

2. Each doctoral candidate is required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one language other than English that is relevant to the student's area of study. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Ancient Greek, and Latin are the normally acceptable choices to meet the foreign language requirement, although other languages may be used with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Students who elect the medieval period as the field of specialization must demonstrate a reading knowledge of Latin, Old English, and Middle English as well as one relevant modern language. Doctoral candidates can meet the foreign language requirement by documenting that they have met a foreign language requirement at the University of Arkansas or another accredited M.A. program no more than two years before starting the Ph.D. program. This requirement should be met as early as possible in the student's program of study, preferably before registration for doctoral dissertation hours.

   For either the M.A. or Ph.D. degree, reading knowledge must be demonstrated in one of the following ways:
   a. The student passes a test of reading knowledge as administered through the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures or by a member of the faculty of another department in the University who is competent to assess reading knowledge in the given language. The Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures administers testing either in conjunction with Ph.D. reading courses (course number 30603) in French, German, Latin, or Spanish; or through individual examinations. Students wishing to be examined in a foreign language should contact the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures well before the test to familiarize themselves with the different requirements of each language program.
   b. The student presents evidence of having completed the equivalent of one semester of graduate or upper-level undergraduate study in the given foreign language with a grade of "B" or above at an accredited college or university.
   c. The student documents that the language in question is his or her native language and that he or she has native fluency in the language.

3. By the time they take the candidacy examinations, students must have completed the 24-hour course requirement or be registered for courses which, if passed, will complete the 24-hour course requirement. Students must pass both candidacy exams before registering for dissertation hours.

4. To strengthen and support a field of specialization, each student may take up to six hours of graduate course work in other departments. Subject to the approval of the student's adviser, these hours will count toward the 24-hour course requirement for the degree.

5. Students in the doctoral program are required to complete 24 semester hours of course work for graduate credit beyond the M.A. degree. This work must include at least one course in critical theory and at least four seminar courses, at least one of which must be in the field of specialization.

6. With the consent of the Graduate Studies Committee, students will declare a field of specialization. This declaration will be made prior to the completion of the candidate's first year of doctoral studies; it must be made before arranging to take the written candidacy examination. The field of specialization may be a period (Medieval; Renaissance to 1660; Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British; Nineteenth-Century British; Modern and Contemporary British; American to 1900; Modern and Contemporary American) or an area (Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy; Southern Literature and Culture; World Literature and Culture in English; American Multiculturalism; Gender Studies; Film and Media Studies; Literary Criticism and Theory; Popular Culture and Popular Genres; and Literary History). In conjunction with their committee and with the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students may propose additional fields if their particular projects do not fit within any of the suggested areas.

7. The Director of Graduate Studies in the department must be notified by each student of his or her intention to take the candidacy examinations a month before the end of the term preceding the date of the examinations, which will be scheduled by the student in consultation with the committee administering the examinations. At the time of the candidacy examinations, each student must have a grade-point average of 3.50 for courses taken beyond the master's degree.

8. Each student must pass the following candidacy examinations:
   a. A 72-hour take-home written examination in the field of specialization.
   b. An oral examination on a specific topic within the student's broad field, approved jointly by the student and the exam committee. Students may retake only once any examination they fail.

9. Upon successfully completing the candidacy exams, if a dissertation prospectus has not already been submitted to the student's committee for approval, each student must submit a dissertation prospectus to be discussed and approved in a formal meeting with the student's dissertation committee.

10. Within the time limits specified by the Graduate School, each student must complete 18 dissertation hours and submit a dissertation acceptable to the student's dissertation committee.

11. Each student must pass a dissertation defense administered by the student's dissertation committee.

Year-by-Year Schedule for the Ph.D. Program in English

English Ph.D. students are strongly advised to follow the schedule provided to them at the beginning of their program in order to:

- proceed through the doctoral program in a timely manner;
- successfully complete all of the main stages of the program (course work, candidacy exams, and dissertation defense);
- be prepared to go on the job market by their last year of funding; and
- secure competitive and fulfilling employment.

Main Course Work Schedule (Years 1 and 2)

English Ph.D. students begin their programs by completing 24 hours of main course work that must include 12 hours of seminar-level courses and one theory course.

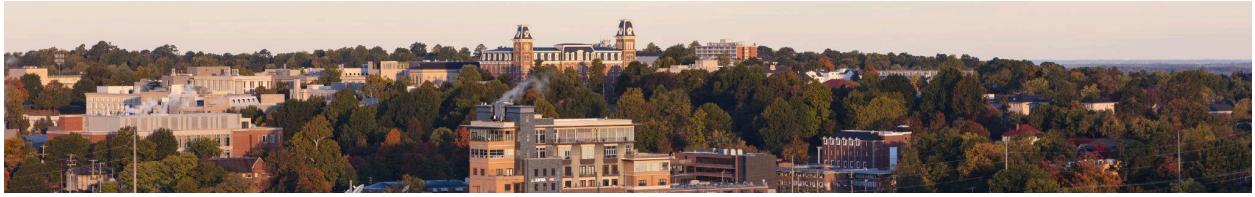
Though the catalog description for the English Ph.D. program includes a requirement that doctoral students take at least one course in their specialization, we actually recommend that students enroll in a majority of courses in their area of specialization in order to be best prepared for candidacy exams and dissertation research/writing. This is especially critical for those doctoral students specializing in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy.

For any student wishing to be endorsed as a specialist in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy through letters of recommendation written by our Rhet/Comp faculty, the student should aim to take 6 of their main courses (18 hours) with members of our Rhet/Comp faculty - not counting ENGL 50003: Composition Pedagogy, a course required for all incoming doctoral students who have not taken ENGL 50003 previously. In addition, one of the 6 courses should be a Methods course.

For any student wishing to be endorsed as a specialist in a certain area of Literary Studies, the student should aim to take at least 3-4 of their main courses (9 to 12 hours) as close to their area of literary specialization as possible.

Selection of Committee (to be completed by no later than the fall semester of the second year)

Whether specializing in an area of Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy or in an area of Literary Studies, an English Ph.D. student will be expected to select and confirm by no later than the fall semester of their second year the chair and the other two members of their committee, who will oversee the student's exam process and (unless the committee makeup is changed) the student's dissertation defense. Doctoral students specializing in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy should have a Rhet/Comp faculty member as their chair and one other Rhet/Comp faculty member as another member of the student's committee.



Candidacy Exam Schedule (Year 3)

All doctoral students are expected to complete their candidacy exams (one written exam + one oral exam) during the third year of their program.

First (Written) Candidacy Exam

The first (written) candidacy exam should be taken any time between **Oct. 1st through the end of the fall break** of the English Ph.D. student's third year. The student will need to notify their committee by no later than the spring semester of their second year to confirm the specific 72-hours (3-day) period for their written exam. If the student does not pass the written exam on the first try, they will need to retake their written candidacy by winter break if at all possible or, at the latest, between Feb. 15th and March 1st of the third year.

Second (Oral) Candidacy Exam

The second (oral) candidacy exam requires the English Ph.D. student to defend their dissertation prospectus to their committee and should be taken any time between **March 1st and April 30th** of the student's third year. The student will need to notify their committee by no later than the winter break of their third year to schedule a day for their oral exam, which will last 1-2 hours. If the student does not pass the oral exam on the first try, they will need to retake their oral candidacy exam by no later than the end of the summer of their third year.

Dissertation and Job Market Schedule (Years 4 and 5)

After completing candidacy exams in their third year, the English Ph.D. student should dedicate their last two years to writing their dissertation, going on the job market, and defending their dissertation.

FOURTH YEAR

Starting as soon as possible but at least no later than the beginning of the fall semester of their fourth year, the student should, following the structure outlined in their prospectus, begin writing their dissertation. It is highly recommended that the student:

- draft two main chapters of their dissertation by **December 31st** of their fourth year; and
- draft the remaining chapters of their dissertation by the end of spring semester of their fourth year, using the summer to draft their dissertation's introduction and conclusion.

FIFTH YEAR

For the student's fifth year in the doctoral program (which is also the final year of their TAship funding), it is highly recommended that the student:

- use the fall semester to go on the job market and revise their dissertation; and
- use the spring semester to complete on-campus interviews and defend their dissertation.

Doctoral RAships

If an English Ph.D. student wishes to be considered for an RAship (to complete a research-related activity in lieu of one of their teaching sections for Fall and Spring semesters), the student has to have passed their written candidacy exam by no later than **March 31st** in the spring semester before the RAship would start in the fall. The doctoral student should also complete their oral candidacy exam **by the end of the summer** before the RAship would start in the fall.

To request an RAship, a doctoral student must e-mail Dr. Szwydky and Dr. Sparks (cc-ing the student's doctoral committee chair on the correspondence) **by April 1st** to confirm the following:

- that the doctoral student wishes to be considered for an RAship in the fall

- that the doctoral student has completed their written candidacy exam and that they have confirmed with their doctoral committee chair that they will complete their oral candidacy exam by the end of the summer

If a doctoral student's request for an RAship is approved, the student will need to notify their doctoral committee chair as soon as possible. Then, **by May 1st,** the doctoral student will need to e-mail Dr. Szwydky and Dr. Sparks (cc-ing the student's doctoral committee chair) a 1-page document, signed by the doctoral student and their chair, providing a detailed description of the type of dissertation-related research project that the student will be completing in the fall of the coming year in lieu of teaching one section each of those semesters. (Note that a second document like this will be required at the end of fall in anticipation of the doctoral student's RAship continuing through spring.)

RAship Suggestions:

- Co-research with professor.
- Co-write an article.
- Community engagement projects to gather data for doctoral research/research for writing.
- Curatorial/exhibition work related to research/writing.
- Adapt dissertation research for audiences outside of academia (e.g., digital projects or public programming).
- Prepare and revise application materials for awards, external grants, research fellowships, postdoctoral fellowships, and academic job application materials.
- Complete a department-approved internship to prepare for jobs outside of academia (can also be taken for credit through our grad internship course, but in addition to dissertation hours).
- Research outcomes for thesis or dissertation project, such as grants or institutes to help with revisions, potential outlets for publishing chapters/articles/creative work or publishers/literary agents for the eventual books.

All of the above steps are required to ensure that students are using their RAship semester(s) for the purpose of completing extra research that may be related to their dissertation project but also separate (beyond simply researching and writing their dissertation). We have to be able to document that the

RAships are being used in this way to justify our providing doctoral students with those opportunities and to explain how each doctoral student is completing additional work in lieu of their teaching a second section for two semesters. Doctoral students who would prefer not to pursue an RAship do not have to request that opportunity during their course of doctoral study.

Please note, as well, that we cannot allow doctoral students to start their RAship in the middle of the year (i.e., the beginning of the spring semester) as this makes the process of assigning teaching sections difficult for the Rhetoric and Composition Office. All RAships, therefore, must begin in the fall semester. Again, if a doctoral student does not begin their RAship the fall of their fourth year, they can apply for their RAship to start the fall of their fifth year if they have completed their written candidacy exam by March 31st of their fourth year and plan to complete their oral candidacy exam by the end of the summer.

Focused Study in Rhetoric and Composition

Students earning the Doctor of Philosophy in English may choose Rhetoric and Composition as a field of focused study. Students who choose this option are required to do the following:

1. Take ENGL 50003 Composition Pedagogy; ENGL 59703 Advanced Studies in Rhetoric and Composition or ENGL 69703 Seminar in Rhetoric and Composition; and an additional graduate-level course in Rhetoric and Composition approved by the Director of Composition.

2. Teach five of the following writing courses offered by the English Department:

   - Any two courses from Category A
   - Any two courses from Category B
   - And any additional course from A, B or C

   Category A
   ENGL 00001, ENGL 10103, ENGL 10203, ENGL 10203 (Special Topics)
   Category B
   ENGL 20003, ENGL 10303, ENGL 30503
   Category C
   ENGL 20133, ENGL 20103, ENGL 30103

3. Earn 10 professional development points from the Program in Rhetoric and Composition by engaging in any combination of the following activities:
   - Presenting research at any Rhetoric and Composition conference (three points)
   - Organizing or leading a PRC workshop (two points)
   - Participating in a PRC workshop (one point)
   - Coordinating a PRC course or project (three points)

Graduate Student Dismissal Process

Following Graduate School policy, the Department of English may dismiss a graduate student for the following reasons, though there may be other unusual situations in which a student may be dismissed.

- Lack of Adequate Academic Progress
- Academic or Research Misconduct and Violations of the Code of Student Life
- Unethical and/or Unprofessional Conduct

The Department of English adopts the official university and Graduate School standards for the above.

For the Department of English to dismiss a graduate student, a case must be brought in one of the following ways:

- The Director of Graduate Studies may ask the Executive Committee to consider dismissing a student.
- The Director of Creative Writing may ask the Executive Committee to consider dismissing a student.
- If a student is dismissed from their teaching assistantship, the Executive Committee will meet to determine if the student also merits dismissal from the program.

For a student to be dismissed, a majority of the Executive Committee must vote to dismiss the student. The chair will not be present during this meeting. However, in the case of a tie, the chair will cast the deciding vote.

Graduate Student Appeal Process

Any M.A. or Ph.D. student who is notified that they are being dismissed from the graduate program due to inadequate progress toward their degree has the right to appeal such a decision.

The process for appealing is as follows:

1. The student may contact the Director of Graduate Studies to determine whether the student can take further steps to avoid being dismissed from the program.
2. If the Director of Graduate Studies advises the student that the student can take no further steps to remain in the program, the student may appeal this decision to the Department

Chair.

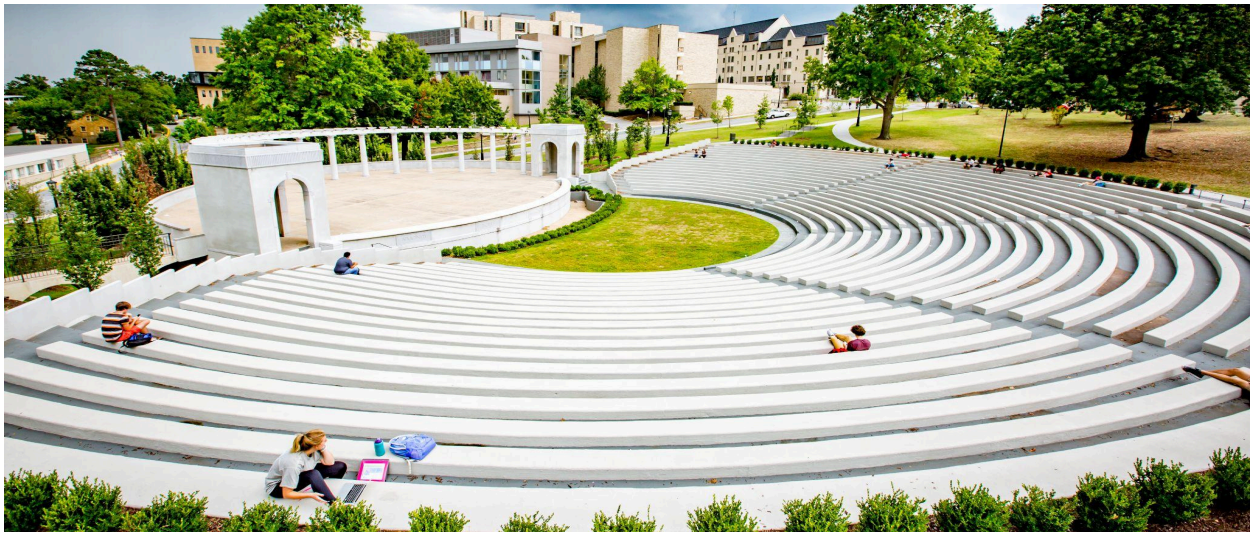
3. If the Department Chair advises the student that the student can take no further steps to remain in the program, the student may appeal this decision to the Academic Appeals Committee of the Graduate Council through the graduate student academic grievance process.

If the Graduate Council advises the student that the student can take no further steps to remain in the program, the student will be dismissed from the program.

GPA Requirements and Annual Evaluations of Graduate Student Progress

Each M.A. student in English must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.33 on the total number of graduate credit hours appearing on the transcript before being allowed to graduate. Each Ph.D. student in English must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 on the total number of graduate credit hours appearing on the transcript after completion of the M.A. A doctoral student whose GPA is below 3.5 will not be allowed to proceed with candidacy exams and on to dissertation writing.

According to Graduate School policy, each student must receive an Annual Graduate Student Academic Review Form (see p. 19) from the Director of Graduate Studies at the end of each spring semester. (A copy will also be sent to each doctoral student's committee chair.) If a student has a GPA that drops below the required minimum, receives an incomplete grade in a course (indicated by an "I" on the transcript) and does not complete the work for that course before the Annual Academic Review process, or goes beyond maximum time to degree (six years for the M.A. program and seven years for the Ph.D. program), the Academic Review form will indicate that the student is not making satisfactory progress and that the student needs to contact the Director of Graduate Studies immediately to discuss the student's status in the program.



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS | Graduate School & International Education

Annual Graduate Student Academic Review for Master's Students

When the department/program completes their review, they should send this signed document to https://bit.ly/3txQEAj by June 30th of each year.

Please Note: A review is not necessary if: a. the student graduated. b. the student never enrolled after acceptance into your program. c. the student was never officially admitted to your program.

1. Student's Name: _____
2. University ID Number: _____ Student's degree program: _____
3. Semester and year student entered degree program: _____
4. Current GPA and number of course hours completed: _____
5. Does student have any out of date course work? (Course work is considered out of date if it was taken more than six years prior to graduation.)
   ◯ Yes ◯ No
6. Has degree audit been made current, reflecting all exemptions to date?
   ◯ Yes ◯ No
7. Degree progress is:
   ◯ satisfactory.
   ◯ not satisfactory.
   Please explain:
8. Check all that have been completed and are requirements for this degree:
   ☐ Coursework completed (this excludes research hours)
   ☐ Comprehensive exam/thesis defense. Date: _____
   ☐ Practicum/internship/externship completed.
   ☐ Other: _____
9. The results of the review were communicated to the student:
   ◯ by face-to-face interview on _____ (date)
   _____ (signature of student)
   ◯ by the following procedure because the face-to-face interview was not possible or practical (include dates of notification): _____

Revised: 6/13/2022

10. This form accurately summarizes the annual graduate student academic review for this student for 2020 - 2021.
_____(Academic Year)

Signature of Review Coordinator _____ Name of Review Coordinator _____

Signature of Department/Program Head/Chair/Director: _____ Date _____

For Graduate School Use Only:

Review received (signature of dean): _____

Annual Graduate Student Academic Review Form for M.A. Students

Student Forms Directory

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS | Graduate School & International Education

Annual Graduate Student Academic Review for Doctoral Students

When the department/program completes their review, they should send this signed document to https://bit.ly/3txQEAj by June 30th of each year.

Please Note: A review is not necessary if: a. the student graduated. b. the student never enrolled after acceptance into your program. c. the student was never officially admitted to your program.

1. Student's Name: _____
2. University ID Number: _____ Student's degree program: _____
3. Semester and year student entered degree program: _____
4. Current GPA and number of hours completed: _____
5. Does student have any out of date course work? (Course work is considered out of date if at the time of graduation it was taken more than seven years prior to the first semester in the doctoral program.)
   ◯ Yes ◯ No
6. Has degree audit been made current, reflecting all exemptions to date?
   ◯ Yes ◯ No
7. Degree progress is:
   ◯ satisfactory.
   ◯ not satisfactory.
   Please explain:
8. Check all that have been completed and are requirements for this degree:
   ☐ Coursework completed (this excludes research hours)
   ☐ Candidacy exam. Date: _____
   ☐ Capstone/project submitted. Date: _____
   ☐ Internship/externship/practicum completed. Date: _____
   ☐ Proposal defense, if used. Date: _____
9. The results of the review were communicated to the student:
   ◯ by face-to-face interview on _____ (date)
   _____ (signature of student)
   ◯ by the following procedure because the face-to-face interview was not possible or practical (include dates of notification): _____

Revised: 6/13/2022

10. This form accurately summarizes the annual graduate student academic review for this student for
_____(Academic Year)

Signature of Review Coordinator _____ Name of Review Coordinator _____

Signature of Department/Program Head/Chair/Director: _____ Date _____

For Graduate School Use Only:

Review received (signature of dean): _____

Revised: 6/13/2022

Annual Graduate Student Academic Review Form for Ph.D. Students

Student Forms Directory

Faculty Areas of Specialization

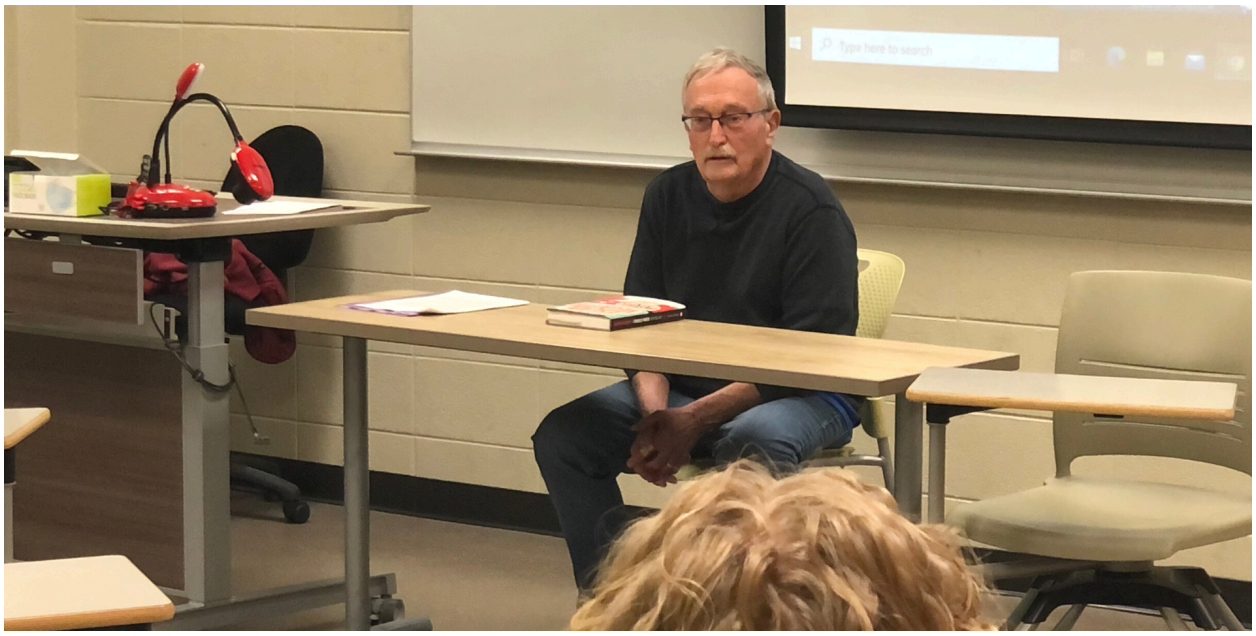
Whether you are studying at the M.A. level or you are studying at the Ph.D. level, we encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the wide range of our graduate English faculty members' research areas. Doing so early in your graduate programs will help you to plan ahead regarding the courses that you would like to take and also the faculty members who may be best suited to serve on your thesis, portfolio, or dissertation committees. (Note: M.A. students have the option of either defending a thesis or presenting a portfolio to their committee to complete their degree program.)

Here is the list of our current graduate English faculty members who teach courses at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels, and their respective areas of specialization.

Keith Booker - Science Fiction, Postcolonial Literature, Literature of the Left, Modern American Literature, Modern British Literature, Film Studies, Literary Theory

Sidney Burris - 20th-Century Literature, Creative Nonfiction, Human-Rights Literature, History of Non-Violence

Robert Cochran - Folklore, American Studies, Contemporary Literature, World Drama



Professor Robert Cochran

Matthew Coker - Old and Middle English, Medieval Latin, Old Norse, Old Irish, and Medieval Welsh Languages and Literatures

Sean Dempsey - Romanticism, 18th- and 19th-Century British Literature and Culture, Modernism and Modernity, Critical Theory, Religion and Literature, Psychoanalysis, Political Theology, Cosmopolitanism, Ecocriticism, Visuality, Film Studies

Maggie Fernandes - Digital Cultural Rhetorics, Assessment, and Content Moderation on Social Media Platforms

Lisa Hinrichsen - Southern Literature and Culture, 20th-Century American Literature, African-American Literature, Psychoanalytical Theory, Cultural Studies

Mohja Kahf - Comparative Literature, Arabic Literature, the Quran, Postcolonialism, Gender Studies

Casey Kayser – Medical Literature, Drama, Southern Literature

Mary Beth Long - Late-Medieval and Early Modern Literature, Hagiography and Reli- gious Culture, Manuscript and Early Print History, Gender Studies

Susan Marren - Modern American Fiction, American Literature, African American Literature, Gender Studies

Professor Susan Marren

Megan McIntyre - Composition History and Theory, Antiracist Pedagogy, Writing Program Administration, Digital Rhetorics, and Social Media

Yajaira Padilla - U.S. Latino/a Literatures and Culture, Ethnic Studies, Modern American Literature, 19th- and 20th-Century Latin American Literature, Central American Literature, Contemporary Latin American Literary, Cultural, and Social Theory

Adam Pope - Graduate Certificate Administration and Pedagogy, Online Pedagogy, and Digital Rhetorics

Eric Darnell Pritchard - Literacy and Rhetoric and Their Intersections with Fashion, Beauty, Popular Culture, Identity, and Power

William Quinn - Old and Middle English Literature, Prosody and History of Prosodic Theory, and Performance Features of Narrative Poetry

Mark Scott - Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama

Joshua Byron Smith – Medieval Literature, History of the English Language

Dorothy Stephens - Renaissance Literature, Gender Studies, Heian Japan

Professor Dorothy Stephens

Lissette Szwydky - Nineteenth-Century, Romantic and Victorian Literature and Culture; Adaptation and Transmedia Storytelling; Media Studies; Gender Studies; Theater and Performance Studies; Immersive Storytelling; Cultural History; Comparative Literature and Media; Visual Culture; Film and Television; Graphic Novels; Public Humanities; Career Education in the Arts and Humanities

Sean Teuton - North American Indigenous Literature, Cherokee Studies, Global Indigenous Literature

Lora Walsh - Religion and Gender, Medieval Religious History, Medieval Prayer and Mysticism, Medieval and Early Modern Ecclesiology

Kay Yandell - Early and 19th-Century American Literature, with an emphasis on the Technologies and Literatures of American Indian Women

Jarvis Young - African American literature and Afro-Diasporic writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

Guidelines for Candidacy Exam Prep (Ph.D. Students) and Final Project Prep (M.A. and Ph.D. Students)

Guidelines for Ph.D. Written-Exam Reading Lists

Coverage. As you start compiling your reading list for the Ph.D. written exam (the first of two doctoral candidacy exams), keep in mind that the area covered by the written exam should be noticeably broader than the area covered by your dissertation. The broad area of specialization covered by the exam—and represented by the works you select for your reading list—should include the more specific research area you intend to inhabit while writing your dissertation but should usually not be limited to that focus. You can think of your reading list for the exam as representing multiple research areas, and multiple teaching areas, and you can plan on marketing your research interests and teaching expertise to search committees in terms of these areas if you ultimately decide to go on the academic job market. Because the broad area of specialization covered by the Ph.D. written exam usually includes multiple research and teaching areas, students often divide their reading lists for the exam into sections and use subheadings to organize their bibliographical entries.

Number and Types of Works Included. Because students' reading lists for the Ph.D. written exam reflect differing research interests and areas of expertise, reading lists naturally vary in terms of the number and types of works included. As you define your broad area of specialization, and begin to compile your reading list, you might initially think of including 75 to 100 entries, with perhaps half of them being books and half being articles, although the number and types of works included will change, of course, as you receive feedback from your Advisory Committee and your reading list evolves.

Your reading list may include works you know well, works you need to reread, and works you've never read. For secondary sources, you may have reason to include older material but should typically concentrate on publications from the past twenty years or so: in addition to helping you develop a broad area of specialization, the process of reading for the Ph.D. written exam should help you position your dissertation research within a current scholarly conversation, once you start writing your dissertation. Depending on how you and the chair of your Advisory Committee decide to define your broad area of specialization, you may not need to include a large number of purely theoretical texts on your reading list. The members of your committee will, however, expect your reading list to demonstrate that you are making informed methodological choices; therefore, your committee members will expect to see a respectable amount of theory, or theoretically rich analyses, on the list. Even in the earliest versions of

your reading list, you should include your selections as full bibliographical entries in the correct (usually MLA or APA style) form so that you and the members of your Advisory Committee can more easily consider publication dates and any particular editions you may be using.

***Interaction with Your Advisory Committee*.** It is critical that you have regular interaction with your Advisory Committee while compiling your reading list for the Ph.D. written exam. Be sure to communicate regularly with the chair of your committee, in particular, consulting with him or her about the coverage of your reading list and about the number and types of sources you are including. Whenever you are in doubt about how to proceed with your reading list, meet with, and talk directly to, the chair of your committee. When your chair says you are ready to do so, share your list with the other two members of your Advisory Committee and ask them to respond to it. You should give your reading list to your chair, and then to the rest of your committee, as early as possible, because the committee members may well want you to make major changes to the list (for example, to add more theory or to replace older secondary sources with more recently published material) before they feel you are ready to schedule the Ph.D. written exam.

***Exam Preparation*.** Once your entire Advisory Committee has approved your reading list for the Ph.D. written exam, you will likely need to spend the next several months preparing for the exam by reading your way through all the works on the list and carefully taking notes on them. As you prepare, keep in mind that the exam is open note and open book: you won't need to worry about memorizing information, but you probably will want to take thoughtful and well-organized notes, in anticipation of using your notes during the exam. While reading through your list, you will almost certainly want to write summaries of some of the works and perhaps want to write detailed responses to some. Be sure, however, also to take notes that will enable you to synthesize the works—that is, to make meaningful connections among them. In a few cases, you may realize while reading something that it isn't especially useful for your purposes; in such cases, you may ask your committee members whether you can remove it from your reading list.

***Format and Expectations*.** The format of the Ph.D. written exam provides each student with 72 hours (three consecutive days) at home to compose essays in response to the questions on the exam. Most Advisory Committees include three questions on the written exam, and the format for your particular exam may or may not provide a choice in answering the questions. Your exam could require you to write on three out of three questions, to write on two out of three questions, or to answer one question and then choose between two others. Each student is expected to write approximately 30 double-spaced pages in response to the exam questions—about 15 pages on each of two questions, or about 10 pages on each of three questions. Because the written exam is open book (as well as open note), students are expected to provide full documentation, including parenthetical citations and a "Works Cited" or "References" page, with each essay submitted.

When your Advisory Committee assesses your responses to the exam questions, the committee will not expect you to have generated publishable ideas and prose. In assessing your exam responses, the committee will, however, consider the following: 1) your knowledge of your broad area of specialization; 2) your understanding of the current scholarly conversation(s) to which your dissertation will contribute;

3) your ability to analyze intelligently, and to synthesize with purpose, the works on your reading list; and
4) your ability to write coherent, detailed, and persuasive essays under pressure.

Guidelines for M.A. Portfolios (Note: Only those M.A. students choosing the portfolio option should refer to this section.)

When you are nearing the end of your first semester of the M.A. program, you should decide whether you want to complete a portfolio for the final project of your degree program or whether you want to complete a thesis. Students choosing to complete a portfolio are advised to stay committed to that option once they decide upon it as switching to the thesis option later may result in their not having enough time to finish the thesis project by the end of their second year in the program.

Students choosing the portfolio option must take ENGL 52103/Portfolio Workshop the spring semester of their second year in the program—that is, the semester they plan to graduate. Students prepare and submit portfolios by the end of the course, and the portfolios are evaluated by a committee of three faculty members: the professor of ENGL 52103 (who serves as chair of the committee), the Director of Graduate Studies, and another committee member selected by the professor of the course. Portfolios are given a score of Pass or Fail, and a student must receive a passing score in order to complete the M.A. program. If a student receives a failing score, he or she is allowed to rework the portfolio and to submit it a second time, but this second attempt at receiving a passing score is the final one granted.

The writing selected for a student's portfolio should include five to ten main documents totaling 50-75 pages and an introductory essay of 5-10 pages.

The introductory essay should provide an overview of the main documents selected for the portfolio and contextualize each of them. The introductory essay should also offer a self-reflective account of the student's trajectory in the program, considering the student's goals and objectives in undertaking the program, the development and growth experienced as a result of work in the program, and an indication of how this work could be applied to future career development.

The five to ten main documents for the portfolio should represent a student's best work in the program, so at least one of the main documents should normally be a researched critical essay written for a course and revised for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Other types of documents that could be suitable for the portfolio include shorter critical essays, pedagogical pieces, websites and multi-media projects, and job application materials.

2024 and 2025 Cohorts of Graduating English M.A. Portfolio Students

Guidelines for M.A. Thesis and Ph.D. Dissertation Prospectuses (Note: Only those M.A. students choosing the thesis option and Ph.D. students should refer to this section.)

If you are nearing the end of your first spring as an M.A. student or preparing for your second (oral) candidacy exam as a Ph.D. student, you need to start thinking ahead to the prospectus for your thesis or dissertation. The prospectus is a plan of action—not an outline, but a description—that is required of graduate students in English before they are allowed to begin writing a thesis or dissertation. It is vital that before writing the prospectus, you do a great deal of research to make sure you are planning an original project that does not repeat arguments published by other critics. M.A. students should start researching the prospectus and building a working bibliography during their first summer and discuss this work with their committee chair early in their second fall semester. Ph.D. students normally write and defend their dissertation prospectus as part of their second (oral) candidacy exam.

***Purpose*.** Your prospectus is a crucial tool in three ways:

1. A prospectus lets your committee know your initial ideas about your thesis or dissertation, thus enabling them to help you fine-tune your plans—by, for example, suggesting additional primary or secondary works for you to read, helping you figure out a more useful argumentative structure, or telling you that you need to go back to the drawing board.

2. It is likely that while writing your thesis or dissertation—and virtually certain that while writing your dissertation—you will at times lose track of the overall shape of your argument or the purpose of your project. At those times, it is a relief to be able to consult your own prospectus, which can set you back on track and bring order to the chaos of your thoughts. A good prospectus can serve this purpose even when, as is often the case, you have changed various aspects of your initial plans since writing the prospectus.

3. Having written a prospectus will help you a great deal in the future, when you will have to write similar documents for potential book publishers, conference organizers, professional fellowship committees, and institutions that offer grants.

Length. The prospectus can be either about five pages (plus a bibliography) or about ten to thirty pages (plus a bibliography), depending on how much research you have done beforehand and the nature of your project. Only you and your director can decide which format will be most useful for you. Write the longer version if you believe that with little revision you will be able to use it as the introductory chapter of your thesis or dissertation. If you are not at the right stage in your research to produce an introductory chapter, choose the shorter version. (A ten-page introductory chapter might be an appropriate length for one chapter of a fifty-page M.A. thesis; a thirty-page introductory chapter might not be too long for a 200- to 400-page dissertation.)

Components of a Prospectus. Below is an annotated list of the normal components of a prospectus. Not every prospectus contains all of these components, but if you decide to omit any, discuss the omission with your advisor, first. If your thesis or dissertation is unusual in some way—say, if your research will consist mostly of classroom observation or if you will not be analyzing texts—your advisor may suggest a slightly different form for the prospectus. The nature of your project may lead you to change the order of these components or to combine some of them.

1. Briefly explain your project. If you are writing an introductory chapter, you will want to articulate the central argument or arguments of your thesis or dissertation, but if you are writing the shorter form, you may want to stick to the traditional expectation for a prospectus, which is that it will not state the writer's argument. The reasons for this are similar to those in the sciences: one cannot report scientific results until the experiment is made; one can only advance an hypothesis and keep one's mind open. Similarly, the literary scholar cannot predict an argument until the process of writing chapters has produced that argument. Whether or not you state your central argument, however, you must go far beyond simply describing a topic. Focus on describing the central issue that you wish to address in your thesis or dissertation—that is, the problem with which you want to grapple. Your description of this issue should be unique; it should not look like it could refer to any article or book previously published by another scholar (or by yourself, for that matter).

2. Describe what has been done before in this research area. The purpose of this part of your prospectus is not to summarize entire articles or books by other scholars, nor is it to demonstrate how much you have read. Instead, the purpose is to indicate that you are entering an ongoing scholarly conversation and that you have something new and useful to offer to that conversation. If no other scholar has ever written about the author whose work you are going to address, you can still point to scholars who have asked related questions, who have addressed authors' writings in similar genres in the same historical period, or the like.

3. State explicitly how your approach to your issue or authors will differ from what has been done before, and explain how your work will contribute usefully to the body of literary or rhetorical scholarship. You do not need to claim that your project represents a mind-blowingly new development in the history of literary or rhetorical criticism; still less do you need to claim that all scholars before you have been nitwits. Again, remember that literary and rhetorical scholarship are collections of conversations and that your responsibility is to write something that will carry at least one of those conversations forward in a fresh way. (Remember, too, that within a very few years you are quite likely to meet some of the scholars to whom you refer. You want them to be interested in what you have to say even when you are strongly disagreeing with them.)

4. Explain what your methodology will be. You need not espouse one "-ism," and indeed, most literary scholars these days use parts of at least two or three sorts of theory. The aim of this part of your prospectus is to demonstrate to your committee that you have not simply defaulted to the one type of theory you know; instead, you have thoughtfully chosen to use certain methodologies because you believe they will be the most useful in addressing the particular topic and issue you have chosen.

5. List and describe each of the chapters of your work. You needn't have chapter titles yet, and again, you probably will not want to list the central argument of each chapter. (If you are writing your prospectus as an introductory chapter, you may want to list the central argument of each chapter, but you will probably have to come back and revise that portion of your introduction heavily after writing the entire thesis or dissertation.) Here, it is particularly important not only to describe the anticipated topic of each chapter (e.g., "painful self-awareness in *Wuthering Heights*") but also to describe its issue—the literary-critical problem that it is addressing. If you describe only a topic for each chapter, you will likely find yourself writing in circles a few months from now, as you realize that you are answering some of the same questions in your second chapter that you answered in your first. Putting a great deal of thought into this part of your prospectus now will save you a great deal of anxiety, frustration, and even panic later on.

6. Attach a Working Bibliography several pages long, impeccably proofread and formatted according to MLA or APA guidelines. You need not have read everything listed in the bibliography, and it is expected that you will both delete and add items later on while writing the thesis or dissertation. However, you should have read at least parts of most of the items on your list, enough to have a shrewd idea that they will be useful to your project. List both primary and secondary works. Your bibliography may consist of one list, or you may separate it into categories of some sort—e.g., all works pertaining to one of your authors, then all pertaining to another of your authors; or primary works and then secondary works; or works addressing rhetorical aspects of your project and then works addressing political aspects. You need not annotate your bibliography, though if you include a work that might look out of place, unscholarly, or otherwise odd to your committee members, you can always add a sentence of explanation at the end of the entry.

SharePoint Site

The Graduate Program in English has a secure SharePoint site that can be accessed by current graduate students in the Department of English. M.A. students can access the site to review sample thesis prospectuses that have been developed by past M.A. students and approved by department faculty. Ph.D. students can access the site to review sample written-exam reading lists that have been compiled by former Ph.D. students and approved by the department faculty. Ph.D. students also can access the site to review sample questions that department faculty have used on past written exams. Finally, Ph.D. students can access the site to review sample dissertation prospectuses that have been developed by past Ph.D. students and approved by department faculty.

****Please contact the Associate Director of Graduate Studies to be given access to this site.****

Important Graduate School Forms and Documents

Below is a list of the Graduate School forms and documents that you may need to access and perhaps also send back to the Graduate School over the course of your program. PDF versions can be accessed at the Graduate School's website.

Forms and Documents Used by English M.A. Students

- Presentation Travel Grant Application
- Master's Committee
- Thesis/Dissertation Title
- Guide to Theses/Dissertations
- Thesis/Dissertation Submission
- Intellectual Property Disclosure Form

Forms and Documents Used by English Ph.D. Students

- Presentation Travel Grant Application
- Research Travel Grant Application (Doctoral Students Only)
- International Travel Supplement Request (Doctoral Students Only)
- Ph.D. Committee Form
- Candidacy Exam Notification Form
- Ph.D. Dissertation Title Form
- Guide to Preparing Theses and Dissertations
- Dissertation Defense Announcement Calendar (Add your dissertation defense announcement to the UARK calendar.)
- Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form
- Intellectual Property Disclosure Form
- Survey of Earned Doctorates Certificate (Print a copy of the certificate when you are done.)

Staying Healthy

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Students who succeed in graduate school are typically those who take good care of themselves while they complete their studies. Make sure to take breaks from studying to exercise, hang out with friends, write in a journal, read *for yourself* (not just for class), stream your favorite shows, etc. Also, consider reaching out to on-campus or Northwest Arkansas counseling services for mental health support.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is part of the Pat Walker Health Center, located on campus at 525 N. Garland Avenue.

The Pat Walker Health Center (corner of Maple and Garland Avenues)

If you would like to speak with a counselor, you can ask the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies to set up an appointment at CAPS for you, or you can contact the CAPS office directly between

8-5, Monday-Friday, at 479-575-5276. (CAPS also offers 24-hour services through this number.) Group therapy is an option, as well as individual counseling.

Please note: If your first counseling session is not a perfect fit, we encourage you to continue to make appointments with different counselors, at CAPS or elsewhere in Northwest Arkansas, or to explore different therapy groups until you find the setting in which you feel most comfortable. And always feel free to keep the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies informed with regard to your status. If you continue to experience mental health and/or emotional distress while in your graduate program, the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies can help you to pursue other options, including taking a leave of absence from your program until you are ready to return to your studies.

On-Campus Exercise Resources

There is an excellent array of on-campus resources to help you stay in good physical shape while completing your graduate school experience, which we highly recommend that all graduate students do. To find out about opportunities to participate in yoga, group fitness, intramural sports, and university-organized outdoor activities like running, cycling, hiking, kayaking, and canoeing, go to the University Recreation + Wellness website or call 479-575-4646.

Northwest Arkansas Parks, Trails System, and Other Attractions

Get outside! One of the best reasons to attend graduate school at the University of Arkansas is the beautiful landscape of walking, hiking, and biking trails that surrounds you. Check out these resources to learn more about the variety of outdoor and arts-oriented activities to do in Northwest Arkansas:

Experience Fayetteville
Arkansas State Parks
Northwest Arkansas
TrailLink - Razorback Greenway
Razorback Greenway
The Ozarks, Arkansas
Finding NWA
Northwest Arkansas Council
Walton Arts Center
Crystal Bridges Museum
Fayetteville Farmers Market
Climb: Bentonville

Photos by Jared Sparks

Financial Planning

Departmental Assistantships

Stipends for 2026-2027 for graduate teaching assistants enrolled in the English M.A. program are $17,723 (or approx. $1,969/month for 9 months). Stipends for 2026-2027 for graduate teaching assistants enrolled in the English Ph.D. program are $21,163 (or approx. $2,351/month for 9 months). All teaching assistants also receive a full tuition waiver and the option of a benefits package.

Typically, M.A. students receive four semesters of assistantship, and doctoral students receive eight semesters of assistantship. Ph.D. students may apply for one or two additional semesters of assistantship through the Program in Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Office depending upon their level of progress in the program throughout their first four years.

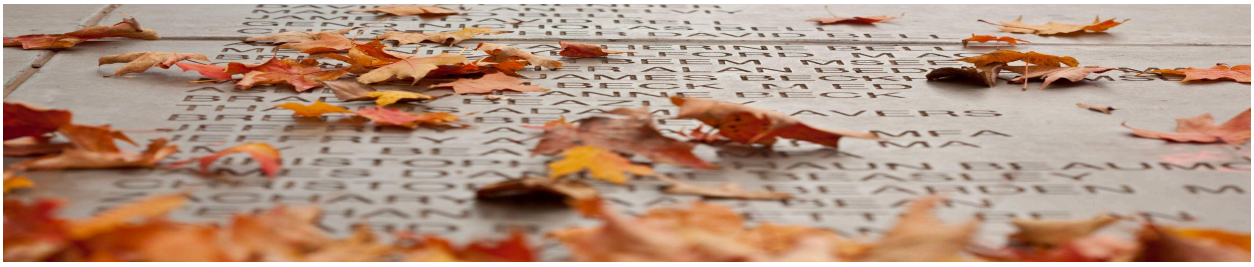
Teaching assistants typically teach two classes in the fall and two in the spring. Currently, Ph.D. students can apply for a fourth-year research assistantship **if they have made sufficient progress through the program.** The RA-ship opportunity allows doctoral students to teach one section and to complete dissertation-related research under the advisement of their dissertation director for both the fall and spring semesters of their fourth year in the program, further supporting their timely progress toward the degree.

Both M.A. and Ph.D. students may apply to teach over the summer, but since summer teaching positions are few, they are not guaranteed.

Teaching assistants may request to teach a range of courses, though M.A.-level TAs typically teach Composition I and II for both years of their program; doctoral-level TAs also typically teach Composition I and II for the first two years of their program, after which they may have opportunities to teach other courses.

Graduate School Doctoral Fellowships

If an incoming doctoral student receives a fellowship in addition to a teaching assistantship (note that a GRE score is required to be considered for a fellowship), the fellowship is typically awarded for a total of four years. It is very important that doctoral fellows read all e-mail correspondence from the Graduate School office so that they understand all requirements of their fellowships.



Taxes

The teaching assistantship stipend is paid through the Payroll office and is subject to federal and state taxes, while the doctoral fellowship is a supplement paid through the Financial Aid office that does not have taxes deducted from it by the university (unless the student is international, in which case taxes may be deducted). Therefore, doctoral fellows may owe taxes on their fellowship supplements, depending on their particular financial situations.

Financial Assistance Outside of the English Department

Graduate students may want to look at the Graduate School's web pages on Fellowships and Scholarships and Emergency Funding, as well as these other possible sources of funding (below) to support them while in graduate school:

- Wright Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange
- Office of Nationally Competitive Awards
- Grant Forward app located at the myapps.uark.edu dashboard (This is a kind of search engine for external funding sources. It requires registration to use, but if you register with your "...@uark.edu" email address, the registration is free.)

Student Loan Debt, Time to Degree, and Financial Aid

It is important for students to plan ahead, even before starting their graduate programs, in order to keep student loan debt to a minimum. Budgeting carefully is key, along with watching for opportunities to receive additional funding. In addition, completing one's degree program in a timely manner (2 years for M.A. students and 4-5 years for Ph.D. students) will help students finish their degrees while they are still receiving financial support as teaching assistants with the Department of English.

Financial Aid

Advisors are not allowed to ask students about their financial aid status, though graduate students are welcome to contact the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies with questions about financial aid issues that may arise with which the graduate students need assistance. Graduate students need to be prepared for issues that may arise with regard to a graduate student's financial aid:

1. The Financial Aid Office may contact students to let them know that they have exceeded 150% of the number of credits required for the degree plan (typically, the Ph.D. program in English). Graduate students are then required to complete a form and several additional steps before their financial aid disbursements can continue.

2. The Financial Aid Office may advise students that their financial aid will run out with the completion of their degree requirements (e.g., completion of 18 dissertation hours).

The English Department Community

Connections among Graduate Students

M.A. and Ph.D. Students Presenting at the 2026 Graduate Students in English Conference

You can meet and get to know other students through the graduate courses you take, the offices you share with other teaching assistants, the Graduate Students in English (GSE) events you attend, and the conferences in which you participate. Make sure to develop a strong support network through the cohort of your fellow graduate students and with others working in your discipline and related fields! 🙂

Student-Faculty and Student-Alumni Connections

Another source of support can be the chair of your graduate program committee, as well as the non-chairing members. Likewise, other faculty members with whom you take courses and perhaps collaborate on teaching, researching, and/or publishing projects can provide you with valuable advice on issues related to academic success and opportunities for professional achievement. Finally, we strongly encourage current students to attend the alumni speaker panel events offered each year and to network with former graduate students who are now working within diverse and exciting professional realms.

Alumni Speaker Panel Event

Dr. Ardeneaux (Alum) and Dr. Hinrichsen

Accessing Professionalization Resources and Financial Support

Academic and Non-Academic Professional Skill Development

We encourage students to take part in a variety of professionalization activities to help them develop competitive job application materials. These opportunities can take the form of participating in annual training sessions led by faculty or GSE officers, presenting at conferences, and publishing scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, we are committed to supporting our graduate students' efforts to acquire non-academic professional training if they are considering careers other than scholarly positions. Students may choose to take Dr. Lissette Lopez Szwydky's "English (and Liberal Arts) Degrees at Work" course or take advantage of other opportunities, such as participating in a professional internship for a semester (see p. 37) to develop skills that can be applied to careers outside of academia.

Annual Professionalization Sessions Offered by the Director and Associate Director of Graduate Studies

Each year, the Director and Associate Director of Graduate Studies offer a series of professionalization sessions. These meetings have traditionally focused upon preparing job application materials, submitting articles for publication, and exploring non-academic career opportunities. Here are the sessions that were offered in the 2025-2026 academic year:

- Speaker Panel: "English Internships" (Oct. 7, 2025)
- Alumni Speaker Panel: "Career Diversity" (Nov. 11, 2025)
- Meeting with Graduate Students and Dr. Susan Marren, Dr. Megan McIntyre, and Dr. Mark Scott to Discuss Scholarly Publication Process (Feb. 18, 2026)
- Meeting with Ph.D. Students to Discuss Tenure-Track Job Application Process (April 29, 2026)

Conference Presentations and Publication Opportunities

To learn about conference presentation and publication opportunities, graduate students can consult faculty mentors and others, as well as regularly check the UPenn Call for Papers site and subscribe to scholarly or professional organizations in their fields of specialization (or find out about opportunities during conference attendance). Students can also watch for announcements e-mailed to the graduate student listserv and posted on our graduate programs' Facebook and Instagram pages.

Additional Funding for Professionalization Opportunities

Graduate School Funding

- Presentation Travel Grant Application (M.A. students)
- Presentation Travel Grant Application (Ph.D. students)
- Research Travel Grant Application (Doctoral Students Only)
- International Travel Supplement Request (Doctoral Students Only)

The following information comes from the Graduate School website:

Presentation Travel Grants 2026-2027

Presentation travel grants will be awarded to students who are in a Master's or a PhD level program.

Students must submit their travel grant applications before the conference takes place. There are no exceptions.

Doctoral/MFA student travel grants: reimbursement of the total approved travel expenses per university travel policy, up to a maximum award of $1,500 for travel (beginning fall 2025).

Master/educational specialist travel grants (graduate certificate not funded): reimbursement of the total approved travel expenses per university travel policy, up to a maximum award of $1,000 for travel (beginning fall 2025).

Research Travel Grants 2026-2027 (Doctoral Students Only)

Doctoral students (examples include PhD, OTD, and EdD) may apply for a second travel grant during the year (July 1 – June 30) that will support research activities necessary for the completion of the dissertation or a capstone experience with a culminating project.

- The location and duration of the work, nature of the research/training, and necessity of engaging in the research for dissertation completion must be explained fully on the Research Travel Grant Application.

- A complete application contains three (3) documents:
  1. An application;
  2. A memo of support from the department/advisor that further explains the necessity of the research must be submitted with the application;
  3. A budget detailing how the funds will be spent

Maximum travel grant amount is $1,500 (beginning fall 2025)

- Doctoral students may not receive two Research Travel Grants in the same year

Go to the Travel Grants page of the Graduate School's website to learn about **International Travel Supplement Requests (available to Doctoral Students Only).**

A.L. Chilton Foundation Award

The A.L. Chilton Foundation Award was established to assist graduate students with a one-time award of up to $500 to support research activities such as:

- Assisting with travel relating to research,
- Purchasing material that may be needed for the student's research that is not available at the university, or
- Purchasing, leasing, or renting any other items or services that will assist the student's research.

While preference is given to students enrolled in graduate programs in the Sam M. Walton College of Business and the College of Education and Health Professions, proposals from graduate students in other colleges are welcome.

Graduate-Professional Student Congress (GPSC) Funding

- GPSC Travel Grants
- GPSC Research Grants
- Also consider nominating yourself or other graduate students for one of the annual GPSC awards.

Academic Scholarship Office at the University of Arkansas

Students can learn about more financial support by visiting the Academic Scholarship Office's page. The ASO's page includes links for the following scholarship opportunities:

- University-Wide Current Student Scholarships
    - ****Go to this page of the Academic Scholarship Office site to find out how you can nominate yourself in the fall semester to be considered for a Department of English graduate student award. See Step #10 to apply for awards through AcademicWorks.****
- College and Department Scholarships
- Arkansas Alumni Association Scholarships
- Division of Student Affairs Scholarships
- Outside Scholarship Agencies
- Other Specialized Resources (Office of Nationally Competitive Awards, Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange)

Other Funding Resources

- American Council of Learned Societies
- Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (M.A. Thesis Awards)
- Fulbright U.S. Student Program
- PhDs.me: The Doctoral Student's Guide to Fellowships
- PhDs.me: Financial Aid for Doctoral Students
- Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship Program

Professional Internships for Graduate Credit

Our graduate students can register for ENGL 51903/Graduate Internship in English (3 hours) in order to get credit for professional work completed outside of the classroom. Such an opportunity must be set up by the student in conversation with the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies and then approved by the Director of Graduate Studies before the student can be registered for that course.

Each fall semester, students can attend a speaker panel event at which representatives from different local businesses and organizations describe their internship opportunities and are able to network with students. Students may wish to pursue these particular opportunities or may decide to find internship opportunities on their own.

All graduate internships, in order to meet the criteria for ENGL 51903, must have a strong component of writing, communication, or research. Previous internships pursued by M.A. and Ph.D. students include:

- Arkansas Arts Academy
- ARSC Communications Team (U of A)
- Bible Advocate Press (Colorado)
- Business Communication Lab (WCOB)
- Canopy NWA
- Finding NWA
- Friends Congregational Church (Texas)
- Indigenous Food/Agriculture Initiative
- J.B. Hunt
- Magdalene Serenity House
- Marshallese Educational Initiative
- Ozark Natural Science Center
- Prose Creative
- Sley House Publishing Co.
- Special Collections / Mullins Library
- Spring International Language Center (closed)
- Sustainability Dept. / City of Fayetteville
- Two Friends Books
- University of Arkansas Press
- The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow
- Writing Studio - Student Success Center

FALL 2025

ENGLISH INTERNSHIPS

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

SPEAKER PANEL (Zoom Link Avail. by Request)
TUESDAY, OCT. 7, 2025, 11:00 - 12:15

AREAS OF ENGLISH INTERNSHIP INCLUDE:

- grant writing
- editing
- technical writing
- publishing
- social media outreach
- podcasting
- research
- secondary educ.
- university admin.
- nonprofit admin.
- for-profit admin.

Graduating

Scheduling and/or Completing Final Portfolio, Thesis, and Dissertation Projects

Early in the semester that a graduate student intends to graduate, he or she should contact the Director or Associate Director of Graduate Studies to receive guidance on wrapping up. The student should also access that semester's graduation checklist, available on the Graduate School's website.

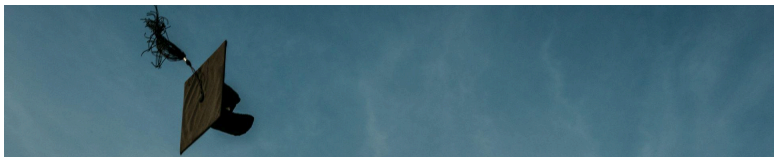
Final Paperwork for Graduation

Paperwork Required of M.A. Students Completing a Portfolio

M.A. students who decide to complete a portfolio for their final project will be enrolled in ENGL 52103/Portfolio Workshop for the last (spring) semester of their program. The instructor of the Portfolio Workshop course will be responsible for choosing the members of each student's Advisory Committee and submitting related paperwork to the Graduate School. The Associate Director of Graduate Studies will also review and finalize each student's academic progress screen in Workday.

Paperwork Required of M.A. Students Defending a Thesis

- Pre-Check Sheet or E-Mail Showing Format Approval (from the Graduate School)
- Thesis Submission Form
- Intellectual Property Disclosure Form
- Full Title Page of Your Thesis with Original Signatures
- The Associate Director of Graduate Studies will also review and finalize each student's academic progress screen in Workday.

Paperwork Required of Ph.D. Students Defending a Dissertation

- Pre-Check Sheet or E-mail Showing Format Approval (from the Graduate School)
- Dissertation Submission Form
- Intellectual Property Disclosure Form
- Survey of Earned Doctorates Certificate
- Full Title Page of Your Dissertation with Original Signatures
- The Director of Graduate Studies will review and finalize each student's academic progress screen in Workday.