

**English Department**  
**Graduate Student Handbook**

**2023-2024**

**College of Arts & Sciences**  
**The University of Tennessee**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2023-2024 version of the *Graduate Student Handbook* provides information for MA, MFA, and PhD candidates. Though this Handbook has come to you in an electronic format since 2005, it represents the cumulative efforts of many people involved with the graduate program. In 1989 Nancy Goslee drafted a first version of the Handbook. Without her efforts and those of Chuck Maland, it would not be available. Since then, the Handbook has been regularly updated by the successive Directors of Graduate Studies: Michael Lofaro, Mary Papke, Misty Anderson, Allen Dunn, Tom Haddox, Dawn Coleman, Bill Hardwig, and Ben Lee. Dinah Brock typed countless versions of the handbook with unfailing patience and good humor, and Leanne Hinkle helped to prepare this and previous editions. Thanks to all of the above for their contributions. Paper copies of this document are available from the Graduate Office on request.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Welcome Statement**

Welcome to graduate study in English at the University of Tennessee. Our department has a nationally and internationally renowned faculty and a wide array of resources to assist you in your scholarly and professional pursuits. Toward this end, we provide you with this Graduate Student Handbook.

### **Graduate School Introduction**

In order to serve the mission and vision of the Graduate School and preserve the integrity of Graduate Programs at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, information related to the process of graduate education in each department is to be provided for all graduate students. Based on Best Practices offered by the Council of Graduate Schools, it is important that detailed articulation of the information specific to the graduate degrees offered in each department/program be disseminated.

The Department Graduate Handbook aligns with the *Academic Policies and Requirements* for Graduate Students in the Graduate Catalog (<http://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>) and the policies governing student conduct and academic integrity in *Hilltopics Student Handbook* (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>). It also details the specific ways in which the Department implements those policies.

**Graduate Students are expected to be aware of and satisfy all regulations governing their work and study at the university.**

### **Purpose of this Handbook**

This Handbook seeks to provide you with basic information about graduate study in English and to anticipate many of the questions that may arise. This Handbook and the Graduate School Catalog contain the relevant policies and requirements governing graduate education. If in doubt about something, check with the Director of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Administrative Assistant, or other appropriate persons. Also, check the departmental calendar for important deadlines. The schedule of upcoming examinations is posted on the bulletin board outside of 306 McClung. While this Handbook attempts to be as complete as possible, some details may have been inadvertently omitted. Please inform the Graduate Office of such omissions so that we can make subsequent editions of the Handbook more complete.

## **Structure of Graduate Administration**

Several individuals and committees in the Department supervise and administer the graduate program. The Director of Graduate Studies (or DGS, currently Dr. Ben Lee) coordinates the activities of the committees and oversees the graduate program as a whole. The Admissions and Placement Coordinator (currently Dr. Nancy Henry) coordinates the activities of the MA, MFA, and PhD Admissions Committees; advises graduate students who are applying for academic jobs; and organizes programming for graduate students related to the academic job search. The DGS, Placement and Admissions Coordinator, and Graduate Administrative Assistant (currently Leanne Hinkle) make up the Graduate Office and together act as a clearinghouse for correspondence with English graduate students.

Because several committees and their actions will affect you during your time here as a student, you should know of their functions and responsibilities. The Graduate Committee, chaired by the DGS, continually reviews the academic structure and procedures of the graduate program and recommends changes to the faculty. It also reviews the results of the comprehensive examinations. The Graduate Admissions Committees (MA, MFA, and PhD) evaluate the credentials of graduate student applicants and make recommendations concerning admission and the awarding of assistantships, associateships, and fellowships.

All regulations in this Handbook must be followed to maintain good standing in the program. There may be extenuating circumstances that justify modification of these stipulations. If you feel that special consideration should be given to your situation, see the DGS, who will advise you about petitioning the Graduate Committee or, if warranted, the Graduate School. You will be informed of the decisions regarding any petitions.

# PART 1: DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

## ***1. Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty***

The Department has important responsibilities to you. We seek to provide you with the best possible training through coursework, seminars, speakers, travel funds, opportunities for research, and other activities. We have an obligation to keep ourselves current in our professional areas and participate in meetings and conferences on topics in our respective fields of interest. We attempt to give you the best possible guidance in the selection of coursework and research. When the time comes for you to seek employment, we will assist you in every way possible.

In some cases we might conclude that you cannot continue in your graduate studies. If that happens, we will inform you of the decision at the earliest opportunity so that you will have time to reevaluate your goals and decide how to proceed.

## ***2. Duties and Responsibilities of Graduate Students***

Every graduate student is expected to be familiar with and to comply with all the requirements listed in the Graduate Catalog's *Academic Policies and Requirements for Graduate Students* (available online at <http://catalog.utk.edu/index.php>) and the policies governing student conduct and academic integrity in *Hilltopics Student Handbook* (<https://hilltopics.utk.edu/>) and in this Handbook. Any changes to the department's requirements will be sent to you via email and listed in future editions of this Handbook. Copies of the modifications will also be available in the Graduate Office and posted on the graduate program's web pages. Students are expected to keep informed about these changes.

Graduate students are expected to maintain a full commitment to the program—to attend their classes and to participate actively in Departmental functions and professional activities. We expect that you will behave in a reasonable manner both on and off the campus. Students are expected to complete their requirements in a timely manner and to comply with all university regulations.

Students with Graduate Teaching Assistantships or Associateships bear extra responsibilities because they also help carry out the teaching function of the university. Graduate Teaching Assistants are expected to work, outside their studies, for 10 hours each week, about 1/4 of their time. Each semester half of the work time (or five hours) will be spent tutoring in the Writing Center and half (the other five hours) will be devoted to classroom experience in the teaching of composition. Graduate Teaching Assistants are responsible for promptly contacting the faculty member with whom they will work during a semester so that they can be informed of their duties and responsibilities.

Graduate Teaching Associates teach their own first-year composition courses. They are responsible for meeting their classes at the appointed times and conducting them as effectively as possible and for holding regularly scheduled office hours. Grading of quizzes and papers should

be completed promptly, enabling students to learn from their mistakes and from the teacher's suggestions and comments. Graduate Teaching Associates are expected, according to the Graduate School, to work 20 hours a week on teaching and to spend the other half of their working week on their own studies. In practice, both halves of this workweek may necessitate longer hours. Balancing responsibility to your students with the demands of your own coursework and education is difficult but essential. Learn early to schedule your time wisely.

Both Assistants and Associates are expected to begin their duties on the first day of meetings specified for their group. New Graduate Teaching Associates and Assistants normally report for training during the department's Graduate Student Orientation, which takes place for several days during the week before classes begin in the Fall semester.

Graduate Teaching Associates who need to miss a class or two (due, for example, to illness or to attend a professional conference) must find someone to teach the class and inform the appropriate English Department offices of the absence. If you are facing circumstances that necessitate more than a one-week absence from the program—for example, for childbirth, surgery, or out-of-town elder care—you should consider taking an official leave of absence (LOA). See the Graduate Catalog for details. However, if you expect to be absent from the program for more than one week but fewer than six, the department may be able to assist you in making arrangements that will allow you to avoid taking an official LOA. In either situation, please consult with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible. The DGS will work with you and departmental administrators to find an appropriate solution.

The student is responsible for reapplying for an associateship; renewal is not automatic. Renewal will depend upon a) satisfactory performance of teaching duties, b) maintenance of an acceptable standard of work in graduate classes, c) satisfactory performance on exams, and d) satisfactory progress toward meeting degree requirements. These standards must also be met, of course, if the student is to retain the teaching associateship for the complete academic year.

The Departmental mailroom is 316 McClung Tower. Graduate students should check their mailboxes regularly, once a day if possible. They should also maintain and check a university email account, which the Graduate Office will use for electronic correspondence and memos.

Normally, graduate students will not be appointed to administrative positions within the department (such as Assistant Director of Composition or the graduate student member of a professorial search committee) unless they have completed their comprehensive examinations.

The reputation of the Department among first-year undergraduates depends on the performances of our Graduate Teaching Associates and Assistants. The Department expects everyone with an associateship or assistantship to take this responsibility seriously. Advanced PhD students who are excellent teachers may sometimes be selected to teach a section of a 200-level course as part of their normal teaching assignment. The department will work to ensure that of the four courses MFA students teach during their normal tenure of two years, one will be a 200-level course in creative writing.

## PART 2: ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### *1. General Information*

The English Department accepts applications for admission to its degree programs for the Fall semester only. Anyone with a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution or foreign equivalent who wishes to take courses for graduate credit, whether or not the person desires to become a candidate for a degree, must submit a formal online application for admission to graduate study or apply for transient status. No action is taken until a file is complete. Applicants should check their status online.

For information on applying to the Graduate School, visit (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/admissions/>) All materials, including the forms specific to the English Department, should be submitted online; the Graduate School will forward them to the English Department. Applicants should take the GRE tests so that the Department receives the scores before the application deadline.

**All application materials must be received by December 1 for PhD students or by January 15 for MA and MFA students.** Offers of appointment for all degrees are typically made in late February but may occur as late as June.

Candidates who are denied entrance into graduate degree programs may reapply for admission only if their application has been substantially enhanced. Any candidate who is denied admission to a graduate program twice will no longer be considered for admission. Students who have been admitted to the Graduate School as non-degree students may take 500-level courses in the English Department with faculty permission.

### *2. MA Admissions*

To be accepted into an MA program in the English Department, a student must have already completed a minimum of 18 semester hours of upper-division English courses. A major in English provides a stronger base for further study but is not a requirement for admission. Students who lack this minimum may choose to enroll as a non-degree student in the Graduate School and to take a certain number of courses as preparation for a future application to the MA program, but no tuition waivers are available for such courses, and there is no guarantee of eventual acceptance into the program. If such students are subsequently admitted to the MA program, Graduate School regulations stipulate that a maximum of 15 semester hours taken as a non-degree student may be transferred to the student's degree program. Although the Graduate School requires a 2.7 or B cumulative average in all previous course work for admission, successful MA candidates typically have much higher grades in English courses. In making its decision, the MA Admissions Committee considers grades, recommendations, GRE scores (these are optional, but candidates may choose to submit scores from a test taken no earlier than five years prior to the January 15 application deadline), a statement of goals, and the writing sample.



The committee looks for students who can complete the program successfully and who will add intellectual energy to the program. Although grades are by no means the only factor we consider, most students who are admitted have a 3.67 GPA or above. By the time a student begins their study in the MA program, they must have completed a bachelor's degree.

### ***3. MFA Admissions***

All applicants to the MFA program must hold a BA or BFA degree by the time they begin their coursework in the fall. While majors in English or Creative Writing are preferred, we also consider students in related disciplines who have completed at least 18 credit hours in upper-level English courses. The Graduate School requires a 2.7 GPA average in all previous coursework for admission to all master's programs, but most of our applicants have a much higher GPA in their coursework. The Admissions Committee evaluates all applicants holistically, based on a portfolio of grades, recommendations, GRE scores (these are optional, but candidates may choose to submit scores from a test taken no earlier than five years prior to the date of application), a statement of goals, and two writing samples, one in creative writing and one in argumentative or critical writing. We are interested in the overall picture of strengths and interests that these materials provide.

### ***4. PhD Admissions***

For admission to the PhD program, a student should have an MA, or, in the case of creative writing students, an MA or an MFA in English, by the time they begin coursework. In unusual circumstances, highly prepared students with some graduate work in English but a degree in another field may be accepted on the condition that they take additional coursework, the amount of which will be determined by the DGS. The English Department normally requires a 3.5 or better in previous graduate coursework. Grades are by no means the sole determining factors in admission decisions, but most students who are admitted have a 3.67 GPA or better. The Admissions Committee also looks for evidence of independent research ability, strong writing skills, and a clear sense of professional purpose.

Neither the GRE General Test nor the GRE Subject Test in Literature is required of applicants to the PhD program. Applicants may choose to submit these scores, however, if they think they would enhance the application.

The DGS, in consultation with the incoming student, will count up to 24 credit hours (excluding thesis hours and any hours taken on a Pass/Fail basis) of previous graduate coursework in English toward the PhD requirements after a transcript evaluation. (For further limits on the number of hours that may be transferred from other universities, see the Graduate Catalog.) Normally, the Department's Graduate Admissions Committee considers acceptance into the PhD program and financial support through a teaching associateship as a package and thus considers actual or potential teaching ability as part of the entrance requirement. PhD applicants who have had no teaching experience may be offered a graduate teaching assistantship for one or two semesters before becoming an associate.

## ***5. Special Admission Categories***

- **Non-degree admission.** Students who wish to take graduate courses in English at UT but who do not intend to pursue a degree program may apply to the Graduate School and to the department for non-degree admission. Unlike admission to a degree program, which happens only during the Fall semester, admission to a non-degree program in English may take place at any time. Students who take non-degree graduate courses are not offered a teaching assistantship and must pay their own tuition. If such students are subsequently admitted into a degree program, the Graduate School typically allows them to transfer up to 15 credit hours earned as a non-degree student at UT to their degree program. Being admitted as a non-degree student, however, is no guarantee of subsequent admission to a degree program.
- **Probationary admission.** In rare cases, an applicant whose undergraduate GPA falls between 2.5 and 2.7 may be admitted on probation, upon recommendation of an academic unit. The probationary status will be removed after completion of 9 or more hours of graduate credit with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Failure to maintain a 3.0 while in this status will result in dismissal. An international student may not be admitted on probation.
- **Readmission.** The Graduate School requires any student who does not enroll for three consecutive terms or who allows their continuous registration in English 600 to lapse to apply again for admission to the Graduate School. It is the policy of the English graduate program not to readmit candidates for a degree after they have not registered for classes for more than three semesters. Any readmission after that point is in fact considered to be a new application for admission. An applicant can have the committee judge their candidacy on existing materials, but to make the strongest case, the applicant may need to make a new full application. Each applicant will then compete with all other applicants for admission to the MA, MFA, or PhD program. The DGS in English reviews these applications with the appropriate Admissions Committee. Those denied readmission can, if they wish, complete the requirements for the next Fall admission and compete with the pool of new candidates. A candidate who is denied readmission and who is subsequently denied admission in a regular Fall term admission review will no longer be eligible or considered for admission to the graduate program.

## ***6. Application Checklist***

All materials should be submitted online to the Graduate School website. The complete application should include:

- The online Graduate School application.
- Statement of Purpose. This document should articulate the reasons for wishing to pursue graduate study, relevant experience and studies to date, any other strengths the applicant would bring to the program, and long-term professional goals.
- A \$60 nonrefundable application fee.
- A critical writing sample of between 10 and 20 pages. This writing sample should illustrate the candidate's ability to craft critical arguments in the context of English

studies. Candidates applying for the MFA degree or for the PhD with Creative Dissertation concentration should also send a creative sample of no more than 25-30 pages of fiction or creative non-fiction or 15 poems (with name, address, and phone number on a title page only), as well as the critical writing sample of between 10 and 20 pages.

- Three letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation commenting on the student's academic ability, most recent performance in English courses, and any previous teaching experience play an important part in determining acceptance and appointments. Letters from professors of English are much more useful than letters from supervisors or colleagues at your place of employment, family members, or members of the clergy.
- Copies of transcripts from all colleges and universities previously attended.
- Copies of GRE Scores if the candidate chooses to include them. The General Test is now optional for all applicants to the MA, the MFA, and the PhD in all concentrations; the Subject Test in Literature is encouraged but not required for applicants to the PhD in Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies and the PhD with Creative Dissertation. Please note that scores are valid for only five years; be sure that your scores will still be valid as of January of the current application year.

You are responsible for making sure that the application is complete with both the Office of Graduate Admissions and the English Department. Applications completed after the announced deadlines may not be considered for Fall term admission.

## PART 3: FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Graduate students in the English Department have access to several kinds of financial aid. Campus financial aid, including loans, is handled outside the department. Departmental support (most commonly, assistantships and associateships) is administered through the Graduate Office.

### *1. Departmental Teaching Assistantships and Associateships*

- **Outside employment.** The Graduate School requires that any student with an assistantship or associateship must seek the permission of the DGS for any employment, whether in the university (for instance, at the Thornton Center) or outside it, beyond the duties of the assistantship or associateship. In many cases, the DGS will then need to submit those requests to the Dean of the Graduate School. Permission is granted on a per-semester basis. Because of the various offices involved, students should request permission before the beginning of the semester in which they wish to work. In virtually no case will permission be granted for a graduate student on an assistantship or associateship to perform more than five additional hours of paid employment per week during the academic year. Students should not work at the Thornton Center if they are first-year PhD students, as they are adjusting to the demands of PhD-level work and need to prioritize their studies.
- **English language proficiency.** Students whose native language is not English must take the OPIc test, which evaluates their oral proficiency in English, before the semester in which they begin their teaching duties. Students who do not pass the test with a sufficiently high score may be assigned other duties (for instance, working in the Writing Center) until they have an opportunity to take the test again. Repeated failures to achieve the required score may result in the loss of the teaching assistantship. The Graduate Administrative Assistant will register any students who need to take the test and inform them of their test date.
- **Graduate Teaching Assistantships.** Applicants must complete the BA before beginning service. In addition to paying a stipend, the assistantship remits tuition for Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters and covers all mandatory fees. Teaching duties are assigned for Fall and Spring only. Graduate Teaching Assistants at UTK, if their work is satisfactory and if they have completed 18 semester hours of graduate English courses, will be promoted to Teaching Associates in their second year. They must also have completed English 505 or its equivalent.
- **Graduate Teaching Associateships.** Normally an applicant from another university must have completed the MA or MFA and had experience as a classroom teacher or teaching assistant. In addition to paying a stipend, the associateship remits tuition for Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters and covers all mandatory fees. Teaching duties are assigned for Fall and Spring only, though summer teaching is often available to PhD students, with priority going to those more advanced in the program. Appointees who hold the MA or MFA degree teach up to four courses during the regular academic year

and may teach an additional course in the summer if it is available. Teaching Associates must enroll for a minimum of six hours of graduate credit each semester of the regular academic year and teach two courses (or equivalent workload or fellowship) each semester.

- **Renewal of Appointments.** At the beginning of the Spring semester, Graduate Teaching Assistants and Associates whose progress and performance have been satisfactory will receive forms for renewing their positions for the following academic year. These forms should be completed and returned in a timely manner, normally before February 1 each year.
- **Resignation from a Teaching Assistantship or Teaching Associateship.** Any graduate student wishing to resign an Assistantship or Associateship should submit a letter of resignation to the Director of Graduate Studies and to the Associate Head of the Department at least two weeks before the first day of classes.

## ***2. Departmental Research and Editorial Assistantships***

The Department has instituted a number of awards for graduate students that make use of special Departmental endowments, especially the Better English Fund, established by John C. Hodges, and the John B. Emperor Fund. The following awards, which typically substitute for teaching a course for one or two semesters, are currently available to our graduate students via competitive application:

- **Richard Beale Davis Editorial Assistantships**—founded in honor of a former member of the department and distinguished scholar in American literature who was one of the original editors of *Tennessee Studies in Literature*. Each assistantship reduces the teaching load of the student selected and obligates the recipient to assist in editing one of the department's publications: *Early American Literature*, *Grist: A Journal of the Literary Arts*, *International Journal of Nuclear Security*, and *Journal of Victorian Culture*. The assistantships are awarded competitively. Ordinarily, Davis Assistantships are not awarded to first- or second-year students.
- **Percy Adams, John Hurt Fisher, Alwin Thaler, and Nathalia Wright Research Assistantships**—founded in honor of distinguished scholars and former department members. These assistantships are awarded competitively and reduce a student's teaching load to either 1-1 or 2-1 and assign them to a professor for a research experience commensurate to the released time. Students typically assist the professor in their research for ten hours per week during one or two academic semesters, depending on the award. The professor and graduate student should be clear from the outset about mutual responsibilities.
- **Research Assistant for John C. Hodges Chair of Excellence.** Normally, for this three-year research position, the recipient will receive one class release time each term of the first and third year and two classes release time during the second year. Chosen from

among applications by the holder of the Chair of Excellence in consultation with the DGS.

### ***3. Other University of Tennessee Graduate Fellowship Opportunities***

- The Graduate School offers a number of competitive, University-wide fellowships. Information is available on the Graduate School's web site: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/> .
- PhD students in English are eligible to apply for residential, dissertation-completion fellowships at the University of Tennessee Humanities Center. Please see <https://uthumanitiesctr.utk.edu/fellowships/fellowships.php> .
- The Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (<https://marco.utk.edu/>) offers a several fellowships for which English graduate students are eligible. See in particular the John Hurt Fisher Memorial Literature Prize (<https://marco.utk.edu/fisher-prize/>).
- The College of Arts and Sciences offers dissertation fellowships, the Penley-Thomas-Allen awards, based on a competitive College-wide application process. Each department's DGS is typically allowed to nominate two dissertators for these awards.

### ***4. Loans Administered by the Financial Aid Office***

Students interested in seeking educational loans should start by visiting the University of Tennessee's One Stop page: <http://onestop.utk.edu/financial-aid/>.

### ***5. Departmental Travel Grants***

- **F. DeWolfe Miller Graduate Student Travel Grants (informally known as Hodges Travel Grants).** Founded in honor of a former member of the department and scholar in American Literature, this award provides financial support for full-time graduate students whose work has been selected for presentation at conferences and other such events. Students may receive a maximum of \$1,000 of such funding for the academic year, which may be used for one event or divided among several.
  1. To apply for a travel grant, please submit a letter to the DGS **at least six weeks before you travel.** This letter should be accompanied by an itemized budget of reimbursable travel-related expenses and by confirmation that you will be presenting your work at this event, such as an email from the conference organizers or a link to an online copy of the program.

The following expenses are reimbursable: conference registration, airfare, lodging (conference rate at conference hotel or up to maximum CONUS rate for the city), per diem costs for food, rental cars, ground transportation (to and from an airport), fuel costs per mile when traveling in a personal car (you may choose to be reimbursed either for gasoline or for mileage, at \$0.47/mile), parking (e.g., at a

conference hotel), membership in an organization *only* when membership is a prerequisite for participation in the conference. When renting a car, you can be reimbursed for refilling the tank yourself but not for Pre-paid or Fuel Service options (because the driver is charged for a full tank, regardless of the miles driven). However, if the car is booked through National/Enterprise, the pre-paid fueling option is acceptable due to a University contract guaranteeing a discounted rate. When renting a car during international travel, the University recommends purchasing collision and/or damage insurance; this expense will be reimbursed. Costs for printing and duplication of promotional or conference materials is also reimbursable as long as it is necessary for official business.

The following expenses are **not** reimbursable: membership in an organization when membership is not a prerequisite for participation in a conference, liability and collision insurance (or any “optional” insurance) for rental cars when traveling in the United States, travel health insurance, sightseeing (even when these tours are offered by conference organizers), the pre-paid fueling option on cars not rented from National/Enterprise, and sundries.

2. Once you received a letter signed by the DGS approving your travel, please fill out a Travel Authorization form and submit it to the department’s travel facilitator **at least 30 days in advance of travel.**
  3. Save all appropriate receipts from your travel.
  4. Submit your receipts to the department’s travel facilitator when you return. Failure to fill out the Travel Authorization form until after you have completed your travels may result in your not being reimbursed.
- **Hodges Grants for Summer Seminars and Workshops.** Doctoral students who have been accepted to summer seminars, creative writing workshops, and other types of summer programs can apply for up to \$1,500 of support. Letters of application should be submitted to the Graduate Office and should describe the nature of the program to be funded, the means by which the participants are selected, and the importance of the program to the student’s course of study. Applicants are encouraged to include a supporting letter from their mentors. This funding cannot be used for travel to conferences or similar events of short duration. To receive funding a student must be accepted to the program in question by way of a competitive application process.

Applications for this funding should be made as soon as you know that you will be applying for such a seminar. A total of \$6,000 per year has been allotted for these awards; they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis to qualifying students.

- **MLA and AWP Interview Grants.** Those attending a job interview at MLA or AWP may request up to \$500 in support. Applications for this award should be submitted to the Graduate Office and should include a written confirmation of the interview.

- **Thomas Wheeler Traveling Fellowships.** Founded in honor of a former member of the department and scholar of Renaissance literature, three competitive fellowships, normally \$1,000 each, are available each year to PhD students who need to travel in this country in pursuance of research work on the dissertation, or two competitive fellowships of \$1,500 for PhD students who need to travel abroad. A letter of application should include specific research plans and budget and should be supported by a letter from the dissertation director.
- **Judith Slagle Graduate Research Fellowship.** Endowed by a distinguished alumna of the department, the Slagle Fellowship provides \$1,000 to be used for travel to libraries, archives, or repositories; for supplies; or for other expenses related to the preparation of a thesis or dissertation in the fields of Restoration, eighteenth-century, or nineteenth-century British studies. One Slagle Fellowship is available per year.

## ***6. Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards***

The Graduate Student Senate, in cooperation with the Dean of Students and the Dean of the Graduate School, provides funding to graduate students to travel, present work, and participate in scholarly conferences and events. Students who apply for this funding must also apply for the F. DeWolfe Miller Graduate Student Travel Grants, described above. Graduate Student Senate Travel Awards can help finance especially expensive conference travel, such as major conferences abroad at which you are presenting your work. The GSS also has a new program for Professional Development grants. See the webpage for details: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/?s=travel&btnF=Go>.

## ***7. Departmental Fellowships and Awards for Scholarship and Teaching***

- **John C. Hodges First Year PhD Fellowships** for Outstanding First-Year Graduate Students. This fellowship provides \$1,000 for the first year and a reduction in teaching load from 2-2 to 1-1. Holders of this award will be eligible for all the other forms of financial assistance described in this Handbook and will hold this fellowship in addition to a teaching associateship.
- **John C. Hodges First Year MA and MFA Fellowships.** This fellowship provides \$500 for the first year to outstanding first-year MA and MFA students. This award is held in addition to a teaching assistantship or associateship.
- **Bain and Irene Stewart Fellowship.** The fellowship is awarded to all funded Ph.D. candidates. Recipients will receive a reduction in the teaching load from 2-2 to 1-2 during their **third** year in the program. Holders of this award will be eligible for all the other forms of financial assistance described in this Handbook and will hold this fellowship in addition to a teaching associateship.
- **W.E.B. Du Bois Fellowship.** Named in honor of the humane man of letters and African American scholar who taught in the rural countryside of Tennessee during his years of undergraduate study in Nashville, this competitive fellowship of \$2,500 annually is open



to U.S. citizens and permanent residents of scholarly potential and talent to pursue graduate studies in African-American or African diasporic literature, culture, rhetoric, and/or linguistics. This fellowship may be renewed upon demonstration of solid performance and progress toward a degree. This award may be held in addition to a Graduate Teaching Assistantship or Associateship.

- **John C. Hodges Award for Exceptional Scholarship.** A candidate for this award of \$1,500 is nominated by one or more professors in March. Papers, usually seminar papers, are submitted, with names removed, by the nominated students and read by a faculty committee chosen so as to exclude the nominators. After the papers are ranked, the committee considers as well the nominee's scholarship, academic record, publications and presentations, awards, etc., in determining the recipient of the award. No student may win this award more than once.
- **V. Carolyn Martin Summer Fellowships.** Founded in honor of a former member of the department, these fellowships pay the tuition fees of high school and college teachers who wish to attend summer sessions and either work for advanced degrees in English or otherwise increase their knowledge and expertise. These awards are made only for courses taken for graduate credit. Applications should be received by the Director of Graduate Studies before February 15. Preference will be given to residents of Tennessee.
- **Roscoe Parker Linguistics Fellowship.** Founded in honor of a former member of the department and scholar in Medieval literature and the English language, this grant enables students to travel to the Linguistic Institute of America. Normally this award is made to a student committed to a career in linguistics and well advanced in a program of doctoral study.
- **Edward Bratton Summer Stipends for Herman Spivey and Yates Fellows.** Founded in honor of a distinguished teacher, these stipends provide full tuition support for Herman Spivey and Yates Fellows who wish to take courses in the summer following their fellowship to complete their degree. Apply to the Director of Graduate Studies by March 30.
- **Internships/Fellowships for International Students.** Small stipends are occasionally available for academically well-qualified international students not yet qualified for Teaching Assistantships or Associateships.
- **Hodges Excellence in Teaching Awards.** Two Hodges Teaching Awards of \$1,500 each, one for an experienced Graduate Teaching Associate and one for a first-year Graduate Teaching Associate, are given each year to recognize excellence in teaching.

## *8. Dissertation Fellowships*

### **Norman J. Sanders Dissertation Fellowships**

- Up to ten PhD Graduate Teaching Associates who reach ABD (“all but dissertation”) status within three years of the first date of their matriculation will receive a two-course reduction in their teaching load for their fourth year to speed work on their dissertations. Reaching ABD status will depend on successful completion of the meeting to discuss the prospectus draft, verified by the signatures of the Departmental dissertation committee members. Those GTAs who reach ABD status in two or two and one-half years of the first date of their matriculation will likely be able to begin this fellowship in the next Fall semester. The specific distribution of their load will be determined by staffing needs. If a dissertation prospectus has not already been filed when this fellowship begins, it should be submitted to the Graduate Office for approval as early in the fellowship year as possible. A recipient of this fellowship is not eligible to apply for an Emperor fellowship. The policy that any GTA may not hold other employment without the express permission of the DGS will continue in effect for those holding this fellowship.
- **John B. Emperor Fellowships.** Several grants are available to doctoral students who reach ABD status within four years of the first date of their matriculation to enable them to be released from some teaching duties (one class, normally during the Spring term) to work on their dissertations. These awards are made on the recommendation of faculty members supervising the dissertations who are satisfied that their candidates have made substantial progress in research leading to completion of the dissertation. An approved dissertation prospectus must be on file in the English Graduate Office to receive this award. Not applicable during Summer. Students may hold a travel fellowship and a released-time Emperor dissertation fellowship simultaneously.
- **Durant da Ponte American Literature Fellowship.** Founded in memory of a former member of the department and scholar in American literature, this award will be granted to an outstanding student writing a doctoral dissertation in American literature. This award provides one course release during an academic year and may be held in conjunction with other released-time awards. **This fellowship is for one year and is non-renewable.**
- **Joseph Trahern Medieval/Renaissance Literature Dissertation Fellowship.** Founded in memory of a former member of the Department and scholar in Medieval Literature, this award will be granted to an outstanding student writing a dissertation in Medieval/Renaissance literature. This award provides a course release for an academic year. This award may be held in conjunction with other released-time awards.
- **Owens-Keenan Medieval, Southern, and Children’s Literature Dissertation Award.** This fellowship award provides a course release for an academic year, or it may be split into two awards, with a one semester, one course release for two students. It was established by Dr. Keenan in memory of his parents, Jewell Owens and Hugh Avery Keenan. **This fellowship is for one year and is non-renewable.**

## ***9. Miscellaneous Grants***

- **Graduate Research Fund.** Grants of up to \$400 are available for miscellaneous expenses related to research. These might include transcription fees, the purchase of digital imaging files such as manuscript facsimiles, or travel to archives that would fall below the \$1,000 threshold of the Wheeler or Slagle Fellowships (see “Departmental Travel Grants,” above). To apply for this funding, students should submit to the DGS a letter of application that explains the nature of the project to be funded and itemizes the expected expenses.
- **Grants from the DGS Discretionary Fund.** Grants of up to \$250 are available to assist students with miscellaneous costs associated with their research, creative projects, and professional development. To apply for this funding, students should write a letter of application that explains the nature of the project to be funded and that itemizes the expenses that the student expects to incur. This letter should be submitted to the DGS.

## ***10. Emergency Loans***

The **Hodges Better English Graduate Loan Fund** is a Departmental “bank” that makes interest-free loans available to graduate students **only in the event of emergencies**. Its resources are limited, and the fund is frequently scrutinized by auditors, so the conditions regarding the disbursement and repayment of loans must be strictly observed. Individual loans may be made for no more than \$1,000, and the Department may loan only up to the balance of the fund. All loans must be repaid within three months, and students who do not repay loans within this time may have their stipend checks and/or their grades withheld. To apply for a loan from the fund, please contact Judith Welch in 301 McClung Tower.

## ***11. Campus Visit Stipends***

A number of grants are available to help students travel to colleges or university campuses for job interviews. The student must present notification of a request for an interview to the Graduate Office to be considered for this stipend.

## ***12. Going off Funding***

PhD students are typically guaranteed five years of funding, conditional upon satisfactory performance in all aspects of the program. After this point, students find jobs in the community or on campus, the latter of which might come with a tuition waiver. Very rarely are departmental funds available to cover a teaching associateship for a PhD student in the sixth year. Students should thus make every effort to complete the PhD within five years. If by the summer before the beginning of the fifth year, they do not believe they will be able to complete their degree by the following summer, they should apply in earnest for extra-departmental funding. Applications for national and even university competitions for dissertation fellowships are often due in September or October, and UT Humanities Center Fellowships have been due December 1. On the rare

occasion when departmental funding does become available for a sixth-year student, it is typically very late in the academic year, in June or July, when an admitted PhD student decides not to matriculate (and it is too late to return to the waitlist) or when another PhD student must leave the program and a “line” (i.e., graduate teaching associateship) is left unexpectedly vacant. Again, the PhD is structured as a five-year program, and the best policy is to plan wisely from the first year forward to ensure timely completion.

### ***13. Postdoctoral Lectureships***

These awards, one-year teaching appointments with a 4-4 load, are available on a competitive basis to PhDs who have completed their degree during the previous year. The number of awards available varies from year to year, depending on the amount of funding available and on staffing needs. Recent PhD graduates who wish to apply for an instructorship should contact the Associate Head of the Department. Students who have completed their PhDs in the department are also eligible to apply to the Department’s national searches for lecturers.

## PART 4: REGISTRATION AND ADVISING

### *1. Procedures for Current Students*

Early in Fall, the DGS meets individually with new MA, MFA, and PhD students to review their coursework, plans to fulfill the language requirement, and professional goals. At these meetings the DGS also reviews the transcripts of new PhD students to determine the previous graduate coursework that can be applied toward the PhD coursework requirements.

Soon thereafter, new graduate students are assigned an academic advisor from the professorial faculty. Multiple factors weigh in the assignment of advisees to advisors, and students should not expect to be matched with the faculty member who seems to align most closely with their research interests. After completing the two field comprehensive exams, PhD students will be re-assigned to the faculty member chairing the dissertation. Second-year MA students will be advised by the faculty chair of their Spring oral comprehensive examination or by their thesis advisor. Second-year MFA students will be advised by the faculty director of their creative thesis.

Every January, students will submit a self-evaluation form (available from the Graduate Administrative Assistant) and CV to their assigned advisor and to the Graduate Office. Based on these materials, the student's transcript, and any other relevant documents, the advisor will prepare a letter outlining the student's progress toward degree and noting requirements yet to be fulfilled. Both the advisor and the DGS will sign this letter. The faculty advisor and student will then meet, usually in March. During this meeting, the student will sign the letter to indicate that they have read it. Signing the letter does not indicate agreement with the assessment, merely that the student has read the letter. While this evaluation letter is strictly factual and meant primarily to indicate progress toward degree, the advising meeting is an invaluable opportunity to discuss the student's overall professional goals and progress, including such issues as defining a field or fields of interest, fulfilling the language requirement, planning coursework, choosing and preparing for conferences, preparing articles for publication, and other professionally relevant matters. Graduate students should feel free to seek meetings with their advisors throughout the year and not rely exclusively on the one required annual meeting.

If during this annual review process or at any point in the academic year, a student is found to be performing below expectations, the student will receive detailed information in writing regarding this assessment within a reasonable period of time for the student to remediate before a recommendation to dismiss is made to the Graduate School. However, in some situations (e.g., violations of academic integrity), prompt dismissal from the program would be in order; please see the *Academic Policies* section of the Graduate Catalog and *Hilltopics* for details.

In terms of registering for courses, approximately one week before campus pre-registration, the English Graduate Office provides descriptions of all departmental courses offered for graduate credit. Students are encouraged to discuss possible choices with their professors and/or assigned advisor during that week. Registration is done online during the pre-registration period. Follow instructions in the current semester timetable for completing registration procedures. Graduate

students need to take responsibility for making sure that they are fulfilling degree requirements on schedule.

## ***2. Minimum Hours for Full-Time Status and Proper Use of English 502***

All graduate students, in order to maintain their full-time status, must be enrolled in at least 6 hours of courses during the Fall and Spring semesters. Funded first-year MA and MFA students typically enroll in 9 credits per semester so that they will have completed 18 hours of credit that the accreditation agency requires for them to become instructors of record during their second year in the program. Students using university facilities, services, or faculty time, including during the summer term, must be registered. Normally, students are registered for coursework or for thesis/dissertation hours. Students who are not taking coursework and are not yet eligible to register for thesis or dissertation hours (i.e., students taking exams) must register for English 502 (Use of Facilities) if they wish to have borrowing privileges in the University Libraries or to use computer labs or other university resources.

## ***3. Thesis and Dissertation Hours***

Students working on a thesis must be registered for either English 500 (in the MA program) or English 555 (in the MFA program) during each semester in which there is work on the thesis, including a minimum of 3 hours during the semester in which the thesis is accepted by the Graduate School. Six hours of English 500 (in the MA) or English 555 (in the MFA) are required. After receiving the MA or MFA, a student is no longer permitted to register for English 500 or for English 555.

A PhD student who has completed the coursework and foreign language requirements, passed the two field comprehensive exams, and successfully completed the guided dissertation prospectus-writing process (with or without a finalized prospectus) should begin registering for English 600, the course number for dissertation hours. The candidate is required to complete 24 semester hours of dissertation credit and to remain continuously enrolled in dissertation hours, **including during the Summer terms**, unless granted a leave of absence by the Graduate School, in order to maintain full-time status. Students who hold teaching associateships must be enrolled in at least 6 hours of English 600 during the Fall and Spring semesters and in at least 3 hours during the Summer term in order to maintain full-time status with the Graduate School. A student who will not be using faculty services and/or university facilities for a period of time may request leaves of absence from dissertation research up to a maximum of six terms (including Summer terms). Such requests must be approved by the student's dissertation director, by the DGS, and by the Graduate School. Students who wish to make such a request must complete the required form and submit it to the DGS, who will forward it to the Graduate School. Please note that when leaves of absence are approved, they extend the eight-year window within which students must graduate.

# PART 5: THE MA PROGRAM

## *1. General Summary of Requirements*

Our MA in English has two concentrations: Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies (LCTS) and Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics (RWL). Students in the LCTS concentration may pursue a general curriculum or specialize in anything from medieval ballads to postmodern novels. They may choose to write a thesis, but one is not required or even necessarily recommended. Students in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics concentration usually combine courses in RWL with courses in English literatures and cultures. The RWL concentration requires a capstone thesis project. Our MA graduates go on to excellent PhD programs in English as well as to careers in editing, publishing, secondary teaching, and the non-profit and private sectors.

The MA in English requires a minimum of thirty hours of English Department coursework (six of these may be thesis hours for thesis students), fulfillment of the foreign language requirement, and either a final written examination and oral examination OR a thesis and an oral examination. Students who wish to serve as a Graduate Teaching Associate must also take English 505.

These are minimum requirements. Choices should be discussed with the DGS and/or academic advisor, taking into account both research plans and possible teaching plans. For example, to fulfill the language requirement, students focusing on the medieval period would do well to study Latin; students planning to teach in Florida or the Southwest might consider Spanish.

## *2. Requirements for the MA in English (Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies Concentration)*

1. A minimum of thirty hours in the Department of English beyond the BA degree selected in such a way as to provide a firm grasp of English and American literature.

These must include:

- Six hours at the 600 level.
- Twelve additional hours at the 500-600 level, including at least nine hours of coursework in the Literatures and Cultures curriculum. Students are required to take at least one course in each of the three major literature divisions within the department (Medieval/Renaissance, 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Century, 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Century).
- Six hours for graduate credit at any level, including the 400 level.

Students must maintain at least a B average (3.0) in this coursework. A student may apply only three hours of 593 (Independent Study) toward the MA in English.

2. Either a **thesis**, worth six semester hours of credit (See [MA Thesis](#) below), or **the non-thesis option** which requires a comprehensive written examination and includes six

hours of additional coursework at the 500-600 level, making a total of thirty hours. (See “For Non-thesis Candidates,” below.)

3. Evidence of proficiency in one foreign language, to be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- Completion of a second year (or demonstration of competence on a waiver or proficiency examination) of a language at the college level with a grade of C or better. (Note: This method does not satisfy the PhD language requirement. The following two do.)
- Completion of French 302 or German 332 at the University of Tennessee with a grade of B or better.
- Passing the regular PhD foreign language examination as currently administered at the University of Tennessee.
- Non-native English speakers may offer a native language for completion of the language requirement for the MA.

**Note:** A master's student who cannot demonstrate proficiency in any approved language under any of the available options within three attempts must leave the program without a degree.

4. A 60-minute oral final examination on the English LCTS Reading List. (See [MA Comprehensive Examination](#) below.)

### ***3. Requirements for the MA in English (Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics Concentration)***

1. A minimum of thirty hours in the Department of English beyond the B.A. These must include:
  - Six hours at the 600 level. (This may include the required RWL elective mentioned below.)
  - Twelve additional hours at the 500-600 level, including
    - English 585
    - English 586
    - One elective course from the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics curriculum.
  - Six hours of graduate credit at any level, including the 400 level.
  - Six thesis hours

Students must maintain at least a B average (3.0) in this coursework. A student may apply only three hours of 593 (Independent Study) toward the MA in English.

2. A thesis that analyzes some aspect of writing or rhetorical theory, for which six semester hours of credit are given. In addition to the thesis director, two other English



Department faculty members will supervise and approve the project. (See [MA Thesis](#) below.)

3. Evidence of proficiency in one foreign language, to be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- Completion of a second year (or demonstration of competence on a waiver or proficiency examination) of a language at the college level with a grade of C or better. (Note: This method does not satisfy a PhD language requirement. The following two do.)
- Completion of French 302 or German 332 at the University of Tennessee with a grade of B or better.
- Passing the regular PhD foreign language examination as currently administered at the University of Tennessee.
- Non-native English speakers may offer a native language for completion of the language requirement for the MA.

**Note:** A master's student who cannot demonstrate proficiency in any approved language under any of the available options within three attempts must leave the program without a degree.

4. A 90-minute oral final examination. Thirty minutes will serve as a thesis defense and sixty minutes will cover a reading list/portfolio of the materials from the student's coursework and thesis bibliography. (See [MA Comprehensive Examination](#) below.)

#### ***4. Nature of Courses***

MA Candidates may take up to 6 hours of coursework at the 400 level, but 400-level courses should be taken only if an appropriate graduate course is not available. Candidates should concentrate their coursework at the 500 (colloquium) and 600 (seminar) levels. As the numbering system indicates, seminars are more demanding, requiring more extensive research and more substantial papers and in-class reports. Reading courses cover a broader range of material. They may require shorter papers, assignments, exams, or some combination thereof as the professor sees fit. Undergraduate courses usually require two papers and two examinations, with additional assignment at the instructor's discretion for students asking for graduate credit.

MA students may count only English Department courses toward the 30 hours required for the degree. A student on assistantship or associateship who is making normal or accelerated progress toward a degree may use a tuition waiver to take courses outside the department, provided those courses meet the larger purposes of the student's program. For example, a student who has completed the 18 hours of English coursework necessary for promotion to Teaching Associate by the end of the first Spring semester would be free to enroll in an appropriate history or foreign language course during Summer. A student who took English courses during Summer would be ahead of schedule and thus be free to take an outside course during the next year.

## 5. *The MA Thesis*

MA students who plan to write a thesis should discuss this plan with the DGS in the Spring semester of their first-year. By the end of Spring semester, they should have submitted the form (see the Graduate Administrative Assistant) indicating their proposed thesis topic and bearing the signatures of their committee members. **The thesis is an option for students in the Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies concentration but a requirement for students in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics concentration.**

- **Plan early.** Choose coursework that will help you develop a primary area of research. Thesis writers should meet with the DGS and potential thesis directors in the spring of their first year and submit the appropriate form to the English Graduate Office by the end of Spring semester. Students should plan to devote a portion of the summer to planning and researching the thesis. Ideally, one chapter of the thesis should be completed by the end of the Fall semester of the second year.
- **Topic.** This will often arise from seminar research or independent study, or it may come out of preliminary discussions with a faculty member who works in a field that interests the student. It must reflect original research and interpretation and be chosen from British, American, or comparative literature; from the study of American or British language; from the field of editing; from rhetoric or composition; from technical writing; from critical theory; from creative writing; or from another field or combination of fields approved by the Graduate Committee.
- **Director.** The director must be approved to direct theses or dissertations by the Department of English and the Graduate School and should be an active scholar in the area of the written work. It is possible that the student may need to modify a topic to work successfully within the areas of expertise represented within the Department.
- **Length of Thesis.** The length of the thesis will be determined by the student and the director, in consultation with the DGS. Most MA theses are between 60 and 100 pages.
- **Electronic Access.** MA theses successfully defended at the University of Tennessee are made available to the public online through Trace, the university's electronic repository. Students may petition the Graduate School, however, to have the thesis embargoed for a period of up to a year. When students who write theses apply to graduate, they complete and submit to the Graduate School a form (<https://gradschool.utk.edu/forms-central/>) indicating whether they wish for their thesis to be embargoed for a year. All such requests will be reviewed and must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.

## ***6. The MA Comprehensive Examination***

### **A. For Thesis Candidates**

A candidate presenting a thesis must pass a ninety-minute oral examination focusing in part on the thesis but consisting chiefly of questions covering an approved reading list in either the Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies concentration or an individualized list in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics concentration. The reading list for candidates in the LCTS concentration is available from the Graduate Office, 306 McClung Tower.

**A thesis student in any concentration who fails the oral examination may retake this examination once and must do so within one semester's time.** A second failure will remove a student from the MA program.

### **B. For Non-Thesis Candidates (Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies concentration only)**

The comprehensive written examination for non-thesis MA students in Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies is given three times a year, in the Fall, Spring, and Summer. Most students take the examination in the Spring of their second year. Typically this exam takes place on the first weekend in March. A file of old examination questions is available in the English Graduate Office. The examination is on the reading list for the Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies concentration, available in the Graduate Office. It is a three-hour examination, with an extra hour allowed for planning and revision. International students whose native language is not English may request a fifth hour by written petition to the DGS two weeks before the exam.

The committee that draws up the examination is a standing committee whose members serve for overlapping two-year terms. One member of the committee proctors the examination as it is given and does not read the examinations; all examinations are numerically coded so that the exams are read and evaluated anonymously. Students should not discuss their examinations with faculty members until after the exams have been graded. Three members of the committee read all the MA examinations, deciding on a grade of Pass or Fail. MA students who fail the written comprehensive examination may retake it once, within one semester. A student who fails the MA written examination twice will not be granted a degree and must leave the program. MA students who pass the written exam then take an oral exam given by a director, chosen by the student, and two other faculty members, selected by the student in consultation with the director. The orals committee decides whether the oral exam is a Pass. If a student passes the MA written examination but fails the oral examination, they may retake the oral examination once and must do so within one semester. A second failure of the oral examination will remove a student from the MA program.

Students taking the MA Written Examination must register for a minimum of three credit hours in the term in which they take the examination. A student not otherwise using University facilities may pay the comprehensive examination fee (equivalent to the cost of one credit hour of coursework) instead of registering. A student who does not wish to take a course may register instead for three credits of English 502 (Registration for Use of Facilities).

## ***7. Timetable for Completion of the MA Degree***

For students with a graduate teaching appointment, the MA program is typically a two-year course of study, with 18 hours of coursework in the first year and 12 hours (including 6 thesis hours for those students completing a thesis) in the second. If a student comes into the program with the foreign language requirement completed, they need only take a normal load of courses in Fall and Spring and prepare for the MA exam to complete the MA degree. Those on assistantships may also apply their tuition waiver toward courses taken during the summer. Under Graduate School regulations, the maximum time for completing the MA degree is six years.

MA students on assistantships should also be aware of a long-standing policy of the graduate program: Students on Assistantship-Associateship are expected to complete their MA degrees **WITHIN TWO YEARS**; support does not extend past the summer of the second year. Thus, if a student falls behind on coursework, that student should plan to catch up by taking a course in summer school. This also means that students should be thinking about filling in gaps in the MA reading list from the time they arrive because the MA exam (written and oral for non-thesis students; oral for thesis students) must be taken in addition to regular coursework.

Entering MA students should also note that the Graduate School, in order to maintain compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and School's accreditation regulations, requires the successful completion of 18 hours of graduate coursework in English before an associateship can be granted. It is therefore essential for a Graduate Teaching Assistant to complete 18 hours of coursework by the end of the first full year.

## **PART 6: THE MFA PROGRAM**

### ***1. General Description and Summary of Requirements***

The MFA in Creative Writing promotes a combination studio/academic course of study. Degree candidates hone their skills as writers and grow as artists through rigorous application of craft, under the tutelage of our distinguished faculty of Creative Writing and our impressive series of visiting writers. Students receive critical feedback on their poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction in writing workshops, scrutinize aspects of genre in special topics classes and investigate larger theoretical and historical contexts for creative work in literature, rhetoric, writing, and linguistics courses. They have the opportunity to gain editorial experience by working with *Grist: A Journal of the Literary Arts*, which has a national reputation for publishing strong new work from established and emerging writers. They also have the opportunity to participate in cultural outreach programs such as the Brian M. Conley Young Writers' Institute. The MFA program culminates in a creative thesis comprised of a book-length manuscript of original creative work.

Excellent financial support, including generous travel funds for research and presentations at scholarly conferences, helps our students enter the profession and begin to establish themselves in their respective fields within the discipline. The Graduate Students in English organization, area study groups, and other activities draw students together as an intellectual and social community with shared passions and aspirations.

While the MFA is an essential credential for those students who plan to teach creative writing at any level and those who wish to pursue a PhD in English with a concentration in Creative Writing, the faculty of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Tennessee believes that study and practice of the literary arts is intrinsically valuable and that our program is designed first and foremost for those students who wish to dedicate their lives to writing well.

### ***2. Degree Requirements***

1. Twenty-four hours of coursework, to be divided as follows:

- 12 hours of writing workshops at the 500 or 600 level (some combination of English 580, 581, 582, and 686) in the genre in which the student was admitted.
- 9 additional hours of graduate courses in literature, rhetoric, writing, or linguistics. 3 of these hours may be in a 500 or 600 level creative writing workshop outside the student's core genre or in a 400, 500, or 600 level class in a collateral area outside the English Department. Classes in collateral areas should be selected in consultation with the DGS and the student's advisor.
- 3 hours of English 505 (Composition Pedagogy).

2. Six hours of English 555 (Creative Thesis). The thesis will be directed by a professorial member of the Creative Writing faculty and approved by him or her and two other professors from English. The completed thesis will be defended in an oral presentation. The presentation will consist of a public reading from the work followed by a question-and-answer session in which members of the public (as well as the thesis committee) may take part.

3. Evidence of proficiency in one foreign language, to be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- Completion of a second year of a language at college level with a grade of C or better. (Note: This method does not fulfill part of the PhD language requirement. The following two methods do.)
- Completion of French 302 or German 332 at UT with a grade of B or better.
- Passing the regular PhD foreign language examination as administered at UT.

### ***3. The MFA Thesis and Public Reading***

All MFA students must complete a thesis, which is typically a novel, a collection of poems or short stories, or a work of creative nonfiction. In addition to the thesis director, two additional faculty members will read and approve the project. The length of the thesis will be determined by the student in consultation with their committee but should be generally comparable to a book-length manuscript of its genre.

During the second year in the program, all students must register for English 555 (Creative Thesis) for both semesters, so as to earn 6 hours. Typically, in the second year, students take 3 hours of 555 in the Fall and 3 in the Spring. If the thesis is not complete by the end of the second year, the student must register for English 502 in the Summer to avoid being charged a sizable examination fee (over \$500) by the Graduate School.

When the thesis committee believes that the work is complete, the student will schedule a public reading through the Graduate Office. At this reading, the student will read from their work and answer questions from the audience. Thesis committee members must be present at this reading, but the reading will be open to the whole university community and to the general public, and the student may answer questions from anyone present. Successful completion of the public reading will mark official approval of the thesis.

MFA theses will not be uploaded to Trace, the university's electronic repository.

### ***4. Teaching in the MFA Program***

All applicants to the MFA program will be asked whether they intend to apply for funding (a teaching waiver and a tuition assistantship). **We do not admit any students without funding unless they have specifically indicated that they are not seeking funding and therefore intend to pay their tuition and fees and to forgo any teaching opportunities.** Those who are accepted with funding are admitted during their first year as teaching assistants. As teaching assistants, they will work ten hours per week, time split between serving as an assistant to an experienced instructor of composition and tutoring in the university's Writing Center. If they make satisfactory progress, MFA students on funding are promoted to teaching associates during their second year. They will teach two courses during the Fall semester and two during the Spring semester. If at all possible, one of the four courses taught will be an introductory undergraduate course in creative writing; the other three will be sections of English 101 and/or English 102.

## ***5. Timetable for Completion of the MFA Degree***

Unless qualified applicants specifically request not to be considered for funding, we do not admit MFA students without funding (a tuition waiver plus a graduate teaching appointment). The MFA program is typically a two-year course of study, with 18 hours of coursework in the first year and 12 hours in the second, including 6 thesis hours (typically, 3 in Fall and 3 in Spring). If a student comes into the program with the foreign language requirement completed, they need only to take a normal load of courses in the Fall and Spring semesters to complete the MFA degree. Those on assistantships may also apply their tuition waiver toward courses taken during the summer. Per Graduate School rules, the maximum time for completing the MFA degree is six years.

Students who receive the funding package with a teaching assistantship/associateship are expected to complete their MFA degrees **WITHIN TWO YEARS**; support does not extend past the summer of the second year. Thus, if a student falls behind on coursework, that student should plan to catch up by taking a course in summer school.

Entering MFA students should also note that the Graduate School, in order to maintain compliance with the accreditation regulations of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, requires the successful completion of 18 hours of graduate coursework in English before an associateship can be granted. It is thus essential for a Graduate Teaching Assistant to complete 18 hours of coursework by the end of the first full year.

## PART 7: THE PhD PROGRAM

### *1. General Description of Concentrations*

The PhD in English at Tennessee combines a breadth of study throughout the field of English with a range of options for advanced work in various specialties. Strong faculty resources in the British and American literary traditions, rhetoric and composition, critical theory, textual studies, creative writing, and other area studies provide support for a range of research projects.

Candidates build on broad training from the MA with a range of coursework in the PhD. They are then credentialed through an examination process that grounds them in their respective fields and develops their particular specializations. The degree culminates in the dissertation, usually written during the fourth and fifth years of study.

Candidates elect one of the following concentrations to structure their studies:

#### **The PhD in English, Concentration in Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies**

builds on the department's historic strength in literary studies. The British and American literary traditions, medieval studies, ethnic literatures, postcolonial and international literatures, critical theory, textual studies, folklore, film, and work in other fields support student research in a variety of genres. Candidates are encouraged to take responsibility for a broad range of material while choosing a research focus that prepares them for advanced work in the field of English. Candidates prepare through a combination of rigorous coursework, field examinations, and a dissertation.

**The PhD in English, Concentration in Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics** allows students to pursue studies in the history of rhetoric, rhetorical and writing theory, critical theory, composition research and pedagogy, literacy studies, technical communication, applied linguistics, and second-language acquisition. The program encourages students to explore diverse methodological approaches (e.g., period and genre studies, feminist criticism, literary theory, literacy studies) and to seek connections with other disciplines (e.g., Education, Classics, Philosophy, History, and Sociology).

**The PhD in English with Creative Dissertation** offers outstanding writers the opportunity to pursue a professional program that emphasizes both creative writing and English studies. We offer students excellent professional training through a curriculum rich in literary history, critical theory, and textual studies. The PhD with Creative Dissertation enables students to compose their original creative work, culminating in a book-length manuscript, with the guidance of our excellent creative writing faculty. Students in this program complete all the degree requirements for the PhD and are prepared to pursue university professorships.

Upon their arrival in the program, each PhD candidate will consult with the DGS regarding the transition to PhD work and graduate requirements. Students are also encouraged to meet regularly with their assigned advisor and to seek informal mentoring from other professors.



There is a residency requirement for the PhD degree. Residence is defined as full-time registration for a given semester on the campus. The summer semester is included in this period. This requirement is a minimum of two consecutive semesters of residence.

PhD students may not count 400-level courses toward the PhD degree except in the case of those courses transferred in from the MA degree.

## ***2. Basic Requirements for all PhD Candidates***

- 54 hours of coursework (including 30 hours beyond the MA) that also meet one of the distributions specified below.
- An additional 24 hours of dissertation research credit (English 600).
- Satisfactory performance on the first-year review.
- Fulfilling the [foreign language](#) requirement (proficiency in one language) prior to comprehensive examinations.
- Successful completion of the comprehensive examinations.
- Continuous enrollment while working on the dissertation prospectus and the dissertation.
- Successful defense of the dissertation.

## ***3. General Coursework Requirements for All PhD Candidates***

The program of study—normally at least six full semesters—should be approved by the candidate's committee and by the DGS when the student completes their Admission to Candidacy form. At least 54 hours of coursework beyond the BA (including at least 30 beyond the MA or MFA level) are required. They must be divided as follows:

- At least 21 hours at the 600 level.
- At least 15 additional hours at the 500-600 level. Three hours of Independent Study (English 593) may be applied toward the MA and six hours may be applied after the MA.
- 15 additional hours of courses at any level approved for graduate credit. Students may take up to 6 of these hours in collateral areas outside the English Department. PhD students who are also pursuing Graduate Certificates in Medieval Studies or in Qualitative Research Methods in Education may count an additional 3 hours in a collateral area toward the required 54 hours. Other students may petition to count an additional 3 hours of coursework in a collateral area toward the 54 required hours if it can be shown that the additional hours will enhance their program of study. During the PhD, students should take only 500- and 600-level courses.
- 3 semester hours (if the student wishes to serve as a Teaching Associate in the Department of English) of English 505 (Composition Pedagogy). This course may be waived by the Director of Composition or by the DGS if the student has previous teaching experience or has received credit for a similar course taken during the MA.

#### ***4. Transferred Coursework Credit***

During the Fall semester of the first year, PhD students will meet with the DGS to discuss which courses from their MA or MFA degrees may be transferred toward the PhD requirements. Normally, up to 24 hours of graduate coursework may be applied toward the 54 required hours, but the level of credit (400-, 500-, or 600-level) for each course transferred will be determined by the DGS after a thorough examination of the students' MA and MFA transcripts. The level at which a transferred course is counted corresponds to the type of enrollment and research requirements. Mixed undergraduate-graduate enrollment courses will count at the 400 level, up to a total of 6 hours. Graduate-only courses which cover a broad area in a survey, application or writing courses, most workshops, and other courses that are analogous to UT readings courses count as 500 level credits. Graduate-only courses focusing on a single author or topic and require a sustained research paper may be transferred in as seminars at the 600 level, subject to the discretion of the DGS, even if the original course number is at the 500 or 5000 level. Among factors to be considered are whether the course was taken at a PhD-granting institution and whether the new PhD candidate would end up taking more lower-level courses at UTK than at the MA- or MFA-granting institution. Thus, the quality of the student's whole program is considered in this evaluation. Thesis hours cannot be transferred from an MA or MFA hours, nor can hours taken on a Pass/Fail basis or, in most cases, in practicum courses. Generally, no more than one workshop course from an MFA program may be transferred.

According to Graduate School regulations, transfer credit may **not** be awarded for thesis hours taken at other institutions. It may also not be awarded for courses taken on a Pass/Fail basis. Moreover, students pursuing the PhD with Creative Dissertation can normally transfer only one writing workshop from an MFA program toward these requirements. Hours earned in a teaching practicum (as distinct from a course in pedagogy) are also typically not transferrable.

Students may need to take more than the minimum of 54 post-BA and 30 post-MA hours to complete their particular program, particularly if their MA degree is not in English or if they have few courses from their MFA program that are not writing workshops. Students should also keep in mind that they must complete two graduate-level courses in a particular field in order to take that field comprehensive examination.

#### ***5. Dissertation Hours Requirements***

Once a student has completed coursework and foreign languages, they must register for 24 hours of dissertation credit (English 600). **Once a student registers for dissertation credit, they must continue to do so, including the summer term, for a minimum of three hours, unless granted a leave of absence by the Graduate School.** Students enrolled in English 600 who hold teaching associateships must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 hours of 600 during the Fall and Spring semesters, and all students, with or without assistantships, should typically be enrolled in 3 hours of 600 during the Summer. These hours represent the research for and writing of the dissertation.

## ***6. Specific Course Requirements for PhD Concentrations***

We encourage students to pursue coursework in fields or concentrations other than their specialty with the understanding that the ability to make connections across the field of English studies and to take responsibility for teaching surveys, introductory courses, and broad topics courses will be an asset in job searches and future employment. In addition to the general coursework requirements, PhD candidates elect to fulfill the specific course distributions appropriate to their area of focus.

### **PhD in English: Literature, Culture, and Textual Studies**

In addition to fulfilling the general requirements (including English 505), students in this concentration must take

- At least two courses in literature before 1800.
- At least two courses in literature after 1800.
- At least one course in methodology, research, or theory.

These requirements may be satisfied with coursework from the MA degree. A student may take up to six hours of 593 (Independent Study) as a doctoral student and focus the content of those courses to meet any of the three distribution requirements above. In consultation with the appropriate faculty member, a student may also wish to arrange a 593 that follows the template of a 400-level course being taught, with additional assignments required to make the course suitable for graduate study.

### **PhD in English: Creative Dissertation**

In addition to fulfilling the general requirements (including English 505), students in this concentration must take

- At least one Creative Writing course at the 600 level (686 or another by petition).
- At least three Creative Writing courses at the 500 level. These include English 580, 581, and 582. (English 463, 464 and 484 may be taken by special petition only.)

**Note:** English 580 and 581 may be repeated up to three times. Normally, only one workshop transfers from the MA or MFA toward the fulfillment of these requirements and is counted as a section of English 580 or 581. Thesis hours taken as part of an MA or MFA degree may also not be transferred.

### **PhD in English: Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics**

In addition to fulfilling the general requirements (including English 505), students with this concentration must take

- English 585, 586, and 682.
- One 600-level elective course from the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics curriculum.
- One elective course in Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics at either the 500 or 600 level.

**Note:** Students who entered the program before 2010 may elect to fulfill the RWL PhD requirements from an earlier catalog. See the Graduate Office for details.

## ***7. Exceptions to Coursework Requirements***

- **Courses outside the English Department:** PhD students are encouraged, though not required, to take up to 6 hours of graduate coursework outside the Department to count toward the degree. These courses should be chosen in consultation with the DGS and an advisor in the student's major area; they offer an opportunity for later choosing an outside reader for the dissertation. Students who are also pursuing a Graduate Certificate in Medieval Studies or in Qualitative Research in Education Methods may take up to 9 hours of graduate courses in the Department to count toward the degree.
- **Courses at other institutions:** At the discretion of the DGS, a student may receive credit for a maximum of 6 hours of graduate courses taken off campus that function at a level of excellence equal to that which we expect in our own departmental courses (Linguistic Institute of America Seminars and Fulbright, for example) and that clearly enhance their professional abilities and careers in ways that we cannot accommodate on this campus. All such courses require prior approval of the Graduate Office and are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. This category does not allow simple transfer credit for courses that resemble our own and are taken at other universities.
- **Other exceptions:** Requests for exceptions to curriculum regulations should be discussed with an advisor in the student's field and then presented in the form of a written petition to the DGS. Exceptions that concern Graduate School requirements, as stated in the general sections of the Catalog will be reviewed by the DGS and then forwarded to the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, who determines whether to approve such requests. Exceptions that concern departmental requirements or policies are handled either by the DGS or referred to the Graduate Committee.

## ***8. PhD Language Requirement***

Candidates must successfully complete the language requirement by exhibiting proficiency in one foreign language.

The requirement for the language may be fulfilled in any of the following ways:

- a) Completion of French 302 or German 332 with a grade of B or better.
- b) Completion at the University of Tennessee or at a previous institution of any two semester courses at the 300 level or above in the foreign language or literature with at least a grade of B in each course. If this option is chosen, all work must be done in the language (not in English translation) and must have been completed within five years of matriculation in the PhD program.
- c) Passing the regular PhD foreign language examination as administered at the University of Tennessee. The foreign language examination is offered two times a year, during the Fall and

Spring semesters. If students wish to be examined in a language that is not regularly offered by the Graduate School, they must make the case to the DGS that this language is pertinent to their dissertation.

d) Completing an undergraduate major or minor in a foreign language, whether the work is done at the University of Tennessee or elsewhere. As in option b), work completed in the major or minor must be in the foreign language (not in translation) and must have been completed within five years of matriculation in the PhD program.

e) Completion of American Sign Language 111, 112, 211, and 212 at the University of Tennessee, or equivalent courses taken elsewhere. While this option is intended primarily for students in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics concentration, students in other concentrations may petition the DGS for permission to use this option if they have competence in ASL and/or long-term professional goals related to its use.

Note: Studying the earlier periods of British literary history requires a broader and deeper engagement with languages other than English. PhD students in these fields are strongly encouraged to pursue advanced study of at least one additional foreign language related to their area of research, beyond the one foreign language required by the English Department. Students should consult with their advisors to develop a plan appropriate for their field of study.

Students who plan to fulfill their language requirement through the Doctoral Language Exam can obtain copies of recent translation exams from the Graduate Secretary. A doctoral student must leave the program if one language is failed three times or with any combination of six unsuccessful attempts to complete the PhD language requirement.

These are minimum requirements. Students should discuss choices with their professors and the DGS, taking into account both research plans and possible teaching plans.

## ***9. The First-Year Review***

The first-year review is designed to help students identify strengths in their profile and think about how to further develop as scholars in their fields. The first-year review consists of:

- An updated statement of purpose from the candidate that reflects upon their first year and establishes academic priorities for the coming year.
- Transcript of first-year grades.
- A short statement from each professor elucidating the grade and the student's performance.

These materials are due in early May in the Graduate Office. The DGS will review them and compose a report that assesses the students' strengths and weaknesses. Students will receive a copy of the report during the summer, and they are required to meet with the DGS early in the Fall to review the report. The report will recommend either that the candidate proceed with the degree or be placed on probation. Students placed on probation will need to complete the review again at the end of the second year. If the committee does not recommend that the candidate proceed in the second review, the candidate will be asked to leave the program.

## ***10. Comprehensive Field Examinations***

After completing all coursework and fulfilling the language requirement, students will enter the comprehensive exam process determined by their concentration.

### **Comprehensive Exam Process for the PhD in English, Concentration in Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies, and for the PhD in English with Creative Dissertation**

Students in Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies and in the PhD in English with Creative Dissertation will take two comprehensive field examinations.

1. **Timeline.** Students may not begin taking comprehensive exams until they have completed their coursework requirement for the PhD and fulfilled the foreign language requirement. Students must begin taking comprehensive exams no later than the **second** offering of examinations after they have completed these requirements. By the end of the semester *before* a student takes a given exam, the student must meet with all of his or her committees as a group for both exams (a separate meeting for each exam) in order to discuss procedures and expectations and to have their final reading lists and rationales approved (see "Reading Lists," below). Once the committee has approved these lists and rationales, the student will then submit them to the DGS for final review. Students should submit these lists, along with a Field Exam Proposal Form available from the English Graduate Office that indicates the composition of the examination committees, by **March 30** for Fall exams, or by **October 30** for Spring exams. Revised supplemental lists and rationales must be approved by the committee and submitted by the last day of class. Most students take their comprehensive field exams during the fall of their third year in

the program. At a minimum, each student should take at least one comprehensive field exam during each exam sitting until both exams are completed. Graduate School regulations require that comprehensive examinations be completed successfully within five years of the date of matriculation into the doctoral program. Any student who does not pass these examinations within five years of their matriculation in the doctoral program (or of the date of the first course counted toward completion of the doctoral program) must withdraw from the program.

2. **Administration of Exams.** Exams are administered twice a year, in early September and in February. During each of these two offerings, two weekends, usually two weeks apart, are designated as the exam weekends (see “Time Limit” below). Exams may not be taken during the summer or during weeks other than those designated by the Graduate Office in the regular academic year.
3. **Restrictions.** In order to be eligible to take a comprehensive field exam, students must have completed a minimum of 6 credit hours at the 500 or 600 level in the chosen field. If no graduate-level courses in a given field were available during the period when a student was taking coursework, the student should arrange to complete an independent study (English 593) that can count toward these six hours. Students may **not** elect to take both the 20C American Literature exam and either the Modern Literature or the Contemporary Literature exam. Students may also **not** elect to take more than one genre field exam (Novel, Poetry, or Drama).
4. **Membership of Exam Committees.** Each comprehensive field exam committee will consist of three members. All tenured and tenure-track members of the professorial faculty are eligible to serve on and to chair field exam committees. Adjunct professors may serve on and chair exam committees only when their primary appointment is in the English Department. Lecturers are not eligible to serve on exam committees. Students should seek out professors with expertise in the designated field, preferably professors with whom they have taken coursework. There may be overlap in the membership of a student’s two field exam committees, but whenever possible, a student should have neither the same three professors nor the same chair on both of their committees. Except for rare cases that need be acknowledged and approved by the committee, students may not take a comprehensive exam in a field if they have not had a class with any member of faculty eligible to serve on the exam committee.

Committees for the genre field exams (Novel, Poetry, and Drama) and for exams in Contemporary, Modern, and 20C American literature must include **at least one** faculty member from Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies. Committees for exams in Contemporary, Modern, and 20C American literature **must be chaired** by a member of the Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies faculty.

The list below indicates which exam fields are designated as areas of expertise for each member of the professorial faculty, but students should be aware that all members of a committee must agree to serve on the committee. Normally, all members of a committee for a given field exam must be listed as experts in that field. If a student wishes for some reason to include on a committee a professor who is not an expert in that field, the student must present a petition and a compelling rationale for doing so to the

DGS. All such exceptions must be approved by the DGS in consultation with the Graduate Committee.

5. **Responsibilities of Exam Committees.** One member of each committee should be designated as the chair. Students and the members of the committee must be in agreement as to who will serve as chair. The chair of a committee is responsible for soliciting exam questions from the other committee members, for putting the exam together from the committee members' questions, and for submitting it to the DGS for approval. Each exam should contain some material written by each member of the committee, including the chair. All members of the committee should read completed exams and come to a consensus about the grade. The chair is responsible for reporting the grade to the DGS.
6. **Responsibilities of the DGS.** The DGS reviews the examination plan submitted by each student to determine that the student is eligible to take their chosen exams. In consultation with the Graduate Committee, the DGS also considers requests for exceptions in the membership of a committee (see "Membership of Exam Committees," above) and approves all exams submitted by the committees before they are administered to students.
7. **Reading Lists.** Each field examination has a core list of texts. These lists are determined and periodically revised by the professorial faculty in that field. They are accessible on the English Department Google Drive. The lists help the students begin to take responsibility for their fields. In addition to the texts on the core list, students should construct, in consultation with their committees, a customized portion of the reading list that should consist of no more than 20% of the total number of texts. Students must also write a rationale explaining the choice of these texts. Some committees prefer to have a draft of this list and rationale submitted before the committee meeting, while others prefer to generate this list at the meeting. It is important that the student work with the chair of the committee in advance to determine the procedure to be followed for that committee. Either way, the committee must approve both the initial reading list and rationale and the revised version of the reading list and the rationale by the end of the semester before a student takes that exam. The final list and rationale, with the signatures of the committee members indicating approval, should then be filed with the Graduate Office by the last day of class the semester before the exam.

## **Comprehensive Exam Process for the PhD in English, Concentration in Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics**

For students pursuing the PhD in Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics, the comprehensive exam process consists of two parts: a written exam covering a tailored list, and the writing/revision of an article deemed by the student's comprehensive exam committee to be of publishable quality.

The student will form a committee consisting of three members who will jointly oversee both aspects (written exam and article) of the RWL Comprehensive Examination Process. All tenured and tenure-track members of the professorial faculty are eligible to serve on and to chair exam committees. Adjunct professors may serve on and chair exam committees only when their



primary appointment is in the English Department. Lecturers are not eligible to serve on exam committees. Students should seek out professors with expertise in their area of dissertation interest, preferably professors with whom they have taken coursework.

## Written Examination

All students pursuing the PhD in RWL must take a written exam, typically in the fall of their third year.

1. **Timeline.** Students may not begin the comprehensive exam process until they have completed their coursework requirement for the PhD and fulfilled the foreign language requirement. By the end of the student's last semester of coursework, the student must form their committee (see above) and have their reading list approved (see "Reading List" below). Once the committee has approved the list, the student will then submit the list to the DGS for final review. Students should submit the list along with a Field Exam Proposal Form available from the English Graduate Office that indicates the composition of the examination committee, by **March 30** for Fall exams, or by **October 30** for Spring exams. Most students take their written field exam during the fall of their third year in the program. Graduate School regulations require that the comprehensive examination process be completed successfully within five years of the date of matriculation into the doctoral program. Any student who does not pass this examination process within five years of their matriculation in the doctoral program (or of the date of the first course counted toward completion of the doctoral program) must withdraw from the program.
2. **Reading List.** The core of the lists to be used in the written exam consists of the compilation of all readings that were a part of the student's coursework, with room to build each course reading list out with additional texts based on the student's research. This compilation of readings from a student's coursework constitutes the general reading list, as it reflects a range of historical, theoretical, and methodological scholarship, both foundational and current. Students then develop two shorter secondary area lists to support deepening their knowledge of the field. Students must also write a rationale explaining their choice of readings. The committee must approve both the initial reading list and rationale and the revised version of the reading list and rationale by the end of the semester before the student takes the exam. The final reading list and rationale, with the signatures of the committee members indicating approval, should be filed with the Graduate Office by the last day of class the semester before the exam.
3. **Administration of Written Exam.** Exams are administered twice a year, in early September and in February. Students complete the written exam in the semester following the completion of their coursework, typically in the fall. During both the September and February exam periods, two weekends—usually two weeks apart—are designated as the exam weekends (see "Time Limit" below). In consultation with their committee, students may select either weekend to take their written exam. Exams may not be taken during the summer or during weeks other than those designated by the Graduate Office in the regular academic year.

## **Publishable Article Writing & Revision Process**

In addition to the written exam, all students pursuing the PhD in RWL submit an article deemed by their committee to be of publishable quality. The writing and revision of this article normally begins in the spring of the second year and continues throughout the third year of the program.

1. **Proposal.** In **April** of their second year, students will develop and submit a proposal for the article they would like to write or revise. They will meet with their exam committee to develop a plan for drafting and revision. The topic should be the student's choice, taking into account coursework, seminar papers, and developing research interests, and will normally be the revision of a seminar paper or a chapter from the student's MA thesis (though this does not preclude the development of a new project).
2. **Draft.** In **October** of the third year, the student should submit a full draft of their article to the committee for "mock article review." Feedback and evaluation will be provided by the committee for further revisions.
3. **Revision.** By **early spring semester of year three**, the student should have the revised manuscript ready to submit to their committee for approval. The precise due date for the revision will be determined by the committee in consultation with the student and is normally no later than mid March.

## List of Departmentally Approved Comprehensive Exams

Medieval literature  
Renaissance literature  
Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup>-century British literature  
19<sup>th</sup>-century British literature  
American literature to 1829  
American literature, 1830-1914  
20<sup>th</sup>-century American literature  
Modernist literature  
African American literature  
Southern literature  
Contemporary literature  
Postcolonial and Anglophone World literature  
Critical Theory  
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
The Novel  
Poetry  
Drama  
Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics

NOTE: A student may not elect to take both the 20<sup>th</sup> Century-American and either the Modernist or Contemporary examinations. A student also may not take more than one genre (Novel, Poetry, or Drama) examination. In order to be eligible to take a comprehensive examination, the student must have taken a minimum of six credit hours at the 500 or 600 level in the chosen comprehensive fields.

## List of Examination Fields and Faculty Expertise

### African American Literature

Katy Chiles	Bill Hardwig	Danielle Procope-Bell
Tom Haddox	La Vinia Delois Jennings	DeLisa Hawkes Gore
Dionte Harris		

### American Literature to 1829

Katy Chiles	Dawn Coleman	
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### American Literature 1830-1914

Katy Chiles	Martin Griffin	Bill Hardwig
Dawn Coleman	Tom Haddox	Mary Papke

### Contemporary Literature

Margaret Lazarus Dean	Stan Garner	Michael Knight
Allen Dunn	Tom Haddox	Gĩchingiri Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ
Amy Elias	Christopher Hebert	Urmila Seshagiri

### Critical Theory

Katy Chiles	Amy Elias	Sean Morey
Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud	Martin Griffin	Urmila Seshagiri
Allen Dunn	Tom Haddox	Eleni Palis
Dionte Harris		

### Drama

Misty Anderson	Heather Hirschfeld	
Stan Garner	Robert Stillman	

### Medieval Literature

Mary Dzon	Laura Howes	Roy Liuzza
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### Modern Literature

Allen Dunn	Stan Garner	Urmila Seshagiri
Amy Elias	Lisi Schoenbach	

### 19<sup>th</sup> C British Literature

Amy Billone	Dawn Coleman	Nancy Henry
Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud	Hilary Havens	

**Novel**

Misty Anderson	Martin Griffin	Nancy Henry
Amy Billone	Tom Haddock	Michael Knight
Dawn Coleman	Bill Hardwig	Mary Papke
Margaret Lazarus Dean	Hilary Havens	Lisi Schoenbach
Allen Dunn	Christopher Hebert	Urmila Seshagiri
Amy Elias		

**Poetry**

Amy Billone	Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud	Iliana Rocha
Anthony Welch	Ben Lee	Cornelius Eady

**Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature**

Katy Chiles	Gĩchingiri Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ	Urmila Seshagiri
Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud		

**Renaissance Literature**

Heather Hirschfeld	Robert Stillman	Anthony Welch
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**Restoration and 18<sup>th</sup> Century Literature**

Misty Anderson	Nancy Henry
Hilary Havens	Anthony Welch

**Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics**

Jamal-Jared Alexander	Thorsten Huth	Jeff Ringer
Kirsten Benson	Lisa King	Tanita Saenkhum
Rima El Abdali	Sean Morey	

**Southern Literature**

Katy Chiles	Tom Haddock	Bill Hardwig
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**Twentieth-Century American Literature**

Allen Dunn	Martin Griffin	La Vinia Delois Jennings
Amy Elias	Tom Haddock	Ben Lee
Stan Garner	Bill Hardwig	Mary Papke

**Women, Gender, and Sexuality**

Misty Anderson	Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud	Mary Papke
Amy Billone	Amy Elias	Lisi Schoenbach
Eleni Palis	Dionte Harris	

## **List of Professorial Faculty and Their Examination Fields of Expertise**

**Jamal-Jared Alexander.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Misty Anderson.** Restoration and 18C British Literature; Drama; Novel; Critical Theory; Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**Danielle Procope-Bell.** African American Literature.

**Kirsten Benson.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Amy Billone.** 19C British Literature; Poetry; Novel; Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**Katy Chiles.** African American Literature, American Literature to 1829, American Literature 1830-1914, Critical Theory, Southern Literature, Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature.

**Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud.** 19C British Literature; Critical Theory; Poetry; Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature; Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**Dawn Coleman.** American Literature 1830-1914, American Literature to 1829, 19C British Literature, Novel.

**Margaret Lazarus Dean.** Novel, Contemporary Literature.

**Allen Dunn.** Modern Literature, Critical Theory, Novel, 20C American Literature, Contemporary Literature.

**Mary Dzon.** Medieval Literature.

**Cornelius Eady.** Poetry.

**Rima El Abdali.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Amy Elias.** Contemporary Literature, 20C American Literature, Critical Theory, Novel, Modern Literature, Feminist Studies.

**Stan Garner.** Drama, Modern Literature, Contemporary Literature, 20C American Literature.

**Dionte Harris.** Critical Theory; Women, Gender, and Sexuality; African American Literature.

**DeLisa Hawkes Gore.** African American Literature.

**Martin Griffin.** American Literature 1830-1914, 20C American Literature, Critical Theory, the Novel.

**Tom Haddox.** Southern Literature, 20C American Literature, Novel, American Literature 1830-1914, African American Literature, Contemporary Literature, Critical Theory.

**Bill Hardwig.** Southern Literature, African American Literature, American Literature 1830-1914, 20C American Literature, Novel.

**Hillary Havens.** Restoration and 18C British Literature, 19C British Literature, Novel.

**Christopher Hebert.** Novel, Contemporary Literature.

**Nancy Henry.** 19C British Literature, Novel, Restoration and 18C British Literature.

**Heather Hirschfeld.** Renaissance Literature, Drama.

**Laura Howes.** Medieval Literature.

**Thorsten Huth.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**La Vinia Delois Jennings.** 20C American Literature, African American Literature.

**Lisa King.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Michael Knight.** Novel, Contemporary Literature.

**Ben Lee.** 20C American Literature, Poetry, Contemporary Literature.

**Roy Liuzza.** Medieval Literature.

**Sean Morey.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Gĩchingiri Ndĩgĩrĩgĩ.** Contemporary Literature, Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature.

**Eleni Palis.** Critical Theory; Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**Mary Papke.** American Literature 1830-1914; 20C American Literature; Women, Gender, and Sexuality; Novel.

**Jeffrey Ringer.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Iliana Rocha.** Poetry.

**Tanita Saenkhum.** Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.

**Lisi Schoenbach.** Modern Literature; Novel; Critical Theory; Women, Gender, and Sexuality.

**Urmila Seshagiri.** Modern Literature, Contemporary Literature, Novel, Critical Theory, Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature.

**Robert Stillman.** Renaissance Literature, Drama.

**Anthony Welch.** Renaissance Literature, Poetry, Restoration and 18C British Literature.

## **What to Expect on All the Comprehensive Field Exams**

- 1. General Instructions.** For all field exams, students should compose their answers so as to demonstrate a broad familiarity with primary texts and with the secondary, critical studies on the core reading lists. Plot summary and repetition of the same examples or texts from question to question should be avoided.
- 2. Word Count.** The maximum limit for all field exams is 6,000 words, not including the Works Cited. Students must provide a word count for each exam, and, as of March 2015, the exam file must be submitted in Microsoft Word or another program that has a word count function—not as a .pdf file. Exam committees reserve the right to fail exams that exceed this word or that are submitted as .pdf files.
- 3. Time Limit.** All students have 72 hours to complete a field exam. The usual procedure takes place over a weekend: students receive the exam questions via email from the Graduate Administrative Assistant at noon on a Friday; they must then email their exam answers back to the Graduate Administrative Assistant by noon on Monday. Students who have family care responsibilities may arrange to have their exams administered during the week, but in such cases students must arrange to take their exams during the week **before** the weekend that most students are taking their exams (typically, such students receive their exams noon on Tuesday and must submit their answers by noon on Friday).
- 4. Coverage of the Customized Portion of the Reading List.** As described above (see “Reading Lists”), students are expected to customize their reading lists by adding an additional 20% of material to the core lists. Committees may stipulate that no more than one question on the exam draw on material from the customized portion of the reading list, and some exam fields have codified this as a rule (see the list below for field exams that specify questions on “thematic specialized material”). When there are no specific instructions that refer to customized material on an exam, students should observe the same distribution of texts in their exam answers as on their reading lists—that is, at least 80% from the core reading list and no more than 20% from the customized material. The customization of reading lists is intended to deepen a student’s knowledge of a field, not to allow students to decline engagement with major texts in that field.
- 5. Academic Honesty.** Students taking field exams are bound by the University’s Honor Code, which prohibits academic dishonesty. Under no circumstances are students to seek help from or to consult with others in the writing of their examinations, and students should avoid communicating with one another while working on the exam. Any evidence



of academic dishonesty will result in dismissal from the program.

- 6. Grading.** Normal grading on comprehensive field exams is Pass or Fail; outstanding performance on an exam may warrant a grade of Pass with Distinction. The chair of an exam committee should submit the grade to the DGS by the Friday following the Monday when the exam is due. Students who fail an exam should discuss the results with their committee members, either individually or as a group, as soon as possible so as to plan the best preparation for retaking the exam. They should also meet with the DGS within two weeks of being notified of the grade of Fail to discuss a revised plan. A student who fails a particular exam must retake that exam during the next offering of comprehensive field exams. If a student fails two exams in the same field, they may elect to take an exam in a new field. If a student elects to move to a new field, they may choose to take that exam either in the first or second sitting following the second failure in the original area. To remain in the program, a student may fail no more than two comprehensive exams. Any student who fails three comprehensive exams must withdraw from the graduate program.

## **What to Expect on Particular Comprehensive Field Exams**

Although each field exam is individualized for a particular student, every exam in the same field will have the same number of questions and the same principles governing what kinds of questions are asked. The principles of a particular exam, especially the nature of the questions, can on rare occasions be modified to avoid overlap between a student's two comprehensive exams, providing the modification is agreed on by the entire committee and the student during the pre-exam meeting and approved by the DGS. It is the responsibility of the DGS, who approves each exam prior to its being administered, to ensure consistency in the formats of individual field exams. The format for each field exam was established as follows:

- **African American Literature.** Three questions: one broad theoretical question that has implications for the field as a whole, and two questions that range over specific historical developments within the field and specialized thematic material.
- **American Literature to 1829.** Three questions: one on literature through 1763, one on literature from 1763-1829, and one specialized thematic question.
- **American Literature 1830-1914.** Three questions: one on literature from 1830-1865, one on literature from 1865-1914, and one on broad thematic issues.
- **Contemporary Literature.** Four questions: one on prose, one on poetry, one on drama, and one on criticism.
- **Critical Theory.** Four questions: one on classical, medieval, and Renaissance criticism and theory; one on criticism and theory from 1660 through the nineteenth century; one on twentieth-century criticism and theory; and one on contemporary issues.

- **Drama.** Four questions: one on medieval or Restoration/18C drama, one on Renaissance drama, one on modern/contemporary drama, and one on drama in general that draws upon a range of historical periods. Arrangements can be made to accommodate specialized exam list material.
- **Medieval Literature.** Three questions: one on Old English literature, one on Middle English literature, and one specialized thematic question.
- **Modern Literature.** Four questions: one on literary modernism, one on modern poetry, one on modern fiction, and one on modern drama.
- **19C British Literature.** Four questions, reflecting a broad coverage of relevant historical developments, genres, and formal and thematic concerns.
- **Novel.** Four questions, all on broad thematic questions that deal with some combination of literary history, politics and ethics, and aesthetics.
- **Poetry.** Four questions, reflecting a balanced focus on genre, history, and broad thematic and aesthetic concerns.
- **Postcolonial and Anglophone World Literature.** No information available at this time.
- **Renaissance Literature.** Four questions, one on broad thematic issues that will require the student to range across historical subfields and several genres; and three on narrower issues related to literary history, genre, thematics, and aesthetics.
- **Restoration and 18C British Literature.** Three questions, reflecting a broad coverage of historical developments, genres, and thematic concerns.
- **Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics.** Three questions, reflecting a balanced focus on history, theory and practice, and methodology.
- **Southern Literature.** Three questions: one on literature before 1914, one on literature after 1914, one on broad thematic issues.
- **Twentieth-Century American Literature.** Four questions: one on prose, one on poetry, one on drama, and one on specialized thematic issues.
- **Women, Gender, and Sexuality.** Three questions covering a range of historical periods, thematic concerns, and theoretical perspectives.

## Checklist for Students Taking Comprehensive Field Exams

During the Spring semester of your second year in the PhD program (if you are following the usual timeline), you should:

- ✓ Seek out professors to serve on your exam committee(s), using the list of professors above as a guide, and ask them to serve on the committee;
- ✓ Make sure that everyone is in agreement as to who will chair each committee (note that the same individual should not chair both exams);
- ✓ If appropriate, petition the DGS, in the form of a written rationale, for any exceptions involving the membership of your committee or the courses that determine your eligibility to take an exam.
- ✓ Customize your reading list to include **an additional 20% of specialized material** and compose a rationale explaining your customization. Work with the committee chair to determine the schedule of when to submit this list and rationale to the committee. An initial version of this list and rationale are due in the Graduate office by March 30.
- ✓ Hold a group meeting with the members of each committee to discuss the customized reading lists and rationales, as well as the committees' expectations for the exams;
- ✓ Submit the customized reading lists and rationales to the Graduate Office, along with the signatures of your committee members indicating that they have read and approved these documents.

At the beginning of the semester when you will be taking your exam(s) (typically Fall), you should:

- ✓ Make sure you have not scheduled any major events that conflict with the scheduled exam weekends;
- ✓ If you have family care responsibilities over weekends and wish to take the exam during the week, confirm with Leanne that you will be receiving your exam on Tuesday instead of Friday.

### 11. *Dissertation Procedures*

- ***Continuous Registration in English 600 (Dissertation Hours)***. Once coursework has been completed, the foreign language requirement fulfilled, and the two comprehensive exams passed, the candidate should begin registering for English 600, the course number for dissertation hours. The candidate is required to complete 24 semester hours of dissertation and to remain continuously enrolled in dissertation hours, **including during the Summer terms**, unless granted a leave of absence by the Graduate School, in order to maintain full-time status. Students who hold teaching associateships must be enrolled

in at least 6 hours of English 600 during the Fall and Spring semesters, and in at least 3 hours of English 600 during the Summer term, in order to maintain full-time status. A student who will not be using faculty services and/or university facilities for a period of time may request leaves of absence from dissertation research up to a maximum of six terms (including summer terms). Such requests must be approved by the student's dissertation director, by the DGS, and by the Graduate School. Students who wish to make such a request must complete the required form and submit it to the DGS, who will forward it to the Graduate School. Please note that when leaves of absence are approved, they extend the eight-year window within which students must graduate.

- ***Dissertation Focus.*** The candidate's dissertation should reflect original research and interpretation and be focused on an area of study within the department's three areas of specialization: Literature, Criticism, and Textual Studies; Rhetoric, Writing, and Linguistics; or Creative Writing. The dissertation should be a book-length work of critical analysis that reflects thorough research in the field; a dissertation in Creative Writing must be a book-length work of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction with a substantial critical introduction to the manuscript.
- ***Membership of Dissertation Committee.*** Please consult Graduate Catalog policy for the specifics of who may chair a doctoral dissertation committee and who may serve as a committee member. Some of the most broadly relevant language is as follows: "Ph.D. committees at the University of Tennessee must be composed of at least four people. At least two committee members must be tenured or tenure track UT faculty. The chair of the committee is typically from the student's department/intercollegiate program. At least one member must be from an academic unit other than that of the student's department." That means that under normal circumstances, three members of your committee will be from the English Department, while one member must teach in another department. Also, doctoral dissertation committees must be chaired by a tenured or tenure-track UT faculty member who holds a doctoral degree. Tenured or tenure-track UT faculty who do not hold doctoral degrees may co-chair a dissertation committee.

## ***12. Guided Dissertation Prospectus-Writing Process***

- After the field comprehensive examinations, the student will begin preparing to write a dissertation prospectus. The student will first create a statement of specialization and a reading list related to the topic of the dissertation prospectus. The statement of specialization should explain the student's intended field(s) and/or subfield(s), as well as salient interdisciplinary lines of inquiry. The reading list should include not only primary and secondary texts likely to be cited in the prospectus but also texts necessary for understanding the scholarly fields named in the statement of specialization. Students should begin reading the texts that might be on this list soon after the completion of the comprehensive field examinations.
- After preparing the statement of specialization and reading list, the student submits these documents to departmental dissertation committee members, then meets with those committee members as a group to discuss them. If students finish the field comprehensive

examinations in September, the revised statement of specialization and reading list, along with the committee signature form verifying that the committee has met, are due to the Graduate Office by **November 15**. If exams are finished in February, these materials are due to the Graduate Office by **April 15**.

- The student then continues reading and begins to draft the dissertation prospectus. The student submits a short draft of the dissertation prospectus to their departmental dissertation committee members and, if desired, the external committee member. A bibliography of primary and secondary sources should be appended to the draft prospectus.
- This draft is due by **January 31** for those who finished field exams in the Fall and by **September 1** for those who finished exams in the Spring. The student then meets with the prospective dissertation committee (which may or may not include the outside reader at this point) to discuss the draft by **February 15** or by **September 15**, or about two weeks after the draft has been submitted. This meeting to discuss the draft dissertation prospectus is formative, not evaluative. It is designed to give the student feedback on the draft so as to strengthen the eventual prospectus.
- After meeting with the Departmental dissertation committee, the student should select and invite the outside reader, if they have not already done so. **At this point, the student must also obtain, complete, and return the Graduate School's Doctoral Committee form.**
- After revising the draft prospectus in light of committee feedback, the student defends the prospectus at an official prospectus defense meeting, which includes the outside reader. The final prospectus should propose a thesis and an overview of organization and chapter content that provides a comprehensive rationale for the dissertation. It should also include a bibliography of primary and secondary sources.
- Ideally, the prospectus defense occurs later in the same semester—for instance, by May 1 or by December 1—but deadlines for the prospectus are left to the discretion of individual dissertation directors. **After defending the prospectus, the student should file an Application to Candidacy form.**
- A final draft of the prospectus should be submitted electronically to the Graduate Office in English for approval. Upon approval, the prospectus should be placed on file in the English Graduate Office.

### ***13. Application to Candidacy***

The Application to Candidacy Form must be filed no later than the last day of the term before the term in which the student intends to graduate. Students are encouraged to fill out the Application to Candidacy form when they defend their prospectus and faculty members are on hand to sign.

## ***14. Submitting Dissertation Work***

- Once the prospectus has been approved, it is recommended that the candidate submit the manuscript one chapter at a time to the dissertation director. The director is responsible for supervising the revision of the manuscript, making suggestions about content, methodology, style, form and editing and seeing that corrections are made to initial drafts prior to passing on chapters to other committee members. The director should confer with other members of the committee periodically to ensure that individual chapters are being circulated for review, suggestions and preliminary approval. To facilitate committee communication, the director should be involved in the conversations between the candidate and other members of the committee, and the candidate should consult the director before making substantive changes suggested by other readers.

As noted above, the candidate is encouraged to submit dissertation writing chapter-by-chapter to the director. If the director has then approved these chapters to be circulated to the other members of the committee during the course of dissertation writing and the candidate has done so, the candidate should submit an entire revised draft to each committee member at least two weeks prior to the oral defense. However, if (a far rarer case) the student and director have chosen to wait and submit the dissertation in full to the other members of the committee after the candidate has made substantial revisions, the other members must receive a copy of the revised draft in its entirety at least eight weeks prior to the oral defense to allow enough time for the committee to read and make suggestions for revision. While the candidate and the director may choose between these two strategies for submitting the manuscript to the other committee members, **no exceptions will be made to the two-week or eight-week minimum required times to submit revised drafts prior to the defense. This is a requirement of the Graduate School**, and it ensures that the readers will have adequate time to devote to dissertation review. All members of the committee must agree that the revised version meets all requirements for an acceptable dissertation before a defense may be scheduled.

- ***Oral Defense.*** Once the dissertation manuscript has been approved by all members of the committee, the candidate and dissertation director should schedule the oral defense on a date and time that all committee members agree is acceptable. At least one week prior to the date of the defense, the candidate should obtain the Schedule of Dissertation Defense Form from the Graduate School website. The candidate should likewise inform the Graduate Administrative Assistant in English of the date, time and place of the defense.

The student should bring the Thesis/Dissertation Approval form (available on the Graduate School website), filled out, to the defense for the committee to sign. This form also includes the embargo request for those choosing to delay the availability of the thesis via Trace.

The defense itself consists of an oral examination by all committee members. It is normally 60 to 90 minutes long and covers topics related to the dissertation writing and research. Members of the university community and the public may attend the defense and may be invited to participate if they are present, but the content of the defense must

be determined by the dissertation director and committee members. Members of the committee from the department must be physically present on campus for the defense (Skyping or other forms of videoconferencing are not an option). According to the Graduate School's regulations, the defense must occur approximately two weeks prior to their deadline for submitting a final copy of the dissertation to the Graduate School.

The dissertation director will bring the Pass/Fail form, sent from the Graduate School, to the defense. Provided the defense is successful, the committee members will sign the form. The candidate should bring this form to the Graduate Office, and the Graduate Administrative Assistant will make a copy of it and submit it to the Graduate School. The candidate should submit a copy of the dissertation and the Thesis/Dissertation Approval form to the Graduate School.

## **PART 8: STANDARDS, LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT, PROBLEMS AND APPEALS**

### ***1. Grades***

The Graduate School requires a 2.7 overall GPA for acceptance into the MA program and a 3.0 GPA in all graduate coursework for acceptance into the PhD program. Once a student has completed nine hours of graduate work, they will be placed on probation by the Graduate School if their cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0. If the student makes a 3.0 or better for the succeeding term and continues to do so, they may continue in the program; once the cumulative GPA reaches 3.0, the student is removed from probation. If the student's GPA falls below a 3.0 in the succeeding term, the student will be dismissed from the Graduate School unless the department requests continuation on a semester-by-semester basis and the Graduate School accepts the appeal. Notice that these requirements are averages; a C, D, or even an F in a single course does not necessarily lead to a student's dismissal from the program.

Above the Graduate School minimum requirements, the English Department requires a 3.5 cumulative GPA at the graduate level for admission to the PhD program and expects students to maintain at least that average after entering the program. Students should remember that most language courses carry undergraduate credit and thus do not affect this average; note, too, that dissertation hours are P/NP. A student who by the end of the second year of coursework has a GPA below 3.3 will have a maximum of one additional year to bring up the GPA to 3.3. In most instances, a student who cannot do this will be dismissed from the program. In exceptional circumstances, the student may petition the English Department Graduate Committee through the DGS to remain in the program.

### ***2. Incompletes***

Any teacher who allows a graduate student an Incomplete should work out specific arrangements in advance with the student, in writing, and file a copy in the English Graduate Office. The Graduate School requires that all Incompletes be made up before the end of the following semester, excluding the summer term. Thus, a spring Incomplete must be removed by December (see the Graduate Catalog). If the student has a valid reason for further delay, the faculty member must request an extension from the Graduate School in writing. Otherwise, the I will be changed to an F.

### ***3. Academic Honesty***

As graduate students, you join a community of scholars whose purpose is to exchange ideas, and the accurate, honest, and fully credited representation of the ideas and phrasings of others is absolutely essential. Proper citation of sources, with quotation marks clearly identifying direct citations, is expected in all graduate work, print or electronic.

For a review of a number of university policies, see *Hilltopics* (copies available at orientation for new students), especially the sections entitled "Academic Standards of Conduct" and "Student/Faculty Relationships." *Hilltopics* also states the honors policy for the campus,



undergraduate and graduate. Most in-course examinations are supervised directly by the instructors. Master's examinations are proctored but run essentially on an honor system; the PhD comprehensive examinations are on an honor system. Honesty through full documentation of sources used in papers is essential. If you have any doubts about procedures, consult your instructor. A very useful, detailed discussion of the limits of paraphrase may be found in Harold C. Martin, Richard M. Ohmann, and James H. Wheatley, *The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition*. Most important, however, is the careful consideration of another's work in the same way in which you would want your own represented. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense and is grounds for immediate dismissal from the graduate program.

#### ***4. Readmission to the MA, MFA, and PhD Programs***

Please see the Graduate Catalog for the current Graduate School policy regarding readmission. When a student must reapply for readmission to an English graduate program, that applicant will compete with all other applicants and be evaluated alongside other applicants by the appropriate Admissions Committee. Those denied readmission can, if they wish, complete the requirements for the next Fall admission and compete with the pool of new candidates. A candidate who is denied readmission and who is subsequently denied admission in a regular Fall term admission review will no longer be eligible or considered for admission to that graduate program.

#### ***5. Appeal Procedures***

Students should be aware of the Graduate School's policy concerning appeals related to grades, policies, and procedures; it is available in the online Graduate Catalog under "Grievances and Appeals." In the cases listed below that might occasion an appeal, two principles will apply: 1) the initial appeal must be filed with the DGS no later than 30 days after the incident that occasions the appeal, and 2) if the Department's procedure, listed below, does not lead to resolution of the complaint, the next appeal is to the College of Arts and Sciences. Appeals to the College must be filed within 30 days of a final decision at the departmental level.

- **Appeals of Grades and Related Matters.** All grade appeals should be made within 30 days of the receipt of the grade. Students wishing to appeal a grade should first speak with the professor. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved at that level, the student should bring their concern to the DGS. If, after appropriate review and consultation, the Director cannot resolve the appeal in a way acceptable to both parties, the final level of administrative approval within the Department is the Head (or Associate Head). If the Head (or Associate Head) concludes that the faculty member's grade is unjust and if the faculty member does not agree to change the grade, the Administrative Committee will appoint an *ad hoc* committee to review the grade. The professorial faculty and administration of the department have agreed by formal vote to abide by the decisions made by such *ad hoc* grade appeal committees.
- **Plagiarism.** In cases involving plagiarism, the instructor writes a letter to the student giving the details of the plagiarism and stating the penalty that they have assigned. The Head reviews and signs the letter. The letter notifies the student of their right to appeal to

the Head and spells out appeals procedures printed in *Hilltopics*. A copy of the letter is sent to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and to the Office of Student Conduct.

- **Appeals of Examination Results/Dismissal from the Graduate Program.** All appeals must be initiated no later than 30 days from the time of the incident in question. Appeals of examination results (MA and PhD comprehensives) should first go to the DGS, who will generally have the student discuss the examination with the committee that wrote and graded it. If the issue remains unresolved, the DGS will consult the chair of the area committee and, after that, the Graduate Committee. (In any appeals process the administrators will be a part of the process only at one level—that is, a grader of the original exam will not hear the appeal.) Appeals from the Graduate Committee go to the Head, advised by the Administrative Committee or an *ad hoc* subcommittee from it, then to the Dean of the College, then to the Dean of the Graduate School. Appeals of a dismissal from the program follow the same route.
- **Harassment, Discrimination, and Related Issues.** Appeals concerning other issues, such as sexual harassment or racial discrimination, should go to the Director of Graduate Studies or to the Department Head. As stated in the Graduate Catalog, “The University of Tennessee is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment free from sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and retaliation. The Office of Title IX, located at 1817 Melrose Avenue, was established to help educate the campus community, prevent incidents, support those in need, and address concerns related to Title IX. The [Office of Title IX, https://titleix.utk.edu/](https://titleix.utk.edu/), provides a comprehensive community approach to the institution's Title IX responsibility. Under the direction of the Title IX Coordinator, Title IX team members, housed in critical areas across campus, work collaboratively to educate the campus community, prevent incidents, support those in need, and address Title IX-related complaints.”

In addition, the Graduate Catalog reads: “Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), ADA (disability), Age Discrimination in Employment Act (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility](#) (EOA), 1840 Melrose Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996-3560, telephone (865) 974-2498 (dial 711 for telecommunications relay services). Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the [Office Equal Opportunity and Accessibility](#).”

## PART 9: SAMPLE TIMELINES

### *1. Typical MA Program for Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate*

Fall Semester, Year One	Spring Semester, Year One	Summer Semester, Year One
500- or 600-level course	500- or 600-level course	Optional course work
500- or 600-level course	English 505 (Composition Pedagogy)	Language study (if needed)
500-level course (maybe one 400-level course modified for the graduate level)	600-level course	Begin thesis, if writing one.
Teaching assistantship: English 101/Writing Center	Teaching assistantship: English 102/Writing Center	

Fall Semester, Year Two	Spring Semester, Year Two	Summer Semester, Year Two
500- or 600-level course	600-level course	
500- or 600-level course <b>or</b> English 500 (Thesis Hours)	500- or 600-level course <b>or</b> English 500 (Thesis Hours)	
Teaching associateship—English 101	Teaching associateship—English 102	
Teaching associateship—English 101	Teaching associateship—English 102	
	MA Written/Oral Exam or Thesis defense and MA Oral Exam	If not complete in Spring semester: MA Thesis defense and MA Oral

## 2. Typical MFA Program for Graduate Teaching Assistant/Associate

Fall Semester, Year One	Spring Semester, Year One	Summer Semester, Year One
500- or 600-level writing workshop	500- or 600-level writing workshop	Optional coursework
500- or 600-level literature or RWL course	English 505 (Composition Pedagogy)	Language study (if needed)
500- or 600-level literature or RWL course	500- or 600-level literature or RWL course	Begin thesis
Teaching assistantship—English 101/Writing Center	Teaching assistantship—English 102/Writing Center	

Fall Semester, Year Two	Spring Semester, Year Two	Summer Semester, Year Two
500- or 600-level writing workshop	500- or 600-level writing workshop	
English 555 (Creative Thesis)	English 555 (Creative Thesis)	
Teaching associateship—English 101 or 102 <b>OR</b> , once during the program, a 200-level course in creative writing	Teaching associateship—English 101 or 102 <b>OR</b> , once during the program, a 200-level course in creative writing	
Teaching associateship—English 101 or 102 <b>OR</b> , once during the program, a 200-level course in creative writing	Teaching associateship—English 101 or 102 <b>OR</b> , once during the program, a 200-level course in creative writing	
	Public reading of MFA final project.	

Please note that no more than one of the four courses that teaching associates who are MFAs teach during their second year in the program will be a course in creative writing. The other three courses may be English 101 or 102, depending on departmental needs and scheduling priorities.

### 3. Typical Program for PhD Teaching Associate

Year One: 3/3 coursework, 1/1 teaching; meet language requirement

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
500-level course	600/500-level course	First-Year Review (materials due in early May)
600/500-level course	600/500-level course	Optional: 500- or 600-level course
600/500-level course (note: 508 does not count toward coursework if used toward language requirement)	600/500-level course (note: 509 does not count toward coursework if used toward language requirement)	Optional: language exam
	Language (e.g. French 302). Note: languages do not count toward Departmental course requirements.	
Teaching Associateship, English 101	Teaching Associateship, English 102	

#### IMPORTANT

Please note that the biggest stumbling block to making reasonable progress toward degree is the failure to complete the language requirement. **Begin early and plan ahead.** Allow more time than you believe you will need to complete this requirement.

Year Two: 2/2 coursework, 2/2 teaching; meet language requirement (if not already completed)

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
600/500-level course	600/500-level course	Prepare for field comprehensive exams.
600-level course	600-level course	
Begin planning for comprehensive exams.	Prepare and approve reading lists with committee; complete all language requirements.	
Teaching associateship, two sections of English 101	Teaching associateship, two sections of English 102	

NOTE: Students should begin to present papers at scholarly meetings and submit articles for publication as soon as possible in their doctoral program to establish their professional credentials.

Year Three: complete exams, 2/2 or 1/2 teaching

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Study for comps/ take 2 comps in September.	Guided dissertation prospectus-writing process. Enroll in six credit hours of English 600.	Begin research on dissertation.
Begin guided dissertation prospectus-writing process.	Submit draft prospectus by Jan. 31. Discuss with committee in meeting by Feb. 15.	Begin writing first chapter of dissertation.
Enroll in six credit hours of English 502.	Recommended: Defend dissertation prospectus in April.	Possible travel fellowship.
Teaching associateship, one or two sections of English 101, depending on fellowships.	Teaching associateship, one or two sections of English 102, depending on fellowships.	

Teaching Associates who have completed field comprehensive examinations must enroll in 6 hours of English 600 each term (Fall, Spring, and Summer) until all doctoral degree requirements are fulfilled.

Year Four: Dissertation, 1/1 or 2/2 teaching, depending on fellowships

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
Write dissertation		
1. 600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours
2. 600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours
Teaching associateship, one or two sections of English 101	Teaching associateship, one or two sections of English 102	
Apply for Tennessee Humanities Center dissertation fellowship and any external dissertation fellowships.		

Note: By Summer of the fourth year, students planning to go on the market should have at least three dissertation chapters in final form so as to provide their most advanced work to possible employers.

Year Five: finish dissertation, 2/2 teaching

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	Summer Semester
600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours (if necessary)
600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours	600 dissertation hours (if necessary)
Teaching associateship, two sections of English 101.	Teaching associateship, two sections of English 102.	
Optional: Apply for academic positions for the following Fall.		

# **PART 10: APPENDIX BIAS ADVISORY GROUP, HARRASSMENT RESOURCES, AND UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE WEB PAGES**

## **Bias Advisory Group**

The **English Bias Advisory Group** is a voluntary group of faculty that will serve as a resource for graduate students by providing advising to any graduate students with concerns about possible instances of bias, intimidation, and/or harassment in the classroom, department, departmental community, or university.

The English Bias Advisory Group is not involved in adjudication, policy administration, or any other departmental action regarding bias incidents. The group does not have a disciplinary or decision-making function. Instead, it serves as an initial resource, along the lines of a departmental Ombuds office, for graduate students looking for guidance in navigating unclear or difficult issues in our department and university, including grey areas such as intimidation, toxic behavior, and/or a lack of professionalism within our communities.

A list of individual members of the group will be available to the graduate student community. Any student who wishes to discuss possible issues of bias, intimidation, or harassment will have the ability to contact the member(s) with whom they feel most comfortable talking. The group members will also help graduate students navigate the reporting of bias and harassment (when appropriate and requested by the graduate student), including determining whether to report an incident, to whom to report an incident, and the appropriate procedure for submitting a report. Finally, the group will facilitate communication between departmental administration/faculty and graduate students about possible bias incidents, policies, and concerns.

When requested by the graduate student, the group member will keep discussions with the student private to the extent possible. However, some incidents may require that the group member report the incident to the university. For example, faculty members are required to report known or suspected violations of the Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking to the Office of Title IX. If the faculty member reports an incident to the university, the faculty member will inform the graduate student.

**UTK Bias Definitions** - <https://bias.utk.edu/what-is-bias/> *These definitions are not intended to limit the scope of the English Bias Advisory Group, but as a resource for students looking for institutional definitions.*

A “bias” is defined as any act that is motivated, in whole or in part, due to an individual’s age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, gender identity or expression, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, national origin, veteran status, religion and/or religious practice, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, weight, political affiliation, medical condition, mental health, or any combination of these or related factors.



“Bias related-incidents” are incidents that occur on campus or within an area that impacts the UT community and which an individual can reasonably conclude is directed at a member or a group of the UT community due to that individual’s or group’s actual or perceived age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender, gender identity or expression, immigration or citizenship status, marital status, national origin, veteran status, religion and/or religious practice, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, weight, political affiliation, medical condition, mental health, or any combination of these or related factors.

### **Other Resources Outside the Department:**

#### **The Office of Title** – <https://titleix.utk.edu/>

Reports of conduct violating the Policy on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating and Domestic Violence, and Stalking (“Policy”) may be reported to the Office of Title IX. The Policy prohibits sexual harassment, which includes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. The Office of Title IX provides supportive measures for both complainants and respondents involved in matters covered under the Policy.

#### **Bias Education and Referral Team** – <https://bias.utk.edu/response/>

The Bias Education and Referral Team reviews bias incident reports and meets with affected students to facilitate services such as counseling, health services, or other referrals as needed to address safety concerns and to provide assistance and comfort to those impacted.

#### **Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility** – <https://dae.utk.edu/ea/>

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility investigates complaints by students of discrimination and harassment by faculty and staff.

#### **Office of the Ombuds** – <https://ombuds.utk.edu/>

The Office of Ombuds Services serves as an independent, impartial, confidential, and informal resource for employees—both faculty and staff—and graduate students.

The office provides the university community with an informal channel of conflict resolution and allows faculty, staff, and graduate students to obtain access to impartial and honest resolution of problems. Visitors to the office are not required to engage in formal Faculty Senate, Graduate School, Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Equity, or any other grievance processes.

#### **Student Counseling Center** – <https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>

The Student Counseling Center is the university’s primary facility for students for personal counseling, psychotherapy, and mental health outreach and consultation services.

**24-Hour Helpline:** If you are experiencing a mental health emergency or concerned about the mental health of another student, you can reach a crisis-trained professional after regular business hours by dialing [\(865\) 974-HELP \(4357\)](tel:8659744357). If there is an immediate risk to the safety of self or others, please dial 911.

#### **Student Health Center** – <https://studenthealth.utk.edu/>

The Student Health Center is available to all students and provides a wide range of clinics and services to offer students in need of healthcare.

# UNIVERSITY WEB PAGES

- Center for International Education
  - <https://cie.utk.edu/>
- Counseling Center
  - <https://counselingcenter.utk.edu/>
- Department of English
  - <https://english.utk.edu/>
- College of Arts & Sciences
  - <https://artsci.utk.edu/>
- Funding, Fellowships, Assistantships for Graduate Students
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/costs-funding/graduate-fellowships/>
- Graduate School
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/>
- Graduate Catalog
  - <https://catalog.utk.edu/index.php?catoid=21>
- Graduate Student Appeals Procedure
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council/>
- Graduate Student Senate
  - <https://gss.utk.edu>
- Graduate and International Admissions
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/>
- International House/Center for Global Engagement
  - <https://ihouse.utk.edu/>
- International Teaching Assistant Testing Program (OPIc)
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/graduate-student-life/ita-testing-program/>
- Office of Equity and Diversity
  - <https://oed.utk.edu/>
- Office of Multicultural Student Life/Black Cultural Center
  - <https://multicultural.utk.edu/>
- Office of Research Integrity (including IRB/ Human Subject Research)
  - <https://research.utk.edu/compliance/>
- Student Conduct and Community Standards
  - <https://studentconduct.utk.edu/>

- Thesis/Dissertation Website
  - <https://gradschool.utk.edu/thesesdissertations/>
- Library Website for Graduate Students
  - <https://libguides.utk.edu/graduate>
- Office of Information Technology
  - <https://oit.utk.edu/>
- Teaching and Learning Innovation
  - <https://teaching.utk.edu/>