



# Ph.D. Graduate Student Handbook

University of Iowa  
Department of English

# CONTENTS

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<b>03</b>	<b>Commencing Study</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Distribution Requirement</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Seminar Requirement</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Foreign Language Requirement</b>
<b>09</b>	<b>Graduate College Requirements 06</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Qualification for Doctoral Candidacy</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Comprehensive Examination</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Dissertation</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>PhD in English with Book Studies Specialization</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Post-Funded Years</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>After the Ph.D.</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Fellowships and Awards</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Department Travel Funds</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>Service</b>

Department of English  
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# COMMENCING STUDY

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The Iowa doctoral program emphasizes individual initiative, careful choice, and creativity. With the exception of Introduction to Graduate Study, no specific course or sequence of courses is required. Instead, all students are encouraged to design a program that combines the breadth required to teach survey courses with the focus that enables them to make significant scholarly contributions to their areas of specialization, even before the completion of the degree. In planning your course of study, it is important to remember that in the past decade economic constraints have led many colleges and universities to seek broadly trained, critically informed job candidates prepared to teach and publish in diverse fields of study. The Iowa Ph.D. Program's distribution, seminar, and foreign language requirements are intended to equip students for a lifetime of literary study. They are also designed to prepare students for future careers, whether they choose to work in academia or in a nonacademic setting.

In an initial conference set up by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), you will fill out a "Course Record" form that identifies the historical and critical areas in which you have completed academic work, as well as your preparation in foreign languages and any previous graduate courses that will transfer. (The maximum number of transfer credits accepted from other institutions is 18 semester hours [s.h.]). You will be encouraged to sample advanced course work in most historical areas, in criticism, and in theory before committing to a specific field of concentration. There are three goals of this initial conference: to identify areas in which substantial course work has been completed and areas which still need exploration, to review your preparation in foreign languages, and to make tentative long-term plans in terms of your specific professional goals. This initial conference should also prepare the DGS to be of help to you through your first semesters at Iowa.

A key to a student's success in the program is the relationships they develop with professors and mentors. Just as students have different habits of mind, intellectual passions, and career aspirations, faculty have different styles of mentoring, advising, and teaching. Your goal should be to find a mentor (or mentors) who is a good match for the way you like to think, write, and learn. The English Department works to facilitate those relationships by giving students a chance to meet and interact with the faculty outside of the classroom in the many social events, lectures, and colloquia that take place throughout the year. When you are ready to identify an area as your field of concentration, it will be time to ask a faculty member in that area to serve as your interim adviser. This adviser will help you plan the rest of your course work, prepare for Admission to Candidacy, and begin preparation for your Comprehensive Examination. Although the timing varies, most students are ready to ask a faculty member to serve as their interim adviser sometime between the end of the second semester and the middle of the fourth semester of doctoral study. Availability of individual faculty members depends on research interests, teaching schedules, and current advising load, but you are most likely to find a successful match with a professor from whom you have taken at least one course. After a faculty member has agreed to serve as your adviser, you should register this commitment with the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC). Because academic interests and career goals shift for students and faculty alike, this commitment is an "interim" one: the faculty member who helps you make the professional choices that shape the middle years of doctoral study may or may not continue to guide you through your dissertation. The "Course Record" form in your file will help you make course choices in relation to your professional objectives and will help the Director of Graduate Studies understand your progress toward the degree. As you approach the Comprehensive Examination, introductory graduate survey courses will yield to more advanced work in your field of concentration and, in at least three cases, to seminars.

Each student needs to create a coherent individual plan of study. There is no department blueprint, though it is imperative that you design a course of study which can feasibly be completed within your funded years. While students who have had broad undergraduate and/or MA training in the literatures of various periods and in criticism and theory will be ready to begin to develop their field of concentration early, students who have had little training in literature and literary theory should sample a broad selection of courses before they commit to a particular field of concentration. In the first year of course work, students are advised to select courses both to fill gaps in their training and to develop their major interests.

### ENGL:6000-Level

Reading courses at this level provide broad coverage of a period, movement, theme, foundational figure, or other component of the discipline. Some offerings satisfy historical distribution requirements; others introduce students to a related body of primary texts, criticism, and/or theory serving as groundwork for more specialized study at the ENGL:7000-level. Writing assignments are varied, limited in scope (adding up to about 3000-5000 words), and may include annotated bibliographies, short conference papers, book reviews, project proposals, etc.

### ENGL:7000-Level

Courses at this level are designated as “seminars” and offer the most specialized work available in the curriculum. Whether they address periods, topics, authors, genres, issues, or theories, seminars always engage the most important and recent developments in a field of study. It is useful for students to have taken lower-level work in the same or a related area, if possible. Enrollment is limited and students participate actively through oral presentations and other ways of sharing new expertise. To prepare students to make original contributions of their own, seminars provide training and experience in the skills needed for scholarly research and writing. Course work culminates in a 25-30-page paper (7500-9000 words) aimed at publication and potentially leading toward the dissertation.

### Independent Studies

Ph.D. students should not enroll in independent studies prior to beginning preparation for the Comprehensive Exam except during the summer term; any exceptions during the regular academic year must be preapproved by the DGS on a case-by-case basis.

### ENGL:3000- & 4000-Level

In most cases, Ph.D. students should not enroll in ENGL:3000-4999 courses, which rarely offer the same level of training or group interaction as is found in graduate English courses. But in certain situations, a Ph.D. student may have legitimate reasons to enroll in a ENGL:3000-4999 course. For example, the student may want to work with a faculty member with whom he or she would otherwise be unable to study or to work in an area that is not covered in the graduate curriculum. In those situations, the student must receive the professor’s express permission to take the course for graduate credit, and the student and professor must agree to a modified set of course assignments that will make the course suitable for graduate-level study. The student must also complete a form (see Graduate Webforms at <https://english.uiowa.edu/graduate-programs/graduate-webforms>) to receive approval for the course.

**Ph.D. students must complete 51 s.h. in graded courses at the 3000-level or above. Of those, at least 30 s.h. must be in English courses at the 5000-level or above prior to coming up for comps. (That leaves the possibility of 21 additional s.h. in graded courses at the 3000-level or above which may be taken in other departments or in English.) After finishing those 51 s.h. in graded courses, students take 9 s.h. of independent study courses with the directors of their Comprehensive Exam areas (see the section on Comprehensive Examinations below). Once they pass their Comprehensive Exams, students must be continuously enrolled in the independent study course ENGL:7999 during the semesters that they are working on their prospectuses and dissertations. Their cumulative hours in ENGL:7999 bring students to the 72 s.h. that the Graduate College requires of all Ph.D. students.**

The field of English is characterized by lively debate that has, in recent years, challenged many of the traditional assumptions of literary studies. What is “literary” about a “literary period”? What is the relationship between definitions of “literariness” and issues of class, gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity? How can literary critics address writings not traditionally considered “literary”—for example, diaries, sermons, historical and legal documents, slogans, and songs? What principles govern the act of literary interpretation? What constitutes “meaning” in literature? Questions as fundamental as these indicate that graduate studies is not simply a time to master a required body of knowledge but also a time to explore issues under intense professional scrutiny.

A coherent individual course of study can take many forms. The following possibilities are meant to suggest possibilities rather than to limit inquiry:

**Study of a historical period:** The concentration of longest standing at Iowa is the study of the intellectual backgrounds, formal strategies, traditions, and interconnections of writings from a specific period of English and/or American literature.

**Special area study:** It is also possible to concentrate in areas that cross or elude historical periods, such as the study of a genre, a body of literary theory, or the literature(s) of a particular region or ethnicity.

**Cultural studies:** At Iowa, much of what we teach could be called cultural studies. Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary field that combines literary study with sociological analysis. It is based on the assumption that forms of cultural production like arts, ideologies, and institutions must be examined in relation to one another and in relation to social and historical structures. For example, if you are interested in popular culture, media, or in the relations between literature and material production, you may want to work in cultural studies for your course of study.

**Nonfiction studies:** Iowa's special commitment to nonfiction writing (which includes an MFA degree in the writing of nonfiction) also provides opportunities for doctoral study of literary nonfiction. Work in nonfiction for a special area may focus on a wide range of topics and subtopics, such as stylistics, theories of the essay, the twentieth-century American essay, the nature of self-representation in autobiography and memoir, or the politics of confession in contemporary nonfiction.

**Book studies:** At Iowa, students with an interest in book studies have the rare opportunity of working with a number of scholars who have made important contributions to the field. Book studies scholars study the history of the book as a cultural form, how texts are published and marketed, and how they circulate among communities of readers. Many students choose to take courses in the University's Center for the Book, which offers a Graduate Certificate in book arts, studies, and technologies.

**Digital humanities:** The digital humanities are another strength of our program that students may wish to explore as a concentration. Through coursework with faculty who have expertise in the field and support from the University's Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio, students can pursue a wide range of digital projects in literary and cultural studies.

## **GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING: MAINTAINING SATISFACTORY PROGRESS THROUGH THE PROGRAM**

In order to be in good academic standing, the Graduate College requires that all doctoral students maintain a GPA above a 3.0. In addition, the English Department has its own requirements for the maintenance of satisfactory progress, as follows. In order to maintain satisfactory progress through the program, doctoral students must:

- 1.) Apply for qualification by their fourth semester in the program (see the section below on "Qualification")
- 2.) Take their comprehensive exam within five semesters of reaching 24 s.h. of total graduate credit (see the section below on "Comprehensive Exams")
- 3.) Submit a dissertation prospectus to their committee in the semester after taking their comprehensive exam (see the section below on the "Dissertation")
- 4.) Complete and defend their dissertation within their expected time to degree (6 years for those entering with a BA; 5 years for those entering with an MA or with fellowship support as indicated in the initial offer letter)

## **REVIEWS BY THE GRADUATE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Any student who is not making satisfactory progress will be reviewed by the Graduate Steering Committee in the spring semester. The committee will produce a plan outlining the requirements the student must fulfill to return to good standing in the following academic year. If the student fails to fulfill these requirements, he or she will be reviewed one more time. If, after the second review, the student still has not met the requirements of the Graduate Steering Committee, he or she will be obligated to leave the program. The DGS is always ready to consult with students about their progress through the program, their academic standing at any given time, and the Graduate Steering Committee's review process.

When applying annually for financial aid, students will be required to note their progress; unsatisfactory progress may result in lower standing for financial support or denial of aid.

# DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

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In order to ensure knowledge of a broad historical range of literatures in English, all doctoral students are required to take **at least one graduate English course in any four of the following historical periods:**

- Literature and culture before 1500
- Literature and culture 1500-1660
- Literature and culture 1660-1800
- Literature and culture 1800-1900
- Literature and culture 1900 to present

Courses may be in British, American, or other Anglophone literatures, depending on the student's individual needs and interests. However, each student must enroll in at least one course in American literature and one course in British literature after 1660. Students must receive a grade of B+ or higher in courses that satisfy a distribution requirement. Graduate courses taken at other universities may count towards fulfillment of the requirement; the maximum number of graduate transfer credits is 18. When it is unclear which historical period a course falls into, or if transfer courses will count towards the requirement, students should consult the DGS for advice. Students must complete the distribution requirement before being eligible to take the Comprehensive Exam.

# SEMINAR REQUIREMENT

All doctoral students must take, here at Iowa, **at least three seminars** in English.

Numbered at the ENGL:7000-level, seminars are the most highly focused and specialized courses the department offers and provide practice in the skills necessary for researching and writing the dissertation. Normally these courses assume prior related work at a lower level and culminate in a research project of 25-30 pages (7500-9000 words) of publishable quality. It is a good idea to start taking seminars as soon as you begin to focus your field of concentration.

Seminars in other departments or in the Writers' Workshop do not count toward the English Department seminar requirement.

Students must receive a grade of B+ or higher in courses that satisfy the seminar requirement. The seminar requirement must be completed before students are eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination.

## POSSIBILITY FOR SUBSTITUTING ONE SEMINAR

The advanced-level work represented by seminars is viewed by the department as crucial for developing the expertise to write a dissertation, while taking a number of seminars within the department provides the opportunity to become acquainted with a range of faculty necessary for exam committees along with a variety of approaches to literary study. However, in view of the department's sometimes streamlined graduate course offerings, some students find that it is hard to take three seminars useful to their field within the time that they are taking courses. Such students can approach the DGS to request that they be allowed to take a ENGL:6000-level course for seminar credit (i.e., as a ENGL:7000-level course). The point of the present clarification is to standardize a policy for dealing with such requests.

Such substitutions, which need to be approved by the DGS, should be granted only in the following circumstances:

- the instructor of the course agrees to the request;
- the topic is particularly appropriate to a student's planned studies and no seminar in or close to that field is currently on offer;
- the student completes a seminar paper for the course, along with any other special arrangements agreed on with the instructor.

**Only one such substitution may be counted towards the English Department's requirement for three seminars.**

To make such a substitution, the student should discuss his or her case with the course instructor and the DGS. Before taking the course, the student must fill out a form (available online at Graduate Webforms) that includes a statement of how he or she will undertake seminar-equivalent work in the course. The form will then be treated as evidence of the seminar-status of that course by the Graduate Finances committee in assessing the student's progress through the program, by the Qualifications Committee in considering a student for candidacy, and by the DGS in assessing a student's readiness for the Comprehensive Exam.

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

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The foreign language requirement must be completed before taking the Comprehensive Examination. All applicable advanced courses taken previously must have been completed within five years prior to the first semester of doctoral study at Iowa to be eligible to fulfill the language requirement. Since the aim of this requirement is to assure competence in reading a foreign language, courses in translation or on writing are not applicable. Native-speaker fluency does not ordinarily fulfill the requirement in itself; it should be combined with formal instruction, for example, during study abroad or with testing. Please consult with the DGS in order to ensure the acceptability of other options, including intensive or accelerated language study courses.

Students generally elect one of the four options below:

- 1.) Students must earn a grade of B or above in one upper-level undergraduate literature class; courses in modern languages should be taught in the language of study. Normally this comprises the fifth semester of undergraduate instruction, after students have taken two semesters of introductory and two semesters of intermediate training. The introductory and intermediate courses may be taken S/U, but upper-level courses (usually numbered 3000 or higher) should be taken for a grade.
- 2.) Students who have an undergraduate major or minor in a literature other than English, awarded within five years of first enrollment at Iowa, or who have completed the five-semester sequence at another institution within five years of first enrollment at Iowa have satisfied the requirement.
- 3.) Students may also have the opportunity to fulfill the foreign language requirement by completing a three-course sequence with grades of B or above in Elementary Old English, Beowulf, and any single graduate-level course on Middle English literature, should they be offered while the student is in coursework. Courses may be taken in any sequence. These should provide sufficient knowledge of the development of English to constitute the equivalent of learning a foreign language.
- 4.) For several languages, students can also satisfy the requirement with standardized tests:
  - (a) For Italian, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese, and Russian, students can take the Reading Test for Professionals, “a standardized, computer-delivered test for the global assessment of reading ability in a language” (<http://www.languagetesting.com/reading-proficiency-test-rpt>). For Latin, students can take the ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment (ALIRA) (<http://www.languagetesting.com/alira-the-actfl-latin-interpretive-reading-assessment>). Students must score at the intermediate level.
  - (b) For Chinese and Japanese, students can take a test at the UI Placement Exam Portal (<http://teach.its.uiowa.edu/technology-tools/placement-exams>). A passing score on one of these World Languages Placement Tests certifies competence at a level equivalent to four years of high school language instruction. They are multiple-choice adaptive tests that take about an hour to complete. A score appears at the end of your test, which you should save and print. For information about taking the tests, see: <https://newstudents.uiowa.edu/placement-tests>.

# GRADUATE COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

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1.) The *Manual of Rules and Regulations of the Graduate College* states: “All doctoral programs will contain a minimum of 72 semester hours of graduate work. Of those 72 semester hours, at least 39 must be earned while registered in The University of Iowa Graduate College, and after formal program admission. For example, the academic registration requirement cannot be fulfilled by coursework completed under the non-degree or non-departmental student classification or with transfer credit.” Ph.D. students in English reach those 72 hours through the combination of graded courses and independent studies as described above in the section on Commencing Study.

2.) The Graduate College requires that a student **must be registered** in the semester in which he/she earns his/her degree.

# QUALIFICATION FOR DOCTORAL CANDIDACY

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## OVERVIEW

At the time of admission to the Ph.D. program, you become a “doctoral student.” After about a year’s work in the department (see below for details about timing), you will be invited to apply for Qualification as a “doctoral candidate.” For this process, the Graduate Steering Committee reviews your progress to date through the program, your skills as a critical writer, and your progress in planning for the Comprehensive Examination. After its review, the Graduate Steering Committee makes one of two decisions: to admit you to candidacy for the degree or to deny admission to candidacy. After admission to candidacy, you become a “doctoral candidate” and begin formal preparation for the Comprehensive Examination. If your application is denied, you may re-apply one more time in the following academic semester.

## DETAILED ACCOUNT

### A. Choosing an Adviser

If you have not already done so, Qualification is the moment to specify a field of concentration and select an interim adviser. The adviser will confer with you about your academic record, including future plans within the program, and any academic problems perceived by the student or the adviser. After Qualification, students may change advisers if they wish. Such changes should be registered with the Graduate Program Coordinator.

### B. Timing of Qualification

Students will be invited to apply for Qualification after 12-15 s.h. of **graded** coursework in literature and/or criticism at or above the ENGL:5000-level (12 s.h. for students holding an MA, 15 s.h. for students holding a BA). Because this tally does not include language courses, coursework in other departments, courses taken at the 3000-level, and independent studies, this point will vary, but for most students it will occur during the third or fourth semester of graduate study. There may occasionally be reasons for a student to delay an application for candidacy beyond this point, which may be accomplished through a request to the DGS. Because it is vital that students maintain an active commitment to finishing the degree expeditiously, however, if a student does not apply for Qualification in the semester after he or she has completed 21 s.h. of work in literature and/or criticism at or above the ENGL:5000-level, the student must switch from the Ph.D. program to the MA program or, if the student already has an MA in English, resign from the doctoral program.

### C. Process of Qualification

The department requires that a student fill out an Application for Candidacy online (see Graduate Webforms at <https://english.uiowa.edu/graduate-program/graduate-webforms>). This provides an opportunity to reflect upon your progress so far through the degree program. You will use the form to indicate your progress towards the language, distribution, and seminar requirements and to explain how you plan to complete these requirements. This is also an opportunity for you to formulate your plans for the Comprehensive Examination. While plans may be tentative at this stage, students must include the names of at least two faculty members, including one designated as “interim adviser,” with whom they have discussed the Comprehensive Exam and who have expressed provisional agreement to work with them.

Students must also submit a sample paper of at least 15 pages, written in an English course at the ENGL:5000-level or above. The sample paper may be revised based on the professor’s comments at the time of the course, as long as the original graded paper with the professor’s comments accompanies it. Revision is an option, however, not a requirement. We do not intend to encourage students to polish an already strong paper but rather to address certain challenges that may arise regarding the essay requirement. As examples, the following two circumstances might make revision an attractive option:

- 1.) The student’s strongest work was written for a readings course and is shorter than fifteen pages. The student can use the revision option to lengthen the essay.

2.) The student's best work meets the page requirement for qualifications and has potential but also has substantial problems. The student can use the revision option to address some of those problem areas. The sample paper need not concern your expected area of expertise. However, it should demonstrate promise regarding such literary critical skills as: pursuing a lucid argument, drawing upon sustained research, providing nuanced and careful readings, engaging with theoretical methodologies, and contributing to ongoing scholarly debates.

You will be evaluated on your progress through the Ph.D. program as indicated by your course grades (**candidates should have a GPA of 3.67 [A-] or above in graduate English literary studies courses with no outstanding incompletes**), by your progress toward the requirements, by the feasibility of your plan for future work, and by faculty evaluations of your course work, which are added to your file after each course. Your abilities at Ph.D.-level research and writing will be assessed through faculty evaluations of course work and through the sample paper.

The Graduate Steering Committee—comprised of the directors of admissions, qualifications, the MA Program, finances, placement, and the director of graduate studies—judges the applications for candidacy. The committee makes one of two decisions: pass or deny. If passed, the student turns his or her attention to further coursework and preparation for Comprehensive Exams. If denied, the student must reapply the next semester in order to remain in the doctoral program. A student who has been denied should meet with the Director of Qualifications and the DGS to discuss the committee's assessment and recommendations, and to plan strategies for strengthening the student's case for reapplication. If a student is denied a second and final time, the student is dismissed from the doctoral program. She or he does retain funding through the current one-year funding cycle. The MA option remains open to students denied doctoral candidacy.

#### D. After Qualification

Formal admission to candidacy marks the department's intention to see a student through the Comprehensive Examination and the completion of a dissertation. Regardless of the semester in which you qualify, you must take your Comprehensive Exam within five semesters from the semester in which you reach 24 s.h. If at the time of Qualification you have fewer than 24 s.h. of total graduate credit at Iowa, you will have five semesters after the 24th semester hour within which to take the Comprehensive Examination. If this deadline is exceeded, you must re-apply to the Graduate Steering Committee for admission to candidacy. Where progress toward the degree has been sustained, the department may grant an appropriate extension (normally of one calendar year) for completing the Comprehensive Examination.

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

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While preparation for the Comprehensive Examination may begin as early as admission to candidacy, serious work on it should start at least six months before you plan to sit for the exam. You should begin by setting up a meeting with the DGS to discuss your plans and to get advice on your reading lists and committee. At this stage, you should identify the five faculty members who will serve as your Comprehensive Exam committee. You should also decide on your Comprehensive Exam areas and begin to revise the paper you intend to submit as part of the Portfolio.

Once a student has met all eligibility requirements (see the paragraph on Eligibility below) and has received the DGS go-ahead to begin preparing for comps, he or she should enroll in three 3 s.h. independent studies (selecting appropriate courses from the ENGL:7000-level series, one with each of his or her comprehensive exam area directors). Please note that the department does not offer independent study credit for reading groups. Enrollment in these independent studies may be concurrent or staggered over semesters, provided that the student hits the 60 s.h. mark by the end of the semester in which he or she takes the Comprehensive Exam. Students should discuss expectations for exam preparation with their area directors, and these expectations should be summarized on the online independent study approval form, which the student must fill out and submit in the first weeks of the semester (see Graduate Webforms at <https://english.uiowa.edu/graduate-program/graduate-webforms>). Students often prefer to assemble various components of the Portfolio concurrently and over the summer months, when they may not be enrolled—the nine independent study credits may thus be regarded as a tally of work completed toward comps.

Reading for the Examination and crafting the Portfolio (which includes writing an introduction, developing at least one course syllabus, drafting five questions, writing a review essay and annotated bibliography, and final revision of the Article) will usually take about six months. No later than three weeks before the date of the oral exam, students must fill out the webform “**Eligibility to Sit for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**” and upload the entire Portfolio with the webform “**Ph.D. Comprehensive Portfolio Form.**” At this time you should also contact the GPC to schedule your oral examination. The department will provide free photocopying of five copies of the Portfolio for all students who meet the three-week deadline.

## APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

### Six months in advance of oral exam:

- meet with DGS to discuss comprehensive areas, preliminary reading lists, and composition of your committee
- meet with GPC (Cherie Hansen-Rieskamp, 308C EPB) to discuss Short Hours Form and future course registration
- choose three faculty members to supervise the Portfolio:
  - 1 member—Historical Period (typically becomes the exam director)
  - 1 member—Special Area
  - 1 member—Article
- begin work on the Portfolio
- begin reading, writing annotations, and revising the Article to be submitted as part of the Portfolio (accomplished by enrolling in three 3-s.h. independent study courses, one with each area director)  
**Notice:** If applying for an MA *en passant*, please contact the GPC at the beginning of the examination semester to discuss the Graduate College Guidelines.

### Three months in advance:

- choose two at-large members of the exam committee
- continue working on the Portfolio

### Three weeks in advance:

- submit the webform “**Eligibility to Sit for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**”

- submit the webform **“Ph.D. Comprehensive Portfolio Form”** and upload entire Portfolio
- contact GPC to file paperwork (“Request for Examination” and “Plan of Study” forms) with Graduate College, to photocopy five copies of the Portfolio (optional), and to schedule a time and place for the Oral Exam

### Two weeks in advance:

- distribute copies of the Portfolio to all five committee members, preferably in electronic form

## COMPREHENSIVE PORTFOLIO AND EXAMINATION

### Eligibility

The Comprehensive Examination is taken after a student has fulfilled the foreign language, seminar, and distribution requirements, and should occur no later than five semesters after admission to candidacy (although if a student has fewer than 24 s.h. of total graduate credit at the end of the semester of qualification, he or she is allowed five semesters after the completion of 24 s.h.). Students are eligible to take the examination during the semester in which they will have completed 60 s.h. of work. Of those 60 s.h., no more than 9 s.h. should be in Independent Study or S/U courses. The remaining 51 s.h. should be in regular graded courses at the 3000-level or above, and at least 30 s.h. of those courses must be ENGL courses at the 5000-level or above.

### 1. Coverage

The Comprehensive Examination contains three parts, each under the supervision of one of three core members of the committee. These parts carry equal weight and represent the culmination of work over a period of time in different courses as well as independent work completed specifically in preparation for the examination. The three parts of the examination are as follows:

**a. Historical Period:** This part of the examination requires broad knowledge of writings in at least three different genres from a historical period of at least 100 years to be selected by the student. Examples of historical periods in recent Portfolios include:

- English Literature before 1500
- Early Modern English, 1546-1667
- Nineteenth-Century British
- American Literature 1914-present

**b. Special Area:** This part of the examination requires specific knowledge of the literature, criticism, and/or theory that constitute a particular field of study. This area, which must be demonstrably distinct from the Historical Period and Article, may be a second historical period, a literary genre, a body of theory, a major author or group of authors, a theme or topic, writing theory and/or pedagogy, or an interdisciplinary subject. Like the Historical Period, the Special Area allows candidates to develop and demonstrate their grasp of a field in which they hope to write and teach.

**c. Article:** This part of the examination is a 25-35 page essay of publishable quality written in consultation with a faculty member, approved by that faculty member, and submitted as part of the Portfolio. The Article might start from scratch or begin with a paper written for a previous course, but in its final form it should elaborate a sophisticated critical position with respect to a literary theme, issue, author, period, text, or group of texts and should ideally become part of the dissertation.

Portfolios from past Comprehensive Exams are available for student review. Please schedule an appointment with the GPC to view and print electronic files. Below are three examples of Comprehensive Examination areas, offered for the purposes of illustration:

#### Sample Portfolio 1

Historical Period: English Literature before 1500

Special Area: Violence and Trauma in English Literature before 1500

Article: “Chaucer in Revolt: Violence in 1381 in the Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale”

#### Sample Portfolio 2

Historical Period: Early Modern English, 1511-1667

Special Area: Shakespeare Studies: Spying Out Rumors of Authorship Article:

“Puns, Spies, and Hidden Intentions: Quibbling Authorship in *King Lear*”

### Sample Portfolio 3

Historical Period: American Literature, 1914–present

Special Area: The Beat Goes On: Women Writers and the Beat Canon

Article: “Faulkner’s Corpse Bride: Revenging the Ravaged and Queering the Funeral”

### 2. The Committee

The Comprehensive Examination committee consists of five tenure-track faculty members, at least two of whom must be tenured faculty. The directors of the three principal areas of the examination, who must have appointments in the English Department, will form the core of this committee. In addition, each candidate asks two faculty members to serve as at-large examiners. One of these at-large members must be from the English Department, while the other can be either from English or another department within the University of Iowa.

### 3. Reading Lists

In consultation with the directors of the Historical Period and Special Area, students will prepare two lists of readings for the examination. The Historical Period list should consist of 70-100 items covering 100 years and at least three different genres; a small number of the items (usually no more than ten) should be key historical and/or critical works about the period. The Special Area reading list should include 35-40 items, and is typically heavier on critical and theoretical texts.

## PORTFOLIO

The Portfolio consists of five sections: a five to seven page Introduction, five substantial questions based on the Historical Period list, a ten to fifteen page review essay discussing seven to ten texts accompanied by an annotated bibliography of every remaining item from the Special Area list, a 25-35 page Article of publishable quality, and two course syllabi. A detailed description of these five sections follows.

### Introduction

The Introduction to the Portfolio is designed to provide a five to seven page overview of the materials that follow, showing the relations among them. Because the Introduction represents the candidate’s own sense of the interconnections among the various parts of the Portfolio, it does not require prior approval by the faculty members serving on the candidate’s committee, although the candidate is free to seek their advice while drafting the Introduction.

### Historical Period Questions

The Historical Period list should consist of 70 to 100 texts. As a way of coming to terms with the fundamental issues animating the chosen historical period, the candidate should formulate five broadly conceived questions written in consultation with the area’s director. The director must formally approve the questions via the webform “Ph.D. Comprehensive Portfolio.”

### Special Area Review Essay and Annotated Bibliography

The Special Area is examined via a ten to fifteen page review essay, which delineates the area through key primary and/or secondary texts. The essay should examine seven to ten texts from the reading list of thirty-five to forty items. Each one of the remaining texts from the Special Area list should be annotated separately in a full paragraph (250-300 words), following standard bibliographic form (i.e., citing author, title, and publication information for each item). The purpose of the review essay is to allow the candidate to articulate important issues or patterns linking the texts in the Special Area. It should result in a working document that might be the basis for future investigations, including the dissertation. The purpose of the annotated bibliography is to provide a detailed synopsis of texts that can then be referred to in writing the dissertation or in preparing for job interviews. The Special Area list, review essay, and annotated bibliography are written by the candidate in consultation with the area director. The area director’s approval of the Special Area via the webform “Ph.D. Comprehensive Portfolio Form” indicates that the review essay and annotated bibliography are ready to go forward for defense at the oral exam.

### Article

The Article should develop a sophisticated and original argument with respect to a literary theme, issue, author, period, text, or groups of texts in twenty-five to thirty-five pages. It should be of publishable quality and follow an acceptable format (e.g., MLA or Chicago) for citation of sources. The Article may represent new work, but more often develops out of a paper originally written for a course and subsequently revised under the guidance of its director, who is usually the faculty member for whom the paper was first written. With the help of comments and advice offered by the committee during the oral exam, the candidate should plan to submit a revised version of the Article to a scholarly journal for consideration. The Article must be approved by the area’s director via the webform “**Ph.D. Comprehensive Portfolio Form.**” Ideally, the Article should form the basis of the student’s dissertation, though this is not required.

## Syllabi (and Optional Alternate Exercises)

The candidate will complete two exercises that demonstrate his or her ability to present a coherent selection of works from the Historical Period and Special Area lists to a specified audience. Drawing from the Historical Period list, the candidate will design a lower-level survey course for undergraduate majors. (At a minimum, all syllabi should include: course title, course description with explicit goals, list of required texts, brief descriptions of assignments, grading scheme with weights of assignments, and reading schedule.) For the Special Area list, there are two options: (a) the candidate can create a syllabus for an upper-level undergraduate course, or (b) **subject to the approval of the DGS**, the candidate can produce an alternate exercise that demonstrates his or her ability to organize and present a coherent selection of works drawn from the Special Area list to a specified audience. Examples might include a proposal for a website, anthology, or museum exhibit.

## Avoiding Overlap between Sections

Your goal is a portfolio that demonstrates both a broad range of interests and a mastery of knowledge. You should not encroach on the major issues of your Special Area in your five Historical Period questions and your reading lists for the Historical Period and Special Area must be entirely distinct.

## Organization of the Portfolio

In order to help your committee locate items in your Portfolio, it is useful to paginate continuously and to provide a Table of Contents at the beginning. In most cases, the Portfolio should have its items assembled in this order:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Historical period list (signed by its director)
- Historical period questions
- Lower-level survey course syllabus
- Special area list (signed by its director)
- Review essay
- Annotated bibliography
- Upper-level specialized course syllabus
- Article (signed by its director)

## ORAL EXAM

The Portfolio should be given to the Comprehensive Examination Committee at least two weeks before the two-hour oral exam. Because the exam begins with the Historical Period, the director of that area directs the exam. (To clarify a possible point of confusion: it is often the case that the director of the Historical Period does **not** go on to direct the dissertation, since any one of the three core exam committee members is well-situated to serve in that capacity.) Once the committee is assembled, the student leaves the room while members share their views on the quality of the Portfolio and the questions they would most like to ask the student. Then the student is called back into the room for the exam.

Fifty minutes of the oral examination will be set aside to examine the Historical Period. Another fifty minutes will be dedicated to review the Portfolio's additional sections. Although each examiner may raise questions about any portion of the Portfolio and reading lists, the committee will start the exam by asking the candidate to respond to one of the five prepared questions about the Historical Period; thereafter, any of the remaining four questions, as well as all the items on the Historical Period list and the proposed survey course, are open for discussion. Discussion then moves to the Special Area, as the committee inquires about the texts chosen for review, those annotated from the list of 35-40 entries, and those contributing to the advanced course proposed from the area. Finally, the discussion of the Article could productively lead to advice on publication. Students are strongly advised not to read from notes during the oral exam.

At the conclusion of the oral examination, the student leaves the room while committee members evaluate his or her performance. Members prepare a report on the exam for the Graduate College by voting "satisfactory," "reservations," or "unsatisfactory." The committee then calls the student back into the room to convey the results of the vote. **The Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations** states, "A vote

of ‘Reservations’ should only be used when a faculty member feels that the deficiencies displayed by the student were modest and can be readily rectified. In the event of a report with two or more votes of ‘Reservations,’ the actions required of the student, by the committee, that are necessary to correct the deficiencies must be recorded and submitted to the Graduate College with the examination report form. Copies of the written statement of necessary actions should be kept by: the appropriate departmental executive, the chair of the examination committee, and the student. The statement must specify the time allowed for completion of the aforementioned actions. The language describing the actions must be specific. For instance, if additional course work is required, a list of suitable courses must be presented. If the candidate needs to rewrite his or her research prospectus, the deficient areas must be identified, etc. If the candidate satisfies the required actions in the specified period of time, the appropriate departmental executive will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating the date for which the examining committee considers the actions to have been satisfied. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as ‘Satisfactory’ as of that date. If the actions are not satisfied on time, or if the actions are not of sufficient quality, the appropriate departmental executive will send a written report to the Graduate College indicating that fact. Upon approval of the Dean of the Graduate College, the comprehensive exam will be recorded as ‘Unsatisfactory’ as of that date. The candidate will not be admitted to the final oral examination of the dissertation until a grade of ‘Satisfactory’ has been recorded for the comprehensive exam. In the case of a report of unsatisfactory on a comprehensive examination, the committee may grant the candidate permission to attempt a reexamination not sooner than four months after the first examination. The examination may be repeated only once, at the option of the department.”

### Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Award

After passing their Comprehensive Exam, students may apply for this competitive award, which provides recipients with a semester of protected and supported time to pursue their research. For details about eligibility, applications procedures, and the terms of the award, see <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships/internal/post-comp>

# DISSERTATION

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## GRADUATE COLLEGE FIVE-YEAR RULE

By regulation of the Graduate College, a student has five years following successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination in which to finish all substantive requirements for the Ph.D..

## REGISTRATION AFTER THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

After a student has passed the Comprehensive Exam and is engaged in the preparation of the prospectus or doctoral thesis, he or she must enroll every fall and spring in the independent study course ENGL:7999 (for one or two semester hours) under the guidance of his or her dissertation director. Continuous enrollment in this course will bring the student to 72 s.h., which the Graduate College requires of all Ph.D. students at the time of graduation. If the dissertation defense examination is completed during the summer semester, the student must register for summer s.h.

For financial aid, with the GPC's assistance the student must submit a "short hours" webform to the Registrar's Office to be considered fulltime. Please contact the GPC for more information.

### A. The Dissertation Committee

This five-member committee consists of a dissertation director and three other full or jointly-appointed English Department faculty members. The fifth member may be either from the English Department or from another department within the University of Iowa. The Graduate College must approve any requests for a member from another institution or for an additional committee member. These committee members should play an active role in the formation of the dissertation. The nature of responsibilities for reading and responding to chapters will be decided at the meeting to approve the prospectus.

### B. The Topic

In most cases, the Article prepared for the Comprehensive Examination Portfolio provides a point of departure for the dissertation, but the questioning that produces a successful dissertation begins early in your course work. A dissertation topic may emerge from the materials of a specific course or from a conjunction of texts, themes, and theories encountered in several courses; often it receives its first formulation in a seminar paper. Because topics are constituted through the critical discourse that surrounds them, all topics are tied to a scholarly community. The aim of the dissertation is to enter this community in a way that is fresh, individual, and productive.

### C. The Prospectus

After passing the comprehensive examination, you must present a dissertation prospectus to a committee composed of the dissertation director and at least three secondary readers from the dissertation committee. **The prospectus meeting is approximately one hour long. It should occur no later than the semester following the Comprehensive Examination. You must turn in a copy of the prospectus to each member of the dissertation committee at least one week prior to the prospectus meeting.** At the meeting, you will discuss your project with your committee and they will determine whether the prospectus is acceptable. If the prospectus is not approved at the prospectus meeting, a second meeting must be held by the end of the following semester. Although the prospectus should be precise enough to give your committee a clear sense of your proposed topic, argument, and aims, it is a working proposal, not a legal contract. Your prospectus should follow these two general guidelines:

- a. **A prospectus** is a typed, double-spaced document approximately 10 pages in length (not including the bibliography). In addition to stating the main thesis, it should provide the most pertinent critical context for the argument and some idea of how the thesis will be developed chapter by chapter. In the end, the prospectus should be useful not only for launching research and writing the dissertation but also as an abstract to submit for possible internal or external fellowship support.

b. **A working bibliography** of primary and secondary sources should accompany the prospectus.

A copy of the prospectus and signature form must be signed by the dissertation director and committee members and submitted for approval to the DGS.

#### D. The Dissertation

Writing a book-length dissertation is the most sustained and demanding intellectual labor confronting a graduate student. Although research and writing are part of doctoral training from the start, the dissertation is the evidence on which academic employers will judge a candidate's potential as a publishing scholar. A student who has completed a dissertation has a claim to be not just an author but an "authority": someone who has addressed a significant topic with learning and thoroughness, someone whose arguments have weight and consequence, someone who has made a contribution to ongoing scholarly discourse. A successful dissertation combines a project worth doing, the preparation necessary to do it well, and the hard work and insight that can lead to a fresh and urgent argument.

Many students find writing a dissertation to be the hardest and most rewarding experience of their time in the program. Students are strongly advised to take advantage of the formal and informal resources available at the University of Iowa for doctoral candidates working on their dissertations. These include the Writing Center's Write-In and Write ON programs and its summer writing camps. Many students also find it helpful to form writing groups to share chapters-in-progress with their colleagues. Students are strongly encouraged to set a schedule for completing their dissertations with their directors. It is especially helpful to set and keep deadlines for completing and revising chapters. Above all, students should stay in regular contact with their directors to discuss their progress. **This is especially important for students who choose to leave Iowa City while writing their dissertations.**

Because the forms that a successful dissertation can assume are various and because a new topic may call for an unprecedented form, no canonical description of a dissertation is possible. Specific questions of form and content must be decided in consultation with the dissertation director and committee. However, regardless of the form of your argument, it is strongly recommended that your dissertation not exceed four chapters or 250 pages, and that you choose a topic that is attuned to the opportunities and constraints of the current academic marketplace.

Successful completion of a dissertation requires careful planning and active consultation with the director and committee members. Because very few manuscripts reach publication without alteration from the criticism of colleagues and peers, suggestions from readers connected with a press, and the intervention of one or more editors, you might consider your dissertation committee to be your first—and most streamlined—band of editorial advisers.

While the form and content of acceptable dissertations cannot be effectively defined here, the duties and responsibilities of all persons concerned can be made clear. The director has major responsibility for the supervision of the planning and writing and for detailed commentary on the chapters in progress. The obligation to provide commentary also extends to the other readers, whose role as critics and advisers should be active. They and the director are responsible for returning drafts of individual chapters no later than one month after receiving them. You, in turn, are responsible for observing all required procedures and deadlines that relate to the dissertation and its defense. In particular, you must be certain that all members of the committee possess a full draft of the dissertation no later than **three weeks prior to the defense**. Any committee member may refuse to read the dissertation if this deadline is not met, and the defense will have to be rescheduled.

#### DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION

- Doctoral candidates, having completed the dissertation, must pass a final oral examination called the "Thesis Defense," "Defense of the Dissertation," or "Final Examination." This examination will be conducted by the dissertation director and the dissertation committee, with questions from the public as they are recognized by the dissertation director, who chairs the examination. There are two aspects of the defense of the dissertation that require clarification: the procedures that govern the defense and the nature of the examination itself.
- The procedures covering the defense are complex, partly because of official deadlines and partly because the Graduate College must approve the dissertation before its final defense can occur. It is your responsibility to assure that all deadlines and requirements are satisfied. The following timetable should be observed:

- 1.) The defense must occur no later than five years following successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination. In unusual circumstances, an extension may be granted by the Graduate College.
- 2.) Typographical conventions must follow the Graduate College Thesis Manual, available from the Graduate College (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation/preparing-formatting>). You should choose a citation style customarily used in the humanities (i.e., MLA, Chicago, or Turabian), and you should maintain that style throughout the dissertation. Whichever citation style you pick, be careful to follow the most recent guidelines. For example, MLA citations should conform to the eighth edition of the MLA Handbook.
- 3.) You must file an application for receiving the degree before the deadline specified each semester by the Graduate College. Failure to meet this deadline means that awarding of the Ph.D. will be postponed for a semester. It would be in your best interest to apply for your degree in the semester you are planning to graduate and, if need be, cancel the application rather than apply after the deadline. Please see the GPC for further details.
- 4.) Following consultation with all five members of your committee, the next step is to make a formal request through the GPC for a specific examination date. If a member of the examination committee is on leave, a substitute examiner must be requested at this time through the DGS. The request of an examination date must be made with the GPC no later than six weeks prior to the defense. If a committee member is via video connection, it's very important that this information is passed on to the GPC to make sure that adequate technology is available and ready to make sure that the meeting flows smoothly.
- 5.) **No later than three weeks prior to the defense**, every faculty member on the committee must be given a paper or electronic copy (check with committee members for preference) of the full dissertation. The completed draft of the dissertation distributed to the committee at this time need not be final, but it should be very close. **Major rewriting in the three weeks before the defense is unacceptable.**
- 6.) On the date assigned, the defense of the dissertation takes place. At the conclusion of the defense, each committee member evaluates the student as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Two or more unsatisfactory votes will make the committee report unsatisfactory. In case of an unsatisfactory report, the candidate may be reexamined only once at the option of the department and not before the next semester. At the time of defense, members also sign the Report of Final Examination: Advanced Degree and Report of Thesis Approval (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation/submitting-fees-copies>). Before the single deposit is submitted, it is highly recommended that students discuss with their advisers whether or not to embargo their dissertations. Information on open access and embargo is available at this website: <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation/publication>
- 7.) Following a successful defense of the dissertation, the student must electronically submit their "single deposit" according to the Graduate College Guidelines (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/deadlines>). Please follow the "Theses and Dissertation" electronic format guide (<https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/academics/thesis-and-dissertation/preparing-formatting>). The only textual changes permitted after the "single deposit" are those required by the Graduate College or by the examining committee. At that time, the student must also submit the abstract page, title page, and signed Report of Thesis Approval from his or her defense.
- 8.) It is advised that graduate students request the offered 2-year embargo on the ProQuest digital publication of their dissertation required for graduation by the Graduate College and Library. Once the 2-year embargo lapses, graduate students are advised that ProQuest offers continuations of the embargo. ProQuest can be reached via email, [disspub@proquest.com](mailto:disspub@proquest.com). If a PhD has a publication agreement in-hand at any point during the initial 2-year embargo, they may contact the Graduate College directly to request an extension of the embargo.

- The nature of the defense will vary with the composition of the examining committee and the nature of the dissertation. To some degree, the members of the dissertation committee serve a different function as examiners than they did as advisers. They confront in the finished dissertation not individual pieces of a

work-in-progress, which is usually what they see as advisers, but a complete work implicitly asking for recognition from a larger world of scholars, publishers, and readers. In approving the dissertation, the committee certifies that the student's completed act of literary interpretation, criticism, and/or scholarship is worthy to be made public not only inside but also outside the University of Iowa.

# PhD in English with Book Studies Specialization

Book studies scholars study the history of the book as a cultural form, how texts are materially composed, how they are published and marketed, and how they circulate among communities of readers. At Iowa, students with an interest in material texts have the rare opportunity of working with a number of English department faculty who have made important contributions to the field.

The University of Iowa Center for the Book is a community of distinguished faculty, staff, students, and local book specialists. Its unique program combines training in the technique and artistry of bookmaking with research into the history and culture of books.

Students with the specialization are positioned to achieve in traditional academic appointments and in allied cultural work at museums, libraries, publishing houses, and educational venues. Admitted students benefit not only from Iowa's unique book studies resources but also from the pioneering graduate programs in studio art and creative writing.

This specialization streamlines English PhD requirements so that students may attain in a timely manner both their PhD in English and a Graduate Certificate in book arts, studies, and technologies from the University of Iowa Center for the Book.

Through both their coursework and their dissertation, graduates with this specialization will attain and demonstrate mastery in

- the history of literature and the culture of books
- literary criticism
- book arts practice and technique

## REQUIREMENTS:

All Ph.D. students in the English department must complete 51 s.h. in graded courses at the 3000-level or above. At least 24 of the 51 s.h. must be in English courses at the 5000-level or above. All distribution, seminar and language requirements apply to this track. At least 15 of the 51 s.h. must be in Center for the Book courses at the 4000-level or above. Of courses in the Center for the Book, 3 s.h. must be in studio practice; 3 s.h. must be in material analysis; and 3 s.h. must be in scholarly inquiry.

That leaves the possibility of 12 additional s.h. in graded courses at the 3000-level or above which may be taken in other departments or in English (5000-level).

After finishing 51 s.h. in graded courses, students take 9 s.h. of independent study courses with the directors of their Comprehensive Exam areas (see the section on Comprehensive Examinations below). Once they pass their Comprehensive Exams, students must be continuously enrolled in the independent study course ENGL:7999 during the semesters that they are working on their prospectuses and dissertations. Their cumulative hours in ENGL:7999 bring students to the 72 s.h. that the Graduate College requires of all Ph.D. students.

## UICB COURSE OFFERINGS

Studio practice: art and craft courses in printing, binding, papermaking, calligraphy, and digital design

Material analysis: courses in the anatomy and physique of books, often in concert with Special Collections  
 Scholarly inquiry: research- and writing-based courses on the history and culture of books (from English, History, Art History, and Library Sciences departments)

<b>ENGLISH PH.D. EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>JOINT ENGLISH PH.D. PLUS UICB CERTIFICATE</b>
51 credit hours at 3000 level or above	51 credit hours at 3000 level or above
30 of those in English at 5000 level or above	24 of those in English at 5000 level or above
21 remaining anywhere, at 3000 level or above	15 in the UICB at 4000 level or above
9 credit hours while comping	Required: 3 credit hours in <b>studio practice</b> ; 3 credit hours in <b>material analysis</b> ; 3 credit hours in <b>scholarly inquiry</b>
12 credit hours in directed study while dissertating	Electives: 6 remaining hours elected from UICB courses, some of which are cross-listed with English Department courses
72 credit hours total	12 remaining anywhere, at 3000 level or above
	9 credit hours while comping
	12 credit hours in directed study while dissertating
	72 credit hours total

# POST-FUNDED YEARS

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Ideally, you should complete and defend your dissertation within your funded years (5 years for those with a prior MA or President's Graduate Research Fellowship; 6 years for those without). At any point in the program, if you have questions or concerns about your timetable for the degree, please do not hesitate to consult with the DGS. All students are especially encouraged to meet with the DGS to discuss their plans for finishing the Ph.D. at the beginning of their penultimate year of funding.

Students who are out of funding are eligible for teaching on the following basis: If you have not defended within your funded years, your progress will be reviewed annually by the Graduate Steering Committee. If the committee approves of your progress, you will remain eligible for whatever teaching is available after all positions have been assigned to those in aid. If the committee doesn't approve your progress, it will provide you with a detailed plan for the following year, during which you will be eligible for teaching after all positions have been assigned to those in aid as well as to those out of aid but making satisfactory progress. If your progress is not approved at your next annual review, you will be required to leave the program. Please note that the Graduate College requires a student to defend within five years of passing the comprehensive exam.

# AFTER THE PH.D.

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Although increasing numbers of Ph.D.s in English now seek jobs outside academia (see below), many still pursue employment at colleges and universities. The Department of English cannot guarantee such employment, but it can promise vigorous and wholehearted assistance. Each year, a Ph.D. Placement Director is appointed to provide mentoring to graduate students who are on the academic job market. The Placement Director maintains a detailed job placement guide, replete with deadlines, sample applications, and advice on everything from generating the job application letter to negotiating one's first job contract. Students are encouraged to set up meetings with the Placement Director to discuss topics such as interviewing, writing samples, and professionalism. The Placement Director is also available to set up mock job interviews in preparation for the MLA convention and mock job talks. Each student should also expect their advisor to work with them on job materials. Professor Adam Hooks has generously shared his own expertise and vast collection of resources for job placement here: <http://www.adamghooks.net/p/placement-practicum.html>. Whether you are just starting the program or nearing graduation, here you will find a wealth of advice for navigating the job market and application materials.

In addition to working with the Placement Director and their advisor, students can take other practical steps to enhance their opportunities for academic employment. Probably the most important advantages are to have the dissertation close to completion when seeking employment and to build a record that includes presentation of papers at conferences, publication of essays and reviews, and evidence of distinction in teaching and scholarship. Recent experience shows that most students at Iowa who receive job offers have completed the dissertation at the time the offer is made. Because employers are hesitant to hire persons whose dissertations are incomplete, students should aim to complete the dissertation between December and mid-spring of the academic year in which they seek a job. It is important, then, to predict your rate of progress from the Comprehensive Examination through the completion of the dissertation, to hold a prospectus meeting promptly, and to allow sufficient time for the writing of the dissertation.

It is crucial to cultivate expertise in a broadly defined historical and/or critical field as well as in the narrower area(s) of your dissertation. Because most Ph.D. candidates plan to pursue careers in teaching, the department strongly advises all doctoral candidates to gain experience, whether through college-level teaching done elsewhere or through teaching assistantships in Iowa's Rhetoric Department and/or General Education Program. Training and experience in teaching significantly strengthen a student's position in today's job market and enhance intellectual engagement with the study of literature. The best general advice is to begin to develop the skills and qualities that will make you attractive to potential employers well before the final year of study. Strong course work will ensure strong letters of recommendation, wise planning will create coherence and definition for your program, and an excellent dissertation will be read by academic employers as representing both your achievement and your promise.

English graduate students sometimes run a **Summer Placement Collaborative**, a week-long workshop designed to help students prepare and polish their job application documents. The sessions are typically divided between a visit from faculty/professionals and time to workshop materials with peers. In the course of the collaborative, students work on documents including teaching philosophy statements, dissertation abstracts, CVs, and diversity statements. For more information about the Summer Placement Collaborative, contact the Placement Director.

Because there is no certainty that all Ph.D.s in English will find continuing academic employment, it is crucial to remain open to job opportunities outside the teaching profession. A number of Ph.D.s are now pursuing careers in academic administration, nonprofits, business, and government. Students are strongly encouraged to explore these "Alt-Ac" and nonacademic career opportunities. The Graduate College Career Services office, which is headed by one of our Ph.D.s, offers excellent programming and advice on the full range of career opportunities for our graduates. See <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/career-exploration-planning>. We strongly advise our students to take full advantage of this resource.

# FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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## GRADUATE COLLEGE AND CLAS FELLOWSHIPS

Each year Ph.D. students in English win competitive scholarships and awards offered by the Graduate College and CLAS. During both the fall and spring semesters, the Graduate College holds competitions for the Post-Comprehensive Research Awards (for post-Comps students) and the Ballard and Seashore Dissertation Fellowships (for post-prospectus students). These Graduate College fellowships both provide a single funded semester of protected research time. For details about these awards, as well as other Graduate College fellowships, please visit: <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/fellowships> In the fall, post-comprehensive students with suitable dissertation topics can also apply for the Marcus Bach Graduate Fellowship, which is offered by CLAS. This fellowship provides a single funded semester of protected research time. For details, please visit: <https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/opportunities-students>. Students may apply for dissertation fellowships either for their last funded year in the program or for the year immediately following (5th and 6th years for students entering with a prior MA; 6th and 7th years for those entering with a BA).

The GPC will send out regular email reminders of the due dates for all Graduate College and CLAS fellowships. They are also posted on their website: <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/internal-fellowships>. Many of these fellowships are “by nomination only,” which means students must submit their application materials to the GPC, rather than sending them directly to the Graduate College or CLAS. Please note, the English department often has internal deadlines for these fellowships that are well in advance of the Graduate College and CLAS deadlines. Your complete application is due to the GPC on the English department deadline.

## ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

Early in the spring semester, the Graduate Steering Committee invites applications for the Diehl dissertation-year fellowship as well as for the five departmental research support awards and the Best Essay Prize. Although students are urged to apply in all relevant categories, winners of the Ballard and Seashore Fellowship and CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship are not eligible for the Diehl fellowship. All awards except for the Piper require the applicant to have completed Comprehensive Exams and the dissertation prospectus meeting by February of the awards competition year. The Piper Memorial Fellowship is open to female Ph.D. and MFA students as outlined below. Students may apply for the Diehl fellowship either for their last funded year in the program or for the year immediately following (5th and 6th year for students entering with a prior MA; 6th and 7th year for those entering with a BA).

### Huston Diehl Distinguished Dissertation Fellowship

**Source:** The Diehl Fellowship was established in honor of University of Iowa English Department faculty member Huston Diehl (1948-2010). Huston was an influential scholar of Early Modern English literature and culture whose pedagogy inspired her colleagues and students. Thanks to the generosity of Professor Diehl and her partner, Gerald Wetlaufer, this recognition involves a research stipend for one academic year supplementing two special teaching assignments: an upper-level undergraduate English course in one semester and one section of ENGL:1200 in the other semester.

**Eligibility:** The recipient, to be designated “The Huston Diehl Fellow,” must be a Ph.D. student who has completed the comprehensive examination, a dissertation prospectus meeting, and all other doctoral requirements except the dissertation by the time of application. Students in any field are eligible.

**Terms of the Award:** This award carries with it a research stipend for one academic year supplementing two special teaching assignments: an upper-level undergraduate English course in one semester and one section of ENGL:1200 in the other semester.

**Applications:** Applicants should submit the following materials (**single-spaced, 12 pt. type, 1” margins, and as separate PDF files**):

- A one-page dissertation abstract.
- A two-page document containing a descriptive list of chapters and a timetable for completion of the dissertation.
- A one-page C.V. of the nominee’s educational and professional experience, honors and awards, and publications.
- A syllabus for the upper-level course the applicant proposes to teach.

Two letters of support:

- One letter from the nominee’s dissertation director that includes:
  - o A description of how much work has already been accomplished on the dissertation.
  - o The likelihood that the degree will be completed within one semester of receiving the award.
- One letter from a committee member or other faculty member familiar with the student’s work.

### Prairie Lights/Sherman Paul, Frederick P.W. McDowell, Freda Dixon Malone, and Valerie Lagorio Dissertation Scholarships

**Source:** These awards are made from the proceeds of funds established through the generosity of Prairie Lights Bookstore; by the students of Professors Emeritus Frederick P.W. McDowell and Valerie Lagorio; and by the sister of Freda Dixon Malone, who received her MA in English from the University of Iowa in 1929.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must have completed the comprehensive examination, a dissertation prospectus meeting, and all other requirements for the Ph.D. except the dissertation at the time of application. Doctoral candidates with a concentration in contemporary (post-1950) literature and theory from any region are eligible for the Prairie Lights/Sherman Paul Award. Doctoral candidates with a concentration in British and/or American literature from 1850 to 1950 are eligible for the McDowell Award; those with a concentration in British literature from 1500 to 1850 are eligible for the Malone Award; and those with a concentration in British literature before 1500 are eligible for the Lagorio Award. In the event that no dissertation-stage medievalist successfully applies for the Lagorio Award, one or two smaller traveling fellowships will be made to nurture medievalists in the earlier stages of their careers.

**Terms of awards:** These awards of approximately \$1000 each (as of 2019), subject to confirmation, are to be used to defray research costs related to the completion of the dissertation. The stipends may support travel to libraries in connection with the award-holder’s research, online computer expenses, childcare expenses, or the cost of books, computer equipment, or other materials associated with the dissertation. English forwards a nominee for these four awards to the UI Office of Student Financial Aid, which administers the award. In some cases, the award is applied directly to the recipient’s financial aid package. Please contact the Office of Student Financial Aid if you have questions regarding the distribution of the award. The awards will be made in the spring semester and will go into effect for the following twelve months. The designees will be called “The Prairie Lights/Sherman Paul Scholar,” “The Frederick P.W. McDowell Scholar,” “The Freda Dixon Malone Scholar,” and “The Valerie Lagorio Scholar” or “The Valerie Lagorio Traveling Fellow,” respectively.

**Applications:** Applicants should submit the following materials (**single-spaced, 12 pt. type, 1” margins, and as separate PDF files**):

- A one-page dissertation abstract.
- A two-page document containing a descriptive list of chapters and a timetable for completion of the dissertation.
- A one-page C.V. of the nominee’s educational and professional experience, honors and awards, and publications.
- A one-paragraph statement indicating how the research money will be spent.

### Edwin Ford Piper Memorial Scholarship

**Eligibility:** The recipient must be a female graduate student enrolled full-time in the English Department during the academic year. Ph.D. students and MFA students in Nonfiction Writing may apply for this award. Each applicant must be a native-born American citizen who is currently self-supporting, must demonstrate “above average competence in her chosen field,” and must have aspirations to help the cause of women.

Although not a determining factor, financial need is a criterion for consideration.

**Terms of the Award:** The designee will be called “The Edwin Ford Piper Scholar.” English forwards a nominee for the Piper to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which administers the award. The amount of the award is \$2,000, which is distributed in two installments over the academic year. Please contact the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences if you have questions regarding the distribution of the award.

**Applications:** Applicants should submit the following materials (**single-spaced, 12 pt. type, 1” margins, and as separate PDF files**):

- A one-page dissertation abstract or MFA thesis description.
- A two-page document containing a descriptive list of chapters and a timetable for completion of the dissertation or MFA thesis.
- A one-page C.V. of the nominee’s educational and professional experience, honors and awards, and publications.
- A statement of the applicant’s financial need and social aspirations.

### English Department Best Essay Prize

**Source:** In order to recognize and honor the excellent scholarly work of its graduate students, the English Department annually awards a prize for the best essay published by an English Department Ph.D. student. The amount of the prize is \$250 (as of 2019), subject to confirmation.

**Eligibility:** Ph.D. students who have held a successful prospectus meeting by the time of application are eligible to submit essays that have been accepted for publication or have already been published in refereed journals or collections. For the spring prize, the essay must have been accepted or published between January two years’ prior and December one year prior to the award year. Although the applicant must be at the post-prospectus stage, the essay itself may have been written earlier. Applicants are invited to resubmit the same essay, if it is still eligible, the following year. Applicants may only submit one essay per year. Previous winners are not eligible to compete a second time.

**Submissions:** Students should submit one copy of the essay, along with a brief cover letter stating the date of the prospectus meeting, and the course and instructor for which the essay was originally written. In the case of forthcoming essays, also include proof of acceptance and projected publication date.

**Evaluation:** The essays will be judged by the Graduate Steering Committee.

### Dietz Poetry Essay Prize

Elizabeth Dietz (1964-2005) was a poet and professor of Renaissance Literature at Rice University. A graduate of both the Writers’ Workshop and the University of Iowa’s doctoral program in English, Elizabeth specialized in the lyric poetry of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and was equally interested in poetic theory and practice. She was also a gifted teacher of poetry.

**Source:** The Dietz Essay Prize is awarded annually, on alternating years, for the best essay on poetry written by an undergraduate and a graduate student. In honor of Elizabeth’s broad and eclectic interests, essays on all kinds of poetry—epic, lyric, narrative, dramatic, and experimental—as well as on poetics are welcome.

**Submissions:** Students should submit one copy of the essay, along with a brief cover letter stating the date of the prospectus meeting, and the course and instructor for which the essay was originally written. In the case of forthcoming essays, also include proof of acceptance and projected publication date.

**Evaluation:** The essays will be judged by the Graduate Steering Committee.

### OTHER FELLOWSHIPS

The Division of Sponsored Programs also invites graduate students to utilize its resources in identifying appropriate external grants. For more information, see <http://dsp.research.uiowa.edu>.

UI International Programs also sponsors graduate funding programs for a variety of international research & language learning opportunities. For more information, see <https://international.uiowa.edu/students>.

# DEPARTMENT TRAVEL FUNDS

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## TRAVEL TO CONFERENCES AND ARCHIVES

The Department will fund travel to conferences or archives in the amount of \$400 per trip per fiscal year (July 1st–June 30th) with a maximum of three trips for Ph.D. and MFA students. (For students working simultaneously on MFA and Ph.D. degrees, the maximum number of trips shall be three.)

### Eligibility and application procedures:

- Ph.D. students are eligible for conference travel support after they have been admitted to Ph.D. candidacy and for travel to archives after they have held a successful prospectus meeting. In order to apply for travel support, students must submit the webform: **“English – Ph.D. Travel Award Application.”** Once the webform has been processed, a letter will be sent to the student approving or denying the travel award.
- If approved, the next step is to contact Mandy McAllister ([uss-english@uiowa.edu](mailto:uss-english@uiowa.edu)) to schedule an appointment to start the travel voucher **prior to departure**. For travel outside of the United States, international medical insurance must be obtained several weeks prior to departure.

Budget permitting, the department will provide up to \$200 travel support to conferences and research trips for pre-qualifications graduate students in good standing (max \$100 per trip). Students can apply for this support via the webform: **“English – Ph.D. Travel Award Application.”**

Since travel support funds are limited, students are encouraged to also seek travel support from other sources within the University, particularly the Graduate Student Senate and International Programs. See appendix below for a list of additional funding sources.

## TRAVEL FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

For Ph.D. students who have job interviews at the MLA conference, the Department will offer up to two awards of \$300 to help cover travel expenses. This is in addition to the three supported trips to conferences, archives, or workshops described above.

## ADDITIONAL TRAVEL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

### Division of Sponsored Programs

Provides help with all aspects of finding sources of external funding, from searches to grant applications.

<http://dsp.research.uiowa.edu/>

### Graduate Student Senate Travel Funds

\$300 if within 300 miles; up to \$750 if farther; \$1,000 if outside North America.

Travel funds are awarded to students traveling to present at a conference. Students are eligible to apply once per fiscal year (July 1st–June 30th). Multiple deadlines throughout the year.

<http://gss.grad.uiowa.edu/funding/gss-travel-funds-information>

### Graduate and Professional Students Government (GPSG) Scholarly Presentation Awards and Research Grants

Up to \$1500 “grants to University of Iowa graduate and professional students to travel, conduct research, or engage in a service project.” (Only funds projects that qualify as research.) Multiple deadlines per fiscal year. <https://gpsg.uiowa.edu/grants-for-students/>

### Stanley Graduate Awards for International Research (\$2,500)

For grad students who are proposing to conduct research abroad for their theses.

<http://international.uiowa.edu/funding/stanley-graduate-awards-international-research>

## DEPARTMENTAL SUPPORT FOR SUMMER PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PH.D. STUDENTS

The English Department will contribute towards covering tuition and living expenses for Ph.D. students to attend a broad range of summer institutes and seminars. (See below for a partial list of opportunities. Students are welcome to apply for others.) Priority for funding will go to applicants who are at a stage of graduate study in between the comprehensive exam and the sixth or final year of funding.

The application for departmental support consists of a one-page proposal, a tentative budget, and a brief letter of nomination from the faculty mentor; these are due in Cherie Hansen-Rieskamp's office early in the spring semester. The Graduate Steering Committee will make a tentative commitment of funds in spring semester, to be confirmed once the student has been accepted into the program to which he or she has applied. We ask that students also apply for any available fellowship or tuition support from the program to which they are applying.

### International Whitman Week Seminar and Symposium

<https://ir.uiowa.edu/wwqr/journalannounce.html>

### The School of Criticism and Theory

<http://sct.cornell.edu/>

### Dickens Universe

<http://dickens.ucsc.edu/universe/>

### Futures of American Studies Institute

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~futures/>

### American Antiquarian Society Summer Seminar

<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/summersem.htm>

### Rare Book School, University of Virginia

<http://www.rarebookschool.org/>

### Folger Institute Programs

<https://www.folger.edu/scholarly-programs>

### Newberry Library

<http://www.newberry.org/research/felshp/fellowshome.html>

### Mellon and NEH Summer Seminars (multiple institutional locations)

<http://www.mellon.org/programs/higher-education-and-scholarship-humanities/> <http://www.neh.gov/divisions/education/summer-programs>

# SERVICE

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Through service, students can contribute to the strength of the department and the wider community while developing important leadership skills. As committee members, organization leaders, and conference organizers, students play a crucial role in shaping the future of the department and the University as a whole. Below is a partial list of organizations and events that our students contribute to and help lead.

**ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH (AGSE)** represents the graduate students on the department's faculty Executive Committee, serves as a liaison between students and faculty, greets and orients new students, holds meetings to discuss student concerns, and hosts fundraising, informational, and social events. Each year the organization chooses a group of students to represent it in faculty committee meetings. See <https://uiowaagse.wordpress.com/>.

**GENERAL EDUCATION IN LITERATURE PROGRAM ASSOCIATE** Each year the department's General Education in Literature (GEL) program hires a group of experienced teaching assistants to serve as Program Associates. The duties of the Program Associates include leading the pre-fall orientation for new teaching assistants, helping to lead the fall 1 s.h. colloquium for new GEL teaching assistants, and advising a small group of 4-6 new teaching assistants through the academic year. The announcement to apply for a Program Associate position goes out to all GEL teaching assistants in the spring. All those with a teaching assistant appointment the following year are eligible to apply.

**CRAFT CRITIQUE CULTURE** is an annual interdisciplinary conference focusing on the intersections of critical and creative approaches to writing both within and beyond the academy. It brings together established scholars and graduate students for a two-day conference around a selected theme. The conference is planned and run by students who serve on the organizing committee, moderate panels, volunteer, and present papers.

**THE IOWA JOURNAL OF CULTURAL STUDIES** describes itself as "a fully open access peer-reviewed publication edited by graduate students at The University of Iowa that mixes traditional approaches and contemporary interventions in the interdisciplinary humanities and interpretive social sciences." See <http://ir.uiowa.edu/ijcs>.

**THE IOWA REVIEW** is a nationally recognized literary magazine. It invites volunteer readers (mostly MFA students, but Ph.D. students are welcome) to join the fiction, poetry, or nonfiction reading groups. Volunteers read and evaluate unsolicited submissions and are listed as Editorial Assistants on the masthead. For more information on joining a reading group, please email [iowa-review@uiowa.edu](mailto:iowa-review@uiowa.edu). Find out more about TIR at [iowareview.org](http://iowareview.org).

**COGS**. UE Local 896-COGS is the graduate student union at the University. Union members can serve in various capacities. As the COGS website explains, "At all levels of our Union – Local, Regional, and National – democracy dictates. Members directly elect all Officers, Committee Chairs, Stewards, and Delegates on an annual basis." See <http://cogs.org>.

**GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE (GSS)** is a University-sponsored and funded organization made up of elected or appointed graduate students from each department within the Graduate College. GSS is supervised by the Graduate College Dean and exists to give graduate students a voice to engage in dialogue with University administration, as well as to provide opportunities for professionalization, public outreach, funding and showcasing graduate research, and social events. GSS's primary obligations are its Travel Funds Committee and the Jakobsen Memorial Conference Committee, but senators may also serve on the Social, Student Teaching, Voices, and International Student Committees. Alternatively, some senators are elected to represent GSS as delegates on Graduate and Professional Student Government and Graduate Council. See <https://gss.grad.uiowa.edu/home>.

**GRADUATE COUNCIL** is made up of four graduate student representatives, one of whom is the GSS President, faculty representatives from various colleges, and Graduate College administrators. Council members receive reports on the effectiveness of the Graduate College and graduate programs and work together to improve graduate education. Council members also vote on proposed changes to program curricula. See <https://www.grad.uiowa.edu/faculty-staff/graduate-council>.

**GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT GOVERNMENT (GPSG)** is the student government for graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa and is responsible for supervising and funding all graduate and professional organizations. It represents the University's nearly 10,000 graduate and professional students, and advocates on their behalf to university administrators, the Board of Regents, and state and federal legislators.

Its mission is to improve the experience of graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa. GPSG is a representative democracy, with delegates elected from all graduate and professional students at the University of Iowa. Delegates from each college (Graduate, Law, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Medicine, and Business) are elected by college-level student organizations. For the Graduate College, that body is Graduate Student Senate. In addition to the delegates, GPSG is comprised of its Executive Officers and its Committee Chairs, elected each spring. GPSG itself holds monthly meetings and is also heavily involved in campus-wide initiatives and committees. See <https://gpsg.uiowa.edu>.