

# SEMINAR REQUIREMENT

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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

1. 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.