

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

# DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

## Ph.D. Handbook Fall 2016

Contains information on:

- Course and Distribution Requirements
- Doctoral Examination
- Dissertation Proposals
- Foreign Language Requirement
- Teaching Preparation



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# COURSE LEVELS

The Graduate Program consists of 1000, 2000, and 3000 level courses.

**1000-Introductory graduate courses.** Open to M.A. and Ph.D. students and to upper-level undergraduates with permission of the instructor. These courses will serve as introductions to periods, genres, or theoretical approaches. They are designed to provide students with the opportunity to study periods, genres, or theoretical approaches in which they have done little or no prior work.

**2000-Graduate Seminars.** Open to M.A. and Ph.D. students. These courses offer opportunities for more advanced work in periods, genres, or theoretical approaches.

**3000-Graduate Seminars.** Ordinarily open only to Ph.D. students. Open to exceptionally qualified M.A. students only with permission of the instructor. Work in the course is geared to the writing of a potentially publishable research paper. These courses offer Ph.D. students the experience of taking a smaller seminar with their peers, and a mode of instruction in research techniques necessary for their professionalization as scholars. Prior work in the sub-field may be required by the instructor.

**Note:** Students may take courses at any level during their years of coursework, but it is recommended that 1000 level courses be taken earlier, 3000 level courses later.

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# FUNDING AND TIME TO DEGREE

The English Ph.D. program is designed to be completed within the term of the full-funding MacCracken award (typically five years). By following the Department's recommendation and teaching for a total of four semesters during the Mac-Cracken term (see "Teacher Preparation" section), and opting to fully participate in the MacCracken Reserve Program, students can provide themselves an additional year of full funding in case they require a sixth year of matriculation in order to secure employment and complete the degree.

To facilitate academic publishing by graduate students, the English Department offers modest funding for support in securing permissions in

relation to articles accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals or edited scholarly volumes. To request such funding, a student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies and provide proof of acceptance for publication.

# COURSE DISTRIBUTION

## AND REQUIREMENTS

Requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English and American literature include the completion of 72 credits and the following specific requirements:

### 1. Course work in the first two years

- Four 4-credit doctoral seminars (selected from G41.3100 through G41.3979). [16 credits total]
- Elective courses and directed reading. [32 credits total]

### 2. Doctoral Examination

- 4-credit *Guided Research* (G41.3002) in preparation for Doctoral Examination. [4 credits]
- Doctoral Examination, based on two individualized reading lists covering two historical fields (one of which is designated the major field, and the other the minor field). The examination fields are: medieval; Renaissance; 18th-century British; Romantic; 19th-century British; 20th-century British; American: beginning to 1865; American: 1865 to present; African American literature; colonial and postcolonial studies; literature of the Americas; transatlantic studies; critical theory; and modern drama. The written examination is supervised by a committee of three faculty members chosen by the student.

### 3. Preparation and Defense of Dissertation Proposal

- A 4-credit *Dissertation Seminar I* (G41.3981), which entails preparing for and the preliminary drafting of the Dissertation Proposal. While enrolled in this course, students should work closely with the faculty member who will direct their dissertation, as well as two additional faculty members who together will form the dissertation committee, to prepare the proposal. As part of this process students will complete a literature review based on a topic bibliography. The dissertation director must be a member of the department. [4 credits]

# COURSE DISTRIBUTION

## AND REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

- A 4-credit *Dissertation Seminar II* (G41.3892), which entails an oral defense of the Dissertation Proposal before the student's dissertation committee. After the completion of the defense, when the proposal is officially approved and the subject of the dissertation formally registered with the department, the student may begin initial work on the dissertation proper. [4 credits]

### 4. Professional Training

- A 4-credit *Pedagogy Seminar* (G41.3985), taken during the first semester in which teaching is anticipated. [4-credits]
- A 4-credit *Workshop on Professional Practices* (G41.3980), which must be taken in the spring of the student's fourth year in the program. [4-credits]

### 5. Language proficiency beyond the English language

- This requirement may be satisfied either before or after matriculation at NYU by demonstrating either (a) proficiency in one language by completing the sixth term of an acceptable college language course with a grade of B or better or by passing a language examination at a comparable level of proficiency or (b) proficiency in two language by completing the equivalent of our semesters of acceptable college work. The final course or examination establishing proficiency must have been completed no more than two years prior to matriculation in the Ph.D. program. The language(s) offered must be relevant to the dissertation research and scholarly practice in the field in which the student intends to work, and the department reserves the right to require a particular language on these grounds. Any student whose first language is not English should see the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss the use of their language to fulfill (or partially fulfill) the requirement.

### 6. Incompletes

- The English Department does not permit instructors to assign "Incomplete" as the grade for a graduate course. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from completing his or her coursework for a grade in a timely manner, the student should contact the Director of Graduate Studies [or the Director of the

# COURSE DISTRIBUTION

## AND REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

Masters] to make arrangements. Only requests having to do with exceptional conditions (e.g., prolonged illness, etc.) will be considered.

### **7. A completed dissertation and oral defense of the dissertation**

- Course credits for directed research and writing [4-credits]
- The dissertation must be approved for defense by the director and core committee before the examination is convened. Some revision, including the mandatory correction of any errors, may be required as a result of the defense. The examining board consists of five members of the graduate faculty, the core committee plus two additional committee members. In this final examination, the candidate is questioned for one hour on the dissertation. If the candidate fails the oral defense of the dissertation, a second examination is permitted, resulting either in a pass or in elimination from the Ph.D. program.

### **8. Completion of all requirements within seven years for students entering with an M.A. degree or ten years for students entering with a B.A. degree.**

**Total Course Credits: 72**

# M.A. REQUIREMENTS FOR PH.D.

1. Ph.D. students taking an M.A. in the program must have demonstrated at least intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language prior to the beginning of the third year of matriculation.
2. Students will be eligible to receive the M.A. degree upon successful completion of the Doctoral Exams, which constitute the M.A. “Special Project” for those enrolled in the Ph.D. program.

# TEACHING PREPARATION

1. While teaching is not required as a condition of the Graduate School's MacCracken Award, the English Department still sees teaching as crucial to the professional development of its doctoral candidates. We therefore expect that our Ph.D. students will teach for four semesters starting after the second year of study, typically scheduled across the third through fifth years.
2. Teaching opportunities primarily include serving as a recitation leader in general education courses in the undergraduate college, and in departmental undergraduate survey courses: British Literature I, British Literature II, and American Literature I. Students who follow the department's recommendation for teaching will be assigned to a range of different courses over their four semesters of service, and can thereby achieve the breadth of knowledge stipulated in the "Course and Distribution Requirements" section. Students who forgo teaching may be required to demonstrate the breadth of their literary-historical knowledge through a departmentally-administered examination (distinct from the Doctoral Exams).
3. In addition to enrolling in the department's Pedagogy Colloquium in the fall of the third year, all recitation leaders teaching with a departmental faculty member will be required to meet regularly with the lecturer for instruction in all aspects of pedagogy: presentation of content, techniques for leading discussion, assignments, and grading.
4. After serving as a recitation leader for at least four sections (i.e., two semesters), students will whenever possible be considered for assignment to teach a course for which they are fully responsible. The primary opportunities in this regard are the summer session versions of the intermediate departmental courses offered in the undergraduate major.

# DOCTORAL EXAMINATION

The Doctoral Exam is the context in which students entering their third year demonstrate:

Thorough knowledge of both the representative principal texts and the principal critical issues within a designated major field of specialization.

Substantial familiarity with key primary texts of a designated minor field.

Both major and minor fields are to be selected from the following categories. These categories are meant to be general, and correspond roughly with the conventional historical designations in which our students are likely to teach in lower division undergraduate courses. Within these periods, various emphases and adjustments (the “long 18th century,” for example, or “Victorian literature”) are possible.

- Medieval English Literature
- Renaissance English Literature
- Eighteenth-Century British Literature
- Romantic literature
- Nineteenth-Century British Literature
- Colonial and Postcolonial Studies
- Literature of the Americas
- Twentieth-Century British Literature
- Early American Literature (to roughly 1865)
- Modern American Literature (from roughly 1865 to the present)
- Modern Drama
- African American Literature
- Transatlantic Studies
- Critical Theory

# DOCTORAL EXAMINATION

(CONTINUED)

The major and minor examination fields are centered on reading lists drawn up by the student in conjunction with faculty examiners, according to the following standards:

For the major field list, approximately 25 primary items (i.e., recognized literary texts from within the designated field) and about 10 secondary items (i.e., instances of influential scholarly work in the field that are still informing discussion among specialists, augmented by a few basic literary histories of the period or useful theoretical works originating beyond the discipline of literary studies).

For the minor field list, approximately 20 items consisting exclusively of primary texts.

The student will also compile a topic list, comprising approximately twenty items focused in an area of recognized scholarly significance, delineated by the student with a view to the dissertation project.

These lists are to be drafted at the end of the spring semester of the second year, each under the supervision of an individual advisor drawn from the regular and affiliated departmental faculty; together the major field advisor, minor field advisor, and topic advisor constitute the Doctoral Exam Committee. All three lists must be approved by the three members of the Doctoral Exam Committee and submitted to the office of the Director of Graduate Studies no later than April 1 of the spring term of the second year.

Through the spring and summer of the second year, students will review the materials on their lists and consult with the members of the Doctoral Exam Committee as all parties agree is appropriate. The exam itself focuses only on the major and minor fields, and it consists of two essays written in response to questions drafted by the major and minor field advisors. It occurs over the course of one calendar week, a Friday-to-Friday period preceding the beginning of fall semester classes.

# DOCTORAL EXAMINATION

(CONTINUED)

The writing proceeds under take-home, open-book conditions, with the exam for each field requiring the student to discuss at least four texts from the relevant reading list. Each exam essay must conform to stipulated word-length guidelines—3,000-4,000 words for the major field exam; 2,500-3,000 words for the minor field exam. While the essays may address materials in addition to the required four listed items, examiners may not ask students to account for works that do not appear on the approved exam lists unless they provide the relevant reference material within the exam question itself. By and large, the shape of the questions should be dictated by the character of the lists themselves. Typically, each examiner provides the student with three questions from which to select the one addressed in the exam essay, and while this is not absolutely necessary, in cases where options are not given the question should be crafted so as to allow the student maximum flexibility in addressing the issues.

The two written exams will be read by all three members of the Doctoral Exam Committee, who by consensus will award an overall grade of pass or fail. The department does not give designations of “distinction” for Doctoral Exams. If a fail grade is given, the student will be permitted to re-take the exam once, generally by the mid-point of the fall term of the third year and in any case no later than the end of that same term. Students who fail the Doctoral Exam a second time will be terminated from the program.

# DISSERTATION PROPOSALS

## Literature-Review Essay and Dissertation Proposal

After the student's successful completion of the Doctoral Exam the Doctoral Exam Committee will be reconstituted as the Core Dissertation Committee. While the two committees might theoretically be identical in composition (with the Topic advisor, and perhaps the Major Field advisor, in any event almost certainly serving on both), it is likely that some retooling will occur, so as to orient the Core Dissertation Committee toward the area to be addressed in the dissertation.

Under the supervision of the Core Dissertation Committee the student will continue reviewing the works on the Topic list through the fall of the third year, with an eye toward developing a dissertation project. That continued study will culminate in the student's summarizing the import of the Topic materials in a formal literature-review essay of 2500 to 3000 words, to be submitted to the Core Dissertation Committee by the end of the eleventh week of the student's third fall semester. The literature review will conclude by presenting a research question—or set of research questions—issuing from the engagement with the Topic bibliography, and to be taken up in the dissertation.

At some point during the final three weeks of the fall semester, the student will meet with the Core Dissertation Committee to discuss the proposed dissertation topic and receive advice about how to apply the findings of the literature review in the drafting of the official Dissertation Proposal. The drafting and discussion of the literature review will constitute the four-credit Dissertation Seminar I (to be registered for during the third fall semester), which will not meet as a formal class.

During the spring semester of the third year the student is enrolled in the eight-credit Dissertation Seminar II, which supports the drafting and defense of the Dissertation Proposal, under the auspices of the Core Dissertation Committee. The Dissertation Proposal, the main body of which runs to 10-15 pages, should contain the following elements:

# DISSERTATION PROPOSALS

(CONTINUED)

- A title page including the candidate's name, the dissertation director's name, the date, and the proposed dissertation title
- A statement of the purpose, scope, and anticipated conclusions of the dissertation (4–7 pages), including:
- A preliminary hypothesis or argument
- Explanation of the major critical concerns, questions, and issues with which the project is engaged
- Survey and description of the primary materials for research and analysis
- Summary of the major areas of scholarship with which the project will be engaged
- An indication of the dissertation's basic organization, if not a preliminary chapter outline (6–8 pages)
- A working bibliography

A complete draft of the Dissertation Proposal shall be due to the Dissertation Committee and to the office of the Graduate Program no later than the week following spring break. Submission of the proposal will be followed by an hour-long Dissertation Proposal Defense, to be held no later than the first week of May in the spring term of the third year. The objective of the proposal defense is to determine whether the student is in fact ready to proceed with the project and likely to complete it within the next three years. To that end, the Dissertation Committee will query the student about the plan for preparing the Dissertation, addressing such matters as the type of research required, the analytical methods to be used, the point to be argued, and the order in which the chapters will be written, and offering practical advice as necessary. Summer funding is contingent upon successful defense of the dissertation proposal.

# DISSERTATION AND JOB SEARCH

If the committee requires that the Proposal be extensively revised and another Defense scheduled, a second defense must be successfully administered before the beginning of the student's fourth academic year, or the student will be terminated from the program. Once the Dissertation Committee is satisfied with the student's plan for completing the Dissertation, its members sign the official "Approval to Write Dissertation" form and submit it to the DGS. Immediately thereafter, the student begins work on the Dissertation proper. A complete draft of the first chapter of the dissertation is due for all students by September 1 of the fourth year.

The writing of the Dissertation will proceed under the supervision of the Dissertation Director and in consultation with the two additional members of the Dissertation Committee. The initial chapter of the Dissertation is due for all students by September 1 of the fourth year, and students will meet regularly with their Dissertation Committees to discuss their progress over the remainder of the writing period (see "Advising and Evaluation of Academic Progress"). It is expected that students will have made sufficient progress on their dissertations to go on the job market in the fall of the fifth year, and the Department will provide substantial guidance and practical support for all job seekers, assuming they present complete application packages, including appropriate teaching experience.

**Dissertation Defense:** PhD students are expected to defend their completed dissertation as the final step towards the doctorate degree. The defense includes the student's core committee member (i.e., a chair who must be a member of the English Department, and two additional members) as well as two external readers, who have relevant academic expertise in the dissertation field and topic. Lissette Florez will assist students in arranging the time and location of the defense. The English Department's video-conferencing technology is available for those members unable to attend the defense in person.

A student should provide all members a penultimate draft of the full dissertation at least one month prior to the date of the defense. The defense is scheduled to last 90 minutes and typically consists of a short presentation by the student providing an overview of the dissertation project. This is followed by an extended question and answer session, after which committee members and readers consult on the outcome of the defense. Students may be asked to revise extensively and, if necessary, a second defense scheduled if faculty are not satisfied with the dissertation and defense.

# ADVISING AND EVALUATION

## OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS

1. Students will be assigned an advisor in their announced field of interest upon admission to the program. All students will be required to consult with this advisor each term before registering for courses, and advisors will be required to sign a permission to register, to be handed in to the office of the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. The academic progress of all pre-ABD students will be reviewed twice each year, in January and May. The purpose of the review is to provide feedback and guidance to students making good progress toward the degree as well as to those whose records reveal problems that need to be addressed. Accordingly, a summary of the discussion in each case, including specific recommendations to the Director of Graduate Studies, will be communicated in writing to the student after the meeting.
3. Progress of students engaged in writing the dissertation will be monitored at regularly scheduled meetings of the core dissertation committee (principal advisor and second and third readers) and the student. For 4th year students and beyond, meetings will take place toward the beginning of the fall and end of the spring semesters.



# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## AND PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when the student presents the words, ideas or research of others as his or her own work. Even if you cite the source from which you have taken material at some point, both word-for-word copying without quotation marks and the reproduction of whole sequences of ideas or sources without clear and immediate attribution are considered to be plagiarism. The submission of assignments purchased or otherwise derived from another person or a company is expressly forbidden. Be particularly careful in using Internet sources.

*Please note that the submission of the same written work, in whole or in part, for two or more classes without the express permission of all the instructors involved is also a violation of Academic Integrity. Consult with your course instructors and project advisors in advance if you wish to submit the same work for more than one class or requirement. A verbal understanding is sufficient.*

Students in our graduate programs are expected to maintain the highest level of Academic Integrity.

**Any instance of plagiarism will result in the student's receiving a failing grade for the course or, where relevant, Special Project. The student will be subject to further sanction — including dismissal from the university — at the discretion of the Department Chair and the Vice Dean of GSAS.**

# MODEL SCHEDULE

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## First Year

**Fall:** 12 credits' worth of course work

**Spring:** 12 credits' worth of course work

*To be achieved by end of first year: Intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language.*

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## Second Year

**Fall:** 12 credits' worth of course work

**Spring:** 12 credits' worth of course work (FOUR 3000-level courses or equivalents should be completed by the end of the spring semester of the second year)

*Due by end of spring semester: Approved lists for Major and Minor Field Exams*

**Summer:** Guided Research in Preparation for Doctoral Exam (4 credits for reading toward the Major and Minor Field Exams)

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## Third Year

(Teaching service anticipated in both Fall and Spring semesters, with one-half of each semester's MacCracken stipend saved for future use)

Written Doctoral Exam in Major and Minor Fields (administered to all students in the week before the beginning of the fall semester)

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M.A. awarded in September, on successful completion of Major and Minor Field Exams

**Fall:** Pedagogy Colloquium (4 credits)  
Dissertation Seminar I (4 credits): Dissertation Seminar I ] entails preparatory reading for and drafting of the topic-list Literature Review, which is due in early December.

**Spring:** Dissertation Seminar II (8 credits): Dissertation Seminar II entails (a) completion of Final Dissertation Proposals: A complete draft of the Dissertation Proposal shall be due no later than the week following the spring break (b) administration of the oral Dissertation Proposal Defense, which must be completed no later than the first week of May

*To be achieved by end of third year: Advanced-level proficiency in one foreign language, or intermediate-level proficiency in a second foreign language.*

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## Fourth Year

(Teaching service anticipated in the Springs semester, with one-half of that semester's MacCracken stipend saved for future use)

Workshop on Professional Practices (4 credits): The Workshop on Professional Practices will orient students to four key academic-professional activities: (a) CV design; (b) conference participation; (c) grant and fellowship application; and (d) article preparation and submission. Students will be required to prepare an article for submission by the end of the semester.

Progress on Dissertation (initial chapter due for all students by September 1 of the fourth year)

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## Fifth Year

(Teaching service anticipated in the Fall semester, with one-half of that semester's MacCracken stipend saved for future use)

Job Market

Continue work on Dissertation

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## Sixth Year

(Fellowship provided through saved MacCracken funds)

Job Market

Complete Dissertation



