

Department of English

Ph.D. Handbook

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Contains information on:

- **Course and Distribution Requirements**
- **Doctoral Examination**
- **Foreign Language Requirement**
- **Teacher Preparation**

Graduate Program

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Ph.D. Handbook

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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-Doctoral 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.

Funding and Time to Degree

The English Ph.D. program is designed to be completed within the five-year term for which the MacCracken award ensures full funding. By following the Department's recommendation and teaching for a total of four semesters during the MacCracken term (see "Teacher Preparation" section), students can guarantee 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.

Course and Distribution Requirements

- a. The doctoral program requires students to complete 72 credits of course work, ordinarily 18 courses. Of these 18 courses, students are required to take the following:
 - Four Doctoral Seminars (3000 level). With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, seminars offered in other departments, or Consortium courses, might in some cases count as Doctoral Seminars.
 - One four-credit Guided Research course in preparation for the Doctoral Exams
 - One four-credit Pedagogy Colloquium
 - Dissertation Seminars I and II (12 credits total), devoted to the drafting and defense of the Dissertation Proposal and to the initial stages of Dissertation writing
 - One four-credit Workshop on Professional Practices

- b. Students will also be expected to demonstrate in regular consultations with their advisors progress toward breadth of knowledge in the major literary periods, genres of literature, and topics in literary criticism and theory (see "Advising and Evaluation of Academic Progress"). This knowledge can be demonstrated through:
 - Superior performance in undergraduate courses in a given period, genre, or theoretical approach
 - Completion of graduate courses in the period, genre, or theoretical approach, in the English Department or in another department
 - Service as a Recitation Leader in NYU undergraduate courses that cover one or more of the major literary periods, genres, or theoretical approaches
 - Independent reading
 - Departmentally-administered examination (distinct from the Doctoral Exams)

Course and Distribution Requirements

c. Progress toward breadth of knowledge will be assessed in the department's semi-annual review of graduate students (see "Advising and Evaluation of Academic Progress"), and appropriate recommendations will be forwarded to the student by way of the DGS.

d. To assure the appropriate balance of specialization and breadth, Ph.D. students must consult with their advisors before registering for courses each term, and advisors must sign a permission to register, to be handed in to the office of the DGS.

Note: Students should be apprised that courses offered in other departments and in the consortium schools can count toward the 72 credits required for the doctorate, with the permission of the student's advisor. Information about course offerings in other departments and schools will be provided in advance of registration each term.

Foreign Language Requirement

a. Ph.D. students must demonstrate proficiency in two languages at an intermediate level, or one language at an advanced level.

b. Proficiency is demonstrated either by passing the university's foreign language translation exams or by approved coursework as specified in the GSAS bulletin.

c. If the student offers two languages at the intermediate level, proficiency must be demonstrated in the first language at the end of the first year, and in the second language at the end of the third year.

d. If a student offers one language at the advanced level, proficiency must be demonstrated by the end of the third year.

Note: The language(s) offered for this requirement must be relevant to the student's course of study and field of specialization, as determined in consultation with the student's advisor or dissertation director. A student whose first language is not English may arrange with the Director of Graduate Studies for that language to count toward the requirement at the intermediate level. In order to count at the advanced level, that language must be deemed relevant to the student's course of study.

M.A. Requirements for Ph.D.

- a. 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.
- b. 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

- a. 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.
- b. Teaching opportunities primarily include serving as a recitation leader in general education (MAP) 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).
- c. 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.
- d. After serving as a recitation leader for at least for 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

- a. The aims of the doctoral exam are to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of both the representative principal texts and the principal critical issues within a designated major field of specialization, and to demonstrate substantial familiarity with key primary texts of a designated minor field.
- b. The exam will be based on two reading lists:
- a major field list, consisting of approximately 25 primary items, and at least 10 items of secondary criticism (see note below for definition of major fields).
 - a minor field list, consisting of approximately 20 primary items (see note).
- c. The exam lists will be submitted after 48 credits, ordinarily at the end of the fourth semester of the program.
- d. Students will register for four credits of Guided Research during the summer following the fourth semester in order to prepare for the exam, and they will arrange with their examiners to confer during that period as necessary.
- e. The exam will be administered during the week before the beginning of the fall semester of the third year. Exceptions will be granted by the DGS only in extraordinary circumstances.
- f. The exam, which comprises a written component only, will be administered in take-home, open book format with completed exams to be returned on the Friday preceding the first day of fall semester classes; questions will be available for pick-up one week before the exam due date. For students specializing in the Medieval period, the language or translation component of the exam will be taken in the department where it will be timed and proctored.

Doctoral Examination

- g. The exam will consist of two essays responding to questions submitted by the two examiners in the two fields, major and minor. Each exam will require students to write on at least four texts from that exam's list.
- i. The word-count limit for the major exam is 3000-4000 words; for the minor exam it is 2500-3000 words.
- j. After the student has submitted the exam, both the major and minor portions, taken together, will be given a grade of pass or fail, by consensus of the two examiners
- k. If a fail grade is given, the student will be permitted to retake the exam once, generally by the mid-point of the term in which the exam was first administered and in any case no later than the end of that same term.
- l. Assuming prior demonstration of intermediate-level foreign language proficiency, students seeking the M.A. will be awarded the degree in September of the third year, upon successful completion of the Doctoral Exam.
- Note:** The major fields include:
- Medieval English Literature
 - Renaissance English Literature
 - Eighteenth-century British Literature (1660-1800)
 - Nineteenth-Century British Literature (1789-1914)
 - Twentieth-Century British Literature
 - Colonial and Postcolonial studies
 - American Literature to 1865
 - American Literature from 1865 to the present
 - African American Literature
 - Literature of the Americas
 - Transatlantic studies
 - Modern Drama from 1860 to the present
 - Other major field topics may be undertaken after review by the DGS

Dissertation Proposals

- a. In the semester immediately following completion of the doctoral exams (ordinarily the fifth semester of the program), students will enroll in Dissertation Seminar I, which entails preparatory reading for and preliminary drafting of the Dissertation Proposal, pursued under the supervision of the prospective Dissertation Director (who must be a member of the Department) and with the advice of two additional Dissertation Committee Members. The reading will typically focus on a bibliography of theoretical, critical, and other scholarly materials pertinent to the student's particular research interest, along with any primary literary texts expected to be central to the dissertation.
- b. A preliminary draft of the Dissertation Proposal will be due in early December, after which the student will confer with the Dissertation Committee to discuss both the proposal and the dissertation project itself; students will then have an opportunity to revise and refine their proposals. Final dissertation proposals will be due in the office of the DGS on the Friday preceding the first day of spring semester classes. (Detailed instructions and guidelines for the Dissertation Proposal are available in pdf format on the English Department website, or can be picked up from the department.)
- c. In the spring semester of the third year, students will enroll in Dissertation Seminar II, which will entail (1) administration of the Dissertation Proposal Defense (to be completed within the first three weeks of the semester); and (2) initial work on the Dissertation proper, which will begin immediately after approval of the proposal.

Dissertation and Job Search

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.

Advising and Evaluation of Academic Progress

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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

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

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)

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)

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 preliminary drafting of the Dissertation Proposal, the final version of which is due on the Friday preceding the first day of spring semester classes

Model Schedule

Spring:

Dissertation Seminar II (8 credits)

Dissertation Seminar II entails (a) administration of the oral Dissertation Proposal Defense, which must be completed within the first three weeks of the spring semester; and (b) initial work on the Dissertation proper, which will begin immediately after approval of the proposal

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.

To be achieved by end of third year:

Advanced-level proficiency in one foreign language, or intermediate-level proficiency in a second foreign language.

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

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

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

Sixth Year (Fellowship provided through saved MacCracken funds)

Job Market

Complete Dissertation