

**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

Department of English

# Ph.D. Handbook

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**Contains information on:**

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

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# Ph.D. Handbook

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## Course Levels



3000 level courses.

**1000-Introductory graduate courses.** Open to MA 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 MA 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 MA 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.

## 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:

- One Ph.D. Proseminar
- One course that satisfies the English language requirement
- 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.
- Three Guided Research courses to count as pedagogy seminars (see 5e)
- One Guided Research course in preparation for submission of the Dissertation Proposal (see Section 7)

b. Students will also be expected to demonstrate in regular consultations with their advisors (see 8a.) progress toward breadth of knowledge in the major literary periods, genres of literature, and topics in literary criticism and theory. 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 Teaching Assistant in NYU undergraduate courses that cover one or more of the major literary periods, genres, or theoretical approaches
- independent reading

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## Course and Distribution Requirements

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c. Progress toward breadth of knowledge will be assessed in the department's Annual Review of graduate students (see Section 8), 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.**

## MA Thesis for PhD Students

- a. Ph.D. students taking an MA in the program will complete this requirement (typically, before the beginning of the third year) by revising a seminar paper, as an exercise in preparing an essay for publication. Students will choose a seminar paper from a course in which a grade has already been posted, and a faculty member will supervise revision of the paper.
- b. Students will have the option of registering for Guided Research for the purpose of preparing the MA thesis.
- c. The MA thesis will be read and approved by two members of the faculty, one of whom will be the supervisor of the thesis.

## Teacher Preparation

- a. During the semesters of their teaching stipend, students will be assigned to at least two survey courses, from among British Literature I, British Literature II, and American Literature I. Students will be required to teach both in the survey course within which their major field lies, and in one of the other two survey courses.
- b. A MAP course can substitute for a survey course if taught by a member of the English Department, and if the instructor adheres to the mentoring procedures detailed in item c.
- c. All Teaching Assistants in a survey course 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. Toward the end of their teaching fellowship, students will be considered for assignment to teach a course for which they are fully responsible.. This course will be either Literary Interpretation, or one of the intermediate courses offered in the major.
- e. In each of the three years of their TA service, students will register for a Guided Research course, which for bookkeeping purposes will count as the equivalent of a pedagogy seminar, and for a total of three pedagogy seminars and 12 credits in all.

# Doctoral Examination

- a. The aims of the doctoral exam are as follows:
- to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of both the representative principal texts and the principal critical issues within a designated major field of specialization.
  - to demonstrate substantial familiarity with key primary texts of a designated minor field.
  - to demonstrate knowledge of a set of theoretical concerns, designated by the "topic" area, defined broadly enough to engage texts on the reading lists for the major and minor fields.
- b. The exam will be based on three reading lists:
- a major field list, consisting of approximately 25 primary items, and at least 10 items of secondary criticism (see note 1 for definition of major fields).
  - a minor field list, consisting of approximately 20 primary items (see note 1).
  - a topics list, consisting of approximately 20 items (see note 2 for sample topics)
- c. The exam lists will be submitted after 48 credits, ordinarily at the end of the fourth semester of the program.
- d. Students will be strongly encouraged to take a Guided Research in the fifth semester of the program in order to prepare for the exam.
- e. The exam will take place after 56 credits, ordinarily at the beginning of the sixth (Spring) term of the program.
- f. The written exam will be administered for all students in the week before the beginning of the Spring term. Exceptions will be granted by the DGS only in extraordinary circumstances.
- g. The written exam will be administered in take-home,

# Doctoral Examination

on the Friday preceding the first day of spring 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.

h. The written exam will consist of three essays responding to questions submitted by the three examiners in the three fields, major, minor, and topical. The topical exam may also refer to works on the major list, or both the major and minor lists. Each exam will require students to write on at least four texts from that exam's list.

i. Word-count limits for each exam are as follows: For the major exam: 3000-4000 words; for the minor and topic exams: 2500-3000 words.

j. The oral exam will be scheduled prior to the exam-writing period, for a date within the three weeks following the written exam.

k. In the oral exam the student may be asked to clarify, expand upon, or illustrate points made on the written exam, but it is expected that the examiners will also pose questions relating to the entire range of texts in the three lists and not only those upon which the student has commented in the written exam.

l. After the student has taken the oral exam, the entire doctoral exam, written and oral together, will be given a grade of pass or fail, by consensus of the examining committee.

If a fail grade is given, the student will be permitted to re-take 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.

# Doctoral Examination

**Note 1:** 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

**Note 2:** A "topic" shall be defined as a general area of theoretical concern, more broadly inclusive than a term paper or dissertation topic. Topical areas might include but are not restricted to the following examples:

**Literary History** (e.g., canon formation, history of reading, influences and mediation, topoi, period concepts, movements, historicism and new historicism)

**History of Ideas** (e.g., theory formation, history of concepts and terms, genealogy of concepts)

**Discourse theory** (e.g., distinction of public and private, communication and speech act theory, dialogics, media, popular literature)

**Print culture and history of the book** (e.g., textual editing, publishing, censorship, literary markets, patronage, copyright, printing history, oral and written expression, authorship)

**Reception** (e.g., history of reading and communicative competence, classes and genders of readers, reader response and reception theory)

**Rhetoric and Poetics** (e.g., history of education, categories of figures, topics, disposition and memory)

**Genre** (e.g., literary forms and kinds, theory and history of particular genres in relation to others, hierarchies of forms, types of discourse and linguistic practices, non-literary genres in relation to the literary)

# Doctoral Examination

**Politics** (e.g., cultural criticism, cultural materialism, ecological criticism, law and literature, history and structure of the public sphere, the body politic, literary engagement with issues of class, gender, race, and ethnicity)

**Gender and Sexuality** (e.g., difference and identity, genderedness of discourse and literary genres, sexual identity, social constructions of gender and sexuality)

**Authority** (e.g., authorship, authorial intention, self-construction, consciousness and phenomenology, psychology)

**Literature and Religion** (e.g., religious discourses, theology, mysticism, comparative religions and literary traditions, hermeneutics)

**Literature and Philosophy** (e.g., philosophical criticism, philosophy as text, history of the literary in the philosophical tradition, moral and aesthetic value, ethics of reading deconstruction, pragmatics)

**Aesthetics** (e.g., perception, fiction, imagination and imagery, formalism, metaphor, linguistic mediation)

**Performance** (e.g., theater, dance, speech as act, recitation, music)

**Linguistics** (e.g., sign theory, philological criticism, semantic change, etymology, politics of language, ethnic and regional dialects)

**Interdisciplinary discourses** (e.g., literature and psychology, the plastic arts, anthropology, law, history, music)

**Note 3:** The topics list should be headed by a short paragraph that clearly defines the topic, and states the principle of selection and design of the list. Each of the 20 items on the topics list must be annotated by a sentence indicating the pertinence of that item to the candidate's topic. It is not sufficient to observe that a book is an important work in its field. To be helpful to the candidate and the committee alike, the annotation should make clear how - in its methodology, its focus, its argument, or its relation to other works on the list - the item contributes to the topic. This requirement presupposes that, by the time the list is submitted for approval, the candidate will not have mastered the list, but will be familiar enough with its contents to justify each selection in this manner.

## Dissertation Proposals and Procedures

- a. In the semester immediately following the doctoral exam-ordinarily the sixth semester of the program-students will enroll in a Guided Research for the purpose of preparing a Dissertation Proposal. Ordinarily the Director of the Guided Research will become the Dissertation Director.
- b. The Dissertation Director must be a member of the Department.
- C. 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.

## 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 (same as 2d above).
  
- b. The academic progress of all pre-ABD students will be reviewed annually in January. 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.

## 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 failing the course or special project grade. The student will be subject to further sanction at the discretion of the department Chair and the Vice-Dean of GSAS, including dismissal from the university.**

# Model Schedule

## **First Year**

### **Fall:**

Proseminar

2 other courses, ordinarily 1000 or 2000 level

### **Spring:**

3 courses, at any level (including the 3000 level)

*To be completed by end of first year:*

1 course in English language requirement

First foreign language proficiency at intermediate level

## **Second year**

### **Fall:**

3 courses, ordinarily 2000 or 3000 level

### **Spring:**

3 courses: ordinarily 2000 or 3000 level (by now, FOUR 3000-level courses or equivalents should be completed)

*To be completed by end of Spring semester:*

Preparation of lists for Doctoral Exam; Additionally, one Guided Research course for preparation of the MA thesis should be completed by the end of the summer of the second year, although it might be completed earlier

## **Third Year (TA service)**

### **Fall:**

1 Guided Research in Preparation for Doctoral Exam

### **Spring:**

*Doctoral Exam*

1 Guided Research in Pedagogy

1 Guided Research for Preparation of the Dissertation Proposal

*To be completed by end of third year:*

Second foreign language proficiency at intermediate level, or foreign language proficiency at advanced level.

## **Fourth Year (TA service)**

1 Guided Research in Pedagogy

## **Fifth Year (TA service)**

1 Guided Research in Pedagogy

Complete Dissertation