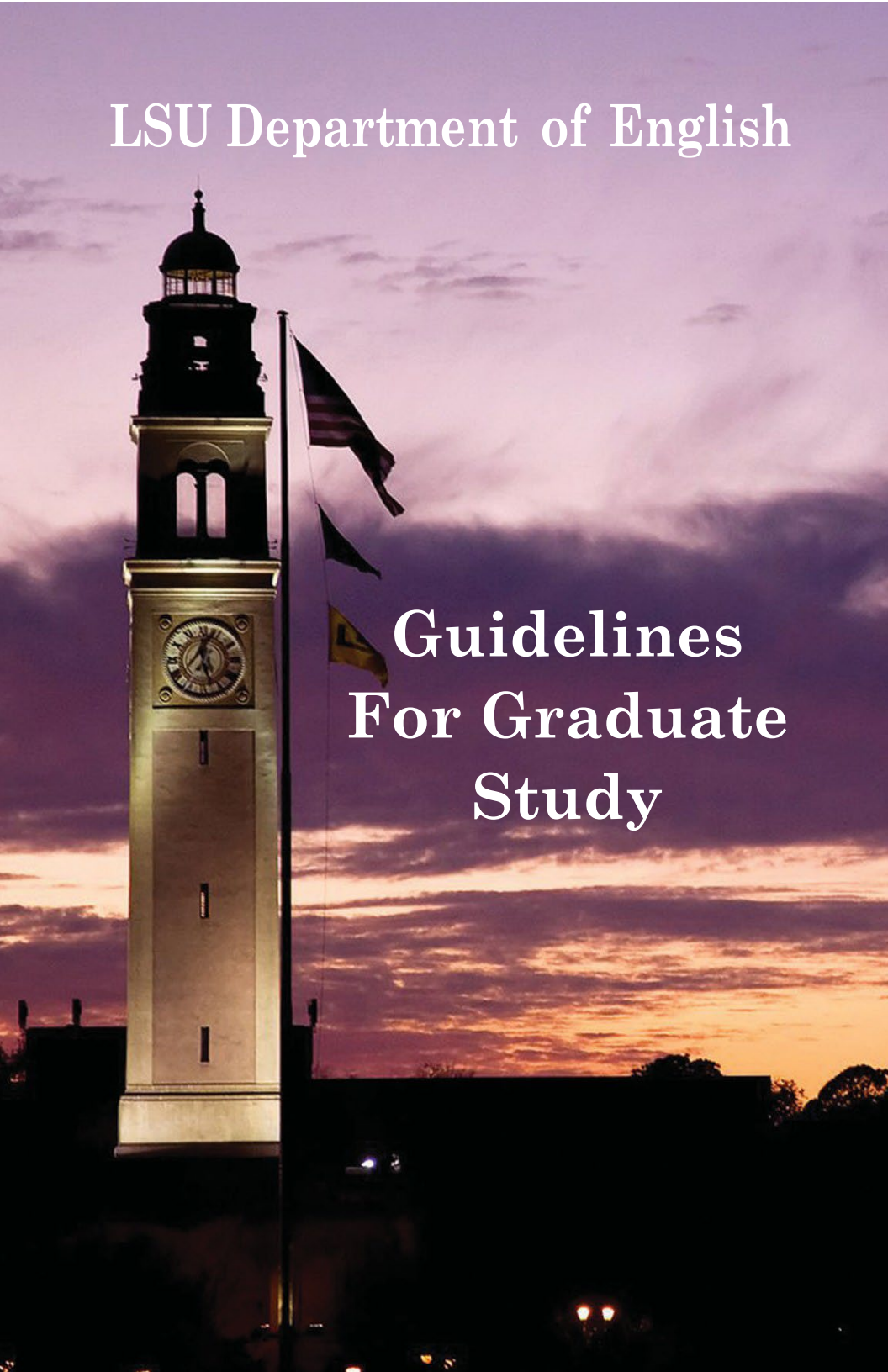


LSU Department of English

A photograph of the LSU Tower at sunset. The tower is illuminated from below, showing its clock face and arched windows. To the right of the tower, a flagpole holds the American flag and the LSU flag. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and orange, with clouds catching the low light. The foreground is dark, with some distant lights visible.

Guidelines For Graduate Study

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Welcome to the Graduate Program in English at LSU.

We offer three degrees at the graduate level: The Master of Arts in English (MA), the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (MFA), and the Doctor of Philosophy in English (PhD). These “Guidelines for Graduate Study” (also known as *The Purple Book*) contain departmental regulations governing all graduate study in English, as well as regulations specific to each degree. *The Purple Book* is an important source of information for both graduate students and the graduate faculty. Please also consult the LSU English Department and Graduate School websites for additional information.

GRADUATE SCHOOL INFORMATION

English graduate study at LSU is governed by the regulations of LSU’s Pinkie Gordon Lane Graduate School as well as by English Department requirements. These Guidelines provide general information about the graduate English Programs; they also provide some information about relevant Graduate School policies. But they make no attempt to duplicate all the applicable material from the General Catalog. Always consult Graduate School regulations directly. You can find the General Catalog here: <http://catalog.lsu.edu/index.php>

Graduate students are responsible for fulfilling requirements described in LSU’s current General Catalog and these Guidelines. Although the Catalog’s inside cover states explicitly that LSU reserves the right to change requirements at any time, the Department tries to apply the regulations that are in effect in the year students enter their programs.

Of particular importance in the Graduate Catalog are the sections entitled “Admission to Graduate Study,” “General Graduate School Regulations,” and “Requirements for Advanced Degrees.”

If you are writing a thesis or dissertation, be sure to pick up the Graduate School's Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations.

Refer to the "Guidelines" throughout your course of study as questions arise. If your question is not answered clearly here or in the Graduate Catalog, please ask your Major Professor, the Director of Graduate Studies in English (DGS), the Graduate English Program Coordinator, or the pertinent officials at the Graduate School.

Graduate students must always assume the initiative for progress toward the completion of their degrees. *It's your degree.* Check the calendar on the Graduate School website for key deadlines and take note of information in emails to your LSU account and other forms of communication. We'll do our best to help you to negotiate the bureaucracy, but **ultimately**, it's your responsibility to find out the rules and meet the deadlines.

ENGLISH GRADUATE INFORMATION

Advising

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) serves as first-year graduate advisor to students enrolled in all three programs. Additionally, a member of the Creative Writing faculty typically serves as advisor MFA students, often in the role of Director of Creative Writing. This person always works closely with the DGS, and you are welcome to speak to either or both should you have any questions or concerns. For MA and PhD students, the DGS is your academic counselor until you choose another member of the graduate faculty to advise you. Even when you have selected your advisor, they may send you to the DGS for additional counseling when appropriate. All students are always welcome to speak directly to the DGS should you have any questions or concerns about your time in the program.

Course Information

You must be registered as a full-time graduate student to retain a graduate assistantship. The minimum number of hours for full time status is nine credit hours, six of which must be at the graduate level. Students enrolled in English graduate degree programs must take courses numbered 7000 and above. A very few 4000-level courses in English, or 4000-level courses in other departments that fulfill graduate requirements, are permitted. (See “Course Work.”)

Some courses can be taken more than once for credit, when topics vary. Always consult the General Catalog to check the maximum hours allowed per course (especially workshop and independent study courses).

The following course numbers designate independent study or research arrangements and may be taken only with the consent of a Graduate Faculty member who agrees to direct the course of study and to assign a grade. Students and faculty should agree beforehand on work expected and, in the case of English 8900, must file the appropriate paperwork (available from the Graduate Program Coordinator) with the DGS no later than the first day of classes in the semester during which the Independent Study will be conducted.

These courses are classified as follows:

- English 8000 (Thesis Research) can be taken only by students writing (or preparing to write) an MA or MFA thesis. Graded S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory).
- English 8900 (Independent Study) can be taken with the consent of a Graduate Faculty member who agrees to direct the course of study, to meet regularly with the student, and to assign a letter grade. Graded A-F.
- English 9000 (Dissertation Research) can be taken only by students enrolled in the PhD program who are either

preparing a dissertation or are preparing for and taking the General Exam. Graded S/U.

In all three of these courses, students must report regularly to the course director on research progress.

Evaluation of Graduate Students

All graduate course work is evaluated by a grade (see Appendix). The Graduate Office will also evaluate your progress towards your degree annually.

According to the guidelines of the Graduate School, a majority of the committee members (not necessarily a unanimity) must award a “pass” for the student to pass any of the major examinations required for degrees in the department (MA and MFA Final Examinations, and PhD General and Final Examinations). Students who are unanimously assigned a “retake” on any of the major examinations can discuss their performance with their examiners and the DGS. They may be permitted to retake each examination only once. Students who are unanimously assigned a “fail” on any of the major examinations cannot retake the exam and are terminated from the program.

Participation in Departmental Events

Attendance at talks, readings, workshops, lectures, and University Writing Program (UWP) programs sponsored by the Department of English is considered part of students’ professional training and is taken into account during progress evaluations. Graduate students are expected to attend these events as active members of the academic community and to learn basic skills related to the discipline of English studies.

Job Placement

Each year, a graduate faculty member serves as the Job Placement Officer. See the Department website for the name of

the current Officer(s) and request to be added to the English Job Corps Moodle page. The Job Placement Officer advises all MFA and PhD students about the academic and postacademic job markets as well as fellowship and grant opportunities; runs workshops on improving CVs, application letters, writing samples, job talks, dossiers, teaching portfolios, and interviewing skills; organizes mock interviews; and more. Sometimes faculty in Creative Writing may organize additional professionalization workshops and events focused on careers closely related to the MFA. For additional information, see the Job Placement section on our English Graduate Program website.

Professional Development

Although excelling in your degree is always your highest priority, it is also important that you develop a strong CV that reflects your attainment of several transferable skills that will be valuable in both academic and non-academic careers. In addition, it is crucial to your training to show up at departmental events, join professional organizations at the graduate student rate, explore non-academic job possibilities, submit proposals to conferences, and revise your best work for publication. Students should begin consulting with the Job Placement Officer or other faculty about professional development from the beginning of their graduate study.

MINORING IN ENGLISH

A non-English PhD student's graduate minor in English (non-Creative Writing) is obtained by taking nine hours of graduate English courses and by including an English professor on the student's exam committees who will supervise the minor. The teaching practicum, 7915, does not count toward a minor focused on Rhetoric and Composition. A graduate minor in Creative Writing requires that a student take 4 graduate-level creative writing courses.

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

The Master of Arts in English is a broad program of study designed to help students develop professional-level skills in research, reading, writing, and editing in a range of cultural, literary, and language-related areas. The Department of English offers the MA degree with both thesis and non-thesis options. Both options require an oral Final Examination. Full-time graduate students normally complete the program in two years, although it can be completed more swiftly with careful planning. The degree must be completed within five years of entrance into the program.

The courses you select as an MA degree student will give you a broad and well-grounded knowledge of the major literary genres of English, American, Anglophone, and other literatures in their historical and cultural contexts. They will also help you achieve competence in critical approaches and scholarly methods. Non-thesis-option students take 30 hours of course work. Thesis-option students take 24 hours of course work plus 6 hours of Thesis Research (ENGL 8000). Note that students who plan to enter a PhD program should be aware that MA thesis hours may not count toward the course-work requirements for a PhD program. They do not count toward the 48 hours of coursework required for our own PhD, for example.

COURSE WORK

Courses to be counted toward the MA degree must be at the 7000 level, except:

- 4000-level courses in linguistics and Old English, permitted with the consent of both your Major Professor and the DGS. These are the only 4000-level English classes for which English graduate students can receive graduate credit.
- 4000-level related courses in other departments (max. 9 hours) that are designated by the Graduate School as

providing graduate credit and are considered graduate courses by the department in which they are taken. Check with the English Graduate Program Coordinator to see if the university indicates that graduate credit can be given. Please offer verification to the DGS that this course requires graduate students to do significantly more work than undergraduates also enrolled in the course. The Graduate School does not permit courses to be offered for graduate credit in the summer unless the same course provides graduate credit during regular semesters.

- In no case can more than half of the course work counted toward the degree come from courses below the 7000 level.

Course Requirements

At the MA level, there are two tracks with different course requirements: Literary Studies and Writing & Culture. Every student entering the MA program is required to take the Proseminar in Graduate Study (ENGL 7020) in their first semester of graduate study, a course on literary theory, and (during the semester they are assigned their first composition course) ENGL 7915.

Literary Studies

- Proseminar in Graduate Study (ENGL 7020)
- Three graduate courses from an area of concentration (British, American, Ethnic & Postcolonial, Southern Studies, African-American Studies, Medieval and Renaissance Studies, etc).
- Two graduate courses from outside the area of concentration

Writing & Culture

- Proseminar in Graduate Study (ENGL 7020)
- Three graduate courses from an area of concentration (Cultural Studies, Women's & Gender Studies, Rhetorical

Studies, or Composition Studies). The Teaching Practicum, 7915, does not count as one of these three courses.

- Two graduate courses from outside the area of concentration

A NOTE ABOUT COURSES OUTSIDE ENGLISH

All students must have taken 18 hours of English to be eligible to teach as an instructor of record. For most students entering with a BA, this means that they must take 18 hours of English in their first year (9 per semester) to be able to teach their own class of ENGL 1001 in the Fall of their second year. Courses in similar or related disciplines—such as Comparative Literature, Screen Arts, Theatre, or Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies—can often count as equivalent to an English course, but courses in other fields might not. In every case, a petition must be made for all non-English courses. Students who do not become eligible to teach as instructor of record by Fall of their second year may not be able to meet the terms of their Graduate Assistantship and may therefore be at risk of losing their Assistantship. For this reason, we strongly recommend that all first-year students entering with their BA take classes only in English or very closely related fields.

MA OPTIONS

Non-Thesis Option

Non-Thesis (or Portfolio) Option requires 30 hours of coursework. The student presents a portfolio made up of essays and syllabi. The essay portion consists of a selection of three to four essays from the MA coursework, at least three of which should be term projects of average article length. This selection should represent the student’s best written work and may be revised, under the direction of a professor, before submission to the committee. The syllabi should include all MA coursework. The portfolio should be

submitted to committee members at least two weeks in advance of the actual examination. Most students submit these materials electronically, but committee members can request materials to be submitted in print. A sample portfolio is available in the English Graduate Office.

The Examining Committee comprises three faculty members chosen by the student in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies; the student should have taken courses with at least two of the committee members.

At the Non-Thesis MA Final Exam, the student will give a presentation that is identical to the student presentation in the PhD Qualifying Procedure (see below). Discussion in the examination can refer to material covered in the student's graduate coursework as well as to material deemed important in determining the student's general competence. The student should schedule the exam through the English Graduate Program Coordinator with the Graduate School, organizing the date and time with the committee. The examination committee will conduct an oral Final Examination that will last between one and two hours. The student can take this exam no more than twice. If the student fails the second attempt, the student is considered terminated from the program at the end of the examination semester. The student has the right to petition for reconsideration.

Special Note for MA/PhD at LSU: For students earning the MA while in the PhD Program, the PhD Qualifying Procedure (described below) is the same event as the MA Final Examination. In practice, there is no difference between the MA Final Examination and the PhD Qualifying Procedure except that the Qualifying Procedure Committee will review past coursework and recommend further coursework as well as determine foreign language requirements for the student who passes. Students who enter the program without an MA (i.e., with only a BA) must

submit the Academic Course Plan in the first semester of their second year. These students typically take the MA Final Exam/PhD Qualifying Procedure in the second semester of their second year.

We strongly advise all students entering the PhD program without an MA to get the MA along the way. You will have completed the work and should have the degree to show for it.

Thesis Option

The thesis option requires 24 hours of course work plus 6 hours of English 8000 (Thesis Research). The members of your Thesis Committee supervise and assist you in your work and approve the final draft of your thesis, which should be a substantial work of original scholarship and criticism, typically 50-100 pages in length. Visit the Graduate School office during the semester before the semester you plan to graduate for deadlines and procedures concerning requests for a Final Exam and submitting the thesis to your committee.

An oral Thesis Defense before your committee constitutes your Final Exam. Theses may be formally submitted to the Thesis Committee no more than twice for defense. All members of your committee must agree to pass your thesis. If your thesis is not approved at the second submission, you are considered terminated from the graduate program at the end of the examination semester. MA thesis students may not petition for a third submission.

Thesis MA Final Examination: This procedure is exactly the same as the Non-Thesis Master's Examination except that instead of a portfolio of essays from coursework, the student will submit a thesis. Thesis students should also submit the syllabi of all courses taken during the MA program. Most students submit these materials electronically, but committee members can request materials to be submitted in print.

After a successful thesis defense, submit the approved and corrected thesis (including any corrections required by the Graduate School) to the Graduate School. Please note the often surprisingly early deadlines in the LSU General Catalog's Academic Calendar. **Please do not submit any forms to the Graduate School without first communicating and reviewing the forms with the English Graduate Program Coordinator.**

Switching Options

Students may switch options (thesis or non-thesis) only once. Regardless of whether students stay in one option or move to another, they have a total of only two chances to be passed by their committee(s) for the MA degree. For example, a student whose thesis is rejected by their committee may subsequently request to switch to the non-thesis option, but such a student is expected to pass the oral examination the first time; if not, he or she will ordinarily be terminated from the program.

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN CREATIVE WRITING

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing is a genre-flexible program of study designed for students who wish to engage in a dynamic exploration of the craft of creative writing. The program aims to help students rapidly develop critical lenses for writing, reading, and editing, as well as to foster professional skills and a broad knowledge of the field of contemporary writing. The program prepares students for work in the literary arts, teaching, publishing, and other careers. Nearly all students complete the program in three years. The degree must be completed within five years of entrance into the program.

OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

In order to earn a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, candidates must:

- Submit the Academic Course Plan form during the second semester of the first year.
- Complete 42 hours of course work, plus 6 hours of Thesis Research (ENGL 8000).
- Write a Creative Thesis and pass a Final Examination (oral thesis defense).

COURSE WORK

Courses to be counted toward the MFA degree must be at the 7000 level, except:

- 4000-level courses in linguistics and Old English, permitted with the consent of both your Major Professor and the DGS. These are the only 4000-level English classes for which English graduate students can receive graduate credit.
- 4000-level related courses in other departments (max. 9 hours) that are designated by the Graduate School as providing graduate credit and are considered graduate

courses by the department in which they are taken. Check with the English Graduate Program Coordinator to see if the university indicates that graduate credit can be given. Please offer verification to the DGS that this course requires graduate students to do significantly more work than undergraduates also enrolled in the course. The Graduate School does not permit courses to be offered for graduate credit in the summer unless the same course provides graduate credit during regular semesters.

Courses for the MFA degree must include:

- 15 hours of writing workshops in the following genres. (At least three of these hours must be outside your primary genre. No more than 12 hours of any one of these courses may be counted toward the degree):
 - Fiction (ENGL 7006)
 - Poetry (ENGL 7007)
 - Drama (ENGL 7008)
 - Screenwriting (ENGL 7009)
 - Literary Nonfiction (ENGL 7001)
- 3 hours of a forms course, usually in your primary genre. (No more than 9 hours of any one of these courses may be counted toward the degree):
 - Forms of Prose Fiction (ENGL 7106)
 - Prosody and Poetic Forms (ENGL 7107)
 - Forms of Film Writing (ENGL 7109)
- 12 hours of non-Creative-Writing courses in the English Department.
 - Those teaching English Composition for the first time will take ENGL 7915 in that same semester. This course will count as part of these 12 hours.
- 12 more hours in any of the following:
 - Additional non-Creative-Writing English courses (or courses outside the department with special permission from advisor or major professor,

Director of Creative Writing and Director of Graduate Studies)

- Additional workshops (again, note maximum hours of credit listed for each course in the General Catalog)
 - Additional forms courses (again, note maximum hours of credit listed for each course in the General Catalog)
 - Up to 6 hours of independent study (ENGL 8900)
 - Up to 9 hours in related courses outside the department
- 6 hours of Thesis Research (ENGL 8000)

ACADEMIC COURSE PLAN

We require an Academic Course Plan meeting with the Director of Creative Writing, your advisor, or the DGS by the end of your first year in the program. Students will be notified about who to meet with about the course plan. An MFA Academic Course Plan form is available to download from English Graduate Studies Moodle page. This form is an advising tool that reflects your plans and your discussion with your advisor. The form clarifies requirements for the degree, but it can evolve as your goals change; you are not bound to specific courses in the order set forth.

A NOTE ABOUT COURSES OUTSIDE ENGLISH

All students must have taken 18 hours of English to be eligible to teach as an instructor of record. For most students in the MFA program, this means that they must take 18 hours of English in their first year (9 per semester) to be able to teach their own class of ENGL 1001 in the Fall of their second year. Courses in similar or related disciplines—such as Comparative Literature, Screen Arts, Theatre, or Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies—can often

count as equivalent to an English course, but courses in other fields might not. In every case, a petition must be made for all non-English courses. Students who do not become eligible to teach as instructor of record by Fall of their second year may not be able to meet the terms of their Graduate Assistantship and may therefore be at risk of losing their Assistantship. For this reason, we strongly recommend that all first-year students in the MFA program take classes only in English or very closely related fields.

THESIS

Thesis advisors and committee formation begin in the spring semester of your second year. Students complete the Thesis Committee Preference Form, available on Community Moodle, and submit according to the instructions provided by the Director of Creative Writing or (in some instances) the DGS. In selecting a thesis advisor, you should choose a faculty member who has artistic and/or academic expertise that will help you successfully complete your project. The MFA faculty (all genres, including “secondary” genres) will collectively pair each student with a faculty thesis advisor based on not only the student’s expressed preference, but also on the project and the need for equitable distribution of workload for the faculty. Every effort is made to pair you with your first choice. It is recommended that you select a member of the Creative Writing faculty to serve as your thesis advisor; however, your thesis advisor must be a full member of the Graduate Faculty from the English department and approved by the DGS and the Director of Creative Writing. The remaining members of the thesis committee may be selected from the graduate faculty within or outside of the English department. You will be required to submit a short proposal of your thesis project when you submit your thesis committee preference form. You are permitted to have an “open” defense, which means that you can allow people other than the members of your thesis committee to

attend your defense, but it is your responsibility to inform your thesis advisor of your desire for an open defense.

The Chair of the committee (your Major Professor/Thesis Advisor) will confer with you and other committee members about the proposed thesis and will review the preliminary thesis work with you, informing you whether your proposed thesis is likely to fulfill the requirements for an MFA degree.

FINAL EXAMINATION/THESIS DEFENSE

The MFA Final Examination is a critical evaluation of your creative intentions and of how well those intentions have manifested themselves in the play, screenplay, or book-length work of prose or poetry that you have produced.

You are responsible for knowing the deadlines for submitting your thesis and for all other deadlines related to completing your thesis work. Visit the Graduate School office (114 West David Boyd Hall) or website (<https://www.lsu.edu/graduateschool/index.php>) the semester *before* the semester you plan to graduate for deadlines and procedures concerning requests for a Final Exam and submitting the thesis to your committee. You should also communicate with the English Graduate Program Coordinator about all deadlines and forms. **Please do not submit any forms to the Graduate School without first communicating and reviewing the forms with the English Graduate Program Coordinator.**

Thesis defenses usually take place in February or March, though they can be scheduled earlier. The defense must be held two weeks before you formally submit your thesis to the university. You are responsible for coordinating the time and date of your thesis defense in consultation with your committee, no later than fall semester of your third year. You are also responsible for booking the room in which your defense will be held with the English Office and notifying your committee members of the

location. If you wish to have an open defense, you must consult with the chair of your committee about the possibility early in the thesis process.

Theses may be formally submitted to the Thesis Committee no more than twice for defense. All members of your committee must agree to pass your thesis. If your thesis is not approved at the second submission, you are considered terminated from the graduate program at the end of the examination semester.

After your successful thesis defense, submit the approved and corrected thesis (including any corrections required by the Graduate School) and the required paperwork to the Graduate School. Note the often surprisingly early deadlines in the LSU General Catalog's Academic Calendar.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in English at LSU is designed to help students develop high-level, theoretically informed, professional skills in research, reading, writing, editing, and teaching in a range of literary, cultural, and linguistic areas of study, and to develop expertise in those areas. We prepare students for jobs in college and university teaching and for post-academic careers requiring similar professional skills. Students entering with an MA should aim to complete their degree within four years. Students entering with a BA should aim to complete their degree within five years. Students may apply for extra-year funding when their initial funding package is expiring, if funding is available. All students must complete the degree within 7 years of entrance into the program.

One useful way of thinking about the PhD program is to divide it up into three important phases: coursework, exams, and dissertation. A handy milestone list is included as an appendix in the “Guidelines” and is also on the Graduate English website.

Note on Internal Admission

All students typically admitted to the PhD program regardless of whether they have their BA or MA. Students admitted to the MFA program who wish to pursue a PhD must be formally admitted to the PhD program. They will be reviewed in the same way as other applicants for admission and financial aid. These students should apply for admission no later than January 15 to begin the PhD program the following fall semester. They should complete the department’s application form, with writing sample and statement of purpose. (Note: if a student’s admission application is older than five years, they must reapply.)

OVERVIEW OF REQUIREMENTS

In order to earn a PhD in English, all students must:

- Submit the Academic Course Plan form
- Complete the Qualifying Procedure (for students entering with an MA, this is the same as the Academic Course Plan meeting; for students entering with only a BA, this can be the same as the MA final examination)
- Complete 48 hours of required coursework
- Meet the foreign language requirement
- Meet the residency requirement
- Pass the General Examination
- Complete the pre-dissertation conference
- Complete the dissertation (a minimum of 9 dissertation hours are required)
- Pass the Final Examination (Dissertation Defense)

Each of these requirements is detailed below.

ACADEMIC COURSE PLAN/CONFERENCE

This conference is a formal review and assessment of the scope and quality of your past work and plans for future work. In the second semester of study (for students entering with an MA) or early in the third (for students entering with a BA), complete the following process:

1. Ask three Graduate Faculty members of the English Department to serve on your Academic Course Plan committee. These should primarily be professors who have expertise in your areas of interest, but they may also be professors working in other areas with whom you have taken classes.
2. Request approval of the committee from the DGS.
3. Schedule the conference with your committee.
4. Collect the relevant documents and information needed for the conference and fill out a draft of the Academic

Course Plan. The form used for this purpose is called The Program of Study Form.

5. Submit Program of Study form, signed by the committee members, to the DGS for approval, where it remains on file until needed to complete the Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Examination.

The conference is a diagnostic conversation in which you and your committee:

- Determine how much (if any) previous graduate work will be applied as course credit toward the LSU PhD, and which requirements these courses fill. The department allows a maximum of 24 hours of previous graduate coursework elsewhere (with grades of A, B, P, or S) to be applied toward the degree, including no more than 12 hours of courses taken as a non-matriculating student. MA Thesis/Research hours may not be applied toward the PhD degree. Bring transcripts and syllabi from graduate courses taken elsewhere for your committee to evaluate.
- Discuss the intended shape of your doctoral work, including any deficiencies or problems needing attention.
- Discuss the possibility of choosing a Graduate Minor. You may declare a minor on your Doctoral Degree Audit Form, either within or outside the English department, but you are not required to do so. If you choose to declare a minor, you must find a member of the university's Graduate Faculty who agrees to serve as your Minor Professor, and you must report your choice of a Graduate Minor and Minor Professor to the committee for inclusion in the Academic Course Plan. You need not file any separate forms to declare a minor. More details are discussed below under Graduate Minors.
- Draw up the full list of courses (or choices of courses) that will satisfy your degree requirements and provide

coverage of a variety of subjects of study relating to your approved plans.

- After the conference, complete the revised Program of Study form and collect signatures from members of the committee.

The principal record of the conference is the Academic Course Plan, filled out in the Program of Study form, completed and signed by the committee, and forwarded as a PDF to the DGS for approval. It is filed in the English Graduate Office and held until completion of paperwork to schedule the general exam. Students should retain a copy for their own records.

For students entering the program with an MA, the Academic Course Plan conference should be combined with the Qualifying Procedure (see below).

QUALIFYING PROCEDURE

In practice, the Qualifying Procedure is identical to the MA Final Examination for students pursuing the PhD at LSU. The Qualifying Procedure is designed to ensure satisfactory overall student progress and quality of work (including determining foreign language requirements), and to give faculty a forum for evaluating whether or not a student should remain in the program.

The Qualifying Procedure Committee comprises three faculty members chosen by the student in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. The student should have taken courses with at least two of the committee members.

For all PhD students: The Qualifying Procedure is an in-house departmental procedure. There are two scenarios in which no paperwork needs to go to the Graduate School: first, if you entered with an MA; and, second, if you entered the doctoral

program without an MA and wish to proceed with your doctoral work without receiving an MA from LSU. In these cases, the committee members should inform the Graduate Program Coordinator when the student has satisfactorily completed the Qualifying Procedure. For students entering the program without an MA, the work they submit for the Qualifying Procedure is essentially the same as for the MA Final Exam, and the students should strongly consider filing the paperwork for the MA.

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For full-time PhD students entering the program **with** an MA in English (or equivalent), the Qualifying Procedure is the same as the Academic Course Plan conference. This conference should establish and confirm the student's program(s) of study and foreign language requirement, and it should be scheduled during their second semester.

In addition to the guidelines for the Academic Course Plan conference (described above), these students (i.e., students who entered with an MA) should orally present a summary of graduate-level work completed to date and plans for future work. This is an exercise in reflection and scholarly self-articulation. It should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes. Questions or concerns about the student's presentation are addressed at the meeting, and the committee may recommend further coursework, as needed. The range of possible questions about the student's past work, plan of future work, and possible dissertation project is identical to that of the MA Final Examination.

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Full-time PhD students entering **without** an MA should take the Qualifying Procedure no later than the fourth semester or when they have completed the MA-level coursework. We strongly encourage students who entered without an MA to earn their MA

at this time by doing the procedure as their MA Final Exam, as described above. In order for this to count as your MA Final Exam, you must schedule this as your MA Final Exam with the Graduate School.

For these students, the procedure consists of three elements: the portfolio review, the student presentation, and the examination:

1. **Portfolio Review:** The student puts together a portfolio of essays and syllabi and submits it to committee members who individually review the material prior to the meeting. The essay portion consists of a selection of three or four essays from the MA coursework, at least three of which should be term projects of average article length. This selection should represent the student's best written work and may be revised, under the direction of a professor, before submission to the committee. The syllabi should include all courses taken during the MA, up to this point. The portfolio should also include the Program of Study form from the Academic Course Plan conference. The portfolio should be submitted to committee members at least two weeks in advance of the actual examination. A model portfolio is available in the English Graduate Office for perusal. The portfolio requirements are identical to the MA Final Examination (non-thesis).
2. **Student Presentation:** Drawing from the portfolio, the student orally presents a summary of graduate-level work completed to date and plans for future work. This is an exercise in reflection and scholarly self-articulation. It should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes. This procedure is identical to that of the MA Final Examination.
3. **Examination and Plan of Work:** Questions or concerns about the portfolio's contents and the student's presentation are addressed at the meeting. The range of possible questions about the student's past work, plan of future work, and possible dissertation project is identical

to that of the MA Final Examination. The committee may recommend further coursework, as needed.

If you are a doctoral student who entered the department without an MA, you may choose to do the Qualifying Procedure as your MA Final Examination in order to earn the MA at this time (upon passing the exam, of course). As a reminder: to make this count as your MA Exam, you must schedule the MA Final Examination with the Graduate School. This involves meeting some paperwork deadlines and paying a graduation fee; check with the English Graduate Program Coordinator and the Graduate School for dates. Please allow time to arrange for it.

COURSE WORK

At the PhD level, there are two tracks with different course requirements for each: Literary Studies and Writing & Culture. Each provides the flexibility to craft an individual Academic Course Plan according to the student's own research interests, with faculty guidance.

Every student entering the English PhD program. must take the Graduate Proseminar (ENGL 7020). The Proseminar is a critical course that constitutes an introduction not only to graduate studies in English but to the culture of our department. Students who have taken an equivalent course during a prior MA program may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for a waiver of this requirement, but this is not encouraged, and students should not expect the request to be granted.

Students are encouraged to take a breadth of courses within English to give greater exposure to different kinds of texts, periods, and approaches. Students are also encouraged to take courses in other programs and departments when relevant, especially when considering a graduate minor. At the same time,

course work is a time to develop a focus and depth of exploration in a particular concentration. The Academic Course Plan committees (along with the DGS) will help students determine what courses satisfy what requirements because it is not always immediately obvious. Students need to take 5 classes in their area of concentration/period and 3 classes outside that concentration. One rationale for these distribution requirements is that, no matter what your concentration, you will likely enter an academic job market that defines assistant professor positions and major research publications largely by historical period or in other broad ways. Being asked to engage with other periods, fields, spaces, or theories also gives students more familiarity and competency with the wider landscape of academic scholarship.

Students who teach English composition courses must take ENGL 7915 (Teaching College Composition) during the semester they are assigned their first composition course, ENGL 1001. In the second semester, they are required to teach ENGL 2000 and attend three mentoring sessions. Any student in any track who has not taken a course in literary, cultural, or rhetorical theory must do so at the PhD level. You must complete a minimum of 48 hours of graduate courses.

Literary Studies

- Proseminar in Graduate Study (ENGL 7020)
- Five graduate courses from an area of concentration (e.g., British, American, Postcolonial, Southern Studies, African-American Studies, Medieval and/or Renaissance Studies, etc.).
- Three graduate courses from outside the area of concentration.

Writing & Culture

- Proseminar in Graduate Study (ENGL 7020)

- Five graduate courses from an area of concentration (e.g., Cultural Studies, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, Rhetorical Studies, and/or Composition Studies, Film Studies, etc.).
- Three graduate courses from outside the area of concentration.

Courses to be counted toward the PhD degree must be at the 7000 level, except:

- 4000-level courses in linguistics and Old English, permitted with the consent of both your Major Professor and the DGS. These are the only 4000-level English classes for which English graduate students can receive graduate credit.
- 4000-level related courses in other departments (max. 9 hours) that are designated by the Graduate School as providing graduate credit and are considered graduate courses by the department in which they are taken. Check with the English Graduate Program Coordinator to see if the university indicates that graduate credit can be given. Please offer verification to the DGS that this course requires graduate students to do significantly more work than undergraduates also enrolled in the course. The Graduate School does not permit courses to be offered for graduate credit in the summer unless the same course provides graduate credit during regular semesters.

You must also complete at least nine hours of English 9000 (Dissertation Research). These nine hours do not count toward the minimum of 48 hours of graduate courses. Research hours are evaluated at the end of the semester by the supervising professor with a grade of S or U.

English 9000 should not be confused with 8900, the Independent Study. Independent Studies count as coursework. As with any course, an Independent Study must have a syllabus designed by the student and approved by the supervising professor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Unlike research hours, the Independent Study earns a letter grade of A through F. Independent Studies should not duplicate regularly offered courses and should be reserved for specific areas of study or rarely offered topics. Proposals for Independent Studies must be submitted to the DGS for approval no later than the first week of classes.

GRADUATE MINORS

If you have chosen a Graduate Minor, at least one of the three to five courses required in the minor field must be at the 7000-level or higher, in accordance with the requirements of that minor. If you choose a minor, you must do so before completing the Academic Course Plan/Qualifying Procedure. You must ask a member of the graduate faculty from your minor department or program to become part of your committee. Your choice of minor may be:

- A minor in another department (where all courses are in that other department)
- A split minor in two or more departments, one of which may be English (e.g., Screen Arts or Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies)
- An internal minor (e.g. creative writing)

Students who choose minors often do so in order to gain knowledge germane to their dissertations. The program for an external minor, including the actual number of courses to be taken and the nature of the examination (if any), is determined by the minor field department or program, not English. Be aware that popular minors, such as the Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Graduate Minor or the Screen Arts Graduate Minor, may have required courses that are only taught once yearly.

The Graduate School stipulates that “a minority” of the courses taken in the minor department must be counted “in addition” to the student’s PhD course requirements. In English, those courses can count as electives within the 48 total required hours.

Typically, only one graduate minor will appear on the student’s transcript. To declare a graduate minor formally, a member of that minor department or program should be a member of the student’s general examination and dissertation committee.

Students should check the requirements of the Graduate School, or ask the English Graduate Office, to make sure.

For an internal graduate minor in Creative Writing, a student must take 4 creative writing courses at the 7000-level. In keeping with Graduate School policy, one of these courses must be taken “in addition” to the student’s PhD course requirements; the other 3 may count both toward the minor and the major. Please note that enrollment in Creative Writing workshops is by permission of the instructor and Director of Creative Writing, with preference given to currently enrolled MFA students. Being a Graduate Minor in Creative Writing does not guarantee a place in a Creative Writing course.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Every PhD student must at a minimum earn basic proficiency in reading criticism in one foreign language or a reasonable equivalent (the latter to be determined by the Academic Course Plan/Qualifying Procedure Committee and/or the DGS). It is our goal that this language be genuinely useful to our students’ research.

The choice of language(s) is based upon the student’s scholarly needs. The Academic Course Plan/Qualifying Procedure Committee will determine a PhD student’s language requirement during the Academic Course Plan conference/Qualifying

Procedure (henceforth simply called “Qualifying Procedure”). Students who have decided on an area (or possible areas) of concentration should meet and consult with appropriate faculty members before their Qualifying Procedures, however, so that they can begin work on fulfilling their language requirement. Faculty recommendations should be indicated on the Academic Course Plan Form. The Qualifying Procedure Committee will honor such recommendations, although it can ask that the student learn additional language or languages, if appropriate (e.g., for the study of medieval or Renaissance literature). A committee that recommends more than two languages must submit a justification to the Director of Graduate Studies and a schedule for the student’s completion of the additional requirements. Students who feel unduly burdened may appeal to the Graduate Committee through the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students must complete at least one language requirement before taking their General Exams. Any additional language requirements should be completed within two semesters after the General Exam. Extensions may be permitted if circumstances warrant.

Students cannot be required to learn languages not taught on this campus; however, students can voluntarily fulfill their language requirement at other institutions with the approval of their committee.

Most students will fulfill the foreign language requirement in one of two ways:

- 1) by taking a translation exam in their chosen language. This exam will be arranged by the Graduate Office and typically administered by a member of LSU’s Graduate Faculty. The exam will test a student’s ability to read and translate into

English a piece of academic critical prose in a language agreed upon by the student's course plan committee and approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

- 2) by taking a reading knowledge course offered in a foreign language department. At present, French and German offer such a course about once each year.

Students may also demonstrate basic proficiency in reading criticism through satisfactory performance (a grade of B or higher) in a sequence of foreign language literature courses, culminating in a fifth-semester course, taken as a graduate student either at LSU or (upon approval of the DGS) at another institution. More advanced proficiency in reading criticism may be demonstrated by satisfactory performance (a grade of B or higher) in a sequence of foreign language literature courses at the 4000 or 7000 level taken as a graduate student either at LSU or (upon DGS approval) at another institution. (If the course is taken at LSU at the 7000 level, it can be credited as an elective toward the 48 hours of coursework required for the PhD) Students may also choose to do an independent-study reading course in the language with either an English professor or a faculty member from another department who knows the language. This independent-study option requires the approval of the DGS.

Students who have native fluency in another language other than English may petition their Academic Course Plan/Qualifying Procedure committee and the DGS for permission to use that language for their "foreign language" requirement. In some instances, however, these students may still be required to be examined in that language.

After the Qualifying Procedure, the chair of the Qualifying Procedure committee will inform the DGS of the student's specific language requirement. When students have completed the foreign language requirement, they should notify the Graduate

Program Coordinator, who will place a certification of completion in their files.

GENERAL EXAM

The General Exam is the two-hour oral examination required by the Graduate School for all doctoral candidates at LSU. **It must be taken within three semesters of having completed the Qualifying Procedure. Students should gather their committee of Graduate Faculty members and start developing these reading lists during their final semester of course work.**

An alternative structure for the General Exam (known as “Option 2”) is allowed in rare instances with the approval of a student’s Major Professor and Exam Committee. Please note that:

1. You cannot change the version you select for the exam once your lists have been approved by your committee and the DGS.
2. Should the committee vote unanimously for you to retake the exam, then you must take the version you first chose.
3. You will be given six weeks to write the response to your question and two weeks for your committee to read them. Please schedule your exam eight weeks before you receive your question(s).

GENERAL EXAM: WRITTEN AND ORAL

The oral examination will be based on:

1. Three distinct bibliographies on three areas related to the student’s possible dissertation topic. Students choose the three areas in collaboration with their minimum-three-person examining committees. Students should gather their committee of Graduate Faculty members and start developing these reading lists during their final semester of course work. Each bibliography should be created by the student and the appropriate committee member

whose expertise is in that area. Generally, the professor guiding an individual list later writes the exam question for it. A three-person committee is required for every General Exam by the Graduate School (but it is permissible to have an additional member). Copies of completed bibliographies should be routed to committee members for approval and submitted to the English Graduate Office for DGS approval and filing. List lengths may vary, but each bibliography should include approximately 30-45 significant primary and secondary texts. As the student prepares for the General Exam, secondary bibliographies may be generated, building upon the original bibliographies. Together these lists will ideally form the beginning of a bibliography for writing the dissertation. Should the committee choose, it may ask the student to submit such secondary bibliographies with their essays (see below). The students should typically expect to spend up to three or four months reading and synthesizing the listed works. By the end of the reading period, the student usually will have developed ideas that will translate into possible dissertation topics.

2. Three 15-page documented essays (not including the list of works cited) written by the student in response to exam questions based on the three bibliographies. Often the three examiners (the General Exam committee members) consult with students during the reading period in order to write questions that take into account the student's developing research interests. Ideally, these essays will form the kernels of dissertation chapters, thus helping to streamline the time to degree. Students generally write these three essays in a total of six weeks or less.
3. Two course syllabi written by the student, one for a commonly taught introductory course that incorporates at least two of the three areas of interest, and another for a more advanced (e.g., 4000- or 7000-level) course in one of the specific areas of interest. The syllabi should contain

the following: 1) course title, 2) a course description and course objectives, 3) list of required texts, 4) list of writing assignments and examination schedule, 5) schedule of reading assignments and discussion topics, and 6) other components required under LSU guidelines, such as a disability statement, grade breakdown, etc. In selecting reading assignments, be sure not only to choose texts but to develop a sense of how they will work together and the time you would be able to devote to them during a normal semester. At the oral General Exam, the student should be prepared to talk about how these syllabi fit into their research interests, as expressed in the three essays.

GENERAL EXAM: OPTION 2

There are certain instances in which Option 2 may be a better fit for a student's intellectual trajectory. If a student feels that Option 2 best suits their background and objectives, they should consult their Major Professor about this option. Approval by the Major Professor, in consultation with the exam committee and the Director of Graduate Studies, is required for a student to take General Exam Option 2.

In General Exam Option 2, the oral examination will be based on:

1. Two interrelated bibliographies: Students will write two lists—an exam reading list (in which the student reads broadly in the field) and a dissertation reading list (in which the student reads more narrowly around the parameters of the dissertation). So, for example, a student working on ecocriticism and medieval literature would write an exam reading list on medieval literature and a dissertation list on ecocriticism in/and medieval literature. The big list is intended to be as capacious as possible and can include a wide variety of topics and historical periods such as “Medieval and Modern Literature,” “19th and 20th century American literature,” “Rhetoric and Popular

Culture,” etc. Students choose the topics for the two lists in collaboration with their minimum-three-person examining committees. Students should gather their committee of Graduate Faculty members and start developing these reading lists during their final semester of course work. Each bibliography should be created by the student with input from all committee members. The committee chair will write the question in consultation with, and feedback from, the rest of the committee. A three-person committee is required for every General Exam by the Graduate School (but it is permissible to have an additional member). Copies of completed bibliographies should be routed to committee members for approval and submitted to the English Graduate Office for DGS approval and filing. List lengths may vary, but the two bibliographies should include approximately 90-135 significant primary and secondary texts distributed between the two lists as the student and committee see fit. As the student prepares for the General Exam, secondary bibliographies may be generated, building upon the original bibliographies. Should the committee choose, it may ask the student to submit such secondary bibliographies with their essays (see below). The students should typically expect to spend up to three or four months reading and synthesizing the listed works. By the end of the reading period, the student should have developed the ability to write a dissertation prospectus and an essay pertaining to the larger field of study in which their dissertation will be situated.

2. One Dissertation Prospectus and One Exam Question: Students will write, and defend, a dissertation prospectus (about 20-25 pages) for the exam based on the dissertation list and a documented essay (20-30 pages) on the exam reading list. The exam essay should be written in a way that will allow organic expansion into a dissertation chapter or into an article for publication. Often the

General Exam committee members consult with students during the reading period in order to write a question that take into account the student's developing research interests. Students generally write these two essays in a total of six weeks or less. Since the prospectus is a mobile document, the student will not be held to the exact specifics of the prospectus should they choose to change the structure or the content of the prospectus, although the basic premise or subject of study for the prospectus must remain the same. After taking the exam, the student will be given two weeks to revise the prospectus, if necessary, which will then be submitted to the chair for final approval. The committee's suggestions for the prospectus at the exam will be very specific and geared towards helping the student craft a strong outline for the dissertation. A successful prospectus will consist of an overview of the project, an explanation of the main argument and critical intervention, a literature review, proposed chapter summaries, audience, and bibliography. The committee has the right to make amendments to these general expectations of a prospectus. We hope to offer a Prospectus Workshop every semester to help students prepare for the exam. This might be folded into the Dissertation Writing Workshop so that you can continue working on your dissertation in the Dissertation Writing Workshop even after you finish your prospectus.

3. Two course syllabi written by the student, one for a commonly taught introductory course that incorporates one area of interest (such as medieval literature) and another for a more advanced (e.g., 4000- or 7000-level) course in a more specific area of interest (e.g. Ecocritical Theory in *The Canterbury Tales*). The syllabi should contain the following: 1) course title, 2) a course description and course objectives, 3) list of required texts, 4) list of writing assignments and examination schedule, 5) schedule of reading assignments and discussion topics, and 6) other

components required under LSU guidelines, such as a disability statement, grade breakdown, etc. In selecting reading assignments, be sure not only to choose texts but to develop a sense of how they will work together and the time you would be able to devote to them during a normal semester. At the oral General Exam, the student should be prepared to talk about how these syllabi fit into their research interests as expressed in the writing component of the exam.

The areas on which the student will be examined should speak closely to the interests of the students in order to give them a head start in writing the dissertation, as this list suggests. (This list is by no means exhaustive):

- Medieval Literature
- Renaissance Literature
- Restoration and Eighteenth-century Literature
- British Romanticism
- British Victorian Literature
- Early American Literature
- Nineteenth-century American Literature
- Modernism
- Postmodernism
- African-American Literature
- Biography and Autobiography
- Critical Theory
- Cultural Studies
- Gender Studies
- The Literature of Women
- Postcolonial Studies
- Global Anglophone Studies
- Multi-ethnic American Literature
- Southern Literature
- Working-Class Studies
- Science-Fiction Studies
- Composition Theory

Rhetorical Studies

Media and Representation

A genre (such as drama, the novel, the epic, crime fiction)

A period genre (such as Renaissance Lyric or Restoration Comedy)

A period medium (such as nineteenth-century periodical literature)

Linguistics

Louisiana Folklore

Analytic Bibliography and Textual Editing

Other approved open areas

These broad areas should be coordinated and focused according to the research and teaching interests of the student, as supervised by the committee. Sample bibliographies will be on file in the Graduate English office for your perusal, but your reading lists should reflect your own research interests.

General Exam Procedural Guidelines

General Exam Committees enjoy a high degree of autonomy, and students should consult extensively with their committee members to make sure that there is a clear understanding as to what seems most appropriate in each case. Remember that you cannot schedule your general examination until you have completed your foreign language requirement. The examination schedule should be formally arranged by the committee and the student, taking into account the student's responsibilities, such as teaching duties, beyond the examination preparation itself. Once the student has obtained the exam questions, sufficient time should be allotted for the student to complete the syllabi and essay assignments (typically six weeks).

The order of events is as follows:

1. Gather your committee (typically three members) of Graduate Faculty, including a Major Professor. Each of the

three professors should be experts in the areas of interest you plan to be examined on. (See below for more technical information on the committee's composition.) If you have a Graduate Minor, one of the two professors who is not your major professor, or a fourth committee member, will be your Minor Professor. This step typically occurs during the last semester of course work, when most students begin taking some research hours (ENGL 9000).

2. Begin developing your reading lists in conjunction with the examining committee. Don't spend more time on this than necessary.
3. Finalize your lists and seek their approval from all committee members.
4. Give the lists and statements of approval from committee members to the English Graduate Program Coordinator for formal approval by the DGS. The lists are then filed in the English Graduate Office.
5. Read and synthesize. Students usually spend a few months (but not more than one semester) reading and developing ideas.
6. Coordinate with the English Graduate Program Coordinator to prepare your degree audit and to schedule your General Exam with the Graduate School. **You should submit these forms to the Graduate School no less than 3 weeks prior to the date of the exam established by your committee.** Contact the members of your committee to find a workable date and time. Please note that the usual six weeks for writing essays, in addition to the two weeks committees need to respond, means that the date you request should be eight weeks after you receive your questions. Your questions will not be released to you until you have formally arranged the exam date with your committee. You must submit forms to the Graduate School at least three weeks prior to that arranged exam date. **Please do not submit any forms to the Graduate**

School without first communicating and reviewing the forms with the English Graduate Program Coordinator.

7. The Dean of the Graduate School will send a representative (the Dean's Rep) from outside the English Department to the exam. The Graduate School will inform you of your Dean's Rep's name and department.
8. Your committee will now include the Dean's Rep, assigned by the Graduate School. This professor from outside the English Department becomes a full member of the committee. You now include the Dean's Rep in every aspect of the committee's formal activities.
9. After hearing from you about where your work is moving, the appropriate committee members write the question(s), which are routed to the entire committee by your director for approval, approved by the DGS, and filed in the English Graduate Office. The committee should have the questions ready for you to pick up approximately six weeks prior to the due date for submission of essays to the committee for review.
10. Within the timeframe established by your committee, pick up your questions and write your exams. The time for writing the essays is usually set at six weeks.
11. Submit your essays and syllabi to all members of your committee, including the Dean's Rep, as well as the Graduate Program Coordinator, a minimum of two weeks prior to the General Exam. Attend your General Exam ready to talk about your essays and two syllabi, to answer questions about them, and to discuss the directions your research is going.

The preparation of the essays and syllabi ideally should take place during the same semester as the General Exam. The entire process (developing the bibliographies, reading the listed materials, consulting with your committee, writing the essays and syllabi, and sitting for the oral General Exam) can be accomplished

in one semester and should not take more than one year. The General Exam must be scheduled with your committee before the essay questions will be released to you. It is your responsibility to contact the committee members and to organize a workable exam date and time.

Prior to the General Exam, check to make sure that you have taken the courses listed on your Academic Course Plan and enter this information in the required section of the Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Exam form. Financial support decisions may hinge on timely completion of the General Exam (see Department Policies on Financial Support below). Make sure to review and complete these forms with the help of the English Graduate Program Coordinator. **Please do not submit any forms to the Graduate School without first communicating and reviewing the forms with the English Graduate Program Coordinator.**

The Graduate School recognizes only the grades of Pass, Fail, or Retake for any General Exam, and such a grade should be submitted by your Major Professor on the Graduate School's Approval Sheets (Graduate Defense Results) to the Graduate School through the English Department Graduate Program Coordinator on the day of the Exam (or by the following business day).

Students who are given a grade of retake will be given specific guidelines for what they must do in order to retake and pass the exam, as well as the timeline for doing so. Students who fail the exam may not retake it. The committee must vote unanimously to give the student a grade of "retake" or "fail," but a "pass" can be awarded by a majority of the committee.

The General Exam Committee

The General Exam committee, with the addition of a Dean's Representative appointed by the Graduate School, usually continues (sometimes with modifications) as the dissertation committee. It must include at least four Graduate Faculty members meeting the following requirements:

- Doctoral committees must include a minimum of two members of the Graduate faculty from the English Department.
- The Major Professor acts as Committee Chair and must be a Full Member (Tenured Full or Associate Professor of the Graduate Faculty) from the English Department. (If the committee has co-chairs, one of them must be a Full Member of the Graduate Faculty from the English Department. Typically an untenured Assistant Professor on of the Graduate Faculty cannot act as the sole Committee Chair.)
- At least three members serving on the committee must be tenured or tenure-track.
- One of the members beyond the minimum three is the Dean's Representative appointed by the Graduate School. The committee will be nominated by the English Department (except for the Dean's Representative) and officially appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School.

In American universities, students who have completed the General Exam are typically called PhD Candidates and are known as ABD (All But Dissertation). The designation PhD Candidate is not normally applied or used in correspondence until this point in your graduate career.

If the makeup of the committee changes between the General Exam and the PhD Final Exam, the student must notify the English Graduate Office.

DISSERTATION

By far your most important task as a PhD candidate is writing your dissertation, the subject of which may come from any aspect of English studies. The General Catalog states that the dissertation “must demonstrate a mastery of research techniques, ability to do original and independent research, and skill in formulating conclusions that in some way enlarge upon or modify accepted ideas.” The graduate committee recommends that the dissertation should be at least 150-175 pages long. However, you must consult your Major Professor for advice concerning the appropriate length, genre, format, and structure of your dissertation, especially as some committees may require longer dissertations. In addition, read the Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations, which is available from the LSU Graduate School.

Pre-Dissertation Conference/Prospectus Meeting

The Pre-Dissertation Conference (or “prospectus meeting”) is a one-hour meeting of the doctoral candidate and dissertation committee members to discuss dissertation plans. This meeting should take place by the middle of the semester following the General Examination (unless you take Option 2 of the General Examination). You may prefer to schedule it as soon as one month after the General Exam. The pre-dissertation conference typically centers on a Dissertation Prospectus, which is composed after the General Exam and shared with dissertation committee members in advance of the conference. Successful prospectus examples are available on the English Graduate Studies Moodle page or by request from the Graduate Office. Although the Graduate School considers a student to be officially ABD upon passing the General Exam, the department considers the pre-dissertation conference to be an important final step in satisfying all degree requirements prior to the dissertation itself. Note that the pre-dissertation conference, unlike the General Exam, is an in-house departmental procedure not required by the Graduate School. Therefore, it is

not mandatory that the Dean's Representative from the General Exam be included. However, the committee chair may choose, as a matter of courtesy, to invite the Dean's Rep to take part. (If you choose to take Option 2 of the general exam, then you do not need to schedule the pre-dissertation conference.)

The committee's suggestions for the prospectus at the prospectus meeting will be specific and geared towards helping the student craft a strong outline for the dissertation. A successful prospectus will consist of an overview of the project, an explanation of the main argument and critical intervention, a literature review, proposed chapter summaries, audience, and bibliography. The committee has the right to make amendments to these general expectations of a prospectus. We hope to offer a Prospectus Workshop every semester to help students prepare for the exam. This might be folded into the Dissertation Writing Workshop so that you can continue working on your dissertation in the Dissertation Writing Workshop even after you finish your prospectus.

After the student has successfully completed the pre-dissertation conference, the chair and members of the student's committee should submit a letter to that effect to the English Graduate Program Coordinator, who will place it in the student's file. If the dissertation committee changes after this conference, the chair and members of the student's committee should submit a letter to that effect to the English Graduate Program Coordinator, who will place it in the student's file.

Dissertation Research

With the help of your Major Professor, select and focus your subject, then determine the research procedures appropriate to developing and completing it. When registering for dissertation research hours (ENGL 9000) each semester, you will need to

arrange a schedule with your Major Professor for expected work and progress.

Before embarking upon the dissertation, the student should meet with the Major Professor and each member of the Dissertation Committee in order to agree upon a procedure for submission and revision of preliminary drafts of written work.

Dissertation writers are required to meet with their full committees at least once per academic year. This meeting will allow students to update committee members on their progress; will provide an opportunity for collaborative feedback and a space for the airing and discussion of differences of opinion; and will enhance the transparency of the advising process. It is also intended to reduce any stress caused by over-reliance on a single mentor. It is the student's responsibility to reach out to their committee about scheduling this conversation. Students are requested to notify the English Graduate Program Coordinator that this required meeting has occurred so that a note can be added to the student's file.

The student is responsible throughout the course of the project for communicating with committee members and for soliciting their response to drafts of written work. When a draft of the dissertation has been finished and no further revisions are required by the Major Professor, the student should submit a copy of the entire work to each member of the Committee, allowing sufficient time to implement suggested revisions in a timely manner. PhD candidates are expected to address these revisions in a completed draft before the Final Examination may be scheduled.

Be sure to comply with the Residence Requirement (full-time registration for at least two consecutive semesters, not counting summers) and the Continuous Registration Requirement (registration for at least three credit hours every Fall and Spring

semester from the semester in which you pass the General Exam until your dissertation is approved) required by the Graduate School.

Dissertation Deadlines

When scheduling your General Exam and writing your dissertation, keep in mind key Graduate School regulations. The program for the doctoral degree must be completed within seven years from the time a student is classified as a doctoral student. The time limit may not be exceeded except by special permission (which is rarely given) from the Dean of the Graduate School. No less than one academic year may elapse between the passing of the General Examination and the completion of all requirements for the doctoral degree. In other words, you are not permitted to delay your General Exam until you are almost done with your dissertation.

FINAL EXAMINATION (THE DISSERTATION DEFENSE)

The last requirement for the PhD degree is the oral Final Examination. This is the traditional defense of the dissertation, conducted by your dissertation committee. This committee is the same one (sometimes with modifications) that administered your General Examination. This exam should not be scheduled until your Major Professor has approved a final version of the Dissertation. The Graduate School defines the Final Exam as the occasion for the dissertation committee to take a Pass/Fail verdict on the dissertation as a completed work, not an occasion at which to suggest further revisions. All revisions (beyond correcting minor typographical errors and the like) should be complete before the Final Exam is held. The Graduate Defense Results form on which committee members record that the student has passed, failed, or must retake the Final Exam should be forwarded to the Graduate School by the Major Professor (through the

English Graduate Program Coordinator) on the day of the exam (or at least by the morning of the following business day).

Final Examination Deadlines

Visit the Graduate School and/or the Graduate School website one semester before you plan to defend your dissertation in order to obtain relevant deadlines and procedures concerning official requests for the exam and the degree. You should also consult with the English Graduate Program Coordinator to confirm the deadlines and begin initiating the procedures. The Final Exam must be scheduled at least three weeks in advance through the filing of a form designed to confirm the members of the Final Exam Committee. This form is found on the Graduate School's website. **Please do not submit any forms to the Graduate School without first communicating and reviewing the forms with the English Graduate Program Coordinator.**

You are responsible for distributing the final version of the dissertation to the members of your committee (including the Dean's Rep.) at least two weeks before your Final Exam. This exam must be scheduled very early in the semester you plan to graduate (check deadlines in the General Catalog), or later in the semester before your semester of graduation. When scheduling your Final Exam, you should also be aware that faculty are not routinely available during the Summer term.

DEPARTMENT POLICY ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Assistantships

All Graduate Assistantships are offered on a one-year renewable basis. A student's assistantship may be terminated at the end of any given year if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress toward a degree and/or evidence of unsatisfactory performance of the work assignment associated with the student's funding.

You must be a full-time student in good academic standing to hold any graduate assistantship. You must have 18 graduate credit hours in English to be the instructor of record in your own course. For most students entering with a BA, this means that you must take 18 hours of English in your first year (9 per semester) to be able to teach your own class of ENGL 1001 in the Fall of your second year. Courses in similar or related disciplines—such as Comparative Literature, Screen Arts, Theatre, or Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies—can often count as equivalent to an English course, but courses in other fields might not. In every case, a petition must be made for all non-English courses. Students who do not become eligible to teach as instructor of record by Fall of their second year may not be able to meet the terms of their Graduate Assistantship and may therefore be at risk of losing their Assistantship. For this reason, we strongly recommend that all first-year students entering with their BA take classes only in English or very closely related fields.

You do not need 18 hours of credit in English for editorial or research assistantships, or for an assistantship that requires you to assist a professor in a large lecture class. You must take ENGL 7915 during your first semester of teaching English composition at LSU. The countdown of maximum years of eligibility for graduate assistantships begins the semester you first matriculated as a graduate student in your program, and whether you received support that first semester or not; these limits are based on making expected progress toward your degree.

- MFA students have 3 years of eligibility.
- PhD students who entered their program with an MA in English have 4 years of eligibility. These students may petition the department for a competitive fifth-year extension of support if, by the end of the student's seventh regular semester (after 3 ½ years), the student has passed the General Examination—and if the funding is available. This is known in the department as “extra-year funding.”
- PhD students who enter without an MA in English (i.e., a BA only, or sometimes MAs not in English or equivalent) may receive assistantships for up to 5 years. These students may petition the department for a sixth-year extension if the student has passed the General Examination, and if the funding is available. This is known in the department as “extra-year funding.”

Additional Teaching/Compensation

The Graduate School limits additional compensation (add comp) for students holding assistantships to five hours a week. In English, the opportunity to teach an extra class for add comp usually arises when there are unexpected teaching needs for ENGL 1001/2000 classes or for literature, creative writing, or other upper-level courses, especially ILC courses; but there is never a guarantee that students will get a chance to do extra work for add comp. Sometimes students are invited to apply to serve as research or program assistants for add comp in place of extra teaching. Although we recognize that students may want additional income during the academic year, our first goal is to make sure graduate students are able to make the best progress toward the completion of their degree.

Eligibility:

- Accepting a teaching position at other schools during the academic year while a G.A. at LSU violates your contract and is grounds for losing the assistantship.
- By federal law, no international students who hold a visa may earn any add comp.
- PhD students who have not passed their General Exam will not be considered for add comp unless a special case is made to the DGS by the student's Advisor.
- MFA students who have not made good progress on their Thesis will not be considered for add comp unless a special case is made to the DGS and Director of Creative Writing by the student's Advisor.
- Students will not be considered for add comp if they have an outstanding incomplete in a course.

Process:

- If the University Writing Program (UWP) Director, the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), the Director of Creative Writing, or the DGS approaches a student about their interest in teaching an extra class or taking on other forms of add comp, the student must get approval to do so by their Dissertation or Thesis Advisor.
- The Advisor will weigh the student's progress in their writing and other milestones and write to the DGS to either approve or disapprove the student's request. If the request is for an additional class, the email should mention the course number.
- If the Advisor approves the request, the DGS and/or the Director of Creative Writing will then check the student's milestones to make sure they are eligible and to check their progress toward the completion of their degree. The DGS and/or Director of Creative Writing may discuss the student's progress with the Advisor, the UWP Director, and/or the DUS; and the DGS and/or

Director of Creative Writing have the authority to deny the student's request. The student can appeal that decision by asking their Advisor to contact the DGS.

- If the Advisor does not approve the student's request, the DGS and/or Director of Creative Writing cannot directly overrule that decision, but the student has the right to appeal to the DGS to speak with the Advisor about reconsidering the decision.
- After approval by the Advisor, DGS, and/or Director of Creative Writing, all requests for add comp must then be approved by the Graduate School.

Summer School Tuition Exemption

English graduate students on assistantship for both fall and spring semesters are eligible for a full tuition exemption and out-of-state fee waiver (if applicable) during the summer term. The exemption covers part-time or full-time tuition and applies automatically if eligible. Currently, students are responsible for applicable in-state fees. Please keep in mind at least half of the registered credits for part-time graduate students during the summer term must be in graduate credit coursework. Make sure you contact the Graduate Program Coordinator before you enroll for a summer course. Graduate students may also be eligible for part-time Summer Instructor positions. The DGS will send out announcements for these and other competitive assignments.

APPENDIX A: ENGLISH DEPARTMENT GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM

A+ A A-	Full to near full command of material covered, active participation in the course, produced work demonstrating original thought and exhibiting polished, full professional command of the subject and the assigned presentational mode(s).
B+ B B-	Good grasp of material covered, adequate engagement in the course, produced work demonstrating some original thought, but requiring further development in order to demonstrate full, professional command of the subject and/or presentational mode used.
C+ C C-	Minimally acceptable grasp of material covered, weak overall participation in the course, produced work requiring significant revision before it could be considered to conform to full professional standards. Note: The Graduate School allows no more than 6 hours of credit earned at LSU with a grade of C to be applied toward a degree. No credit hours from elsewhere with a grade of C may be applied toward an LSU degree.
P/F	Indicates Pass/Fail option. PhD students who choose to take a foreign language course in order to meet the language requirement may choose this option. The Dissertation Workshop is also typically pass/fail.
S/U	Indicates Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory performance. The professor directing your Thesis/Dissertation hours will assign a grade of “S” or “U” according to your performance. Note: The Graduate School stipulates that a student receiving a “U” in research will be placed on probation. A student receiving a second “U” may be dropped from the Graduate School.

APPENDIX B: MILESTONES FOR THE MFA IN ENGLISH

These milestones are rough guidelines on how to proceed towards completing your degree. They will be used as the basis for your annual assessment. You must meet these milestones each year if you want to finish in the three years of funding available to you.

Year 1 Fall	Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses or 2 graduate level-courses and ENGL 7915 if teaching composition).
Year 1 Spring	- Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses). - Schedule and hold mandatory Academic Course Plan (ACP) meeting with official/unofficial advisor (usually the Director of Creative Writing) or the DGS. - Submit signed ACP form, also known as Program of Study form, to the DGS.
Year 2 Fall	Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses or 2 graduate-level courses and ENGL 7915 if teaching composition).
Year 2 Spring	- Enroll in 6 hours of graduate level courses and 3 hours of thesis hours (ENGL 8000). - Complete Thesis Preference Selection Form to select thesis committee.
Year 3 Fall	- Enroll in at least 9 hours of graduate level classes and/or thesis hours (ENGL 8000). - Meet with Graduate Program Coordinator and visit the Graduate School for deadlines and procedures on scheduling thesis defense. Schedule defense. - RECOMMENDED: Apply to residencies and fellowships. - RECOMMENDED: Attend professionalization events and/or work with departmental Job Placement Officer to apply for jobs (not just academic jobs) - RECOMMENDED: Ask advisor to observe you teaching for potential recommendation letter.
Year 3 Spring	Enroll in at least 9 hours of graduate level classes and/or thesis hours (ENGL 8000).

	• Defend thesis. Make sure you discuss the nature of your defense—open or closed—with your advisor/committee well in advance of the exam. • RECOMMENDED: Apply to residencies and fellowships. • RECOMMENDED: Attend professionalization events and/or work with departmental Job Placement Officer to apply for jobs (not just academic jobs) • RECOMMENDED: Ask advisor to observe you teaching for potential recommendation letter. • When you defend your thesis, you're done! (except any remaining coursework, of course) CONGRATULATIONS!
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APPENDIX C: MILESTONES FOR PHD IN ENGLISH (WITH BA)

These milestones are rough guidelines on how to proceed but will be used as the basis for your annual assessment. You must meet these milestones each year if you want to finish in the five years of funding available to you.

Year 1 Fall	• Enroll in full load of coursework (2 graduate-level courses + ENGL 7020) • Consult with DGS to select area of concentration
Year 1 Spring	• Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses) • Identify a preliminary committee for Academic Course Plan meeting
Year 1 Summer	Complete Foreign Language Requirement
Year 2 Fall	• Enroll in full load of coursework (2 graduate-level courses + ENGL 7915) • Must complete Academic Course Plan with a committee of your choice; this committee can also be the same as your MA Final Exam/Qualifying Procedure committee.
Year 2 Spring	• Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses)

	• Must complete Qualifying Procedure (or the recommended MA Final Exam) by the end of the spring semester.
Year 2 Summer	IF YOU HAVEN'T YET: Complete Foreign Language Requirement
Year 3 Fall	• Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses) • Finalize general exam committee
Year 3 Spring	• Finish coursework, if you haven't already (1 graduate-level course and 6 hours of ENGL 9000; do not take extra classes unless you absolutely have to. Keep the 6 hours of ENGL 9000 to work on your exam lists). • Have exam lists approved by the middle of the semester and begin reading for general exams.
Year 3 Summer	• Read, read, and read more. • Complete Foreign Language Requirement by the start of your third year. You cannot take the General Examinations without meeting your foreign language requirement.
Year 4 Fall	• Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000 every semester for full-time status. • Complete Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Examinations. • Take General Exams by the middle of the semester and complete prospectus and pre-dissertation conference by the end of the semester.
Year 4 Spring	• Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. You are also strongly encouraged to sign up for the Dissertation Writing Workshop at least once while you are writing your dissertation. • Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter every semester. • Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS.

	● RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships.
Summer	Write, write, and write some more.
Fall	DISSERTATION WRITING PHASE ● Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. ● RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. ● RECOMMENDED: Join writing groups with other doctoral students. ● RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships ● Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter. ● Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS. ● Apply for the Dissertation Year Fellowship through the Graduate School and Extra Year Funding through the English Department. ● Attend Job Placement Workshop Meetings and begin preparing job materials. ● Request faculty to write letters of recommendation for the job market; do this well in advance. ● Meet with the English Department Graduate Program Coordinator to review forms and requirements for the Dissertation Defense (Final Exam). ● IDEALLY: Begin scheduling the Dissertation Defense for Spring Semester.
Spring	● Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. ● Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter. ● IDEALLY: Finish dissertation and schedule the Dissertation Defense. ● Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS. ● RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. ● RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships; begin developing job search material; attend job placement meetings.

	• RECOMMENDED: Join writing groups with other doctoral students. • If you defend, then you're done! CONGRATULATIONS!
	• It is not uncommon to need an additional year to complete the dissertation. You should prepare in the Fall of your final year of funding to apply for the Dissertation Year Fellowship and Extra Year Funding. But you should also plan ahead in case these opportunities do not become available. If you are continuing to write during this additional year, you should plan to finish and defend the dissertation as soon as possible while also going on the job market. Remember that you must complete your degree in 7 years after entering the program. • Whenever you defend your dissertation, then you're done! CONGRATULATIONS!

APPENDIX D: MILESTONES FOR PHD PROGRAM (WITH MA)

These milestones are rough guidelines on how to proceed but will be used as the basis for your annual evaluations. You must meet these milestones each year if you want to finish in the four years of funding available to you.

Year 1 Fall	• Enroll in full load of coursework (1 graduate-level course + ENGL 7020 + ENGL 7915). Consult with the DGS for advice on assembling an Academic Course Plan (ACP) committee and declaring an area of concentration.
Year 1 Spring	• Enroll in full load of coursework (3 graduate-level courses). • Schedule and hold mandatory Academic Course Plan (ACP) meeting with committee of your choice. The DGS must approve the program of study form signed by your ACP committee. Be very strategic about the classes you are transferring from your MA. Make sure you transfer the full 24 hours that you are allowed to move over. This will enable you to finish in the four funded years you have at LSU. Note that the ACP meeting constitutes the Qualifying Procedure for students entering the program with an MA.
Year 1 Summer	• IF YOU HAVEN'T YET: Complete Foreign Language Requirement by the start of your second year. You cannot schedule the general exam without meeting the foreign language requirement. • Begin work on the lists for your General Examinations.
Year 2 Fall	• Enroll in full load of coursework (2 courses + ENGL 9000). Do not enroll in a third class just because you are already taking two classes. Use the third class to sign up for thesis hours and work on the lists for your general exams. • Finalize your committee for your General Examinations.

	Finalize your lists for the General Examinations by December.
Year 2 Spring	- Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000 every semester for full-time status. - Complete Doctoral Degree Audit and Request for General Examinations. - Read, read, and read for your General Examinations. - Take your General Examinations by the end of the spring semester at the very latest. The earlier the better though!
Year 2 Summer	Write Dissertation Prospectus and/or draft out one chapter.
Year 3 Fall	- Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. - Schedule your prospectus meeting/pre-dissertation conference early in the fall. - Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter every semester. - Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS.
Year 3 Spring	- Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. - Work on dissertation; write chapter. - Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS. - RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. - RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships, begin developing job search material; attend “job corps” meetings. - RECOMMENDED: Join writing groups with other doctoral students.
Year 3 Summer	- Write, write, and write more. Finish chapter and start on another chapter. - Request faculty to write letters of recommendation for the job market; do this well in advance.
Fall	DISSERTATION WRITING PHASE Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000.

	• RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. • RECOMMENDED: Join writing groups with other doctoral students. • RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships • Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter. • Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS. • Apply for the Dissertation Year Fellowship through the Graduate School and Extra Year Funding through the English Department. • Attend Job Placement Workshop Meetings and begin preparing job materials. • Request faculty to write letters of recommendation for the job market; do this well in advance. • Meet with the English Department Graduate Program Coordinator to review forms and requirements for the Dissertation Defense (Final Exam). • IDEALLY: Begin scheduling the Dissertation Defense for Spring Semester.
Spring	• Sign up for 9 hours of ENGLISH 9000. • Work on dissertation; write at least one chapter. • IDEALLY: Finish dissertation and schedule the Dissertation Defense. • Report progress in writing to advisor and DGS. • RECOMMENDED: Enroll in Dissertation Writing Workshop. • RECOMMENDED: Identify dissertation grants and fellowships; begin developing job search material; attend job placement meetings. • RECOMMENDED: Join writing groups with other doctoral students. • If you defend, then you're done! CONGRATULATIONS!
	• It is not uncommon to need an additional year to complete the dissertation. You should prepare in the

	Fall of your final year of funding to apply for the Dissertation Year Fellowship and Extra Year Funding. But you should also plan ahead in case these opportunities do not become available. If you are continuing to write during this additional year, you should plan to finish and defend the dissertation as soon as possible while also going on the job market. Remember that you must complete your degree in 7 years after entering the program. • Whenever you defend your dissertation, then you're done! CONGRATULATIONS!
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Names and contact details of all Department administration can be found on the English Department webpage at https://www.lsu.edu/hss/english/faculty/department_administration/department_admin.php.

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