



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE HANDBOOK
AUGUST 2024

THE ENGLISH GRADUATE HANDBOOK¹

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I. MISSION

The SMU doctoral program in English provides students with a broad knowledge of English, American and Anglophone literature, critical theory, and pedagogy. The program also trains students in research methods as well as in textual and editorial practices that are foundational to their work as scholar-teachers. The faculty is committed to training future teachers and to the ideal that teaching and scholarship mutually nourish and sustain careers in our field. After a first-year course in pedagogy, students begin a carefully mentored, structured program designed to conclude with their teaching literature courses in their chosen field. The program also emphasizes each student's ability to research and to write innovatively and effectively. Students are assigned a mentor on first arriving and will thereafter work closely with other teachers, committee members and their dissertation director. The program encourages each doctoral student to become involved professionally: to present scholarship at conferences and symposia and to engage the daily life of the department, the college, and the university, from the ordinary work of self-governance to the dynamic energy of intellectual exchanges and programs scheduled throughout the year. SMU's English doctoral program is selective and small, with unique offerings like the Taos Summer Seminar. The program thus provides opportunities to forge close collegial relationships with faculty and fellow students, ties that will also support and promote the graduate's professional work for years to come.

The English Ph.D. program works closely with the [Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#) (formerly the [Office of Graduate Studies](#)) to find ways to improve or enhance the graduate study experience. They may be contacted at 214-768

DECISION ON FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM

Students enter the Ph.D. program with the expectation that they will follow the six-year schedule. Students entering with a master's degree may, with the permission of the DGS, select the five-year program following the first-year review at the end of the 2nd semester in residence. This decision needs to be accompanied by a petition to

is crucial that students interrupting their studies discuss the circumstances with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible.

Funding consists of tuition, fees, basic health benefits, and a stipend. Stipends will be paid on a monthly basis.

University policy dictates that any student performing work as part of their degree program must receive an Assistantship from which income tax will be withheld. Since all students, regardless of program plan, will teach one course per semester beginning in the second year of their residency, a portion of their stipend (income tax not withheld) will be paid as an Assistantship (income tax withheld). This

apply to the Graduate Program Committee for funding to improve professional development, including attendance at summer symposia or institutes, or to take language immersion courses.

Travel funds can be rolled over, and we recommend reserving these funds for later in the graduate career, when attending major national and international conferences (e.g. MLA, CCCC, ASA, GEMCS, ICMS) can best enable a candidate to present research (including the dissertation), network in the field, and advance the job search. The Moody School also has limited [travel funds](#) that may be requested to supplement those from our Ph.D. program.

N.B.:

with teaching duties; those not teaching may not be assigned an office. To resolve office space problems, please consult the DGS.



DIRECTORS

enter the job market. If, for example, you choose a director who will be on leave for most of your final years in the program, this will make maintaining a productive relationship much more difficult.

IN APPROACHING A FACULTY MEMBER ABOUT DIRECTING,

Consider the following questions:

- Does your potential director support your plans for study?
- Does she or he support the scholarly and intellectual goals of your dissertation project?
- What is the expected timeline for completing the later steps of the program?
- When are you expected to have dissertation chapters finished?
- What does your potential director expect of you?

The sooner you and your potential director understand how the relationship will work, the greater the chance the latter part of your graduate career will be highly rewarding.

The other two internal members of your committee should also be faculty members with whom you have had a productive relationship via regular coursework, independent studies, or other means. They should have expertise in the secondary or tertiary areas in which you will be examined for your qualifying examinations and be capable of offering advice on parts of the dissertation. All three committee members will be responsible for reading your examinations and dissertation. Each committee member has equal voting power in determining whether examinations and dissertations are acceptable. It is therefore important that all members be both supportive yet objective in their assessment of the dissertation project. The director and/or the DGS can recommend other members of the committee if you have any uncertainty.

ALL DISSERTATION COMMITTEES AT SMU REQUIRE AN EXTERNAL MEMBER. The external member must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from outside of the SMU English department. The external member may be from another institution but is not required to be in any way. You should consult your dissertation director in selecting the external member. The DGS must approve all committee members.

N.B.: The external committee member should be chosen as early as possible after you have advanced to candidacy. This is to ensure not only that you find a *supportive* committee member with a strong reputation, but also out of respect for that person's time and other obligations. **The best time to secure an external committee member is upon successful defense of the dissertation prospectus.**

VIII. EVALUATION & STANDARDS

Evaluation is an ongoing process. The faculty, and especially the DGS along with the student's mentor, director and committee members, take an unceasing interest in the student's progress, and will therefore be watching it carefully. Our goal is always to verify that each student is doing good work, learning what will lead to success (in terms of information and, more importantly, advanced skills), and making timely progress through the program. If those things temporarily stop happening, we will try to help a student get back on track; if a student seems unlikely to resume or successfully fulfill program goals, more serious action may become necessary, up to and including dismissal from the program.

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agreement between the faculty member and the student, as well as an excessive number of "I" grades, may jeopardize the student's standing in the program.

FIRST-YEAR REVIEW

All students will be carefully evaluated at the end of their first year by a subcommittee of the Ph.D. Program Committee, at which time students will be advised on how to proceed most productively in the program. This review is not meant to be punitive or intimidating. Rather, it is an important feedback opportunity both for the student and for the program. Students will submit a portfolio of their work for the year and a very brief summary review. Students should reflect on what they have done over the first year and where they see their work moving over the next two years. The subcommittee is charged with helping the student identify strengths and areas that are in need of remediation.

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On rare occasions, the committee may find that a student should not continue in the program. Our goal is that all first-year students will pass this review. Students must present copies of all their graduate work to the subcommittee before the review.

MASTER'S DEGREE,

Those students without a Master's degree will be offered the M.A. following the defense of the dissertation prospectus. Students will need

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member revises an existing writing project to be submitted soon after for publication. Students and teachers will live in casitas on the Taos campus. The week will **allow**

the student's Director and the DGS. See section on "Dissertation" below. Normally, the Dissertation Fellowship is taken in the 6th year. All students enroll in ENGL 8049 and ENGL 8105 in the spring.

Preparation in summer and fall for the job search. Students who took year five as the dissertation fellowship year teach two courses. All students enroll in ENGL 8049 and ENGL 8105.

Possible postdoctoral fellowship at

Year 3	6 hours at 6000- or 7000-level Teach one course Select Exam Director	3 hours at 6000-
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ENGLISH PH.D. GRADUATE CURRICULUM: FIVE-YEAR PLAN (42 HOURS)

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	9 hours enrolled: 6311 (Theory) plus 6 additional hours at 6000- or 7000-level No teaching	9 hours enrolled: 6310 (ALS) plus 6 additional hours at 6000- or 7000-level First-year evaluation No teaching
Year 2	6312 (Teaching Practicum) and 6 more hours at 6000- or 7000-level	



ENGL 6310, 6311, and 6312

Six 7000-level seminar courses (excludes
ENGL 7398

narratology, cultural studies, or an interdisciplinary approach) or some other topic. These parts may, indeed optimally they will, intersect the anticipated topic of your dissertation, but as a whole, they *must* take in a broad field of literary study, including a wide chronology and a range of genres and styles. **The oral exam will build on the written exams, which allows for expansion, clarification, and defense of the ideas and positions the student presented in the first part of the qualifying exams.**

THE EXAM PROPOSAL WILL CONSIST OF TWO COMPONENTS:

This rationale is crucial to the proposal. It should be a narrative essay that indicates clearly the origins and purpose of your interest in the periods, genres, or fields you have chosen for your examinations. It should also indicate that you have established a strong background in the field through your coursework, and that you have already learned enough about each field to be able to justify your study. In other words, the rationale should indicate that you have thought carefully about your choices, and that they will lead you down a focused path.

Each should include a brief statement of the logic and objectives for selections and the critical problems they present. Each list should consist of at least forty primary texts (for example, novels, plays, books of poetry, major epic poems, films, etc.) and a number of major critical/secondary texts. The lists should include accurate bibliographic information about authors' names and dates. They should be alphabetized by author, unless your director asks you to do otherwise.

Each list may comprise subsets organized to indicate specific movements or areas of interest directly relevant to your future projects. Your rationale should clarify their presence and organizing logic.

After gaining preliminary approval of your exam committee's Director, submit the proposal—both rationale and lists—to the other members of your committee promptly so they may contribute to your lists as needed. When your committee approves the proposal, the Director will submit copies to the DGS and **Program** Assistant. This should happen no later than the seventh week of the semester. Your Director will work with the DGS to set a date for the exams. Consult with the DGS and the

The written exams will be administered over three 8:00 am-5:00 pm days, generally during a one-week

your committee. Students cannot defend a prospectus that has not been approved by the dissertation director.

Ask the Program Assistant for help in arranging the place and time. To ensure that this date is met, and to uphold basic courtesies, the student should complete at least two tasks well in advance:

1. Communicate with *all* members of the dissertation committee and the DGS as soon as possible about the nature of the project, when they may expect to see the prospectus, and when you intend to sit for the defense;
2. Provide the dissertation committee with final

and for the candidate to build the dissertation from relevant papers, essays, presentations, and articles completed for seminars and/or professional

APPENDIX A:**FORMS**

1. Upon finalizing the Qualifying Exam committee, file with the Graduate Program Assistant:

[English Graduate Studies Committee Declaration Form](#)

2. After the successful completion of written exams and the defense of the prospectus, the following forms must be filled out, signed, and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and a copy to the Assistant to the Graduate Program.

[Recommendation for Admission to](#)

Student Signature

Date

To be completed by Department:

Director of Graduate Studies (print)

Signature

Date

Department Chair (print)

Signature

Date

Submit this completed formform

LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION MOTOR VEHICLE REPORT
MUST BE SIGNED BY SMU EMPLOYEE AND/OR STUDENT

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF RISK
MANAGEMENT DAWSON SERVICE CENTER SUITE 170

3030 Dyer Court P.O. Box 750231

Dallas TX 75275

ATTENTION:

To the Authorized Representative

Name as It Appears on Driver License (Print Legible)

.....

Driver License Number/State of Issuance

.....

Date of Birth

DEPARTMENT OR

ORGANIZATION SUPERVISOR

OR STAFF DESIGNEE

DATE

Revised August, 2007

Submit this completed form to the Assistant to the Chair of the Department of English



[THE DISSERTATION](#)



[THE PROFESSION](#)