GW English Graduate Program

2015-2016 Graduate Handbook (revised October 2015)
Note to students

You are responsible for abiding by the information in this handbook, as well as all pertinent information about graduate study at George Washington University and the Department of English contained in these two online sources:


2. The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences graduate handbook: http://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate/graduatestudenthandbook
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## GW'S ACADEMIC POLICIES

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General Information
The George Washington University offers several important services and resources for its students, in addition to resources available in the general DC area.

English Department Office
The Department of English is located at 801 22nd St., NW Suite 760, Washington, DC 20052, in Rome Hall room 763; telephone: 202-994-6180. The English Department website can be found at http://columbian.gwu.edu/departmentsprograms/english/ or http://columbian.gwu.edu/english.

The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS)
The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) website can be found at http://columbian.gwu.edu/.
Address: 801 22nd St NW, Suite 107, Washington DC 20051 (Phillips Hall); telephone: 202-994-6210

Student Technology Services (STS)
The Student Technology Services (STS) (http://gwired.gwu.edu/sts/?url=sts) provides technical support to students, including wireless access, ResNet, software installation, and Dell and Apple warranty repairs.

Estelle and Melvin Gelman Library
The Estelle and Melvin Gelman Library offers resources and services for GW students, including computers and printing, specialized research guides, databases, and loan services. The Library can be found at 2130 H St. NW, Washington, DC 20052 and the Gelman Library System website can be found at http://www.gelman.gwu.edu/

In addition, GW offers library services on the Mount Vernon campus through the Eckles Library (http://www.gelman.gwu.edu/eckles-library), which can be found at 2100 Foxhall Rd NW, Washington DC, 20007, and at the Virginia Science and Technology campus library (http://www.gelman.gwu.edu/virginia), which can be found in room 179 in Building 2 at 44983 Knoll Square, Ashburn, VA 20147.

Consortium Libraries
The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area provides unique opportunities for students in the DC area. As part of this program, students of GW have access to the other Consortium university libraries. The following thirteen universities are members of the Consortium and allow library access: American University, Catholic University of America, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Marymount University, National Defense Intelligence College, Southeastern University, Trinity University, the University of the District of Columbia, and the University of Maryland.

In addition to allowing library access, the Consortium allows students to request books from other Consortium libraries through the GW Gelman library website, http://www.gelman.gwu.edu/services/consortium-loan, or through the Washington Research Library Consortium website, http://www.wrlc.org/. This process is similar to interlibrary loan services, also offered at Gelman Library, but books requested through the Consortium loan arrive in two to five business days, while interlibrary loan books arrive in five to fourteen business days.
Area Libraries
Other libraries in the DC area that GW students may find useful include the DC public library system, http://www.dclibrary.org/, and the Library of Congress, http://www.loc.gov/index.html. The Library of Congress contains over 33 million books and provides valuable services to research students.

Writing Center
The George Washington University Writing Center offers free, one-on-one sessions with undergraduate and graduate student peer tutors, trained to help GW students “develop and focus their ideas, implement an organizational strategy, utilize evidence proficiently, and clarify their syntax and diction.” Students can make appointments through the Writing Center website (recommended), by phone, or in person at the Center. The George Washington University Writing center is located in the Gelman Library, suit 103 (first floor, back left), 2130 H Street NW. The phone number for the center is (202) 994-3765 and the website is http://www.gwu.edu/~gwriter/.

GW Bookstore
The George Washington University Bookstore is located on the ground floor of the Marvin Center at 800 21st, NW. The bookstore’s website can be accessed at http://www.gwu.bkstr.com.

GW Police Department
The University Police Department offers a number of services for George Washington students, including a free 12 hour self-defense course for female students and an escort service.

The Police department is located at Woodull House, 1033 G. St., NW and can be reached on the Foggy Bottom campus at 202.994.6110 and on the Mount Vernon campus at 202.242.6110. In case of emergency, please call 202.994.6111 or 911. For non-emergency situations, the University Police can be reached by email at upd@upd.gwu.edu. More information about the University Police department website can be found at http://gwired.gwu.edu/upd.

Campus Safety
The University Police Department encourages all George Washington University students to be alert, aware of their surroundings, and conscious of their behavior in order to remain safe while on campus. While the University’s urban location offers many benefits and opportunities for GW students, it likewise necessitates higher awareness. The UPD suggests that students follow the following tips, among others:

• Always carry a form of personal identification with you. This is particularly important in Washington, DC because of the amount of federal and local security that is utilized in the District.
• Wherever you are—on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus or subway—stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
• Know the neighborhoods where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, and restaurants, or stores that are open late.
• Know your neighbors, so you have someone to call or go to if you’re uncomfortable or frightened.
Transportation
The District of Columbia offers public transportation in the form of bus and metro services, which make campus access easy for students living off campus. The Foggy Bottom metro rail stop (orange and blue line) is located at 2301 I St. NW, on the GW campus. The metro also provides bus service with numerous lines on or near the GWU campus: http://www.wmata.com. Finally, the Maryland Transportation Authority provides commuter train services (the MARC train) from Brunswick, Baltimore, and Camden Park to Union Station in DC, with station stops between (http://mta.maryland.gov/services/marc/).

George Washington University offers a number of transportation options for its students. The Mount Vernon Shuttle (or the Vern Express http://gwired.gwu.edu/mvcl/Express/) provides free transportation between the Foggy Bottom campus and the Mount Vernon campus. The Colonial Express Shuttle provides free transportation around the GWU campus from 7 pm to 3 am (http://gwired.gwu.edu/upd/Transportation/ColonialExpressShuttleBuscopy/). Finally, GW offers 4-RIDE, a free escort service which runs from 7 pm to 5:30 am every day. In addition, one of the Escort Vans is equipped to provide access for persons using a wheelchair (http://gwired.gwu.edu/upd/Transportation/4RIDEcopy/). To request a van call 202-994-RIDE. If you are in a wheelchair, please notify the dispatcher when you call to request a ride so the correct van is sent.

Student Health Services
The George Washington University offers health services for its students, including a health clinic, student health insurance, LGBTQ services, and women’s health. More information about Student Health Services can be found at http://gwired.gwu.edu/shs.

Lerner Health and Wellness Center (Gym)
The Lerner Health and Wellness Center (http://gwired.gwu.edu/gwellness/) is located at the corner of 23rd and G Streets and provides fitness equipment, exercise courses, sport courts, and a pool, among other services and facilities, for GW students and faculty.

Dining Information
The George Washington University and surrounding area offer a large variety of dining options for GW students. Information about campus dining and meal plans can be found at http://www.gwu.edu/explore/campuslife/livingoncampus/dining. A list of area restaurants can be found at http://www.gwu.edu/explore/visitingcampus/lodgingdining.

Student Services
GWired, http://gwired.gwu.edu, is a student network created by Student and Academic Support Services, which provides a comprehensive list of student services and provides information on events and opportunities for GW students.

GW Information System (GWeb)
The GWeb information system (http://my.gwu.edu or https://banweb.gwu.edu/PRODCartridge/rwbkwhis.P_WWWLogin) provides GW students with access to student records and registration, financial aid information, employee information (when applicable), and personal information. In addition, students register for classes through the GWeb system. DegreeMAP is availa-
ble to all undergraduate programs and many graduate programs: http://registrar.gwu.edu/degreemap. While DegreeMap can serve as a helpful check on student progress the information is not always fully updated.

**GW’s Academic Policies**

More detail information about the George Washington University’s academic policies can be found in the Graduate Bulletin ([http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/grad/csas.html#regulations](http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/grad/csas.html#regulations)) and the Graduate Student Handbook ([http://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate/graduatestudenthandbook](http://columbian.gwu.edu/graduate/graduatestudenthandbook)).

**Course Registration**

Students may register for classes and change their schedule through the GWeb system ([http://my.gwu.edu](http://my.gwu.edu) or [https://banweb.gwu.edu/PRODCartridge/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin](https://banweb.gwu.edu/PRODCartridge/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin)), where they can likewise view student holds, which might prevent registration.

**Consortium Course Registration**

George Washington University is a member of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Thirteen universities – American University, Catholic University of America, Gallaudet University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Marymount University, National Defense Intelligence College, Southeastern University, Trinity University, the University of the District of Columbia, and the University of Maryland – are affiliated with the Consortium. Students in our program have the opportunity to take courses at other Consortium member universities, although departmental policy is that graduate students can take no more than two courses for credit outside of the GWU English department.

For Consortium courses, registration forms and instructions are available here: [https://registrar.gwu.edu/sites/registrar.gwu.edu/files/downloads/consortium-form.pdf](https://registrar.gwu.edu/sites/registrar.gwu.edu/files/downloads/consortium-form.pdf). Usually, permission of the instructor is required for all courses students take at other Consortium universities. Students register and pay tuition at their own institution for all Consortium courses.

**English Language Requirements for International Students**

Students who are citizens of countries in which English is not an official language are required to take the English for Academic Purposes Placement Test prior to registration for their first semester. The placement test is offered by the Language Center ([http://gwired.gwu.edu/language](http://gwired.gwu.edu/language)). Those with TOEFL scores of at least 600 (paper-based) or 250 (computer-based) or 100 (Internet-based) or an overall hard score of 7.0 on the academic IELTS with no individual hard score below 6.0 are exempted. Based on the result of the Placement Test, students may be required to take one or more EFL courses. Students placed in EAP 109, 110 or 111 must register for these courses in their first semester. For more information, please refer to the section on University Regulations in the University Bulletin ([http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/](http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/)) for Graduate Programs.
Maintaining Good Standing at GW

Grades and Curricular Requirements

CCAS policies regarding grades and scholarship requirements are outlined in the Graduate Bulletin: http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/grad/csas.html#regulations

No CCAS degree candidates will be permitted to graduate with a GPA (grade-point average) of less than 3.0. In the English Department, MA students are required to maintain a 3.25 GPA and PhD students a 3.5 GPA. If a course is repeated for credit, all grades received for the course remain on the record and are included in the GPA.

Registration and Work Load

Students are required to register each fall and spring semester. Failure to register requires that a student apply for readmission.

Students who are temporarily unable to continue their program may request a Leave of Absence (LOA). The student should submit a petition form to their department. If the request is approved, CCAS will inform the student and submit the required registration paper work to the Office of the Registrar. Students on LOA do not have access to University facilities including the library and the faculty. No more than two semesters LOA is allowed over the total period of enrollment in the program.

Students who have not yet completed all their required coursework (and are not on LOA) must register for at least three credit hours per semester. Note that this applies also to those registering for Thesis/Dissertation Research. Students must register for at least five hours per semester to be considered a half-time student, and at least nine hours to be considered full-time. Special permission is required for a student to register for more than fifteen hours in the fall or spring semesters or more than six hours in a single summer session.

Students who have completed all required coursework, all special departmental requirements, and all Thesis/Dissertation Research registration requirements and are within their CCAS program deadline (4 years for Master’s and 8 years for PhD) must register for one credit of Continuing Research (CR) each semester until completion of degree. Continuing Research is listed in the Schedule of Classes under Columbian College as CCAS 0940 for doctoral students and CCAS 0920 for Master’s. Students who have exceeded their CCAS program deadline must petition to continue a further semester and, if approved by the Associate Dean, may be required to register for up to six credit hours of Reading and Research for audit.

Dropping, Adding, Withdrawing from Courses

Students dropping and adding coursework should do so using the same method (online or on paper) and within the same week. Any changes in course enrollment made after the end of the registration period must have the approval of the instructor involved, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the CCAS Graduate Office, and must be made by the stated deadline (see below). Registration transaction forms (RTF and RTF-EZ) are available on the Office of the Registrar’s web page: http://www.gwu.edu/~reGWeb/web-content/index.html
Tuition will be adjusted according to the schedule of refunds in the GW Graduate Bulletin: http://www.gwu.edu/~bulletin/grad/fefr.html

Refund request forms are available through the Student Accounts Office: http://colonialcentral.gwu.edu/

During the Fall and Spring semesters the deadline for dropping a course without academic penalty is the end of the eighth week of classes. A course dropped during the first four weeks of classes will not appear on a student’s transcript. A course dropped after the fourth week but before the end of the eighth week will appear on the transcript with a grade of "W". Students who wish to drop a course after that deadline must work with their Director of Graduate Studies to petition the CCAS Graduate Office. Please note that the dates relevant to academic status have no bearing on refund policies.

Students who find it necessary to withdraw completely from the University must notify the CCAS Graduate Office in writing. If notification is not given, and the student fails to register for the next Fall or Spring semester, action will be taken to terminate the student’s degree candidacy. If it is necessary to withdraw from the University during the semester, the student must withdraw from all courses according to the procedures and policies stated in the previous paragraphs.

**Fulltime, Halftime, and Part Time Status**

- **Fulltime status**: no less than 9 credits and no more than 12 credits per semester. All International Students must be registered fulltime, or certified for a lower number of credits and fulltime status.
- **Halftime status**: between 5 and 8 credits per semester.
- **Part Time status**: less than 5 credits per semester.

**Deadlines for Degrees**

Master’s degrees students must finish within 4 years; PhD students must finish within 8 years. Students who do not finish within that time may be dismissed from the program.
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

GENERAL INFO FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH
The English Department at The George Washington University offers Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

Graduate Advising
Every graduate student in the English Department will be assigned an advisor upon admission. Students should meet with their advisor and/or Director of Graduate Studies in their first semester in order to draw up a Program of Studies. This should be a detailed statement of the individual requirements of each degree program and the dates by which each requirement should be completed. It should include a list of all courses that the student will take each semester and a list of all exams that the student must pass, with dates by which the student intends to pass them. The student and department should keep copies of this Program of Studies and consult it regularly as the student progresses through the program. After the first semester, all students must contact their Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and/or assigned faculty mentor before registering for courses.

Transfer of Credits
An entering PhD student who has a Master’s degree relevant to the proposed doctoral field of study may be awarded up to 24 hours of coursework credits. Entering students who do not hold a Master’s degree may request up to 24 semester hours of credit toward a doctoral degree for acceptable post-baccalaureate, graduate-level coursework that meets the criteria cited above in the section on Transfer of Credits into Master’s programs. Students who wish to transfer credit into their program should consult their Director of Graduate Studies as early as possible and arrange for the department to petition CCAS via the appropriate form. Only rarely and with good reason will more than 24 semester hours be transferred. (One such reason is if the courses were taken as part of a GW Master’s degree within the same discipline.) This request should be submitted within the student’s first year in the program. To begin the process of applying for transfer credit, the student should write to her/his previous graduate institution, requesting an official transcript. Then s/he should make an appointment with the DGS to fill out the transfer credit form and, if need be, a CCAS petition form. Once transfer credits have been approved by the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, notification will appear on the student’s official record.

Non-Seminar Credits
There are six types of non-seminar credit for which students register:
1. **Graduate Teaching Certification (UNIV 0250):** All funded PhD Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and unfunded Instructional Assistants (IAs) are required to sign up for the GTAP orientation program offered a few days before the beginning of their first semester. This course, which is listed as UNIV 0250, counts for 1 credit.

2. **Independent Study (ENGL 6720):** BA/MA, MA and PhD students can count toward their credits of coursework up to 9 credits of Independent Study (ENGL 6720). An Independent Study is usually 3 credits; to sign up for it, the student must first find a faculty mentor willing to supervise him/her, and draw up a contract that consists of a reading list as well as a timeline for meetings and submission of required written work. The contract should then be emailed to the Director of Graduate
Studies for approval. Only then will the student be able to register electronically for the Independent Study.

3. **Undergraduate Course for Graduate Credit**: Graduate students may take up to two undergraduate courses for graduate credit. Receiving graduate credit for an undergraduate course requires additional reading and coursework, and all necessary arrangements will be made in advance between the student and the professor. Students should discuss plans to take undergraduate courses for graduate credit with the DGS as well as with their departmental advisor.

4. **MA Thesis Research (English 6999)**: When an MA student chooses to do a thesis rather a portfolio as the final project for the MA degree. In the last semester of the program, students doing a thesis must take 6 credit hours of ENGL 6999 with a thesis advisor.

5. **PhD Advanced Reading and Research (ENGL 8998)**: When a PhD student has finished her/his 48 credits of coursework, but has not yet been advanced to candidacy (i.e. before successfully defending her/his Dissertation Prospectus), s/he stays enrolled by signing up for credits of ENGL 8998, Advanced Reading and Research.

6. **PhD Dissertation Research (ENGL 8999)**: When a PhD student has advanced to candidacy (i.e. passed the Written and Oral exams, successfully defended her/his Dissertation prospectus, and fulfilled all other obligations including the Language Exam), s/he stays enrolled by signing up for credits of ENGL 8999, Dissertation Research. A student should not exceed a total of 72 credits, so if s/he has to sign up for less than the required fulltime credit load, s/he must fill out a form (signed by the Director of Graduate Studies) certifying her/his fulltime status and submit it to the CCAS Graduate Office.

7. **PhD Continuing Research (CCAS 0940)**: When a PhD student has reached the required total of 72 credits and is within deadline but has not yet finished her/his dissertation, s/he signs up for Continuing Research (CCAS 0940). There is also a Continuing Education option available for students who need to remain registered over the summer.

### Incomplete Grades

A student can receive a grade of incomplete for a graduate seminar only with the permission of the instructor. A form needs to be filled out; it is available from the English Department’s Office Manager. Usually, all coursework must be submitted within 6 months of the end of the course; if the student does not submit all coursework within a year, the grade automatically becomes an “F.” The final grade will appear on the student’s transcript along with an “I.”

### Procedure for Awarding Degrees

BA/MA, MA, MPhil, and PhD students must apply to graduate; the form is available online on the Registrar’s website (www.gwu.edu/~reGWeb). The deadlines are as follows:

- for Fall graduation: October 1
- for Spring graduation: February 1
- for Summer graduation: July 1

If a student misses the application-to-graduate deadline, s/he can still apply to graduate that semester, but s/he will have to pay a late fee. If for some reason the student does not graduate in the semester s/he had applied to do so, s/he will need to submit a new application for graduation. Any graduation fees paid previously will transfer to the new application. In order to graduate, the student must be cleared to do so by the...
Director of Graduate Studies. The final date of clearance for MA students in the spring semester is May 15; hence the Portfolio interview must be scheduled for no later than the first week of May.

**Travel and Conference Funding**

Graduate students can receive up to $700 support per year ($500 from CCAS, $200 from the department) for study-related travel expenses (attending conferences, visiting archives, etc.). Procedures for applying for support can be found at [http://columbian.gwu.edu/staticfile/CCAS/AboutUs/travel_guideline-r.pdf](http://columbian.gwu.edu/staticfile/CCAS/AboutUs/travel_guideline-r.pdf). To apply for the support, you must fill out an E-travel form request; it can be obtained from the Chair of the Department of English.
SEQUENCES & PROCEDURES FOR ENGLISH GRADUATE DEGREES

MA IN ENGLISH
There are two possible pathways toward the MA in English. One path is through the 5 year GW BA/MA program. The second path is through the normal 2 year program. Both programs require the following:
1. Take required courses: 30 hours
2. Maintain cumulative GPA of 3.25 or more (MA only)
3. Take English 6100 Literary Theory, unless waived or substituted by honors 4040 or other approved courses
4. Apply, by appropriate deadlines, to graduate during semester desired (see “Procedure for Awarding Degrees” above)
5. Finish thesis or portfolio before end of final semester.

MA Coursework
Earning an MA in English requires 30 hours of credit (normally 10 3-credit courses). Eight of the ten courses must be graduate courses in English. However, with the permission of the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), a student may take up to two graduate courses in another Department or a Consortium University. This scenario is particularly desirable when courses are offered that prove extremely relevant to the student's scholarly interests. Additionally, a student can take up to two undergraduate courses at the 3000 level in English which, with extra work agreed upon by the faculty and student, will count as English graduate courses. This agreement to extra work should be spelled out and filed with the English DGS for inclusion in the student's file. Students choosing to do the thesis as the final project will take course credits of 6 hours in thesis research (English 6998 and/or English 6999) in the final semester. The Office of the Registrar provides a step-by-step guide on how to register, and information about the Fall/Spring schedule and summer sessions. http://registrar.gwu.edu/how-register.

Application to graduate: You must have a cumulative degree GPA of at least 3.25. When you think you are in your final semester, you must apply to graduate through the Student Records menu in GWeb. Application deadlines can be found on the Registrar's website: http://registrar.gwu.edu/. Graduation information and applications deadlines are found: http://registrar.gwu.edu/application-deadlines. If you do not apply by the published deadlines, you may be able to use a paper application form, and you will be charged a $35 late fee. You must submit an application to graduate in order to have your degree conferred.

You must be registered in the semester in which you are intending to graduate. If you are graduating in the summer, you may be eligible for Continuous Enrollment (see “Non Seminar Credits” above). Degrees are conferred in January, May, and August, although only the May graduation is marked in a commencement ceremony. If you do not graduate during your intended graduating semester you must register and reapply.

Work Load: You must register for at least 3 credits per semester, unless you have completed all of your coursework or are on an approved leave of absence (see “Maintaining Good Standing” above). The credit hours required for half-time and full-time status are: Minimum: 3 credits per semester; Maximum: 12 credits per semester. If you wish to be part-time, turn in a half-time certification form for approval to the graduate dean (see “Maintaining Good Standing” above). You cannot work full time and be a full time graduate student.
MA Final Projects

#1: The MA Portfolio
The student choosing to do the MA Portfolio submits three essays written for English graduate seminars at GW considered to be his or her best work (these can be rewritten for inclusion in the portfolio); and an overview (approx. 6-8 pages) that places the written work included in the Portfolio and the student’s development as a scholar and critic in perspective. The overview may tease out points of theoretical and/or thematic convergence between the essays; recognize points of tension between them; revisit and reformulate points that the student might now approach differently; suggest new directions that the student is likely to follow in future work (including as yet unfinished work for courses in the spring semester). Submit the essays to the MA advisor. The MA director will schedule the final portfolio interview.

A. Procedures for Preparing the MA Portfolio
1. After reading the portfolio materials, two members of the graduate studies committee will meet with the student for a 30-45 minute interview. The two committee members will talk with the student about the contents of his or her portfolio; they will provide feedback about its quality, paying particular attention to the overview in relation to the three essays.
2. The student will then be awarded a grade of distinction, pass or fail; the grade will be accompanied by a written evaluation of the portfolio, written by the two committee members. Students who fail their portfolio assessment will be expected to revise and resubmit their portfolio by the end of the summer. If they fail a second time, they will not receive the MA.

B. Rubric for Evaluating the MA Portfolio:
DISTINCTION: Student’s papers are of an outstanding (and even publishable) quality; overview and interview indicate that the student has a strong sense of her/himself as a critic, is capable of thoughtful self-reflection about the theoretical and methodological assumptions s/he brings to bear on her/his reading, and is asking provocative and even innovative questions about her/his field(s) of study.
PASS: Student’s papers are of good quality; overview and interview offer a thoughtful distillation of student’s assumptions as a scholar and critic, and suggest competence within her/his field(s) of study.
FAIL: Student’s papers are of indifferent quality; overview and interview do not indicate sufficient critical self-awareness or competence within her/his field(s) of study.

#2: The MA thesis
Students who opt to write a Master’s Thesis will submit the thesis no later than the last day of classes in the semester in which the student plans to graduate. The thesis counts for 6 credits. The thesis (60-80 pages) should demonstrate scholarly research and a strong original argument, and should be presented in an approved format. It will be supervised by two faculty members (a director and a reader) in the field.

Rubric for Evaluating the MA Thesis:
DISTINCTION: Student’s thesis is of an outstanding (and even publishable) quality; the student’s scholarly voice is well-developed; her/his thesis asks and answers provocative and even innovative questions about her/his field(s) of study.
PASS: Student’s thesis is of good quality; student’s scholarly voice is sufficient and suggests competence within her/his field(s) of study.
FAIL: Student’s thesis is of indifferent quality; student’s scholarly voice is insufficient and suggests a lack of critical self-awareness or competence within her/his field(s) of study.
Sample MA Timelines

BA/MA: The Five-Year Dual Program
The BA/MA degree is completed during an additional fifth year following a GW English student’s four years of undergraduate coursework (and after award of the bachelor’s degree).

BA/MA students complete the MA portion of their dual degree during their fourth and fifth years at GW. 30 credits of coursework are required; 6 of these are completed in one’s undergraduate senior year, and these count toward both the BA and the MA. The student must fill out a combined degree credit form to have courses “double” count toward both degrees; s/he must obtain a B or better in all double-counted coursework.

BA/MA students admitted to the English Honors Program must take the undergraduate Honors Seminar (ENGL 4040) in their senior year. Students who take ENGL 4040 will not be required to take ENGL 6100 in their fifth year. Those BA/MA students who do not take ENGL 4040 will be required to take ENGL 6100.

BA/MA students are strongly encouraged to take at least one independent study (3 credits) during the summer before their MA year, thus lightening his or her load. If the student does this, the remaining 21 credits are taken over the course of the remaining two semesters.

Scenario 1 (Student takes Honors Seminar [ENGL 4040]):

Senior year as undergraduate: ENGL 4040 Honors Seminar (3 credits); 1 English graduate seminar (3 credits);

Summer session before academic year: recommended 3 credits of ENGL 6720 (Independent Study)

Fall semester: 4 courses (12 credits)

Spring semester: 3 courses (9 credits), and submit Master’s Portfolio by March 15th

- OR - 1 course (3 credits), and submit Master’s Thesis (6 credits) by March 15th.

Scenario 2 (Student does not take Honors Seminar [ENGL 4040]):

Senior year as undergraduate: 2 English graduate seminars (6 credits)

Summer session before academic year: recommended 3 credits of ENGL 6720 (Independent Study)

Fall semester: ENGL 6100 (3 credits); 3 additional courses (9 credits)

Spring semester: 3 courses (9 credits), and submit Master’s Portfolio by March 15th

- OR - 1 course (3 credits), and submit Master’s Thesis (6 credits) by March 15th.
MA: The Two-Year Program
Full time MA students complete their degrees in two years; they are required to take 30 credits before graduation.

MA students usually take 3 courses per semester in their first year (i.e. 9 credits per semester, for an annual total of 18), and 2 courses per semester in their second year; however, if your loan package mandates full time study, you will need to do your MA in a year and a half, taking 3 courses in two of the three semesters and 4 courses in one of the three semesters.

If a student opts to write a Master’s Thesis, this counts for 6 credits; it is written in the final semester of the degree.

Year 1
Fall semester: 3 or 4 courses (9 or 12 credits), including ENGL 6100 – Introduction to Literary Theory (the only required course for the MA)
Spring semester: 3 or 4 courses (9 or 12 credits)

Year 2
Fall semester: 2 courses (6 credits), or 3 courses (9 credits) if loan package mandates fulltime study
Spring semester: 2 courses (6 credits) OR a thesis (6 credits); submit Master's Portfolio by March 15th - OR - submit Master's Thesis no later than the last day of courses.
PhD IN ENGLISH
The PhD program (72 credit hours) normally takes four to five years of full-time study. We expect students to adhere to this timetable and therefore fund them for this length of time, designing a program that will enable them to progress quickly from coursework to dissertation and defense. In order to facilitate the shift from ‘student’ to ‘colleague,’ we match students to appropriate faculty mentors upon arrival in the doctoral program, and we urge students to develop a dissertation research agenda by the end of the first year of graduate work.

A student entering with an MA in an approved field may be awarded up to 24 credits of advanced standing toward doctoral coursework. PhD students must maintain a minimum grade-point average of 3.5 in order to remain in the program.

PhD Coursework
Students must have 48 hours (16 seminars) of coursework; this includes Independent Study (ENGL 6720) and Advanced Research and Reading (ENGL 8998) courses, which may be repeated for credit with the approval of the DGS.

Students may take up to two courses outside the English Department, in other GW graduate programs, in Consortium Universities with English graduate programs (Georgetown University, American University, the University of Maryland-College Park, and George Mason University), or at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

PhD Language exam
The Language Exam is required of PhD students. Students must pass a comprehension exam in a language other than English; the language is selected with the approval of the student’s faculty advisor and/or DGS. Most language exams are administered by the George Washington University Language Center, which schedules and grades them. It tests only comprehension skills in reading another language (i.e. not verbal or speaking skills). See: http://gwired.gwu.edu/language/testing/toolexamsfall. We strongly advise that PhD students fulfill this requirement as soon as possible and preferably in their first semester. Students must complete the language requirement before proceeding to the Written Exam.
**PhD Written Exam**

The PhD Written Exam is the first in the formal doctoral exam sequence. Ideally the Written Exam will be completed by April 1 of Year 2. It is an eight-hour written exam based on the student's proposed field of study for the dissertation. Study for the Written Exam is intended to be an exciting and fulfilling. The exam is intended to be a fully interactive process that leads to the scholarly independence necessary for writing a dissertation and to follow one into a research career.

**A. Preparing for the Written Exam**

1. At the beginning of the spring semester in Year 1, the PhD student will declare a primary field or fields. This is most likely the area of strength into which the student was admitted.

2. During the spring semester of Year 1, the student will select – in consultation with her/his advisor – a second reader who is expected to be an expert within the declared field(s). The student should initially consult with, and subsequently receive written agreement from, both faculty members, stating that each is willing to direct and administer the list and the exam. This agreement should be indicated on the PhD Written Exam Committee Form.

3. By the end of Year 1, the student should submit a draft of her/his reading list (no fewer than 50 books) along with a 1-2 page rationale. The recommended breakdown of the books for the reading list is 30-40 primary texts, and 10-20 theoretical texts. The rationale is designed to lay out the student’s major points of interest across the periods and genres within the area of strength; it should also justify the inclusion of any texts from outside those field(s).

4. At least a month before the scheduled day of the exam (Written Exams should be completed by April 1 of Year 2), the student must send a list of eight possible Written Examination questions to the advisor and second reader. The advisor and second reader reserve the right to edit these questions, but will notify the student of the emendations. They will select four of these eight questions (whether in their original or in revised form) to appear in the exam; the other four questions will be devised by the advisor and the second reader.

**B. Duties of the Written Examiners**

1. The ADVISOR meets regularly with the student in the semester prior to the exam (Written Exams should be completed by April 1 of Year 2). The advisor is the student’s primary consultant on her/his reading list and rationale, and must sign off on these before they are submitted with the Written Exam Committee form to the DGS. The advisor solicits eight possible Written Examination questions from the student at least a month before the scheduled exam; together with the second reader, s/he reviews the questions, and notifies the student of any emendations. The advisor also confers with the second reader on the composition of four new questions. The advisor emails the exam to the student on the scheduled examination day; once the exam is completed, the advisor is responsible for: 1) collating her/his feedback and that of the second reader into a consolidated written report, to be sent within a week of the exam; and 2) scheduling the Oral Exam.

2. The SECOND READER tends to meet less regularly with the student in the semester prior to the exam than the advisor does. But the reader is also required to sign off on the reading list and rationale. S/he confers with the advisor on reviewing and (if necessary) emending the students’ proposed eight questions as well as on the composition of the four examiners’ questions. The reader sends the advisor her/his written feedback about the exam within a week.
C. Procedures for the Written Exam
1. The Written Exam itself consists of eight questions; four are from the student’s list, and the other four are written by the examiners (see above). During the exam, the student answers four of the eight questions, including at least two written by the examiners.

2. The exam takes eight hours, usually starting at 8 am or 9 am and finishing at 5 pm or 6 pm, with an hour off for lunch. The student cannot consult books or notes during the exam. At the end of the exam, the student emails her/his four answers to the two examiners.

3. The examiners grade the Written Exam (a fail, a pass, or a distinction), and write up an extensive report on the examination.

4. The student must pass the Written Exam before moving on to the Oral Exam; s/he can retake it if s/he fails, but if s/he fails the exam twice s/he will be dismissed from the program.

D. Rubric for Evaluating the Written Exam
DISTINCTION: Student’s answers display superior skills of critical analysis, theoretical reflection, and historical contextualization. S/he not only responds directly to the examination questions, but also thoughtfully teases out interesting and even unexpected implications from them. S/he is already making compelling, nuanced, dissertation-worthy arguments that testify to her/his mastery of the field(s), in terms both of primary texts and the current critical conversations about them.

PASS: Student’s answers display satisfactory skills of critical analysis, theoretical reflection, and historical contextualization. S/he responds appropriately to the examination questions. S/he may not yet be making dissertation-worthy arguments, but is clearly well immersed in the field(s) and its current critical conversations.

FAIL (if student makes at least two of the four following errors): 1. Student’s answers do not display sufficient skills of critical analysis, theoretical reflection, and/or historical contextualization. 2. S/he does not respond to the questions that have been posed. 3. S/he does not demonstrate sufficient mastery of the primary texts in her/his field(s). 4. S/he does not demonstrate sufficient mastery of the current critical conversations in her/his field(s).
**PhD Oral Exam**

The PhD Oral Exam is the second in the formal doctoral exam sequence. Ideally the Oral Exam will be completed within three weeks of the Written Exam (i.e., by the end of April in Year 2). The Oral Exam provides the student the opportunity to defend the Written Exam and to discuss wider aspects of the works included on her/his reading list. This Oral Exam will last 90 minutes. The examination committee consists of the student’s advisor plus two other English faculty members who specialize in the student’s field(s).

**A. Preparing for the Oral Exam**

1. In consultation with the student’s advisor and/or the DGS, the student must choose the third committee member to serve as an examiner. Ideally this will occur during the spring semester of Year 1 (when the student selected her/his Written Exam committee members). The student should consult with (and subsequently receive written agreement from) all three committee members, stating that each is willing to direct and administer the Oral Exam. This agreement should be indicated on the PhD Oral Exam Committee Form.

2. At least one week before Oral Exam, the student must send the three examiners a copy of the passage s/he plans to close read and explicate at the exam. The student’s chosen passage should provide not only an example of a rich and complex primary text, but also a passage that demonstrates the links between the student’s field(s) and thematic interests.

3. The student should remember to bring to the exam print-outs of her/his Written Exam, the long list of 50 books, rationale, her/his chosen passage, and a pen.

**B. Duties of Oral Exam Committee Members**

1. The STUDENT’S ADVISOR confers with the committee members in advance about possible lines of questioning that stem from the student’s Written Exam. S/he should take the lead in the conversation based on the student’s chosen passage and close reading. S/he should also take the lead in testing the student’s depth of coverage of the reading list, ability to make thematic points of connection between texts across genres and historical periods, and facility with different theoretical perspectives in response to diverse texts. Ideally, the advisor will be able to steer the conversation toward a dissertation topic.

2. The SECOND EXAMINER is expected to take an active, co-leading role (with the advisor) in the questioning. S/he confers in advance with the advisor about possible lines of questioning (see above), but also asks follow-up questions based on the student’s Written Exam, the student’s chosen passage and close reading, and comments made in the Oral Exam.

3. The THIRD EXAMINER, who was not a member of the Written Exam committee, represents expertise in another facet of the student’s research field(s). S/he is especially tasked with enabling a conversation that tests the student’s depth of coverage of the reading list, ability to make thematic points of connection between texts across genres and historical periods, and facility with different theoretical perspectives in response to diverse texts.
C. Procedures for the Oral Exam
The Oral Exam lasts 90 minutes, and is subdivided approximately as follows:

1. The advisor calls the exam into session, explaining the format (student’s general statement, close reading of the student’s chosen passage, and Q and A about the Written Exam and the reading list).

2. The student makes a brief general statement about her/his reading list. This is in some ways a reprise of the written rationale; the difference is that having written on many of the works and studying the list over the preparatory period leading up to the exams, the student may now see new points of connection between the texts on the list, and understand her/his relation to the field(s) in a new light. (5 mins)

3. The student distributes copies of her/his chosen passage, and then offers a close reading of it. The student should explicate the ways the passage highlights themes and/or topics that unite the student’s reading list. The examiners ask questions about the passage, close reading, and thematic connections. (20 mins)

4. The advisor and second examiner ask questions about the student’s Written Exam. This question time is not as formal as the structured Q and A of the dissertation defense – instead, it should be a conversation between the student and the examiners, with examiners feeling free to ask follow-up questions on the spot. (20 mins)

5. The entire committee asks questions to assess the student’s depth of coverage of the reading list, ability to make thematic points of connection between texts across genres and historical periods, and facility with different theoretical perspectives in response to diverse texts. It might make sense for each examiner to take a turn “leading” the Q and A. (40 mins)

6. After 90 minutes, the student will be asked to leave the room; the committee should confer for 10 minutes about the student’s performance, and decide on a grade of distinction, pass, or fail, based on the evaluation rubric (see below). The student is then called back into the room and informed of the result. The advisor will write a paragraph reviewing the student’s performance, making recommendations for areas that the student might need to address. The paragraph should be emailed to the student within a day of the exam; it should be cc’ed to the examining committee and the DGS. If the student has failed, s/he could consult with the DGS immediately to discuss scheduling when s/he will retake exam. Students who fail their exam the first time will have one more opportunity to take it the following year. Students who fail the exam twice will not be allowed to continue in the program. However, they will then be encouraged to assemble and submit a Master’s Final Portfolio for evaluation that, if approved, will entitle them to an MA.
D. Rubric for Evaluating the Oral Exam

DISTINCTION: The student demonstrates a scholarly depth and breadth of reading in her field(s) as evidenced by her/his intimate familiarity with the reading list. S/he provides a thoughtful, thorough, and compelling close reading, analysis, and justification for her/his chosen passage, clearly explicating the thematic links with the rest of her/his reading list. S/he is able to tease out thoughtful and even unexpected points of connection between numerous texts across genres and historical periods, all the while displaying sensitivity discussed in the Written Exam and beyond as to the specificity of historical and cultural context. S/he already displays a literary critic's facility with different theoretical and critical perspectives.

PASS: Student can offer a coherent close reading of her/his chosen short passage, but not necessarily provide a coherent thematic link with the rest of the reading list. Carefully recapitulate, critique, and extend answers from the Written Exam. S/he demonstrates a workable familiarity with her/his reading list. S/he is able to recognize significant points of connection between texts across genres and historical periods. S/he shows a fundamental understanding of different theoretical and critical perspectives.

FAIL (if student makes at least two of the following errors): 1. The student's close reading of the chosen passage lacks coherence. 2. Inability or insufficient ability to explain and respond to questions regarding responses on the Written Exam. 3. Her/his coverage of the reading list is clearly wanting. 4. Her/his comparative analysis of texts suggests an inadequate understanding of points of dialogue between them. 5. Her/his grasp of theoretical and critical perspectives is tenuous.
PhD Prospectus Defense

Ideally the student who successfully completes the Written and Oral Exams will be well prepared to write the Dissertation Prospectus. The Dissertation Prospectus is normally completed and defended the semester after passing the Oral Exam (i.e. by December 1 of Year 3). The Prospectus is generally a 10-15 page outline of the dissertation’s proposed argument, archive, method, and possible chapters, accompanied by a substantial bibliography of research material. Sample prospectuses are kept on file in the DGS’s office. Students are encouraged to start working on their prospectus as they prepare for the Written and Oral Exams. Submission of the prospectus is followed by a defense, which consists of an oral discussion of the prospectus by the dissertation committee in a public forum with other faculty and graduate students.

A. Procedures for the Prospectus Defense

1. After the Oral Exam, the student meets with the DGS; in consultation with the DGS, and with input from the advisor, the student puts together a Dissertation Committee of three. Usually, but not always, the committee consists of the Oral Exam committee members.

2. The objective is to complete and successfully defend the prospectus by the end of the first semester in Year 3. This gives students a full two years to complete the dissertation within the 5 year funding timetable and also allows students time to prepare to teach a "content" course in Year 4 of the doctoral degree program. All three committee members must sign off on the final draft before it can proceed to defense.

3. Once the committee of three has signed off on the Dissertation Prospectus, the student must then publicly defend it. The Defense is a 90-minute conversation, attended by the student, her/his committee of three, and other faculty and graduate students.

4. The first 10 minutes of the Defense consist of a statement from the student about her/his topic; there are then 45 minutes of Q and A between the student and her/his committee; and the last 30 or so minutes will include questions from the other faculty and graduate students.

5. After the Defense, and if the student has completed all other requirements, the student is considered ABD (All But Dissertation) and advanced to Candidacy. The DGS completes the Candidacy Form.
PhD Dissertation
The dissertation is normally written over the course of two years. All students, having successfully defended the Dissertation Prospectus, must secure the continued advising agreement of faculty advisors by having them sign off on the Dissertation Committee Form. We expect that dissertation-writing students will meet regularly with their Director and Readers. A schedule of meetings should be set up early in the dissertation stage, as should a schedule outlining when portions will be submitted and returned with comments. In the event that a student's dissertation is co-directed by multiple faculty members, there must still be two readers in addition to the directors.

At the end of each academic year, ABD students will submit to the DGS a brief (one paragraph) email report of their progress. Ideally, only three of these reports will be submitted before the student reaches defense stage; in any case, the reports keep the graduate program and dissertation student connected throughout the writing process.

When a draft of the dissertation is completed, it should be read by all three committee members; all must sign off on it before it can go forward to defense.

PhD Dissertation Defense
In order to graduate in May, students must defend by end of March; to graduate in August, students must defend by the end of May; to graduate in December, students must defend by the end of October. This means that a final draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the examining committee at least six weeks before the defense, with the approval of the dissertation committee. The defense is conducted by the three faculty members on the student's dissertation committee, and is a public event. The final, revised draft of the thesis is submitted electronically: please check www.gwu.edu/~etds for more details.

The Dissertation Defense is a public discussion of approximately 90 minutes duration. The student will prepare a 10-minute overview of her/his argument, archive, method, and future directions. Then each examiner will, in order of seniority, ask the student questions for a period of 15 minutes. After the first round of questions, there is a second round, in which each examiner has the option of asking the student questions for a period of 5 minutes. The remaining 5 minutes are allotted for questions from the public audience. At the end of the discussion, the student is asked to leave the room; the examining committee then determines whether the student has passed the Defense, and if so, whether revisions are required.

After the Defense, the student makes any necessary revisions and then submits the final draft of the dissertation electronically. All information about how to do this is at http://library.gwu.edu/etds/. 
Sample PhD Timeline

Here is a sample timeline that students may use to prepare for all milestones leading up to the dissertation:

**Fall Semester: Year 1**
- Complete Language Examination
- Declare Area of Strength
- Identification of faculty advisor and secondary reader to lead Exam Sequence in consultation with DGS
- Forms/Paperwork:
  - Language Examination
  - PhD Advisor & Secondary Exam Reader with Declaration of Area of Strength

**Spring Semester: Year 1**
- Draft Reading List (50 books) and approved rationale (1-2 pages)
- Forms/Paperwork:
  - Submission to DGS of Reading List and 1-2 page written rationale
  - PhD Written Exam Committee

**Spring Semester: Year 2**
- Submission of 8 possible Written Exam questions to advisor/second reader for approval at least one month prior to exam (4 questions will be chosen for the Written Exam from the student’s options and 4 designed by the Examiners; the student will choose 4 of 8 questions to answer)
- Written Exam (8 hour written exam without notes or books)
- Oral Exam (an oral “defense” usually within 3 weeks of completion of Written Exam)
- Forms/Paperwork:
  - PhD Written Exam Approval
  - PhD Written Exam Report
  - Oral Exam Report (Superior, Pass, Fail)
  - Advancement to Candidacy Form

**Fall Semester: Year 3**
- Completion of Dissertation Prospectus
- Forms/Paperwork:
  - PhD Committee (Dissertation)
  - PhD Committee Dissertation Prospectus
  - Dissertation Prospectus Approval

**Fall/Spring: Year 4**
- Introductory seminar teaching in field of specialization
- Teach a content course closely related to one's field of specialization as assigned by the department chair and DGS.
- Create a Teaching Portfolio in consultation with student’s Dissertation Advisor

**Fall/Spring: Year 5**
- Preparation of a Job Market Placement Portfolio in consultation with advisor and dissertation committee members
- Completion of Dissertation Project
- Dissertation Defense
• Forms/Paperwork:
  o PhD Defense Approval
  o Dissertation Approval
  o Graduation Clearance (PhD)

Contacts

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Coordinator, MA Program: Professor Christopher Sten, csten@gwu.edu

Coordinator, BA/MA Program: Professor Patrick Cook, pcook@gwu.edu

Coordinator of American Literature & Cultural Studies area of strength: Professor Marshall Alcorn, alcornma@gwu.edu

Coordinator of British Postcolonism Studies area of strength: Professor Daniel DeWispelare, dewispelare@gwu.edu

Coordinator of Medieval & Early Modern Studies area of strength and Director of GW MEMSI: Professor Ayanna Thompson thompsona@gwu.edu

Coordinator of Crip/Queer Studies area of strength and Director of Graduate Programs: David Mitchell, dtmitchel@gwu.edu

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President, EGSA: Alan Montroso, a.montroso@hotmail.com
Forms

Faculty Advisor

George Washington University Department of English
Graduate Faculty Advisor for Doctoral Student

Note: This form is to be completed by the doctoral student, signed by her/his faculty advisor, and submitted to the department’s Director of Graduate Studies.

Deadline: Please submit this form by the last day of class of your first semester as a doctoral student.

The graduate faculty advisor meets regularly with the student and oversees the student’s progress toward each of the milestones: written exam, oral exam, dissertation prospectus defense, and dissertation completion and defense. While a faculty advisor is assigned to every graduate student upon admittance, it is the student’s responsibility to formalize the arrangement.

Doctoral Student’s Name: __________________________ Email: __________________________

Doctoral Student’s Signature: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Faculty Advisor: _______________________________ Date: ______________________

Advisor’s signature: ____________________________
Written Exam Committee

George Washington University Department of English
PhD Written Examination Committee

**Note:** This form is to be completed by the doctoral student, signed by the examiners, and submitted to the department’s Director of Graduate Studies along with the student’s reading list and rationale.

The written exam committee consists of the student’s advisor and a second reader.

Doctoral Student’s Name: __________________________ Email: ______________________

Doctoral Student’s Signature: _______________________ Date: _____________________

First Reader: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature: ___________________________

Second Reader: ___________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature: ___________________________
Oral Exam Committee

George Washington University Department of English
PhD Oral Examination Committee

Note: This form is to be completed by the doctoral student, signed by the examiners, and submitted to the department’s Director of Graduate Studies along with the student’s reading list and rationale.

The oral exam committee consists of the first examiner (the student’s advisor) and two other faculty members in the student’s field(s).

Doctoral Student’s Name: ________________________ Email: ___________________

Doctoral Student’s Signature: _____________________ Date: ________________

First Examiner: ____________________________ Date: ____________________

Signature: _________________________________

Second Examiner: ____________________________ Date: ____________________

Signature: _________________________________

Third Examiner: ____________________________ Date: ____________________

Signature: _________________________________
Dissertation Prospectus Committee

George Washington University Department of English
PhD Dissertation Prospectus Committee

Note: This form is to be completed by the doctoral student, signed by the examiners, and submitted to the department’s Director of Graduate Studies.

The dissertation prospectus committee consists of the student’s advisor and two readers.

Doctoral Student’s Name: _______________________ Email: ___________________

Doctoral Student’s Signature: ___________________ Date: ___________________

Faculty Advisor: ______________________________ Date: ___________________

Signature: __________________________________

First Reader: _________________________________ Date: ___________________

Signature: __________________________________

Second Reader: ______________________________ Date: ___________________

Signature: __________________________________
Dissertation Committee

George Washington University Department of English
PhD Dissertation Committee

Note: This form is to be completed by the doctoral student, signed by the student’s advisor and at least two other faculty members in the student’s field(s).

The dissertation committee consists of the student’s advisor and two readers.

Doctoral Candidate’s Name: ________________________ Email: __________________

Doctoral Candidate’s Signature: _____________________ Date: ___________________

Faculty Advisor: ____________________________ Date: __________________

Signature: ____________________________

First Reader: ____________________________ Date: __________________

Signature: ____________________________

Second Reader: ____________________________ Date: __________________

Signature: ____________________________