The Department of English Guide to Graduate Study supplements the Graduate School website, which contains general regulations and deadlines on a wide range of academic and financial matters pertaining to graduate study. The Guide contains information about departmental regulations and requirements for the master's and doctoral programs and degrees. When departmental regulations concerning a particular aspect of the program change during your tenure of study at Northwestern, you will ordinarily follow the rule in effect when you matriculated, except by permission of the Director of Graduate Studies. The Guide sometimes refers to general regulations of the Graduate School, but it must always be used in conjunction with the most recent update to the Graduate School website.

As a student in the Graduate School, you will at any moment be one of several hundred degree candidates, and during your stay here you will have to interact directly and indirectly with a set of bureaucracies that includes, among others, the Federal Government. It is your direct responsibility to keep abreast of the general regulations and deadlines of the Graduate School and to comply with them in a timely fashion. The Department will help you, but you should not rely on it to tell you what you need to do and when. While the Graduate School will be compassionate in dealing with difficulties that are beyond your control, equity and time constraints make it hard for rules to be bent when problems arise from students’ negligence.

The English Graduate Office

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<td>3 seminars</td>
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<td>At least 1 member of the QE committee must be selected</td>
<td>GA or UF (5/20)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>UF quarter: 3 seminars</td>
<td>QE committee must be formed Draft QE list due</td>
<td>GA or UF (6/20)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Eng 570 TGS 500</td>
<td>Final QE list due</td>
<td>GA or UF (7/20)</td>
<td>UF quarter in Spring as a default</td>
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<tr>
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<td>TGS 500</td>
<td>Qualifying Exam</td>
<td>UF (9/20)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Eng 505 TGS 500</td>
<td></td>
<td>GA (10/20)</td>
<td>One P/NP class in any quarter (students matriculating with MAs are exempt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Eng 520 Eng 570 TGS 500</td>
<td>submit Prospectus</td>
<td>GA (11/20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
<td>fulfill remaining candidacy requirements advance to candidacy by quarter’s end</td>
<td>UF (12/20)</td>
<td>Summer: begin researching internal and external funding</td>
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<td><strong>Year four</strong></td>
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<td>Fall</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Eng 520 TGS 500</td>
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<td>GA (13-15/20)</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>Summer</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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<td>UF (16/20)</td>
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<td><strong>Year five</strong></td>
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<td>Fall</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
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<td>UF (17/20)</td>
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<td>Winter</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
<td></td>
<td>UF (18/20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
<td>deadline for committee approval of at least one dissertation chapter draft</td>
<td>UF (19/20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>TGS 500</td>
<td></td>
<td>UF (20/20)</td>
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<td><strong>Year six+</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>until completion: TGS 500 if funded TGS 512 if unfunded</td>
<td>annual progress report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>TGS 500 if funded</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>TGS 500 if funded</td>
<td>Don’t register if unfunded</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Abbreviations used below:

DGS: Director of Graduate Study (faculty person who administers the graduate program in English; your liaison for programmatic and substantive concerns to do with coursework, requirements, exams, committee, prospectus, and dissertation, as well as any other personal or structural concerns relevant to your graduate study);

GPA: Graduate Program Assistant (Nathan Mead), tasked with the administrative and programmatic implementation of the Graduate Program, maintenance of the department’s institutional liaison with The Graduate School, as well as serving as your contact for information concerning fellowship and travel grant applications;

GPC: Graduate Policy Committee (annually rotating committee of four or five faculty who assist the DGS with programmatic directives, graduate policy, and student reviews), which includes the DGS when referred to below;

TGS: The Graduate School, the administrative unit that determines graduate policy, regulations, admissions, benefits, and funding.

1. REGISTRATION, REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATIONS

1.1. Coursework

If you are a full-time student in The Graduate School (TGS), credits are based on full enrollment and course registration rather than credit hours. Registration in three classes per quarter is required for full-time standing. You may take a fourth course (including undergraduate 100-level language courses) without incurring tuition penalties.

Within the framework of TGS coursework requirements, the English Department determines the number and distribution of courses required for the Ph.D. in English. In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), you will choose your coursework from seminars offered in the English Department as well as in other departments and programs at Northwestern and in Chicago. In year one, you will take three courses per quarter (Fall, Winter, and Spring). In year two, you will take two courses per quarter during the two quarters in which you serve as a T.A., and three courses during your non-teaching quarter. In year three, unless you enter with an M.A. in English, you will take one course for P/NP credit in any quarter. Students pursuing the M.A. in English will enroll in three courses per quarter. The following registration levels and types can be counted toward full-time standing as a student in TGS:

300-level undergraduate courses - You are strongly encouraged to pursue all of your coursework at the graduate (400) level. Undergraduate classes do not replicate graduate seminars, either in terms of intellectual complexity or mandated active participation essential to your preparation for this profession. Ph.D. candidates may enroll in a maximum total of two 300-level undergraduate courses to fulfill your required coursework. Students pursuing the M.A. may register for up to four. All students must contact the DGS before registration to justify the necessity of any 300-level course to your program of study. Only 300-level courses listed in CAESAR under Course Career “Graduate School” can confer credit toward your Ph.D. Upon DGS approval, you must contact the professor to determine whether they are willing to accept graduate students in the class and to establish the extra workload (at minimum, an additional or enhanced research essay) requisite to confer graduate credit. 300-level undergraduate classes cannot be used to fulfill any of the 7 courses of the breadth requirement.

400-level graduate courses - These graduate seminars make up your foundational coursework. Be sure to consult graduate course offerings in CLS, History, Program in African Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Philosophy, Political Science, Art History, and beyond. Ph.D. students are also eligible to enroll in graduate seminars for Northwestern credit at local institutions such as the University of Illinois at Chicago or the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (“B1G”) or the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program. Though M.A. students are not eligible to participate in the B1G arrangement, they can apply to enroll in graduate seminars offered by institutions participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program.

English 490: Reading and Pedagogy - Ph.D. students will register for one unit of English 490 per quarter during year two of the program. This registration carries no specific assignments or duties, but gives you course credit for time spent preparing for your qualifying exam and for work as a Graduate Assistant. English 490 registrations carry an automatic passing grade for students in good standing.

English 499: Independent Study - The formal graduate seminar offerings in English and other departments or programs should be your primary means of earning credit for coursework. You should contemplate independent faculty supervised work for credit only if you can justify the exceptional urgency of the material or situation. All independent study requests must be reviewed and endorsed in advance by the DGS in concert with the Graduate Policy Committee. Approval of requests for Independent Study work is not guaranteed.

500-level graduate courses - These courses, such as English 570: Teaching Composition (usually taken during year three in the program), are not necessarily more advanced in nature than 400-level classes. They confer specific amounts of credit towards full-time student status.
**English 505: Research Development Seminar** - You will take this seminar in the Winter Quarter of year three, immediately following the successful completion of the Qualifying Exam. The Research Development Seminar will guide you through the preparation of a draft of the dissertation prospectus, as well as the preparation of at least one grant or fellowship application. The Research Development Seminar will be graded P/NP.

**English 520: Writing for Publication** - Students who have advanced to candidacy will enroll in this seminar, offered annually in Spring Quarter, which will guide them through the preparation of a publishable essay while also addressing broader questions of both scholarly and public-facing communication. Writing for Publication will be graded P/NP. Students may opt to substitute alternative professional development courses for English 520 in consultation with the dissertation committee and the DGS.

**English 570: Seminar in Teaching Composition** - You will register for this class in Spring Quarter of year three. Taught by Professor Robert Gundlach, Director of the Writing Program, English 570 meets weekly to cover issues of writing and pedagogy. This class confers graduate credit. It is taken for a letter grade, and cannot count as the P/NP seminar required in year three. With permission of the DGS and Professor Gundlach, M.A. students can also enroll in this class.

**English 590: Research** - Ph.D. students register for English 590 during the Summer Quarters of their first and second years in the program, with the purpose of maintaining full student standing.

**TGS 500: Advanced Doctoral Study** - Ph.D. students register for TGS 500 starting in Fall Quarter of year three in the program, when course work (with the exception of the P/NP course) is complete. After year two, TGS 500 is your default registration for any quarter during which you receive funding from internal or external sources. TGS 500 confers full student status and all related benefits, including the TGS health insurance subsidy. It also obliges you to continue paying the Student Activity Fee.

**TGS 512: Continuous Registration** - In any quarter (with the exception of summer, but including any Ph.D. student's post-9th year, or M.A. student's post-5th year, quarters of enrollment) during which you do not receive funding, you must register for TGS 512 (tuition: $100/quarter). This registration confers minimum student status, continued access to email and other Northwestern online resources, and library and other privileges, but does not confer the TGS health insurance subsidy. The Student Activity Fee is not required with registration for TGS 512 and its benefits are not available.

### 1.2. Transfer Credit

Ph.D. candidates who arrive with an M.A. in English may, upon request, transfer one unit of M.A. credit to be used in year three instead of taking a seminar for P/NP credit. **Transfer credits cannot be used to fulfill the breadth requirements.** At the discretion of the DGS, transfer credit may be awarded to those with an M.A. in related fields other than English.

### 1.3. Breadth Requirement

In order to ensure that students become acquainted with literature from diverse historical periods and contexts, we require that all doctoral students take one course from each of the following seven categories:

1. Literature and Culture to 1500
2. Literature and Culture 1500-1680
3. Literature and Culture 1680-1800
4. Literature and Culture 1800-1900
5. Literature and Culture 1900-1989
6. Literature and Culture since 1989
7. Genres, Topics, and Theories in the “longue durée”

Master’s students must take two courses focusing on literature written before 1800 literature, and two focusing on literature written after 1800.

All courses used to satisfy the breadth requirement must be at the 400 level. Seminars taken to fulfill this requirement must be offered by the Department of English, though you may petition the DGS in exceptional cases. Eligible courses cannot be audited or taken P/NP. Ordinarily, Independent Study courses (English 499) may not be used to satisfy this requirement, though again, you may petition the DGS in exceptional cases. To have a graduate seminar taken at a Chicago-area institution under the auspices of either the Big Ten Academic Alliance (B1G) or the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program count for the breadth requirement, you must get approval from the DGS in advance. If a given course straddles the line of two categories, your professor will make the determination depending on your chosen area of research focus for the class. For a course in literary theory to count for one of the first 6 categories (for Ph.D. students) or for post-1800 literature (for MA students), it must engage some significant aspect of the literary canon in that chronological period. The DGS will adjudicate these requests on a case-by-case basis.

### 1.4. Grades

At Northwestern, undergraduate and graduate professors use letter grades with “+” and “–” distinctions. The A+ grade is not available. Your grades will appear in this format in departmental records, TGS records, and transcripts released by the Office of the Registrar.

### 1.5. Incomplete Work

In order to remain in good standing, you must make up incomplete work from any academic year no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of classes in the following Fall Quarter. This rule supersedes any rule set down by TGS. We strongly recommend that you complete all work for your courses before the beginning of the subsequent quarter whenever possible. In unavoidable circumstances such as illness or a family emerg-
gancy, you should work with your professors and the DGS to establish an extended schedule of deadlines. *It is crucial for you to communicate with the DGS and your professors if you foresee obstacles to your timely completion of coursework.*

TGS and the Department closely monitor incomplete work. While there are any incompletes on your record, Ph.D. students will be considered ineligible for Departmental or TGS travel funding and will be unable to advance to candidacy. Please see Section 5.6. on admission to candidacy for further details on the ramifications of a late advance to ABD status. M.A. students cannot graduate with any unresolved incompletes on their record.

### 1.6. Departmental Evaluations

#### 1.6.1. Course Evaluations

For every course taken in the first year of the doctoral program, your professor will complete a formal written evaluation. A key part of your permanent record in the department office, these evaluations are given close attention in deliberations about continuation and fellowships. Students should consult them as they appear and use them in measuring achievement and planning goals. The graduate faculty may consult all student records. M.A. students will not receive this formal evaluation.

#### 1.6.2. Teaching Assistant Evaluations

Professors to whom doctoral students are assigned as Teaching Assistants are encouraged to provide an evaluation of the work performed for them. All evaluations submitted are available in your permanent record in the department office.

#### 1.6.3. In-Candidacy Annual Progress Reports

Doctoral students advancing to year five and beyond must submit a progress report at the end of each summer quarter. The form will be distributed by the GAP in August, after which it is to be completed and submitted to the dissertation committee chair for approval by the end of September. The committee chair will then return the approved form for review by the DGS, who will address any issues or concerns raised.

#### 1.6.4. Standing Notifications

As noted above, Graduate Assistantships and other fellowship commitments to WCAS and TGS require that you remain in good standing as a full-time student.

The English Department is required to notify all students active in the Ph.D. program before the nine-year dissertation deadline of their standing at the end of every academic year. Letters indicating the satisfactory completion of the first year, including a Summer Research and Planning Proposal drafted under the guidance of the first-year mentor, the Qualifying Exam (in the Fall of year three), and the prospectus (at the end of year three) are considered indicators of good standing. If students’ standing is in question, committee chairs and the DGS will, in consultation with these students, devise a schedule to restore their good standing in the Department. Such students will receive letters outlining these conditions, with which they must affirm their agreement. In early Fall Quarter of years eight and nine, students must consult with their directors and the DGS to determine whether a defense is feasible and, if so, to devise a schedule for completion.

### 1.7. The Language Requirement

Knowledge of a second language and some experience of written traditions in that language vitally enrich the study of English, American, and Anglophone literature. Doctoral students must possess an advanced reading knowledge of a second language broadly relevant to the study of English, American, and/or Anglophone Literature. *Completion of the Language Requirement is a prerequisite for admission to candidacy at the end of year three.* The Language Requirement is not part of the M.A. degree.

Although we do not stipulate that the language requirement must demonstrate connections to your particular research interests, you are strongly encouraged to choose the language that will be most beneficial to you in the pursuit of your dissertation work.

The language requirement may be satisfied in one of four ways:

- With a “Pass” on the three-hour translation exam, comprising three to four individual passages. Your translation is handwritten and dictionaries are permitted. Translations into English must demonstrate more than a basic knowledge of vocabulary and grammar; they must grasp the idiomatic, syntactical, and connotative complexities of each source passage. French, German, Italian, Latin, and Spanish translation exams are composed, administered, and graded by the English Department. In other cases, the exam is composed and graded by an outside expert.
- With a grade of A– or higher in a graduate course at Northwestern in Spanish, French, Latina/o Studies, Italian, etc., which must be pre-approved by the DGS. The course must require readings in the original language, though it may be conducted in English. To fulfill the departmental Language Requirement by this route, a student must take this course during the first year in the Ph.D. program. An independent study cannot satisfy the language requirement.
- By earning a grade of A– or higher in a year-long undergraduate language sequence taken as a fourth class during the first year in the Ph.D. program.
- By earning a grade of A– or higher in a summer intensive language course taken at Northwestern or a participating Big Ten Academic Alliance institution. If the intensive course is graded in several weeks-long increments, the average grade must be at least an A–.

The language requirement should be satisfied before the beginning of the second year. In exceptional cases, which must be approved by the DGS, the language requirement may be
THE MASTER'S PROGRAM

2. THE ONE YEAR M.A.

As a terminal, one-year program, the Master's degree is designed to be completed in three quarters of full-time registration. The program provides students with considerable freedom in the choice of their coursework while still providing them with a broad historical overview of English, American, and Anglophone literature.

2.1. Coursework

As a student in the Department of English year-long Master’s Degree program, you will take a total of nine classes over its three-quarter span.

You have a number of different options in the distribution of your coursework:

- At least five of your nine overall seminars must be at the 400 (graduate) level.
- Up to three of your nine overall seminars may be chosen from among those offered by other departments or programs.
- You must take two graduate seminars focusing on literature written before 1800 and two graduate seminars focusing on literature written after 1800. As with the breadth requirements for the Ph.D. program (see item 1.3 above), courses taken to fulfill the pre- and post-1800 requirement must be at the 400-level and must be offered by the Department of English. You must petition the DGS for any exceptions to these rules.
- You may arrange to take no more than four of your nine overall seminars chosen from among those advanced undergraduate classes at the 300 level, with additional graduate-level requirements designed and supervised by the faculty member teaching the course. The instructor in such cases must be a member of the Northwestern graduate faculty. Check with the DGS and Graduate Program Assistant if you have any questions about whether a given professor falls in this category. You cannot earn graduate credit for classes taught by Visiting Assistant Professors except by permission of the DGS.
- Although it is not required, we strongly recommend that you take the Fall Quarter Introduction to Graduate Studies seminar (English 410) with the incoming Ph.D. class.

You are eligible to enroll in graduate seminars offered by area institutions participating in the Chicago Metropolitan Exchange Program, but not seminars offered by the Big Ten Academic Alliance.

2.2. Master’s Capstone Essay

As the culminating project for your M.A. degree, you must complete a Capstone Essay of 6,000 to 8,000 words (20–24 double-spaced pages). The Capstone Essay is an expanded
and revised version of an essay you have written for a Fall or Winter Quarter English Department graduate seminar, revised in response to comments from, and as appropriate in consultation with, the seminar instructor. The seminar instructor for whom you wrote the seminar essay thereby serves as your Capstone Essay advisor. You must consult the DGS for approval should you wish to pursue your Capstone Essay with an advisor for whom you did not write the seminar essay.

By the end of Reading Week in Spring Quarter, your completed Capstone Essay must be approved by your advisor and submitted to the Department. The exact date will be communicated to you during the summer before matriculation, but Reading Week is typically the tenth week of the quarter. The approved thesis is reviewed by the DGS.

2.3. Regulations Concerning Degree Completion

The schedule for the completion of the M.A. program assumes that you will finish the M.A. Capstone Essay and coursework in time to graduate at the end of the Spring Quarter. However, if you need more time to polish the final document, you may choose to submit the Capstone Essay for review during Summer Quarter. Your degree is then conferred early the following September without additional tuition expense. Pursuit of this alternative schedule must be approved by the DGS and your Capstone Essay advisor before the end of the Winter Quarter.

According to TGS regulations, a student in the M.A. program has five years from the initial quarter of matriculation to complete all degree requirements. To maintain student standing over this extended period, you must register for TGS 512 (tuition: $100/quarter) for each academic quarter during which no coursework is taken. This includes Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters, but you are not required to register in Summer. Failure to register during the academic year will result in discontinuation from the program, which can only be reversed by submitting a petition for readmission and paying a fee determined by TGS.

THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

3. THE FIRST YEAR OF THE PH.D.

The Ph.D. program provides scholarly training in literary theory and the history and criticism of literature written in English. Our regulations governing the first three years of doctoral work aim to give you a broadly based historical knowledge of English, American, and Anglophone literature and to engender your critically informed understanding of the field in which you propose to write a dissertation. Whether you enter with a B.A. or M.A., your first year in the doctoral program consists of coursework.

3.1. English 410: Introduction to Graduate Studies

English 410, “Introduction to Graduate Studies,” is required of all doctoral students. This seminar introduces students to library resources, research methods, scholarly endeavors such as textual editing, constructions and deconstructions of literary history and canons, influential theories underlying analytic and critical practices, the history of the profession of literary studies, and contemporary issues within and around the discipline. English 410 also includes a Friday discussion section in which professors, librarians, and other professionals will give informal talks and lead discussions about various issues of intellectual and professional development. Possible topics may include editing and peer review at academic journals, archival research, using digital technology in research and teaching, writing for a public audience, and so on. Depending on availability, the section may not meet every week, and/or may offer several sessions during the Winter and Spring quarters.

Your goal in the first year will be to explore the field of literary study, gain facility in the discursive and analytic protocols of academic work in literature, and discover the resources of the English Department as you begin to define your field of specialization. The formal requirements of year one in the Ph.D. program include:

• English 410, “Introduction to Graduate Studies,” taken in Fall Quarter;
• Eight other seminars (three graduate classes per quarter), which may fulfill breadth requirements, develop general knowledge, and refine your methodological and research interests;
• The language requirement;
• Spring Quarter first-year review, which involves a meeting with the DGS and the first-year mentor, and the submission of a Summer Research and Planning Proposal devised in consultation with the latter. In cases where the work completed during the first year has consistently failed to meet faculty expectations, the DGS and first-year mentor may recommend probationary status or discontinuation. The recommendations of the DGS and the first-year mentor must be formally ratified by the graduate faculty of the full department.
3.2. First-Year Mentor

At the beginning of year one, you will be assigned a first-year mentor who has significant experience advising graduate students and with whom you have cognate interests or methodologies. You will meet with your mentor at least once per quarter to discuss course selection and, in spring quarter, to discuss your Summer Research and Planning Proposal. You and your mentor are also encouraged to have expansive conversations about your intellectual trajectory and graduate student life. While you may develop a close connection with your mentor, there is no expectation that the relationship needs to extend into the exam or dissertation stages. Meetings with your first-year mentor do not supplant meetings with the DGS, who will also meet with you several times during year one.

3.3. First-Year Review

The satisfactory completion of all courses is a necessary but not sufficient condition for continuation in the program, which depends on the graduate faculty’s confidence that you have demonstrated the ability and motivation to plan and execute a substantial scholarly project within the time limits for the degree.

During reading week of the Spring Quarter, the DGS will schedule a meeting with each first-year doctoral student and his/her/their faculty mentor. This meeting will concern your evolving interests, your development during year one, and your plans for the future; the DGS and faculty mentor will also offer advice and feedback based on your course performance and evaluations. You will also review your Summer Research and Planning Proposal of approximately 500 words, developed in consultation with your faculty mentor, and submitted to the DGS two weeks in advance (typically by the second week of May). The content of this document will depend on each student’s particular profile, but will typically include a reading plan, an exploratory research plan, and language training goals that reflect both the departmental requirement and anticipated research needs. The Proposal is an occasion to begin to formulate the topics of your proposed exam lists as well as possible exam committee members. Remember that you will begin working as a T.A. in year two, which will be an engrossing experience, so it is important to make headway on your research during the summer. This is no less true if you are also engaged in intensive language training during the summer.

On the basis of your academic record in the first year, the DGS in consultation with faculty mentors will make recommendations to the graduate faculty of the Department about continuation in the doctoral program. The DGS may recommend continuation, dismissal, or second-year probation. In this latter instance, the student will be assigned a faculty mentor (who may or may not be the same as the first-year mentor). The student will work closely with the faculty mentor in year two, with the aim of developing strengths and working through difficulties; during Spring Quarter Reading Week of year two, the student will undergo a second-year review with the DGS and faculty mentor. Second-year probation rather than dismissal will be recommended if weak performance in some areas has been balanced by strong performance in others. The graduate faculty as a whole makes the final decisions about DGS recommendations.

3.4. The Master’s Degree as Part of the Ph.D. Program

Upon successful completion of nine courses with at least a B average, you are eligible to receive a non-terminal M.A. degree upon request, whether or not you remain in the Ph.D. program.

4. THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PH.D.

In the second year of the doctoral program, you must complete your breadth requirements, fulfill the Language Requirement if you have not already done so, draft and revise your three Qualifying Exam lists, and constitute your Qualifying Exam Committee.

4.1. Coursework and English 490

Your course load in the second year will consist of two seminars during each quarter when you are serving as a Teaching or Research Assistant, and three seminars during your non-teaching (or non-R.A.) quarter. To accommodate the work you perform as a Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant, you must also register for one unit of English 490 (Reading and Pedagogy) in Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters of year two. This registration does not involve classroom attendance or coursework, but serves to confer course credit for your duties as a Graduate Assistant.

4.2. Graduate Assistantships

Beginning in year two, you are funded in part by Graduate Assistantships. Typically, these are quarterly Teaching Assistant positions, which can involve a range of different assignments as determined by the Department. In rarer cases, you may also work as a Research Assistant for one quarter in year two. To prepare you to teach lecture discussion sections, you are strongly encouraged to attend the New T.A. Conference, which is offered by the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching in mid-September. Be sure to register for this event well in advance. You are encouraged to take advantage of Searle Center programs and services as detailed on their website. You may also be assigned a Teaching Assistant mentor who is a current graduate student in the department.

As you adapt to the classroom and develop your pedagogical skills, keep in mind that the G.A. position is meant to be part-time (maximum 20 hours/week). Your primary responsibility is to continue to move toward your Ph.D., and it is imperative that you strive to balance your pedagogical and programmatic commitments. Do not allow teaching to become all-consuming. Consult with the course professor to discuss strategies for achieving this balance and preserving time for your research.

As a Graduate Assistant, you hold an appointment in TGS with
duties assigned by the Department. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of all TGS regulations that relate to the appointment, remuneration, tax status, and academic standing of Graduate Assistants.

4.3. Teaching Assistant Responsibilities

As a new Teaching Assistant, you will typically be assigned to a large 200-level lecture class, where you are primarily responsible for running small weekly 50-minute discussion sections. In this capacity, you will lead two discussion sections containing no more than 20 students apiece. The mandatory duties of this position include:

• Careful, active reading of all assigned texts on the syllabus;
• Participating in weekly T.A. meetings convened by the course professor;
• Attending all lectures;
• Giving advance notice of any necessary absence from lecture;
• Teaching weekly discussion sections;
• Grading your students’ essays and/or exams in accordance with the professor’s standards;
• Holding office hours (two hours total; according to WCAS requirement, on two different days of the week);
• Communicating with the course professor about any disciplinary, academic, or other issues that arise with students in your section;
• Helping the course professor with logistical, technological, or other aspects of the lecture class.

Awarded by TGS upon recommendation by the department, T.A. and R.A. assignments for the academic year are finalized in Spring Quarter of the preceding year. You will be apprised of your assignments for year two at the close of Spring Quarter of the first year.

Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant positions are assigned by the DGS in consultation with the Chair, the Associate Chair, and the Graduate Program Assistant. While we solicit your preferences in advance, T.A., R.A., and other assignments depend on a number of variables beyond departmental control: undergraduate enrollments, which often fluctuate widely over the course of registration; overall availability of graduate labor; availability of experienced T.A.s; and extra-departmental needs of contiguous departments or programs. We make every effort to match your interests and provide you vital literary coverage, but undergraduate curricular needs ultimately must take precedence over the requests of both students and faculty. Please be aware that due to unforeseen and unavoidable scheduling exigencies, your G.A. duties may have to be changed from the original assignment.

As a Teaching Assistant in the Department of English, you may also be assigned to a course in Comparative Literary Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Latino/a Studies, or other department or program. The regulations of the English Department still apply to you in that case. Be sure to notify the DGS if you are asked to teach more students than you would in an English class, or if the workload otherwise exceeds the limit of 20 hours per week.

While bringing outside speakers to campus and organizing conferences provides useful professional experience, you are not expected to perform more than several hours a week of non-remunerated organizational labor. Please contact the DGS if you have any questions about this policy, which is intended to preserve your time for your primary goal of progress toward candidacy and the Ph.D.

For further details about teaching assistant duties, please consult the English Department’s Teaching Assistant Handbook, distributed at the start of each academic year.

4.4. Preparing for the Qualifying Exam

The goal of the qualifying exam is to demonstrate your facility in a teaching field, a research field, and in a theoretical or topical disposition, as you begin to define these in relation to a possible dissertation project. It is designed to encourage you to elaborate positions and claims that reflect your most vital intellectual interests, but to do so within the context of a larger framework defined by one of the major fields within English Literary Studies and by a theoretical or topical commitment conducive to scholarly conversation beyond that field.

4.4.1. Reading Lists

Students will develop three distinctive and non-redundant reading lists in close consultation with their exam committees. These lists will include a Teaching Field (60 works), a Research Field (50 works), and a list on a Genre, Theory or Topic (30 works). A “work” usually refers to a book-length text (e.g., novel, collection of essays or stories, volume or selection of poems, or an academic monograph). Students must begin to discuss the rubrics for these three fields with at least one committee member no later than December 1 in the Fall Quarter of the second year. The full committee of three faculty members must be selected and a first draft of the lists turned into the committee by March 15 in the Winter Quarter of the second year. (While you may revise the membership of your committee after the Qualifying Exam, you should choose faculty with whom you expect to sustain an advisory relationship throughout the program.) No later than May 15 in the Spring Quarter of the second year, a final draft of the lists must be submitted to the committee and to the DGS along with a brief rationale (approximately 750 words, or, in some cases, three headnotes of approximately 250 words each to each individual list). At this time, students must identify one examiner as the committee chair (although this designation is encouraged sooner if possible). Upon committee and DGS approval of the lists, student research interests on the department website will be changed to express the students’ professional
Teaching Field

A representative group of 60 canonical works in the student’s primary teaching “field.” The field designation ought to encompass a significant area of instructional expertise sought by universities and colleges. It might define a common historical field, such as “early modern/Renaissance,” “nineteenth-century British,” “multiethnic American literature, 1900-present,” or “postcolonial Anglophone literature,” or it might encompass a broader historical frame such as “African-American Literature, origins to the present.” Most commonly, the list will reflect the major genres of literary production (dramatic, narrative, poetic, critical). The field designation should be a relatively capacious and recognizable category arrived at in close consultation with the committee, in view of the student’s intellectual interests and desired area of teaching expertise.

The department does not maintain an exhaustive list of fields or of works regarded as representative within them; the shape of established fields changes over time, and new fields continue to emerge and find institutional recognition. However, in constructing their lists, students may wish to consult, in addition to their committees, the prior examination lists made available in the Virgil database, including the “Oral Qualifying Exam” (QE1) lists formerly offered by the department.

Research Field

The research field includes an original corpus of 50 works (generally a mixture of primary and scholarly literature, with an emphasis on primary sources). The research field should outline a focused area of research that aims to form the basis of a dissertation prospectus bibliography. The list may be organized around a specific historical criterion (e.g., literatures of the American Civil War); it might be composed around a topic (e.g., early modern fictions of Utopia); or it might represent a specific genre and its context (e.g., multiethnic speculative fiction, 1973-present; or interwar lyric poetry). In general, the work of finding and selecting the corpus should involve a significant act of original assembly.

Genres, Theories and Topics (Developed in relation to the research field and/or as a second teaching field)

A group of 30 texts that represent a topical or theoretical approach related to the proposed research area. This open-ended component might include affect theory, theory of the novel, disability studies, poetics, animal studies, new philology, environmental studies, media theory, postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis, theory of translation, feminist theory, and so on. In general, this list ought not to be narrowly construed as a list of period-focused scholarship or criticism, but instead should aim for an ambitious intellectual thread that is articulated across areas or periods. (For example, a student interested in the processes of nineteenth-century U.S. settler-colonialism might be expected to link a few texts on this topic to theories and critiques of coloniality from the Transatlantic Renaissance to the era of decolonization.)

Each list must be organized either alphabetically or chronologically, and each item on each list must include the basic bibliographic data specified by the Chicago Manual of Style:

- Name of the author or authors, the editors, or the institutions responsible for the writing of the book
- Full title of the book, including subtitle if there is one
- Series (if any)
- Volume number
- Edition, if not the original
- City of publication
- Publisher’s name
- Date of publication

For articles:

- Author, title, name of periodical, volume number/date/both as appropriate, pages occupied by the article.

There is no agreed upon format for the citation of individual poems, so please use the following:

For poems published in a magazine:

- Last name followed by a comma, then first name and a period
- Title of the poem in quotation marks, with a period inside the closing marks
- The title of the magazine in italics, and follow that with a comma and the date of publication

For poems in a collection:

- Last name, a comma, then first name and a period
- Title of the poem in quotation marks, with a period inside
- "In" followed by the book's name the book in italics, followed by a comma
- "Edited by" and the name of the editor, followed by a comma
- List the page number(s) where the poem can be found
- List the city of publication followed by a colon, and conclude your citation with the name of the publishing house, a comma and the year of publication

If the student wishes to organize the lists differently, with the permission of the exam committee, the rationale for this departure from usual practice should preface the lists.

Samples list trios from an Early Modern perspective:

- **Teaching Field**: Early drama (medieval to Restoration), or history of English drama
- **Research Field**: Theatrical representations of the body in
the Elizabethan era

- **Theories and Topics:** Gender, queer, and/or disability studies.

- **Teaching Field:** Renaissance/early modern literature, 1500-1650
- **Research Field:** Sixteenth C intellectual texts and the genealogy of republicanism
- **Theories and Topics:** Political theory or religious studies or media studies

- **Teaching Field:** Tudor literature, with or without a Shakespeare specialization
- **Research Field:** Poetry, dissemination, and the new materialism
- **Theories and Topics:** Ecocriticism / environmental humanities, including plant studies and environmental models from the period, and encompassing contemporary theories of materialism and object studies

- **Teaching Field:** Renaissance literature, comparative
- **Research Field:** Forms of address in sixteenth-century English texts
- **Theories and Topics:** Affect theory

**Samples list trios from Modern/Contemporary Perspective:**

- **Teaching Field:** Multiethic American Literatures, 1900-present
- **Field List:** Geopolitical Imaginaries in Latinx Literature since NAFTA, 1990-2016
- **Theories and Topics:** Hemispheric Studies, origins to the present

- **Teaching Field:** Transnational/Global Anglophone Literatures, 1880-1989
- **Field List:** Modernization and Decolonization in African Literature, 1945-1989
- **Theories and Topics:** Postcolonial Studies, emphasis on Postcolonial Ecocriticism

- **Teaching Field:** Modern and Contemporary Anglophone Poetry & Poetics (American, British, Caribbean, African)
- **Field List:** Race and Media in Contemporary Poetry
- **Theories and Topics:** New Media Studies

**4.5. Anticipating Year Three**

Your third year in the Ph.D. program is particularly challenging, logistically and intellectually. You must take the Qualifying Exam by the end of Fall Quarter, typically during reading week. In the Winter Quarter, you will enroll in English 505, the Research Development Seminar, which will guide you through the process of drafting a prospectus and a grant or fellowship proposal. By the end of Spring Quarter, you must complete a dissertation prospectus that is approved by your dissertation committee and by the DGS. At this point, you will formally advance to candidacy for the Ph.D., which means that you have satisfied all requirements (including coursework and the Language Requirement) for the Ph.D. except the dissertation and are “ABD” (All But Dissertation) in the eyes of the English Department and TGS. The Summer Quarter after your second year of coursework is thus a critical time to prepare for your Qualifying Exam. This summer also marks an important transition from the formalized demands of coursework to self-directed work, requiring more active and independent work from you. While you will still receive guidance from your committee, and should never hesitate to seek it, your achievements will depend increasingly on your own discipline, organization, ambition, and imagination.

**5. THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PH.D.**

By the end of year three, you should have completed all departmental and TGS requirements for admission to candidacy: fulfilling the departmental Language Requirement; completing your coursework; passing the Qualifying Exam; and completing the dissertation prospectus. The third year completes your preparation for the ultimate task of your graduate study: the research and writing of your dissertation. Your achievements in year three contribute critically to your overall goal of becoming a mature, self-motivated scholar, thinker, and writer.

**5.1. Qualifying Exam**

While the majority of the preparation for the Qualifying Exam should be completed during year two and the following summer, the Fall Quarter will entail an intensive period of final reading, synthesis, reflection, and review. [Whenever possible, and contingent on Departmental teaching needs, students will be granted a fellowship during the Fall Quarter of the third year in order to allow them to devote themselves to exam preparation full-time.]

In consultation with the GPA and the exam committee, students should schedule the Qualifying Exam for reading week of the Fall Quarter of the third year. Students should plan to meet with the exam committee chair (or, at the request of the committee chair, with the entire committee) no later than two weeks prior to the exam date. The meeting will comprise a discussion of the student’s developing intellectual preoccupations as well as the parameters of the oral presentation with which he/she/they will begin the examination, elucidating his/her/their driving questions. Two-and-a-half hours will be allotted for the examination. Commonly, the three examiners will take turns interviewing the candidate for approximately 20 minutes on any text or topic related to the examination lists or to the presentation. The exam will then open up into a final hour of collective conversation. However, the precise format of the examination is subject to the determination of the committee chair in consultation with the committee. Students can expect that questions will emphasize the teaching, research, and theory components of the exam with some degree of parity. For the majority of the exam, students can expect a ranging conversation on distinct topics; ideally, the exam will also include some explicit thought toward dissertation prospectus development.
After the examination, the committee will determine whether the performance merits a Pass, a Pass with Distinction, or a Failure. In the case of failure, a consultation among the exam committee, the DGS, and the Department Chair will determine whether to exclude the student from the program or to recommend a retake of the exam or some portion thereof. While there is no formal written evaluation of the Qualifying Exam, students can expect oral feedback immediately after the exam, as well as emailed comments that identify especially productive avenues of thought, possible pitfalls or lacunae to be addressed, and ways to think about moving from the Qualifying Exam to the prospectus.

5.2. Coursework

Following the successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, students will enroll in English 505: Research Development Seminar, during the Winter Quarter. English 505 will guide students through the preparation of a first draft of the dissertation prospectus and at least one draft of a grant or fellowship proposal. (Note that the Social Science Research Council’s Dissertation Proposal Development program, TGS, and the Buffett Center all offer fellowships whose deadlines fall in the Winter Quarter.) While students should remain engaged with their proposed dissertation committees as they draft the prospectus, English 505 will explain and model best practices for research and grant proposals in the field while also providing structure to keep students on track with their research plans.

In Spring Quarter, all third-year students will enroll in English 570: Expository Writing and Pedagogy, taught by Professor Robert Gundlach, Director of the Writing Program. This class, which covers issues of writing pedagogy, confers graduate credit and receives a letter grade. In addition, those students entering the Ph.D. program without an M.A. in English or commensurate discipline from another institution must take one seminar under the grading rubric Pass/No Pass (P/NP). You may enroll in this course during Fall, Winter, or Spring, although you are encouraged to complete this requirement during Fall and Winter.

In advance of registration for the P/NP class, you must confirm with the course professor that approves your participation on a P/NP basis. Because the P/NP rubric is not equivalent to an audit, you and the professor must determine in advance what workload will earn you a P grade for the class. Typically, you will complete the class reading, participate in the discussion, and undertake some light writing (e.g., ongoing notes on the reading), but you will not write an extended essay for the class. Please be absolutely sure that your professor understands in advance that you must complete some work to receive P/NP credit. It is impossible retroactively to confer credit when no work has been submitted for evaluation. English 505 and English 570 cannot count as your P/NP seminar.

5.3. The Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus establishes a blueprint for the major accomplishment of your career in the doctoral program, the dissertation. As a document that motivates and justifies the chapter breakdown of your projected dissertation, the prospectus aims to anticipate the structure of a book-length argument. Your prospectus should chart the research plan as well as the interpretive and/or theoretical analysis you plan to undertake; it should place this evidentiary and analytic work in relation to the current critical scholarship that you aim most vitally to engage. In addition, your prospectus should anticipate the specific critical, literary-historical, and/or methodological intervention your dissertation aspires to make. Attention to logical articulations between chapters and the method through which your argument will be sustained by evidence is crucial to the persuasiveness of your prospectus.

The prospectus should thus accomplish the following:

• Describe the topic under consideration and formulate the argument to be proposed;
• Identify the methodological principles on the basis of which the research will be conducted;
• Specify the scope of the inquiry;
• Explain the relation of the dissertation to relevant scholarly categories and critical trends in the field;
• Outline the chapters, with a brief exposition of what each one seeks to accomplish;
• Provide an extensive bibliography of both primary and secondary texts.

Insofar as it delimits the literary-historical and critical scope of your dissertation, your bibliography is especially important. Different fields require different kinds of bibliographies with different degrees of inclusiveness. In general, your bibliography should include every primary item that would make a difference to the dissertation, not only as core evidence but also as a constituent of the literary-historical field your dissertation addresses; and, every secondary item whose argument your dissertation engages or to whom your dissertation is relevant. Consult with your advisor to discuss the desired depth and specificity of your prospectus’s bibliography.

The body of the prospectus should comprise about 5,000 words double-spaced (roughly 14–18 pages) in length, excluding the bibliography. As a formal, professional document, the prospectus must consistently conform to one scholarly formatting style (typically, either Chicago or MLA style). All bibliographic entries must be correctly formatted. Pervasive typographical and/or formatting errors are grounds for rejection by the DGS. The GPA maintains a file of approved prospectuses, which you are encouraged to consult.

5.3.1. Committee Approval & Meeting

During Winter and Spring Quarters of the third year, the student will work closely with the dissertation committee to craft a viable prospectus, a process that requires multiple drafts.
No later than the last day of WCAS Reading Week in Spring Quarter, the student must secure the dissertation committee’s approval of the prospectus. This approval must be communicated to the GPA and DGS by the committee chair.

No later than the last day of Exam Week in Spring Quarter, the student and dissertation committee will conduct a conversation about the prospectus, lasting up to two hours. This conversation will address any final minor revisions to the prospectus; it will also chart a course for initial dissertation research and writing subsequent to the prospectus.

5.3.2. Department Approval of the Prospectus

Shortly after the deadline for the Prospectus Meeting, the student will submit the final prospectus with any revisions arising from the Prospectus Meeting to the GPA and DGS. Final approval of the prospectus rests with the DGS. Prospectuses must be submitted no later than one week after the Prospectus Meeting.

The DGS will review the prospectus and, in the vast majority of cases, approve it. In exceptional cases, if the document is judged in need of extensive revision, the DGS will return it for resubmission. You and your dissertation director will receive discursive comments, with the notification of approval or non-approval, via letter (both hard and digital copies) by the end of June, year three.

If the prospectus is sent back for revision, it must be revised and approved by the full dissertation committee no later than one week before the beginning of Fall Quarter, year four. At this point, it will be re-evaluated by the DGS as rapidly as possible; you and your dissertation director will be notified of her decision by email and letter before the end of September, year four.

5.4 Admission to Candidacy

Admission to candidacy is a TGS benchmark that indicates your completion of all degree requirements with the exception of the dissertation (thus the acronym “ABD,” for “All But Dissertation”). You advance to candidacy if you have met the breadth and language requirements; finished all coursework and resolved all incomplete grades; passed the Qualifying Exam; and completed an approved prospectus. No student may advance to candidacy with an incomplete on her record. No student may advance to candidacy without fulfilling the language requirement. These departmental requirements are strictly administered by TGS; it is critical that you satisfy them well in advance of Fall Quarter year four.

TGS requires that you achieve candidacy by the end of the first week of classes after your twelfth quarter in the program (that is, the first week of classes, Fall Quarter, year four). If you have not passed all departmental requirements at this time, TGS will place you on probationary status. According to TGS policy, students on fourth-year probation have Fall and Winter Quarters to complete their outstanding work. Failure to do so within this timeframe may result in exclusion from TGS and the Department of English. If you have not advanced to candidacy by the start of Spring Quarter, year four, all further fellowship and/or travel funding may be forfeited.

A delay in your advancement to candidacy seriously impedes your ability to make progress on your dissertation. In the event of outstanding requirements at the start of year four, your sole focus must be the completion of all outstanding work. In consultation with you and your dissertation director, the DGS will draft a schedule of work for Fall and Winter Quarters with the aim of fulfilling all outstanding coursework or requirements. You will receive a letter detailing this projected work schedule, to which you are required to communicate your consent.

When you achieve candidacy, you must continue to register for TGS 500: Advanced Doctoral Study; you will continue to do so in any quarter in which you receive funding. If you are unfunded as a result of late advancement to candidacy, you must register instead for TGS 512: Continuous Registration, which enables you to maintain minimal student status.

6. THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE PH.D.

As soon as your prospectus is approved, it is imperative that you make timely progress in productive, targeted research with an end to drafting your first dissertation chapter. You must make significant progress in writing your dissertation during year four. To be competitive for external fellowship opportunities, you should aim to have completed one solid, committee-approved chapter and to have made progress on a second by the end of Summer Quarter, year four.

To ensure one refereed publication in hand before you begin your job search (and, ideally, your fellowship applications), students who have advanced to candidacy should enroll in “English 520: Writing for Publication” in the Spring quarter of year 4 as a P/NP registration. English 520 will guide students through the preparation of a publishable essay and will broach broader questions of both scholarly and public-facing communication. Pre-existing work (usually a seminar paper or dissertation chapter) will form the basis of the essay that students develop in the course. Successful completion of the course will require the preparation of an essay suitable for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. (Students may opt to substitute alternative professional development courses for English 520 in consultation with the committee and the DGS.)

The learning objectives of English 520 include:

1. Learning to write for a professional audience in one’s field
2. Assessing different publication venues and choosing the most appropriate for a given piece of work
3. Pinpointing and repairing weaknesses in research, argument, and style
4. Learning to respond to editors, readers’ reports, and peer review
5. Refining rhetoric to meet the needs of a target audience

6. Becoming more meticulous in documentation and proofreading

TGS strongly encourages Ph.D. students to apply for external funding in year four. Often the best source of funding at this early stage proceeds from research libraries whose archives will assist you with your dissertation research. Major research libraries such as The Folger Library, The Huntington Library, the Harry Ransom Center, the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, the Beinecke Library, and many others offer one- and two-month short-term travel funding. Chicago’s The Newberry Library offers a one-quarter Lawrence Lipking Fellowship targeted for Ph.D. students in English at Northwestern. Many smaller collections like Haverford College Library’s Quaker and Special Collections also offer specific short-term fellowships. Consult your dissertation director and the Northwestern Office of Fellowships before Fall Quarter of year four to compile a list of potential short-term funding sources and deadlines, draft your application materials, and solicit letters of recommendation from your committee. In addition, the Graduate Program Assistant maintains a highly useful database of departmental fellowship applications and awards. You should also consider whether you are ready to apply for long-term funding at the start of year four. (For further discussion, see 4.3. Fellowships.)

6.1. Composition of the Dissertation Committee

As the Admission to Candidacy page of the TGS website states, “The [Dissertation] Examination Committee must include no fewer than three full-time members of the Northwestern University faculty, two of whom, including the chair, must be members of the Graduate Faculty.” With the approval of the DGS and TGS, a faculty member who leaves the University may still serve as one of your dissertation committee members. As long as the core committee composition accords with TGS guidelines, a specialist from another university may be asked to serve as a fourth reader. If a member of your committee leaves the University or resigns from your committee, the DGS will appoint a replacement in consultation with you and your remaining committee.

6.2. Rewriting the Prospectus

In the truly exceptional event of radical changes to the dissertation topic, your dissertation director may require you to draft a new prospectus. This requirement is imposed at your director’s discretion. The DGS is not required to approve the new prospectus and your status in candidacy is not affected.

6.3. Dissertation Writing & Committee Feedback

Even though you research and draft chapters on your own, you are strongly encouraged to remain in ongoing contact with your director and committee. You should consult your advisors not only for guidance about your research and analysis, but also to draw up a tentative schedule for the completion of your chapter drafts. With a schedule in hand, your committee will be better able to check in with you, offer assistance, and plan in advance to read your work. With regular communication about your progress during year four, you and your committee will be best able to anticipate your readiness to undertake external long-term fellowship, external short-term research fellowship, and Northwestern fellowship applications at the start of year five. You will also be able to assess your readiness to embark on the job market at the start of year five.

It is optimal, but not required, for your director to take the lead in providing commentary on your drafts. You are advised to use your director’s advice in conjunction with your own judgment to determine when to share drafts with other committee members. While you should inform your director when you circulate work to other committee members or faculty, you are encouraged to share work with any committee member or faculty reader who can best assist you at your particular juncture. In addition, graduate writing groups inside and outside of English can be crucial enablers of productivity and community.

Ideally, your committee members should read individual dissertation chapters within one month, but you are required to give them advance warning so they can plan to respect this schedule. If you aim to submit an entire dissertation, you must provide a month’s notice to receive feedback within one month. Committee members also have an obligation to read your dissertation while they are on leave. During faculty leave and summer, anticipate potential delays in communication and longer lead time prior to the turnaround of your work. To ensure that you are able to maintain your dissertation work schedule, be sure to work out turnaround times before your advisors leave town for research or summer travel.

If you experience a serious impediment to your ability to advance with the dissertation in year four, as always, you should consult the DGS sooner rather than later. Whether the source of the block is advisory, structural, intellectual, or personal, the DGS will work constructively with you to attempt to resolve it. It is crucial to your progress in the program that you seek this assistance if needed. The DGS will keep all communications confidential with the important exception of complaints of sexual misconduct, which faculty are obliged to report to the Office of Equity to maintain Northwestern University’s compliance with Title IX.

7. THE FIFTH YEAR OF THE PH.D.

Year five in the Ph.D. program involves significant decisions and developments. As soon as the previous spring, you should consider whether you are ready to apply for academic jobs in early Fall Quarter, the application stage of the annual academic job market cycle. This is a decision best adjudicated with your director, although the ultimate choice depends on your own commitments and circumstances. In addition, you are expected by TGS and the Department to apply by early Fall Quarter of year five (deadlines vary) for internal and external fellowship funding.
At the start of year five, you and your director should devise a dissertation completion schedule that terminates at the end of year six. While you may win a two-year fellowship award that covers years six and seven (see Section 4.3. Fellowships), you are advised to plan the trajectory of your dissertation research and writing so that you can enter the academic job market in early Fall Quarter of year six at the latest.

During year five, the department provides you with fellowship support, which relieves you of teaching or Graduate Assistant responsibilities. You are expected to make significant headway on your dissertation during this time. While rates of completion vary, and there are multiple sources of funding for year six, you should aim to embark on the third chapter of your dissertation by the start of year five. As part of your funding package, TGS provides funding through and including the summer of year five.

7.1. Fifth-year chapter completion requirement

This requirement applies to Ph.D. students who matriculated in Fall 2014 and later.

Sixth-year funding is contingent upon the minimum completion of one committee-approved chapter by the end of year five. By no later than Friday of Exam Week, Spring Quarter, one full dissertation chapter draft must have been approved by the dissertation committee. Please note that this constitutes a minimum standard: in the majority of cases, students complete their first approved chapter draft before the end of year five. Please contact the DGS sooner rather than later if you encounter any significant impediment in meeting this requirement.

8. THE SIXTH YEAR OF THE PH.D. AND BEYOND

While not formally guaranteed, sixth-year funding through and including the summer of year six is provided to all students in good standing in the Ph.D. program in English. See section 10.2 below for further details.

In the current professional environment, you are unlikely to get a job in your first try on the academic job market, especially if you are ABD at the time of your application. Keep in mind that you will compete with unemployed Ph.D.s as well as assistant professors who wish to move laterally. However, you will be a stronger applicant if you have defended your dissertation before the start of Fall Quarter, year seven. For this reason, as well as for eligibility for positions like the Visiting Assistant Professorship in English, you should aim to defend by the end of year six unless you have received fellowship support through your seventh year.

8.1. Preparation of the Dissertation

Submission of your dissertation to TGS is performed electronically. Information on this process can be found in the Degree Requirements section of the Academic Student Services page of the TGS website. You must consult the TGS website for the latest information on submission requirements and guidelines. You should, however, offer electronic and/or hard copies of the dissertation to each member of your committee. The department printer/copier is available for your use in the distribution of dissertation copies.

In preparing your dissertation, the department and TGS require you to follow the latest edition of an approved model of scholarly citation, preferably The Chicago Manual of Style or The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. TGS has further formatting requirements, which can be found on its website. Your director will review your dissertation for scholarly accuracy. It is to your advantage to choose an approved format for footnotes and bibliography early on and to follow it meticulously throughout the stages of preparing your dissertation. Zotero and EndNote software can format notes and bibliographies for you. The former is freely available online, and the latter can be downloaded from Northwestern IT for free with your NetID and password.

8.2. Dissertation Defense and Assessment

Your last examination as a degree candidate will be the oral defense of your dissertation. After this examination, your committee will comment on your doctoral thesis, assessing in reasonable detail its strengths and weaknesses, making recommendations concerning possible publication, and, of most immediate concern, recommending whatever final editing needs to be done prior to submission of the dissertation to TGS.

In either case, submission of the fully edited dissertation to TGS is the final requirement that must be fulfilled before you are eligible to graduate. Though specific dates will vary from year to year, you should be prepared to submit the finalized dissertation to TGS at least six weeks prior to your graduation date. Spring graduation, including the Hooding Ceremony, takes place in mid-June, while Fall Quarter degrees are awarded at the end of December. Students earning a Fall Quarter degree may participate in the Hooding Ceremony the following spring.

8.3. Time Limits

Beyond the optimal timeframe of six or seven years to the Ph.D., TGS defines the following outer limit (updated August 2019 from its website): “The Graduate School Policy states that all requirements for the doctoral degree must be met within nine years of initial registration in a doctoral program, which falls on the last day of the 36th quarter. For students on an approved leave of absence or approved childbirth accommodations, milestones will be extended accordingly.” In the absence of approved leaves or accommodations, TGS firmly administers this cutoff. Be assured that last-minute extensions are extremely difficult to procure.

As an absolute outer limit in the absence of an approved leave, you have until the end of your ninth year in the program (usually the Summer Quarter, mid-September) to file your completed,
defended, approved and edited dissertation. If you enter your eighth year in the doctoral program without having earned the Ph.D., you are required to consult with your director and the DGS so that you and your committee can work to ensure a defense date well in advance of TGS’s terminal limit.

9. COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES / ENGLISH PH.D. REQUIREMENTS

Ph.D. students in the Comparative Literary Studies Program (CLS) whose home department is English must meet the following requirements:

• CLS/English Ph.D. students must take six graduate seminars in English, which may include Independent Studies. Courses must carry an English course number or be taught by English department faculty or English-affiliated faculty. All Independent Study requests must be approved in advance by the English DGS (see Section 1.1. “English 499” above). Exceptions may be granted in advance by the English DGS in consultation with the DGS of CLS.

• CLS/English Ph.D. students do not undergo the first-year review.

• For the Qualifying Exam and dissertation committee, at least one committee member must be English or English-affiliated faculty. Exceptions may be granted in advance by the English DGS in consultation with the DGS of CLS.

• CLS/English students submit Qualifying Exam reading lists and take the Qualifying Exam on the same schedule as English graduate students. For crucial information about committee formation, reading lists, and the exam, see Sections 4.4 and 5.1. above:
  • The final Qualifying Exam Reading Lists and accompanying rationale(s) must be submitted to the committee and the DGS no later than May 15 of the second year;
  • The Qualifying Exam will ordinarily be administered during Fall Quarter of year three. All CLS/English students matriculating in Fall 2019 or later are subject to the new Written Exam format described in Section 5.1.

Upon successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, CLS/English Ph.D. students are subject to no further requirements in English, with the exception of the requirement that one dissertation committee member belong to the English or English-affiliated faculty. All subsequent requirements through the award of the Ph.D. are administered by the Comparative Literary Studies Program.

10. FUNDING & ASSISTANTSHIPS

10.1. Funding in Years Two, Three, Four, & Five

University Fellowships and Graduate Assistantships are provided to students in the doctoral program. The Department provides support through and including the summer of the fifth year for all Ph.D. students who have been continued into the second year and who remain in good standing in subsequent years. Note that one quarter of funding is used early if the student elects to enroll in a language intensive class during Summer Quarter before year one. By accepting graduate funding, students have contractually agreed not to undertake significant additional remunerative work without TGS approval. Please see the TGS website for details of this policy.

Funding between years two and four takes the form of Graduate Assistantships, which may include up to one quarter per academic year of fellowship. The Department makes every effort to provide fellowship funding in Fall Quarter of year three, with the goal of providing you additional time for Qualifying Exam preparation. As in year one, all four quarters of year five are covered by a University Fellowship. You are relieved of departmental responsibilities in year five with the aim of enabling significant progress on the dissertation.

Departmental recommendation of continuation into year two is prerequisite to the award of Graduate Assistantships and all other forms of fellowship that involve Northwestern University funds. In addition, TGS requires that you be in good academic standing to be a Graduate Assistant. Good academic standing requires at least a B average and no more than one incomplete grade.

Other circumstances that may jeopardize or otherwise negatively impact university funding include:

• Failing to make up incompletes by two weeks before the beginning of the Fall Quarter;

• Not achieving candidacy before the beginning of the fourth year due to outstanding incompletes, an outstanding language requirement, or an unapproved dissertation prospectus.

10.2. Internal Support Beyond Year Five

While not formally guaranteed, sixth-year funding through and including the summer of year six is provided to all students in good standing in the Ph.D. program in English, in part because many sixth-year students succeed in securing extra-departmental funding. Be aware that University funding becomes significantly more difficult to procure in year seven and beyond due to TGS regulations restricting seventh-year funding.

At the start of year five, you and your director should devise a dissertation completion schedule that terminates at the end of year six. While you may win a two-year fellowship award that covers years six and seven (see 4.3. Fellowships), you are advised to plan the trajectory of your dissertation research and writing so that you can enter the academic job market in early Fall Quarter of year six at the latest.

10.3. TGS External Award Policy

Because TGS considers “graduate funding to be a collaborative effort between students and Northwestern University” (TGS website), TGS strongly recommends that you begin to apply for external fellowship in year four. You are expected to apply for
external fellowship awards in year five and beyond. In addition to the obvious benefits of time free from teaching duties and the visibility of an external or internal fellowship on your CV, fellowship support during year five also earns you additional support from TGS: up to four quarters of fellowship support and $500 extra stipend per month from TGS, in addition to your original funding package. The TGS supplemental award allows you to “bank” additional quarters of funding that extend into or through Summer Quarter, year six. TGS policy (as of September 2016) stipulates that the supplemental funding will “apply to those awards that provide student comparable stipend support. Therefore, awards … [that] provide only research and travel support [with no stipend] are not eligible for the support listed below.

1. A 1:1 match up to an additional four quarters of support to be used in the sixth year for graduate students who are awarded and accept an external competitive award within their first five years of study; and

2. A stipend supplement of $500 per month for the duration of the external award to students through their fifth year.

3. A stipend top-up to the TGS base stipend if the external award stipend is lower to students through their sixth year.”

Note that TGS offers the one-to-one match-up of one to four extra quarters in addition to your original funding package only if those extra quarters are used by the end of Summer Quarter, year six (which means that the funding was applied for in years four or five). Note also that TGS extends the $500 monthly stipend supplement only if the award is used in Fall, Winter, Spring, or Summer of year five (which means that the funding was applied for in year four). To take advantage of this benefit, you must apply for fellowships in years four and/or five. In year five, the benefit accrues only in the event of a short-term award, so that the banked supplemental quarter could be used by the end of summer of year six. Consult “TGS External Award Policy” on the TGS website to stay abreast of current provisions. TGS policy is subject to change.

You should consult your director, the DGS, the GPA, and the Northwestern Office of Fellowships to identify short- and long-term external funding opportunities specific to your field, topic, and/or methodology. Be aware that a significant number of year-long fellowships, like the Mellon/ ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship and the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship, are designated dissertation completion fellowships, which means that you, your director, and the DGS must attest that you will be ready to defend the dissertation by August 31 of the fellowship period. You are contractually bound to abide by this deadline under threat of reimbursement of the award. Some ABD fellowship awards, such as The Princeton Society of Fellows, require that the dissertation be defended and filed by June 15 of the fellowship period.

You should investigate application criteria well in advance of year five so that you can coordinate your projected fellowship application and dissertation completion schedule.

10.4. Departmental/TGS Conference Travel Support

Ph.D. students may apply for a total of four conference travel grants, each totaling up to $1,000. The first two are largely funded by TGS ($800 contribution from TGS, $200 from English). After these two TGS conference grants are used, students are eligible for their third and fourth conference grants, which are funded by the Department of English. Students must be currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program and currently receiving University funding to be eligible for conference grant support. The Department cannot provide conference travel funds to recent Ph.D.s or students past the period of University funding.

TGS will not fund conference travel prior to three completed quarters of graduate work at Northwestern. Only in cases of extreme professional urgency will the Department support conference travel in the first year, in which case the funds proceed from one of the student’s two departmentally sourced grants.

To be eligible for conference travel funding, you must be a “principal presenter” at the conference, listed in the program as presenter of your own work on a panel or roundtable. Co-authored and co-presented work is acceptable. Conference attendance without any presentation of academic work is not eligible for funding. You are strongly discouraged from conference participation in Spring Quarter, year two. It is recommended that you conserve most of your allocated conference travel until you have started your dissertation work. Circulating dissertation work in progress may help generate interest in you and your project before you enter the job market.

Conference travel grants must be approved by both your dissertation (or field) advisor and the DGS to ensure that the planned travel does not conflict with Graduate Assistantship responsibilities. You must consult with your field advisor, (if you are in year two), Qualifying Exam chair, or dissertation director before you apply. Upon approval by your field advisor, Exam chair, or director, you must submit a Conference Travel Request Form for the DGS’s approval and signature. Faculty endorsement of travel requests signals professional confirmation of the legitimacy of the conference and the merit of the commitment of student time. Faculty are expected to weigh this endorsement seriously; approval is not assured.

10.5. Extra-Departmental Travel/ Research Support

Northwestern University’s Roberta Buffett Institute for Global Studies supports graduate work in globalization studies, research in the Middle East, and travel related to international and comparative studies. The Program in African Studies (PAS) offers Hans E. Panofsky Pre-Dissertation Awards, Morris Goodman Awards to support language study, Foreign Language and Area Studies awards, PAS Travel Awards, and other grants. TGS also offers a range of competitive short-term graduate grants, including Summer Language Grants and Graduate Research Grants (up to $3,000). You are encouraged to consult the websites of relevant institutes, programs, and departments, as well as TGS
and the Office of Fellowships for further information about short-term grant opportunities at Northwestern.

10.6. Major Internal Fellowships & Assistantships

Please note that TGS fellowship and assistantship application criteria reflect TGS’s vision of the optimum time to degree, and year four is the last year that you are eligible to apply for fellowship funding provided in full or in part by TGS. Receiving TGS support in year five will make you eligible to bank quarters of your initial funding offer for use no later than Summer Quarter of year six.

TGS maintains lists on their website of internal fellowships and grants, as well as interdisciplinary assistantships available from other units in the University. Some of the most frequently pursued are listed below:

TGS’s Presidential Fellowship is a competitive university-wide award that provides two years of funding. For this, the most prestigious graduate award at Northwestern, the department is allowed to nominate one student each year, and will select the nominee from students in the fourth year of the program. At the beginning of Winter Quarter in year four, you and your committee chair will submit application materials to the GPC, which will select the Department’s nominee. Be sure to inform your director well in advance so that she/he/they can confirm support of your application; the Department will solicit applications in late Summer. Note that TGS prohibits the submission of dissertation chapters as samples of applicants’ writing. However, you may submit a talk or article related to your dissertation as your writing sample. See the TGS website for up-to-date information and application requirements.

The Franke Graduate Fellowship is offered by The Alice Kaplan Institute for the Humanities, in partnership with TGS, to “the most accomplished doctoral students in the humanities during their fourth or fifth year of study.” The Franke Graduate Fellowship provides two fellowship quarters and $2,000 in research funds; in Spring Quarter, Franke Fellows design and teach a course in their home department or program. Franke Graduate Fellowship awards are eligible for TGS matching support, which can be “banked” for use through the Summer Quarter of year six. See the Humanities Institute website for up-to-date information and application requirements.

The Gender & Sexuality Studies Program offers three competitively awarded quarters of funding, typically comprising two quarters of teaching assistantship for large introductory lecture classes in GSS plus one quarter of solo teaching of a 300-level seminar on a topic of the recipient’s own design (necessarily related to gender or sexuality). GSS fellowship applications are usually due in late March or early April of the preceding year. Only fourth-year doctoral students may apply; occasional exceptions may be made for third-year students. GSS fellowship awards are eligible for TGS matching support, which can be “banked” for use through Summer Quarter of year six. Consult GSS for further details.

The Sexualities Project at Northwestern (SPAN) offers dissertation fellowships to Northwestern graduate students working on topics related to sexual orientation and sexuality. SPAN dissertation fellowships provide up to three quarters of funding (including stipend, tuition, and benefits); SPAN summer grants are also available. SPAN fellowship awards are eligible for TGS matching support, which can be “banked” for use through Summer Quarter of year six. The deadline falls in early May of the preceding year. Consult the SPAN website for more details.

11. OTHER MATTERS

11.1. Department Organization

The Graduate Program of the Department of English operates under the authority and rules of TGS. Responsibility for curricular matters, admissions, fellowships, and other academic and financial matters rests with the graduate faculty of the Department, but much of the programmatic business is delegated to the DGS and GPC. The DGS is the executive officer of the Graduate Program.

11.2. English Graduate Student Organization

The English Graduate Student Organization (EGSO) is headed by two co-chairs, who are elected for one-year terms, as well as two elected representatives of students in coursework and in candidacy, respectively. As the graduate body that organizes and advocates for the social, intellectual, and professional well-being of the Ph.D., M.A., and MFA+MA cohort, EGSO offers peer support to graduate students in their first year and in coursework; assists in recruiting prospective entrants to the Ph.D. program during their campus visit; helps assess job candidates in the Department of English; organizes graduate student colloquia and the faculty-graduate Salon reading group; and convenes less formal opportunities for collegiality and community. Most critically, EGSO brings the graduate community’s needs and concerns to the attention of the Chair and DGS. The Department offers funds to support EGSO programming.

11.3. Placement Services

The Department of English provides all possible assistance to Ph.D. candidates and recent Ph.D.s who enter the job market, academic or otherwise. Your dissertation director, in consultation with your dissertation committee, will often remain your primary source of advice and support during this phase. Additionally, each academic year, one or two designated members of the English Department faculty serve as Placement Directors to schedule feedback, support, and targeted advice for the duration of the job-seeking process. On the Virgil Database, you can access the Placement Handbook, which includes information about both the traditional academic job market and opportunities in
secondary education, public humanities, and “alt-ac” careers.

Traditionally, the academic job market followed a fairly predictable schedule, outlined in the following paragraph. In recent years, though, many institutions have disregarded the traditional schedule, posting job openings throughout the year. So while it’s helpful to be aware of the traditional calendar of the academic job market, please be aware that not all opportunities will conform to the schedule described below. The traditional academic job market begins roughly in July, when you prepare application materials for feedback and multiple cycles of revision. In August, you secure letters from your committee and set up an electronic dossier with Interfolio. In August and early September, you meet with your director and the Placement Directors to review your letter of application, your abstract, your CV, your writing sample, and your teaching statement. Sample syllabi, reflecting courses you have taught as well as courses you would like to teach in your field, are also recommended. In September and October, depending on the deadlines announced in the Job Information List (released by the Modern Language Association in early September, but updated regularly thereafter), you submit individualized application letters and materials. In October and November, you transmit further letters of reference and/or writing samples upon search committee request; you may also be invited to participate in Skype interviews at this time and beyond. In December and early January, you hear from search committees who wish to schedule an in-person interview at the Modern Language Association convention in early January. (Please note that Skype interviews are increasingly more common than in-person interviews at MLA.) After your interviews at the MLA convention, you are contacted by search committees who wish to schedule an on-campus visit, at which point you must prepare a job talk and/or prepare to teach a class in front of the search committee and host faculty. After the campus visit, you must prepare to negotiate the most advantageous terms should you receive an offer of academic employment.

The demands of the job market are grueling and can distract from the work of completing the dissertation. If you are ABD, you and your advisors should carefully weigh the potential benefits and costs. While it is a tremendous advantage to secure employment in today’s market, you should be aware that a “restricted search” will demand just as much time as a full-scale search. Fellowship applications, which you should undertake in Fall Quarter of year five, also require a significant investment of time in a divergent set of application materials.

The English Department’s Placement Directors are available to assist students in English; Comparative Literary Studies with a home department in English; and, when appropriate, affiliated programs such as the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Theatre and Drama. The Placement Directors arrange a collaborative student-faculty workshop in early Fall Quarter to review application materials; organize mock interviews early in fall quarter to prepare students for interviews via Skype or at the MLA Convention; and set up mock job talks in early Winter Quarter for those invited for on campus visits. In addition, the Placement Directors work individually with each job applicant over the course of the application, from Summer Quarter of the prior year (when students typically ponder the pros and cons of entering the market) through the job offer negotiation process and beyond.

If you wish to explore career opportunities in alternative academic employment, public humanities, secondary education, or other venues off the academic tenure track, the Placement Directors may also be able to direct you to resources that will assist you in your search. Note that TGS funding gives graduate students access to skills-based courses in the School for Professional Studies, some of which might enhance students’ training for academic and “alt-ac” jobs alike (for example, in “Web Development,” “Museum Studies,” and “Publishing and Professional Development”). The Kaplan Humanities Institute is also a member of the consortium Humanities Without Walls, which offers predoctoral workshops to help prepare graduate students for careers both inside and outside of the academy. Northwestern Career Advancement offers some programming designed specifically for graduate students. Chicago’s Newberry Library is offering a new graduate course on the archive that will teach participants how to process an unprocessed collection at an independent research archive. Online resources that offer support for Ph.D.s aiming to build skills, networks, and career opportunities outside of academia include ImaginePh.D.; VersatilePhD (to which Northwestern is a subscribing institution); HASTAC Scholars; and the MLA Humanities Commons, including the MLA Connected Academics Initiative.

Along with the Placement Directors, your advisors and the entire Department of English are strongly committed to your success. Do not hesitate to consult your advisors, the Placement Directors, the DGS, and other faculty for assistance throughout your job search.