

English, PhD

The Doctor of Philosophy program in English is designed to prepare students for a lifetime of literary study, as well as for the wide range of professions that require well-developed reading, research, writing, teaching, and administrative skills. The program emphasizes individual initiative, careful choice, and creativity. Students may concentrate in one or more of several areas, including literary history, critical theory, cultural studies, the digital humanities, and pedagogy. The department offers a version of the PhD that incorporates book studies, including a certificate from the UI Center for the Book, as well as a combined program with the Master of Arts in library and information sciences; see Combined Programs [p. 1] in this section of the catalog.

Learning Outcomes

- Writing skills: proficiency in writing publishable academic and creative work of high quality.
- Historical knowledge: comprehensive historical knowledge of literary history, reflected in courses taken across a range of literary periods and national/international traditions.
- Critical theory and approaches: rigorous study of critical methodologies and interpretive strategies.
- Research skills: familiarity with library research into secondary scholarship on primary texts, archival research methods, and field research, where applicable.
- Teaching skills: ideally, students will move from foundations-based grading positions under the supervision of tenure track faculty (introduction to the major) to rhetoric/composition coursework (rhetoric), and then on to literary analysis-focused courses (general education literature). Students learn to build their own syllabi, develop a teaching portfolio, and manage their own courses independently.
- Professional development: preparing conference presentations, curriculum vitae, résumés, and teaching statements, as well as gaining exposure to career tracks, both academic (e.g., tenure track jobs, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, etc.) and alternative professions (e.g., digital humanities, humanities organizations, publishing, etc.).

Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy program in English requires a minimum of 72 s.h. of graduate credit. Students may receive credit for up to 18 s.h. of transfer courses. They must maintain a cumulative University of Iowa grade-point average of at least 3.00. Concentrations are offered in areas such as literary history and critical theory, as well as interdisciplinary areas such as cultural studies and transnational studies.

Of the minimum 72 s.h. required for the degree, at least 51 s.h. must be in graded coursework numbered 3000 or above. Of those, at least 30 s.h. must be in English courses numbered 5000 or above, 21 s.h. in courses numbered 3000 or above may be taken in the Department of English or in another unit, and 9 s.h. taken in independent studies related to a comprehensive exam. The remaining 12 s.h. of post-comprehensive courses numbered 3000 or above may be taken as graded or independent study coursework.

The book studies specialization requires 72 s.h. in courses numbered 3000 or above. Of those, at least 24 s.h. must

be in English courses numbered 5000 or above, 15 s.h. must be in Center for the Book courses numbered 4000 or above (see Center for the Book in the Graduate College section of the catalog), 12 s.h. in courses numbered 3000 or above may be taken in the Department of English or in another unit, and 9 s.h. taken in independent studies related to a comprehensive exam. The remaining 12 s.h. of post-comprehensive courses numbered 3000 or above may be taken as graded or independent study coursework.

Students must gain formal admission to PhD candidacy by a vote of the Graduate Steering Committee, usually during the third semester of doctoral study.

Students complete coursework in literature and culture of any four of these historical periods, as expressed in texts of the English-speaking and -writing world (usually but not always British or American): pre-1500, 1500-1660, 1660-1800, 1800-1900, 20th and 21st centuries. They also complete three seminars in the Department of English at the University of Iowa.

Students also must fulfill the program's world language requirement, usually by taking a standardized test or completing an advanced undergraduate course numbered 3000 or above in a language other than English.

The comprehensive examination consists of the following: a portfolio of five scholarly questions based on a period of literary history (usually British or American), a review essay and annotated bibliography in a special area of interest, two course syllabi or alternate materials pertaining to an academic-adjacent career, an article to be submitted for publication, and an introduction to the portfolio that synthesizes its parts in preparation for a two-hour oral exam.

A dissertation is required. Students present their prospectus formally to a faculty committee and must undergo a final exam defending the dissertation.

All doctoral candidates are strongly advised to gain teaching experience, preferably in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Department of Rhetoric and in GE CLAS Core literature courses.

For application forms and a complete description of the PhD program, contact the department's graduate program academic coordinator.

Combined Programs

MA in Library and Information Science/PhD in English

The combined MA in library and information science/PhD in English program prepares students for careers in academic libraries as humanities subject specialists, reference and instruction librarians, first-year experience librarians, special collections librarians and curators, and archivists. It also enhances the research profiles and methodological toolboxes of digital humanists as well as archival historicists, in addition to improving pedagogical skills. Offered by the Graduate College and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; see the MA in library and information science in the catalog.

Admission

Applications and all supporting documents for graduate admission must be submitted electronically by Dec. 14. Applicants should submit their applications and supporting

materials to the University of Iowa Office of Admissions website.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; see the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Financial Support

Graduate scholarships, fellowships, and teaching and research assistantships are awarded on a competitive basis. The department strives to provide five years of support for students who enter with an MA and six years of support for students who enter with a BA. Students must be in good standing, which requires a University of Iowa grade-point average of at least 3.00, full-time enrollment, and satisfactory progress through the program.

Financial aid applications are considered only from students who have applied or been admitted to a degree program in the Graduate College. Applications and all necessary supporting material must be submitted by the end of January for the following academic year. Forms are available from the Department of English Graduate Studies Office.

Career Advancement

Most PhD graduates seek employment at colleges and universities. Although the Department of English cannot guarantee such employment, it does supply vigorous assistance. Because there is no certainty that all doctoral graduates in English will find continuing academic employment, it is valuable to remain open to the opportunity of jobs outside the profession of teaching. A number of graduates are finding employment in academic administration, the digital humanities, business, and government.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

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Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
72 s.h. of graduate level coursework must be completed; up to 18 s.h. of graduate transfer credits from an accredited institution allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. ^{a, b, c}		
Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.00.		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
ENGL:5000	Introduction to Graduate Study ^d	3
ENGL:6000	Introduction to Contemporary Theory	3
Seminar course ^e		3
Historical Period course ^f		3

ENGL:6950	Colloquium: Teaching Foundations of the English Major	1
Hours		13
Spring		
Seminar course ^e		3
Elective course ^g		3
Historical Period course ^f		3
ENGL:6950	Colloquium: Teaching Foundations of the English Major	1
World Language requirement ^h		
Hours		10
Second Year		
Fall		
Historical Period course ^f		3
Elective course ^g		3
Seminar course ^e		3
RHET:5350	Colloquium: Teaching Rhetoric	3
Hours		12
Spring		
Historical Period course ^f		3
Elective course ^g		3
English Elective course (numbered 5000 or above) ^g		3
Hours		9
Third Year		
Fall		
Elective course ^g		3
Elective course ^g		3
English Elective course (numbered 5000 or above)		3
Hours		9
Spring		
Elective course ^g		3
Hours		3
Fourth Year		
Fall		
ENGL:7910	Advanced Studies in a Literary Period ⁱ	3
ENGL:7960	Advanced Studies in a Literary Theme ^j	3
ENGL:7970	Advanced Studies in Literary Criticism ^k	3
ENGL:6960	Colloquium: Teaching Literature ^l	2
Comprehensive Exam ^m		
Hours		11
Spring		
ENGL:7999	PhD Thesis ⁿ	1
Hours		1
Fifth Year		
Fall		
ENGL:7999	PhD Thesis ⁿ	1
Hours		1
Spring		
ENGL:7999	PhD Thesis ⁿ	1
Hours		1
Sixth Year		
Fall		
ENGL:7999	PhD Thesis ⁿ	1
Hours		1

Spring

ENGL:7999	PhD Thesis ⁿ	1
Final Oral Exam (Dissertation Defense) ^o		
Hours		1
Total Hours		72

- a A minimum of 51 s.h. must be graded coursework numbered 3000 or above with at least 30 s.h. in English courses numbered 5000 or above.
- b Students may pursue certificates (including the book studies/book arts and technologies certificate), in conjunction with completing the degree requirements for the PhD. For more information check with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
- c Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.
- d Typically this course is offered in fall semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
- e Prior to Comprehensive Exam, complete three seminars (ENGL:7000 level) in the department.
- f Prior to Comprehensive Exam, complete coursework in literature and culture of any four of these historical periods, as expressed in texts of the English-speaking and -writing world (usually but not always British or American): pre-1500, 1500-1660, 1660-1800, 1800-1900, 20th and 21st centuries.
- g Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate graduate coursework and sequence; graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval.
- h Prior to Comprehensive Exam, take a standardized test or complete an advanced undergraduate course numbered 3000 or above in a language other than English.
- i Independent studies with historical Comprehensive Exam faculty members.
- j Independent studies with special area Comprehensive Exam faculty members.
- k Independent studies with article Comprehensive Exam faculty members.
- l Required for TA employment.
- m Requires a portfolio of five scholarly questions based on a period of literary history (usually British or American); a review essay and annotated bibliography in a special area of interest; two course syllabi; an article to be submitted for publication; and an introduction to the portfolio that synthesizes its parts in preparation for a two-hour oral exam. See the General Catalog and department website for specifics.
- n Post-Comprehensive Exam registration for thesis credit is required every fall and spring semester until graduation.
- o Students present their prospectus formally to a faculty committee and must undergo a final exam defending the dissertation.