

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.] 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.).