

ENGLISH PHD PROGRAM IN CRITICAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES
Updated November 2022

I. ADMISSIONS. Individuals with at least a Bachelor's degree or its equivalent from an approved undergraduate institution may apply for admission to the English PhD Program in Critical and Cultural Studies. Applicants with a Master's degree or its equivalent are also invited to apply.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. *General Requirements.* The School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh requires a minimum of 72 credits at the 2000-level or above for the PhD. Of these 72 credits required for the PhD in English, 34 will be earned through seminars or required courses. The following course of study will comprise these credit requirements:

1. ENGLIT 2993: Introduction to Graduate Study (1 credit) in the Fall of the first year
2. ENGLIT 2500: Seminar in Pedagogy (3 credits) in the Spring of the first year
3. ENGLIT 2995: Dissertation Workshop (3 credits)
4. Three core programmatic courses (3 credits each), at least two of which must be in the student's home program (Composition, Film, or Literature)
5. Six elective courses (3 credits each) approved by the student's faculty advisor
 - i) Enrollment in undergraduate courses for graduate credit is by petition only. The student and advisor will each submit a rationale to the DGS, explaining why the undergraduate course is necessary. If approved by the DGS, any 1000-level course counted toward the PhD must include a graduate component in the form of additional and advanced readings and writings to be determined by the instructor, and students must also consult with the Graduate Administrator and register for three credits of ENGLIT 3910 Comprehensive Exam or ENGLIT 3000 Dissertation Research to receive credit toward the graduate degree. A statement from the instructor describing the graduate component should be placed in the student's file.
 - ii) The remaining credits of coursework shall be taken in the form of graduate seminars approved by the student's faculty advisor. Ordinarily, no more than one seminar (3 credits) shall be taken outside of the English Department. Students pursuing the joint Film and Media Studies PhD may take up to two courses (6 credits) outside the English department in order to fulfill the FMS requirement. Beyond these limitations, the student and faculty advisor must petition the DGS with a rationale explaining why the additional courses outside the department are necessary.
 - iii) A student may count no more than 3 Directed Study credits toward the PhD (see Introduction section IV.C for policies governing directed studies).

B. *Core Courses.* These courses must be completed with a grade of B or better to count toward degree requirements. ENGLIT 2993 Introduction to Graduate Studies is ordinarily taken during a student's first year in the program. ENGLIT 2500: Seminar in Pedagogy should be taken during a student's first year in the program. Students will take one of the two core programmatic courses during their first year in the program.

C. *ENGLIT 2996 Writing Pedagogy 1 and ENGLIT 2996 Writing Pedagogy 2* These courses are required as part of students' appointment as TAs and will normally be taken during the second year in the PhD program.

D. *Earning the MA.* PhD students may elect to earn the MA as they progress in the PhD Program, although they are not required to do so. If they wish to earn the MA, they must, in addition to

meeting the credit and foreign language requirements for the MA, either successfully complete the Master's Research Paper (outlined in section III of the MA Program in this *Handbook*) or successfully complete their PhD Project Examinations. Both options require students to apply for MA graduation with the Graduate Administrator.

E. *Certification of Coursework Completion*: Prior to scheduling the Project Examinations, the student must communicate with the Chair of the Committee about their transcript. The Chair must certify that the student has completed all coursework, using the "PhD Requirements Certification Form." This form must be submitted to the Graduate Administrator when scheduling the exams.

III. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS. It is important for scholars in the humanities not to be monolingual, as knowledge of languages can be important to PhD students in a number of ways. This requirement asks students to advance their knowledge of at least one language other than English as part of their graduate studies unless they have already made the study of languages a significant part of their education. This requirement must be completed before taking the PhD Project Examinations, unless a deferral is approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. Any language relevant to the student's doctoral work or, more generally, to the anticipated conditions of future scholarship and teaching may fulfill this requirement.

Students may fulfill this requirement by demonstrating a reading knowledge of two languages, undertaking further study of one language, or beginning a new language.

A. *Reading Knowledge of Two Languages Other Than English*. Students may demonstrate a reading knowledge of two languages in one of the following ways:

1. A student may demonstrate reading knowledge of a language other than English by passing an examination administered by a faculty member in a University of Pittsburgh language department. In the case where there is no faculty member here able to examine the student, the student may demonstrate reading knowledge of a language via examination by a faculty member at another institution. Such an arrangement must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.
2. A student may demonstrate reading knowledge of a language other than English by earning a B or better in a fourth-semester language course or a course designed to provide an equivalent reading knowledge of a language. The courses that satisfy this requirement vary by language department; students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies, who can provide a list of current courses at the University of Pittsburgh that fulfill the requirement. Students who would like to fulfill this requirement on the basis of coursework completed at another institution must apply to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will determine whether the coursework is equivalent.
3. A student may petition the Director of Graduate Studies to count other evidence of reading knowledge of another language, such as translation work, fulfillment of a comparable language requirement in another graduate program, completion of equivalent coursework at another institution, or previous schooling in which the language was the language of instruction.

B. *Advanced Study in One Language Other Than English*. Students may demonstrate that they have undertaken advanced study in a language by earning a B or better in an upper-level undergraduate course or graduate seminar in which materials in the language (in any medium) are examined or produced or in which the language is studied or employed in a more advanced or intensive way. The instructor of the course must certify in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies that the student demonstrated facility in the language by completing course readings in the language or by using the language in discussion, translation work, or composition.

C. *Beginning Knowledge of a New Language*. Students who prefer to begin studying a language (either because they have not seriously studied a language other than English before or because they have a reason to take up a new language) may fulfill the language requirement by achieving

a grade of B or better in a second-semester course in the language or in an intensive course (usually requiring 5 credits or more).

D. Other Regulations and Information

1. A student may not use English to fulfill the language requirement.
2. Students who have satisfied a language requirement at another recognized graduate school may request that fulfillment of the requirement at the other graduate school be accepted as fulfilling our requirement. All proof of language ability transferred from an examination at another university will satisfy the requirement of reading knowledge only.
3. Certification of Language Requirement: Prior to scheduling the Project Examinations, the Chair of the Committee must certify that the student has completed the language requirement, using the "PhD Requirements Certification Form." This form must be submitted to the Graduate Administrator when scheduling the exams.

IV. TEACHING REQUIREMENT. All PhD students are required to teach for at least two semesters and to complete ENGLIT 2500: Seminar in Pedagogy.

V. TRANSFER OF CREDITS. Students will not ordinarily be allowed to transfer credits from previous degrees toward their PhD coursework requirements. With the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies, students who earned a previous graduate degree at the University of Pittsburgh may count up to 6 credits of graduate coursework in the Department of English to satisfy requirements for the PhD.

VI. THE PHD PROJECT EXAMINATIONS

A. General Guidelines. The PhD Project Examinations fulfill the University requirement for a comprehensive examination prior to initiating dissertation work. One of the more important functions of the Project is to provide students with an occasion to generate questions that will guide their research, the answers to which will likely surprise them. The Project is meant to demonstrate a breadth of knowledge in tandem with the ability to work on a particular problem or an interrelated set of issues. The PhD Project exam involves an historical and theoretical exploration defined by a set of questions or problems; an investigation that will build a strong intellectual base for more detailed work at the dissertation stage, and will draw on material that could be useful for research and teaching beyond the dissertation; and a way of making connections among various interests a student has explored through seminar papers and other work from a broad range of courses taken.

B. The Project Committee. Each student forms a Project committee of three or more Department of English faculty members, with one member serving as chair. Students should form their Project committees no later than the end of the fall term of their third year or their fifth term in residence. Students should inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Administrator in writing once a Project committee has been formed.

C. PhD Project Examination Components. The PhD Project Examination proceeds in three main steps: the Project Proposal and Bibliography; the Project Papers; and the written and oral components of the Project Examination.

D. The Project Proposal and Bibliography

1. The Project Proposal is a 5-page (double-spaced) document that describes the issues and goals of the student's Project and is accompanied by a Project Bibliography that will guide the student's research and reading over the course of the Project. This Proposal outlines a set of questions, concerns, and areas of inquiry; almost inevitably it will be somewhat revised as a result of ongoing study. Yet it should also set some necessary limits on the material being studied. The Proposal should:

- i. Outline the questions, methodologies, and resources that will be involved in completing the Project.
 - ii. Situate the Project with respect to critical issues in the disciplinary fields under study.
 - iii. Explain what the goals of the Project are, why the Project should be constituted in the manner proposed by the student, and how the goals of the Project will be realized by the Project Papers.
- 2. The Project Bibliography accompanying the Project Proposal should:
 - i. Identify a set of primary materials relevant to the Project.
 - ii. Identify readings from the disciplinary fields under study.
 - iii. Indicate the breadth of reading and research to be undertaken over the course of the Project as a whole
- 3. Once members of the Project committee agree that the proposal is ready, the committee must convene to advise the student and sign the cover sheet of the proposal. The proposal and bibliography should be deposited with the Graduate Administrator in paper and digital versions together with the signed cover sheet and will be deposited in the student's file and retained by the department for purposes of assessment. In order to maintain good progress, students must have their Project Proposals approved by their committees and deposited with the Graduate Administrator no later than the last day of the spring semester of their third year in the program.
- 4. Students should expect to have both Project Papers drafted no later than the end of August before their fourth year in the program so that final revisions can be prepared in a timely manner. The Project Papers must be completed and submitted to the Project committee no later than 15 October of the student's fourth year in the program.
- 5. *E. The Project Papers and Revised Project Bibliography.* In consultation with their Project committees, students will write two papers, 20-30 (double-spaced) pages each, developing issues outlined in the Proposal. Committees may ask that each paper be accompanied by a critical or annotated bibliography of items that informed the research and thinking for the paper but were not included in the paper.
- 6. The two papers will be composed as follows:
 - i. Paper 1. The function of this paper is to situate the Project concerns within the disciplinary fields under study, as defined by the student in consultation with the Project committee.
 - ii. Paper 2. The function of this paper is to articulate and explore in depth a few of the most salient issues of the Project as imagined by the Proposal.
- 7. *Revised Project Bibliography.* The student may also submit a revised Project Bibliography reflecting the works on which they would like to be examined, and this bibliography may delete items from the initial Project Bibliography and add new ones. This revised Project Bibliography must be similar to the first one in terms of topic, scope, and number of works, and it must meet with the approval of the Project committee.

F. The Project Written and Oral Examinations. The written and oral components of the Project Examinations explore issues and questions raised by the Project Proposal, the revised Project Bibliography, and the Project Papers. After the Project committee receives the Project Papers and revised Project Bibliography, each committee member will submit questions to the Project committee chair, who will then compose the written exams and will schedule two three-hour written exam segments. The student may take their written examinations on two successive days or on a morning and afternoon with a restorative break in between. In addition to the three hours of exam-writing, the student will be allowed fifteen minutes at the beginning to

read and consider the questions, and fifteen minutes at the end for stylistic revision and proofreading (that is, each written exam segment will total three and one-half hours). Because the written component of the Project Exam is administered by the Graduate Administrator, the Chair of the Project committee must give a copy of the exam questions to the Graduate Administrator. The Graduate Administrator will be responsible for giving the student exam questions, collecting the written exam answers at the end of each segment, and distributing the answers to the Project committee. A copy of the exam and the student's answers will be deposited in their file.

1. The two written exam segments will be composed as follows:
 - i. Segment 1. This exam will focus on matters not substantially addressed in the two Project Papers but important to the disciplinary fields under study, as established in the student's Project Proposal and Revised Project Bibliography.
 - ii. Segment 2. This exam will focus on matters addressed in the two Project Papers, or broader matters important to the disciplinary fields under study as established in the student's Project Proposal and revised Project Bibliography, or a combination of these.
2. After the written examination is completed, the Project committee will conduct an oral examination of one to two hours; this exam may focus on issues in the Papers and the written examinations, in addition to raising other issues relevant to the Project as a whole. Following the oral examination, the student withdraws and waits for the Project committee to come to a decision about the student's performance on both the written and the oral portions of the exam. In terms of judging whether or not a student has passed the Project Examinations, there is no fixed or quantitative relationship between the written and oral portions of the exams.
3. In order to maintain good standing, students must take the oral project exam no later than the end of the fall semester in their 4th year in the program.
4. After the oral examination the Project committee members sign a form indicating that the student has either passed or failed. The Project committee may pass the student with distinction if they believe the candidate's performance on the written and oral portion of the exams warrants such recognition.
5. If the student fails the exams, the Project committee will discuss with the student the reasons for failure. Failed PhD Project Examinations may be repeated only with the permission of the student's Project committee. Project Examinations may be retaken only once and must be retaken within one academic term of the original examination date.

VII. FORMATION OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE. After a student has passed the Project examinations, they will register for Dissertation Research Credits in order to write a prospectus for the dissertation. The student should choose a dissertation committee chair and the other members of the dissertation committee at this time.

A. *Constitution of Dissertation Committee.* A dissertation committee must consist of at least three members of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh, and an outside reader.

B. *Dissertation Committee Chairperson.* The dissertation committee must have a chairperson, and they must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh.

C. *Outside Reader.* The outside reader must be a member of the Graduate Faculty in another department at the University of Pittsburgh or a faculty member from another university (in which case they may be in English or in a different department).

D. *Faculty Members at Other Universities.*

1. A faculty member at another university may serve either as an outside reader or as a regular committee member. If a faculty member at another university is serving as a regular committee member, they will be a fourth regular committee member (i.e., there must be three Graduate Faculty from the Department of English at the University of Pittsburgh on every dissertation committee). A faculty member from another university may not chair a dissertation committee, although they may co-chair if the other committee members consent to this arrangement.
2. In order for a faculty member at another university to be able to serve on a dissertation committee in any capacity, they must be approved by the Graduate Dean's Office. The graduate student must submit a letter from their dissertation committee chair justifying the appointment of this committee member, along with a copy of the *curriculum vitae* of the faculty member at another university, to the Graduate Administrator.

E. *Presence at Prospectus Meetings and Defenses.* All members of the dissertation committee must be present at the prospectus meeting and dissertation defense unless permission for remote participation has been granted by the Graduate Dean's office. The Director of Graduate Studies forwards a request for remote participation to the Graduate Dean's office. If remote participation is allowed, the chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for monitoring the quality of remote participation and submitting a Remote Attendance Certification Form to the Graduate Dean's office. The chair must also submit email authorization for the remote participants' signatures on the official documentation of these events.

VIII. THE DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS. Once a dissertation committee has been formed, the student will submit a formal dissertation prospectus to the committee for approval. The prospectus will be approximately 10 (double-spaced) pages in length and will be accompanied by an initial bibliography. The dissertation committee will meet with the student to discuss the prospectus. At this meeting, the student can expect to receive initial advice about the writing of the dissertation and appropriate research resources. Students must have their dissertation prospectus approved no later than the end of the fourth year in the program or the eighth term in residence.

- A. *Admission to Doctoral Candidacy.* When the dissertation committee has approved the prospectus, the Graduate Administrator will submit to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research an application that the student be admitted to doctoral candidacy.
- B. *The Dissertation.* Once a student has had their dissertation prospectus passed and has been admitted to doctoral candidacy, they should begin the work of researching and writing the dissertation. Normally students will complete the dissertation during the fifth or sixth year in the program. The practices of the current *MLA Style Sheet* or those found in the *Chicago Manual of Style* should be observed. Students should consult with the Graduate Administrator well in advance of their defenses regarding the procedures for submission of electronic dissertations and for graduation.
- C. *The Doctoral Examination*
 - i. The completed dissertation, revised in accordance with the dissertation committee's suggestions, must be submitted at least two weeks before the anticipated date of the doctoral examination (otherwise known as the dissertation defense). Each dissertation committee member must be given a copy of the completed dissertation.
 - ii. The dissertation committee will decide the form and length of the doctoral examination. The examination need not be confined to materials in or related to the dissertation. Prior to the examination, the dissertation committee chair should obtain a "Report on Examinations for the Doctoral Degree" card from the Graduate Administrator. The dissertation committee chair should make certain that this card is filled out completely, with the appropriate signatures, and is returned to the Graduate Administrator after the examination.
 - iii. The dissertation committee chair should inform the Graduate Administrator of an impending dissertation defense. The name of the doctoral candidate, the date, and the subject of the doctoral examination will be submitted for publication in the *University*

Times at least four weeks in advance of the examination. Doctoral examinations are public.

- iv. Students who pass the doctoral examination must submit a copy of their dissertation, along with other documents, to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Students should consult with the Graduate Administrator and the Graduate Dean's Office well in advance of their doctoral examinations regarding the submission of these documents.

- D. *Statute of Limitations:* All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within ten calendar years of the student's first registration for graduate study if the student entered with only a Bachelor's degree or within eight years of study if the student entered with a Master's degree or its equivalent.