Ph.D. HANDBOOK
for
The Rhetoric & Writing Program

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Updated Fall 2017

This handbook provides basic, useful information for the completion of the Ph.D. in English with a specialization in Rhetoric and Writing, including information about course work, preliminary exams, and dissertations. This document should be read in conjunction with the Rhetoric & Writing homepage: http://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/graduate-programs/phd-in-rhetoric-and-writing.html; as well as the Graduate College catalog, specifically its information on policies: http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/catalogs-and-policies.html.
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The Doctoral Program

Since 1980, the BGSU English Department has offered a doctoral degree in English with emphasis in rhetoric and writing. Candidates who achieve the required number of hours, complete their preliminary exams and graduate lecture, and defend their dissertation receive the Ph.D. in English with specialization in Rhetoric & Writing.

Ninety hours of graduate credit are required for the Ph.D. Those holding an M.A. or M.F.A. from an accredited institution receive 30 hours of graduate credit toward the required 90 hours. Thus students must take a minimum of 60 hours of credit at BGSU, including 21 hours of dissertation credit. The typical hours taken in the program are:

- 30 hours of master’s degree credit
- 33 hours of courses
- 6 hours of preliminary exam credit
- 21 hours of dissertation credit
- 90 minimum hours of graduate credit

Program Goals

The Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program prepares its graduates for seven outcomes:

- Develop knowledge through understanding past and ongoing disciplinary conversations and create interventions through their own research, theory building, and teaching.
- Practice an array of methodological, theoretical, and pedagogical approaches for engaging as scholars, teachers, and leaders who are responsive to the situated nature of rhetoric and to what campuses, cultures and society want from writing today.
- Contribute scholarship, teaching and leadership practices rooted in the developing literacies, literacy technologies, and needs of diverse learners shaping higher education today.

Mission

The Rhetoric & Writing program understands rhetoric as situated, participatory, action based, and responsive. The program approaches rhetoric and writing as meaning-making practices that span across cultures and develop over a lifetime. The program grows future faculty members who contribute to the scholarly discipline; engage learners as responsible and responsive citizens; develop pedagogies informed by research, best practices, and developing technologies; administer university writing programs; and shape campus and community cultures through their leadership.

Language Requirement

There is no foreign language requirement for doctoral students.

Assistantship Assignments

Assistantship assignments in the English Department typically involve graduate students teaching General Studies Writing courses. The teaching load is currently three classes per year,
spread over two semesters, i.e., 2/1 or 1/2. Occasionally, different work assignments are available to enhance the professional experiences doctoral students bring to academic job searches. These include serving as the assistant to the R&W program director; teaching ENG 2070: Intermediate Writing; teaching other courses in English; mentoring first-year graduate students in the General Studies Writing program; working in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) office and/or teaching ESOL courses; assisting with publications and websites of the English Department. Such work assignments may involve a release from one, two, or three courses each academic year. Interested graduate students should speak with the program director about such options.

**Research Assistantships**

The department awards three one-year research assistantships to rising fourth-year Rhetoric & Writing PhD program students. Research Assistantships allow students in their final year of assistantship funding to devote full-time energies to completing their research, as well as conducting a substantial academic job search. Each spring, the R&W Program Director distributes applications to all third-year R&W students. Criteria, procedures, and deadlines are outlined in the application. Applications are evaluated by the Rhetoric & Writing doctoral faculty in light of criteria outlined in the application. Awards are merit-based. For questions about deadlines and procedures, contact the R&W Program Director. For questions about compensation and the assistantship period, contact English’s Graduate Coordinator.

**Course Work**

Full-time doctoral students complete their course work within their first two years. Rhetoric & Writing core course courses are offered every other year, with two exceptions: ENG 6210 is offered every Fall and restricted to first-year students only. ENG 7260 is offered every Fall and restricted to second-year students only.

Special topics courses include ENG 6800 or 7800 courses offered by a R&W core faculty member, as well as ENG 6200: The Teaching of Writing and ENG 6220: Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing when offered by a core R&W faculty member. Neither special topics courses nor independent studies may be used to substitute for the core courses of the Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program.

ENG 6020: Comp Instructors Workshop does not count toward electives or as a core R&W core course.
Rhetoric & Writing Core—8 Courses/24 Hours Required

- ENG 6210: Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition as a Discipline
- ENG 7220: History of Rhetoric and Written Discourse
- ENG 7230: Issues in Historical Rhetoric
- ENG 7240: Rhetoric and Written Discourse
- ENG 7260: Research in Rhetoric & Writing
- ENG 7280: Computer Mediated Writing: Theory & Practice
- ENG 7290: Publication in Rhetoric & Writing
- Special Topic R&W Seminar (ENG 6800, 7800, 6200, 6220)

Electives—3 Courses/9 Hours Required
Electives may be taken in any area relevant to research and teaching interests. Often students take additional R&W special topics courses. Special topics courses in R&W are taught by core faculty on a rotating basis. Recent topics have included writing assessment, cultural rhetorics, community literacies, decolonial theory and methodology, teacher research, online learning for English educators, and teaching grammar in the context of writing.

Electives can include other courses in English (Literature, TESOL Scientific & Technical Communication) or courses in other departments. Electives can be selected to develop a secondary area of research and/or teaching. R&W students sometimes use electives to pursue a graduate certificate in areas such as Scientific & Technical Communication, TESOL, or Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies. More information about certificates can be found on the Graduate College homepage; scroll to the bottom of the page to find certificate programs:

https://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduate-programs.html

To pursue specialized research interests not addressed in core or special topics, students may take a 3-hour Directed Study course (e.g., ENG 7840) under the supervision of a core R&W faculty member. To initiate a directed study, first talk with the Program Director. After approval, talk to R&W core faculty members to identify someone able to mentor you in a given semester. Upon approval from the faculty member, complete an independent study form, available from the graduate secretary in the Department of English. Students must develop a course syllabus and reading list, in conjunction with the faculty mentor, and submit the documentation with the independent study form. These materials are required prior to
Registering for a directed study course in a given semester. No more than nine hours of directed studies may be counted toward the required number of hours for graduation.

Registering for Prelim and Dissertation Hours
Following completion of course work, students continue to register for hours each semester. For the R&W PhD, six hours are required of ENG 7980: Readings for Preliminary Examination, and 21 are required of ENG 7990: Dissertation Research.

Those on assistantship must be registered for a minimum of 8 credit hours each semester. Typically, in Fall of their third year students take 6 hours of 7980 and 2 hours of 7990. In the following three semesters of funding, they take 8 hours of 7990 each semester. When registering, each semester you will need to provide English’s Graduate Secretary with the name of your committee chair. This step is necessary because 7890 and 7990 hours are offered with different section numbers for each doctoral faculty member.

Note: It is your responsibility to confirm you are registered each semester. Doing so is important to ensure compliance with financial aid requirements and to ensure that you maintain your assistantship. You can keep track of your registration each semester by checking your online degree audit and by checking with the Graduate Secretary.

Online Degree Audits
The Check sheet for the R&W Program is a document that lists program requirements and can help you plan and track your course work. It is available in hard copy from the Graduate Office and/or the R&W Program Director. For the most part, this document has been replaced by the university-wide online degree audit. Bowling Green State University offers an electronic degree audit to assist students and advisors with tracking progress toward degree completion. The degree audit matches completed, in-progress, and registered courses with requirements of the specified degree program to determine what requirements need to be met.

You can view your electronic degree audit through MyBGSU, under the Students option. For more information, including a tutorial that will help in understanding how to request and view your electronic degree audit, visit:

https://www.bgsu.edu/registration-records/degree-audit-info.html

For questions about the online degree audit, you may contact dars@bgsu.edu or 419-372-8223, the R&W Program Director, and English’s Graduate Coordinator.
Establishing a Committee

During the Fall semester of your second year, you will consult the R&W Program Director to discuss your research interests, which core R&W faculty you would like to work with as your Chair, and the process of forming your committee. In consultation with your Chair, you will identify the appropriate faculty to complete your committee and gain their signatures on the Application for Preliminary Exam Form. Once the form is submitted to the Graduate College, a Graduate Faculty Representative from a different department will be appointed.

Rhetoric & Writing Ph.D. committees consist of a Chair who is a core R&W faculty member; two regular graduate faculty members (at least one of whom must be a core R&W faculty member); and a Graduate Faculty Representative appointed by the Graduate College. Typically, one R&W Faculty member chairs both prelim and dissertation committees, though a shift of chairs is possible when changes in research focus warrant doing so.

The Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program Director is your academic advisor before you select a dissertation chair. The Program Director will advise you about the process of setting up your prelim/dissertation committee. Once you have set up your committee, your Committee Chair will be your primary academic advisor. The R&W Program Director, in conjunction with the Graduate Secretary and Graduate Coordinator, supervises registration each semester and coordinates with other offices at the University related to your registration, contracts, and meeting the requirements for degree completion.

Following completion of your coursework, your Committee Chair serves as your primary academic advisor until you complete the doctoral degree. Your Chair is your primary advisor for the processes of the preliminary exams, the prospectus and graduate lecture, the dissertation and oral defense, along with preparation for your job search. Your Chair can best serve you when you stay in regular touch, both face to face and via email.

Preliminary Examination Application Form

After your Chair has approved the membership of your committee and after each member has agreed to serve on your committee, there is a form, as with most steps toward degree completion. This form, the Preliminary Examination Application, is prepared by the Graduate Secretary. On the form, you will need to suggest dates for your prelims; the actual dates will be decided by your Chair and committee later in the process. You will also need to provide the names of your Chair and committee members.

The form is then signed in this order: by you, by your Chair, and by your other committee members. You then return the form to the Graduate Secretary for the Graduate Coordinator’s signature. The Graduate Secretary then turns it in to the Graduate College.


**Preliminary Examinations**

The Rhetoric & Writing PhD Program preliminary examination has three parts: a written *General Preliminary Exam* based on a required reading list, a *Specialized Portfolio*, and an *Oral Exam*. The student and committee meet twice, to confirm plans for prelims and for the oral exam.

**General Preliminary Exam**

The General Preliminary Examination is based on the General Preliminary Exam Reading List (available on the program homepage). The core list contains 52 works; you are to add 18 more works, in consultation with your Chair and your committee. This list is approved by the Chair and committee at the prelim planning meeting.

General exams are designed as weekend take-home exams, i.e., Friday morning until Monday morning. The exam is sent via email attachment on a Friday morning, and responses are by Noon the following Monday. Students are provided with questions in History, Theory & Research, and Pedagogy, and instructed to select one question from each area. Core exams should be double spaced and paginated with name and page number in the upper-right-hand corner of each page. One bibliography should be included at the end listing all the works cited in the exam responses. Specific instructions are included on the exam itself.

**Specialized Portfolio**

The specialized portfolio is developed by the student and submitted to the committee no later than one week following submission of the core exam, or earlier, at the discretion of the student. The Specialized Portfolio consists of these four sections:

- **A. Professional Revising Project.** This section will include (1) the original of a R&W seminar paper, (2) a revision of that paper intended for conference delivery or for submission to a journal or book editor, and (3) an Afterword that discusses and illustrates the nature of the revision--and the reasons for changes during revision.

- **B. Professional Curriculum Project.** This section will include the syllabus for a writing course (whether already taught or anticipated) and a compact but specific Afterword that discusses (in light of Core Prelim List readings and other sources) the principles that ground and shape the syllabus.

- **C. Initial Dissertation Reading List.** With an eye toward future dissertation research, the student will work with the Committee Chair to develop an Initial Reading List of 30-40 works, not duplicating any works on the core prelim List. The list should reflect a balance of books and articles/book chapters. This list will be approved by the committee at the prelim planning meeting.

- **D. Bibliographic Essay.** Working with the Initial Reading List, the student will develop a bibliographic essay (2000-2500 words) showing understanding of individual works, key relationships and differences among works, and important issues, questions, and
needed research in the area of the future dissertation. The essay should include a list of the works cited.

**Oral Exam**
The Oral Exam is typically held within two weeks of the submission of the core exam and the specialized portfolio. The oral lasts for 90 minutes and typically begins with the student briefly reviewing the process of taking prelims and the products submitted, followed by questions and discussion with the committee members. Prelim orals are private meetings of a student with their chair and committee members.

**Summary of Steps**

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult the R&amp;W Program Director to discuss possible chairs</td>
<td>for your committee members, and discuss general premi exam policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consult with your Chair about contacting possible members for your</td>
<td>committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtain the signatures of your Chair and committee members on the</td>
<td>Application for Preliminary Exam Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule a prelim planning meeting with your committee to discuss</td>
<td>your core reading list, plans for the specialized portfolio examination, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take and submit the core exam and submit the specialized portfolio</td>
<td>dates for taking your prelims</td>
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<td>Pass oral examination</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Register for six hours of ENG 7980: Prelim Hours, typically in Fall</td>
<td>of the third year of funding</td>
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**Dissertation Topic Approval: Prospectus and Graduate Lecture**

After successful completion of preliminary examinations, you will direct your focus toward the gaining approval for your proposed research project. The first step is consulting with your Chair about the research and writing needed to develop a proposal, or prospectus, for a focused, one-year dissertation project. The final step is presenting the prospectus at a formal public meeting, called the Graduate Lecture. The Graduate Lecture is typically delivered no later than the Fall or Spring semester (summer excluded) following completion of preliminary exams.

**The Prospectus**

Working closely with your Chair, you will develop a formal proposal for the dissertation project, or prospectus. Regardless of the type of research, such discussions include identifying relevant scholarship for review, formulating research questions, identifying methodologies to inform the project, and identifying appropriate methods for data gathering. Examples of prospectuses for several kinds of projects can be found on the R&W Canvas site for Post-Prelim Group; the Program Director enrolls third- and fourth-year students in this group.
A prospectus typically includes:

- A description and summary of the topic and approach of the dissertation. It may also include a discussion of the evolution of your interest in the topic and/or chart academic experiences that have fed your interest
- A survey and synthesis of relevant bodies of published research that inform your proposed project
- A discussion of the research questions, methodologies, and methods to be used in the project
- A working bibliography of published scholarship
- A chapter outline of the dissertation
- A tentative schedule for your research and writing given your target date for graduation

For dissertation projects involving human subjects, approval is required from BGSU’s Human Subjects Review Board. ENG 7260: Research in Rhetoric & Writing and discussion with your Chair will address the processes and time necessary for developing and submitting an HSRB application—and the typical step of revising per specifications from HSRB. HSRB approval is required before dissertation projects involving human subjects can be approved by a student’s Chair and committee. As with all matters involving dissertation research, students should consult their chairs regularly.

Once your Chair approves your prospectus, you will share it with the entire committee. You should query committee members about their preference for electronic and/or hard copy delivery, being sure to copy your Chair. Committee members must have a minimum of two weeks to review the prospectus before the graduate lecture is held.

Note: It is strongly recommended that you prepare your prospectus following requirements of the Graduate College’s Thesis/Dissertation Handbook. Doing so will greatly alleviate time and stress involved in preparing the final version of the dissertation for the defense and for submission to the Graduate College. The handbook is available at this link on the Graduate College’s homepage:


The Graduate Lecture
The Graduate Lecture is a 90-minute meeting where you present and discuss your dissertation project. You will deliver a formal 15- to 20-minute overview of the research project and engage in discussion with your committee members and, time permitting, others in attendance. Graduate lectures are public meetings, advertised and open to your dissertation committee, the R&W program, other members of the English Department and university community, and any other guests you invite. You should plan to attend several graduate lectures in the R&W program to support your colleagues and learn about their research, and to acquaint yourself with how these meetings run. An academic job search typically involves delivering a research
presentation during an on-campus interview. Consequently, the graduate lecture provides an opportunity to rehearse discussing your research with a broad audience.

Once your graduate lecture is scheduled, you must provide both the Graduate Secretary and your Chair with the title of your project, as well as the date and time of the lecture, to facilitate the required Graduate College and R&W program advertising. If relevant, provide the Graduate Secretary with your HSRB approval number, which must be entered on the signature form before your lecture.

In preparing for the lecture itself, you should follow the same strategies as for preparing professional presentations. You may prepare a paper to read from or an outline, whichever suits your needs and abilities, as well as the nature of your research project. You may develop a Power Point or similar presentation, and it will be your responsibility to check technology available in the room where your lecture will be held. Both for the benefit of your audience and as a backup in case of technology issues, prepare a brief handout for the audience. Keep in mind that some people at your lecture will not have read the prospectus.

At the end of the lecture, your chair will ask committee members to remain in the room to discuss your proposal privately. A few minutes later, your Chair will invite you to join the committee members for follow-up discussion. Once the committee approves your topic, they will sign the Topic Approval form, prepared by the Graduate Secretary and brought to the meeting by the Chair. The form is returned to the Graduate Office to be signed by the Graduate Coordinator and forwarded to the Graduate College.

Writing and Defending the Dissertation

In the R&W doctoral program, Chairs and dissertation students stay in close contact with each other throughout the processes of writing, defending, and depositing the dissertation. Chairs provide the best advice and feedback through regular discussion with their advisees and reading works in progress. Early in the process, you should discuss with your Chair his/her preferences for holding regular meetings, communication preferences and constraints, and the submission of chapter drafts, as well as his/her timeline and policies for reading chapters.

Writing, Reviewing, and Revising Chapters

While writing the dissertation, you will follow the process typical in our program. You submit a draft of a chapter—including a bibliography—to your Chair, and then revise and re-submit it until he or she approves it for distribution to committee members. Approved chapters should be distributed via email attachment, with a request for committee members to contact you for a hard copy. Each time that you contact your committee via email, you also copy your chair.

As you are writing the chapters, allow time for your Chair and committee members to review your work. Do not expect your Chair or committee members to read and evaluate drafts on
University holidays, during planned travel for professional or personal reasons, or under pressure.

As you receive feedback from committee members on your chapters, share this feedback with your Chair. It is simply good professional manners to thank others for reading your work, so committee members and your Chair will appreciate your acknowledgement that you have received their comments on your chapters. Typically, revisions requested by committee members are incorporated into the defense manuscript.

**The Defense Manuscript & Defense**

When all chapters have been approved by the Chair and distributed to committee members, you prepare and distribute the defense manuscript. This is an edited version of the dissertation that incorporates revisions requested from the Chair and committee members and is formatted according to guidelines in the Graduate College’s *Thesis/Dissertation Handbook*. The defense manuscript also includes required front matter, e.g., title page, table of contents, abstract. It should be bound for the convenience of your readers. You will distribute a hard copy of the defense manuscript to your Chair and each member of the committee.

Once the defense manuscript is distributed, your Chair will schedule the dissertation defense. Typically lasting 90 minutes, a dissertation defense is a public meeting advertised and open to the R&W program, the English Department, and the University community. You will benefit from attending several defenses as your colleagues reach this point in their doctoral programs, both to support them and learn about their research findings as well as to learn how these meetings are run. Your Chair and the Graduate Secretary will advertise the defense in the forums required by the Graduate College and R&W program.

The defense opens with your giving a 15-20 minute lecture overviewing the project. You should prepare for this presentation as you would for discussing your research at a professional conference or during an on-campus interview for an academic job. You should develop a PowerPoint or similar presentation and prepare a handout, as well as check out available technology and layout of the room where your defense is scheduled. If a projector or other technology is needed, you are responsible for ordering it. Following your presentation, committee members will engage you in further questions and discussion. If time permits, guests will do the same.

At the end of the discussion, your Chair will ask committee members to remain in the room to discuss your defense privately. After a few minutes, your Chair will invite you to join the committee for a brief discussion. Once the committee approves, they will sign the Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form (ETD Approval/Submission Form). This form is prepared by the Graduate Secretary and brought to the defense by the Chair, who then turns it in to the Graduate Office to be signed by the Graduate Coordinator and forwarded to the Graduate College.
Submitting the Approved Dissertation Manuscript
Following a successful defense, students must actually submit the dissertation to the Graduate College. Doing so is a requirement for completing the PhD. This process involves several steps, all of which are a student’s responsibility. Support is available from CollabLab, STAC, 122 Jerome Library:

https://www.bgsu.edu/library/collab-lab.html

Graduation Deadlines
It is your responsibility to be aware of graduation deadlines for a given semester, all of which are firm and permit no exceptions. The Graduate College publishes a schedule of crucial dates for graduation, for instance, the deadline to apply to graduate, the deadline for holding a dissertation defense, the deadline to electronically upload the approved dissertation in order to graduate in a given semester. This schedule is available in the Graduate College website, under the heading Important Dates & Deadlines:

https://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduation/degree-candidates-deadlines.html

Formatting the Dissertation
Beginning with the prospectus and continuing through the dissertation manuscript, follow the formatting requirements of the Graduate College for dissertations. Specific formatting requirements are found in the Thesis/Dissertation Handbook:


Converting the Dissertation to PDF
Dissertations must be submitted as a PDF document. Please see Graduate College instructions for converting your dissertation to PDF:


Uploading Your Manuscript to OhioLINK
Once your manuscript has been defended, approved by your dissertation committee, and converted to a PDF document, you are ready to upload it to OhioLINK. Complete instructions for uploading are available from the link below:


Check List for Successful Completion of Ph.D.

After completing course work, it can be confusing to hold in mind the steps to complete the Ph.D. To help visualize the process, consult the checklist below, even adding target dates by which you want to complete each step. You should also consult the Graduate College homepage for the deadlines for dissertation and applications for graduation.

**Stage 1: Preliminary Exams**
- Submit TDP to graduate coordinator
- Select chair for prelim and dissertation committee
- Complete Preliminary Examination form and get signatures
- Compose core reading list selections
- Compose two page overview of portfolio materials and submit to advisor, then committee
- Hold committee meeting to confirm plans for prelim exams and schedule date
- Take core exam, submit portfolio
- Pass oral exam

**Stage 2: Graduate Lecture & Prospectus**
- Prepare the prospectus in consultation with Chair
- Seek HSRB approval for research involving human subjects
- Submit approved prospectus to whole committee
- Schedule and deliver grad lecture
- Complete grad lecture within six months of completing prelims

**Stage 3: Dissertation**
- Distribute chapter drafts, one at a time, to chair for review and approval for distribution to committee
- Apply for graduation at the Graduate College
- Distribute final, edited and formatted defense draft of to Chair and committee two weeks before defense
- Schedule defense in advance of Graduate College graduation deadline
- Electronic submission of dissertation