

Doctor of Philosophy in English

About This Program

The Doctor of Philosophy in English prepares students at the most advanced stage in the interpretation and composition of texts. The program emphasizes rigorous critical study in the fields of rhetoric, composition, critical theory, cultural studies, pedagogy, technical writing, and literary studies. Early in the program, each student takes two core courses, one that serves as an introduction to the profession of English Studies, and one that examines theory as it is currently used in English scholarship. Rather than offering separate tracks, the program allows students, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor and the dissertation committee, to design a program of work that best suits their scholarly interests and career goals. The combination of diverse course offerings with the requirement that each student define a focus that reflects their intellectual and career interests provides students with the flexibility to adapt to changes in English Studies. Specifically, the PhD in English prepares students for careers in writing, including professional and technical writing, as well as academic publishing. The Department trains students for college-level teaching in several ways, including graduate courses in the teaching of literature and of composition. Doctoral students in English present papers at scholarly conferences, publish essays in scholarly journals, and participate in other professional activities.

Competencies

1. Students completing the PhD in English will be able to describe, analyze, and interpret literary and non-literary texts within the context of a scholarly conversation, evaluating and responding to others' interventions.
2. Students completing the PhD in English will be able to understand and employ a number of critical theories and methodologies in analyzing literary and other texts, including the ability to understand, analyze, and interpret texts in relation to cultural and historical contexts.
3. Students completing the PhD in English will be able to conduct independent research, including a thorough knowledge of relevant secondary materials, and will produce, in their dissertation and other scholarly writing, original, substantial, and significant contributions to scholarship.
4. Students completing the PhD in English will be able to present, explicate, and defend their findings, in both oral and written form, with clarity and force; they will hone their writing skills and master the conventions of Standard English.
5. Students completing the PhD in English will become familiar with common protocols and practices in the profession of English Studies, but will also graduate with widely marketable skills, such as the ability to conduct research and analyze and synthesize data.

Admissions Requirements

In addition to the basic graduate (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/academicregulations/admissions/graduate/>) admission requirements (<https://catalog.uta.edu/archives/2025-2026/academicregulations/admissions/graduate/>) of UT Arlington, the Department of English requires all international students to have speaking, reading, and writing competence in English. We consider four different admission criteria: (1) GPA; (2) writing sample; (3) statement of purpose; and (4) letters of recommendation. Prospective students should submit all the required materials and scores—i.e. official transcripts, a writing sample, a statement of purpose, and recommendation letters—in order for their application to be processed. All criteria are considered together, in a holistic way. No single factor will eliminate a prospective student from consideration.

UNCONDITIONAL ADMISSION

For unconditional admission, candidates must meet the following standards for at least three of the four criteria.

1. A minimum GPA of 3.5 in the student's MA in English or a very closely related field. (If the MA is not in English, we will consider the undergraduate GPA as well as that of the MA. Moreover, if the MA is not in a very closely related field, the prospective student will be admitted to the MA program in English, not the PhD.)
2. An original, single-authored writing sample of 15 to 20 pages that demonstrates a sophisticated prose style, the ability to engage in intellectually rigorous modes of analysis, and a strong knowledge of rhetoric, composition studies, literary studies, cultural studies, or interdisciplinary critical theory.
3. A statement of purpose of 1 to 2 pages in which applicants introduce themselves, explain why they are interested in doctoral study in English, and describe their professional goals and/or research interests.
4. Three letters of recommendation that attest to the student's intellectual and scholarly potential. At least two of these must be from former professors; at least one must be a professor from the student's MA program.

DEFERRED DECISION

A deferred decision may be granted when a file is incomplete or when a denied decision is not appropriate.

PROVISIONAL ADMISSION

An applicant unable to supply all required documentation prior to the admission deadline but who otherwise appears to meet admission requirements may be granted provisional admission.

PROBATIONARY ADMISSION

For both the MA and PhD programs, students may be admitted on probation under one of two scenarios: (1) if the prospective student's application materials do not meet two of the four standards, but are outstanding in the remaining two categories; or (2) if the prospective student's materials come extremely close to meeting the standards in at least three of the four areas. Students on academic probation must make no grade lower than a B in the first 12 hours of their graduate work in order to remain in the program.

DENIAL

Admission will be denied if the application materials (1) do not meet the standards in three of the four categories; or (2) if the materials do not meet the standards in two of the categories, and in the remaining two categories meet the standards but in an unexceptional manner.

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

Please consult the Director of First Year Writing, Dr. Justin Lerberg (jlerberg@uta.edu), for information about Graduate Teaching Assistantships.

Curriculum

Foundations

ENGL 5300	THE PROFESSION OF ENGLISH STUDIES ¹	3
ENGL 5310	INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL THEORY ¹	3
Select one course in rhetorical theory from the following:		3
ENGL 5311	FOUNDATIONS OF RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION	
ENGL 5350	HISTORY OF RHETORIC I: CLASSICAL RHETORIC	
ENGL 5351	HISTORY OF RHETORIC II: MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE RHETORIC	
ENGL 5352	HISTORY OF RHETORIC III: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY RHETORIC	
ENGL 5353	RHETORIC AND SOUND	
ENGL 5359	ARGUMENTATION THEORY	
ENGL 6350	TOPICS IN THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF RHETORIC	
Another relevant special topics course.		

Electives

In consultation with the Graduate Advisor, select seven 5000/6000-level courses in English. Up to two electives may be taken in departments in the College of Liberal Arts other than English; students may also petition to apply credits taken outside of the College. 21

Dissertation

Complete at least nine hours of the following, enrolling in a course in which the grade of P can be assigned (6699, 6999, 7399) in the semester in which the dissertation is defended:		9
ENGL 6399	DISSERTATION	
ENGL 6699	DISSERTATION	
ENGL 6999	DISSERTATION	
ENGL 7399	DOCTORAL DEGREE COMPLETION	

Total Hours 39

¹ Must be taken within a student's first 12 hours of study unless completed while in the MA program.

Program Completion

The PhD requires basic proficiency in one natural language other than English.

Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Coordinator in planning their coursework in order to develop a coherent focus and to ensure that they take all required courses. Near the end of coursework, students must establish a dissertation committee and identify the chair, who will become their primary advisor. The committee will help students develop three subject area reading lists for their written comprehensive examination, which will be taken after they complete their coursework and satisfy the foreign language requirement. While studying for the comprehensive exam, students may enroll in ENGL 6391 GRADUATE READINGS, supervised reading for the PhD exam, graded R. By the end of the first semester after successfully completing the comprehensive examination, the student must submit a dissertation prospectus to their committee. The dissertation must be an original, substantial and significant contribution to a scholarly field. Students should work closely with the chair of their committee while researching and writing their dissertation. While researching and writing their dissertation, students must enroll in dissertation hours (ENGL 6399 DISSERTATION, ENGL 6699 DISSERTATION or ENGL 6999 DISSERTATION). In the final semester of dissertation work, students may enroll in ENGL 7399 DOCTORAL DEGREE COMPLETION. Once the student, the chair of the committee, and the primary readers agree that the dissertation is sufficiently completed, the student may schedule the defense. The student must furnish each committee member with a copy of the dissertation, including notes and bibliography, at least three weeks prior to the defense date. The defense of the dissertation is oral. The defense is

open to all members of the faculty, graduate students, and invited guests of the university community. Questioning of the candidate will be directed by the student's dissertation supervising committee, but any person attending the defense may participate. Committee members may request that the dissertation be further revised and may withhold final approval of the dissertation until the revisions have been made. For more specific information regarding degree requirements, please consult the Graduate Handbook of the Department of English.

Advising Resources

Prospective graduate students are invited to contact an advisor to learn more about our programs or inquire about the application process.

Location:

Carlisle Hall

Email:

english.gradadvisor@uta.edu

Phone:

817-272-0466

Web:

English Grad Advising FAQ (<https://www.uta.edu/academics/schools-colleges/liberal-arts/departments/english/advising/graduate/>)