



- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. General Information                | 8. Independent Teaching               |
| 2. Program Outline                    | 9. Prizes & Awards                    |
| 3. Advising                           | 10. The Preliminary Examination       |
| 4. Coursework                         | 11. The Dissertation Prospectus       |
| 5. Evaluation Procedures              | 12. The Dissertation                  |
| 6. Grading & Academic Standing        | 13. Procedures for Problem Resolution |
| 7. Research & Teaching Assistantships | 14. Further Questions & Contact Info  |
- 

## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION:

The **Graduate Program in English at Rice University** is supervised by the Department of English Graduate Committee, which consists of at least five faculty members appointed by the departmental chair, as well as two student representatives elected by the graduate students.

Graduate study at Rice University consists of course work, a Preliminary Examination, advanced research, the writing of a thesis, and practical training in teaching at the university level. The program is a doctoral program only. Students receive an automatic Master's degree after they have achieved Ph.D. candidacy. Students withdrawing from the program before that point may qualify for a terminal Master's degree.

All students entering the program begin with the first-year curriculum, regardless of degrees they have earned outside Rice.

## 2. PROGRAM OUTLINE:

Students entering the program will generally have before them two full years of course work, will take their preliminary exams in their third year, and will spend the fourth and fifth years writing their dissertations.

In addition, each year involves a different research or teaching responsibility to the department: in their first year, entering students will serve as research assistants to departmental faculty; in the second and third years they must serve at least twice as teaching assistants for departmental courses; in the fourth year students will teach a section of English 175, "Global Literatures in English." The fifth (dissertation) year,

students will focus on their dissertations. Teaching requirements are subject to change in the case of university-wide teaching and funding initiatives.

<b>Year 1:</b> coursework and research assistantship (two semesters)
<b>Year 2:</b> coursework and teaching assistantship (two semesters)
<b>Year 3:</b> preliminary exams, third-year writing workshop (fall semester), and pedagogy (spring semester)
<b>Year 4:</b> dissertation work and independent teaching (one semester)
<b>Year 5:</b> dissertation work

### 3. ADVISING:

At the beginning of the first year, each student is assigned a **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)** by the Graduate Committee. The student and the PAC are responsible for evaluating the student's background and for preparing a tentative plan of study. In most cases this plan will specify courses to be taken and establish a schedule for meeting requirements and deadlines within the university and the department (see "The Preliminary Exam" and "The Dissertation Prospectus," below). Both the PAC and student should keep records of the students' progress toward completion of the plan by using a tracking sheet to be kept in the student's file. After the first year and before preparation for the Preliminary Exam in the third year, the student must find a faculty advisor with whom s/he plans to work on the Preliminary Exam and dissertation. Until the student has submitted a form with the names of Preliminary Committee members, the PAC will serve as the advisory body. The student may make changes to the PAC membership at any time by filling out a new PAC form that requires the signature of new PAC members.

The student is responsible for completing the various phases of the graduate program within the prescribed time limitations.

### 4. COURSEWORK:

Students should always consult with their PAC before enrolling in courses each semester. Ph.D. candidates must successfully complete a minimum of **12 graduate courses** of which at least 10 must be graduate seminars. With the approval of their PAC, students may enroll in English 621, Directed Reading, either as a traditional directed

reading course or as a 400 level English course to which a graduate component has been added. English 621 counts toward the 12 required graduate courses but does not count as a graduate seminar.

The 12 required courses must include English 600, "Topics in Literary Theory," English 605, "Third-Year Writing Workshop," and English 510, "Pedagogy." Of the remaining nine, two must focus on literature before 1800, and two after 1800. Ordinarily, students will take 3 courses each semester of the first year, and a reduced course load for the second. Students should begin to study for the Preliminary Exam in the third year, when they will also take English 605, "Third-Year Writing Workshop," designed to help transform seminar papers into works of publishable quality. Students are also encouraged to take graduate courses in other departments related to their areas of interest. These will count toward the twelve course requirement but not usually for distribution.

## 5. EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

At the beginning of year two and year three in the program, all second and third year students will meet with a small subcommittee from the Graduate Committee, including the DGS, to discuss their progress in the program. This discussion will involve the review of faculty evaluations which will have been sent to students at the end of the previous academic year.

Students in their third and fourth years are evaluated through the preliminary exam and the achievement of candidacy respectively.

Students who have achieved candidacy receive a written evaluation from their dissertation advisors each semester.

## 6. GRADING & ACADEMIC STANDING:

The grade of (A+) indicates truly distinguished work; (A) indicates outstanding work; (A-) consistently very good work; (B+) good work; (B), work that, however competent, lacks originality or promise; and (B-), unsatisfactory work which falls short of acceptable graduate standards. At all times students are expected to make reasonable progress toward the completion of their degree. Students must maintain an overall grade average of B+ in order to graduate.

A graduate student will be placed on "**academic probation**" and a warning letter will be sent to the student if, during any semester, the student (1) fails to earn a grade of B+ in courses taken to satisfy requirements for the Ph.D., or (2) fails to maintain a B+

overall GPA. A second semester of probationary status will lead to dismissal by the Office of Graduate Studies unless a plea for exception is presented by the student's department and approved by the dean of Graduate Studies. A student may be dismissed by departmental action after only one semester of performance at the probationary level.

Students who have achieved candidacy receive a grade of "S" or "U" from their dissertation advisors each semester. Effective Spring 2012, a grade of "U" will result in the student being placed on probation. A grade of "U" for a second, successive, semester will result in dismissal from the program.

## 7. RESEARCH & TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS:

Research and teaching assistantships are an integral part of students' first four years of training and of our program. In the first year, students serve for two semesters as research assistants to faculty members in the department. Students and faculty may register preferences for assignments but the Graduate Committee reserves the right to decide the assignments and will do so before the beginning of each semester. Research assistantships are governed by the departmental document "Research Assistants: Rights and Responsibilities."

During the second and third years of the program, students normally serve as a teaching assistant for **two** of four semesters. However, the Graduate Committee reserves the right, after reviewing a student's file, to require additional supervised teaching. The committee also encourages students who want to teach more than two semesters to do so.

Teaching assistantships are governed by the departmental document "Teaching Assistants: Rights and Responsibilities." The Graduate Committee will assign teaching assistants. While every effort will be made to match students and teachers according to their preferences, the assistants will be assigned to specific courses according to the following guidelines:

- 200-level courses will be privileged over 300-level courses.
- 300-level courses will be privileged over 400-level courses.
- Large (40 person) courses will be privileged over smaller ones, and, if possible, one T.A. will be assigned per 20 students over the minimum of 40.

While it can be valuable for a student to assist in a course in his/her field of specialization this cannot always be arranged, and students are encouraged to apply for

assistantships outside their fields. Teaching assistants must register for six hours of English 602 or 603, "Teaching Practicum." These experiences are assigned course numbers so they can appear on students' transcripts; English 602 and 603 do not count towards the 12-course requirement.

#### 8. INDEPENDENT TEACHING:

During the fourth year of our program, students generally teach a minimum of one section of English 175, "Global Literatures in English". Students must have **completed** two semesters of assistantship before applying to teach these courses and English 510, "Pedagogy." The Graduate Committee is responsible for deciding if a student is ready to teach 175. Students teaching 175 should register for three hours of 603/604, "Teaching of Literature and Composition." If enrollments allow, students may teach a second semester of 175. The Graduate Committee is responsible for assigning students to sections and deciding if a student should teach a second semester. English 603 and 604 do not count towards the 12-course requirement.

#### 9. PRIZES & AWARDS:

Every year the department is asked to nominate one or more students for university-wide prizes or awards. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Committee to solicit nominations from the department faculty as a whole, to decide among the various nominees, and to provide for the timely presentation of application materials. But students should be prepared to respond by maintaining an up-to-date vita at all times, and (for advanced students) by having ready a one-page description of the thesis topic. This vita will also be useful in helping the department in compiling its annual list of Honors and Awards for graduation.

#### 10. THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION:

All students will devote the Spring semester of Year 3 to the qualifying examination process, which must be completed by the final day of the Rice examination period for that semester. Students will compile **two readings lists**—one devoted to a field/period, and one devoted to a critical or theoretical approach or orientation which will frame the specific mode of critical intervention in the field. Each list will be accompanied by a **"qualifying paper"** of about 15-20 pages which should make clear the rationale for texts included in and excluded from the list, summarize past and current key debates and motifs in the period or critical approach, and so on. Once the reading lists and the qualifying papers are approved by the committee, the student may proceed to the final stage of the examination process—an **oral examination** of 2 to 3 hours on material covered in the readings lists and qualifying papers. The student receives a passing grade on the qualifying examination when the committee deems that all elements of the

examination process—reading lists, qualifying papers, and oral examination—have been completed satisfactorily. Students who are unable to complete the examination process successfully by the end of the spring semester of Year 3 are required to repeat the process and complete it successfully by the end of fall semester of Year 4.

## 11. THE DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS:

By the end of the first week of the Fall semester of Year 4, students are required to submit a **brief dissertation prospectus** of 5-10 pages (1250-1500 words) for approval by their committee. The prospectus succinctly defines the topic of the dissertation, the particular thesis that the dissertation hopes to develop about that topic, and the relevance and importance of the dissertation's thesis for the contribution it will make to the student's chosen field (and, if applicable, to the broader discipline).

The prospectus and a satisfactory draft of a chapter (which need not be the dissertation's first chapter) must be approved by the student's committee by the end of Fall semester of Year 4 (regardless of when the student completes the examination process) for the student to advance to candidacy.

When the prospectus and chapter are completed, the department thesis director(s) and second reader should signify approval by signing copies of the prospectus. Then the student should turn the signed copies in to the department office for circulation among the Graduate Committee members. The Graduate Committee may approve the initial submission or ask that the prospectus be revised and resubmitted. Candidacy is achieved when the prospectus is approved and appropriate forms are filed with the Office of Graduate Studies. Students must be admitted to candidacy by the end of their fourth year or they will not be eligible for fifth year funding.

## 12. THE DISSERTATION:

The **dissertation** should demonstrate a capacity for independent work of high quality in either scholarship, critical interpretation, or critical theory. Although it may be a monograph rather than a full-length book, it should be the beginning of a major work of criticism or scholarship. The student should be able to complete the research and writing of a dissertation within twelve months. The dissertation must essentially be finished by mid-March of the year in which the student intends to graduate, so that revision, the oral exam, and final proofing can be finished in time to award the degree. The dissertation will be written in consultation with a **dissertation committee** consisting of the director, and second reader from within the department, and at least one outside reader from another department at Rice.

### 13. PROCEDURES FOR PROBLEM RESOLUTION:

Problems or conflicts may arise during a student's graduate education. Students should take responsibility for informing the appropriate faculty of any such problem. All parties involved should work together amicably with the goal of resolving the problem informally if at all possible. If appropriate, a student may petition to replace the thesis advisor or a member of the dissertation committee. When attempts to resolve a problem informally do not meet with success, the following grievance procedure should be adopted.

- a) The student should submit the grievance in writing to the Departmental Chair, who will then attempt to resolve the problem.
- b) If the student remains unsatisfied, the problem should be presented to a Departmental committee for resolution. This committee should be a standing committee and not the student's own review or dissertation committee. In the English Department, the Graduate Committee is the appropriate standing committee. Both the student and the Chair should submit a written record of their views to this committee.
- c) If the student remains unsatisfied, the problem should be referred to a standing subcommittee designated by Graduate Council and composed of three faculty members (representing diverse disciplines within the University), and one graduate student. A written report of proceedings should be presented to the Chair of Graduate Council, for forwarding to the sub-committee, together with all other written materials generated during the investigation. The decision of this sub-committee will be considered final.

In situations where a faculty member who is actively involved in a student problem has a designated role in this grievance procedure, that role will be transferred to a suitable senior faculty member. This substitute should be chosen by the Department Chair, if possible, or the Divisional Dean, and should be acceptable to all parties immediately involved in the dispute. Additional information may be found at <http://graduate.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=73>.



#### **14. FURTHER QUESTIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION:**

For all questions about Rice University policy (about leave of absence, loans, etc.) see the section Graduate Study in the Rice catalogue.

#### **Rice University English Department**

##### **Herring 225**

Tel: 713-348-4840

Fax: 713-348-5991

[english@rice.edu](mailto:english@rice.edu)

[englgrad@rice.edu](mailto:englgrad@rice.edu)

[www.english.rice.edu](http://www.english.rice.edu)

#### **Department Chair**

##### **Rosemary Hennessy**

Herring 331 (Chair's Office: Herring 226)

Tel: 713-348-2666

[Rosemary.Hennessy@rice.edu](mailto:Rosemary.Hennessy@rice.edu)

#### **Director of Graduate Studies**

##### **Helena Michie**

Herring 316

Tel: 713-348-2823

[michie@rice.edu](mailto:michie@rice.edu)

#### **Department Administrator**

##### **Linda Evans**

Herring 227

Tel: 713-348-4846

[lre1@rice.edu](mailto:lre1@rice.edu)

#### **Program Coordinator**

##### **Anne M. Smith**

Herring 225

Tel: 713-348-4877

[amjsmith@rice.edu](mailto:amjsmith@rice.edu)

**[English Graduate Program Handbook updated 7 July 2016]**