



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE *Department of English*

Department of English

Graduate Student Handbook

It is the responsibility of each student and each member of the Graduate Faculty to be familiar with the information in this document.

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The Department of English reserves the right to alter all deadlines within this document. Any changes that occur will be communicated promptly and directly to students.

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1. Doctoral Program Administration

The Doctoral Program is administered by the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), which is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The Graduate Studies Committee is typically composed of five English Department faculty members who are appointed (or continued) each year by the Department Chair. Among the committee's members is one graduate student representative elected by the [English Graduate Students Association \(EGSA\)](#).

The GSC conducts all business that concerns the nature and function of the Graduate Program. It has the following responsibilities:

- to consider petitions for variances from stated regulations
- to serve as the admissions committee for applicants to the graduate program
- to judge and recommend nominees for awards and fellowships
- to discuss, formulate, and present to the full faculty recommendations for changes to the program
- to consider appeals from individual graduate students on matters pertaining to comprehensive exams
- to consider and comment on dissertation proposals
- to consider and present to the faculty proposals for new graduate courses
- to consider requests for leaves of absence
- to consider funding requests
- to conduct annual reviews of all current Ph.D. students for progress and standing.

Appointed for terms of three years, the DGS serves as a liaison between the English Department and the Graduate School, as well as between the individual graduate students or groups of graduate students and the Graduate School. The DGS also monitors each graduate student's progress toward the degree; schedules and administers the comprehensive exams; if needed, mediates conflicts between graduate students and faculty; and designs the schedule of

graduate course offerings such as to insure adequate coverage in the fields that the graduate student body represents at a given time.

The Department of English also maintains a full-time Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) for the Ph.D. program. The GPA facilitates all academic, administrative, and financial processes for the Ph.D. program, including all event scheduling, student and TA stipends, award disbursement, and individual student credit hour tracking. All paperwork for the Ph.D. program flows through the GPA position, both internal department forms and Graduate School paperwork. The Graduate Program Assistant functions as a go-to resource for all Ph.D. students and faculty.

2. Master of Arts Degree

The Vanderbilt English Department does not typically offer a terminal M.A. degree.¹ Students earn an M.A. en route to the Ph.D. Full-time doctoral students must complete all requirements for the M.A. by the end of the fall semester of Year Two (see [Graduate School for deadlines and forms](#)) to be eligible to continue in the program.

First-year graduate students register for classes with the advice and consent of the DGS and an initial faculty advisor, who will be appointed by the DGS. This advisor will make early plans with the student about course selection, language study, long and short range preparation for the comprehensive and oral examinations, and the dissertation. In **mid-May** each year, first-year students submit an internal M.A. Thesis Registration form that confirms the preliminary M.A. thesis title and the thesis reader/supervisor.

M.A. Thesis: Under the direction of a thesis supervisor, first-year students will rewrite a paper from a first-year course as an article suitable for submission to a scholarly journal. The article does not have to be accepted for publication, but it does need to be professional enough to be ready, in the opinion of the supervisor, for submission. Students should consult with the Graduate School about thesis formatting and regulations. The preliminary M.A. thesis is due to the DGS office in **mid-June** following Year One. The final draft of the M.A. thesis is due to the DGS office at the beginning of **September** in Year Two. At that point, the Graduate Program Assistant works directly with the students to submit M.A. paperwork with the Graduate School. The M.A. degree is typically conferred at the end of the Fall semester in Year Two.

In **September** of Year Two, all incoming second-year students participate in the annual Second Year Conference. This conference is designed as a showcase for the students' recently completed M.A. theses. Typically, one student from the first-year cohort takes point in organizing the conference during the summer between Year One and Year Two, working directly with the Graduate Program Assistant to coordinate logistics.

¹ It is at the discretion of the Graduate Studies Committee to make occasional exceptions.

3. Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The Ph.D. is designed to be completed by a full-time student in five years. Financial support is limited to this time.

3.1 Transfer Credit for Students Admitted with an M.A. degree

The Department of English does not accept transfer credit for course work completed prior to enrollment at Vanderbilt University.

3.2 Course Work

Students complete 72 credit hours in the Ph.D. program. 52 credit hours are completed as coursework. Students take 24 hours in their first year, 24 hours in their second year, and 4 hours during the spring semester of their third year. The majority of these courses are graduate seminars that offer in-depth study of a particular genre, author, historical period, or a special topic. The remaining 20 credit hours are completed through non-candidate and dissertation research hours.

3.2.1 Required Coursework: The following courses are required of all English Ph.D. students.

- ENGL 8110, Proseminar (First-Years Only)
- ENGL 8120, Pedagogy Seminar (Third-Years Only)
- Two ENGL seminars outside of the students' period or topic of specialization

3.2.2 Courses outside of the English Department: Students are encouraged to take up to two courses outside of the Department of English for graduate credit. A student wishing to take additional hours outside of the department must petition the Graduate Studies Committee, explaining the usefulness and appropriateness of such courses for their plan of study.

3.2.3 Undergraduate courses for graduate credit: A student may sometimes find it appropriate to enroll in a 2000-level undergraduate course for graduate credit, but only with the permission of the course instructor and the DGS. In such cases, students will do additional work

beyond the undergraduate requirements for the course. Please note that not all 2000-level courses are open for graduate credit.

3.2.4 Independent Studies (English 8150): Independent studies are one-on-one tutorials in which student and professor agree on a one-semester course of study that includes a reading list and writing assignments. They are especially appropriate in situations where the department's graduate course offerings in any given term does not cover topics that a student needs for their field of specialization. Students may take one such course in their graduate career and petition the Graduate Studies Committee for a second course. Students wishing to do an independent study must consult with the DGS and fill out the necessary permission form.

3.2.5 Incompletes: The accumulation of Incompletes in any given term hinders progress toward the degree and may imperil continuance of financial aid. By action of the Departmental Faculty, graduate instructors may give Incompletes only in cases of illness or unusual personal circumstances, and only with the written approval of the DGS. Students who take Incompletes in any year of study must resolve those grades before registering for the next term.

3.2.6 Progress toward the Degree: Graduate seminars in English each earn 4 hours of credit. Note: this is not always so in other departments, where graduate courses tend to earn 3 credit hours. If you take a course in another department, you may have to add 1 hour of ENGL 8150 Independent Study to make up for this deficit (form available in the DGS office).

3.2.7 Annual Faculty Evaluation of Students' Progress: At the conclusion of each academic year, the Graduate Studies Committee calls a meeting of the entire graduate faculty to evaluate the progress of each graduate student. These evaluations may result in a variety of recommendations (e.g., continued progress toward the degree, academic probation, discontinuation of financial aid, dismissal from the Program). The DGS will communicate such recommendations in writing.

3.2.8 Joint-Ph.D. Program in Comparative Media Analysis & Practice (CMAP): Each spring, this joint-Ph.D. Program recruits its next cohort of graduate students. All English Ph.D.

students have the option to enroll in [a joint-Ph.D. program with CMAP](#) in the spring semester of years 1 or 2. The deadline for the application process is typically in **March**. Students typically apply to join a CMAP cohort at the end of their first year at Vanderbilt. While they enroll in their first CMAP seminar in the fall of their second year, it is recommended that they take at least one CMAP course during their first year.

Enrolling in CMAP involves additional credit hour requirements and teaching responsibilities outside of the English Department. The CMAP track also affects the timing of a student's comprehensive exam process (see section on degree timelines).

3.3 The Foreign Language Requirement

Students are required to pass a foreign language translation exam by the end of their fifth semester. They cannot sit for their comprehensive exams until they have passed this requirement.

Students may take the exam more than once, starting in Year 1. Tests are coordinated and administered in **September** and **January**. Students should notify the DGS's office before the beginning of the semester as to whether or not they intend to take a translation test during that semester. Whenever possible, members of the Department of English will conduct the tests. The exam typically consists of excerpts from scholarly articles and books in the student's chosen language.

Exam details are as follows:

- There is a two-hour time limit. Each student may use one online dictionary during the translation.
- There is no limit on re-takes, except in cases where the department has to pay for a faculty member from another institution to create and grade the exam. This would be the case when the language in which a student prefers to take the exam is not taught at Vanderbilt. The limit in those cases is one retake.

- The student must show that they are able to comprehend a scholarly source text in a foreign language. Criteria for passing are a good command of the structure of the language; a strong understanding of the meaning of the source text at the sentence level; and completion of a translation of at least 2/3 of the original text. Exams are created such that a competent test-taker can complete them in two hours.

3.4 The Comprehensive Examination

Students take their comprehensive exams in their third year. All Incompletes must be resolved and the foreign language requirement satisfied before a student may sit for their exam.

The comprehensive exam has several components:

- The written exam (administered right after Thanksgiving Break).
- The dissertation prospectus (due mid-January)
- The oral exam (by mid-February)
- The formal dissertation proposal (due mid-March)

3.4.1 The Written Examination

The written examination is completed in **December** of a student's third year for that student to be in good academic standing. The exam begins at 4:00 P.M. on the Monday after Thanksgiving Break and ends by 9:00 A.M. on Thursday of the following week.

Students choose to answer one of three questions in each examination field and will write a conference-length paper (2,500 words, excluding foot- or endnotes) for each of the three exam questions they select. Strong exam essays will show research skill and acumen, strong critical familiarity with both primary and secondary texts, and the ability to state and sustain a critical argument. The writing submitted for the exam answers must be original writing. The Graduate Program Assistant releases the exam questions to students individually and directly. Students return exam responses electronically in Microsoft Word format, by email, to the Graduate Program Assistant, along with a copy of their exam questions.

3.4.1.1 The Comprehensive Examination Committee: Students must register their committees with the English Department at the beginning of **August** in the Third Year. Committee appointment forms are available in January of each year. The exam committee is composed of three English Department faculty and one outside reader. The outside reader reads the written examinations but does not grade them. The outside reader does participate in the oral examination, serves on the dissertation committee, and participates in the dissertation defense. Students should consult with their other committee members about the most appropriate faculty member to fill this role.

Students must register outside readers with the Department *before the written examination takes place*. If the reader is not a member of Vanderbilt's graduate faculty or a faculty member at a university other than Vanderbilt, the Graduate School requires the following documents from the student: (a) a copy of the reader's Curriculum Vitae, and (b) a note from the student to the DGS describing how the reader's scholarship contributes to the student's dissertation-writing process.

3.4.1.2 The Examination Fields: The written exam covers *two major fields and one minor field*. These fields may be organized theoretically, generically, theoretically, or in other ways that reflect a coherent argument. At least one field must cover a substantial theoretical period.

The Department does not impose numerical requirement on reading lists. The length of each list will be determined through consultation between the student and their/their examination committee members. Major lists tend to fall between 75-100 texts; minor lists tend to fall between 50-65 items. Each student should have an early discussion with their exam committee to sets these target numbers. Preliminary reading lists are due from second-year students in **mid-May**, followed by final tiered lists due in **mid-October**.

The minor list typically supplements the two major lists. This can work in a number of ways. The list sometimes provides context by taking the study of a particular issue, movement, or genre backward or forward theoretically. It sometimes concentrates on a sub-genre,

development, debate, or other focal group of texts. It sometimes assembles texts—theoretical, historical, or otherwise methodological—that the student and committee members anticipate will provide an analytic structure for the dissertation. The Department recommends that each student conduct an early discussion with their committee about the most effective ways to use this third list. The three fields and the reading lists are subject to the approval, first, of the candidate's committee, then by the Graduate Studies Committee.

3.4.1.3 Preparation for the Written Exam: The exam emphasizes the importance of a broad grounding in each field, while also beginning the transition from general reading to targeted research. In the third year, then, the shared project of the committee and the student is twofold: a) to make certain that the student has a strong knowledge of their or their fields of study; and b) to develop a subset of each list, representing both teaching and research priorities, on which the written exam will focus. These preliminary lists are due in **mid-May** during the summer between a student's Second and Third Years.

Students read most, ideally all, of the material on their preliminary lists during the summer after their second year. The fall semester of the student's third year is thus dedicated to organizing lists into levels of priority, re-reading as particular emphasis and connections develop, and learning the relationships between a general field of knowledge and a particular intervention in that field. The student identifies texts of greater and lesser importance (that is, tiers) to their exams and provides a rationale that precedes each list.

Students work closely with their committee members throughout the exam preparation process. *By September of the third year, students meet with each of their committee members on a biweekly basis.*

3.4.1.4 Lists and Tiers: Each exam list is divided into *two tiers of priority* through this process of continued reading and regular consultation. Final lists, with a two-tiered structure, that is, texts of primary and secondary significance to the student's three fields, *MUST be approved by the committee and submitted to the DGS office by mid-October of the student's third year.*

While the written exam focuses primarily on the first-tier lists, the second-tier lists also remain important: they will continue to provide context for discussions between student and committee members, and will contribute to the student's credentials as a scholar and a teacher in their or their fields.

If committee members have reservations about a student's preparation, they may decide, as a group, not to let the written exam go forward. If this occurs, the student must take the written exam by the last day of classes in their third year. *See also* Postponement below.

3.4.1.5 Post-Examination Meetings: After the written exam, each student schedules formal meetings with ALL members of their/their committee. These discussions will address strengths and weaknesses of the exam, as well as areas for further development. They also serve as preparation for the oral exam (see below).

3.4.1.6 Postponements: Postponements (usually only until the following semester) are very rarely granted and only in cases of unusual hardship. A request for postponement must be made in writing to the Graduate Studies Committee. Failure to take the written exam on schedule without an authorized deferral constitutes unsatisfactory progress toward the degree and is likely to result in the termination of financial aid.

3.4.1.7 Retaking the Written Exam: If a student fails all or part of the written exam, they have one opportunity to retake the examination in the spring semester during Spring Break. Failure of all or part of the retake will result in dismissal from the Graduate Program. If the student passes the retake, they will submit a preliminary dissertation prospectus to the committee not later than mid-April; sit for the oral examination no later than mid-May; and submit the final dissertation proposal no later than mid-June.

3.4.2 The Dissertation Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus (10 pages plus a working bibliography) is the initial working draft of the formal dissertation proposal, which presents the student's dissertation project in the most precise terms available at this stage. The student draws on the experiences of focusing the

exam lists and writing the exam essays, linking the prospectus closely to the development of ideas fostered by those earlier stages. The prospectus will concentrate on argument, contribution to the field, research plans, and methodology. Although a list of chapters may be included at this stage, the prospectus should not be dominated by detailed chapter descriptions. The prospectus has two major purposes, then: a) to distill the student's plans for the dissertation, and b) to provide a focal point for the oral exam.

The dissertation prospectus must be approved by the student's committee and submitted to the DGS office around **mid-January** of the Third Year.

3.4.3 The Oral Examination

Once the student has passed the written exam and has submitted an approved dissertation prospectus, the two-hour oral exam *takes place around **February 1** in the third year*. The outside reader participates in the exam, if necessary via Skype.

While the oral exam may engage questions from the written exam, it prioritizes the dissertation project as represented in the dissertation prospectus. The oral exam leads to the final dissertation proposal and toward the dissertation itself.

If the dissertation committee does not find the discussions that precede the oral exam satisfactory, they may decide, as a group, not to let the oral exam go forward. If this occurs, the student must petition to take the exam later, by which date the student must obtain the committee members' consent to proceed. The petition, which specifies the date, must be approved by the student's committee and by the Graduate Studies Committee. If the student does not pass the oral exam by the new set date, they are allowed one retake of the oral exam before losing their/their standing in the Program (see below).

3.4.3.1 Retaking the Oral Examination: If a student fails the oral exam, they are allowed one retake. Failure of the retake will result in dismissal.

3.5 The Final Dissertation Proposal

The final dissertation proposal includes an overview of the project—argument, contribution to its field, research plans, and analytic methodology—a description of each chapter, and a detailed working bibliography. It is typically about 20pp. long (plus bibliography).

The proposal must be approved by the student's dissertation committee and submitted to the DGS office by **mid-March** of the third year. The submission **MUST** include a cover sheet signed by the student's dissertation director(s), indicating the committee's approval of the proposal as presented.

After submitting the Final Dissertation Proposal, each student begins to draft a dissertation chapter. An initial draft of 15-20 pages is due to the dissertation committee by **mid-May** of the third year. A complete version of one chapter is due for submission for a departmental award at the beginning of **September**. Students should confer closely with their committee about which chapter to write first. Students will thus enter Year Four fully prepared a) to apply for dissertation-year fellowships (both internal & external) and other research grants, and b) to participate successfully in Project Publish.

3.6. Project Publish (PP)

All students are required to participate in PP. Most students complete PP in Year Four, though [CMAP](#) students complete PP in Year Five. In the fall term, students attend several workshops designed to get them going on a publishable essay. In the spring, the locus of work will shift to their dissertation committees, supplemented by peer revision groups, a recommended set of deadlines, and one additional workshop. The workload for students in the fall is relatively light; in the spring, the writing and revision schedule is more demanding. Ideally, students begin the spring semester with an article already underway.

3.7 The Dissertation

After submitting the final dissertation proposal (see above), each student begins writing a dissertation chapter to be completed in draft form by the end of the summer. Students should confer closely with their committee about which chapter to write first.

3.7.1 The Dissertation Committee: Except in unusual cases, which must be approved through a petition process, the Graduate School requires that each Dissertation Committee include at least three English Department faculty members, and limits total dissertation committee size to five faculty members. For most students, the dissertation committee is the same as the committee they used for their exams: it includes a dissertation director (or two co-directors), two additional English Department faculty (one in the case of co-directors), and an outside reader. Students must keep each member of the committee informed of the progress of the dissertation and usually submit portion of their work as it progresses for comments and corrections. Students also need to be aware of the schedule the Department and the Graduate School set each term for submission of a final dissertation draft to the committee and a final copy to the Graduate School.

3.7.2. What is a Dissertation? Writing a dissertation is the most demanding project a doctoral candidate undertakes. Students produce a considerable amount of scholarly writing during course work. When appropriate, some of that writing can, usually with extensive revision, be incorporated into the dissertation. Beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, the Graduate School began filing all electronic theses and dissertations in [VIREO](#). Past dissertations can be accessed through Vanderbilt Libraries' [ETD site](#).

While there are no rigid, quantitative guidelines for dissertations, the English department expects a dissertation to demonstrate breadth of familiarity with the scholarship in the field; a well-defined and sharply focused approach to a problem in that field; a high level of effectiveness in scholarly discussion; and clear potential for the candidate's independent research in the field after graduate school. Further, the Department considers the dissertation to be a book-length thesis (200-300 pages) of original, independent scholarship that seeks to make a key contribution to the life of the scholarly community in our fields. The Department encourages students to publish in professional journals prior to the dissertation.

The dissertation committee evaluates the dissertation according to the following criteria: freshness of contribution to existing scholarship and/or theory; quality of critical insight; both range and depth of scholarship; soundness and appropriateness of method; organization and style. A good dissertation should constitute a significant step toward the writing of a publishable book. (On the transition from dissertation to book, one good source is William Germano, *From Dissertation to Book*, 2nd ed. [2013].)

The form of the dissertation may vary according to the intrinsic logic of the project and the career aims of the writer. For students aiming for a tenure-track job in higher education that requires both teaching and research, the dissertation must be a book-length thesis of original scholarship. Given that long-term success in such positions typically requires the publication of a scholarly monograph, a strong dissertation for those seeking tenure-track employment will constitute a significant step toward the writing of a publishable book. At the same time, some book-length theses in this category may include alternative modes of scholarly communication (e.g., images, moving images, interactive text, or other digital formats).

3.7.3 Time-to-degree limit: By regulation of the Graduate School, a student has four years after passing the comprehensive examination to complete their dissertation. During this time, a student must maintain continuous registration with the Graduate School, even if they are not in residence (a minimal fee is charged each term). A student who does not complete the dissertation within the allotted time is terminated from the program and, with the support of the dissertation committee members and the DGS, may apply to the Dean of the Graduate School for an extension of eligibility or for readmission at a later point.

3.8. The Dissertation Defense

Students are required to attend a defense of their dissertation during the late spring or early summer of their fifth year—or their sixth year in the case of a joint degree with [CMAP](#). The final draft of the dissertation must be in the hands of the entire committee at least one month

prior to the scheduled date for defense. *The Department will not usually schedule a dissertation defense with less a month notice.*

4. Grades

Students are expected to earn at minimum a grade of B in all courses. Grades lower than a C- are not computed toward fulfillment of the 24-hour required by the Graduate School.

Students who receive a C or lower in any course taken for Graduate School credit must discuss the grade and their future in the program with the DGS.

Any student earning two Cs and/or four Bs (or lower) in graduate courses in the Department of English will be advised to consider resignation from the program. The B- mark represents an instructor's serious reservations about the student's capacity for or dedication to graduate work. The concurrence of a second or third instructor in the assessment should be interpreted as authoritative discouragement to continue in the Program. With the consent of the Graduate Studies Committee, the DGS will invite any student with two Cs and/or four Bs to consider withdrawal.

Students enrolling in English 8999 (Non-Candidate Research) and English 9999 (Ph.D. Dissertation Research) will be assigned S(atisfactory) / U(nsatisfactory) grades in accordance with the Graduate School's policy: "One U grade requires consultation between the student and the research adviser; a second U grade triggers a locally defined program-level intervention process involving (at least) the student, the research adviser, the student's thesis or dissertation committee and the DGS; and a third U grade leads to de-matriculation. These steps are triggered by the accumulation of U grades, not simply U grades in succession. Each U represents approximately one-half of one academic year of unsatisfactory progress. No credit hours are awarded for an enrollment that earns a grade of U." In exceptional cases, it is possible for the instructor, in consultation with the DGS, to award a grade of Incomplete for these courses.

5. Part-Time Status

Part-time status is not allowed in the Department of English.

6. Leaves of Absence

6.1 Medical and personal Leaves: The Graduate Studies Committee will occasionally approve of a leave of absence from the program for medical or personal reasons. Students seeking a leave must do so in writing to the DGS and the Graduate Committee, explaining the reason(s) for the request. If the Graduate Studies Committee approve the request, the DGS will forward it to the Graduate School. Only the Graduate School is empowered to grant leaves of absence of any sort.

In endorsing a request for leave, the Graduate Studies Committee will require that the student notify the Department of English and the Graduate School well in advance of their plans to re-enter, extend the leave, or withdraw from the program.

In practical terms, this means that for leave of one fall-to-fall academic year, the committee must be notified by December 1 of plans for the following fall, by April 1 for a spring semester leave. The early dates of notification are primarily for budgetary reasons.

6.2 Reinstatement after prolonged absence: If a student leaves the doctoral program before having completed the dissertation and wishes to re-enter the program and the Graduate School to do so after a prolonged absence, they must apply to the Graduate School for reinstatement. Such reinstatement is granted rarely, and only on the recommendation of the student's dissertation committee, the Graduate Studies Committee, and with approval of the Graduate School.

7. Examples of Typical Schedules

(Please note: the dates change slightly each year)

7.1 Five-Year Schedule for Non-CMAP Students

(*required coursework)

Year One

1. Fall Semester: 12 hours of coursework (3 courses), including ENGL 8110 Proseminar*
2. Spring Semester: 12 hours of coursework (3 courses)
 - a. **Mid-May:** M.A. Thesis Registration Form due
3. Summer: Preliminary M.A. Thesis due **Mid-July**

Year Two

1. Fall Semester: 12 hours of coursework (3 courses)
 - a. **September/October:** Participation in 2nd Year Conference
 - b. **Early September:** Final M.A. Thesis due
 - c. **End of September:** Submit all M.A. paperwork to DGS office
2. Spring Semester: 12 hours of coursework (3 courses)
 - a. **Mid-May:** Preliminary Comprehensive Reading Lists due
3. Summer: Read for Exams

Year Three

1. Fall Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. **Early September:** Comps/PhD Committee Appointment Forms due to DGS
 - b. **Mid-October:** Tiered Comprehensive Reading Lists due
 - c. **End of November/early December:** Written Comprehensive Exams
2. Spring Semester: 4 hours of coursework (ENGL 8210 Pedagogy Seminar*) and 5 hours of ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. Shadow a W course or serve as TA for a lecture course
 - b. **Mid-January:** Preliminary Dissertation Prospectus due
 - c. **Mid-February:** Deadline to complete Oral Examinations

- d. **Mid-March:** Final Dissertation Proposal due; admitted to candidacy.
 - e. **Early May:** Preliminary First Chapter Draft due
3. Summer: Begin the dissertation phase

Year Four

- 1. Fall Semester: 5 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
 - a. Project Publish*
 - b. Instructor of Record teaching opportunities (one course)
 - c. **Early September:** Final version of First Chapter due
 - d. **Early December:** Deadline for Myers First Chapter Award submissions
- 2. Spring Semester: 5 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
 - a. Instructor of Record teaching opportunities (one course)

Year Five

- 1. Fall Semester: 5 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
- 2. Spring Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
- 3. Summer: Complete and defend the dissertation for an August graduation

7.2.1 Six-Year Schedule for CMAP Joint-Degree Students (2020-2021) (*required coursework)

Year One

- 1. Fall Semester: 12-15 hours of coursework (3-4 courses), including ENGL 8110* and CMAP 5001, Media and the Senses.
- 2. Spring Semester: 12-15 hours of coursework (3-4 courses), including CMAP 5002, History of the Media.
 - a. **Mid-May:** M.A. Thesis Registration Form due
- 3. Maymester: CMAP 5010 and collaborative DPS project
- 4. Summer: Preliminary M.A. Thesis due **Mid-July**

Year Two

- 1. Fall Semester: 15 hours of coursework (4 courses), including CMAP 5003, Media Theory
 - a. **September/October:** Participation in 2nd Year Conference

- b. **Early September:** Final M.A. Thesis due
 - c. **End of September:** Submit all M.A. paperwork to DGS office
- 2. Spring Semester: 15 hours of coursework (4 courses), including CMAP 5004, Media Ecology.
- 3. Maymester: CMAP 5011 and collaborative DPS project
- 4. Summer: Read for Exams

Year Three

- 1. Fall Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. Serve as TA for CMAP course
 - b. **Early December:** Preliminary Comprehensive Reading Lists due
- 2. Spring Semester: 4 hours of coursework (ENGL 8210 Pedagogy Seminar*) and 5 hours of ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. **Late March:** Ph.D. Committee Appointment forms due
 - b. **Late April:** Tiered Comprehensive Reading Lists due
- 3. Summer: CMAP Internship (40 hours) and read for Exams

Year Four for CMAP students who elect to take Comps in August

- 1. Fall Semester: ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. Instructor of Record opportunities (one course)
 - b. **Mid to Late August:** Written Comprehensive Exams
 - c. **Mid-September:** Dissertation Prospectus due
 - d. **End of October:** Deadline to complete Oral Examinations
 - e. **End of November:** Final Dissertation Proposal due
 - f. **December:** Admitted to candidacy
- 2. Spring Semester: ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
 - a. Instructor of Record opportunities (one course)
 - b. Begin the dissertation
 - c. **Mid-May:** First Chapter Draft due

3. Summer: continue the dissertation

Year Four for CMAP students who elect to take Comps in December:

1. Fall semester: ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with the DGS
 - a. Instructor of Record opportunities (one course)
 - b. **Mid-September:** Comps/ PhD Committee Appointment Forms due
 - c. **Mid-October:** Tiered Comprehensive Reading Lists due
 - d. **Late December/Early January:** Written Comprehensive Exams
2. Spring Semester: ENGL 8999 (non-candidate research) with dissertation chair
 - a. Instructor of Record opportunities (one course)
 - b. **Early February:** Preliminary Dissertation Prospectus due
 - c. **Late February:** Deadline to complete Oral Examinations
3. **Late March:** Final Dissertation Proposal due; admission to candidacy
4. Summer: Begin the dissertation stage
 - a. **Mid-June:** Preliminary First Chapter Draft due

Year Five

1. Fall Semester: ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
 - a. Project Publish*
 - b. **Early September:** Complete First Chapter due
 - c. **Early December** Deadline for Myers First Chapter Award submissions
2. Spring Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
3. Summer: Complete and defend dissertation for August graduation

Year Six

1. Fall Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
2. Spring Semester: 0 hours of ENGL 9999 (dissertation research) with dissertation chair
3. Summer: Complete and defend dissertation for August graduation

8. Funding

8.1 Graduate School Funding

- **Graduate Fellowships**

All students admitted to the doctoral program will receive full tuition and a base stipend of \$26,000 (minus \$500 in activity fees) and full health insurance coverage. Beyond this, Vanderbilt University's Graduate School offers a number of so-called topping stipends, all of which are merit-based and competitive (see below). Qualifying students are nominated at the admissions stage. Amounts and conditions for each of these additional stipends varies. Stipends are paid out on a 12-month schedule and are limited to a period of 5 years. Because all of our students receive full-time support, they may not accept any additional employment.

- [The University Graduate Fellowship \(UGF\)](#) is a \$5,000 three-year topping-up award. This award is given to students entering the doctoral program and is renewable for up to five years on a competitive basis. Its continuance is contingent upon satisfactory progress toward the degree. UGF awards are competitive among applicants to all graduate programs at the University.
- [The Provost's Graduate Fellowship \(PGF\)](#) is a \$5,000 annual topping-up award that supplements the student's base stipend for up to three years, then renewable for two years. The PGF is merit-based and recognizes students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds.

Students' financial support may be terminated if the Graduate Studies Committee, in its annual review of all graduate students, finds that insufficient progress is being made toward the degree (e.g., un-met course or language requirements, one or more "incompletes" or "unsatisfactories," poor academic evaluations).

- **Travel Grants**

Graduate School Travel Grants: Students may apply for **three** [Graduate School Travel Grants](#) (maximum one per year) over their five-year tenure in the program. Grants are limited up to \$500 per trip for foreign or domestic travel. The applicant must be the sole presenter of research at a major regional, national, or international conference. First-year doctoral students are not eligible. All other doctoral students are expected to apply for these grants before seeking departmental funding.

Russell G. Hamilton Graduate Leadership Institute Travel Grants: [The GLI Travel Grant](#) provides up to \$1000 of support for graduate students seeking opportunities to further their professional and/or academic development, for which funding is commonly unavailable. Students are allowed **one GLI travel grant per academic year**. This funding is separate from the standard Graduate School Travel Grants (see above) and funds awarded through that program do not count against eligibility for GLI grants. First-year doctoral students are not eligible. All other doctoral students are expected to apply for these grants before seeking departmental funding. Annual application deadlines in November and May for Spring/Fall funding cycles.

8.2 College of Arts and Science Funding

- **Summer Research Awards (SRAs)**

[The SRA program](#) assists graduate students with outstanding potential to accelerate progress on their research. SRAs provide funds for research expenses related to the doctoral thesis, other advanced research projects, or scholarly activities that significantly advance professional development. Doctoral students in good standing are eligible for the SRA. A student may receive this award **no more than twice** during their career at Vanderbilt.

SRAs are granted on a competitive basis. Students may request awards of up to \$3,000. In determining the amount of each award, the Committee on Graduate Education will consider the degree of need demonstrated by the proposal and budget, the number of successful applications, and the total available funds. Award funds will either be provided directly to

vendors upon receipt of an invoice or will be provided to award recipients in the form of reimbursement for expenses.

Application materials: 2-page maximum CV; 1-2 page proposal; detailed budget (which the applicants submits to the DGS office as a single PDF); two 1-page letters of support, one from a faculty member who will supervise the proposed research (to be submitted to the DGS in advance of the deadline); SRA Cover Sheet filled out by the DGS. Because the Graduate Studies Committee nominates SRA applicants and the DGS forward applications to the Dean's office, all applicants must contact the DGSs well in advance of the March deadline, note an intention to submit an application, and request a date by which to submit their materials to the committee.

- **Summer Language Training Grants (SLTs)**

[The SLTG program](#) provides awards up to \$5,000 to study a foreign language in another country. Doctoral students in good standing are eligible. Application deadlines in early spring, and the application procedure and disbursement is the same as the one for SRAs.

- **Dissertation Fellowships**

One-year dissertation fellowships are available each on a competitive basis from the [Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities \(RPW\)](#). Deadlines in early spring.

- **Professional Developmental Funding**

From time to time, the College of Arts & Science provides individual academic departments with additional lines of professional development funding for their graduate cohorts.

Departments maintain discretion on fund disbursement. If and/or when funds of this type are made available, the English Department solicits student applications in the typical internal manner. Rolling deadlines occur as funds are made available.

8.3 Department-sponsored Funding

- **The Drake Series**

The annual endowed Drake Series, which typically occurs in April, is designed to give graduate students extended contact with world-class scholars in diverse fields. Drake speakers are in residence for 4-5 days, during which time they deliver one formal public lecture and meet with graduate students in more informal settings. Drake visitors usually meet with groups of students in two workshops to discuss the students' scholarly interests and conduct a seminar either on their own work-in-progress or a published essay (circulated in advance).

- **Summer Institutes**

The English Department regularly funds students' participation in several summer institutes with which we are affiliated. Interested students submit the following electronically to the Graduate Program Assistant for each institute they wish to attend: a one-page description of how attending one of the institute would benefit their graduate career, a CV, and a detailed budget. The Department will release calls for interested participants as the institutes announce them throughout the fall term and will set internal application deadlines. In the case of multiple applicants, the Graduate Studies Committee will make a selection based on plausibility and merit of the proposal.

1. [The School of Criticism and Theory](#) (SCT)
2. [The Institute of World Literature](#) (IWL)
3. [Dickens Universe](#)
4. [The Folger Institute](#) at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C. The Folger programs tend to be highly competitive. However, if you are admitted, you will automatically receive a Grant-in-Aid to subsidize travel and lodging costs.

- **Myers Funding**

The Department's Robert Manson Myers Endowment Fund supports professional development with awards up to \$1,000 per application. This funding is meant to supplement the opportunities available from the Graduate School, such as Travel Fellowships and Summer

Research Awards (see above), to which students should apply first, unless they are not yet or no longer eligible. Grants from this fund may support visits to archives, pedagogical development opportunities, specific research toward your dissertation or a publication, conference attendance not covered by existing resources (see above), or other projects that advance scholarly, pedagogical, or professional goals. Proposals that clearly advance a student's dissertation project will receive priority.

Calls for applications will be posted every year in **October and March**. To apply, students submit a description of the proposed project, a brief rationale that situates the project in relation to the overall development of teaching, scholarship, or professional development, and a detailed budget to the graduate Program Assistant. Part of the application must be a brief explanation of how the applicant has pursued other funding avenues, be they internal or external.

- **Research Assistantships (RAs)**

Beginning in the second year, graduate students who are either in need of extra money may, with the authorization of the DGS, earn an hourly wage as an RA for a faculty member.

- **Academic Job Search Support**

Through the Job Placement Committee, the Department of English has developed a thorough program of mentoring and advising students seeking academic employment. This includes a grant to support travel and lodging at the annual MLA conference, if a candidate has been invited to job interviews there.

8.4 Other Funding Opportunities

- The Center for Teaching offers a one-year [Graduate Teaching Fellows Program](#).
- [The Writing Studio](#) offers paid consultantships for eligible graduate students.
- Vanderbilt Graduate students are eligible to apply for year-long Mellon Fellowships with the University's [Center for Digital Humanities](#).

9.0 Departmental Awards

Each year, the English Department bestows the following awards for outstanding graduate student work:

- **The Robert Manson Myers Distinguish Graduate Student Award** honors the graduate student who has demonstrated the highest standards of achievement and promise for the future. The DGS solicits nomination letters of fifth or sixth-year graduate students from the graduate Faculty, and the Graduate Committee evaluates the nominees. The evaluation process takes into account nominating letters from the students' dissertation committee, course work, performance on the comprehensive examination, teaching, conference participation, publication(s), and service. This award is funded by Vanderbilt Alumni and author Robert Manson Myers.
- The Graduate Studies Committee confers **The Thomas Daniel Young Award** for excellence in classroom teaching by a graduate student.
- **The John M. Aden Award** is for the best essay written by a graduate student in the context of a graduate course. Students may self-nominate and/or are nominated by members of the faculty. The Graduate Studies committee reads the papers anonymously and delivers its recommendation to the DGS.
- **The Robert Manson Myers First Chapter Award** and awarded to a maximum of two graduate students on the basis of first chapters of their dissertations. First-year dissertation writers will submit a chapter to the graduate committee in early December (specific deadlines announced annually). The chapter can be any chapter from the dissertation; it need not be the first chapter in either sequence or chronology.
- **The Robert Manson Myers Dissertation Award** will be given to the fifth- or sixth-year graduate student who has written what the Graduate Studies Committee deems the year's

most distinguished dissertation. All those who meet the Graduate School deadline for August graduation in their fifth or sixth year will be eligible for the award.

The Graduate Studies Committee may decide whether, in any of all of these competitions, to split awards or offer no award at all for the year.

10. Campus Resources

10.1 Digital Humanities

This page gathers information about various things digital here at Vanderbilt University and beyond that should be of particular use to graduate students. If you have a digital project in mind, below you will find a variety of resources.

- Contact [Andrew Wesolek](#), Director of Digital Scholarship & Scholarly Communications in the [Jean and Alexander Heard Library](#).
- Consult with [Felekech Tigabu](#), Assistant Director of Instructional Technologies at the [Center for Second Language Studies](#).

10.1.1 Training Opportunities at Vanderbilt University for Graduate Students

- The Center for Second Language Studies offers opportunities for practical skills development in the field of digital humanities. For more information, please refer to the [Digital Initiative in World Literatures](#).
- [Digital Scholarships & Communications](#) at the Jean and Alexander Heard Library conducts workshops to introduce students, faculty, and staff members at Vanderbilt to new tools and techniques in the fields of scholarly communications and digital scholarship. For questions please contact [Andrew Wesolek](#).

10.1.2 Outside Opportunities for Digital Training

- [Digital Humanities Summer Institute \(DHSI\) at the University of Victoria](#): There are three week-long programs, each of which offers numerous courses. Scholarships are available and the application process opens in early fall.
- [Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School](#)

10.1.3 Support for Digital Work at Vanderbilt University

- [VIDL](#): the Vanderbilt Institute for Digital Learning (“VIDL” is meant to rhyme with “vital”) is at the heart of digital training at Vanderbilt.

- The [Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy](#).
- [The Wond'ry](#): Vanderbilt's Innovation Center

10.2 The Writing Studio

[The Writing Studio](#) at Vanderbilt supports graduate students in different ways:

- **One-on-one writing consultations**

The primary way that the Writing Studio can support graduate students looking to improve their writing is through one-on-one consultations, which are scheduled through the Writing Studio's website. Most graduate students who seek out an appointment are proactive about choosing to work with one of the Studio's graduate consultants, our Post-doctoral Associates, or one of the three Academic Support Coordinators (who have Ph.D.s in a variety of fields). [John Bradley](#), the Director of the Writing Studio, is always happy to help facilitate an effective referral. Whether they are looking for a source of external accountability for their writing, a regular opportunity to discuss and reflect on their ongoing projects, or sustained individual support for writing challenges, many of the graduate students who seek out the Writing Studio come back to meet with the same consultant on a regular and ongoing basis throughout the semester.

Additional support for graduate students: For students in the dissertation phase, the Writing Studio offers extended two-hour appointments. The process for setting up an extended appointment is found here: <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/about/faq-and-policies/>. For graduate writers who primarily want structured time to write, the Writing Studio also offers a series of [Dissertation Writers Retreats](#) throughout the year. The Studio hosts a weeklong Dissertation Writers Retreats in the summer (often in May) and then two-day mini-retreats over fall break and spring break.

12. Professionalization

Vanderbilt's doctoral program in English recognizes the challenges facing graduate students and devotes considerable attention to preparing them to enter the profession.

Vanderbilt's doctoral Program in English offers professionalization training for different job market, beginning in the student's first year with the Proseminar.

For an overview of debates about professionalization in relation to the job market, see the Modern Language Association's (MLA's) online article: "[Professionalization in Perspective](#)."

The recommendations for departments fall into five headings:

1. Providing a comprehensive sense of the profession
2. Providing directed information and guidance
3. Establishing or formalizing professional development programs
4. Career mentoring
5. Making teaching important

Our graduate program, in concert with the Graduate School, aims to provide support in each of these areas.

12.1 Providing a Comprehensive Sense of the Profession

All first-year students enroll in a Proseminar designed to help them to become familiar with various aspects of our rapidly changing profession. In addition, the DGS and EGSA may arrange a series of plenary events designed to help students with different aspects of the profession. Over the past few years, we have had sessions on the hiring process, featuring a panel of discussants composed of members of Vanderbilt's most recent hiring committee; on collegiality; grant writing; and on the transition from graduate student to departmental colleague. We also devote considerable attention to research and publication (see Project Publish below); to undergraduate teaching and broad humanistic education; and to new developments and changes in the field.

12.2 Providing Directed Information and Guidance

Our graduate program provides extensive guidance along the way, in part through regular cohort meetings with the DGS to discuss everything from the first-year M.A. thesis to preparing for comprehensive exams; assembling dissertation committees; applying for inside and outside fellowships and grants; to going on the job market.

12.2.1 Job Placement Services

The English Department's Job Placement Committee typically consists of three faculty members who help guide students through the application process, from the drafting of application letters and *curriculum vitae* to conducting practice interviews and practice job talks. This process begins during the summer preceding the fourth year and picks up in intensity in the early fall before the first job listings are advertised. Students who receive campus call-backs have the opportunity to practice the talk, Q & A, and receive extensive feedback on their performance.

Each year, beginning in mid-September, the [Modern Language Association \(MLA\)](#) publishes a "Job Information List" (JIL) on their website, which is available as an electronic database or as a printable .pdf file. The JIL is the recognized professional source for announcements and full-time faculty positions available in the fields of English and foreign languages in North American colleges and universities (and often beyond). The database allows job-seekers to search by field, language, geographic region, key word(s)/ phrase(s) in a job description (e.g., "women's studies", "romanticism", "drama"), and by rank. The JIL is free to all MLA members. Graduate students may access the site through the English department's subscription. The Job Placement Committee will help guide students through the application process.

The English Department maintains an active online resource page through Vanderbilt's course management tool, Brightspace. Central to the Ph.D. Student Brightspace page is the Job Board module. The Job Board contains job postings in English writ large, sourced by the Graduate Program Assistant across five job sites: [Higher Ed Jobs](#), [H-Net Job Guide](#), [Chronicle](#)

[Vitae](#), [Inside Higher Ed](#), and [jobs.ac.uk](#). While not exhaustive, the list strives to provide a wide cross-section of current postings (adjunct positions not included).

12.2.2 Some Nuts and Bolts

Dossiers are typically handled electronically these days (most through Interfolio). The dossier should include a CV and at least three letters of recommendation. Other documents, such as award citations, may also be included. Students should update their dossier periodically. Dissertation and Job Placement Committee members and the DGS are happy to work with students on the format and content of their CVs. The Graduate School also offers regular workshops on this and other job-search related topics. Students should also discuss their job search with as many members of the faculty as possible. Most English Departments require a completed and approved dissertation from each job applicant. Moreover, publications have become increasingly important for successful applicants. It is, therefore, advisable to consider each seminar paper as an opportunity to contribute to an ongoing conversation in hopes, ideally, of publishing a revised version before entering the job market.

Students should also apply for post-doctoral fellowships simultaneously with the job search. There are many more post-doctoral fellowships in the humanities than there used to be. There are many opportunities to apply for postdoctoral fellowships in the humanities. For more information, see the [Office of Postdoctoral Affairs](#) in the Graduate School.

12.2.3 Careers Outside of Academia

Increasingly, the MLA and graduate programs have come to acknowledge that, given the shortage of tenure-track jobs nation-wide, doctoral students also need counsel regarding alternative academic careers and non-academic options for employment. To this end, Vanderbilt's Graduate School has an Assistant Dean for [Career Development](#), [Ruth Schemmer](#). The English Department also gathers information about the variety of paths our own Ph.D.'s have taken over the years. The [MLA website](#) also contains some useful links for those seeking non-academic careers.

Within the Ph.D. program at Vanderbilt, the Job Placement Committee seeks to maintain active relationships with ENGL alumni who have transitioned into careers both within and without academia. Graduates from the program have successfully moved into careers in the community college sector; library sciences and arts administration; freelance editing and writing; small business ownership; and investment futures.

12.3 Establishing or Formalizing Professional Development Programs

One English Department program stands out here: Project Publish (PP). PP is a year-long, non-credit, required program prepares students to submit an article for publication by May of their fourth year. All fourth-year students are required to participate. Students in their third year may participate if (a) a faculty member has told them that one of their seminar papers is potentially publishable, or (b) they receive permission from their comprehensive exam committee and from the DGS. The following is an outline of PP:

Fall Semester: three workshops with coordinated assignments.

- *Introduction and Editorial Survey:* The main focus is on how editors think about article submissions.
- *Journal Review:* Discussion of targeted journals. Students report on one or two journals that seem appropriate for their article. Invited faculty members participate in facilitating discussion of writing for particular journals.
- *Getting Started:* Discussion of openings of published article distributed in advance. Students discuss ways of engaging the reader, setting up arguments, and distributed openings. They submit their own openings (3-4 pages) by early November. These openings will receive feedback from all students in this workshop and the PP leader, who may also invite a faculty expert in one of the fields.

Spring Semester: The focus of the work shifts to peer reading groups and dissertation committees. Deadlines are set over the course of the semester for meeting with peer reading

groups to discuss initial drafts of entire articles and for meeting with dissertation committees to discuss revised drafts.

12.4 Career Mentoring

In addition to the programs noted above, our doctoral program supplies several layers of mentoring for beginning students. First-year students have the benefit of two mentors: (a) a current graduate student mentor assigned by the [Vanderbilt English Graduate Student Association \(EGSA\)](#) and (b) a faculty mentor assigned by the DGS. Once a student selects a committee for comprehensive exams and dissertations with the guidance of the DGS, committee members take on the role of mentors.

During the fall term of the second year, the second-year cohort organizes and hosts a daylong conference, which gives them a valuable opportunity to practice their conference skills, with feedback from fellow students and faculty across the department. Each year, EGSA also hosts an array of events for graduate students aimed at developing research, pedagogical, grant applications, and paper performance skills. It also keeps an up-to-date database of job application materials – from CVs and application letters to teaching philosophy statements – to support students as they begin to prepare for the job market.

12.5 Making Teaching Matter

In the spring term of their third year, each student is required to enroll in the departmental Pedagogy course. This course prepares them to create syllabi for the two undergraduate courses they will teach during their fourth year. As graduate instructors, fourth-year students have full instructional responsibility for their seminars, from course design to grading. They teach not discussion sections but independent writing-intensive seminars.

All graduate instructors are assigned faculty teaching mentors for at least one term. These mentors observed classes and provide written feedback at the end of each term. That feedback is then made available to the graduate instructor. Graduate instructors are also encouraged to make use of the various services provided by the [Center for Teaching](#).

13. Graduate Certificate Programs

[African American and Diaspora Studies](#)

[American Studies](#)

[Asian Studies](#)

Center for Teaching:

- [Certificate in College Teaching](#) (CiCT)
- [Certificate in Humanities Teaching & Learning](#) (CHTL)

[Comparative Media Analysis & Practice](#) (Joint-Ph.D. Program)

[Global Health](#)

[Jewish Studies](#)

[Latin American Studies](#)

[Latino & Latina Studies](#)

[Medicine, Health & Society](#)

[Women's & Gender Studies](#)