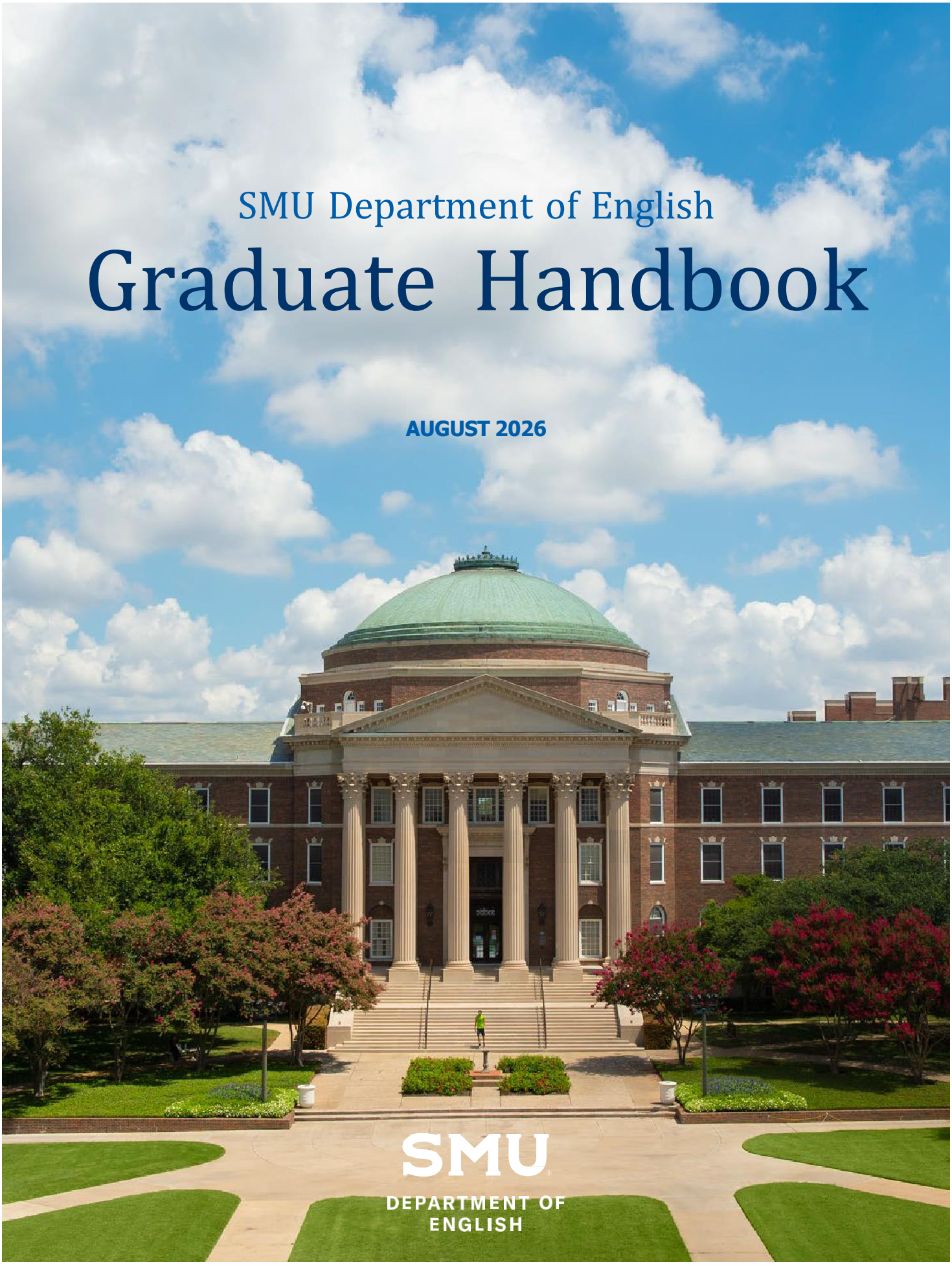
SMU Department of English

Graduate Handbook

AUGUST 2026



SMU

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Contents

I. Mission 2

II. Deadlines 3

III. Funding 4

IV. Policies 5

- Travel 5
- Computer 6
- Photocopies 6
- Offices 7
- Study Space 7
- Self-Governance 7
- English Graduate Organization 7
- Jobs and Residency 7
- Health Insurance 9
- Leaves 9
- Parental Leave 10
- Grievance Procedures 10

V. Course Waivers, Non-English Courses & Transfers of Credit 12

VI. Language Requirement 13

VII. Advising: Mentors & Directors 14

VIII. Evaluation & Standards 17

- Grading Course Work 18
- First-Year Review 18
- Master's Degree, En Route 18
- Teaching Evaluation 18
- Qualifying Exams 19
- Dissertation Defense 20
- Taos Summer Seminar 20

IX. Other Program Activities 23

X. Program Timelines 24

- English Ph.D. Graduate Curriculum: Six-Year Plan (54 Hours) 27

XI. Teaching as a Graduate Student 28

XII. Qualifying Examinations 29

XIII. The Dissertation 33

XIV. The Dissertation Defense 34

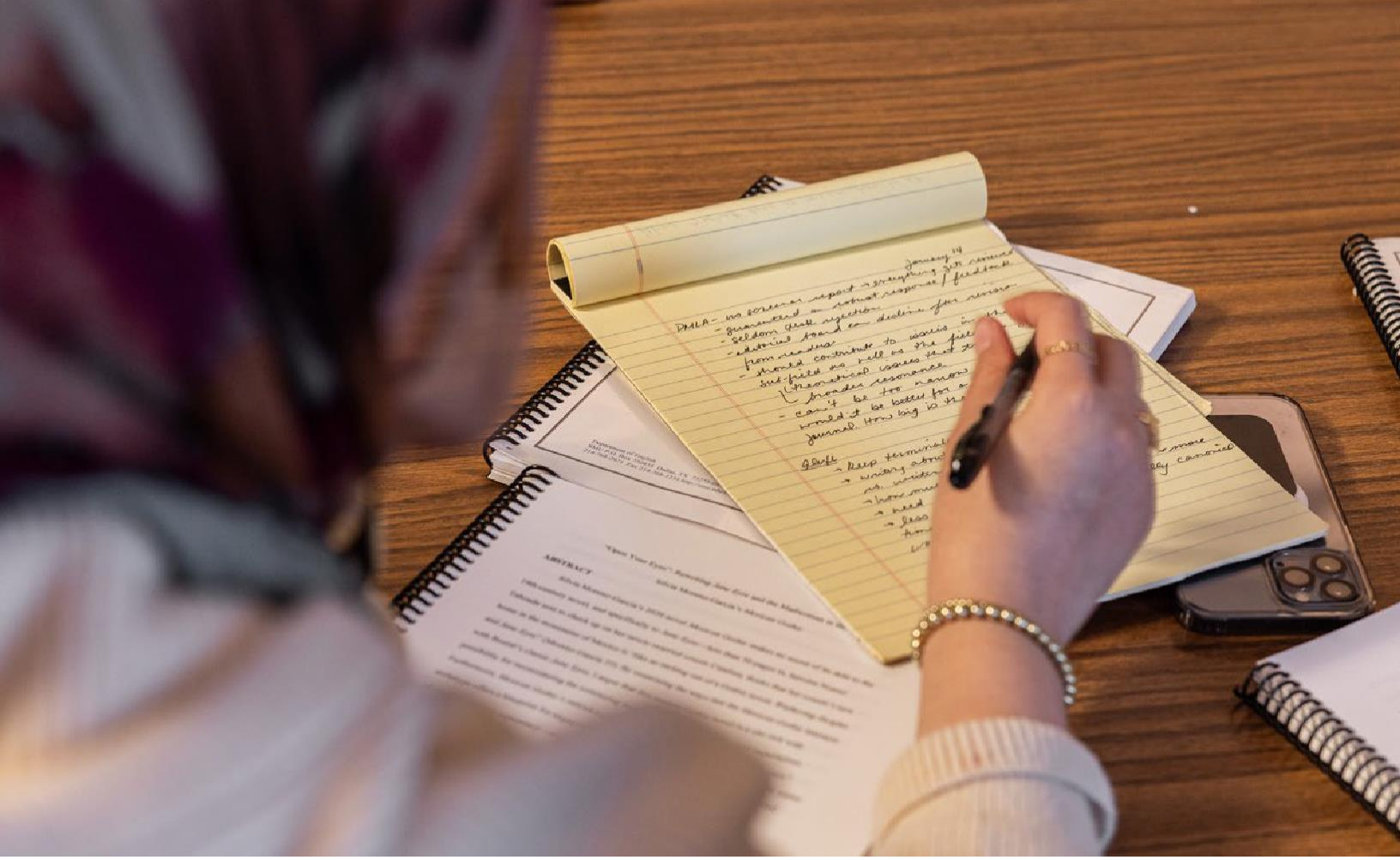
XV. Graduation 35

XVI. Hughes Postdoctoral Fellowship at SMU 36

APPENDIX A: Forms 37

APPENDIX B: The Dissertation 43

APPENDIX C: The Profession 43



I. Mission

The SMU doctoral program in English provides students with a broad knowledge of English, American and Anglophone literature, critical theory and pedagogy. The program also trains students in research methods as well as in textual and editorial practices that are foundational to their work as scholar-teachers. The faculty is committed to training future teachers and to the ideal that teaching and scholarship mutually nourish and sustain careers in our field. After a first-year course in pedagogy, students begin a carefully mentored, structured program designed to conclude with their teaching literature courses in their chosen field. The program also emphasizes each student's ability to research and to write innovatively and effectively. Students are assigned a mentor on first arriving and will thereafter work closely with other teachers, committee members and their dissertation director. The program encourages each doctoral student to become involved professionally: to present scholarship at conferences and symposia and to engage the daily life of the department, the college, and the university, from the ordinary work of self-governance to the dynamic energy of intellectual exchanges and programs scheduled throughout the year. SMU's English doctoral program is selective and small, with unique offerings like the Taos Summer Seminar. The program thus provides opportunities to forge close collegial relationships with faculty and fellow students, ties that will also support and promote the graduate's professional work for years to come.

The English Ph.D. program works closely with the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies to find ways to improve or enhance the graduate study experience. They may be contacted at 214-768-4345, or via e-mail at smugrad@smu.edu.

II. Deadlines

APPLICATION TO PROGRAM

Consult the Graduate Studies guide to applications for Dedman College. All application materials must be submitted by January 15th to ensure full consideration. If some part of the application cannot be completed by the deadline, as much of the application as possible should be on file at SMU.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT TUTORIAL

This is a University requirement. All students will be assigned a tutorial on Canvas to be completed by the date indicated in the assignment. Do not ignore.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

All students are required to demonstrate proficiency in one language other than English, generally by passing a translation exam administered by the Graduate Program. This requirement must be fulfilled prior to taking the written qualifying exams. We strongly recommend that the requirement be fulfilled as early as possible. See further instructions below.

ELECTION OF QUALIFYING EXAMINATION CHAIR

No later than Fall of the 3rd year, student is in the six-year program. The rest of the committee should be formed by the end of the following semester.

SUBMISSION OF QUALIFYING EXAM PROPOSAL TO THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

No later than Week 7 of the Spring semester (6th semester) preceding the written examination dates. Students should have written approval of their proposals (rationale + reading lists) from their committees and the DGS. If for any reason they are unable to meet this deadline, students should inform the DGS.

WRITTEN QUALIFYING EXAMS

Written Qualifying Exams should be taken in the 7th semester (6-year program).

ORAL QUALIFYING EXAM

The Oral Qualifying Exam will be held 7 to 14 days after the Written Qualifying Exam and lasts two hours, covering the rationale and reading lists, with the final half-hour dedicated to discussing the dissertation prospectus.

COMPLETION OF DISSERTATION

Dissertations should be completed and successfully defended within the six-year period of the program. After two years following the end of that period, students must apply to the program for permission to complete the degree.

GRADUATION

Application to graduate must be made during the first week of the semester in which one plans to graduate.

III. Funding

Students admitted to the Ph.D. program will receive funding for six years. We expect students to remain enrolled and in residence for the duration of the program, with the exception of summer, including the non-teaching year. Following interruptions of no more than one year for medical or personal reasons, students will generally be permitted to resume the program schedule and funding. It is crucial that students interrupting their studies discuss the circumstances with the Director of Graduate Studies as soon as possible.

Funding consists of tuition, fees, basic health benefits, and a stipend. Stipends will be paid on a monthly basis.

University policy dictates that any student performing work as part of their degree program must receive an Assistantship from which income tax will be withheld. Since all students, regardless of program plan, will teach one course per semester beginning in the second year of their residency, a portion of their stipend (income tax not withheld) will be paid as an Assistantship (income tax withheld). This portion will be equivalent to the salary of lecturers and adjuncts who teach similar courses. Bear in mind that although the University does not deduct taxes from stipends (the non-Assistantship portion of a fellowship), you may still be responsible for federal taxes. Medicare and/or Social Security will not be deducted. You will not receive a W-2. Please consult a tax professional to determine your specific tax burden, if any.

Students who take an approved leave of absence (i.e., dissertation, maternity, or medical) and who continue to receive aid from the department will return to a stipend status (income tax not withheld) until they return to complete their teaching duties, if any.

Students considering employment outside of the department should consult the Work Policy below.

> **N.B.:** *Students who have requested their lending institutions to defer outstanding student loans must maintain at least part-time student status (be enrolled in six hours or more) or lose their deferments. Consequently, those students who have completed their regular coursework will need to enroll in ENGL 8049, a non-credit, pass/no pass course that bestows full-time status on those who enroll, in addition to reading and dissertation hours. Please consult the DGS for assistance.*

Finally, the Ph.D. program offers a one-time professional dossier subvention of $50 for each Ph.D. candidate who applies to the DGS. Students may use this reimbursement funding to offset the costs of setting up a professional dossier and sending it to other institutions during a search for employment or postdoctoral funding.

IV. Policies

TRAVEL FOR CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH

Both research in scholarly archives and attending and participating in professional conferences are essential components of our profession. During their time in the program all students should make every effort to obtain experience in these areas. Such experience will simultaneously help improve their work and increase their visibility and likely success as a job candidate. We encourage attendance at conferences—local, regional, national, or international.

Following a student's first year in the program, the department will offer funds up to $1500 during each year in residence; unused funds will accrue through their final year in the program. Conference funding is reserved for meetings at which the student is presenting a paper. We recommend reserving these funds for later in the graduate career, when attending major national and international conferences (e.g. MLA, CCCC, ASA, GEMCS, ICMS) can best enable a job candidate to present research (including the dissertation), network in the field, and advance the job search. Students may also apply to use their funding for professional development, including attendance at summer symposia or institutes, to support research, or to take language immersion courses.

Students who desire additional funding beyond what is available in their accumulated annual allocations from the department must first apply for the grants available from the Moody School and the Dedman Graduate Student Assembly. If such applications are declined, they may petition the Director of Graduate Studies for additional funding, with the final determination on their requests resting with the Chair of the Department.

> **N.B.:** *Travel funds are not available to students on medical or parental leave or to those not presenting a paper at the conference for which funding is requested.*

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Procedures for travel reimbursement differ depending on whether a student is on teaching salary or solely on stipend. **Consult with the Graduate Administrative Assistant to make sure you will be reimbursed**. All students must complete the Student Certification for Business Related Travel form and it must be approved BEFORE you travel. To be reimbursed, you are required to submit this approved form with your expense report.

Students who are not teaching should submit a Travel Report Form and a Dedman College Travel Information Form to the Department Administrative Assistant several weeks prior to a conference or archive visit. Whenever possible, submit the request as soon as a paper has been accepted or when plans to visit a particular archive are finalized.

Students who are teaching are employees of SMU and must use Concur travel software. You will need to create your account and submit a travel request which must be approved before you travel. After your trip, you will file your expense report in Concur. For comprehensive Concur travel training click here.

Whether using paper travel forms or Concur, detailed, itemized receipts are required.

Not every expense incurred during a trip may be reimbursed. **Travel funds are disbursed under Dedman College Travel Policies and SMU's Travel and Entertainment Procedures**. Consult them carefully, along with the SMU travel web page. These policies restrict the number of nights for which a traveler may be reimbursed as well as the per diem that a traveler may claim. Under normal circumstances, a traveler may claim two nights' hotel stay (up to $125/night) and an attendant per diem;

if the schedule of the conference requires three nights hotel stay, be sure to get permission prior to travel. Reimbursement for ground transportation to and from airports is also limited.

If you use your personal vehicle, you must have public liability insurance in force with at least the minimum coverage required by Texas law. Any damage or loss to a personal vehicle on University business is the responsibility of the owner. When commercial air transportation is available, but the individual elects to drive a personal vehicle, the total mileage reimbursement and related expenses such as hotel parking may not exceed the cost of the most economical unrestricted coach fare (at the time that advance air transportation would have been purchased) and related expenses such as taxis/ airport shuttles, mileage to/from the airport, and airport parking using the lowest daily parking rate. Documentation of the cost of such airfare must be submitted with the reimbursement request. Mileage reimbursement will be computed in Concur using Google map functionality and reimbursement will be at the IRS rate in effect on the date of the travel. The starting point for mileage reimbursements is from the SMU campus, which is the traveler's work location. This will be selected in the Concur Google map.

Dedman travel forms and policies are available online. If you plan to rent a car, fill out the Motor Vehicle Report form.

> **N.B.:** *To ensure that your expenses stay within a reasonable budget, take several steps:*
>
> 1. *Try to get the best airfare weeks or months in advance, and to fly into the closest airport.*
> 2. *Stay in the most economical lodging. Generally, this will be the conference hotel, which will have negotiated a discount rate.*
> 3. *Minimize the number of nights at the conference site. Again, Dedman College policy is to fund two nights' stay, with a third justifiable only with a low airfare.*
> 4. *Use the government per diem you are allowed for meals to offset remaining costs.*
> 5. *Please recognize that while conferences may have various activities that interest attendees, neither the Ph.D. program nor Dedman College is responsible for nonessential expenses. Budget accordingly. Upon return to SMU, be certain to submit your receipts and Travel Forms within ten days.*

COMPUTER

A new SMU laptop is provided to each incoming graduate student to be used through the duration of the program. Each system comes with a SMU ID tag. DO NOT REMOVE THE TAG. For technical and maintenance issues on SMU issued laptops please submit all requests to SMU Help Desk at 214-768-4357. When graduate students leave SMU, they must return laptops to the Department of English so that SMU can comply with software licensing agreements. SMU will charge the accounts of any student who fails to return a computer. Students will be unable to request transcripts or access university services until all accounts are cleared.

PHOTOCOPIES

Use departmental photocopy machines solely for work- and study-related purposes, and always with good judgment and economy. Each student is provided with a photocopy account that will be monitored. Excessive or unnecessary use may result in loss of photocopying privileges.

OFFICES

Any assigned office is primarily for work related to teaching and study. Because the Department of English has very limited office space, it is necessary to share offices. First priority will go to students with teaching duties; those not teaching may not be assigned an office. To resolve office space problems, please consult the DGS.

STUDY SPACE

SMU's libraries offer varied options for students needing quiet places for study and research. Students may reserve study rooms in Fondren Library via its website. See: Study Rooms. A limited number of study carrels are also available on a first-come, first-served basis. See: Reserve a Room. There is a waiting list: put your name on the list at least two years before you need it.

Students are advised to investigate other options, such as the Underwood Law Library, Hamon Arts Library, and Bridwell Library. Each tends to be quiet and generally free of distractions.

SELF-GOVERNANCE

Whenever reasonable, graduate students will be included on departmental committees, including particularly the Ph.D. Program Committee and the Gilbert Lecture Committee. In order to ensure representation to the Department, students have formed EGO, the English Graduate Organization.

THE ENGLISH GRADUATE ORGANIZATION

The primary purpose of the English Graduate Organization (EGO) is to provide a professional support network for graduate students as they progress through their studies at SMU. The EGO also functions as a central point of contact between English graduate students and faculty. Specifically, the EGO represents the graduate student body on relevant departmental committees; facilitate communication and cooperation between graduate students and faculty; foster ties between SMU English graduate students; help graduate students to be active and contributing members of SMU's larger campus life; provide opportunities for institutional service; and support the faculty's efforts as they work to professionalize graduate students and to prepare them for the demands of academia.

All graduate students in the Southern Methodist University English Department are automatically considered members of the EGO, receiving all the benefits and responsibilities of membership. Graduate students may opt out of membership if they wish to do so by submitting a written statement to the EGO president.

JOBS AND RESIDENCY

We are committed to graduating all doctoral students in good time, generally within six years. To that end, we provide generous stipends for that term of study. In return, we expect that students will devote full working time to scholarship and teaching during the fall and spring terms, and not take any additional employment, within the University or outside. Students who take such employment may forfeit all funding from the PhD program, including stipends and scholarships covering tuition, fees, and health insurance. For exceptions to this policy, the Graduate Student Work Policy below.

We also expect students to remain in residence during the school term unless they are engaged in research at an archive outside Dallas or have another good reason to be away. Students with questions about funding and residency should consult the DGS and the department Chair.



Graduate Student Work Policy

1. Doctoral study is a full-time job; we encourage students to treat it as such. To that end, SMU provides a generous stipend to each graduate student. However, the English department understands that extenuating circumstances and paid research opportunities might arise. As such, the department allows graduate students to seek and to hold such employment under the following conditions.
2. Students must disclose additional employment and have it approved by the DGS and the department Chair.
3. No student may take on more than **eight (8) hours** of additional work per week during the academic year (i.e., August 1-May 31).
4. Students may not work during their first year in the program.
5. Any student who takes on extra work may automatically forfeit the privilege of extensions on any major stages in the program if the PhD committee determines the delay is a direct result of the student's additional labor. Major stages include the language exam, the written exams, and the prospectus defense. Further, a student may not hold such employment if the PhD committee identifies a lack of progress on the dissertation.
6. Students on academic probation, or those who are already behind exam deadlines, may not hold additional employment.
7. The PhD committee reserves the right to end the student's fellowship immediately should it determine that the student missed any one of these deadlines as direct result of having additional employment.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Health insurance is required for SMU domestic students who are enrolled in a minimum of 9 credit hours and SMU international students who are enrolled in a minimum of 1 credit hour. Students must enroll in coverage or waive coverage every fall and spring semester by using the Student Center component of https://my.smu.edu. Hard deadlines apply. Students who neither waive or elect will automatically be enrolled and charged for the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) provided through SMU. For additional information, all students should visit https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/DrBobSmithHealthCenter/Student-Health-Insurance. Domestic students should also review the Domestic Benefit Packet. International students should review the International Benefit Packet for detailed instructions. If you have questions, please contact SMU's Student Health Insurance Coordinator at 214-768-3408 or at studenthealthinsurance@smu.edu. The Student Health Insurance Office is located at the Dr. Bob Smith Center at SMU.

All students must be enrolled in at least 1 credit bearing hour to be eligible to enroll in SMU's Student Health Insurance Plan. If you apply for a departmental leave of absence and it is approved, and you want to be insured by SMU's Student Health Insurance Plan, you should enroll in a 1 credit-hour research course (Engl 8105) section assigned to your Director for the semester that you will be on approved leave.

If you previously elected or waived coverage and you would like to change your selection, you must contact the Student Health Insurance Office directly. No election changes are permitted after the first week of classes.

Students already receiving sufficient or superior coverage under another policy may retain that coverage and opt not to enroll in SMU's policy. Students will be responsible for any health care expenses not covered by the policy. Family members and add-ons (i.e. Dental & Vision) can be added to the policy at the student's expense. Please be aware as well that the SMU policy charges a $200 fee. The fellowship does not cover this expense.

LEAVES

At this time, the graduate program has no provision for paid medical leave, family leave, or other exigencies that require a student to interrupt graduate studies with the exception of parental leave (see below). Students who must take a leave should discuss the circumstances with the DGS and, when possible, make plans for reentering the program as soon as it is reasonable. Departmental leave is no longer available and students will need to apply for official leave through the university. You will keep your student health insurance only if you have attended classes for 31 days for the semester you're on leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE

The Department recognizes that many graduate students will be enrolled during prime childbearing years and welcomes the addition of children to our community. The Department offers a one-time parental leave policy. This provision will take effect following the student's first year in residence.

1. The Department pledges that no student will be discriminated against in the program for pregnancy or for becoming a parent. This applies regardless of gender.
2. The program will make accommodations to the course of study (for example: the scheduling of exams and the completion of the dissertation) following the birth or adoption of a child. Students must fill out the SMU Department of English Graduate Studies Parental Leave Application Form. *Do not submit the University Leave Request Form.* Submitting the University Leave Request form will result in the student losing health insurance benefits.
3. The program will not require the student to teach or take classes for one semester upon the birth or adoption of a child and will extend funding in the program for **one additional semester**.
4. Application for parental leave should be made one semester prior to the planned leave period, or as soon as possible in the case of adoption. The student may take parental leave no later than the semester after birth or adoption.
5. Students on leave will not have access to travel funds.
6. Only one paid parental leave may be granted during the student's time in the Ph.D. program.
7. If you apply for a departmental leave of absence and it is approved, and you want to be insured by SMU's Student Health Insurance Plan, you should enroll in a 1 credit-hour research course (Engl 8105) section assigned to your Director for the semester that you will be on approved leave. In addition, you must enroll in Engl 8049.

Students anticipating the birth or adoption of a child are encouraged to discuss their specific circumstances with the DGS or Chair as early as possible.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

We recommend that students acquaint themselves with provisions in the SMU Policy Manual and the Student Handbook. In general, grievances should be addressed to the DGS. If the complaint involves the DGS, it should be addressed to the Chair of English. Although mentors and other members of the faculty are available to discuss situations students find troubling, all serious grievances should be taken to the administration of the department or college: to the DGS, the Chair, or the Dean.

We take the dignity and safety of each student seriously. Students should never feel singled out, targeted or ridiculed on the basis of their physical appearance, gender, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or on any other grounds. Comments or jokes directed at or about a student on such bases are never appropriate in the classroom. If a student chooses to express concern about the actions of a faculty member, the DGS or a faculty member will communicate with the student at every step until the matter is resolved. If a student or students express concern about conduct directed by another student to or about a member of the faculty or staff at SMU, the student in question will be notified and asked about the incident or incidents in question before further action is taken. Students who lodge a complaint or

who experience questionable behavior directed at them will not be penalized for expressing concern or making a complaint, and their privacy will be protected as much as possible.

Sexual harassment issues follow a different process. The university Student Handbook and the Office of Institutional Access and Equity are again useful for their guidelines. Sexual harassment can include unwanted physical advances, or "a pattern of conduct (not legitimately related to the subject matter of an academic course, if one is involved, or to a workplace discussion, if that is the case) that causes humiliation or discomfort, such as sexually explicit or sexist comments, questions, anecdotes or jokes" as well as a "pattern of conduct that would cause humiliation or discomfort in the person at whom the behavior was directed (e.g., unnecessary touching, patting, hugging, brushing against a person's body or clothing, remarks of a sexual nature about a person's body or clothing, remarks or speculation about a person's sexual activity or sexual experience." If you think you have experienced an isolated incident of sexual harassment or have been subjected to a pattern of behavior that might constitute sexual harassment, it is important to know that any claim of sexual harassment requires an official record, so you cannot ask anyone on the faculty or any member of the Department of English staff for complete confidentiality. However, the Dr. Bob Smith Health Center at SMU has experienced counselors on staff who may speak to you in confidence and who can give you advice on how to understand what has happened and how to respond to it. A university chaplain may also speak to you in confidence.

The University Policy Manual allows for both informal and formal procedures in response to sexual harassment. Conferring with a counselor may help in deciding the best path to take. A mentor or other trusted member of the faculty can also help negotiate this process.



V. Course Waivers, Non-English Courses & Transfers of Credit

A student entering the program with a Master's degree **in English** from another institution may petition to count up to 12 credits toward the 60-credit requirement for the doctoral degree at SMU.

A student may petition the DGS to waive one of the required seminars by substituting a Directed Studies course in its place (ENGL 6301/2). The waiver petition must include a detailed syllabus for the proposed Directed Studies course, and should be filed and approved before the end of the semester prior to the proposed directed study.

Directed Studies courses should be proposed and entered into carefully and only when necessary. **Directed Studies courses must directly contribute to a student's program** and to her or his future plans for research and scholarship, especially the Qualifying Examinations and the dissertation.

NON-ENGLISH DEPARTMENT COURSES

Students may enroll in up to twelve hours of graduate coursework at the 6000- and 7000-level outside of the English Ph.D. program for credit toward the Ph.D. Students wishing to enroll in such courses **must secure the approval of the DGS prior to enrollment**. This is to ensure that courses appropriately meet the student's programmatic and intellectual needs and are equivalent to English courses in quality. This also allows English to keep track of all courses for credit. In most cases, the student will also need to secure permission from the department or program offering the course, as it might be necessary to create a separate course number. Under normal circumstances, the Ph.D. program will neither permit nor pay for enrollment in undergraduate courses.



VI. Language Requirement

Ph.D. students are required to show reading competency in at least one language other than English. For some students, this may include a computer-based coding language. Language exams require the student to translate a short piece of literature or criticism into idiomatic English.

Some fields may require a second language, to be determined by the Dissertation Director and the DGS. **Students are strongly advised to consult early with their intended Directors and the DGS about languages.** The deadline for fulfilling a second language will be determined by the Dissertation Director.

In general, the chosen language should help provide the student gain more access to literature and criticism connected with the dissertation field. Those studying in earlier periods are more likely to need a second language to be competent in their fields, but in all cases, knowing a second language undergirds one's native language.

The **minimum** requirement of one non-English language must be completed prior to the semester in which written Ph.D. exams are scheduled. If a student fails the language exam, the DGS will expect a detailed plan for completing the requirement. No student will be advanced to candidacy until the requirement is completed. Proficiency exams will be arranged by the DGS in coordination with the students. In general, it is the student's responsibility to acquire the language if it has not been learned prior to entering the program. Although the English Ph.D. program and other entities may offer limited opportunities to study languages at SMU, until such language instruction has been fully institutionalized, students are advised to make their own arrangements.

The department will approve funding for resources in aid of preparing for the language exam. These resources include but are not limited to the following:

- An exam preparation course from SMU's World Languages and Literatures Department
- Auditing relevant SMU undergraduate language courses
- A course external to SMU
- Resources such as dictionaries, apps, and other language-learning aids

Students are encouraged to request approval of such funds from the DGS.

Students (generally, international students) for whom English is a second language may petition the DGS and PhD Program Committee for an exemption of the language requirement.

VII. Advising: Mentors & Directors

MENTORS

Each student will be assigned a faculty mentor when entering the program. The mentoring program is intended to provide someone for students to talk to who is not involved in graduate program administration. Questions, for example, about the profession, and personal difficulties may be discussed confidentially, as needed, with the mentor. Mentors should always assure a mentee that nothing discussed during a mentoring relationship will be used in a professional evaluation of the student. In turn, mentees should be assured that they may speak with candor and confidentiality about their concerns and professional development in the program. We recognize that the assignment of mentors may not work for each student-mentor pairing. A student may ask for a different mentor at any time for any reason, or choose not to make use of a mentor.

> **N.B.:** *The mentor when acting as mentor is not the student's official academic advisor. Be sure to consult with the DGS and your exam or dissertation director for official academic advising.*

DIRECTORS

Qualifying Exams & Dissertation: Although our program does not require you to retain the same professor as both qualifying examinations and dissertation director, *for continuity's sake you should try to avoid changing your director as well as other committee members*. This section assumes that you will retain the same director. However, if you do decide to change directors, you must do so immediately following the successful completion of the qualifying exams. You must receive the approval of the DGS and notify the Program Assistant if such a change is approved.

Please see Appendix B for advice regarding the constitution of your committees.

The director(s) of the student's Ph.D. Qualifying Examinations and Dissertation committees will fulfill several crucial roles in the student's graduate career and, more important, as a future colleague in our profession. The director is at once a principal teacher, a mentor, and an advocate for one's career. It is arguably the most important professional relationship any of us will establish in our career.

The primary role of the director is to extend the work begun by the DGS in working to focus and guide a student's progress. The director helps the student to build upon work accomplished in the Ph.D. courses, and in choosing the primary, secondary, and tertiary focus areas for the written qualifying examinations. Even if the student has already decided upon those areas, the director will refine and supervise the reading lists for the written examinations, in consultation with the other members of your committee. The director should also offer advice and strategies as the student prepares for the examinations, during the stages of planning, researching and writing the dissertation.

> *When choosing the director and the other committee members, carefully consider several criteria, each of nearly equal importance.*

- **First, whenever possible, choose someone of the appropriate rank who teaches and publishes in the primary field in which you plan to specialize**. As a rule, it is best to choose the most senior person in the department in that field—that is, someone at the rank of Professor. In the absence of a faculty member at the highest rank, the student should choose a professor with a clear publication record in his or her respective field. The main reason to give serious consideration to your director's rank is that the most senior person is likely to be the most experienced and knowledgeable. Even when this is not the case, it is true that hiring committees tend to look favorably upon job candidates who have completed their degrees under more senior faculty members. Assistant professors are not eligible to direct committees.
- **Second, choose a director likely to nourish a productive working relationship**. Normally, the student should have taken at least one course with the director, who thus knows the student's work. The student should be able to trust that the director will guide her or him to needed resources, critically encourage the research, and keep his or her efforts on task. The director is the committee member with whom the student must feel at ease in sharing questions and concerns, although the other members will be active consultants at each step.
- **Third, choose a director who will be available**. When approaching the person with whom you would like to work, let her or him know your plans: when you expect to take your examinations; when you expect to complete your dissertation; when you hope to publish some of your work; when you plan to enter the job market. If, for example, you choose a director who will be on leave for most of your final years in the program, this will make maintaining a productive relationship much more difficult.

> *In approaching a faculty member about directing,* come prepared *with a précis of your plans, and with questions about what the potential director will expect of you.*

Consider the following questions:

- Does your potential director support your plans for study?
- Does she or he support the scholarly and intellectual goals of your dissertation project?
- What is the expected timeline for completing the later steps of the program?
- When are you expected to have dissertation chapters finished?
- What does your potential director expect of you?

The sooner you and your potential director understand how the relationship will work, the greater the chance the latter part of your graduate career will be highly rewarding.

The other two internal members of your committee should also be faculty members with whom you have had a productive relationship via regular coursework, independent studies, or other means. They should have expertise in the secondary or tertiary areas in which you will be examined for your qualifying examinations and be capable of offering advice on parts of the dissertation. All three committee members will be responsible for reading your examinations and dissertation. Each committee member has equal voting power in determining whether examinations and dissertations are acceptable. It is therefore important that all members be both supportive yet objective in their assessment of the dissertation project. The director and/or the DGS can recommend other members of the committee if you have any uncertainty.

ALL DISSERTATION COMMITTEES AT SMU REQUIRE AN EXTERNAL MEMBER. The external member must be a tenured or tenure-track faculty member from outside of the SMU English department. The external member may be from another institution but is not required to be in any way. You should consult your dissertation director in selecting the external member. The DGS must approve all committee members.

> **N.B.:** *The external committee member should be chosen* ***as early as possible*** *after you have advanced to candidacy. This is to ensure not only that you find a* supportive *committee member with a strong reputation, but also out of respect for that person's time and other obligations. The best time to secure an external committee member is upon approval of the dissertation prospectus.*



VIII. Evaluation & Standards

Evaluation is an ongoing process. The faculty, and especially the DGS along with the student's mentor, director and committee members, take an unceasing interest in the student's progress, and will therefore be watching it carefully. Our goal is always to verify that each student is doing good work, learning what will lead to success (in terms of information and, more importantly, advanced skills), and making timely progress through the program. If those things temporarily stop happening, we will try to help a student get back on track; **if a student seems unlikely to resume or successfully fulfill program goals, more serious action may become necessary, up to and including dismissal from the program**. Since most problems can be remedied, students with concerns about their performance or its evaluation should be active in discussing those concerns with their mentor/advisor, the specific evaluator(s), and/or the DGS.

Over the course of the program, there are four kinds of explicit assessment. Each focuses on determining whether the student is at that point making satisfactory progress toward becoming a qualified, accomplished scholar and teacher.

The program conducts annual reviews for all active students in the program. Each year the faculty gathers to discuss the progress of each student with respect to three domains: Academics, Research, and Professional Development

Generally understood, *Academics* refers to student coursework, class attendance and participation, work ethic, and grades. This also includes an assessment of one's academic progress with respect to the major benchmarks in the program, such as the language and qualifying exams. Faculty who have taught graduate courses during this past academic year will be largely responsible for assessing our students within this category.

Research refers to the quality of one's scholarship and the progress of one's research agenda. The department understands and will take into account that students early in their graduate careers may not have a developed research agenda or a scholastic profile. For advanced students, faculty directing dissertations will largely be responsible for assessing a student's research progress and quality.

Professional Development refers to the professional training of each student, including one's collegiality, working relationship with peers, staff, and faculty, and one's commitment to the program's vitality. We will also consider engagement with the greater profession, where applicable.

Any student found deficient in any of these areas may be placed on probation and will need to develop a clear plan of remediation in consultation with the DGS. All students placed on probation will have one semester to improve their standing in the program. Students who fail to demonstrate improvement may be removed from the program.

> **NOTE:** *All first-year students must also undergo a review process, which entails an in-person meeting with the Ph.D. program committee. See below.*

GRADING COURSE WORK

In general, the graduate program uses a compressed grade scale: "A" designates excellent work, "A-" work that is good but in need of improvement, and "B+" work that is marginal. A significant number of course grades of "B+" or below will raise serious questions about the student's continuation. Although the *Dedman College Graduate Catalog* indicates that graduate students must maintain a GPA of 3.0, it is the policy of this Department to expect its students to maintain a GPA of 3.5 and **above**. Students who fail to maintain a 3.5 GPA are automatically placed on academic probation. Students should avoid requesting Grades of Incomplete ("I") for regular proseminar or seminar work except under extraordinary circumstances. Grades of Incomplete not cleared according to the agreement between the faculty member and the student, as well as an excessive number of "I" grades, may jeopardize the student's standing in the program.

FIRST-YEAR REVIEW

All students will be carefully evaluated at the end of their first year by a subcommittee of the Ph.D. Program Committee, at which time students will be advised on how to proceed most productively in the program. This review is not meant to be punitive or intimidating. Rather, it is an important feedback opportunity both for the student and for the program. Students will submit a portfolio of their work for the year and a very brief summary review. Students should reflect on what they have done over the first year and where they see their work moving over the next two years. The subcommittee is charged with helping the student identify strengths and areas that are in need of remediation.

On rare occasions, the committee may find that a student should not continue in the program. Our goal is that all first-year students will pass this review. Students must present copies of all their graduate work to the sub-committee before the review. The DGS and Program Assistant will coordinate these efforts.

MASTER'S DEGREE, *EN ROUTE*

Those students without a Master's degree will be offered the M.A. following the defense of the dissertation prospectus. Students will need to submit an Application for Candidacy to Graduate (ACG form) to the Moody School Office at the beginning of the appropriate semester. There is a $75 fee (paid by the student) to receive the diploma. Please consult the DGS for assistance.

Students will need to complete the following forms for the SMU Graduate Studies Office and provide copies to the Program Assistant:

- The online Establishment of Examination Committee form
- The online Dean's Approval for Admission to Candidacy
- The online Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Report form

TEACHING EVALUATION

All graduate student teachers will be regularly evaluated. If the evidence shows that a student is unable or unwilling to perform at a high level in the classroom, the student may be dismissed from the program despite otherwise performing well academically.



QUALIFYING EXAMS AND DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS DEFENSE

Near the middle of their seventh semester students sit for the written and then oral qualifying exams, detailed below ("Qualifying Exams"). The qualifying exams involve a two-stage process: first, students take written exams in three fields over a one-week period, followed by a two-hour oral exam no sooner than one week or later than two weeks after submission of the written exams; second, by the end of the next semester, the student defends the prospectus. Following the defense of the prospectus, the student is advanced to candidacy for the Ph.D. **Except in extraordinary cases, the qualifying exams and the prospectus defense must be held at the latest by the end of the semester following that in which the qualifying exams are first attempted. Failure to schedule exams or to take examinations as scheduled may result in loss of good academic standing and/or the student's fellowship. See Appendix B.**

DISSERTATION DEFENSE

The doctoral student's final accomplishment in the program will be the dissertation defense, detailed below ("The Dissertation"). A critical conversation on the project—including its methods, sources, theses, arguments and contributions to the field, a successful defense of the dissertation caps the student's graduate work. Your doctoral degree then warrants that you are well-qualified as a scholar-teacher in English language literatures.

To increase the chance that your defense will be successful, you should communicate early and often with ALL of your committee members about potential dates for the defense, progress on the dissertation, and other matters.

All defenses are open to the public. The student must schedule the defense with the committee and alert the program administrator and DGS of the date. The student must also fill out the Dissertation Defense Scheduler Form. If the student feels the research topic and its claims may generate hostility from the public, the committee director may contact the DGS and the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies to opt out of the public dissertation defense mandate.

Below are general guidelines for how the committee director may organize and manage the public:

1. Director introduces the student and the committee and makes sure everyone understands how the defense will proceed (goes over steps 1-8 here). The entire defense should be about two hours (those in the public are not introduced).
2. Student delivers opening remarks (public is present).
3. Committee presents student with questions about the dissertation (the public is present but can't ask questions or participate in any conversation that emerges here).
4. Student's final remarks (public is present).
5. Director asks the student *and the public to leave* the room for the committee to deliberate on the student's responses and on the quality of the dissertation, generally.
6. Director invites the student to renter the room. The public is only invited to reenter *if the committee determines that the student has passed the defense.*
7. Committee gives the student a very brief summary of the merits of the exams and possibly offers suggestions for improving the dissertation.
8. The Director, if time allows, solicits questions from the public. This is the only time the public may participate, but only if time allows and only if the committee chooses. This is not mandatory.

TAOS SUMMER SEMINAR (AND DALLAS SUMMER SEMINAR)

The Graduate Program funds an annual week-long seminar—usually in mid-July—at SMU's campus in Taos, New Mexico, for students in the Ph.D. program. This is an intensive writing workshop during which each participating member revises an existing writing project to be submitted soon after for publication. Students and teachers will live in casitas on the Taos campus. The week will allow opportunities to visit Santa Fe, Taos Pueblo, and some of the cultural sites in the area, in addition to hiking in the surrounding mountains.

Attendance of the Taos seminar is voluntary and competitive. Every student will be guaranteed funding for at least two opportunities to attend, but will need to submit a complete and appropriate application. Up to twelve slots will be available each summer. We strongly urge all graduate students to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

APPLICATIONS WILL CONSIST OF:

1. an administrative cover sheet;
2. a brief statement of purpose;
3. supporting documents (papers, essays, abstracts, publications, etc.) indicating the strength of a student's interest in attending the seminar.

We expect those accepted to the Taos seminar to arrange their summer schedules to attend. For this reason, students should not schedule other activities that may occur in early- to mid-July.

Seminar dates will vary slightly from year to year, but students may expect the seminar to begin and end on a Sunday or Monday. Essential travel expenses will be reimbursed. Although students may either fly (via Albuquerque) or drive to SMU-in-Taos, whenever possible, they should consider driving: virtually all off-campus activities in Taos may be reached only by automobile.

Regardless of the chosen travel method(s), ALL students traveling to Taos will need to submit Dedman College Travel Request forms (See IV, above) and documentation for all expenses. Two weeks prior to travel, those students who rent vehicles will also need to apply for insurance coverage under the Office of Risk Management. See the "Letter of Authorization: Motor Vehicle Report" form in Appendix A, below.





TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM ALBUQUERQUE TO/FROM SMU TAOS CAMPUS:

Since SMU does not have a direct billing agreement with any car rental company, costs for renting vehicles cannot be invoiced to the Department. Also, the car rental companies will only allow vehicles to be reserved and paid for by the person who is renting the vehicle. Therefore, the Departmental credit card cannot be used.

There are 2 options for travel to the SMU Taos Campus:

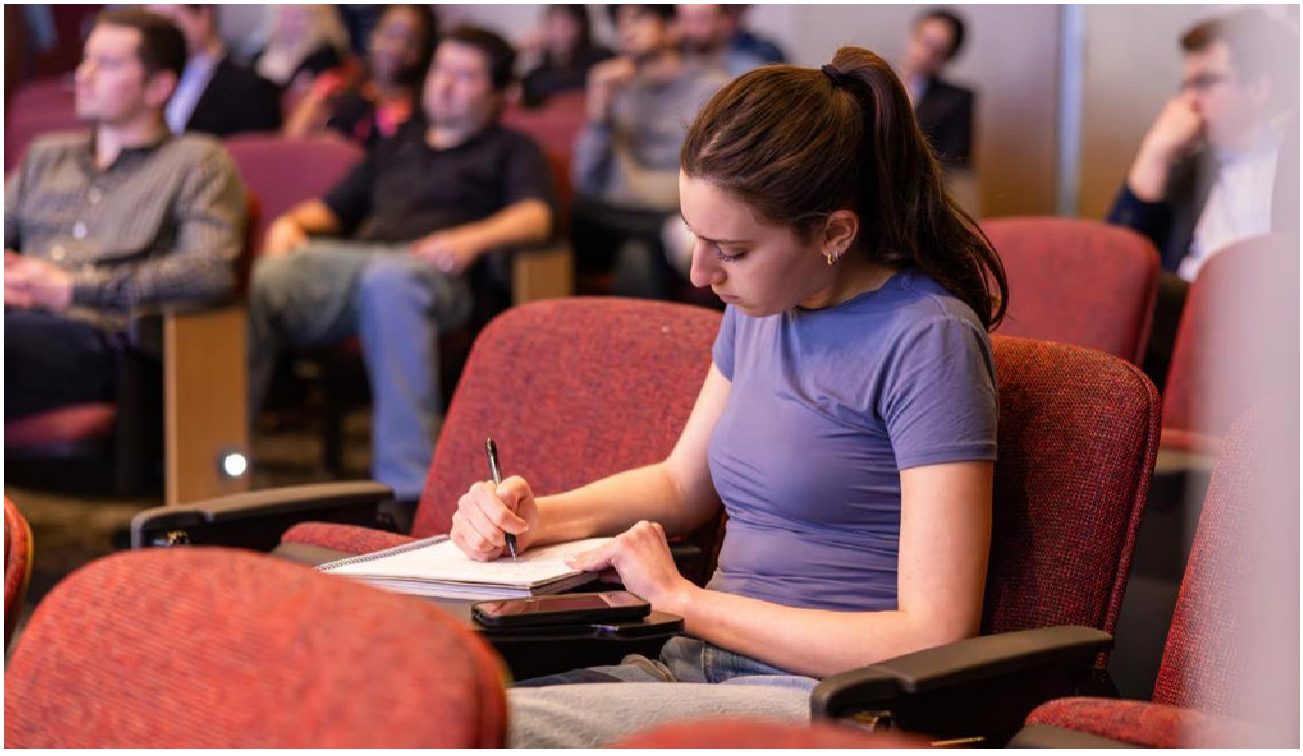
OPTION 1:

If you are able to rent a vehicle and pay for it up front, after returning from your trip, submit your receipts and approved travel expense report for reimbursement to the Assistant to the Chair. Reimbursements are processed by Accounts Payable and typically take 7 to 10 business days. You would make your own car rental reservation using your own credit card. You will automatically have auto insurance coverage by SMU and should refuse any other coverage. You will be reimbursed for gasoline expenses. Please save your receipts and submit them to the English Department.

OPTION 2:

The PhD students attending the Taos workshop should make their own Roadrunner Shuttle reservations (advance notice is needed). Pay for the shuttle service to/from ABQ airport/SMU Taos, submit shuttle service receipts along with your approved travel expense report for reimbursement to the Assistant to the Chair. Reimbursements are processed by Accounts Payable and typically take 7 to 10 business days.

As of Summer 2024, the program held a similarly styled workshop held locally in the Dallas area to accommodate students who may not be able to easily leave their home environment for a week. Approved students are expected to commute to the location during the week. The Dallas workshop will provide the same rigorous and engaging opportunity as the Taos workshop. Both workshops are held on the same week.





IX. Other Program Activities

Through a variety of initiatives, including Project Poëtica, Narrative Now, and Frontera, the Department of English regularly invites guest speakers for lectures and readings, usually preceded by a reception. In some cases, speakers may agree to hold a separate seminar with interested graduate students. In addition, it is a common practice for the English department to invite to campus the top candidates for tenure-track positions on the faculty. These candidates will give presentations before the department and be available for less formal meetings with graduate students and faculty.

These events are a major component of the department's lifeblood, and as much a part of the program as Ph.D. courses and the Taos Summer Seminar. They offer invaluable opportunities to meet with scholars and writers of international stature, potential future colleagues, editors, and publishers, many of whom may be instrumental in furthering a career. Students are encouraged to attend and participate in lectures and seminars as often as possible, regardless of an individual speaker's relationship to a particular course of study.

X. Program Timelines

LENGTH & STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The Ph.D. program should require no more than six years from matriculation to completion and successful defense of the dissertation, at which time the doctorate will be awarded. Graduating members of the program may be eligible for a Postdoctoral Fellowship, although such appointments will be made on a competitive basis after completion of the degree. Students should be aware of other opportunities offered by the Moody School for dissertation fellowships. The Department also offers the Michael Pueppke Writing Prize.

A student entering with a Master's degree in English from another institution may petition to count of to 12 credits toward the 60 credit requirement for the doctoral degree at SMU. Any student holding the Master's who wishes to pursue this option will need to petition the DGS for a transfer of prior credits. The students should petition following the first-year review. The DGS should receive the petition by April 1.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

This description is for those on the 6-year plan.

YEAR ONE

Doctoral students do not teach; they each take 18 hours, 6 of which are the Core courses. To meet the requirement of five (5) seminars (7000-level courses), students should aim for two seminars per academic year for the first three years. NOTE: Examination reading hours do not count towards the seminar requirement.

As spring term ends, the student submits a portfolio of all papers written for the program and a brief written evaluation of his/her progress thus far, and meets with the First Year Advisory Committee (FYAC). At this meeting the student and the FYAC discuss/advise on plans for the student's upcoming coursework and a possible field of concentration leading into a dissertation in the six-year plan. That summer, all students participate in training sessions/seminars to prepare for teaching. These training events are normally held throughout the week immediately preceding the fall semester, but exact dates will be announced by the end of spring. In rare cases, a student who has not succeeded in the first-year's course work will be awarded the terminal MA and leave the program.

YEAR TWO

Each student teaches two courses, one each semester. Each takes 9 hours in the fall, including the Pedagogy seminar (6312), and 6 hours in the spring.

YEAR THREE

The student should be completing the foreign language requirement, if not yet satisfied. By the end of the Fall term, the students who have not selected an Exam Director (who will normally be a prospective dissertation director) should meet with the DGS to discuss the selection process. The student meets with the Exam Director at year's end to discuss progress and possible dissertation topics, and to set goals for the coming year when he/she will begin preparing for the qualifying exams. The students teach two courses and conclude their course work. They enroll in 7398 (Directed Readings) in the spring while preparing for the Qualifying Exams. Students may opt to audit classes that help them to prepare for Exams. See section on "Qualifying Exams" below.

YEAR FOUR

Students again teach two courses. Students will enroll in ENGL 7399 (Directed Readings) in the fall. After passing the written Qualifying Exams, students enroll in ENGL 8398 in the spring (Dissertation credit). See section on "Qualifying Exams" below. After passing this qualifying oral exam (the defense of the prospectus), the students advance to candidacy. Students enrolled in fewer than six hours, including reading and dissertation hours, will enroll in ENGL 8049, a non-credit, pass/no pass course that bestows full-time status and in ENGL 8105 (5-year plan students) as well, which allows students to retain health coverage. Please consult the DGS for assistance.

YEAR FIVE

Students teach two courses and enroll in ENGL 8399. Students may, for good reasons, take the Dissertation Fellowship year in the 5th year (no teaching). This is an important decision and must be made in consultation with the student's Director and the DGS. See section on "Dissertation" below. Normally, the Dissertation Fellowship is taken in the 6th year. All students enroll in ENGL 8049 and ENGL 8105 in the spring.

Students should strongly consider entering the job market after consulting their directors.

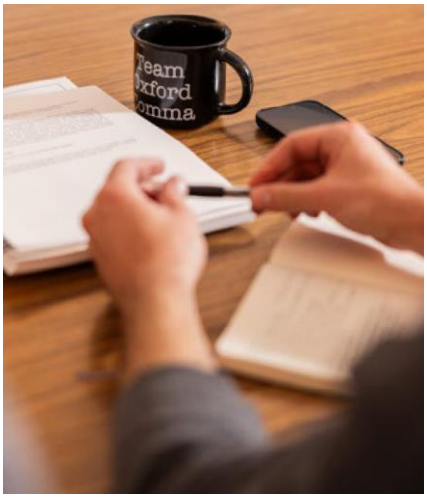
YEAR SIX

Preparation in summer and fall for the job search. Students who took year five as the dissertation fellowship year teach two courses. All students enroll in ENGL 8049 and ENGL 8105.

YEAR SEVEN

Possible postdoctoral fellowship at SMU (a competitive position).









CORE COURSES

We require two cores for all first-year graduate students. ENGL 6310, "Advanced Literary Studies," will survey research methods and materials, bibliography and textual editing, and history of the profession up to the present. 6311, "Survey of Literary Criticism," is an introduction to literary criticism and theory. ENGL 6311 is usually taught during the fall semester and ENGL 6310 is usually taught in the spring. As students prepare to teach, they will be required to participate in training sessions/workshops in late summer before the fall of their second year. That fall, they will enroll in ENGL 6312, "Teaching Practicum."

The timelines below should help you to devise and track your program at all stages. Please consult the DGS at any point to obtain advice about particular courses.

English Ph.D. Graduate Curriculum: 54 Hours

Note: students who take a leave will adjust by shifting one semester for each semester's leave.

	Fall	Spring
YEAR ONE	9 hours enrolled: 6310 (GLS) plus 6 additional hours at 6000- or 7000-level **NO TEACHING**	9 hours enrolled: 6311 (Theory) plus 6 additional hours at 6000- or 7000-level **FIRST-YEAR EVALUATION • NO TEACHING**
YEAR TWO	6312 (Teaching Practicum) and 6 more hours at 6000- or 7000-level **TEACH ONE COURSE**	6 hours at 6000- or 7000-level **TEACH ONE COURSE**
YEAR THREE	6 hours at 6000- or 7000-level **TEACH ONE COURSE • SELECT EXAM DIRECTOR**	3 hours at 6000- or 7000-level ENGL 7398 (Directed Readings): produce exam lists and rationale in preparation for qualifying exams **COMPLETE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT • TEACH ONE COURSE**
YEAR FOUR	7399 and 8049 (Full-time status) **TEACH ONE COURSE** **WRITTEN AND ORAL QUALIFYING EXAMS** by end of semester	8398 (Dissertation) and 8049 **TEACH ONE COURSE • PROSPECTUS DEFENSE BY END OF SEMESTER**
YEAR FIVE	8399 (Dissertation) and 8049 Dissertation Fellowship **OR** Teach one course Consider entering the job market after consulting director	8049 and 8105 Dissertation Fellowship **OR** Teach one course
YEAR SIX	8049 and 8105 Dissertation Fellowship **OR** Teach one course **JOB SEARCH**	8049 and 8105 Dissertation Fellowship **OR** Teach one course **DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

English Ph.D. Graduate Curriculum: (54 Hours)	
CORE CURRICULUM (9 HOURS):	ENGL 6310, 6311, and 6312
SEMINAR (15 HOURS):	Five 7000-level seminar courses (excludes ENGL 7398 and 7399)
ELECTIVES (30 HOURS):	A combination of ten 6000- level and 7000-level courses (includes ENGL 7398 and 7399)
DISSERTATION (6 HOURS)	ENGL 8398 and 8399

XI. Teaching as a Graduate Student

We consider teaching to be an integral part of the training for the Ph.D. in English. Except for their first year and one dissertation year, students will teach one class each semester. In the spring of their first year, students meet with the pedagogy seminar (6312) instructor occasionally and observe a range of classes like those they will be teaching. During the two weeks before fall semester of the second year, all students will participate in intensive training. All students then enroll in the pedagogy seminar in the fall of their second year. The seminar provides formal supervision of the students' teaching during the fall and continues informally through the spring semester. In subsequent years, teaching will be increasingly independent, although there will always be an instructor who will provide guidance and supervision. Since we hold teaching to be central to the program, students who find that they cannot teach competently or who choose not to do so will be asked to leave the program. The only exception to the teaching requirement is for students who are selected to assist with a journal edited by a member of the Department or to participate in some other project that advances their academic preparation. These options require approval from the DGS.

Following the successful completion of the qualifying exams, student will begin teaching selected courses outside of the Writing and Reasoning (WRTR) track under a supervising professor. Decisions will be made by the DGS and Graduate Committee based on Departmental needs, available professors, and expertise of students. Generally, the first course beyond WRTR will be a lecture course, which the student will co-teach with a professor and other graduate students. Other courses include the First-Year Honors Humanities Seminar, a number of 2000-level genre courses, and team-teaching 3000-level literary history courses.

Teaching is simultaneously a complex, frustrating, endlessly rewarding and time-consuming endeavor. Teaching effectively while balancing the demands of scholarship is difficult for all of our colleagues in the profession. Therefore, students should feel free to discuss this process with a mentor, the DGS, their dissertation directors, or any other professor who might be of help. If you find yourself in trouble in a class, be sure to talk to the DGS sooner rather than later.





XII. Qualifying Examinations

The purpose of Qualifying Examinations is both to prepare the doctoral student for future teaching and scholarship and to evaluate his or her readiness to begin the dissertation. By the beginning of the spring semester of the third year, the student will choose a Director for the **written and oral exams**. This person is often, but not always someone who may serve as the Director of your dissertation. Whether she or he serves in this role or not, the student should choose this person carefully. The Director will help you in selecting the topics for the exams, preparing for the exams, and in selecting two other members of the examination committee from the Department of English. You may wish to or be asked to add a fourth member from another faculty, but *this is unnecessary at the exam stage*.

> *All three core members of your committee must be full-time, tenure-track faculty from English; the Director must be tenured.*

No later than the end of the fall term of the 3rd year of course work, you should consult with the DGS to select a Director. Generally, you will talk to the member of the faculty with whom you wish to work on your dissertation and decide whether it will be an appropriate and useful collaboration. Preferably, you will have taken a class from that professor and she or he will be familiar with your work and interests.

You should also choose the second and third members of your committee at this time, although the Director is the most crucial member. Each member should be able to advise you on a specific list, although all members will be responsible for approving your lists and examinations and for writing appropriate general or field- specific questions for your examinations.

The committee will set the date for the exams on a schedule the student arranges with the Director, in consultation with the DGS. (See below.) You should meet frequently with all of your committee members, particularly with the Director, as you read your lists and develop your arguments.

Generally, the qualifying exams will be taken mid-semester of fall of the 4th year. Exceptions must have the permission of the DGS and/or the Graduate Committee: the reasons will need to be compelling. **Students are always free to take their exams *earlier* in the fall semester**: please see below.

> *By the first week of the spring semester of your 3rd year, you should have your three committee members in place.*

Fill out the Department's Committee Declaration form in consultation with your committee members as soon as you are able. If the committee is not in place by spring break, you must meet with the DGS to discuss this matter. As a courtesy, you should let all of your committee members know as soon as possible when you intend to take your examinations, and what your areas of specialty (see below) will be.

That spring, you will enroll in one seminar or proseminar and in English 7398 (Directed Reading) with your Director. This will be your final course: make sure you have the required number of 7000-level seminars. The purpose of 7398 (and 7399 in the following fall) is to allow you to read intensively in preparation for your exams.

The purposes of the qualifying exams are, first, to test the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge in selected areas of literary history and approaches to literary study; second, to lay a foundation for and gain focus on the planned dissertation.

The **written exams** will consist of three parts. All exams will include one section on a **primary historical period** representing your prospective specialty field for the dissertation. The student develops the two other examination areas in consultation with the committee members. Those areas might include a **secondary period, a genre, an interpretive/theoretical problem** (e.g. authorship, narratology, cultural studies, or an interdisciplinary approach) or some other topic. These parts may, indeed optimally they will, intersect the anticipated topic of your dissertation, but as a whole, they must take in a broad field of literary study, including a wide chronology and a range of genres and styles. The oral exam will build on the written exams, which allows for expansion, clarification, and defense of the ideas and positions the student presented in the first part of the qualifying exams.

THE EXAM PROPOSAL WILL CONSIST OF TWO COMPONENTS:

> *First, an **introductory rationale** of five to ten pages explaining reasons for each examination field and how they relate to a possible dissertation.*

This rationale is crucial to the proposal. It should be a narrative essay that indicates clearly the origins and purpose of your interest in the periods, genres, or fields you have chosen for your examinations. It should also indicate that you have established a strong background in the field through your coursework, and that you have already learned enough about each field to be able to justify your study. In other words, the rationale should indicate that you have thought carefully about your choices, and that they will lead you down a focused path.

> *Second, the rationale is followed by the three major lists.*

Each should include a brief statement of the logic and objectives for selections and the critical problems they present. Each list should consist of at least forty primary texts (for example, novels, plays, books of poetry, major epic poems, films, etc.) and a number of major critical/secondary texts. The lists should include accurate bibliographic information about authors' names and dates. They should be alphabetized by author, unless your director asks you to do otherwise.

Each list may comprise subsets organized to indicate specific movements or areas of interest directly relevant to your future projects. Your rationale should clarify their presence and organizing logic.

After gaining preliminary approval of your exam committee's Director, submit the proposal—both rationale and lists—to the other members of your committee promptly so they may contribute to your lists as needed. When your committee approves the proposal, the Director will submit copies to the DGS and Program Assistant. **This should happen no later than the seventh week of the semester**. Your Director will work with the DGS to set a date for the exams. Consult with the DGS and the Program Assistant when scheduling times and rooms for examinations. With your Director's permission, you may arrange to take your exams at an off-campus location—this is the most common method.

Your committee gives your proposal final approval. However, your director may still ask you to revise your proposal to ensure that it meets the program's standards. Students are strongly advised to write their most impressive and carefully proofread proposals in consultation with their committees to minimize the need for revision. Gain all approvals as early as possible after submitting the proposal, but no later than **the end of the spring semester**.

The written exams will be administered over three 8:00 am-5:00 pm days, generally during a one-week period in early October. It is up to you to manage your time, including meals and breaks. The exams are flexible in format. As decided by the student's committee, each of the three parts will include one or more longer essay questions/topics, and may also require responses to short essay prompts or narrowly directed questions. **For each exam day, you may write no more than a combined total of 3,500 words for *ALL* questions**.

When the written exams are completed, the student's committee members read and evaluate them. The student should set a date for the next step in the qualifying exams: the oral exam.

The **oral exam** will be held no sooner than one week (7 days) after and no later than two weeks (14 days) after the written exams, lasting for a total of two hours. This exam continues the conversation begun in the student's answers to the written exams, covering the rationale and reading lists. The final half-hour of the Oral Qualifying Exam may begin to discuss the dissertation prospectus. At this point, the committee will decide on a pass/fail designation for the qualifying examination. The director reports the result to the DGS, and to the student, generally within ten days.

Should the student fail one or more of the parts of the qualifying exams, he, she, or they may apply to the DGS for permission to retake any failed part of the exam(s). If a re-examination is approved, the DGS and the student's exam director will schedule the examinations as soon as practicable, but no later than six weeks following the first exam. Failure on the second examination will render a student ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS PREPARATION AND APPROVAL:

Once the student has successfully completed the qualifying exams (written and oral), the student will name a dissertation director and form a dissertation committee for the next stage of the doctoral program. For the sake of continuity and consistency, the dissertation director is customarily the same faculty member who directed the qualifying exams, though this is not required. A change in director should be made only for a compelling reason.

In the months following the successful completion of the qualifying exams, and with guidance from the dissertation director and committee members, the student prepares a prospectus for the dissertation. The prospectus outlines the plan for a book-length project and should include:

1. A focused topic the student plans to pursue.
2. A clear articulation of the motivating question or problem, including what is at stake in the project and how the proposed approach and argument are significant and original.
3. A review of relevant criticism situating the project within contemporary critical discourse.
4. A preliminary list of chapter topics, all clearly related to the central questions of the project.
5. A bibliography demonstrating familiarity with the critical literature relevant to the project.

The text must include all needed citations/annotations as well as a working bibliography in Chicago format (unless your director says otherwise). The prospectus is not a draft of a chapter or working outline of the dissertation, or notes for the oral defense. It is a statement that allows you to begin a serious conversation with your committee about your dissertation project. Do not linger over the prospectus: its purpose is to allow you to begin writing your dissertation with the clear support of your committee. Defense of the prospectus may proceed only with the prior approval of the dissertation director.

> *The student will set a date for the oral prospectus defense on campus in an appropriate setting with the approvals of his or her committee director and the DGS. A defense via Zoom is permissible if approved by the committee.*

Ask the Program Assistant for help in arranging the place and time. To ensure that this date is met, and to uphold basic courtesies, the student should complete at least two tasks well in advance:

1. **Communicate** with *all* members of the dissertation committee and the DGS as soon as possible about the nature of the project, when they may expect to see the prospectus, and when you intend to sit for the defense;
2. **Provide** the dissertation committee with final iteration of the prospectus *at least* **one week** in advance of the examination date.

The **prospectus defense** will last approximately ninety minutes. It is not open to the general faculty or other visitors. At its conclusion, the candidate leaves the room and members of the committee deliberate. Their unanimous approval is required for acceptance of the dissertation plan and advancement to candidacy. The examination will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis. As with the written portion, a student who fails the oral qualifying exam may petition the DGS to retake the examination. The DGS and the student's exam director will schedule the exam as soon as practicable. A second failure will render the student ineligible to continue in the Ph.D. program.

The student will need to bring a number of forms to the defense for the committee to sign, certifying the result for Moody. (Consult with the program assistant to get the proper forms.) Upon successful completion of the oral examination, the DGS reports the result to the Moody School Office. The student must have satisfied the language requirement in order to be formally admitted to candidacy. With candidacy, you commence working on the dissertation, the capstone of your graduate career.

XIII. The Dissertation

The dissertation is an original, extended written analysis of an intellectual, scholarly, or critical issue; a set of texts; an author; a period; a genre; or some combination of these. It is to be carefully researched and written. The nature and scope of the dissertation, the archive of materials that one works with and the approach taken to them, depend primarily upon the student's interests and commitments. Nevertheless, at every step of the process—beginning with the project's conception and early stages—it is vital that the candidate consult with the dissertation director, committee members, and other knowledgeable faculty in the English department or beyond it, about the resources, methods and theoretical underpinnings of the planned research and writing.

The dissertation marks the culmination of the candidate's coursework and studies. It uses what she or he knows and has done, but now takes that work in a new, original and significant direction. Thus, it is both **acceptable** and **wise** for the candidate to build the dissertation from relevant papers, essays, presentations, and articles completed for seminars and/or professional conferences. Yet the dissertation project will also revise, unify and expand the potential of that earlier work; the dissertation will argue a thesis that is wider in scope and that seeks to make an innovative and significant contribution to the relevant field(s). **PLEASE SEE APPENDIX B for advice regarding the dissertation**.

We do not currently have a provision for creative writing dissertations.

The dissertation is to be written according to the format of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

You should notify the DGS and the Graduate Program Assistant of the composition of your dissertation committee as soon as possible after your examinations if there have been any alterations. **You are strongly advised to retain all members of your examination committee for the dissertation unless compelling reasons emerge to do otherwise**.

PLEASE NOTE: Per Dedman College requirements, ***ALL* dissertation** committees must have one member outside of SMU's Department of English. He or she may be appointed from any other department at SMU or from an institution other than SMU, with the permission of the department chair and Moody. This person should be sought and appointed as early as possible in the student's preparation of the dissertation, but certainly well before the **dissertation defense**. (See below.) For the dissertation project's sake, the external reviewer should be familiar with the candidate's work and supportive of it.

In every case, the Program should be kept apprised of your choices at all times. Please consult the DGS for any advice you need in these matters.

XIV. The Dissertation Defense

The candidate's final accomplishment in the Ph.D. program is the dissertation defense: a formal conversation about the project, critiquing its methods, sources, arguments, findings and potentials for development into published scholarship. The candidate should notify the director and all committee members well in advance of submitting the manuscript, thus to ensure that everyone effectively coordinates their work and that they can be available for the defense. Before submitting copies to the committee, the dissertation manuscript must be formatted according to the Chicago Manual. Treat this step in the process as if you were submitting a manuscript to an editor for possible publication. It should be meticulously edited and proofed; all notes and bibliographical information must be carefully cross-checked and sourced.

> *The Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies requires students planning to defend their dissertations to undergo certain steps and approvals.*

Please see the next section, "Graduation," below.

The defense date will be set after the dissertation committee has received and approved a completed draft of your manuscript, and the director has reported the committee's recommendation to the DGS. The SMU Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies requires that notice of the pending defense be made to University faculty, and to the Deans of the College and Moody, at least a week in advance. You will need to submit the Ph.D. Examination Report one to two days before your scheduled defense date. Your committee will sign the form after the defense is held.

The principal (and voting) examiners will be your dissertation committee, but note that the defense will be open to any SMU faculty members, as well as to members of the public, as man dated by the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies. (As stated above, if the student believes that the research topic and claims may generate hostility from public, the committee chair may contact the DGS and the Moody School to opt out of the public defense mandate.) Any SMU faculty members in attendance may ask questions, but only members of the committee are allowed to vote. The defense will typically last about two hours. At its conclusion, voting members of the committee deliberate with the candidate in absentia, and their **unanimous** approval is required for acceptance of the dissertation and advancement to the degree. A student who fails the dissertation defense may sit for a second attempt after petitioning the DGS, but must do so within one year of the first defense date. A second failed dissertation defense will render the student ineligible to complete the Ph.D.

A successful defense caps your graduate education. It certifies to the University community, and to professional colleagues worldwide, that you are well-qualified to embark on a career as both a scholar and teacher of literature in English.

XV. Graduation

As you prepare to defend your dissertation, you should attend to the deadlines for graduation from SMU. The Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies requires that an Application for Candidacy to Graduate (ACG) be submitted at **the beginning of the semester in which you plan to graduate**. Over the course of that semester, Moody holds a series of thesis and dissertation checks to ensure that your dissertation will meet the submission requirements. If it does not meet those requirements, this will delay your graduation. Please go to Graduation for the basic steps and timeline to graduation. Filing for graduation does require a fee, currently set at $75. The graduating student is responsible for all fees.

Please note, again, that application to graduate should be made no later than the first week of the semester.



XVI. Hughes Postdoctoral Fellowship at SMU

The department may offer a one-year Hughes Postdoctoral Fellowship (postdoc) position, allowing our most recent Ph.D. recipients the opportunity to strengthen their scholarly credentials and to gain further teaching experience. Depending on need and opportunity, the department may offer a second-year renewal.

> *Postdocs will be awarded on a competitive basis. Candidates for the position must have the Ph.D. in hand before the appointment begins. The Chair of English will determine the course load and the course assignments in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. These nine-month appointments will run from mid-August through mid-May. NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 1ST PRIOR TO*

THE APPOINTMENT'S START DATE, THE APPLICANT MUST SUBMIT TO THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR:

1. a cover letter expressing interest in the appointment and outlining the applicant's qualifications and teaching interests;
2. a statement of the applicant's research agenda for the post-doc year;
3. a professional curriculum vitae;
4. three letters of recommendation from faculty members at SMU attesting to the applicant's preparation and expectations for a completed dissertation;
5. a dissertation abstract indicating current stage of completion of the dissertation;
6. a writing sample;
7. three sample syllabi for courses that the applicant wishes to teach.

Candidates will be judged on the basis of both scholarship and teaching:

1. Scholarship will be assessed by a review of the candidates' performance in the program; the quality of the candidates' writing; progress toward completion of the dissertation; the candidates' professional engagement;
2. Teaching will be assessed by a review of the candidates' work in the department; students' course evaluations; the candidates' supervisory instructor assessments; quality of the submitted syllabi.
3. Curricular needs may be considered.

The Postdoctoral Hiring Committee will evaluate applications and forward its recommendation to the department faculty for approval. Final decisions on appointments will be announced no later than **March 30th**.

The Hughes Postdoc shall enjoy other benefits of a faculty appointment, such as health insurance and access to Faculty Development Funds for conference travel and research.

Appendix A:

FORMS

1. Upon finalizing the Qualifying Exam committee, file with the Graduate Program Assistant:

   - English Graduate Studies Committee Declaration Form

2. After the successful completion of written exams and the defense of the prospectus, the following forms must be filled out, signed, and submitted to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies and a copy to the Assistant to the Graduate Program.

   - Recommendation for Admission to Ph.D. Candidacy
   - Ph.D. Qualifying Examination Report
   - Establishment of Examination Committee

3. One to two days prior to your dissertation defense you will need to initiate the Ph.D. Exam Report Form on the Moody School webpage. Once the student has successfully defended his or her dissertation, the Scholar Deposit Agreement form should be filled out and submitted to Moody and a copy to the Assistant to the Graduate Program:

   - Ph.D. Examination Report Form
   - SMU Scholar Deposit Agreement form (thesis)

SMU Department of English Graduate Studies

Parental Leave Application Form

To be completed by the graduate student:

Name_____ SMU ID_____

Requested for the ☐ Fall ☐ Spring semester of the 20_____— 20_____ academic year.

Application for parental leave should be made one semester prior to the planned leave period, or as soon as possible in the case of adoption. The student may take parental leave no later than the semester after birth or adoption.

This application, once approved, entitles the applicant to:

- **one** semester of academic leave, by which the program clock is "stopped";
- continued stipend payment for the semester of leave;
- continued student health insurance renewal for the semester of leave;
- continued library privileges for the semester of leave; and
- retention of office space (though the space may be loaned, temporarily, to another graduate student for the semester of leave).

The applicant acknowledges that:

- enrollment in Engl 8049 is required for the semester of leave;
- enrollment in Engl 8105 with the student's Director, a 1 credit hour bearing course which allows the graduate student to be eligible to enroll in SMU's Student Health Insurance Plan
- maternity leave will be granted only **once** for the duration of the academic program;
- **no extensions** to maternity leave will be granted;
- students will not be funded for any travel/conferences during the semester of leave;
- if grades of incomplete ("I") are rendered to the student, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with their professors to clear those incompletes; and
- teaching obligations postponed due to the leave must be fulfilled in a future semester.

Student Signature_____ Date_____

To be completed by Department:

Director of Graduate Studies (print)	Department Chair (print)
Signature	Signature
Date	Date

Submit this completed form to the Assistant to the Chair of the Department of English

Letter of Authorization Motor Vehicle Report
Must Be Signed by SMU Employee and/or Student

Southern Methodist University
Office of Risk Management
Dawson Service Center
3030 Dyer Court Suite 170, Dallas TX 75275 • P.O. Box 750231, Dallas TX 75275

ATTENTION:

To the Authorized Representative of Southern Methodist University:

I am aware that consumer and motor vehicle reports may be obtained as part of Southern Methodist University's evaluation of my job application, employment, and/or qualification to drive and operate a University owned, courtesy, leased or rental vehicle in the process of performing duties outlined in my job and/or employment description The reports may be procured by Southern Methodist University, and may include personal information obtained from state motor vehicle departments, and my driving record.

By signing this letter, I hereby provide my authorization for Southern Methodist University to procure such information and reports, as an assessment of my insurability for the SMU fleet safety program to evaluate my ability to operate a motor vehicle as part of my employment.

Please check appropriate box: ☐ FACULTY ☐ STAFF ☐ STUDENT

Name as It Appears on Driver License *(Print Legible)*

Driver License Number/State of Issuance | Date of Birth

Signature Applicant/Employee | Date

Department or Organization Supervisor or Staff Designee | Date

Revised August, 2007

Submit this completed form to the Assistant to the Chair of the Department of English

