

Ph.D. in English with Creative Writing Concentration Handbook

DESCRIPTION

The Ph.D. in English with Creative Writing Concentration (C.W.C.) is designed to prepare creative writers who have completed a creative writing M.F.A. to teach university-level literature and writing classes. The program will provide an academically rigorous set of requirements designed to expand students' knowledge of both a literary-historical field and some of the theoretical and aesthetic questions relevant to their own creative work and teaching interests. The objective is to prepare students to teach creative writing at the graduate and undergraduate level and literature courses at the undergraduate level. The C.W.C. program will only consider applicants who have completed an accredited M.F.A. program. The C.W.C. program is designed to grant students a Ph.D. in three years.

MINIMUM TOTAL CREDIT HOURS: 54 COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the Ph.D. in English with a Creative Writing Concentration include:

- 33 hours of course work beyond the M.F.A. (additional courses may be required by the Graduate Admission Committee on an individual basis)
- 21 hours of dissertation credit
- Successful completion of an Advanced Candidacy/Area Exam Examination
- Successful oral defense of a dissertation.

All students pursuing coursework for the Ph.D. should expect to meet with the Director of Graduate Studies at least once a year to discuss their progress. All coursework must be completed before a student may submit any portion of the Advanced Candidacy Examination.

Specific course requirements:

- 6 hours of 700-seminars in English, American, or World literature before 1800
- 6 hours of 700-seminars in English, American, or World literature after 1800.
- 6 hours of creative writing workshop
- 3 hours of ENG 600
- 12 hours of electives, including ENG 681/683 Form, Craft, & Influence, repeatable twice for credit

Students may also count 6 hours of graduate course work in related disciplines and/or directed reading toward their required hours.

Proposed Schedule:

Year 1: Fall – 9 hours of literature course work, Spring – 6 hours of literature course work, 3 hours of workshop

Year 2: Fall - 6 hours literature course work, 3 hours of workshop, Spring - 6 hours of literature course work, 3 hours of dissertation (preparation and scheduling of oral exam prospectus)

Year 3: Fall - 9 hours of dissertation (complete Oral Exam, Prospectus by Dec. 1), Spring - 9 hours of dissertation (complete dissertation defense by May 1)

Ph.D. CWC Committee Formation

Each student will assemble a Ph.D. committee, comprised of four members of the English department graduate faculty whose teaching and research interests complement the student's own plans for doctoral study. Two faculty members will be from the creative writing side and two will be from the literature side. **The student will choose co-directors to mentor and guide their process and dissertation, with one co-director from creative writing and one from the literature faculty.** One of the co-directors must hold a Ph.D. degree. The student and their committee are expected to design an individual program of study which contributes significantly to the student's familiarity with the practice of creative writing as well as the broad scope of literary history, including areas such as theory, methodology, criticism, canonicity, and the reciprocities between literature and culture.

The responsibilities of the Ph.D. committee include setting, administering, and evaluating the Candidacy Examination and admitting the student to candidacy; supervising and approving dissertation work; conducting and evaluating the oral dissertation defense; and recommending the conferral of the Ph.D. degree. A fifth (extradepartmental) examiner works with the committee to evaluate the candidate's work from the prospectus stage forward.

Advanced Candidacy Exam

Admission to advanced candidacy follows the successful completion of the Advanced Candidacy Examination, which is an oral examination. Passage of the oral area exam indicates candidate has attained a working knowledge of a literary-historical field. Each field exam covers a committee-approved list of 30-40 significant works. The list can be more heavily weighted toward a period (post 1800, for example) or some other type of grouping (such as a literary movement, e.g., Modernism, etc.) but should contain at least 20% from the pre- and post-1800 periods to ensure coverage and broad expertise.

This exam must be formally scheduled with the graduate school. The Graduate Committee recommends that candidate bring to the exam two mock syllabi—one for an introductory survey of historical field and one a course on a more focused special topic—and that these documents provide the foundation for the opening discussion. A failed oral may be retaken once; a second failure will result in dismissal from the program. This step should be completed by the end of the first semester of the third year of the program.

*The advanced candidacy exam process should be quite similar to the traditional scholarly PhD exam, with a series of focused questions from the committee related to the approved reading list and

the candidate's designated field of study. The only significant divergence in terms of the process will be some potential questioning (presumably from the CW faculty) that address how the candidate sees their creative work as contributing/converging/contrasting/etc. with their field of study and the relevant works on their list, or questions that concern their dissertation project. *There is no mandatory set of questioning* that specifically addresses the creative aspect of their course of study or dissertation; this part of the process serves the same general purpose as the oral exam for scholarly PhD candidates: allowing them to demonstrate orally their working knowledge of their chosen field and the texts on their reading list, and to show an ability to place this period/area in context with the general field and study of literature. The exam typically lasts around 90 minutes.

*Upon completion of the advanced candidacy exam the candidate will then move to the next step, the submission of the **Dissertation Prospectus**. This step in the process *does differ significantly* from the conventional scholarly PhD prospectus.

Dissertation prospectus

Soon after admission to advanced candidacy, the candidate is expected to submit a dissertation prospectus to the Ph.D. committee and an outside (extradepartmental) examiner. The C.W.C prospectus will consist of an annotated book list of around 30 titles, with at least 5 critical/theoretical texts, as part of the preparation for the Critical Introduction component of the dissertation process. The candidate is at this point declaring a specific creative writing genre for their dissertation: Fiction, Poetry, or Creative Non-Fiction.

Dissertation

The candidate is required to complete a book-length project that makes an original and significant contribution to the field of literature. As a general guideline, book-length will be understood as around 150-200+ pages for a novel, short story collection, or creative non-fiction work, or 48+ pages for a poetry collection. This is only a guideline and the dissertation committee can agree to different requirements should it deem them appropriate.

A required component of the dissertation is an additional 20-40 page critical introduction to the dissertation. In this document the candidate will critically consider their work and its place in the overall canon of literary work in that genre. The introduction will use standard scholarly practices to cite works when applicable, and demonstrate graduate-level competency in literary analysis. The works listed on the Prospectus will serve as the foundation for the critical introduction and individual works will be cited when appropriate.

After the dissertation is completed and approved, the Ph.D. committee and the outside examiner will conduct an oral dissertation defense, which the candidate must pass before conferral of the degree is recommended.

To apply go to <https://apply.olemiss.edu/graduate/>
Navigate to English Ph.D. and select **Liberal Arts – English Creative Writing Concentration Ph.D.**