

FORDHAM

ENGLISH

Ph.D. Handbook 2024-2025

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I. BASIC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Students entering with a BA must complete thirteen courses (39 credits). Those entering with an MA must complete ten courses (30 credits). Students must also demonstrate reading knowledge of one language other than English, pass a PhD comprehensive exam, submit a dissertation prospectus, write the dissertation, and complete an oral dissertation defense. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress, including a minimum 3.5 GPA and maintenance of continuous full-time enrollment.

NOTE: Students *must* complete an [MSSC form](#) each semester until graduation. The Graduate Program Administrator coordinates MSSC form submission each semester; please correspond promptly to ensure continuous enrollment. GSAS also sends out a Merit-Based Funding Confirmation form each winter to confirm the subsequent year's fellowship award. ***These forms are mandatory; do not neglect them!***

II. FUNDING

Funding is offered to PhD students in recognition of their promise as scholars and in support of their timely completion of their program of study. In return, PhD students provide work to the university during their funding period, in the form of graduate assistantships and teaching fellowships. GSAS assesses a [variety of fees](#), most of which are covered by tuition scholarships. Students are allowed to work a maximum of 19 hr/week during the semester, 34 hr/week during the summer, and may take up income opportunities outside Fordham without restriction, excepting international students on an F1 visa.

Students entering with a BA

6-year funding package,* according to the following schedule:

Years 1-3: Graduate Assistantship (GA)

Duties may include and working in the writing center, helping faculty with research, and assisting with various program administration duties.

Years 4-6: Teaching Fellow (TF)

TFs teach courses in writing and literature. The teaching load is 1/1 each year. Subject to departmental need, students in strong academic standing may take on a teaching overload of one course per semester with the approval of their dissertation mentor, DGS, and the Writing Program Coordinator.

Students entering with a MA

5-year funding package,* according to the following schedule:

Years 1-2: Graduate Assistantship (GA)

Duties may include and working in the writing center, helping faculty with research, and assisting with various program administration duties.

Years 3-5: Teaching Fellow (TF)

TFs teach courses in writing and literature. The teaching load is 1/1 each year. Subject to departmental need, students in strong academic standing may take on a teaching overload of one course per semester with the approval of their dissertation mentor, DGS, and the Writing Program Coordinator.

* NOTE: funded students **must submit a Merit-Based Funding Confirmation each and every year.** This includes students who have deferred a year of funding for any reason.

GAship and TFship appointments count as 18 hr/week; PhD students may take up 1 additional hour of work per week paid at the hourly rate, with DGS and GSAS approval. When such opportunities arise, they are usually in support of faculty research, program development, department administration, etc.

Funding options after Year 5/6

After the incoming funding package is complete, students may work as Teaching Associates (TA). TAs teach and are paid on a per-course basis, at a maximum of two courses per semester. GSAS lists its rate of pay per course for TAs on its [Stipends and Scholarships](#) page. The Writing Program Coordinator sends out TAship scheduling requests for the following semester at the start of each semester. Students must be flexible when submitting scheduling requests; the department may not be able to meet scheduling preferences for prime teaching hours unless they pertain directly to course conflicts, on-campus obligations, or documented accommodations.

While providing work to the university during the PhD, students are regarded as unionized workers with respect to all GAsip, TFship, and TAship responsibilities. Assistantship and teaching responsibilities are governed by CWA Local 1104 rules, pay, and benefits, in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement negotiated with the university.

After receiving the PhD, students may be eligible to teach as Adjuncts on a per-course basis under SEIU Local 200United rules, pay, and benefits. New probationary adjuncts are hired based on department scheduling needs as well as on demonstrated record of excellence in teaching; hiring may be competitive and adjunct placement is not guaranteed. New adjuncts are rehired on the basis of performance as well as course availability, and are not guaranteed course offers from semester to semester until such time as presumption of reappointment is earned (see [Information for Adjunct Faculty](#) for more details).

In all of these cases, teaching is not guaranteed and is always subject to departmental need.

Students past funding are responsible for the following costs per semester: a 1 credit fee for ENGL 9999: Dissertation Direction, General and Technology fees, international student fee, and student health insurance expenses.

GSAS Distinguished Fellowships

These fellowships are awarded by the Graduate School, and if the student is still within the funding period, they enable the student to extend funding for one year. For instance, if a student enters the program with a five-year funding package and then is awarded a Research Fellowship during year 4, the student will retain the funding that would normally have been assigned to that year (and so would essentially earn a de facto sixth year of funding). You can and should apply for Distinguished Fellowships as soon as you are eligible, and continue applying as long as you are eligible, **even in your final year of funding.**

Applications are due at the beginning of the Spring semester preceding the anticipated fellowship year. See the [GSAS Distinguished Fellowship Page](#) for more information on application requirements and deadlines.

Research Fellowship

The [Research Fellowship](#) offers support for students who wish to develop their dissertation research or to learn methods or procedures that they will use for their dissertation research. In recent years, students in years 3 and 4 at the time of the application, with at least one article accepted for publication, a research plan that involves international (or at least beyond-the-tri-state) archival work, and a concrete plan for securing a **prestigious external fellowship**, have been most successful in winning RFs. A list of prestigious [external fellowships](#) can be found on under the “Resources and Opportunities” tab on the Graduate English site. The first RF payment comes as a 25% advance issued in June; the balance is issued in 9 equal monthly installments from September to May.

Senior Teaching Fellowship

The [Senior Teaching Fellowship](#) is intended for students who have already completed the Teaching Practicum and at least one year as a Teaching Fellow. The application will include teaching evaluation (SEEQs). In recent years, **successful applicants have had SEEQ score averages of at least 7.5-8.0**. STF is paid out as a 10-month stipend following the payment schedule for the academic year, with the first payment occurring in mid-August.

Alumni Dissertation Fellowship

The [Alumni Dissertation Fellowship](#) is the final award a doctoral candidate may receive. To apply for this fellowship, the dissertation proposal, title, and committee must have already been accepted by the English Department and Dean of GSAS. In recent years, successful applicants have had **two articles accepted for publication** by the time of application and have tied to their research statement a concrete plan for securing a prestigious external fellowship with the support of the ADF. The first ADF payment comes as a 3-month summer installment issued during the month of June. The balance is issued in 9 equal monthly installments from September to May.

III. SUMMER FUNDING

Though there are no guaranteed summer funding options for graduate students, a few avenues exist for income during the summer months:

Summer Research Fellowship

[Summer Research Fellowships](#) are awarded through GSAS; applications are normally due in February. The highest priority will be given to summer projects designed to prepare a student to apply for prestigious fellowships and to improve a student's professional credentials beyond normal program expectations.

GSAS Professional Development Assistantships (a.k.a. Summer GAships)

Faculty members develop and submit project-based proposals for up to two graduate student assistants, who receive a fixed amount of funding for a fixed number of work hours during the semester. Priority is given to proposals that support GSAS academic programs, Fordham's institution building, and/or student professional development. Calls for applications commonly arrive in late April.

Summer teaching

PhD students who have completed one year of Teaching Fellowship as part of their funding package are eligible to teach during the summer, based on departmental need. Graduate students must have gone through the teaching practicum and taught at least two semesters during the regular year before they can teach during summer. Payment is at the course overload rate. Courses usually meet in five-week sessions, either late May-late June (Session I) or early July-early August (Session II), for three days a week. Requests for summer teaching are usually sent out in late September for the following summer.

Writing Center

The Writing Center commonly hires a number of 20 hour/week positions, paid at the hourly rate, for both Session I and II during the summer. Summer assignments may involve some combination of the following activities: in-person tutoring appointments held in the Walsh (RH) or Quinn (LC) library locations; synchronous online appointments held via the WCOonline platform; classroom presentations, miniworks, and individual and collaborative projects to advance Writing Center resources and initiatives. Invitation to apply for summer Writing Center positions usually comes out at the start of May.

Students may also apply for a GSAS/GSC Graduate Student Support Grant to support summer research or learning experiences (see below). Uncommonly, faculty members receive funding for summer graduate

student research support through Fordham or other granting institutions. A student may fulfill this role at the GSAS standard hourly rate. Such arrangements are worked out with the faculty member in advance.

IV. OTHER FUNDING/INCOME OPTIONS

GSAS/GSC Graduate Student Support Grants

The [Graduate Student Support Grant](#) is a competitive grant jointly funded and administered by GSAS and the Graduate Student Council (GSC). It is offered once each semester. Graduate students are eligible to apply for the Graduate Student Support Grant each semester, but priority will be given to applicants who have not received support in the immediate past funding cycle. Eligible students applying during their **first semester** of GSAS enrollment must provide with their application a letter of support from a faculty member.

A student is eligible to submit an application to one of three tracks for Graduate Student Support Grant funding: Conference Funding, Research Funding, and Alternative Learning Experiences Funding.

Conference Funding

- The maximum award for presenting at domestic conferences is \$1500
- The maximum award for presenting at international conferences is \$2000
- The maximum award for attending domestic or international conferences is \$1250

Research Funding

- The maximum award for research funding is \$2000

Alternative Learning Experiences Funding

- The maximum award for alternative learning experiences funding is \$2000

*Please note that these are the “maximum” amounts that may be awarded; actual awards tend to be in the range of **\$300-\$500**. Students should keep this in mind when making plans for conference and/or research travel.*

A review committee consisting of nine faculty and graduate students meet to review applications and make funding decisions. GSAS will notify applicants of the committee’s decisions. Please check the GSAS website for any updates to the above information when applying.

GSAS Cornell School of Criticism and Theory Award

Each year, GSAS may provide funding for one English PhD student to attend the Cornell School of Criticism and Theory (SCT). The award covers tuition and also provides a small stipend for living expenses (in the recent past, awards have totaled \$4000). To receive the award, students should contact the DGS and express interest in being considered at least one month before the deadline to apply for the SCT (usually Feb 1 – see the [SCT’s website](#) for more information about the deadline and the application process). If students receive the GSAS award, they must then submit a full application directly to the SCT by the SCT’s deadline.

GSAS Santander International Internships Fellowship

The [Santander International Internships Fellowship](#) provides support for graduate students who wish to spend the summer working with an international non-governmental organization (NGO). The amount of the award varies, depending on the details of the proposal. Students who have completed at least one semester of full-time graduate study (9 credits) in GSAS by the time the fellowship begins are eligible to apply. The deadline is usually in April.

GSAS Renaissance Society of America Fellowship

A collaboration between GSAS and the Renaissance Society of America (RSA), this 18 hr/week, 12-month [fellowship](#) affords recipients valuable hands-on experience in scholarly editing and publishing, supporting the work of the Managing and Reviews Editors at the journal *Renaissance Quarterly*. It can be renewed for a total term of two (2) years. Applicants must have completed at least six semesters of full-time graduate study, four of them at Fordham; departments recommend up to two (2) students per application cycle.

GSAS Jobs

GSAS posts job opportunities open to graduate students to its [website](#) over the course of the year. Check back regularly for updated postings. Students should also subscribe to studentgsas@fordham.edu, where job opportunities are sometimes posted.

GSAS Professional Development Assistantships (post-funding only)

Faculty members develop and submit project-based proposals for up to two graduate student assistants, who receive a fixed amount of funding for a fixed number of work hours during the semester. Priority is given to proposals that support GSAS academic programs, Fordham's institution building, and/or student professional development. Calls for applications commonly arrive in late August and early January.

Writing Center (post-funding only)

Hourly assignments at the Writing Center are available to students past funding. Calls for applications are sent out on a semesterly basis, but interested students can always contact the [Writing Program Coordinator](#). Applicants submit a CV, a brief statement describing interest and qualifications for the position, and a note indicating per week hourly availability and preferred campus assignment(s).

Ground Floor Teaching Assistant (post-funding only)

The Ground Floor is a required first-year writing intensive course at the Gabelli School of Business. Ground Floor TAs evaluate and offer feedback on short 3-page essays students generate over the course of the semester. TAs evaluate a total of ~35 essays at four points during the semester, in coordination with an assigned Ground Floor professor, with a 2 week turnaround. The work is conducted remotely and focuses exclusively on the quality, not the content, of student writing. Invitations to apply are usually sent out during the mid-summer and late fall for the following semester; applicants submit an updated resume. Interested students can contact the [Dean Bob Daly](#).

V. COURSEWORK

Coursework Requirements

PhD students entering with a BA must complete thirteen courses overall; those entering with an MA must complete ten courses overall. The following distribution requirements apply in both cases.

- Research Methods (NOTE: Research Methods must be taken in the first semester of the first year)
- One course in each of three historical areas:
 - Pre-1500 (designation H1)
 - 1500-1850 (designation H2)
 - 1850-present (designation H3)
- One course that fulfills the Difference and Intersectionality requirement (designation DI).
- The two-part Teaching Practicum.
- **NOTE: check DegreeWorks periodically to make sure that you are fulfilling your distribution requirements and meeting your overall course completion number.**

Students who enter with a BA customarily take three courses per semester for their first four semesters, devote their third year to preparing for the Comprehensive Exam, and take the first course of the Teaching Practicum in the spring of their third year. Students who enter with an MA customarily take three courses per semester for their first three semesters, devote their second year to preparing for the Comprehensive Exam, and take the first course of the Teaching Practicum in the spring of their second year. The Teaching Practicum's second course is customarily taken in the fall semester following completion of the first course, usually a student's first year of teaching. PhD students are not permitted to take Creative Writing courses in their first year of study.

Auditing Courses

Prior to successful passing of the Comprehensive Exam, students may not officially audit courses. Students who have completed the coursework required for their degree and who are registered for Proposal Development or Dissertation Direction may audit one course each semester without charge, with approval of the GSAS dean. Students may unofficially sit in on courses with instructor permission and DGS approval.

Course Waivers

Graduate courses taken outside the Fordham English department may count toward the above requirements. The DGS and GPA will help you submit a [waiver form](#) to student records.

Credit Transfers

Students who have completed graduate courses elsewhere may apply to have **up to two** courses counted toward the overall number of required courses (listed above). GSAS has **specific eligibility rules** for this process – see the [Transfer of Advanced Credit](#) form for details. If you have completed an eligible course that you wish to have applied to your PhD coursework, please contact the DGS and GPA.

Inter-University Doctoral Consortium (IUDC)

Fordham participates in a consortium with several universities in the New York City area. To take courses through the consortium students must have completed at least one year of full-time doctoral study at Fordham (the English department does not have the authority to waive this rule). With the permission of both the home and host institutions, doctoral students can take one or more courses at any school in the consortium. Participating institutions include:

Columbia University	The New School for Social Research
New York University	Rutgers University
Princeton University	Stony Brook University
Graduate Center, City University of New York	Teacher's College, Columbia University

Registering for an IUDC Course

One consortium course may be taken each semester. The consortium exchange is not available during the summer. Students register and receive credit at their home institution. For instructions on how to find and register for consortium courses, visit the [IUDC page](#) on the graduate website. ***You MUST let Labelle know if/when you sign up for an IUDC course.*** Deadlines for consortium course changes (add, drop, change of grade, etc.) are governed by the GSAS academic calendar.

MA in cursu

Fordham does not automatically award an MA to students who enter with a BA upon completing the equivalent coursework. Some students may wish to receive this degree designation, e.g., for external employment purposes. To do so, you must have completed all coursework and your Qualifying Paper. Please write to the DGS, indicating the graduate course from which your Qualifying Paper emerged.

VI. ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN RHETORIC AND WRITING

The [Advanced Certificate in Rhetoric and Writing](#) is a supplementary certification that allows students to demonstrate accomplishment in the interdisciplinary study of rhetoric and writing. It is ideal for students whose future goals include scholarship, teaching, administration, and/or consulting related to writing and rhetoric in a range of academic, professional, and community settings. Students earn the Advanced Certificate by taking any four courses from the list of Rhetoric and Writing offerings, which double count as coursework electives. We aim to offer at least one Rhetoric and Writing course per semester. Students submit a current Fordham transcript and a 500-word statement of intent to apply for the Advanced Certificate through the GSAS Admissions website. Contact the [Advanced Certificate Director](#) for more information.

VII. INTERNSHIPS

During your course of study, you are encouraged to take advantage of internship opportunities at Fordham and beyond to support both academic and adjacent professional futures. Internships build your professional networks and offer real-world experience applicable to various career paths; some are also paid positions which provide another source of funding. More information on internships is available on the [English Department website](#).

Fordham University Press Editorial Internship

This year-long internship introduces students to the field of scholarly book publishing at a university press. Interns report to the Editorial Director, working closely with Press staff in acquisitions, manuscript editing, production and design, marketing, publicity, and business. Interns become acquainted with the various aspects of the publishing process from start to finish. This 9 hour/week internship is paired with a 3-credit tutorial under the DGS or DPPD that consists of weekly readings and a short final written assignment.

GSAS Fellowship in Higher Education Leadership

This year-long Fellowship introduces students to higher education administration and leadership with tailored engagement in strategic initiatives at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Fellows spearhead or advance initiatives aimed at improving the graduate school experience while shadowing a senior member of GSAS administration and working with GSAS staff, including the Dean. Fellows gain an insider's perspective on how graduate schools operate and contribute to GSAS's daily functions and long-term vision. The Fellowship offers a stipend and requires 8-10 hours/week. It can be held concurrently with a Teaching Fellowship, so long as these dual commitments can be successfully balanced and do not impact a Fellow's academic and professional goals and responsibilities.

English Connect

Faculty, alumni, and students often post internship opportunities on [English Connect](#). Log into your account, and navigate Topics > Internships on the left-hand menu.

VIII. READING KNOWLEDGE OF A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN MODERN ENGLISH

PhD students must demonstrate reading knowledge of one language other than English. This requirement must be fulfilled before students take the Comps exam. This requirement may be fulfilled in several ways:

1. Pass a no-fee exam administered by the English Department. This includes exams in Spanish, French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Italian, Irish, ASL, Russian, Middle Welsh, Old English, Old French, Occitan, and other languages when possible (exams require the student to translate a

passage of academic prose with the use of a translation dictionary). Exams are not listed on transcripts until successfully passed. These exams may be scheduled throughout the year. **Contact Labelle De La Rosa if you wish to set up an exam.**

2. Pass a zero-credit Graduate Reading Course offered at Fordham.
3. For incoming PhD students who hold an MA, we accept proof of the language requirement fulfilled during the course of their MA work (including MA work at Fordham).
4. Pass an exam with the Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) or Classics Departments.
5. For incoming and currently enrolled students, we accept graduate-level language courses (such as "French for Reading") taken at other institutions. Students must submit a copy of the course syllabus and transcript to the DGS for approval.
6. Undergraduate degrees earned in a language other than English are accepted as fulfilling the requirement. For instance, if a student's undergraduate school was in Rome and the coursework was conducted in Italian, that student's undergraduate transcript would fulfill the requirement (no testing is required).

If you wish to be examined in your first language other than English or in an uncommon language for scholarly writing, please write the DGS with a short paragraph explaining why this language will be necessary for your research and dissertation project.

IX. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The Comprehensive Exam consists of **two parts**: a qualifying paper and an oral exam. Preparation of the qualifying paper usually takes place during the fall semester of the last year of coursework. Students usually choose their oral exam fields at the beginning of this semester, then approach faculty members to serve on the exam committee and construct reading lists soon after. Oral exams usually take place in December or May of the last year of coursework, or in August following the last year of coursework. Please consult the program's [informal Comps exam guide](#) for fuller guidance.

Planning and Registering for Comps

- Use DegreeWorks to verify that all degree requirements have been met or are in progress
- Meet with the DGS to finalize the exam committee members and exam fields.
- If taking the May exam and not taking any credit-bearing coursework in the Spring, register for the Spring semester ENGL 0912: Requirement Prep. Also register for the Fall semester ENGL 0950: Proposal Development and ENGL 8935: Dissertation Writing Workshop.
- If taking the August exam and not taking any credit-bearing coursework in the Spring, register for the Spring semester ENGL 0912: Requirement Prep. If not taking any credit-bearing coursework in the Fall either, also register for the Fall semester ENGL 0912: Requirement Prep and ENGL 8935: Dissertation Writing Workshop.
- If taking the December exam and not taking any credit-bearing coursework in the Fall, register for the Fall semester ENGL 0912: Requirement Prep. Also register for the Spring semester ENGL 0950: Proposal Development and ENGL 8935: Dissertation Writing Workshop.
- If re-taking the exam and not taking any credit-bearing coursework during the semester that the exam is being re-taken, register for ENGL 0912: Requirement Prep in that semester.
- Students are required to enroll in ENGL 8935: Dissertation Writing Workshop during the semester following a successful comps exam, in order to receive structured support in the timely preparation of a dissertation prospectus.
- All registrations must be completed through my.fordham.edu by the add/drop deadline for continuing students as indicated in the [GSAS academic calendar](#).

Qualifying Paper

Students submit a revised coursework essay of journal-article length (6,000 to 12,000 words, including notes and bibliography) tailored for a specific scholarly journal and its editorial norms. **Essays should include a 250-500 word abstract** of the argument and its critical significance, including comment on why this scholarly journal was selected and how the essay has been tailored for it. The essay should follow either MLA or Chicago Style, be paginated, and include the student's name at the top of each page. Although some students may ultimately submit their essay to a scholarly journal, this is not required.

Essays will ordinarily be based on assignments originally submitted for PhD coursework at Fordham. Students should consult with their faculty advisors to determine which coursework essay is most appropriate for revision. **NOTE: Essays revised in the Research Methods course may not be submitted.** As soon as the essay is selected, students should notify the DGS via email by sending the paper title and a 1-2 sentence precis. Two faculty readers will then be assigned by the DGS. Students may share their work with these faculty readers once, at least 6 weeks before the due date, while revising their coursework essays. Faculty readers are expected to give informal feedback on draft submissions within three weeks of receiving the draft. **Students may not submit drafts within 6 weeks of the due date.** Those seeking structured support for writing their Qualifying Paper are encouraged to enroll in ENGL 8936: Issues in Scholarship and Academia, a zero-credit, no fee course offered every fall term to foster student writing and professionalization.

Qualifying Paper Submission

For students entering with a BA, the essay is due on the first day of classes for the spring semester of the student's third year (consult the GSAS calendar). For those entering with a MA, it is due on the first day of classes for the spring semester of the student's second year (consult the GSAS calendar). Students must submit a digital copy (by email attachment) of the essay to the Graduate Administrator and DGS by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the deadline. No late submissions will be accepted, except in case of emergency.

Qualifying Paper Results

Within 30 days of receiving the qualifying paper, faculty readers will return brief evaluative reports to the Graduate Administrator and assign one of three possible grades: "Pass"; "Pass with Reservations"; and "Fail." The Graduate Administrator will distribute the reports and grade to the student. In case of a split decision, a third faculty member will read the essay. Any student whose essay receives a "Fail" may resubmit it once within 60 days. Students whose resubmitted essays do not receive a passing grade will not be allowed to continue in the PhD program.

Passing essays and readers' reports will be distributed to PhD Comprehensive Exam Committees prior to the Exam. The essay, essay grade, and reader reports are normally considered in assigning the overall PhD. Comprehensive Exam grade, but the essay is not expected to be discussed during the oral exam.

Oral Exam

The oral exam will last two hours. Approximately one hour will be devoted to the major field and one half hour to each of the two minor fields.

Major fields are usually selected from the historical area divisions: Medieval, Early Modern, 18th-Century British (including Restoration), 19th-Century British (Romantic and Victorian), 20th- and 21st-Century British (including post-colonial and Irish), Early and 19th-Century American, and 20th- and 21st-Century American.

The major field exam will include discussions of both primary and secondary texts, including **central field questions and critical interventions**. Students should consult faculty in their exam fields for a sense of the most apt parameters for their chosen major field.

The first minor field will normally be chronologically or geographically contiguous with the major field (e.g., if the major field is 20th- and 21st-Century British, the first minor field might be 19th-Century British or 20th- and 21st-Century American).

The second minor field will be defined more flexibly, in ways appropriate to students' research interests. Students might choose another historical period, a literary genre, a theoretical tradition, an interdisciplinary topic, or any other broadly conceived field that does not significantly overlap with the major field or first minor field. As students consider potential minor fields, they are encouraged to think about how such expertise might inform their dissertation research.

Students should anticipate a wide variety of questions relevant to the major and minor fields. These questions may concern primary *and* secondary texts, literary and cultural history, the analysis of single texts and comparisons of multiple texts, and broad issues of interpretation and narrow issues of fact. But the oral exam is not only a test of knowledge. In the most successful exams, students use specific questions as an opportunity to shape an engaging, wide-ranging conversation, one in which they share their best ideas, insights, questions, and hypotheses.

Timing of the Exam

For students entering with a BA, the oral portion of the comprehensive exam will normally be taken in December or May of the third year. For those entering with a MA, the oral exam is normally taken in May or August of the second year. The May exam is recommended as it allows students to begin developing their dissertation proposals during the summer before they begin teaching. Students should begin planning their exams in consultation with the DGS no later than the semester preceding the oral exam.

In May and December, exams are held on designated Reading Days (see the [FCRH academic calendar](#)). In late August, they are held on the last two non-holiday weekdays before the first day of fall semester classes.

Exam Committee

Comprehensive Exam Committees consist of **three** English department faculty members, one of whom serves as the Committee Chair. The student, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), will select the Committee Chair, and, in consultation with the Committee Chair, the other committee members. Committees must be finalized during the fall semester prior to the May or August exam date, or the spring semester prior to the December exam date. (Note: when necessary to cover a specific area of study, a fourth Committee Member may be added, at the discretion of the Committee Chair and DGS).

Preparing for the Oral Exam

Students are required to discuss specific expectations for the oral exam with their committee chairs, and chairs should share these expectations with the other exam committee members. Students are encouraged to meet with each member of their committee at least once before the exam.

In studying for the oral exam, students normally compile lists of authors and texts, both on their own and in consultation with their committee members. Doing so can be a useful way to define a field and reflect upon its priorities. Reading from lists can also be an effective way to manage time during the studying process. Lists are not mandatory, however, and individual exam committees will determine if lists will be considered during the oral exam.

It is recommended that, in addition to reading and taking notes, students develop a wide range of possible exam questions and practice answering them. Some students form reading and study groups and conduct informal exam practice sessions with one another or with committee members.

Exam Results

After the oral exam has taken place, the committee will grade the student's entire exam as a whole and immediately communicate the result to the student. Written and oral portions of the exam will be graded together and a student will receive only one exam grade. GSAS grades include High Pass, Pass, and Fail. If a fourth examiner is present, grades require the agreement of at least three of the four examiners.

A Pass grade requires a sound conceptual grasp of literary history and form, as well as evidence of a solid familiarity with the individual works discussed. Successful students are able to respond productively to questions and argue points with clarity and specificity, while demonstrating competent knowledge of their major and minor fields. A High Pass grade requires a higher order of synthetic understanding, historical range, original insight, theoretical sophistication, and detailed recollection. In assigning a High Pass, exam committees look for evidence of serious and sustained independent thinking.

Students who fail the exam may retake it once, within six months of the first attempt. The first failure does not appear on a student's transcript. Students who fail the exam may read faculty comments on their exams after submitting a written request to the graduate administrator.

Students whose exam is only marginally passable but not indicative of the ability to complete a dissertation will receive a special departmental grade of Low Pass. Because this grade is officially recorded as a Pass, it allows the student to receive the MPhil degree, but students receiving a Low Pass will not be allowed to continue work toward the PhD.

After the Exam

Students receiving a Pass or High Pass officially become doctoral candidates. Within two weeks of passing their PhD. comprehensive exam, they should select a Dissertation Mentor and begin identifying a First and Second Reader, conducting preliminary dissertation research, and drafting a dissertation prospectus. (Often, though not always, the Comprehensive Exam Committee will stay in place as the Dissertation Committee.)

X. DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS

Advisor and Committee

Students receiving a Pass or High Pass on the Comprehensive Exam officially become doctoral candidates. Within two weeks of passing the Comprehensive Exam, students should identify and confirm a dissertation advisor. Send an email to your advisor, copying the graduate administrator (GPA) and the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and asking the advisor to reply to all (GPA, DGS, and student), so the department will have a record of the mentorship. You should work with your advisor to identify suitable committee members. The most common committee size is three (advisor + two additional readers, at least one of whom must be English faculty), though a co-advisor or additional readers are sometimes included on committees.

Prospectus

The dissertation prospectus should not run longer than 10 double-spaced pages, with an added bibliography of not more than 5 pages. Students must submit an approved dissertation prospectus within one semester of passing their comprehensive exams. If the prospectus is not submitted within 6 months of

passing the comprehensive exam, the student will be placed on GSAS academic probation. At this point, the student must submit to GSAS and the DGS a written plan for submission **endorsed by the advisor**.

The prospectus explains the dissertation's subject, positions the project in a critical conversation, offers provisional chapter outlines, and includes a working bibliography. Be sure to address how your dissertation will add to – or redirect – current critical conversations. Students should expect to consult with their advisor several times during preparation of the prospectus. [Sample prospectuses](#) are viewable on the Graduate English website (contact DGS and GPA for password). **Students and advisors should keep in mind that the prospectus is a provisional document and needn't be perfect: dissertations change during the research and writing process.**

Enrollment in Proposal Development (ENGL 0950) is required for the semester in which students are writing the prospectus. Students who take more than one semester to complete the prospectus must complete the submission plan mentioned above and enroll in Proposal Development again.

In order to help students prepare the prospectus and advance in dissertation writing, the department offers a Dissertation Writing Seminar each semester (ENGL 8935). This seminar is a zero-credit class with no associated fee. Participants workshop their ongoing projects with other seminar members. Students are required to take this seminar during the semester immediately after comps.

Many prospectuses require revision. Students are ordinarily limited to two prospectus submissions, but individual dissertation committees may increase this number. When the advisor and committee members agree that the prospectus is acceptable, students should email the Graduate Administrator (cc: to DGS) with a request to process the Dissertation Title Approval form. **Be sure to include the names of committee members as well as the dissertation title.** Once GSAS officially approves the prospectus, a notice is sent to you with a copy to the English Department, and your registration is changed for the semester from Proposal Development to Proposal Acceptance (3 credits).

Dissertation Registration/Reading

GSAS registers you for Dissertation Mentoring (ENGL 0970; 3 credits) for the semester after you are registered for Proposal Acceptance. After that, **you are required to register yourself** for Dissertation Direction (ENGL 9999; 1 credit) for each semester up to and including the one in which your defense is scheduled. The only exception is for students who defend in the summer: GSAS will register you for Requirement Prep in Summer (ENGL 0914; 0.5 credits) during the summer in which you are defending.

The English Department allows a great deal of flexibility in the administration of the work that dissertation committees do, and students should work out a writing and feedback schedule with their Committees. For a general sense of guidance, however, the Graduate Program Committee suggests the following as one possible arrangement: the second and third readers will normally receive dissertation chapters after they have been through at least one round of feedback and revision with the student's main advisor. Second and third readers will normally receive each revised chapter when it is ready, rather than receiving all chapters at the very end of the process.

Dissertation Co-tutelles

A co-tutelle is an individually tailored contractual arrangement enabling graduate students to pursue their doctoral research under the joint supervision of two graduate institutions, Fordham and another non-US university. The student spends a minimum of one-third of their doctoral research time in residency at each institution, and their dissertation is jointly supervised by a committee comprising faculty from both institutions. Co-tutelles are designed to augment and support scholarly cooperation between researchers and doctoral students, and to enhance doctoral student mobility during and after their studies. Once the

terms of the co-tutelle agreement are completed and the dissertation is defended successfully, the student will be issued two diplomas, one from each institution. For more information, eligibility requirements, application guidelines, and co-tutelle proposal form, visit the [GSAS website](#).

XI. DISSERTATION CHAPTER MEETING

No later than eight months after the approval of the dissertation prospectus, the student must have a group meeting with the dissertation adviser and committee members to discuss a draft of a dissertation chapter. Meetings that happen well before the eighth month are permitted and encouraged.

The exact parameters of the meeting are up to the adviser and committee members, but, in most cases, the meeting need not extend beyond an hour. Meetings may take place in person, via Zoom, on the phone, or in any other format that the adviser and committee members determine to be appropriate.

The adviser and committee members will not issue a formal evaluation or grade as a result of the meeting (i.e., the meeting is not an exam). Rather, the point of the meeting is to promote timely completion of a chapter draft and to provide concerted, coordinated feedback at an early stage in the dissertation writing process. Because the goal is to facilitate the writing process, the adviser and student also have flexibility in deciding what constitutes a chapter draft and what will be presented to the committee.

If a dissertation chapter meeting is not held within eight months of the approval of the prospectus, the student must send the DGS a plan for completion of the chapter draft and holding a group meeting with the dissertation committee, endorsed by his or her adviser.

If the eight-month deadline for the meeting falls during a period when school is not in session (i.e., winter break, spring break, Easter break, or summer break), the chapter draft is still due within eight months. The meeting, however, can be postponed to the next available opportunity (for example, if the eight-month deadline falls in July, the chapter draft would still be due in July, but the meeting could be held in September).

XII. DISSERTATION TIME LIMITS AND DEFENSE

In keeping with GSAS regulations, students must complete their dissertations within five years of passing the comprehensive exams. Students should also keep in mind the program time limit: those who enter with a BA have ten years to complete the degree; those who enter with an MA have eight years.

Once you and your advisor agree that the dissertation is complete, your advisor will work with your committee and one additional reader to schedule the date, time, and campus preference for the defense. Report all of this information to the Graduate Program Administrator, who will schedule a room for the defense, prepare the necessary paperwork, and submit the defense announcement to GSAS. Also notify the Graduate Program Administrator if you have made *any* changes (even minor) to your dissertation title, since GSAS must approve the revised title. **A complete draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the committee and additional reader at least two (2) weeks prior to the defense.** At the extreme minimum, dissertations should be at least 120 pages, standard formatting, excluding front matter and bibliography; normally, dissertations are significantly longer than this.

Defense announcements must be submitted to the GSAS Dean's office **at least two (2) weeks prior** to the defense and within the semester deadline for oral defense notifications. Typically, defense announcements must be submitted to GSAS by the end of March for a May graduation, by mid-July for an

August graduation, and by early January for a February graduation; see the GSAS [academic calendar](#) for exact dates.

Announcements with the date, time, and location of every defense are posted in the English Department and outside the Dean's office. These events are open to the public. The Dissertation Defense is a formal questioning and evaluation of the dissertation, attended by the candidate, the committee, and one additional faculty member. This fourth reader is expected to read one chapter of the dissertation (along with the abstract). The defense should be thought of as a professional conversation among colleagues: if your dissertation is in good shape, the defense provides an opportunity to talk about your ideas and look ahead to the scholarly prospects afforded by the dissertation. The dissertation committee, in conferring privately after the defense, votes to award the candidate the PhD or to terminate the project.

GSAS policy prefers that oral dissertation defenses occur in person with the candidate and dissertation examiners in physical presence of one another. In certain cases, virtual and hybrid defenses may be permitted with approval from the DGS, GSAS, and all participating members of the defense. Examiners may participate by distance methods when such participation provides expertise that cannot be otherwise obtained.

The presentation of the dissertation to the Dean of GSAS, not the oral examination, is the last requirement to be satisfied for receiving the degree. Thus, degree completion will not be certified until after the presentation of the dissertation. See the [GSAS website](#) for specific requirements for the dissertation presentation.

XIII. REQUESTS TO EXTEND TIME LIMITS

All requirements for the doctoral degree must be completed within eight years of the first semester of matriculation in the graduate school for those students who enter with a master's degree from another institution, or within ten years of the first semester of matriculation for those students who are direct doctoral students or who complete a master's degree from Fordham and then continue directly into a doctoral program. Time limit requirements apply to both full and part time students. Students who wish for an extension to the doctoral time limit must apply before the conclusion of their final academic year. Such a request must be directed in writing through the department chairperson or program director, must be approved by the dissertation mentor, readers, and the department chairperson, and must receive the written approval of the dean. An extension to the time limit for degree completion will be granted only if in the dean's judgment there is sufficient evidence that the degree will be completed expeditiously and that the dissertation will be of high merit. Extensions beyond the time limit will not be granted to students who have not secured approval of a dissertation topic prior to the expiration of the time limit or who have otherwise not made substantial academic progress toward completion of the degree, except with the permission of the dean.

Requests for an extension of the doctoral time limit must include:

- A sufficient portion of the dissertation to permit an objective evaluation of the quality of the student's work. In the humanities, a reasonable portion is one-half of the dissertation; in the sciences, research through the stage of data collection should be presented.
- A month-by-month timetable for the completion of the remaining portions of the dissertation.
- A plan for renewed demonstration of language and/or research skills (if needed for dissertation research) if more than five years have elapsed since the original completion of these requirements.
- A plan to demonstrate currency of knowledge for any courses taken prior to the request for extension, and departments may require that they retake certain courses.

- A timetable for retaking and passing the doctoral comprehensive examinations in the department's or program's current format if more than five years have elapsed since any portion of the comprehensive examination was completed.

XIV. DISSERTATION FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Dissertations written in the Department of English may use either MLA or Chicago citation style. Students should consult their advisor and committees about which style is preferred. GSAS requires that all dissertations follow the format and order outlined below.

- GSAS no longer requires the dissertation to be submitted in hard copy. All dissertations should be submitted through the UMI ETD Administrator website.
- Margins. All margins should be 1 inch, with no printing in the margins.
- Pagination. Number the first page of any chapter in the center of the page, one double-space below the last line of the text, approximately 5/8 to 3/4 inch above the bottom. All other numbers are placed one double-space above the first line of printing and just inside the right margin, that is, approximately 5/8 to 3/4 inch from the top and 1 inch from the right edge.
- Font. The pitch of the font should be at least 10, with a pitch of 12 preferred. If proportional spacing is used, the average number of characters per inch (cpi) should not exceed 15. If special symbols are required, the symbols within a word processing package should be used.
- The dissertation should be arranged in the following order:
 - Title Page
 - Dedication or Acknowledgments (if used)
 - Table of Contents
 - Preface (if used)
 - Introduction
 - Chapters
 - Conclusion (if used)
 - Bibliography
 - Appendices (if used)
 - Abstract (no pagination)
 - Vita (no pagination)

For examples of title page and front matter formatting, see Appendix F of the [GSAS Policies and Procedures Guidebook](#).

XV. TEACHING

Outside your coursework and dissertation, teaching is your primary obligation at Fordham. The department does its best to ensure that students acquire a range of teaching experiences that support and accord with their professional goals. To be competitive for teaching and leadership opportunities at Fordham and beyond, it is important to establish an excellent teaching record. You are encouraged to be in active conversation with your advisors and the Writing Program Director to communicate the kinds of coursework you are hoping and prepared to teach through your TFship and TAsip assignments.

The department does its best to take scheduling preferences into account, but students must be flexible when submitting scheduling requests and are expected to be available to teach at times that accord with departmental needs. We may not be able to meet scheduling preferences for prime teaching hours unless they pertain directly to course conflicts, on-campus obligations, or documented accommodations. If you encounter any change of circumstance that affects your ability to fulfill your teaching duties, you should

inform the Writing Program Director immediately. Likewise, in the unusual circumstance that a change to teaching assignments becomes necessary, that change will be communicated as far in advance as possible.

Teaching Practicum

English PhD students take a pedagogy training sequence spanning two semesters. ENGL 5999 is the first part of the Teaching Practicum. This part of the course is taken in the spring semester before the student teaches. Once students pass ENGL 5999, they will be approved to take ENGL 6004 in the fall semester.

Common Assignments for Graduate Instructors

Composition I: Instruction in how to generate and present a critical position in the college essay. Emphasis on the development of unity, coherence, and clarity of expression in written communication. Review of basic grammar with emphasis on diagnosing and solving persistent problems.

Composition II: Intensive training in the principles of effective expository writing, including attention to the techniques and ethics of scholarly research.

Texts and Contexts: An introduction to the literary analysis of texts and the cultural and historical contexts within which they are produced and read. Significant class time will be devoted to critical writing and to speaking about literature. Each section of Texts and Contexts will have a focus developed by the individual instructor and expressed in its subtitle. This course fulfills the undergraduate Core requirements for the second Eloquentia Perfecta seminar. Students commonly teach T&C in their second year of TFship.

Classroom Observations

It is good practice for graduate students to have Writing Program faculty and dissertation committee members observe their teaching, even after completing the Teaching Practicum. Not only does this provide students a valuable opportunity to discuss, define, and improve their pedagogy with seasoned teachers, it prepares faculty to write effective letters of recommendation that address a student's abilities in the classroom in concrete terms. Students should especially request teaching observations from dissertation mentors when teaching a Texts & Contexts course. Contact the DGS and PDA for a graduate student teaching evaluation form.

Jesuit Pedagogy Seminar

The [Jesuit Pedagogy Seminar](#) is an interdisciplinary colloquium run by skilled Fordham faculty, offering advanced graduate student teachers an in-depth look at the Jesuit pedagogical tradition and its continued vitality today. The seminar meets six times over the course of the spring semester and provides a structure for reading, reflection, discussion and experimentation. Students are paired with mentors across disciplines to sponsor thoughtful exchange and spark new perspectives. Mentors and graduate students visit each other's classrooms and exchange syllabi, lesson plans, and grading samples. The seminar concludes with each participant publicly presenting a final project that considers a characteristic of Jesuit pedagogy and applies it to the course that he or she is currently teaching. [Applications](#) are usually due mid-November.

XVI. ADVISING, PLACEMENT, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Advising for Students in Coursework

The DGS serves as advisor to all PhD students during their first two years, especially regarding course selection, academic performance, diverse career professionalization, and gathering a comprehensive exam committee. Students are strongly encouraged to simultaneously build advising relationships with faculty in their fields of study during coursework years by visiting office hours, asking for intellectual and professional advice, exploring conference and publication opportunities, etc. There is no requirement that informal faculty advisors or the DGS also serve as comprehensive exam chair or dissertation mentor.

Advising for All-But-Dissertation (ABD) Students

Once a student is ABD, the dissertation mentor serves as primary advisor. It is important to build an open, communicative relationship with your dissertation mentor; they are your primary advocate in all matters intellectual and professional. The DGS remains a key secondary advocate for all Fordham-related matters.

Director of Placement and Professional Development

The Director of Placement and Professional Development (DPPD) serves as a resource for all graduate students and especially job candidates. The DPPD leads an annual program to prepare doctoral students for the academic job search and organizes various workshops throughout the year on topics such as academic publication, conference participation, and external fellowship applications. The DPPD also runs the Dissertation Workshop in the fall. The DPPD is chair of the Job Placement Committee (JPC). Students entering the job market will each be assigned a mentor from this committee. Job candidates are counseled at each stage of the process (document development, interview practice, job talk preparation, etc.). Information on recent Ph.D. job [placements](#) can be found on the Graduate Program website.

XVII. GRADUATE STUDENT GROUPS AND RESOURCES

Graduate English Association (GEA)

The [GEA](#) is a student-run group that hosts various social and academic events for English graduate students. Featuring a board of three elected graduate students, the GEA works to fulfill three core objectives: first, to enhance Fordham English graduate students' academic and professional experiences; second, to provide graduate students a with network of support; and third, to represent graduate students' interests and concerns.

Graduate Student Council (GSC)

The [GSC](#) is a University student government organization charged with “meeting the needs, furthering the interests, and realizing the potential of our student body” in our Constitution. The GSC is led by two officers and its council comprises representatives from each program within University's Graduate School of Arts and Science (GSAS). The GSC has two primary objectives: first, to act as a liaison between the student body and the GSAS administration; and second, to coordinate social, academic, and professional events throughout the year to both support graduate student development and foster community across the disciplinary divides.

English Connect

[English Connect](#) is the English Department's social networking site, where students, faculty, and alumni share information on a variety of topics, post internship and job opportunities, and generally keep in contact with each other. You need to register to join.

XVIII. WELLBEING RESOURCES

Graduate school is difficult, and burnout is a common problem. Don't try to face these issues alone. Fordham offers a variety of resources for students facing mental health challenges during their studies. Resources range of self-care support to clinical services offered by mental healthcare professionals.

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CPS\)](#)
- CPS graduate student support groups: contact dlawrence8@fordham.edu
- [Teladoc](#): remote mental health counselling for students enrolled in Aetna Student Insurance plan
- [GSAS Futures Self-Care Resources](#)
- [GSAS COVID-19 Wellbeing Resources](#)

- [PhD Balance](#): a free graduate student wellbeing community featuring articles, podcasts, monthly exercises, and a vibrant Discord support community

XIX. LIBRARIES RESOURCES

ILLiad

[ILLiad](#) is Fordham's interlibrary loan service. Use this to obtain materials not directly available in the Fordham library. Integration with databases is uneven, so be sure to review any auto-populated requests for complete request information. Requires registration.

Document delivery

Students may use this service to request that up to one chapter of any book or one article from any journal issue be scanned and sent electronically, if the material is physically held at one of the Fordham libraries and unavailable available in a digital edition. Up to three requests may be made per day at the [Document Delivery](#) site.

Ordering a book

If the Fordham Library does not own a copy of a scholarly book relevant to your research, you can [request](#) that the library purchase the book in physical or e-book format. Once the title arrives, it will either be available immediately (e-book) or held for you at your home campus library (hard copy).

Research librarians

Library staff can assist with research at any stage of a scholarly project. The [Ask A Librarian](#) page allows students to contact a librarian for immediate help with questions about library holdings, services, etc. [Subject Liaisons](#) are experts in library resources relevant to given field of study and can provide one-on-one consultation by appointment.

APPENDIX: ADVISING GUIDELINES

Administrative Responsibilities

- Consult the [English PhD handbook](#) and [GSAS Guidebook](#) for the requirements and policies of both English and GSAS. **These documents should be your first stop for administrative questions.**
- If you're uncertain about any administrative issue, please direct your questions to the Graduate Program Administrator (GPA), Labelle de la Rosa (ldelarosa1@fordham.edu).
- Submit all required paperwork, funding applications, and reports on time. This includes the Matriculated Student Status Certification (MSSC), which must be submitted **each semester**.

Meeting & Communication

- Update your advisor on your research, teaching, and service activities at least twice per semester.
- Answer all department/university emails **within 48 hours**.
- You should expect timely written feedback from your advisor. If you do not hear back within 4 weeks of submitting a piece of writing, please follow up; if you do not get a response, please contact the DGS.
- Let your advisor know if you have questions about requirements, progress toward the degree, teaching, or balancing work with other parts of your life. It is normal and encouraged to take occasional short breaks from dissertating to maintain a well-balanced life. You may also discuss these questions with the DGS.
- Please discuss any concerns about your relationship with your advisor with the DGS.

Planning & Timeline

- Work with your advisor to develop a timeline for the prospectus and dissertation:
 - The prospectus should be completed in one semester; it must be submitted **no later** than six months after you pass the comprehensive exam. Failing to do so puts you at risk of academic suspension.
 - Within eight months of your prospectus's acceptance you must submit a dissertation chapter and meet in person with your entire committee to discuss this chapter and the dissertation more broadly. Please contact your advisor well in advance of the eight-month deadline to set up this meeting.
- Check the [GSAS academic calendar](#) for deadlines relating to course enrollment, fellowship applications, graduation, etc. This is regularly updated; if anything is missing, contact the GPA.
- Keep an eye on [internal](#) and [external fellowship](#) deadlines, including deadlines for advisors' letters. Be sure to give your advisor at least **three weeks** to write recommendations, and/or to review your internal or external fellowship application materials. Provide [specific details](#) and deadlines with every such request.
- Ask your advisor to observe you teach a comp or a lit course (usually T&C). Give your advisor the syllabus as well as info about both the arc of the course and the goals of the observed class. Have your teaching observed ahead of time if you might receive a fellowship that will relieve you from teaching.
- When filling out Course Request forms, request to teach T&C (don't wait to be asked: English is a big department, and we don't want you to be unintentionally overlooked). Be flexible with your scheduling asks.

Employment

Remember that you are in charge of your own job search. Faculty are here to advise you in your chosen professional goal(s), but the choices, and the responsibilities, are yours.

- For the academic job market, give your four main job documents (letter, cv, abstract, teaching statement) to your advisor **by June 1 before your job search begins**. Contact the DPPD for samples to model your materials on. After your advisor has vetted the documents, please send them to the DPPD **by July 15** for further honing.
- Give your advisor a spreadsheet listing every position for which you are applying; if any of these require [recommendation letters](#) by a specific date, indicate this, as well as the delivery method (Interfolio, etc.)
- Ask your advisor to introduce you to contacts he/she has at high schools and community colleges, in academic admin, and in areas beyond the academy (mention that our alumni can be a good place to start).
- The call for postdoc applications goes out in **March from the department chair** (you must defend by August to take up a postdoc). Students who hold a postdoc may apply for a second year.