Department of English
Graduate Student Handbook

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
University of North Carolina Wilmington
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American literary naturalism and realism; 20th century American literature; early modernism; American drama; scholarly editing

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Young adult and children’s literature; Victorian literature; GLBTQ literature and theory; Holocaust literature; women’s studies

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Poetry and poetic theory; Restoration and 18th century literature; cultural studies; hip-hop music and culture; American and Canadian poetry after 1945; theory and practice of the avant-garde

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Professional and technical writing; writing and research in digital spaces; science writing; writing program administration; distance education; workplace writing

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American literature to 1900; Native American literature; 20th century American literature; science, humanities, and society

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Children’s and adolescent literature; women’s studies; popular culture; American studies; literary criticism

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Writing and technology; professional writing; gaming and game theory

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Shakespeare; English Renaissance; Medieval English literature (Chaucer, drama); 18th century British literature; popular culture (comic strips)
M.A. Degree Requirements

Course requirements for students entering the program in Fall 2010 or after:
The MA degree in English requires a total of 36 hours of graduate coursework. These hours must be distributed according to the following guidelines:

- 30 of the required 36 hours must be taken in residence.
- Students may elect to pursue a thesis or non-thesis option. For the thesis option, 6 of the 36 hours will be dedicated to writing the thesis, which is generally a two-semester project. While working on the thesis, students enroll in 3 hours of ENG 599: Thesis each semester in the second year.
- As many as 6 of the 36 minimum hours may be transferred from another accredited institution, subject to the approval of the English Department’s Graduate Coordinator. A student enrolled in the UNCW English Graduate Program who wishes to take one or more graduate English courses elsewhere for graduate credit must obtain prior approval from the Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- Students may take one course (3 hours) from outside the department with the prior approval of the Graduate Coordinator.

Required Courses
All students take two required courses and are advised to do so during the first year of study:

1. English 501: Introduction to Research Methods in English
2. English 502: Introduction to Literary Theory OR English 552: Rhetoric and Culture (Students may take both.)

Comprehensive Examination
Students must successfully complete a qualifying written comprehensive examination, usually in the beginning of their third semesters in the program.

See the program’s website for a complete description of the comprehensive examination: http://uncw.edu/english/graduate/macomp.html

Thesis
Students can elect to write a thesis under the direction of a faculty member. For students pursuing the thesis option, 6 of their 36 hours of coursework will be satisfied by enrolling in 3 hours of ENG 599: Thesis in each of their last two semesters. See more specific information about the thesis on page 7.

Graduate School Policies
All students need to be familiar with the various Graduate School policies and deadlines as printed in the annual Graduate School Catalogue. The catalogue is available online at the Graduate School’s website http://uncw.edu/gradschool.

Transfer Credits
Transfer of all graduate credits is subject to the approval of the Graduate Coordinator, the English Department Chair, and the Graduate School Dean, and must be requested in writing. Ordinarily, course work more than five years old is not accepted for transfer credit.

Degree Time Limits
All degree requirements must be completed within five calendar years from the date of first registration in the graduate program. Students may apply to the English Department and Graduate School Dean to extend the degree time limit if special circumstances arise that warrant such an extension.
Registration, Course Information and Grading

Registration
All students must register for classes via SeaNet (https://seanet.uncw.edu). For registration information, see the graduate school website (http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/registration.html).

Prior to registration each semester, students who have questions about their schedules are encouraged to meet with the Graduate Coordinator. Students should also carefully review the graduate course descriptions on the English Department website (http://uncw.edu/english/graduate/descriptions.html) and the list of classes found in SeaNet.

Course Offerings
Please obtain a Graduate Catalogue from the Graduate School’s website (http://catalogue.uncw.edu/index.php). The catalogue contains general course descriptions for all of the English Department graduate courses, as well as the degree requirements for the graduate programs, policy statements, and a wealth of other useful information. Course topics vary, so please consult the class schedule at the English Department website for specific course information each semester.

Graduate students may register for an undergraduate course, in any given semester, even though they will not earn any credits toward the Master’s degree for undergraduate courses. However, some students entering the program whose majors were not in English elect to take an undergraduate course or two to better prepare for success in our graduate courses.

Full-time status requires a minimum enrollment of 9 credit hours. Teaching assistants must be full time and complete 18 hours of graduate level coursework in their first two semesters in order to qualify to teach in their second year and maintain their funding.

Students who have taken summer coursework after their first year may take fewer credits in the following year. Teaching assistants are expected to finish 36 credits in 2 years.

A graduate student may also be considered full-time when enrolled for fewer than 9 hours if the student is enrolled in GRC 600 (continuous enrollment).
Half-time status begins with at least 4.5 credit hours. Summer counts as one regular term. Students in a graduate degree program are permitted to register for no more than 15 hours in any one semester but are discouraged from registering for more than 9 hours of graduate coursework.

**Continuous Enrollment**
Any student engaged in thesis research and/or writing that involves university faculty or facilities must be registered during the semester or summer session in which they are using faculty time or facilities, whether they are in residence or not. This registration may be for 1 to 6 thesis hours; however, if the 6 thesis hours have already been completed and the student is not enrolled in other courses, they must register for “continuous enrollment,” GRC 600. A student may not enroll in GRC 600 for more than two terms. Students must be enrolled in a course or in GRC 600 during the semester in which they plan to graduate.

**Graduate Grading**
Grades for students enrolled in graduate courses must be one of the following: A (clear excellence); A-; B+; B (entirely satisfactory); B-; C+; C (minimally acceptable); F (fail); S (satisfactory progress on thesis); U (unsatisfactory progress on thesis); I (work incomplete); WP (withdraw passing). Please note that on the graduate level, a “B” is a very good grade, reflecting a solidly competent performance.

A student receiving any grade of “F” is ineligible to continue in graduate school. A student receiving grades of “C” in any three courses is ineligible to continue in graduate school.

When special circumstances warrant, students declared ineligible may be reinstated upon petition by the student to the Dean of the Graduate School. Any reinstatement is provisional in that an additional grade below “B” will again result in the student’s ineligibility.
Comprehensive Exam, Thesis Guidelines and Process, and Application for Graduation

Comprehensive Examination

Below are the goals for the exam and the information that you need to know regarding the reading list and the exam format.

Goals for the comprehensive exam

Our exam is designed to allow students to demonstrate that they can do the following:

• Place and examine texts within theoretical, critical, historical, and/or biographical contexts
• Connect ideas gleaned from multiple courses
• Write clearly and insightfully in response to questions about texts from various genres

Reading list for the exam, timeframe for posting it, and composition of the exam committee

Faculty who are scheduled to teach a graduate course in the subsequent year will submit a text for consideration to the Graduate Committee by January 31. This will help us to connect the texts on the exam to the courses that are being taught in the same academic year.

The Graduate Committee will select five texts for inclusion on the reading list, and the Graduate Coordinator will post the list during the third week of February.

For each of the two administrations of the exam during the academic year, the Graduate Coordinator will select three of the five texts at random. The faculty whose texts are selected will each write a question for that administration of the exam and will serve on the grading committee.

Format and dates for the exam

Students should elect to take the exam in either the Fall or Spring semester. The exam will be a four hour experience administered in a computer classroom on campus and proctored by the Graduate Coordinator or other official. In the Fall semester, the exam will be administered on the third Friday afternoon in September unless otherwise noted. In the Spring semester, the exam will be administered on the first Friday afternoon in February unless otherwise noted.

Students will be required to answer all three questions; therefore, students should study all five books on the reading list. Students may be asked to sign an honor code pledge prior to taking the exam. They will be allowed to bring the editions of the texts recommended on the reading list with them to the exam. These texts can be annotated, but no external notes or papers will be allowed. Students will be expected to include appropriate but brief direct quotations from the texts in their answers and cite those quotations in the text correctly according to MLA guidelines.

Please be advised that once a student enters the exam room on the day of the exam, he/she will be recorded as having attempted the exam. If the student does not remain to
take the exam, departs without attempting to complete it, and/or fails to submit their responses within the allotted time frame, he/she will receive a failing grade for that attempt.

**Preparation for the exam**

Students should read and study all five books on the reading list. The exam questions will prompt students to contextualize the texts by demonstrating an awareness of their historical, theoretical, critical, and/or biographical contexts.

Students should prepare to answer the questions on the exam by reading casebooks, critical editions, and/or scholarship about the texts. In addition, doing some reading about the period in which the text is written will also be useful. Students might consult the historical introductions in standard anthologies for this purpose.

**Additional information**

The three essays are graded Pass/Fail by the examination committee, with a consensus of two members needed for a decision. Grading is done anonymously, with student names removed from papers. Students will be informed in writing by the Graduate Coordinator about whether or not they have passed the examination. In accordance with Graduate School policy, a student who does not pass must wait until the next semester before retaking the examination. No student may take the exam a third time without permission of the Graduate Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Unless there are charges of racial, sexual, or other forms of discrimination, or charges of improper procedures, which allegedly have led to a failed examination, students may not appeal until they have retaken the exam. Appeals made after a second failure of the examination will be handled in keeping with policies established by the Graduate School and the Provost.

**Thesis Guidelines and Process**

Students can elect to pursue a thesis or non-thesis option; the default option is non-thesis. Students who decide to write a thesis should follow the guidelines below.

**Thesis Committee**

Students should begin to think about developing a focus for their thesis and configuring the thesis committee during their second semester of coursework. After consulting with a number of graduate faculty and formulating a focus that can be articulated briefly in writing, students should request to meet with a member of the graduate faculty and ask them to serve as the chair of their thesis advisory committee. Because the chair will be the student’s mentor during the writing of the thesis, students should select a chair with whom they have a good working relationship and from whom they can receive constructive feedback.

In consultation with the thesis director, the student will select two additional members of the thesis advisory committee; one member may be from outside the English Department, if appropriate. If a student changes his/her area of concentration in the process of preparing the thesis, a new thesis director, who will act as chair of the committee, should be found. To formalize this change, students need to complete the requisite Change of Thesis Director form, which can be found on the MA program website (http://www.uncw.edu/english/graduate/thesis.html).

The thesis committee will read and comment on drafts of the thesis and administer the oral defense of the thesis. The decision of the committee concerning the student’s performance during the oral defense is final.

**Thesis Proposal**

The thesis should be proposed as soon as
possible after passing the comprehensive examination; it may be proposed sooner, if the topic is definite and the thesis advisory committee believes doing so is appropriate.

The proposal should be developed in consultation with the chair and thesis advisory committee; the thesis advisory committee will signify its approval of the proposal by signing a cover sheet and giving a copy of the approved proposal and signed cover sheet to the Graduate Coordinator, who will place it in the student’s file. The cover sheet can be obtained from the department website: http://www.uncw.edu/english/graduate/thesis.html

The format of the proposal is as follows:

1. Proposals are generally three to five pages long and include a statement of the research question; a description of the theoretical approach and/or methodologies employed; and some indication of the anticipated structure/organization of the finished thesis. The proposal should also stipulate the form that the project will take. Finally, the proposal should explain to readers clearly and succinctly what the student hopes to demonstrate through writing the thesis.

2. A working bibliography of appropriate length that includes relevant secondary as well as primary sources.

3. A timeline of significant milestones in the research and writing process and the approximate dates of their completion.

Writing, Revising, Defending and Submitting the Thesis

In general, students write their theses during their last two semesters in the MA program. During each semester, students should register for three hours of ENG 599: Thesis. ENG 599 should be treated as a regular course and students should spend significant time each week doing research and writing in order to complete their projects in a timely fashion.

In conjunction with developing their thesis proposal, students should develop a schedule for completing drafts of sections of the thesis. Keeping to this schedule aids in successful completion of the project. Thesis directors should respond to drafts of the sections of the thesis as they are written, and students should be prepared to address the chair’s response through significant revisions, which may require rewriting, further research, and even reconsideration of some portions of their arguments. Students should not consider first versions of their thesis sections as final versions. In some cases, other members of the advisory committee may want to see earlier drafts of sections. Students should work with all members of their committee to learn and meet their expectations in this regard.

The length of the thesis should be agreed upon between the student and their chair. Theses generally range between 50-70 pages in length.

Once the thesis has been drafted and revised, students should give the revised versions to the other two members of the committee. The committee should receive the revised draft no later than a month before the end of classes in the semester in which the student plans to graduate. Because the readers may have further suggestions for rethinking and revision, failure to allow them ample time to respond to the thesis may result in the delay of a student’s oral defense and graduation.

A draft of the thesis must be submitted to the Graduate School for formatting approval, together with a Format Approval Sheet (found at http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/thesis.html); the deadline each semester is announced at the Graduate School website, usually the end of March for Spring graduates and the middle of November for December graduates. This draft submission is checked for proper formatting; content is not reviewed at this time.

A month prior to the end of the semester, students should also schedule a date and time for their thesis defenses in consultation with their chairs and advisory committees. The student or the chair should formally reserve a room for the defense with the help of the office staff. This date should adhere to the Graduate School’s deadline for completion of oral defenses, which usually stipulates the first of December for Fall graduates and mid-April for Spring graduates.
Students should give their advisory committees a clean and revised copy of the thesis at least two weeks before the thesis defense. Assuming that the thesis defense is successful, the student will have a week or two to complete additional revisions before the Graduate School’s final deadline for submission of approved theses.

If the chair or advisory committee members indicate that the thesis is not defensible, they may ask the student to do further revisions and postpone the defense until the next semester. Scheduling the defense does not imply that the thesis is ready to defend or imply a requirement for the committee members to sign-off on the thesis. The chair and the committee should hold the defense only when the project is complete. Graduate faculty should not be pressured by the student or the student’s chair to sign off on a thesis that they do not believe is complete.

The student’s performance at the thesis defense is evaluated by the committee and factors into their assessment of the successful completion of the work for the MA degree. The format for the presentation and the defense should be developed in conjunction with the student, their chair, and the advisory committee. The decision of the committee concerning the student’s performance during the oral defense is final.

After the format of the thesis has been approved, the thesis has been defended, and the chair and advisory committee have approved any additional revisions, the student should submit a pdf of the thesis electronically to the Graduate School; consult the Graduate School’s website for guidelines (http://uncw.edu/gradschool/thesis.html). A pdf of the approved thesis should also be emailed to the Graduate Coordinator for archiving. The preparation of the thesis must follow the MLA Style Manual guidelines, together with those regulations issued by the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School. Students should refer to the Thesis Format Manual, available from the Graduate School, for further details about thesis format and submission procedures.

The English Department’s publication policy is that the graduate student will be noted as sole author of their published thesis.

Application for Graduation

The Graduate School requires all students to fill out a Graduation Application during the semester that precedes their last semester (see http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/currentstudents/graduation.html).
General Information

Email Accounts and Contact information

Email is the most reliable means of staying in touch with colleagues and for getting information about deadlines, important announcements, and upcoming events from the Department of English and the university. Students should check their UNCW email accounts regularly so as not to miss important information.

Please give Donna Carlton in the main English office your local address, UNCW email address, and phone number and notify her of changes in your contact information.

UNCW One Card

Each graduate student will receive a UNCW OneCard at orientation (a photo of your choice can be submitted using the UNCW One Card online submission option at http://myseaport.uncw.edu). The One Card is not only your ID, it also allows you access to campus facilities, university services and events, the library, meal plans or food dollars, free rides on Seahawk Shuttle and WAVE buses, and much more besides. See http://uncw.edu/onecard/ for more information.

Mailboxes

Each graduate student has a mailbox within the Department of English located in the corridor behind the Faculty Commons. If students cannot find their mailbox or have not been assigned a mailbox, they should notify the office staff as soon as possible.

Students should check their mailboxes frequently. Any information that does not go out over email will be placed in the departmental mailbox; in addition, the mailbox area is a site for the posting of calls for papers and information on new course offerings. Graduate students do not have mailboxes in the Warwick Center; all graduate student mail will come to the Department.

Teaching Assistantships and Internships

The Graduate School generally gives the English Department eleven Teaching Assistantships for the academic year. These assistantships are awarded by the Department’s Graduate Committee to English MA students on a competitive basis.

For students who are not TAs but would like to acquire teaching experience, some graduate teaching internships are available at educational institutions in the Wilmington area for second-year students who have earned at least 18 hours of graduate course work.

Other kinds of internships are also available to students. Students may earn three credits for a one-semester graduate internship, and some internships also carry a stipend. The Graduate Coordinator and Internship Coordinator will work with interested students to decide on an appropriate internship venue and supervisor. Students should meet with the Coordinator well before the semester in which they hope to register for an internship. The necessary forms for registering for an internship are available from the Graduate Coordinator.

In addition to Teaching Assistantships, UNCW has a variety of Graduate Assistantships available through the Division of Student Affairs. These assistantships are usually 20 hours per week and usually involve working from August 1 through May 30; for more information, contact the Division of Student Affairs at 962-3117 or see the Graduate School website under Current Students.

Employment

The Career Services Office in the University Union has a web site containing on- and off-campus employment information (http://www.uncw.edu/career/). Human Resources also publishes on-campus job openings on their website (http://www.uncw.edu/hr/employment.html).
Before you seek and accept employment, keep in mind that taking three graduate courses in a semester is required for full-time status and is very time-consuming.

Graduate students should also allow themselves sufficient time to take part in campus activities, share ideas with other students and with professors outside of the classroom, use the library, attend lectures, and participate in conferences. Participating in these activities becomes more difficult for students who work long hours off campus. To get the most out of your graduate education at UNCW, we recommend that you not commit to more than 20 hours of employment if you are taking three classes per semester.

Establishing Residency

Graduate students who move here from out of state specifically to go to school are likely to be considered out-of-state students during their graduate school careers. In order to demonstrate their intention to remain in North Carolina and become a resident, thus qualifying for in-state tuition, students need to begin to establish residency immediately by doing the following:

1. Convert your automobile registration to North Carolina
2. Obtain a North Carolina Driver’s License (or NC Identification Card from the Driver’s License office)
3. Register to vote in North Carolina and vote when possible
4. List your personal property at the New Hanover County Tax Office for taxation
5. File a North Carolina tax return as a resident at the next appropriate time
6. Convert your banking, club/organization membership, etc., to North Carolina

These actions begin the one-year (12 month) waiting period to attain residency. The Graduate School’s website offers in-depth information on the residency process (http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/instateresidency.html).

Graduate English Association and Graduate Student Association

There are two campus associations that serve graduate students. The Graduate English Association (GEA) is open only to Department of English graduate students. The GEA holds regular meetings, readings, and social events. The GEA may also sponsor conferences and work with faculty to develop presentations and workshops relevant to graduate students. New students will receive information from GEA officers about how to join and about the location and times of meetings and events.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is dedicated to improving the lives of all students seeking a graduate degree at UNCW. The GSA works to make the concerns and interests of the graduate student population a driving force in the university. The GSA represents the general interests of graduate students, not individual departments. The GSA has been responsible for the creation of the graduate computer lab in the library and sponsors a program to bring speakers to campus to discuss graduate student concerns. More information about the GSA can be found on their website (http://student.uncw.edu/org/gsa/).

Graduate Student Travel Grants

There are several types of funding available to help support graduate-student travel to present papers at professional conferences. In general, recipients are not permitted to “double-dip,” i.e., students may not use more than one of the following types of grants to cover a particular trip.
**Graduate School Grants**

Students who are presenting a paper, participating in a panel discussion, or giving a poster presentation at a professional conference may be eligible for $400 in Graduate School travel funding through this grant program. The eligibility details and application form for these grants are on the Graduate School website (http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/currentstudents.html). Students must be presenting, not simply attending, to be eligible for these grants. Students normally will be awarded no more than one such grant per academic year.

**Graduate Student Association Travel Grants**

The Graduate Student Association provides graduate students with a travel grant of up to $250 to attend professional conferences, workshops, or to complete thesis research. These grants are designed to reward excellence in scholarship and to increase the visibility of the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s graduate programs within the academic communities. Funds are limited, and all guidelines are strictly enforced.

In the event of limited funds, preference will be given to students beyond their first year of graduate study who have not received a travel grant from either the Graduate School or the Graduate Student Association. Students are eligible to receive only one travel grant per semester, and students who have received a grant are automatically ineligible for this travel grant award if applying for the same event.
Resources and Contact Information

The Career Center
Fisher University Union, Room 2035
962-3174
http://www.uncw.edu/career/

Graduate Computer Lab and Study Room
Randall Library, 2nd Floor

The Graduate School
James Hall, 2nd Floor
962-3202
Staff listing:
http://www.uncw.edu/gradschool/contacts.html

Office of the Registrar
James Hall, 1st Floor
962-3125
http://www.uncw.edu/reg/

Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid
King Hall, 2nd Floor
962-3177
http://www.uncw.edu/finaid/

Student Health Center
DePaolo Hall, 2nd floor
962-3280
http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/healthservices/

Student Affairs Counseling Center
DePaolo Hall, 2nd floor
962-3746
http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/counseling/

Information Technology Systems Division
Hoggard Hall, 1st Floor
962-4357 (962-HELP)
http://www.uncw.edu/itsd/

TAC (Technology Assistance Center)
Randall Library, 1st Floor
tac@uncw.edu

This publication can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities. Direct requests to:

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The University of North Carolina Wilmington is committed to and will provide equality of educational and employment opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex (such as gender, marital status, and pregnancy), age, color, national origin (including ethnicity), creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran status or relationship to other university constituents -- except where sex, age or ability represent bona fide educational or occupational qualifications or where marital status is a statutorily established eligibility criterion for state-funded employee benefit programs.
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