



RICE HUMANITIES AND ARTS

Department of English
and Creative Writing

Graduate Student Handbook

English Ph.D.

AY 2026-27





2026-2027 GRADUATE PROGRAM HANDBOOK (Ph.D.)

Contents

1. *General Information*
2. *Program Outline*
3. *Advising*
4. *Coursework and Registration Requirements*
5. *Evaluation Procedures*
6. *Grading and Academic Progress*
7. *Mentored Teaching Program*
8. *Preliminary Examination*
9. *Dissertation Prospectus and Chapter*
10. *Achieving Candidacy*
11. *The Dissertation*
12. *Thesis Defense*
13. *Prizes and Awards*
14. *Procedures for Dispute Resolution*
15. *Leaves and University Holidays*
16. *Department Contacts and Student Resources*

1. *General Information*

The Ph.D. program in English at Rice University has a long tradition of training and mentoring the next generation of scholars and teachers to enter academia and a wide variety of related fields. The program is supervised by the Ph.D. Graduate Committee of the Department of English and Creative Writing, which consists of at least five faculty members appointed by the departmental chair and two student representatives elected by the graduate students.

Graduate study at Rice University consists of coursework, a preliminary examination, advanced research, the writing of a thesis, and practical training in teaching at the university level. This is a doctoral program only. Students receive a Candidacy Master's degree after they have achieved doctoral candidacy. Students withdrawing from the program before that point may qualify for a non-thesis Master's degree.

All students entering the program begin with the first-year curriculum, regardless of their degrees earned outside Rice.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This handbook outlines the Department of English and Creative Writing Ph.D. program policies and procedures and is updated annually. In addition to being in compliance with department policies, students must also follow Rice University's General Announcements (<https://ga.rice.edu>).

In the case of conflicting information, university-wide regulations take precedence over department-wide regulations, which take precedence over research group-wide regulations. The only exception to this rule pertains to those instances where the University permits Departments to establish their own standards. When in doubt, students should seek help first at the department level (graduate program administrator, graduate program director, advisor, and/or department chair) and then at the central administration level (Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

2. Program Outline

Students entering the program will generally have two full years of coursework before them, will take their preliminary exams in their third year, and will spend the fourth and fifth years writing their dissertations.

In addition, Ph.D. students in the Department of English and Creative Writing will participate in professional training in pedagogy and/or scholarship outside of their coursework. In their second year, students will be assigned as a Teaching Assistant for a departmental course; in their fourth year, students will teach a section of an introductory course and begin taking ENGL 606: Dissertation Writing Workshop. Teaching requirements are subject to change in the case of university-wide teaching and funding initiatives.

Students are responsible for completing the various phases of the graduate program within the prescribed time limitations.

ENGLISH PHD PROGRAM OVERVIEW			
Year in Program	Program Responsibilities	FALL	SPRING
Year 1	Program Focus	Coursework	
	Coursework	ENGL 600: Topics in Literary Studies (3 hrs) + 2 courses (3 hrs each)	3 courses (3 hrs each) + HUMA 500 (2 hrs)
	Opportunities	Students are eligible to serve as tutors in the Program in Writing and Communication (PWC).	
Year 2	Program Focus	Coursework and teaching assistantships	
	Coursework	ENGL 601: Fall Teaching Practicum (3 hrs) + 3 courses (3 hrs each)*	ENGL 602: Spring Teaching Practicum (3 hrs) + 2 courses (3 hrs each)*
	Mentored Teaching Program & Additional Opportunities	TA Assignment during both semesters. <i>Students are eligible to TA for the PWC first-year seminar (FWIS) courses. Students in any field may also apply to serve as Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows for the SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900).</i> <i>*Students may distribute the course load in their second year by taking 2 courses in the Fall semester and 3 in the Spring.</i>	

ENGLISH PHD PROGRAM OVERVIEW, continued

Year in Program	Program Responsibilities	FALL	SPRING
Year 3	Program Focus	Preliminary Examinations	
	Coursework	ENGL 605: Third Year Writing Workshop (3 hrs) + ENGL 703: Candidacy Research Year 3 (6 hrs)	ENGL 510: Pedagogy (3 hrs) + ENGL 703: Candidacy Research Year 3 (6 hrs)
	Mentored Teaching Program & Additional Opportunities	<i>Students are eligible to TA for the PWC first-year seminar (FWIS) courses. Students in any field may also apply to serve as Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows for the SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900).</i>	
Year 4	Program Focus	Dissertation Prospectus & Independent Teaching	
	Coursework	ENGL 603/604: Teaching of Lit & Comp (3 hrs) for Fall or Spring Teaching + ENGL 606: Dissertation Writing Workshop in Fall and Spring + ENGL 704: Candidacy Research Year 4 (3-6 hrs depending on semester teaching, in order to reach a minimum of 9 hrs every semester)	
	Mentored Teaching Program & Additional Opportunities	Independent Teaching (either Fall or Spring).	
Year 5	Program Focus	Dissertation Research & Writing	
	Coursework	Both Fall & Spring: ENGL 606: Dissertation Writing Workshop (3 hrs) + ENGL 800: PhD Research and Thesis (9 hrs)	
	Mentored Teaching Program & Additional Opportunities	<i>Students are eligible to teach independent first-year seminar (FWIS) courses for the PWC. Students may be invited to compete for departmental replacement teaching opportunities, should the occasion arise. Student/faculty pairs might also be able to propose (usually unpaid) co-teaching opportunities. The Graduate Committee is responsible for both replacement and co-teaching selection.</i>	
Year 6+	Program Focus	Dissertation Research & Writing	
	Coursework	Both Fall & Spring: ENGL 800: PhD Research and Thesis (9 hrs) <i>Optional: ENGL 606 Dissertation Writing Workshop (3 hrs)</i>	
	Mentored Teaching Program & Additional Opportunities	See description in Year 5.	

3. *Advising*

The graduate program is administered by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) who chairs the departmental Graduate Committee. Program support is the responsibility of the Graduate Program Administrator. Student governance is operated through Graduate Student Representatives, annually elected by the graduate students.

PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

At the beginning of the first year, each student is assigned a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) by the Graduate Committee. The student and the PAC are responsible for preparing an initial individualized plan of study based on the student's needs and training. In most cases this plan will specify courses to be taken and establish a schedule for meeting requirements and deadlines within the university and the department (see the "Preliminary Examination" and "Dissertation Prospectus & Chapter" sections of this handbook). Both the PAC and student should keep records of the student's progress toward completion of the plan by using the Graduate PAC Advising Checklist (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>) to be kept in the student's file. The student may make changes to the PAC membership at any time by notifying the Graduate Program Administrator and requesting DGS approval of any changes.

After the first year and before preparation for the preliminary examination in the third year, the student must find a faculty advisor with whom s/he/they plan to work on the Preliminary Exam and dissertation. Students must identify their faculty advisor (or co-advisors) and dissertation committee by the end of the Spring semester of their second year. In special cases, a student may ask two faculty members to serve as co-advisors. If the co-advisors are within the English and Creative Writing Department, they can serve as first and second reader. However, if one of the co-advisors is from a different department, a second reader from the ENCW Department is required in keeping with guidelines for the composition of the dissertation committee. Doctoral thesis committees must also have one external member whose primary appointment is in another department within the university. Until the student submits a Preliminary Examination Form with exam committee members (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>), the PAC will serve as the student's advisory body.

FIRST-YEAR MENTORSHIP:

Designed to introduce students to the department and profession, ENGL 600 (Topics in Literary Study) currently serves as a mentoring vehicle for first-year students alongside the Program Advisory Committees (PAC).

POLICY FOR CHANGING ADVISOR:

Students may change their dissertation advisors at any point in the program. Students who desire such a change are encouraged to meet and consult with the Director of Graduate Studies. All involved parties should be aware of and agree to this change in course. Students should notify the Graduate Program Administrator and the Director of Graduate Studies of the change via email, copying all involved. Students should also be aware that faculty advisors and dissertation committee members may also choose to terminate their working relationship with students.

4. *Coursework and Registration Requirements*

To be considered a full-time graduate student, students must be enrolled in at least 9 graduate hours per academic semester (Fall & Spring). Students must also register for 9 graduate hours of research credit each summer if receiving a graduate stipend or being employed as a student, or if defending their thesis in the summer semester.

Students should always consult with their PAC before enrolling in courses each semester. Ph.D. candidates must successfully complete a minimum of 12 graduate courses, of which at least 10 must be graduate seminars. The 12 required courses consist of:

- ENGL 600 (Topics in Literary Studies)
- ENGL 605 (Third-Year Writing Workshop)
- ENGL 510 (Pedagogy)
- Two pre-1800 literature seminars
- Two post-1800 literature seminars
- Five electives, at least two of which are seminars

With the approval of their PAC, students may enroll in ENGL 621 or 622 (Fall or Spring Directed Reading, respectively), either as a traditional directed reading course or as a 400-level English course to which a graduate component has been added. Enrollment in ENGL 621 or 622 may count toward the 12 required graduate courses but not toward the 10 graduate seminars.

Students are also encouraged to take graduate seminars related to their areas of interest in other departments. These will count toward the twelve-course requirement as electives. On those occasions when students are interested in enrolling in upper-level undergraduate courses to round out their exposure to particular topics/fields, they should enroll in a graduate-equivalent section in order to receive graduate credit. The graduate section should differ significantly with respect to content, and its requirements must be commensurate with the standards and expectations of graduate-level courses.

Incoming students are required to register for HUMA 500: The Humanities Beyond the Disciplines in their second semester. This seminar-style colloquium will not count toward the 12-course requirement.

For more information about both independent study and directed reading coursework, please see the following subsection.

In accordance with the Rice University General Announcements, doctoral students must earn at least 90 credit hours for the Ph.D. degree, consisting of required coursework and research hours. For additional registration information and course numbers for departmental teacher training, research leading to candidacy, and thesis research, please refer to the program outline chart in Section 2.

DIRECTED READING:

Students interested in pursuing directed reading must meet with the faculty member who will be directing the course to outline the expectations for this study, including the reading, writing plan and meeting schedule for the term. These criteria will be formalized into a syllabus and should be uploaded to the Registrar's records. Independent Study courses may have more than one student participant.

Students who have identified and met with a faculty member willing to direct this independent work, are required to complete a Graduate Directed Reading/Independent Study Request Form (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>) and submit a proposal and syllabus outlining the course of study for the term to the Graduate Program Administrator and Director of Graduate Studies. These documents must be approved and signed by the faculty member involved in the course, as well as the DGS, and submitted to the Program Administrator no later than the second week of classes. All directed reading courses are subject to the final approval of the DGS. Students are discouraged from taking more than two directed reading courses to complete degree requirements.

5. *Evaluation Procedures*

At the end of each academic semester, faculty will write an evaluation for each student whom they have taught, supervised as a TA, or whose thesis they are supervising. These evaluations will become part of the student's permanent file and will be available to the student about whom they are written.

Each year, all students are required to submit an annual self-assessment (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>) that includes and up-to- date CV and a brief progress report to the Graduate Program Administrator by the last day of classes in the Spring semester. The self-assessment summarizes the work that the student has accomplished over the course of the academic year and outlines the research and writing toward the dissertation and any articles in progress, completed, or published over the year. It should also include conference presentations, teaching, or department/professional training performed during the academic year. This report will become part of the student's record and will be shared with the advisor(s).

Additionally, at the beginning of the second and third year, students meet with a small subcommittee from the Graduate Committee, including the DGS, for a performance evaluation. This review is based on seminar and TA evaluations submitted by faculty teachers and supervisors from the previous year. These reviews provide an opportunity for the DGS and Graduate Committee to assess students' progress within the program, to offer additional constructive feedback and support, and to encourage the growth and development of critical disciplinary skills and research plans.

Students in their third and fourth years are evaluated through the self-assessment as well as preliminary exam and the achievement of candidacy, respectively.

Students who have achieved candidacy will be evaluated through the self-assessment as well as their advisor's ABD student evaluations from the Fall and Spring semesters.

6. *Grading and Academic Progress*

Satisfactory academic progress is defined as completing the requirements of the PhD program in an adequate and timely manner. For students completing coursework, academic progress is measured by individual course grades and overall GPA. The grade of (A+) indicates truly distinguished work; (A) indicates outstanding work; (A-) consistently very good work; (B+) good work; (B) work that, however competent, lacks originality or promise; and (B-) unsatisfactory work which falls short of acceptable graduate standards. Students must maintain an overall grade average of B+ (3.33 cumulative GPA) in order to graduate. A student will not receive credit for the degree for a course grade below a B-.

Following coursework, students enrolled in research hours (ENGL 703, 704, 800) can earn either a Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) grade from their advisor during an academic semester.

A graduate student will be deemed as not making satisfactory academic progress during a semester if s/he/they (1) fails to earn a grade of B+ in a course taken to satisfy requirements for the Ph.D., (2) fails to maintain a B+ GPA in any given semester, or (3) receives a U grade in a research course (ENGL 703, 704, or 800). Following a semester of unsatisfactory progress, the student will be placed on academic probation with the department for the subsequent academic semester, and will be required to meet with his/her/their advisor(s) as soon as possible to formulate a plan to improve his/her/their performance in the probationary semester. The faculty advisor(s) and the DGS will convene at the end of the probationary period to decide whether the student has met the conditions to end that status. If the student makes adequate improvement during the probationary semester, the student will return to good academic standing with the department. However, after a second, consecutive semester of unsatisfactory progress the student will be subject to dismissal at the end of the probationary semester, and any financial support from the university will be terminated at that time.

7. *Mentored Teaching Program*

Pedagogy is a crucial part of graduate training in the School of Humanities and Arts. Graduate students will have a minimum of four (4) semesters of pedagogical training while on stipend through Rice University. This training may take the form of teaching assistantships or serving as instructor of record, either within or outside of the student's home department. Serving as a TA for ENCW or other courses in the school counts towards the four-semester minimum required of students in the School of Humanities and Arts.

ENCW's Mentored Teaching Program is designed to provide support and resources for graduate student teaching at all stages of the program. Students move from teaching under direct faculty supervision to designing and teaching independent classes. Discussions on pedagogy are integrated into the curriculum at key moments.

While the department requires that students teach only one independent course, students can take advantage of competitive teaching opportunities inside and outside the department (extra- departmental opportunities are highlighted in the chart that follows). By the time of graduation, most students will have served as the instructor of record for 3-4 courses.

Year 1

Issues on the place of pedagogy in the university are addressed in ENGL 600.

*Students are eligible to serve as tutors in the **Program in Writing and Communication (PWC)**. This is independent of the English and Creative Writing department. The PWC trains all of its tutors, TAs, and instructors (see below).*

Year 2

Students serve as Teaching Assistants (TAs) for undergrad courses (one each semester). Teaching assistantships are governed by the department's TA Rights and Responsibilities policy (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>) which frames the TA experience as a learning experience for the student, and not primarily as a grader for the faculty. TA supervisors are required to fill out an evaluation at the end of the semester; this goes into the student file and becomes part of the decision-making process about future competitive teaching opportunities. We also ask for special TA evaluations from the students. After a review of the evaluations, the graduate committee can require more supervised (TA) experience before the student can move on to independent teaching.

Students are eligible to TA for the PWC first-year seminar (FWIS) courses. Students, regardless of field of interest, may also apply to serve as Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows for the SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900).

Year 3

In preparation for independent teaching, students enroll in the department's three credit-hour course, ENGL 510, "Pedagogy."

Students are encouraged to explore the opportunities made available through the Center for Teaching Excellence (<https://cte.rice.edu>), especially their Certificate in Teaching and Learning (<https://cte.rice.edu/courses/grads>).

Students are eligible to TA for the PWC first-year seminar (FWIS) courses. Students, regardless of field of interest, may also apply to serve as Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows for the SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900).

Year 4

Students teach an independent departmental course. A Faculty Teaching Mentor visits classes, provides feedback, and takes notes for a possible future teaching letter.

Students are eligible to TA for the PWC first-year seminar (FWIS) courses. Students, regardless of field of interest, may also apply to serve as Diana Hobby Editorial Fellows for the SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900).

Year 5

No department teaching or research obligations. Depending on availability, the department may offer competitive co-teaching or replacement teaching opportunities.

Students are eligible to teach independent first-year seminar (FWIS) courses for the PWC. These are topical communication-intensive seminars; students and faculty propose courses in the spring for the following year. The PWC provides required training for graduate students in the form of a week-long late summer workshop.

Students may be invited to compete for replacement teaching opportunities, should the occasion arise. Student/faculty pairs might also be able to propose (usually unpaid) co-teaching opportunities. Both the replacement and co-teaching selection is the responsibility of the Graduate Committee.

Year 6 (Beyond Departmental Funding Package)

No department teaching or research obligations. Depending on availability, the department may offer competitive co-teaching or replacement teaching opportunities.

Students are eligible to teach independent first-year seminar (FWIS) courses for the PWC. These are topical communication-intensive seminars; students and faculty propose courses in the spring for the following year. The PWC provides required training for graduate students in the form of a week-long late summer workshop.

The PWC also offers competitive postdoctoral fellowships for those who complete their degrees by the end of the spring semester.

TEACHING ASSISTANT SELECTION:

Teaching assistants are assigned by the DGS through a process of matching student and faculty requests. While every effort will be made to match students and teachers according to their preferences, teaching assistants will be assigned to specific courses according to the following guidelines:

- 200-level courses will be privileged over 300-level courses.
- 300-level courses will be privileged over 400-level courses.
- Large (40-person) courses will be privileged over smaller ones, and, if possible, one TA will be assigned per 20 students over the minimum of 40.

While it can be valuable for a student to assist in a course in his/her/their field of specialization this cannot always be arranged, and students are encouraged to apply for assistantships outside their fields. Teaching assistants must register for six hours of ENGL 601 or ENGL 602 (Fall or Spring Teaching Practicum, respectively). These experiences are assigned course numbers so they can appear on students' transcripts; ENGL 601 and ENGL 602 do not count towards the 12-course requirement.

8. Preliminary Examinations

The Preliminary Examination requires significant preparation and students are strongly encouraged to begin work toward this exam as early as possible, but no later than the beginning of their third year. All students will devote the Spring semester of Year 3 to the preliminary examination process, which must be completed by the final day of the Rice examination period for that semester. Students deemed ready by their committee may, however, complete this examination process earlier than this prescribed timeline.

Students will compile two reading lists, each of 30–40 book-length items (e.g., a collection of essays by the same author, published across different journals, might count as one item). The first requires students to define a field and develop and read a list consisting of its most important primary (or foundational) texts and secondary (or elaborative) texts. Students should be prepared to defend the legitimacy of their field as a *field* within the parameters of forms of cultural or textual studies practiced in English departments, indicate the most important debates taking place within the field, and position themselves in relation to those debates. The second list should be devoted to one or more critical/theoretical approaches/methods that will eventually frame the dissertation project. Students should be prepared to defend the legitimacy of their approach and the ongoing or transformative value of the perspective it enables. Each list will be accompanied by a “qualifying paper” of about 15-20 pages addressing the following questions:

Qualifying Paper 1: “What is your field and how would you describe the most important debates taking place within it? How do you position yourself in relation to these debates?”

Qualifying Paper 2: “What is/are your critical/theoretical approach(es)/method(s) and what is the value of the perspective it enables?”

As part of their research into compiling the two reading lists during the fall semester, students are free to pursue auditing elective courses and/or directed readings with faculty in the department or elsewhere in the School of Humanities and Arts.

The exam committee will set two deadlines for submission, one for each paper, during the semester in which the student will take the exam. Input by the committee during the drafting of the papers is encouraged but no further revisions will be allowed to the version turned in at the deadline. Once the reading lists and the qualifying papers are approved by the committee, the student may proceed to the final stage of the examination process—an oral examination of 2-3 hours on material covered in the reading lists and qualifying papers. The scope of the oral component is set in advance by the exam committee.

Objectives of the oral examination have included the following: Revisit the written examination and the material covered in the qualifying papers; stage a broader conversation about the field and the reading lists that goes beyond the material discussed in the qualifying papers; and discuss the next stage of the candidacy process—the drafting of the dissertation prospectus.

Typically, students are expected to follow this schedule:

- April 30 (spring of 2nd year): Finalize your committee and begin drafting your preliminary exam list. Continue reading as you finalize lists.
- December 1 (fall of 3rd year): Finalize both lists and send to DGS for archiving
- February 15: Paper #1 due
- March 15: Paper #2 due
- April 15: Deadline to complete oral exam with committee. The exam is typically 60–90 minutes.

The student successfully completes the preliminary examination requirement when the committee deems that all elements of the examination process—reading lists, qualifying papers, and oral examination—have been completed satisfactorily. The committee may decide to award a student either a “Pass” or “Fail,” using the Preliminary Examination Form (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>). In exceptional circumstances, a student may “Pass with Distinction.”

Students who are unable to complete the examination process successfully by the end of Spring semester of Year 3 are required to repeat the process and complete it successfully by no later than the first week of Year 4. Those students required to re-take the exam who fail to pass during this second round of evaluation will be dismissed from the program.

9. *Dissertation Prospectus and Chapter*

The successful completion of a dissertation prospectus and dissertation chapter builds on the work completed for the Preliminary Exams. These documents are subject to a two-step review process: 1) submission of a prospectus for written approval by both the Thesis Committee and the Director of Graduate Studies; and 2) completion of a chapter draft to the satisfaction of the thesis committee.

DISSERTATION PROSPECTUS:

By the end of the first week of the Fall semester of Year 4, students are required to submit a brief dissertation prospectus of 5-10 pages (1250-1500 words, excluding bibliography and footnotes) for approval by their thesis committee.

The prospectus succinctly defines:

- the topic of the dissertation
- the particular thesis that the dissertation hopes to develop about that topic
- the relevance and importance of the dissertation's thesis to debates and discussions in the student's chosen field
- the methods and approaches to be pursued in the dissertation
- the chapter outline of the dissertation

The prospectus should also include a one-page bibliography.

When the prospectus is completed, the department dissertation director(s) and second reader should signify approval by signing Part I of the Dissertation Prospectus & Chapter Review form (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: <https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms>).

Students must submit their committee approved prospectus to the Graduate Program Administrator by October 1 for review by the Director of Graduate Studies. This deadline must be met irrespective of when the student completes the preliminary examination process. Exceptions to this deadline can be made by the Director of Graduate Studies because of extraordinary circumstances, and on a case- by-case basis.

The DGS will review the prospectus to ensure that it meets the format guidelines provided above. Approval or disapproval of the format by the Director of Graduate Studies does not reflect an evaluation of the merits of the prospectus. A prospectus that meets these guidelines will be approved by the DGS and passed on to the Graduate Committee. The Graduate Committee can choose to provide feedback on the approved prospectus.

A prospectus that does not meet the format guidelines will be returned to the student for revision and resubmission. Should the Director of Graduate Studies recommend changes

to meet the format guidelines, all revisions must be made to the document in consultation with the Thesis Committee and resubmitted to the Director of Graduate Studies for final review and approval no later than February 1.

This revised and resubmitted prospectus must satisfy the expectations of both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Thesis Committee. Students failing to meet this standard may be subject to dismissal.

DISSERTATION CHAPTER:

Additionally, a satisfactory draft of a chapter (which need not be the dissertation's first chapter) must be approved by the student's committee by the last day of class of Fall semester Year 4 (regardless of when the student completes the examination process). The thesis committee signifies their approval by signing Part II of the Dissertation Prospectus & Chapter Review form (forms may be found on the Department of English and Creative Writing website: [https:// english.rice.edu/graduate-forms](https://english.rice.edu/graduate-forms)) and submitting it to the Graduate Program Administrator by the last day of class of the Fall term. Compliance with this departmental deadline requires that students work collaboratively with their dissertation committee to construct a chapter draft completion timeline that adequately allows for feedback, revision, and finally, signed committee approval by the last day of class.

10. Achieving Candidacy

Candidacy is contingent on the successful completion of 36 hours of required coursework, participation in HUMA 500, completion of teaching assistantships, and written and oral components of the preliminary examination.

Students who have not yet completed their preliminary exams by the end of the third year, or have their prospectus officially approved by the end of the fourth year, will be subject to dismissal. If an exception must be granted due to familial or medical circumstances, a letter of request, approved by the DGS, can be directed to the Dean's Office.

Per School of Humanities and Arts guidelines, students must achieve candidacy after six academic semesters (or the end of the third year).

Students will work with the Graduate Program Administrator to submit the necessary forms and documents to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies once the department requirements for candidacy have been satisfied. Students will also be able to apply for the Candidacy MA degree at this time (optional).

11. *The Dissertation*

The dissertation should demonstrate a capacity for independent work of high quality in either scholarship, critical interpretation, or critical theory. It should be the first iteration of a major work of criticism or scholarship. The dissertation must essentially be finished by mid-March of the year in which the student intends to graduate, so that revision, the oral exam, and final proofing can be finished in time to award the degree. The dissertation will be written in consultation with a dissertation committee consisting of the director, and second reader from within the department (or two co-advisors), and at least one outside reader from another department at Rice. Please see the [Regulation and Procedures for Doctoral Degrees](#) section of the Rice University's General Announcements for more details about thesis committee composition.

12. *Thesis Defense*

Students must defend their theses before the end of the 16th semester of their enrollment at Rice. Students who are unable to meet the university time boundary for thesis defense may petition the dean of graduate and postdoctoral studies or his/her/their designee for an extension of time to defense, but these petitions require prior approval of the DGS and the department's graduate committee. Extensions of the time boundary for thesis defense are only granted by the department if the student can justify such an accommodation and if a substantial majority of the thesis is already completed.

13. *Prizes and Awards*

Every year the department is asked to nominate one or more students for university-wide prizes or awards. It is the responsibility of the Graduate Committee to solicit nominations from the department faculty as a whole, to decide among the various nominees, and to provide for the timely presentation of application materials. Students should be prepared to respond to requests for materials by maintaining an up-to-date vita at all times, and (for advanced students) by having ready a one-page description of the thesis topic. The vita will also be useful in helping the department in compiling its annual list of Honors and Awards for graduation.

14. *Procedures for Dispute Resolution*

Problems or conflicts may arise during a student's graduate education. Students should take responsibility for informing the appropriate faculty of any such problem that arises in the course of their study, research or teaching. All parties involved should work together amicably with the goal of resolving the problem informally if possible. If appropriate, a student may petition to replace the thesis advisor or a member of the dissertation committee.

When attempts to resolve a problem informally do not meet with success, the Dispute Resolution procedures outlined in the General Announcement should be followed. Information on Petitions and Appeals, Grievances, and Problem Resolution is available on the following webpage:

<https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/rights-responsibilities/dispute-resolution/>

In situations where a faculty member who is actively involved in a student problem has a designated role in this grievance procedure, that role will be transferred to a suitable senior faculty member.

This substitute should be chosen by the department chair, if appropriate, or by the divisional dean if the chair must recuse him/herself. The substitute should be acceptable to all parties immediately involved in the dispute.

15. Leaves and University Holidays

Graduate students are eligible for the same holidays recognized by the University. Please refer to the Academic Calendar for a list of school closures:

<https://registrar.rice.edu/calendars>

Students who require additional time away during the academic year should refer to the section on “Leaves, Interruptions of Study and Withdrawal,” available on the Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) website: <https://graduate.rice.edu/leaves>

16. Department Contacts and Student Resources

<i>Department Contacts</i>	
Jenny Ustynik, Graduate Program Administrator Tel: 713-348-2078 / ju10@rice.edu / Herring 249 & Humanities 107	
Ragini Tharoor Srinivasan, Director of Graduate Studies rts@rice.edu / Herring 332	
Linda Evans, Department Administrator Tel: 713-348-4846 / lre1@rice.edu / Herring 227	
José Aranda, Jr., Department Chair Tel: 713-348-2481 / aranda@rice.edu / Rayzor 309 (Chair's Office: Herring 226)	
Rice University English and Creative Writing Department Tel: 713-348-4840 / Fax: 713-348-5991 / Herring 225 / www.english.rice.edu	
<i>Student Resources</i>	
Rice University General Announcements – Graduate Students	https://ga.rice.edu/graduate-students/
Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – Current Students	https://gps.rice.edu/current-students
Student Health Services	https://health.rice.edu/
Rice Wellbeing & Counseling Center	https://wellbeing.rice.edu/
Office of Sexual Violence Prevention & Title IX Support	https://safe.rice.edu
Center for Career Development	https://ccd.rice.edu/students/graduate https://rice.12twenty.com/Login

