Ph.D. in English Rhetoric and Composition

The PhD program in Rhetoric and Composition prepares graduates for careers as writing specialists in higher education, business, industry, and government. In higher education, they conduct research into theories of writing development, use, and pedagogy. In business, industry, and government, they apply higher-level research, thinking, and writing skills to enhance communication. The focus of the program is on cultural and digital rhetorics and community engagement.

Students can enter the program with a bachelor’s degree in English or with a master’s degree in Rhetoric and Composition or a related field. They will complete a minimum of 45-51 credit hours beyond the MA, including core courses that cover rhetorical history, composition studies, cultural rhetorics and digital studies; concentration courses in topics such as technical communication, cultural studies, and literacy studies; and an internship course in a community literacy setting. A dissertation involving extended research is required. Students have opportunities to extend their knowledge of Rhetoric and Composition by taking courses in other disciplines such as Literature, Communications, Languages and Linguistics, and Teacher Education.

Admission Requirements

Students will be considered for admission after completion of a BA in English or an MA in English with a focus in Rhetoric and Composition; Rhetoric and Writing Studies; or Professional Writing and Rhetoric. Students with an MA in Literature, an MAT in English, an MFA in Creative Writing, or an MA in a related field (such as Communication or Linguistics) will also be considered.

Students entering the program with a BA will enroll in the master’s program in Rhetoric and Writing Studies offered by the English Department. They will be required to complete the six-hour thesis requirement for the MA degree. Upon finishing this degree, they will complete the additional work required in the PhD program.

To be considered for admission, all applicants to the PhD program must meet the minimum requirements for admission described in this catalog. Students (including UTEP graduates) will be required to submit:

1. Official transcripts of all previous academic work.
2. Letters of recommendation from at least three faculty members and/or members of the professional community with whom they have worked.
3. A description of their educational objectives.
4. A description of their theoretical and pedagogical approaches to teaching writing.
5. Two writing samples: a research paper and another of their choice, such as a digital project.

Applicants will be evaluated according to their previous academic record, the strength of their letters of recommendation, and the quality and appropriateness of their writing samples. Another key criterion will be the compatibility between students’ interests and expectations and the objectives of the PhD program.

Maximum Time to Completion

Students accepted into the PhD program in Rhetoric and Composition must complete all requirements for the degree within eight (8) years.

Language Requirement

All students must demonstrate a reading knowledge of a language other than English sufficient to conduct research using primary and secondary sources. The PhD program’s emphasis on intercultural writing on the U.S.-Mexican border will lead many students to elect Spanish to satisfy this requirement.

Qualifying Exams

Students will take qualifying exams after successful completion of the language requirement and all courses with the exception of RWS 6395 and the dissertation. A copy of the dissertation in PDF or Word electronic format must be submitted to the Graduate School for format check prior to the scheduled defense date. The dissertation, including an abstract not to exceed 350 words, must be prepared according to the Graduate School’s thesis and dissertation guidelines available at the Graduate School Web site. The student will receive email confirmation from the Graduate School after the format has been approved. The final Graduate School-approved dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate School in PDF electronic format by the deadline as published in the Class Schedule, along with a hard copy of the signature page with original signatures of the dissertation committee members. Information on submission procedures can be found on the Graduate School website. The signature page must be included in the PDF file but it should not be signed.

Information for All Degrees/Concentrations

1. **Undergraduate Credit Hours**: Generally, undergraduate credit hours cannot be used to satisfy graduate requirements. Exceptions must be approved by the Graduate Advisor in the English Department and the Graduate School and in no cases are to exceed six (6) hours. With the prior approval of the Graduate Advisor and the Graduate School, the following undergraduate course can be taken for graduate credit: ENGL 4390.
2. **Foreign Students**: Foreign students must supply a satisfactory grade in a special proficiency test in the English language before being allowed to register. (Students should write to Graduate Advisor, Department of English, for details).
3. **Graduate Advising:** All students upon entering the graduate program will outline a tentative degree plan with their Graduate Advisor. Students who have deficiencies in their undergraduate preparation are encouraged to supplement their graduate courses with undergraduate courses (no graduate credit).

4. **Programs of Study:** During the first semester of graduate study, all students must submit to the Graduate School for approval of a Preliminary Program of Study signed by their Graduate Advisor. The Preliminary Program of Study should show the courses required by the department that the student must complete prior to graduation. During the final semester of graduate study, each student must submit to the Graduate School for approval a Final Program of Study signed by their Graduate Advisor. The Final Program of Study should show the courses taken and the courses required by the department that the student will complete during his or her last semester of graduate study. Programs that show an incomplete grade or a GPA below 3.0 cannot be approved.

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**Degree Plan**

Required Credits: 45

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<td><strong>PhD in Rhetoric &amp; Composition (All courses require a grade of C or better)</strong></td>
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<td>ENGL 5300</td>
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<td>ENGL 5306</td>
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<td><strong>Graduate Seminar:</strong></td>
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<td>RWS 6130</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar in Rhetoric (Complete three semesters)</td>
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<td><strong>Internship:</strong></td>
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Other Electives:
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Research Courses:
Complete four courses from the following:
4 Ph.D. in English Rhetoric and Composition

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**Total Hours** 45

1 With advisor's approval, courses outside of the English Department also may be selected.