

# English, Ph.D.

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The Ph.D. program in English at UCI is the #1 department for literary and critical theory nationally (US News and World Report). The research and teaching of department faculty represents and cuts across a range of fields, historical periods, and methodological approaches. Our graduates have gone on (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/english/graduate/placement.php>) to faculty positions at a range of nationally ranked colleges and universities, including, in recent years, the University of Michigan, Tulane, Rice, Clemson, BYU, and Connecticut College.

Many of our Ph.D. faculty and students participate jointly in collaborative, interdisciplinary research clusters and reading groups. Some groups currently active include The Center for Early Cultures (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/earlycultures/>), the Culture and Capital Center, Medieval Devysings (<https://sites.uci.edu/medievaldevysings/>), Poetics | History | Theory (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/poeticshistorytheory/>), the Queer Theory Reading Group, and the Rhetoric Reading Group. Our Ph.D. program allows students to customize their study and research around their own intellectual interests. Students can also take seminars in other programs and departments, and can receive interdisciplinary certificates in Asian American studies (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/aas/graduate/emphasis.php>), Chicano/Latino Studies (<https://www.chicanolatinostudies.uci.edu/grad/emphasis.php>), Critical Theory (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/critical/programs/cte.php>), Gender and Sexuality Studies (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/genderandsexualitystudies/graduate/>), Latin American Studies (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/las/graduate/>), Medical Humanities (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/centermedicalhumanities/curriculum/emphasis.php>), Rhetoric and Composition (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/english/graduate/rhetoric.php>), and Visual Studies (<https://www.humanities.uci.edu/visualstudies/program/emphasis.php>)

All admitted students receive a multi-year funding package, including a range of teaching opportunities. Students may enter the graduate program in English with either a B.A. or an M.A. In either case, the first two years are spent taking courses, completing the language requirement, and writing the M.A. paper. In the third year, students select two or three fields of study for their qualifying exams - exam lists are developed by the student in consultation with their advisor and are intended to help the student build expertise and confidence toward a future dissertation. After successfully completing the qualifying examination, students write a dissertation under the supervision of a three-person dissertation committee, which they select.

Admission to the Ph.D. program in English is determined by careful review of the applicants' prior academic performance, writing sample, letters of recommendation, and personal statement. Admission is for the following fall quarter only. The application and supporting documents (transcripts, writing sample, and three letters of recommendation) are required by the deadline. Applicants must use the university's electronic application process.

Since admission to the graduate program is competitive, it is recommended that prospective applicants consider carefully the following information:

- One of the most important components of an application is the writing sample. This should be a critically-oriented piece that illustrates an applicant's ability to do scholarly research and interpret literary or cultural texts. It is helpful if the writing sample is relevant to your proposed field of study, although this is not a requirement. Only one writing sample should be submitted, and it should not exceed 20 pages. Please note: the writing sample and the statement of purpose (part of the university's online electronic application) are two separate essays, and both are required for the Ph.D. application.
- The **statement of purpose** is generally 1-2 pages and should tell the admissions committee who you are as a scholar, what your research interests are, and why you are applying to the UCI English Ph.D. program in particular. The **personal history statement**, also part of the online application, is not required but is highly recommended, especially for those applicants who think they may be eligible for a diversity fellowship. It should address aspects of your background or personal experience relevant to your application and/or to your academic interests.
- A minimum undergraduate **grade point average** of 3.50 in the last two years of undergraduate study is recommended to be competitive.

For more information about the application process, including deadline and information for international students, visit the UCI Graduate Division application page (<https://www.grad.uci.edu/admissions/applying-to-uci/>).

## Courses

Students must take a minimum of 15 graduate seminars, of which a maximum of three can be taken outside the English Department, though students are allowed to petition for additional courses to count toward the requirement. Courses should expose students to a variety of topics, approaches, genres, and theoretical issues in literary history as well as prepare students for an area of specialization. Adequate historical coverage generally entails at least one course on literatures in English in each of the following periods: medieval; Renaissance; the long 18th century; Romanticism; Victorian or late 19th century; the 20th century. Students should take courses from a number of different faculty in order to provide a good basis for choosing members of committees and to gain educational breadth and diversity. All work for the Ph.D. degree must be in courses limited to graduate students.

## M.A. Examination

As the coursework for the M.A. nears completion, students meet with their advisor to plan for the M.A. examination. The advisor and the student will select a seminar essay the student has already written and which will be revised for the M.A. examination (the essay should be article length, i.e. between 20 and 40 pages). The purpose of the revision is to demonstrate that a student has the skills needed to pursue a Ph.D. in English. The final paper must, therefore, be well-written and clearly argued. The student will also prepare a "Statement of Purpose" which addresses coursework to date and plans for subsequent courses; plans for the qualifying examination and dissertation; and professional aims. The exam meeting itself will be conducted by a member of the departmental M.A. Examination Committee and two other faculty members, including the student's M.A. advisor. Examinations usually last one hour.

## Foreign Language Requirement

The student must demonstrate a highly proficient reading knowledge of one foreign language by passing a translation test. The test must be passed before the M.A. examination. The tests are two-hour sight translations - during which the use of dictionaries is permitted - and may be re-taken. The Graduate Committee asks qualified members of the Department or other departments to set and mark the examinations.

## Teaching

The Department expects its graduates to obtain considerable teaching experience before completing the Ph.D. The amount of teaching any candidate may do will depend upon the availability of teaching assistantships and the maximum limit of 12 quarters of appointments before advancement to candidacy and 18 quarters of total teaching support. (Both are campuswide limits.) Appointments are made on the basis of academic progress and performance as a teacher at the university level. All other considerations being equal, students making normal progress toward the degree have a more compelling claim to support than those who do not. For instance, although students can receive up to 18 quarters of support, priority is normally given to those who have not yet used 15 quarters.

## Qualifying Examination

After students have completed the coursework (and any other requirements), they prepare for the qualifying examination. Working closely with the chair of the committee (confirmed at the M.A. examination), the student should select three other members of the examination committee. A fifth member, working or non-working, from outside the Department and sometimes from outside the School of Humanities, is selected by the chair of the committee in consultation with the student. The primary function of the qualifying examination is to test the student's knowledge of two or three fields of specialization. Working with the advisor and the other members of the committee, the student will prepare reading lists in each of these two or three fields; the number of works read for the examination should total 120-150. Each field list will also be prefaced by a "headnote," written by the student, of 500-1000 words. The examination itself will take place in the spring quarter of the student's third year. It consists of eight hours of on-campus writing and (a week later) a two hour-long oral exam covering both the written exam essays as well as any texts on the student's lists.

Upon satisfactorily completing the qualifying examination, the student is admitted to candidacy for the degree.

## Dissertation

After completing the qualifying examination, the candidate will form a suitable dissertation committee of three members, chaired by a member of the Department. The candidate and the committee will discuss expectations for a substantial piece of writing - a prospectus, introduction, or chapter draft to be completed in the quarter immediately following the qualifying exam. The committee and the candidate will discuss the piece and make plans for the dissertation as a whole. After submitting the full dissertation to their committee members, students will be required to pass an oral dissertation defense with their doctoral committee prior to filing the dissertation and graduating.

The normative time for completion of the Ph.D. is seven years, and the maximum time permitted is nine years.

The following interdisciplinary emphasis programs are available for English Ph.D. students as an optional supplement to their coursework and study.

## Emphasis in Asian American Studies

The emphasis in Asian American Studies ([http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/departmentofasianamericanstudies/asianamericanstudies\\_graduateemphasis/](http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/departmentofasianamericanstudies/asianamericanstudies_graduateemphasis/)) is offered to students in an array of fields in the Schools of Humanities, Social Sciences, Social Ecology, and the Arts. Completion of this rigorous academic sequence demonstrates significant scholarly ability and ethical commitment to the critical study of race broadly, and of Asian Americans in particular.

## Emphasis in Chicano/Latino Studies

The emphasis in Chicano/Latino Studies ([http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofsocialsciences/departmentofchicanolatinostudies/chicanolatinostudies\\_emphasis/](http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofsocialsciences/departmentofchicanolatinostudies/chicanolatinostudies_emphasis/)) is available in conjunction with all Ph.D. programs offered at UC Irvine. As a supplementary program of study, it provides substantive, theoretical, and methodological training in Chicano/Latino studies. Additional coursework allows students to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of Chicano/Latino issues to further their research program and be better prepared to engage with diverse communities.

## Emphasis in Critical Theory

Critical Theory at UCI is understood in the broad sense as the study of the shared assumptions, problems, and commitments of the various discourses in the humanities. An emphasis in Critical Theory (<http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/emphasisincriticaltheory/>) is available for doctoral students in all department within the School of Humanities.

## Emphasis in Feminist Studies

The Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies offers an emphasis in Feminist Studies ([http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/departmentofgenderandsexualitystudies/feministstudies\\_emphasis/](http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/departmentofgenderandsexualitystudies/feministstudies_emphasis/)), which emphasizes interdisciplinary, multicultural scholarship and includes course work in feminist theories, the cultural roles of women, women's socioeconomic condition, women's history, women's literature in a cross-cultural frame, women's images in fine arts and film, women of color, and lesbian and gay studies.

## **Emphasis in Latin American Studies**

The graduate emphasis in Latin American Studies ([http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/specialprograms/latinamericanstudies\\_emphasis/](http://catalogue.uci.edu/schoolofhumanities/specialprograms/latinamericanstudies_emphasis/)) is open to students from all fields and allows students to gain interdisciplinary knowledge about the study of Latin America and form scholarly relationships with a range of faculty and graduate students interested in Latin America from across the UCI campus.