

The Graduate Handbook

**Department of English
Mississippi State University**

2023-2024

Revised: August 1, 2023

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Welcome to the English Department

We are delighted that you have chosen to pursue advanced study in English at Mississippi State University. Graduate students are an essential part of a vibrant English department and we welcome your contributions as students, scholars, and teachers.

This document describes the specific policies and requirements of the English Department and is a complement to the *Graduate Catalog* of the Mississippi State Graduate School.

Read the *Catalog* and this Handbook thoroughly and retain both for future reference.

Students must follow the policies laid out in the *Catalog* and this Handbook. The Graduate Coordinator and English Department Faculty will do our best to make sure that students are informed of requirements, deadlines, and other policies; however, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to become familiar with and follow the policies of the Graduate School and the Department.

The Graduate Catalog is available online at <http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/>; please consult the version of the catalog that corresponds to the year in which you began your studies at MSU.

Professional Standards for Graduate Students:

MSU has high standards for its Graduate Programs. Graduate students must maintain a 3.00 GPA and, further, are expected to maintain certain professional standards in meeting the requirements of their programs. Graduate students will grow as independent scholars and teachers during the pursuit of the MA. To facilitate this development, the English Department Faculty has the following expectations of its graduate students.

- Attend class regularly. Graduate students should **never** miss a seminar class, as graduate seminars require the full participation of all of their members. In the case of an emergency, contact your professor promptly.
- Complete all assigned work promptly and carefully. All written assignments must be accurate and correct, with few or no stylistic or grammatical errors. Include appropriate documentation for all written work.
- Remember that your performance reflects on you as a new professional in the field, but also on your advisors, department, and university. You may seek out, or your professors may offer, opportunities for professional development such as attending or presenting at a conference. On these occasions conduct yourself with professionalism, integrity, and discretion. Bear in mind that your interactions with professors in class, in correspondence, and in professional venues influences what they will have to say in the future if asked to serve as a reference.

An important part of the graduate school experience is cultivating relationships that will enrich your intellectual pursuits and enhance your professional development. Fulfilling the expectations stated above will help you to form enduring professional relationships during your time at MSU and beyond.

Contacts in the English Department

Graduate Coordinator

Dr. Shalyn Claggett
src173@msstate.edu
325-2357

Interim Department Head

Dr. Lara Dodds
ldodds@english.msstate.edu
325-2354

Director of Composition

Emily Stinson
ejs25@msstate.edu
325-3644

TESOL

Dr. Megan Smith
ms4004@msstate.edu

Creative Writing

Becky Hagenston
bhagenston@english.msstate.edu
325-3644

Professorial Faculty Currently Teaching in the Department

- Thomas Anderson tpa14@msstate.edu
Ph.D. Vanderbilt University
Renaissance literature, particularly Shakespeare; critical theory.
- Ted Atkinson tatkinson@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. Louisiana State University
American literature, Southern literature, particularly Faulkner.
- Shalyn Claggett src173@msstate.edu
Ph.D. Vanderbilt University
Victorian literature; Victorian women's writing; science and literature.
- Peter DeGabriele pdegab@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. University at Buffalo-SUNY
Eighteenth-century British literature; the novel; literary and cultural theory.
- Lara Dodds ld214@msstate.edu
Ph.D. Brown University
Renaissance literature; Milton; early modern prose; early modern women's writing, especially Margaret Cavendish; science and literature.
- Saddiq Dzukogi smd600@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Creative writing: poetry
- Lourdes Cardozo Gaibisso lc1811@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Georgia
Systemic functional linguistics; science literacy for minoritized populations; culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogies; TESOL
- Becky Hagenston bh133@ra.msstate.edu
M.F.A. University of Arizona
Creative writing: fiction.
- Holly Johnson hjohnson@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Old English and Middle English literature.
- Matt Little littmatt@ra.msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Chicago
American literature, including works by Henry James, William James, Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald; legal writing.
- Kelly Marsh kmarsh@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University
Twentieth-century British and Irish literature, including works by James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Roddy Doyle, Jeanette Winterson, Salman Rushdie, Zadie Smith.
- Elizabeth Miller cae47@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Maryland, College Park
Rhetoric and composition; rhetorical theory; genre studies; public and community writing; African American rhetorics; feminist rhetorics.

Olufunke Ogundimu ooo70@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Nebraska
Creative writing: fiction.

Bonnie O'Neill boneill@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. Washington University
Early American literature, Nineteenth-century American literature, including works by Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Catherine Pierce CPierce@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Missouri
Creative writing: poetry.

Ginger Pizer GPizer@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Texas, Austin
Linguistics; American Sign Language.

Dan Punday dpunday@english.msstate.edu
Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University
Contemporary literature, theory, computers and writing

Donald Shaffer ds649@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University of Chicago
American literature, African-American literature and history, especially Charles Chesnutt

Megan Smith megan.smith@msstate.edu
Ph.D. Michigan State University
Linguistics: TESOL

Andrea Spain ads506@msstate.edu
Ph.D. University at Buffalo-SUNY
Twentieth-century and contemporary postcolonial literatures, particularly South African Literature; Critical Theory and Gender Studies; Film.

Dhanashree Thorat dt1349@msstate.edu
PhD University of Florida
Asian-American literature, Arab-American literature, Digital humanities.

Eric Vivier
Ph.D. University of Wisconsin-Madison
Renaissance literature, especially satire. Honors College

Admission Requirements

Regular Admission

Admission criteria for the graduate program in English include all the general requirements of the Graduate School. Additionally, the English Department requires an undergraduate degree in English **or** 18 hours of undergraduate English courses beyond composition, with a B average or higher. GRE scores are strongly encouraged but not required. International applicants must obtain a TOEFL score of 625 PBT (263 CBT or 106 iBT) or an IELTS score of 8 or better. An applicant must submit all application materials by March 15th to be considered for a teaching assistantship.

Provisional Admission

If a student does not fully meet the admission requirements of the program, it may be possible for that student to be admitted provisionally. If provisionally admitted, the student must attain at least a 3.00 GPA on the first 9 hours of graduate courses at MSU (courses with an S grade, transfer credits, or credits earned while in Unclassified status cannot be used to satisfy this requirement). If a 3.00 GPA is not attained, the student may be dismissed from the graduate program. **While in provisional status, a student is not eligible to hold a graduate assistantship.**

Program Requirements

The English department offers thesis and non-thesis options for the MA degree. The specific requirements for each option are detailed below. All graduate students must complete EN 8103 (Graduate Research Methods in English), demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language (equivalent to 4 semesters of a language), and successfully complete a comprehensive exam during their final semester of graduate study.

Thesis option

The thesis option requires 24 hours of course work and six hours of thesis research under the direction of a thesis advisor. At least one half of the graduate coursework must be completed at the 8000 level.

Required Course work:

EN 8103 Graduate Research Methods in English (to be taken in the Fall semester of the first year of study).

9 hours EN 8xxx*

12 hours EN 6xxx or 8xxx*

6 hours EN 8000 Thesis/ Research

* Students must select appropriate courses in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator and/ or the Thesis Advisor. EN 6013, which is taken as part of TA training, will not be included in the required coursework.

Non-thesis option

The non-thesis option requires 33 hours of course work. At least 15 hours of graduate course work must be completed at the 8000 level.

Required Coursework:

EN 8103 Graduate Research Methods in English (to be taken in the Fall semester of the first year of study).

12 hours EN 8xxx*

18 hours EN 6xxx or 8xxx*

*Students must select appropriate courses in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator. EN 6013, which is taken as part of TA training, will not be included in the required coursework.

Foreign Language Competency

All students must demonstrate reading knowledge of one foreign language. Foreign language competency may be fulfilled by completion of 4 semesters of undergraduate foreign language courses with a 3.00 average or higher or through the successful completion of a foreign language translation test. See the Graduate Coordinator for more information.

Unsatisfactory Performance

To remain enrolled in the MA Program in English, students must maintain a satisfactory level of performance. Unsatisfactory performance may be defined as defined as any of the following: failure to maintain a B average in attempted graduate courses after admission to the program, a grade of U or F in any one course, failure of the comprehensive examination, unsatisfactory evaluation of a thesis, or failure of a required component of the program of study. Any one of these or a combination of these may constitute the basis for review for possible dismissal. The graduate coordinator will review the record along with the student's graduate committee and take a final course of action which will be immediate dismissal or the establishment of a probationary period in which corrective action must take place. Appeal of dismissal can be made by submitting a written appeal statement to the department head. If the dismissal is upheld by the department head upon the student's appeal, the student can then submit a written appeal to the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences.

For more information about Graduate School Policies on Probation, Academic Dismissal, and Appeal Processes, see the Graduate Catalog.

<http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/academic-policies/academic-probation-dismissal-appeal/>

MA Exam

All students must successfully complete a comprehensive examination, which is a requirement of the Graduate School. The comprehensive exam must be taken when the student is within 6 hours of graduation or in his or her final semester, which for most students will be the 4th semester of study. The exam is offered once during each Fall and Spring semester, usually during September and January. Exams are graded by a committee made up of three members of the Graduate Faculty of the English Department and proctored by a faculty member who is not involved in the grading of the exam.

Exam Format

The MA exam is a take-home examination consisting of three essay questions. The first essay is an explication of a set text, which will not be announced ahead of time. The two remaining essays will be written in response to a question in each of the two following categories:

Research-focused Essay

Students will be asked a question relevant to the research they completed in their seminars (8000-level courses). To prepare for this question, students must keep their seminar papers, drafts, sources, notes, and other material relevant to their final project in seminar classes. To answer this question, students must reformulate and analyze their past research, as well as include proper citation of materials used in support of their argument.

Professional Development Essay

Students will be asked a question about their development in the program in relation to their current professional goals. To answer this question, students must cite evidence of their growth from the first to the fourth semester. Students may answer this question with an eye to their individual program of study and/or emphasis (literature in English, linguistics, TESOL, creative writing, or composition/rhetoric).

Retake Policy

Students who fail the exam have the opportunity to retake it one time. Typically this retake will be scheduled for the semester following the failed exam. Students can expect a letter from the MA Exam Committee that explains the reasons for failure and provides guidance for further study and preparation. Upon a second failure of the MA exam, students will be dismissed from the program. See the Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.msstate.edu/graduate/academic-policies/masters-requirements/#examinationstext>

Exam Preparation Advice

Successful completion of the comprehensive exam requires sustained preparation. Students should develop a system of keeping and documenting sources gathered for their final projects in seminars, as well as feedback from faculty on early drafts and revisions. The Graduate Coordinator and a member of the MA Exam Committee typically holds a review and strategy session early in the Fall semester of each year.

The MA Thesis

The MA Thesis is a substantial and original scholarly or creative work. Students working on the emphasis in Creative Writing will prepare a creative thesis, which consists of significant work in poetry or fiction, such as a collection of poems or stories or a draft of a novel, that is accompanied by a critical introduction. Other students may write a critical thesis, which is a substantial work of original research or scholarship in any of the fields of English or Linguistics represented by the English Department Faculty.

Thesis Committee

The Thesis Committee consists of three members of the Faculty, your Thesis Advisor, and two Committee Members. It is your responsibility to find a faculty member who is willing to work with you as your Thesis Advisor. You will select the members of your Committee in consultation with your Thesis Advisor.

Thesis Proposal

The Thesis Proposal is an overview of your thesis topic, argument, and methodology. It should be prepared in consultation with your Thesis Advisor. The Thesis Proposal must be approved by your Thesis Advisor, the Thesis Committee, and the Graduate Coordinator and must be submitted using the Thesis Proposal Form, which is included as an appendix to this handbook and is available on the English department website.

Thesis Defense

The Thesis Defense is an oral examination of your thesis by your Thesis Committee. The final draft of your thesis manuscript should generally be provided to the committee members two weeks before the Defense; however, the Defense may be scheduled **no sooner than seven days after delivery of the manuscript to the committee.**

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

It is your responsibility to follow all submission requirements and deadlines as laid out by the Graduate School and the Library. Familiarize yourself with the requirements well ahead of the deadlines and give yourself ample time to acquire all the required signatures. During the year in which you intend to submit your thesis, you will register for LIB 9010 an online course that will guide you through the submission process.

Recommended Timeline

All thesis-writers must fulfill the expectations and deadlines set by their Thesis Advisors. Each student's project will vary due to faculty and student schedules and the type of research required; however, most students who write a successful thesis will follow this schedule:

First Semester: Consult with the Graduate Coordinator about your plans; introduce yourself to faculty who work in your areas of interest, share your preliminary ideas and ask for suggestions about topics and research problems.

Second Semester: Identify your Thesis Advisor and get his/her approval. Further narrow your topic and select the members of your thesis committee. Some faculty may require you to prepare a preliminary proposal and bibliography before agreeing to advise your thesis.

Third Semester: Register for 3 Thesis/ Research Hours and complete the Thesis Proposal Form. Prepare a preliminary outline of the thesis and establish a regular schedule of meetings with your Advisor. In consultation with your advisor set preliminary deadlines for completing drafts of your thesis.

Fourth Semester: Register for 3 Thesis/ Research Hours. Finish writing your thesis and prepare for your defense. Graduate School deadlines for the thesis defense are in late March (Spring Graduation) and early November (Fall Graduation), so a complete draft of your thesis must be ready for your committee by approximately midterm.

Deciding between the Thesis and Non-Thesis Option

As you decide whether or not to write a thesis, consider how the thesis fits into your personal, professional, and intellectual goals. Some questions to ask yourself:

- **What are your career goals?** The thesis can be good experience for those who plan to pursue a PhD after completing the MA. Students who plan to teach in secondary schools or two-year colleges may find that additional coursework is more useful because it provides for a broader and more comprehensive grounding in the field.
- **Do you want to develop your writing to a professional level?** Even more than a seminar paper, the thesis requires extensive engagement with the conventions and norms of writing within your field. This may mean an extensive review of the scholarly literature or repeated revisions of your own drafts. Writing a thesis may be a way to develop a writing sample for your applications to graduate school, a conference paper, or even the basis for your first published article.
- **Do you have an idea that requires or will benefit from sustained investigation?** Perhaps the first thing to consider is whether you have a research problem or question that you truly need or want to pursue. The thesis is an original scholarly or creative project that is ambitious in scope and that makes a significant contribution to its field. Theses are often 50 pages or longer, will usually be the longest and most complicated scholarly or creative work you have attempted to date, and will require sustained commitment and effort. The reward for this effort can be great—the discovery of new knowledge or the creation of art—but writing a thesis can also be a long, difficult, and isolating process. Spend time developing your research problem thoroughly and consider carefully whether a thesis is the best way to answer that problem.

Creative Writing Emphasis

The Creative Writing Emphasis is available to students who wish to gain extensive experience in the writing of fiction and poetry. Admission to the creative writing emphasis requires a separate application to the Creative Writing faculty. Students who wish to pursue the Creative Writing emphasis must submit a writing sample with the application for admission (10-12 pages poetry or 15-30 pages fiction) and consult with the Director of Creative Writing upon admission to the program. Creative Writing students will complete a creative thesis consisting of a collection of poems, a collection of short stories, or a novel, preceded by a critical introduction. All students must complete a comprehensive exam in English and American literature.

Course Requirements for the Creative Writing Emphasis

EN 8103 Graduate Research Methods in English

9 hours EN 8xxx

9 hours Creative Writing Workshop (EN 6303 and EN 6313)*

3 hours EN 6xxx or EN 8xxx

6 hours EN 8000 Thesis/ Research

*Creative Writing students will repeat the Workshop class in the genre (fiction or poetry) of their thesis.

Linguistics Emphasis

The English Department at the Mississippi State University offers an emphasis in Linguistics under the department's Master of Art Degree in English. The Linguistics emphasis allows for students to specialize in Linguistics while pursuing a traditional MA in literature. Thesis and non-thesis options are available with the Linguistics Emphasis. All students must complete the comprehensive exam in English and American literature. Students who wish to pursue a Linguistics Emphasis should consult with the Graduate Coordinator and Dr. Ginger Pizer upon admission to the program.

Requirements for the Non-Thesis Option (33 hours)

EN 8103 Graduate Research Methods in English
12 hours EN 8xxx (Literature electives)
3 hours EN 8xxx or 6xxx (Literature elective)
EN 6403: Introduction to Linguistics
EN 6413: History of the English Language
EN 6443: English Syntax
EN 6623: Language and Culture
EN 6633: Language and Society

Requirements for the Thesis Option (24 hours + 6 hours Research/Thesis)

EN 8103: Graduate Research Methods in English
9 hours EN 8xxx (Literature electives)
EN 6403: Introduction to Linguistics
EN 6443: English Syntax
Two of the following:
EN 6413: History of the English Language
EN 6623: Language and Culture
EN 6633: Language and Society

6 hours EN 8000: Thesis/ Research

TESOL Emphasis

The English Department at the Mississippi State University is proud to offer an emphasis in TESOL under the department's Master of Art Degree in English. The TESOL Emphasis allows students to specialize in TESOL while still pursuing a traditional MA in literature. Thesis and non-thesis options are available. Students interested in the MA with TESOL Emphasis should consult with the Graduate Coordinator and Dr. Wendy Herd upon admission to the program.

Requirements for the Non-Thesis Option (33 hours)

EN 8103: Graduate Research Methods in English
12 hours EN 8xxx (Literature Electives)
3 hours EN 8xxx or 6xxx (Literature Elective)
EN 6403: Introduction to Linguistics
EN 6433: Approaches to TESOL
EN 6443: English Syntax
EN 6453: Methods of TESOL
EN 6463: Studies in Second Language Acquisition

Requirements for Thesis Option (24 hours + 6 hours Thesis/Research)

EN 8103: Graduate Research in English
9 Hours EN 8xxx (Literature Electives)
EN 6403: Introduction to Linguistics
EN 6443: English Syntax
EN 6463: Studies in Second Language Acquisition
EN 6433: Approaches to TESOL **or** EN 6453: Methods of TESOL
6 Hours EN 8000: Thesis/ Research

- It is highly suggested that TESOL emphasis students take five split level TESOL courses (EN 6403, 6433, 6443, 6453, and 6463) in order to complete their TESOL Certificate.

Student Organizations

Sigma Tau Delta is the International English Honor Society. Mississippi State hosts the Xi Kappa Chapter. This active local chapter holds an annual induction ceremony and participates in community projects that promote literacy. The faculty advisor is Dr. Peter DeGabriele (pdegab@english.msstate.edu)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is a University-wide organization that provides programs and services for graduate students at MSU. The GSA meets monthly and also hosts two events yearly to showcase graduate student achievements: the Graduate Student Research Symposium and the Graduate Student Awards Banquet. The GSA hosts a travel award competition in support of graduate student travel to conferences or to conduct research. For more information see <http://www.grad.msstate.edu/current/orgs/gsa/>

Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) provides outreach and programming for graduate students with a particular focus on the needs and interests of Black graduate students at Mississippi State University. The BGSA offers fellowships and assistance to undergraduate students of color interested in graduate study. The faculty advisor is Dr. Chiquita Briley (Cbriley@fsnhp.msstate.edu).

Funding and Scholarship Opportunities

Teaching Assistantships

A limited number of teaching assistantships are available for highly qualified students on a competitive basis. An assistantship is a financial award to a graduate student in exchange for part-time work (20 hours/ week) in teaching, research, or administration. Students interested in being considered for an assistantship in the department should submit a separate application at the time of admission and/or no later than March 15th for Fall enrollment. Application forms are available on the Graduate School website (<http://www.grad.msstate.edu/forms/#assist>).

- **Course Load:** Graduate assistants must be registered in 9 graduate credit hours for the Fall and Spring semester in order to maintain full-time status. TAs may register for no more than 13 hours per semester.
- **Academic Achievement:** To retain an assistantship, students must demonstrate satisfactory progress in the program. Failure to do so may result in termination of the assistantship.
- **Orientation:** All new TAs must attend the Graduate Teaching Assistant Orientation held by the Graduate School. The GTA Orientation is held semi-annually before the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters. TAs must also attend the English Department TA workshop, which is held during the week before the beginning of the Fall Semester. Contact the Director of Composition or the Graduate Coordinator for more information about the dates and times of these required Workshops.
- **Workload and Teaching Assignments:** Assistantships are a 20 hour/ week commitment and should be treated as a professional responsibility. The standard load is two courses per semester, which may be assigned in several ways. Students with fewer than 18 graduate hours may be assigned to teach Basic Composition (EN 0103), assist in Composition I or Composition II, and/or tutoring hours in the Writing Center. After student have earned 18 graduate hours they may be assigned to teach Composition I (EN 1103), Composition II (EN 1113) and/or to work in the Writing Center. Occasionally, TAs may have the equivalent of one course (10 hours/ week) reassigned to serve as a research assistant for faculty (see below).
- **Training and Professional Development:** All TAs must register for and attend a teaching practicum, Teaching College Writing (EN 6013), during each semester of the assistantship. EN 6013 will not appear on your Program of Study. **During the second semester of the first year, TAs must enroll in EN 6233 Composition Pedagogy in lieu of EN 6013, which will be included on the Program of Study.**

Research Assistantships

Occasionally TAs may be reassigned to serve as research assistants on faculty projects. Research assistants will have their teaching load reduced by the equivalent of one course or 10 hours in the Writing Center and in exchange will work for 10 hours per week

assisting no more than one faculty member with their research. Research Assistantships are not always available and will **only** be assigned if 1) a faculty member's need can be matched with a TA's interest; and 2) the research assistant award does not compromise the department's ability to meet staffing needs for the composition program and Writing Center. Staffing needs take priority over the assignment of research assistants.

- **Expectations and responsibilities:** Faculty should ensure that research assistants perform academic work that contributes to the RA's professional development as well as the faculty member's research agenda. RAs may perform bibliographic tasks, editing, indexing, searching for sources, data analysis, or other appropriate tasks. RAs will work no more than 10 hours/week and should not perform primarily clerical tasks. Faculty may require research assistants to document and report their hours worked. RA work is tied to the academic class schedule (i.e., students cannot be expected to work over holidays, before the first day of class, or after the last day of class).
- **Procedure:** TAs who are interested in serving as research assistants should notify the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Claggett. After consultation with the Composition Director, TAs will be matched with faculty who have requested assistance for their research projects. TAs will only be reassigned as RAs after all classroom needs have been met.
- **Research assistantships are only available to students who already hold a Teaching Assistantship in the department.**

Travel and Professional Development

The Freshman English Enhancement Fund provides a limited amount of money each year for use by graduate students, lecturers, and instructors to support scholarship and professional development. Money may be available to support presentation of a paper at academic conferences or other relevant activities. To be considered for an award, fill out an application form and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator.

To receive funding from the English Department, students must also apply for matching funding from the College of Arts & Sciences and (if applicable) from the TAGGS program sponsored by the Graduate School.

There are two funding periods during each year

Application Deadline

November 15
May 1

Travel Dates

January 1-June 30
July 1- December 31

To be considered for an award you must complete the English Department application form (see appendix) and the A&S Graduate Student Travel Support Application Form (contact Graduate Coordinator).

Departmental Scholarships

Several scholarships are available to graduate students. See the Departmental Website for information about the application process and deadlines.

- **Eugene Butler Creative Writing Award (\$2500):** Awarded to creative writers at the upper-division undergraduate or graduate level.
- **Howell H. Gwin Scholarship (\$1000 or \$500):** Undergraduate and graduate awards. Graduate students are eligible in their first year.
- **William H. Magruder Memorial Scholarship (\$1000):** Awarded to upper-division undergraduate or graduate students. Application deadline March 1st.
- **Richard Patteson Memorial Scholarship (TBA):** Awarded to a first-year graduate student who intends to focus on literature

Recommended Reading and Other Resources

For news and opinion about higher education, consult *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed* (<http://www.insidehighered.com/>)

Gregory Colon Semenza's *Graduate Study for the 21st Century* (2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) is a useful and practical guide to the challenges of graduate school. This book is particularly useful if you plan to pursue a PhD after MSU.

Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius "*So What Are You Going to Do With That?*": *Finding Careers Outside Academia* (2nd ed. University of Chicago Press, 2007) provides an overview of career options for students with advanced degrees.

For information about the history of English as an academic discipline, try Robert Scholes *The Rise and Fall of English* (Yale UP, 1999) or Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (University of Chicago Press, 2007). Useful collections of essays about the present and future of the field include Bruce McComiskey's *English Studies: An Introduction to the Discipline* (NCTE 2006) and David Nicholls's *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures* (MLA 2007).

**Thesis Proposal Form
Department of English**

Please include a brief, one paragraph abstract of your thesis. If requested by your advisor, you may also attach a more extended prospectus and bibliography. The thesis proposal must be accompanied by a work plan that has been approved by your thesis advisor.

Proposal Deadlines: For Spring graduation, submit your proposal and work plan by **September 15**. For Fall graduation, submit your proposal and work plan to the Graduate Coordinator by **February 15**.

Title:

Abstract:

Student's signature Date

Approved:

Director of Thesis Date

Committee Member Date

Committee Member Date

Reviewed by: Director of Graduate Studies Date

Work Plan:

Student's signature Date

Approved:

Advisor's signature Date

Work Plan

The work plan is designed to help you make progress on your thesis and to ensure that you meet all departmental and Graduate School deadlines for completion of the thesis. Your work plan must include specific deadlines for completion of the main sections of the thesis as well as all official Graduate School deadlines. **Failure to meet the deadlines on your Work Plan may result in delayed graduation.** If your advisor determines that your progress is unsatisfactory or that your thesis requires additional revision, he or she may require you to submit a revised Work Plan, which may also delay graduation.

Submission of Declaration of Defense Form: **2 weeks before the defense date.**

Final Draft of the Thesis submitted to all Committee Members: **7 days before defense date.** (minimum: your advisor and committee may require additional time)

Thesis Defense: **Third week in October** (Fall Graduation) or **Second week in March** (Spring Graduation)

Initial Submission to the Library: **Fourth week in October** (Fall Graduation) or **Fourth week in March** (Spring Graduation)

Final Submission to the Library: **Third week in November** (Fall Graduation) or **Second week in April**

n.b. Consult the current Graduate School Calendar for Exact Dates.

Sample Work Plan*:

September 15, 2015	Thesis proposal completed
October 1, 2015	Draft 1 of Chapter 1 to advisor
October 31, 2015	Draft 1 of Chapter 2 to advisor
November 30, 2015	Draft 1 of Chapter 3 to advisor
December 15, 2015	Draft 1 of Introduction and Conclusion to advisor
January 31, 2016	Revision of Chapters 1-3 completed
February 15, 2016	Revision of Introduction and Conclusion completed
February 19, 2016	Submit Declaration of Defense Form
February 26, 2016	Complete Draft of thesis to advisor and all committee members
March 4, 2016	Thesis Defense
March 24, 2016	Initial Submission to the Library
April 15, 2016	Submission of Library-approved Thesis

* This sample Work Plan is an example. Depending upon the nature of your Thesis and the research and/or writing required, you may need to meet substantially earlier deadlines in order to complete your work effectively. Consult with your advisor about your Work Plan and attach a signed copy to your thesis proposal.

English Department Freshman English Enhancement Fund Travel Funding Request Form

The Freshman English Enhancement Fund provides a limited amount of money each year for use by graduate students, lecturers, and instructors to support scholarship and professional development. Money may be available to support presentation of a paper at academic conferences or other relevant activities. Graduate students may apply for support for one trip each academic year, and may not cover the entire cost of the trip. Funding will be prioritized as follows:

1. Presentations (papers, posters, etc.) by instructors, lecturers, or graduate students
2. Professional development for instructors or lecturers
3. Professional development for graduate students

To be considered for an award, submit this form to the Director of Composition (Instructors and Lecturers) or the Graduate Coordinator (Graduate Students).

Deadlines: Instructors and lecturers may apply for funds on a rolling basis. Applications from graduate students are accepted twice per year: **October 15** (for travel between Jan 1 and June 30) and **April 15** (for travel between July 1 and December 30). **If eligible, graduate students must apply for matching funding from the College of Arts & Science and/or the Graduate School.**

Notes:

- If you have not yet received notice of the acceptance of your abstract, you should still turn in your funding application by the deadline. Any funding awarded will be conditional upon acceptance to the conference. **You must apply for funding by the deadline even if you have not yet been accepted to the conference.**
- If extenuating circumstances (e.g. the CFP is released after the deadline has passed) prevent you from meeting the deadline please contact the Graduate Coordinator as soon as possible.
- After approval for funding is received, you must also receive authorization for travel through the MSU Travel System (Concur). Please see the Graduate Coordinator and Ms. Diana Brown for instructions on using this system.

1. **Name**_____. **Dates of Travel**_____.
Location_____.
2. **Reason for Funding Request:** Provide a brief description of the project including, where relevant, the title of your conference paper.

3. **Proposed Budget:** Provide an estimated budget using the form below. Proposals will be funded based on the merit of the proposal and the availability of funds. Proposals may not be funded 100%

Registration fees	
Accommodations	
Travel expenses (air fare, gas, etc.)	
Meals	
Miscellaneous (provide details):	
Total	

4. **Endorsement:** Attach a copy of the letter of acceptance from the conference organizers. **Graduate students only:** If you are requesting funding for professional development activities that are not associated with the presentation of a paper at a conference, you must include a brief (one paragraph) endorsement from a faculty advisor.