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Master’s Degree Examination Regulations

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Forms, additional resources, and FAQs are available on the Current Student Resources web page, www.northeastern.edu/cssh/english/graduate/current-student-resources.

Last updated: July 10, 2017
MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM
REQUIREMENTS

All students earning the M.A. in English must complete the M.A. core curriculum (below), satisfy the M.A. language requirement, and pass the M.A. Comprehensive Examination. Courses may not be counted twice to satisfy M.A. requirements.

The core curriculum consists of 30 semester hours of coursework, including:

**ENGL 5103: Proseminar – 3 SH**
The proseminar, required for all first-year graduate students in English, will introduce students to the history and current scholarly practices of English studies.

**Two Theories and Methods courses – 6 SH**
Theories and Methods courses include seminars in any area (literature, film, rhetoric, composition, linguistics, digital humanities) that are organized primarily around one or more theoretical or methodological approaches, practices, or questions.

**One course in each of the following literary areas: - 9 SH**
- Medieval through early Renaissance (to 1600, including Shakespeare)
- 17th Century (including Milton)/Restoration/18th Century (including Early American literature)
- 19th Century/20th Century

**Two Rhetoric or Writing courses – 6 SH**

**Two electives – 6 SH**

*Effective September 2010*

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING

Academic advising is a critical part of a student’s experience in the graduate program. New students are assigned faculty advisors and are welcome to subsequently change advisors as they fine-tune their academic and career objectives. Advising covers substantive questions in the student’s field of study as well as long-term academic and career planning. Students are strongly urged to speak to an advisor before registering for courses each semester. Any change in advisor must be reported to the Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Office assistant.
# MASTER’S PROGRAM
## REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>Advisor’s Name</th>
<th>Semester ____/ Year ____</th>
<th>Semester ____/ Year ____</th>
<th>Estimated Graduation Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### M.A. Curriculum – 30 SH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number/Title</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 5103: Proseminar – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories &amp; Methods course (1 of 2) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories &amp; Methods course (2 of 2) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval through early Renaissance (to 1600, including Shakespeare) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th Century/Restoration/18th Century (including Early American) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th Century/20th Century – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric or Writing course (1 of 2) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric or Writing course (2 of 2) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective (1 of 2) – 3 SH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective (2 of 2) or ENGL 7990: Thesis – 3 SH</td>
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</table>

### Other M.A. Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Semester/Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.A. Comprehensive Exam or Thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# MASTER’S PROGRAM
## SUGGESTED TIMELINES

**For full-time students entering in Fall semester**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 SH</td>
<td>9 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 1/ENGL 5103: Proseminar</td>
<td>M.A. Course 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 2</td>
<td>M.A. Course 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 3</td>
<td>M.A. Course 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete language requirement by end of Year 1</td>
<td>Annual Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 SH</td>
<td>3 SH + 0 SH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 7</td>
<td>M.A. Course 10/Elective or ENGL 7990: Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 8</td>
<td>ENGL 6960: M.A. Exam Preparation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 9</td>
<td>Complete M.A. Comprehensive Exam or Thesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *This non-credit bearing enrollment maintains full-time status. Tuition charges apply.*

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## For full-time students completing the Digital Humanities Graduate Certificate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 SH</td>
<td>10 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 1/ENGL 5103: Proseminar</td>
<td>M.A. Course 3/INSH 7910 (2/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 2/ENGL 7370: Intro to DH</td>
<td>M.A. Course 5/DH Elective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 3/INSH 7910: NULab Research Seminar (1/3)</td>
<td>M.A. Course 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 4</td>
<td>M.A. Course 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete language requirement by end of Year 1</td>
<td>Complete language requirement by end of Year 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annual Review</td>
<td>Annual Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 SH</td>
<td>0 SH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 3/INSH 7910 (3/3)</td>
<td>ENGL 7996: Thesis Continuation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 8 (Complete ENGL 7370: Intro to DH and/or DH Elective, if not taken in Year 1)</td>
<td>Complete M.A. Thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 9</td>
<td>Complete DH Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.A. Course 10/ENGL 7990: Thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *This non-credit bearing enrollment maintains full-time status. Tuition charges apply.*

Timelines may vary. PlusOne students should determine their timelines with the undergraduate and graduate advisors.
A Comprehensive Examination is required of all students in the Master’s program. This examination is offered in three written formats: Master’s thesis, pedagogy thesis, and timed examination. A student may petition the Graduate Studies Committee for permission to take an oral exam in lieu of the written examination. At the point of eligibility, the student must declare the method of examination to the student’s advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee. Thesis Proposal and Timed Examination forms are available on the Current Student Resources web site.

Eligibility

After earning at least twenty-one semester hours of course credit with a GPA of at least 3.000 (normally, by the end of the third semester of full-time coursework), a student becomes eligible to take the M.A. Comprehensive Examination. At the point of eligibility, the student must declare the method of examination to the student’s advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee. The deadlines for declaring are Dec. 15th if eligibility is reached during fall semester, April 15th if eligibility is reached during spring semester.

Master’s Thesis

A student who has a GPA of 3.500 or higher may propose writing a thesis to fulfill the Comprehensive Examination requirement. The student must submit a thesis proposal form, prepared in consultation with the potential thesis supervisor, to the GSC by the deadline (Dec. 15th in the fall, April 15th in the spring). If the proposal is approved, the student will enroll in ENGL 7990: Master’s Thesis, and, upon the successful completion of the thesis, earn three semester hours toward the degree in lieu of coursework.

A thesis should be 10,000 to 15,000 words long and will be evaluated by the thesis supervisor and a second reader, who is chosen by the Graduate Studies Committee.

The thesis should be prepared and submitted according to the College of Social Sciences and Humanities Graduate School guidelines, available at www.northeastern.edu/cssh/graduate/commencement/.

Pedagogy Thesis

A student who has a GPA of 3.500 or higher may propose writing a pedagogy thesis for the Comprehensive Examination requirement. The student must submit a thesis proposal form, prepared in consultation with the potential thesis supervisor, to the GSC by the deadline (Dec. 15th in the fall, April 15th in the spring). If the proposal is approved, the student will enroll in ENGL 7990: Master’s Thesis, and, upon the successful completion of the thesis, earn three semester hours toward the degree in lieu of coursework.

For this option, candidates will work with their advisors to create a teaching portfolio comprising the following elements:

- Curriculum Vitae
- One-page statement of teaching or tutoring philosophy
- Sample teaching materials, including syllabi, course calendar, assignment sheets, lecture slides, description of in-class activities.
- 7-10 page critical introduction to these pedagogical materials, offering the theoretical and contextual background for the specific materials included. This introduction should provide historical, social, and institutional contexts for the pedagogical materials created, and offer solid theoretical grounding not solely for those practices, but also for the underlying assumptions about student learning upon which those practices are based. Ideally, the student will draw on what s/he has learned in the M.A. program, whether coursework, practicum, or writing center experience.
- Annotated bibliography of the 10-15 key sources used to inform the critical introduction.
The Teaching Portfolio will be evaluated by the thesis supervisor and a second reader.

The pedagogy thesis should be prepared and submitted according to the College of Social Sciences and Humanities Graduate School guidelines, available at www.northeastern.edu/cssh/graduate/commencement/.

**Timed Examination**

A student may choose to complete a timed, written examination for the Comprehensive Examination. The student, in consultation with her/his faculty advisor, selects four areas of examination: one from each of the course categories of Theories and Methods, Literature (British and American), and Rhetoric and Writing, and an additional one from any area. The list of the four proposed subject areas will be submitted by the student to the Graduate Studies Committee no later than two months prior to the examination.

The examination will be held for a six-hour time span, on campus, generally in late March of a full-time student’s second year in the program. The Graduate Studies Committee will provide an exam of eight questions, two in each area of examination, from which the student will choose to respond to one from each area. Questions will not necessarily be based on the courses that a student has taken previously.

Each exam response will be evaluated by two faculty members chosen by the Graduate Studies Committee. Both readers must agree on whether the examination passes or fails. If the readers disagree as to whether the examination passes or fails, a third reader, chosen by the Graduate Program Director, shall serve as a tie-breaker.

The student must pass three areas to receive an overall grade of pass. A grade of pass with distinction in a given area will be awarded for either one or two such grades in that area. A student who fails two areas may petition the GSC to retake those parts of the examination as an oral examination with three faculty members who can evaluate the areas failed. A student who fails more than two areas may not commence with the Master’s Degree.

A student who fails two areas of the written examination has the option of retaking the written examination or taking an oral examination in its stead. If necessary, the second attempt is the final one; no subsequent attempts are permitted.

**Oral Examination**

A student who has been approved by the GSC to take the Comprehensive Examination as an oral examination will, in consultation with her/his faculty advisor, select four areas of examination: one from each of the course categories of Theories and Methods, Literature (British and American), and Writing and Rhetoric, and an additional one from any area. The list of the four proposed subject areas will be submitted by the student to the Graduate Studies Committee no later than two months prior to the examination.

The examination will be held for a two-to-three-hour time span, on campus, generally in late March of a student’s second year in the program. The Graduate Studies Committee will select four examiners—one for each of the subject areas identified by the student. These four examiners, with the addition of the advisor, will constitute the examining committee. Members of the examining committee are free to frame their questions within a given subject area, but should seek to engage the examinee on a basis that allows her/him to respond productively to those questions. Questions will not necessarily be based on the courses that a student has taken previously.

**Time Limit**

Master’s students must complete coursework and the Comprehensive Examination within seven years of entering the program.

*Effective September 2013; Last updated July 2016*
# MASTER’S PROGRAM
## RECOMMENDED COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION TIMETABLES
### Master’s Thesis or Pedagogy Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td>Become familiar with the Comprehensive Exam options.  &lt;br&gt;Meet with advisor to receive guidance as to exam options and possible fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Year 2 | November  <br>• Develop a reading list, in consultation with your thesis director.  <br>• Review the College of Social Sciences and Humanities’ Thesis Guide.  <br>• Submit a thesis proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee no later than December 15.  <br>• Upon receiving approval from the Graduate Studies Committee, begin work on your thesis project. | April  <br>• Submit your thesis project for evaluation by the thesis director and the designated second reader (chosen by the Graduate Studies Committee) no later than April 1.  <br>• Upload your approved thesis to Proquest by the deadline posted on the Graduate School’s website at [www.northeastern.edu/cssh/graduate/commencement/deadlines/](http://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/graduate/commencement/deadlines/). |

### Timed Comprehensive Examination or Oral Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year 1</strong></td>
<td>Become familiar with the Comprehensive Exam options.  &lt;br&gt;Meet with advisor to receive guidance as to exam options and possible fields.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Year 2 | Notify your advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee of your decision to take the timed exam no later than December 15. | February/March  <br>• Prepare for the examination by reading relevant texts and possibly doing practice exams, to get a feel for time-management. Copies of old examinations may be obtained from the Graduate Office. |

|  | March/April  <br>• Sit for the examination. Allow two weeks for grading.  <br>• Receive results of examination, no later than the last day of examinations for spring classes. |
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

An M.A. student must demonstrate reading proficiency in one language other than English or one advanced research skill (ARS). In order to be cleared for graduation, M.A. students must have in their files evidence of having satisfied the appropriate language requirement. M.A. students are urged to satisfy the language requirement in Year 1 of the program.

Languages commonly used to fulfill the requirement include French, Spanish, Italian, German, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek; students wishing to satisfy the requirement in a language other than these, including a signed language, should submit a petition to do so to the Graduate Studies Committee.

Students may demonstrate proficiency in five ways:

1. **Reading comprehension examination.** A student must pass a language examination provided by the Department of English or the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and evaluated by qualified faculty. Examinations are generally given once each semester, and the date will be announced well in advance. Students have two hours to translate a passage of 200-250 words, on a topic related to literary studies. Print dictionaries may be used; however, grammar or vocabulary aids such as 501 French Verbs are not permitted. The examination is given on a pass/fail basis, and students will be notified of the result in writing. Students who do not pass may repeat the examination without penalty. Copies of previous examinations are available in the Graduate Programs office. Grading criteria can be found on the next page.

2. **Previous coursework.** A student may provide an official transcript demonstrating one year of intermediate-level undergraduate literature (not language) courses (or the equivalent in the case of signed languages) in the language with grades of “B” or higher. The transcript will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director, and the student will be notified of the result in writing.

   Doctoral students entering with a Master’s degree may present evidence of having completed a similar examination at the previous institution. The request will be evaluated by the Graduate Program Director.

3. **Native proficiency.** A student may petition to have proficiency in a native language other than English count toward satisfaction of the requirement. Petitions and supporting materials will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee, and students will be notified of the result in writing.

4. **Advanced Research Skill.** A student may petition to have proficiency in an Advanced Research Skill pertinent to their Master's research. An ARS would be a research skill that goes beyond the traditional textual analysis techniques taught in English graduate programs, e.g. text encoding, oral history, qualitative coding, geographic information systems, database design, statistical analysis, rhetorical strategy, or computational text analysis. Advanced Research Skill petitions should describe the skill and its relevance to the student’s project, and identify a faculty member who is able and willing to evaluate the student’s proficiency. Upon approval by the GSC, the student is evaluated by the faculty member who will notify the GSC of the outcome. The advisor’s signature is required.

5. **Another method, proposed by the student and approved by the advisor and the Graduate Studies Committee.** Petitions and supporting materials will be evaluated by the Graduate Studies Committee, and students will be notified of the result in writing.

For options 2-5, use the General Petition Form, available on the Current Student Resources web page.

*Effective September 2015; Last updated July 2017*
GRADUATE PROGRAMS
READING COMPREHENSION EXAMINATION

The goal of the reading comprehension examination is to test your competence as a translator of literary and critical works in languages other than English. The exam consists of a two-hour session in which you are asked to translate a passage of 200-250 words. You are allowed to consult a dictionary during the exam; you are not allowed to consult grammar or language guides. While preparing for the exam, you should keep in mind the following guidelines, which will be used to evaluate the exam.

**Meaning**

Does your translation accurately capture the overall sense of the passage and convey this sense in coherent and meaningful English? Does your translation accurately present the ideas, actions, and concepts of the original text?

**Grammar**

Is your translation an accurate representation of verb conjugations both in terms of tense and person? Does your translation link pronouns with the proper antecedents? Does your translation account for demonstrative distinctions that appear in the original? Is your translation written in grammatical English?

**Vocabulary**

Do English words chosen accurately convey the meaning of the words used in the original language?

**Evaluation**

The exam is graded on a pass/fail basis. Multiple and/or significant errors in any combination of these categories result in a failing exam.

**Preparing for the Language Examination**

To assist students preparing for the language exam in a number of languages, including German, Japanese, French, Russian, Spanish, Latin, Portuguese, and Arabic, the Modern Languages Department has placed a set of auto-tutorial CD ROMS entitled *Transparent Language Now* on Reserve at the main circulation desk of the library. As Reserve items, the CD ROMS are available for use in the library for up to 3 hours.

Graduate students have an opportunity to enroll in NU undergraduate language courses. Please contact the Graduate Office for more information and appropriate forms.

*Effective May 2009*
Nicole Aljoe
Associate Professor

Eighteenth- & nineteenth-century Black Atlantic Literature; the Slave Narrative; Postcolonial Studies (Black British, African, Caribbean, Latin American, South Asian); eighteenth-century British Novel; gender/sexuality and writing; archival studies; visual culture

Sari Altschuler
Assistant Professor

Health and humanities; disability studies; nineteenth-century American literature

Frank Blessington
Professor

Milton; seventeenth-century British literature; classics; poetry writing; fiction writing; genre (epic and lyric); sixteenth-century British literature; Spenser; Shakespeare

Erika Boeckeler
Assistant Professor

Shakespeare; Alphabets & Alphabetic Literature; Language Theory; Renaissance Lyric Poetry; History of the Book; Early Modern Northern European Visual Art; Early Slavic Print Culture

Beth Britt
Associate Professor

Contemporary rhetorical criticism, especially feminist and cultural criticism; classical rhetoric; rhetoric and the law; rhetoric and materiality; qualitative research methods, including participant-observation and interviewing; discourses of domestic violence, probability, infertility/reproductive technologies

Hillary Chute
Professor

Comics and graphic novels; contemporary fiction; visual studies; American literature; gender and sexuality studies; literature and the arts; critical theory; media studies

Ryan Cordell
Assistant Professor

Nineteenth-century American literature; periodical studies; digital humanities; religion and literature; American apocalypticism; technologies of textual production
Ellen Cushman  
Professor

Writing and rhetoric; literacy studies in tribal and urban communities; decolonial rhetorics; Cherokee language and writing; digital composing and archiving; writing pedagogies; qualitative research methodologies and research in the teaching of English.

Theo Davis  
Professor

Eighteenth- & nineteenth-century American literature; literary and political theory; aesthetics

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon  
Professor

Seventeenth- through nineteenth-century American literature; transatlantic seventeenth-nineteenth century literature; origins of the novel; public sphere and early print culture; eighteenth-century drama – British and American; aesthetics; feminist theory; critical theory; early Caribbean literature; early African American literature; literature and performance; archival studies; literature and political theory

Julia Flanders  
Professor of the Practice

Text encoding, digital literary studies

Chris Gallagher  
Professor

Writing and rhetoric; writing pedagogy and assessment; writing program administration; educational change and reform

Laura Green  
Professor

Victorian literature; twentieth-century Anglophone literature; history and theory of the novel; feminist and queer theory

Carla Kaplan  
Professor

Twentieth-century American Literature; Modernism; African American Literature and History; Feminist Theory; Biography and Cultural History; Literary Journalism and Creative Nonfiction
Kathleen Kelly
Professor

Medieval studies; film; contemporary British novel; non-human and post-human studies; animal studies; ecocriticism; feminist and gender theories; genre theories; narrative theories (with a particular interest in magic realism and other “non-traditional” forms); queer theories; British literature from the medieval period through the present; speculative fiction

Eunsong Kim
Assistant Professor

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century US literature, Modern and Postmodernism, Visual Studies; Poetics, Critical Gender Studies, Asian American Literature, US Multi-Ethnic Literature, New Media Studies

Lori Hope Lefkovitz
Professor

Jewish literature; Hebrew bible; contemporary critical theory; Jewish feminism; Victorian literature; the novel

Neal Lerner
Professor

Writing and rhetoric; writing across the curriculum; writing centers; literacy; writing studies research methods

Marina Leslie
Associate Professor

Early modern literature and culture; archival studies; gender studies. Specific topics of interest include utopian fiction, fictions of social contract and the origins of science fiction; travel literature and narratives of contact; literature and crime, with particular interest in the ways that “true crime” stories enter literary culture; early modern women as subjects and authors; the human/animal connection and the pre-history of the post-human.

Mary Loeffelholz
Professor

American literature; women writers; gay and lesbian cultural studies; nineteenth-century Anglophone poetry

Patrick Mullen
Associate Professor

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish and English culture and politics; modernity and globalization; Marxism; critical theory; history of sexuality
Mya Poe
Associate Professor

Writing and Rhetoric; writing assessment, especially issues of fairness and racial/linguistic diversity; writing across the curriculum with particular interest in disciplinary ways of knowing and representing data; public discourses about literacy, identity, and language; intersections of literary and literacy research; writing studies research methods; genre studies

Janet Randall
Professor

Linguistics; grammar; English language teaching/education; dialects of English (including African American English); gender and language; mental representations of language; language and law