

WRITING STUDIES GRADUATE CONCENTRATION

for the Writing Studies Graduate Concentration

The Center for Writing Studies (CWS) facilitates research and promotes graduate study in the areas of rhetoric, written composition, language, and literacy. CWS offers graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees in participating departments a program leading to a concentration in Writing Studies. Graduate students pursuing the concentration may be enrolled in the participating departments of English, Communication, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership, Library and Information Science, or other departments from across campus with the approval of the student's home department.

Writing Studies Graduate Concentration Participating Programs:

Communication, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/communication-phd/>)

Curriculum & Instruction, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/education/curriculum-instruction-phd/>)

Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership, EdD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/education/education-policy-organization-leadership-edd/>)

Educational Policy, Organization & Leadership, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/concentration/writing-studies/graduate/education/education-policy-organization-leadership-phd/>)

English, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/english-phd/>)

Information Sciences, PhD (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/is/information-science-phd/>)

Graduate students may elect to pursue a concentration in Writing Studies at the PhD level. Students take two foundational courses for the concentration to introduce them to the field, along with two methodology courses to ready them for their research. The first pair of required courses (ENGL 505/CI 563; and one of the following theme-focused courses: ENGL 506/CI 564, ENGL 583/CI 566, ENGL 584/CI 569 or a 500-level course approved for this requirement by the CWS Graduate Programs Committee) provides a historical background in Writing Studies while at the same time assuring knowledge of current issues through the reading and analysis of texts that mark the field. The second pair of required courses (ENGL 582/CI 565 and a second approved methodology course) introduces students in depth to strands of writing studies research – historical, empirical, and theoretical. In addition, graduate students take two courses from across the university that focus on the study of writing but that also open up avenues for interdisciplinary inquiry, a key dimension of this area of study. English, Anthropology, Curriculum and Instruction, Information Sciences, Educational Policy Studies, Sociology, and Communication are among the departments from which students commonly select courses.

Admission

Students are admitted into graduate study through their home departments and the Graduate College. Students may petition to add

the concentration at the point of admission or after they have begun graduate study. The petition to add the concentration must be approved by the Center for Writing Studies, the home department, and the Graduate College. (Please note that the Department of English offers separate MA and PhD tracks specializing in Writing Studies; see the Department of English for admission requirements to these degree programs.) Graduate students planning to concentrate in Writing Studies must fulfill the degree requirements of their home department in addition to the Writing Studies' graduate concentration requirements. In consultation with the home department, students determine whether the Writing Studies' graduate concentration is appropriate for their plan of study. Students should meet with a faculty advisor in their own department and also set up a meeting to discuss their program of concentration with the Director of the Center for Writing Studies.

Faculty Research Interests

Specific faculty interests include research in literacy studies, digital media, rhetorical studies, globalization and language, disability studies, cultural-historical activity theory, feminist theory and pedagogy, genre theory, technical communication and other areas of study related to the development of language and policy.

Facilities and Resources

CWS has a multidisciplinary group of core and affiliated faculty. It is home to the campus's Writing across the Curriculum Program and the Writers Workshop, a campus-wide tutorial facility; a sponsor of an electronic discussion group on writing across the curriculum, and a co-founder of the University of Illinois Writing Project (UIWP), a site of the National Writing Project

Financial Aid

Graduate students may receive assistantships as consultants in the Writers Workshop, as teachers in the Writing Across Media courses, as assistant directors of CWS programs, and as research assistants to CWS faculty.

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For additional details and requirements refer to the department's concentration requirements (<http://www.cws.illinois.edu/graduate/phd/>) and the Graduate College Handbook (<http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/>).

Code	Title	Hours
Theme-focused Writing Studies		8
ENGL 505 & ENGL 583 or ENGL 584	Writing Studies and Topics Writ Pedagogy & Design Topics Discourse and Writing	
Or 500-level course approved for this requirement by the CWS Graduate Programs Committee		
Methods Courses		8
ENGL 582 & one other methods course approved by the Director of the Center for Writing Studies	Topics Research and Writing	
Elective hours from approved CWS list in consultation with your advisor		8
Total Hours		24

Other Requirements

Requirement	Description
Other requirements may overlap	
Students must prepare and deliver a lecture based on their research to faculty and students for the CWS Colloquium Series: Graduate Research Forum.	
The dissertation must demonstrably focus on Writing Studies (with a topic approved by the CWS Director) and be guided by CWS-affiliated faculty that serve on the dissertation committee.	

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1. **The completion of an original and in-depth research project (the dissertation) in a specific field of Writing Studies:** The dissertation (a book-length manuscript required for the doctoral degree) is the ultimate project of the MA/PhD program. The goal of the dissertation is the culmination of coursework and special fields work (see below), but it also goes beyond these preparatory steps. It demonstrates expertise and is composed of original research that is meant to contribute to the field of Writing Studies and to be a key source for additional publications (articles, chapters, and perhaps a book). The dissertation is necessary for tenure-track academic jobs, and is also valued by alternative-academic (alt-ac) employers as a sign of independent research skills.
2. **Preparation for teaching writing studies at the college level:** College-level teaching in English demands breadth across the field of study one is hired in, well beyond the expertise on display in the dissertation (e.g., literate practices in university classes), and it also requires preparation and practice in pedagogy and often writing program administration. The former is built out of the foundation of coursework, but is developed more assiduously in the Special Fields Exam which tasks students with reading scholarship in a field more broadly defined than the dissertation's focus. The Professional Seminar in the Teaching of Rhetoric and Composition offers Writing Studies graduate students both a resource for teaching and for doing professional development with writing teachers. Graduate students in Writing Studies typically teach in the Rhetoric program plus other programs (e.g., BTW in English, INFO/WRIT 303; the Writers Workshop).
3. **Generalist knowledge for the field of English Writing Studies:** Graduate coursework is divided into two parts: MA coursework and PhD coursework. While the dissertation and field exam prepares students to be experts in particular fields, the MA coursework introduces students to key and active areas of theory, research, pedagogy and practice in Writing Studies. Given the interdisciplinarity that marks Writing Studies, MA and PhD students typically take classes that reflect different areas of specialization in English and in other Rhetoric and Writing Studies programs on campus (e.g., Communication, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership). The MA students' preparation to pass from this stage into the PhD program is judged through the application to Stage II of the program, in which the students' portfolios are reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee. The foreign language requirement is part of this training as well, and it is expected to be finished by application to Stage II.

4. **Professionalization:** The department has several modes of preparing students for both the professional demands of academia and for the job market for faculty positions. In coursework, students typically write seminar papers that match the demands of scholarly articles published in journals. On top of this, seminars routinely include practice in preparing and delivering conferences papers and presentations; researching and writing bibliographies of scholarship; doing original archival research; employing ethnographic and other situated research methods; and exploring different genres and media for disciplinary writing. Thus, students enter their dissertation years having had practice in common genres of academic writing. Students also get encouragement and financial support to attend up to two conferences per year. We regularly offer a summer ProSemon the topic of publication, in which student articles are workshopped with the final assignment to submit them to peer-reviewed journals. This Professional Seminar is taught as a Summer Session I seminar by faculty members who edit important journals. Graduate students in Writing Studies often participate in writing program administration, getting experience in leadership roles in the Rhetoric and/or Professional Writing Programs in English or in the Center for Writing Studies in LAS.

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Center for Writing Studies

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College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences website (<https://las.illinois.edu/>)

Admissions

Graduate College Admissions & Requirements (<https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/>)