

WRITING AND RHETORIC, PHD

Banner Code: LA-PHD-WRTR

Academic Advising

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The doctoral program in writing and rhetoric offers a curriculum that emphasizes theoretical, practical, and productive approaches to composition, professional writing, and public rhetoric. The program is built on the premise that writing and teaching in twenty-first century organizations require the rigorous, integrated study of rhetoric, technology, pedagogy, culture, and research methodologies. In addition to our core curriculum, the program's proximity to Washington, D.C. makes it uniquely situated to provide opportunities for research and internships that go beyond and enrich the student's writing and rhetoric coursework.

Admissions & Policies

Admissions

Applicants to all graduate programs at George Mason University must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as specified in Graduate Admissions (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>). Applicants to the PhD in Writing and Rhetoric must already have earned a master's degree in a relevant field before being admitted to the program.

For further information specific to the PhD in Writing and Rhetoric, see Application Requirements and Deadlines (<http://english.gmu.edu/programs/la-phd-wrtr/application/>) on the college website.

Policies

For policies governing all graduate programs, see AP.6 Graduate Policies (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

Required Master's Degree

Applicants must have earned a master's degree in a relevant field before being admitted to the PhD. The PhD requires 78 credits. Up to 30 credits may be transferred from the required master's degree. More information can be found in [AP.6.5.2 Transfer of Credit \(https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-2\)](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5-2).

Program Requirements

To receive the PhD in Writing and Rhetoric, students complete a minimum of 78 credits of coursework, 48 beyond the master's degree. Beyond the basic coursework, a dissertation is required.

Requirements

Degree Requirements

Total credits: 78

Doctoral Coursework

Core Courses

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 720	Histories of Institutional Rhetorics	3
ENGH 722	Composition Pedagogies and Programs in Context	3
ENGH 724	Professional Writing Theory and Research	3
ENGH 726	Rhetorical Theory and Public Spaces	3
Total Credits		12

Required Research Methods Course

Code	Title	Credits
ENGH 702	Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing	3
Total Credits		3

Primary Focus Area

With a faculty advisor, students complete any combination of the following courses totaling 12 credits. The selected courses should form a consistent area of research around a specific object, practice, method, set of theories, or sub-field.

Code	Title	Credits
Select four courses from the following:		12
ENGH 602	Pedagogical Research	
ENGH 611	Studies in Rhetoric	
ENGH 615	Proseminar in Composition Instruction	
ENGH 620	Topics in Pedagogy	
ENGH 689	Advanced Proposal Writing	
ENGH 690	Special Topics in Writing and Rhetoric	
ENGH 697	Composition Theory	
ENGH 710	Core Readings in Writing Studies	
ENGH 820	Studies in Rhetorical Theory and Practice ¹	
ENGH 821	Writing Program Design and Administration	
ENGH 822	Studies in Composition ¹	
ENGH 824	Studies in Professional Writing ¹	
ENGH 826	Studies in Public Rhetorics ¹	
Total Credits		12

¹ May be repeated up to four times when topic differs.

Secondary Focus Area

The selected courses form a consistent secondary area of research that supports the student's primary area and developing research interests. It is strongly suggested that the secondary focus courses be taken in other programs or disciplines.

Code	Title	Credits
	Select 3 courses from another program or discipline (see below) and/or the primary area courses, in consultation with advisor	9
	Art and Visual Technology (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/avt/)	
	Communication (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/comm/)	
	Computer Game Design (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/game/)	
	Conflict Analysis and Resolution (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/conf/)	
	Counseling and Development (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/edcd/)	
	Cultural Studies (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/cult/)	
	Education Instructional Technology (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/edit/)	
	Education Leadership (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/edle/)	
	Educational Policy (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/edpo/)	
	Global and Community Health (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/gch/)	
	Higher Education (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/he/)	
	History (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/hist/)	
	Linguistics (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/ling/)	
	Philosophy (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/phil/)	
	Policy and Government (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/pogo/)	
	Psychology (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/psyc/)	
	Public Administration (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/puad/)	
	Public Policy (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/pubp/)	
	Reading (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/edrd/)	
	Social Work (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/socw/)	
	Sociology (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/soci/)	
	Statistics (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/stat/)	
	Women and Gender Studies (https://catalog.gmu.edu/courses/wmst/)	
Total Credits		9

Electives

Code	Title	Credits
	Students complete elective courses chosen in consultation with an advisor.	30
Total Credits		30

Advancement to Candidacy

Prior to beginning dissertation research (normally after completion of 66 hours of coursework), students will take a written examination, successful completion of which will demonstrate a qualification for advancement to candidacy. The examination will cover foundation knowledge acquired in the writing and rhetoric core courses and in the student's area of primary focus.

Dissertation

The dissertation process, which begins after the student has completed 66 credit hours and passed the written qualifying exam, includes an oral

exam on the dissertation proposal, the production of the dissertation, and an oral defense of the dissertation. The student's progress at all stages will be evaluated by the dissertation committee. The dissertation should use theoretical, historical, qualitative, and/or quantitative methods to address a rhetorical problem within an institutional or public context that is framed within a disciplinary field. While these projects are often multidisciplinary in approach, they should address a gap in a discipline's research as well as solve a public rhetorical problem.

Once enrolled in ENGH 998 Doctoral Dissertation Proposal, students in this degree program must maintain continuous registration in ENGH 998 or ENGH 999 Doctoral Dissertation each semester (excluding summers) until the dissertation is submitted to and accepted by the University Libraries. Once enrolled in ENGH 999, students must follow the university's continuous registration policy as specified in the Academic Policies section of the catalog. Students who defend in the summer must be registered for at least 1 credit of ENGH 999.

Code	Title	Credits
At least 3 credits of		3
ENGH 998	Doctoral Dissertation Proposal (3 credits required)	
At least 9 credits of		9
ENGH 999	Doctoral Dissertation (minimum of 9 credits)	
Total Credits		12

Program Outcomes**Program Outcomes**

In addition to developing research, writing, and teaching skills that can be applied to industry, government, nonprofit organizations and public schools, Writing and Rhetoric PhD students will be able to

- define the contours and boundaries of the three main fields of writing studies addressed in the program.
- synthesize and critically evaluate information pertinent to research in writing studies.
- plan and conduct a program of independent research.
- select and apply the appropriate methodological tools to a research question.
- effectively present and discuss academic research.
- write for professional publication.