## Doctor of Philosophy

# English (PhD)

Julia Romberger, Graduate Program Director
jromberg@odu.edu

The PhD in English is an innovative program that integrates writing, rhetoric, discourse, technology, literary, and textual studies. Offering opportunities for creative reinterpretation of these areas within the field of English, the program emphasizes research that examines texts in a variety of overlapping and sometimes competing language-based worlds. Our focus is on how the creation and reception of texts and media are affected by form, purpose, technology of composition, audience, cultural location, social practices, and communities of discourse. Students may pursue full- or part-time study through a combination of on-campus and online. There are four concentrations:

1. Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse Studies
2. Literary and Cultural Studies
3. Technology and Media Studies
4. Student Designed Concentration (must be approved by the graduate program director)

Each concentration prepares students for academic careers, as well as other careers in which reading and writing figure prominently; the program also helps students professionalize within their current careers.

## Admission Information

Applications are accepted for entrance in fall semester only and all documents must be submitted no later than January 15. All required forms and documents should be sent directly to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Applications packets are available online at the Office of Graduate Admissions website. The following should be submitted along with the appropriate applications forms: 1) a 1500-word statement of the applicant's research interests, academic and professional goals and discussion of how the PhD in English will contribute to the achievement of those goals; 2) three letters of reference from sources capable of commenting on the applicant's readiness for advanced graduate study in English; 3) a 15-20 double-spaced-page writing sample demonstrating applicant's scholarly abilities; and 4) a résumé or curriculum vitae.

Admission standards include the following, which are required, unless otherwise stated: 1) A completed master's degree (or its equivalent) in English or in an appropriate field (such as rhetoric, composition, English education, communications, journalism, linguistics, philosophy, or science and technology studies) from a regionally accredited institution of higher education; 2) A minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) overall for the master's degree. For students whose first language is not English, a current score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) of at least 600 on the paper version, 250 on the computer-based version, or 80 on the iBT version. Students without at least some significant background in an English-related field are encouraged to take master's level coursework in English before applying. Applicants may be contacted for additional information.

## Curriculum Requirements

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in English requires 48 credit hours (39 credit hours of course work and 9 credit hours of dissertation), completion of a research competency, and the passing of a candidacy examination and an oral defense of the dissertation. An identifiable unifying principle is required for each student's program.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ENGL 810 | Major Debates in English Studies | 3 |
| ENGL 840 | Empirical Research Methods and Project Design | 3 |
| ENGL 892 | Dissertation Seminar | 3 |
| Concentration 1 * | | 9 |
| Concentration 2 * | | 9 |
| Electives ** | | 12 |
| ENGL 899 | Dissertation | 9 |
| **Total Credit Hours** | | **48** |

* Students are allowed to take only one ENGL 897 per emphasis with a total of two different sections of English 897 for the entire course of study.

** Students are allowed to take one course at the 600-level towards their course of study. The remaining four courses are electives, which may include additional courses in the student's chosen concentrations, course in other concentrations, or other 800-level courses from other programs. Students are encouraged to select electives that contribute to defining a coherent area of specialization or subfield. Note: Students and advisors should select a pedagogy course when students' previous work experience or course work does not prepare them for instructional activities related to their field.

## Concentrations

(18 credit hours)

Students will choose two nine-hour concentrations from those described below. NOTES:

1. Some courses appear in multiple concentrations, but the same course cannot be counted toward the required nine hours in multiple concentrations. (No "double-dipping" is allowed.)
2. A concentration is defined by a minimum of three courses, but students are free to select additional courses from their concentration areas as electives (see below, ELECTIVES).
3. Students who choose the "Student-Designed Concentration" as one of their two concentrations MUST follow the process for defining it specified in the description below in order for courses they take to constitute a concentration.
4. Students may count only one "Student-Designed Concentration" toward the requirement to complete two concentrations. That is, all students must select as least one of the pre-defined disciplinary concentrations, but all students may also design their own concentrations according to the process stipulated below.

### Literary and Cultural Studies Concentration

The Literary and Cultural Studies concentration will teach students to apply a range of methodologies to the study of literature and other textually informed cultural practices. By the conclusion of their studies in this concentration, students will be proficient in interpreting texts and cultural practices by critically employing methodologies that include:

- Theories of Form, such as the technical protocols of scholarly editing and the physical description of manuscript and printed texts.
- Critical Theories such as New Historicism, Feminism, Queer Theory, and Poststructuralism.
- Cultural Theories such as Critical Race Theory, Disability Studies, New Materialism, Mass/Popular Culture Theory, Posthumanism, and Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies.

| Select three of the following: | | 9 |
|---|---|---|
| ENGL 801 | Texts and Technologies | |
| ENGL 803 | Technologies of the Book | |
| ENGL 805 | Discourse and Rhetoric Across Cultures | |
| ENGL 822 | Multilingualism and Writing Instruction | |
| ENGL 825 | Scholarly Editing and Textual Scholarship | |
| ENGL 826 | The British Periodical Press | |
| ENGL 827 | London Calling: 20th and 21st Century British Literature | |
| ENGL 828 | Eighteenth Century British Literature | |
| ENGL 830 | The Digital Humanities | |

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| ENGL 832 | Digital Activisms |
| ENGL 835 | Postcolonial Literature and Theory |
| ENGL 836 | (Against) World Literature |
| ENGL 837 | Narratology |
| ENGL 841 | Nineteenth Century British Literature |
| ENGL 851 | American Literature to 1810 |
| ENGL 853 | Queer of Color Critique |
| ENGL 854 | Cultural Studies |
| ENGL 855 | Critical Race Theory |
| ENGL 856 | Pocahontas Unplugged: Jamestown, Pocahontas and the Forging of American Identity |
| ENGL 857 | American Literature 1810-1870 |
| ENGL 858 | American Literature 1870-1945 |
| ENGL 864 | Theories of Literature |
| ENGL 890 | Seminar in Textual Studies |
| ENGL 891 | Seminar in Literary Studies |
| ENGL 895 | Topics (when appropriate for emphasis) |
| **Total Credit Hours** | **9** |

### Rhetoric, Writing, and Discourse Studies Concentration

This concentration prepares students for placement and advancement in careers centered on the history and theory of rhetoric, composition studies, technical communication, writing program administration, workplace studies, and/or rhetorical and linguistic approaches to discourse and culture. It emphasizes how communications are composed, constructed, and produced as well as how they affect (inter) personal, social, cultural, and political situations. Possible areas of inquiry include:

- Institutional assessment procedures for writing and critical thinking.
- Writing practices and language use in a variety of educational, public, professional, scientific, and workplace settings.
- The influence of institutional, cultural, and disciplinary assumptions about language and language users upon rhetorical and linguistic choices.
- The rhetorical constraints and strategies of underrepresented groups.
- The historical development of rhetoric and composition and professional and technical communication in terms of theory, practice, and instruction.

| Select three of the following: | 9 |
|---|---|
| ENGL 805 | Discourse and Rhetoric Across Cultures |
| ENGL 806 | Visual Rhetoric and Document Design |
| ENGL 815 | Technical Communication Theories and Practices |
| ENGL 817 | Teaching Professional and Technical Writing |
| ENGL 820 | Pedagogy and Instructional Design |
| ENGL 821 | Compositions as Applied Rhetoric |
| ENGL 822 | Multilingualism and Writing Instruction |
| ENGL 824 | Online Writing Instruction |
| ENGL 834 | Theories of Networks |
| ENGL 860 | Classical Rhetoric and Theory Building |
| ENGL 863 | Seminar in Discourse Analysis |
| ENGL 865 | Modern Rhetoric and Theory Building |
| ENGL 870 | Research Methods in Language Analysis |
| ENGL 875 | Seminar in English Studies - Pedagogy and Curriculum Design |
| ENGL 878 | Seminar in Sociolinguistics |
| ENGL 880 | Corpus Use, Research, and Material Design |
| ENGL 883 | Seminar in Professional Writing |
| ENGL 893 | Seminar in Rhetoric |
| ENGL 895 | Topics (when appropriate for this emphasis) |
| **Total Credit Hours** | **9** |

### Technology and Media Studies Concentration

The study of technology as a political, cultural, economic, systematic, and aesthetic force is a crucial area of analysis in contemporary scholarship. This concentration prepares students for interdisciplinary work with a focus on domains of technological complexity with foundations in the materiality of rhetorical work. A major tenet of this concentration is that in addition to studying issues of technology, society, communication, and media design, we also develop practical solutions for the situations we confront. This concentration prepares students for both academic and industry positions where they can use their skills as researchers and strategists. Possible areas of research and application include:

- Ethical, social, and political dimensions of information, technology, and networked communication
- Copyright and intellectual property, including the legal implications of technological regulation and change
- Privacy issues in information technologies and media
- Implications of digital methods in the humanities
- Design and development of digital humanities tools
- Technologically mediated communication such as experience design, usability studies, and information architecture
- Visual and participatory cultures

| Select three of the following: | 9 |
|---|---|
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| ENGL 803 | Technologies of the Book |
| ENGL 806 | Visual Rhetoric and Document Design |
| ENGL 815 | Technical Communication Theories and Practices |
| ENGL 824 | Online Writing Instruction |
| ENGL 830 | The Digital Humanities |
| ENGL 832 | Digital Activisms |
| ENGL 834 | Theories of Networks |
| ENGL 866 | New Media Theory and Practice I |
| ENGL 871 | New Media Theory and Practice II |
| ENGL 880 | Corpus Use, Research, and Material Design |
| ENGL 894 | Seminar in New Media |
| ENGL 895 | Topics (when appropriate to emphasis) |
| **Total Credit Hours** | **9** |

### Student Designed Concentration

A student-designed concentration is a coherent cluster of at least three courses that are not included in the other concentration chosen by the student. The courses selected must define a cross-curricular focus that is clearly different from the foci of the predefined disciplinary concentrations listed above and may include classes from other units in the College or across the University. Students should construct concentrations under the guidance of an advisor, with advice from other mentors as needed. Students must submit a proposal for the concentration that includes a title, a description of the focus, and a tentative or exemplary selection of at least three courses. Both the advisor and the GPD must approve the proposal and place a signed approval letter in the student's advising file. Because course offerings may change, a final description of the concentration (including a title, a description of the focus, and a justification of how courses taken support the focus) must be approved by the student's advisor (in a signed letter) and submitted with the letter to the GPD before the student enrolls in Dissertation Seminar.

# Additional Requirements

## Dissertation Seminar

(3 credit hours)

Taken in the semester of the student's candidacy examination, this course (ENGL 892) supports students in preparing their dissertation prospectus. It sets up writing groups for cohorts of students entering the dissertation stage of their graduate studies.

## Dissertation Credits

(minimum of 9 credit hours)

A dissertation is required of all PhD students. A dissertation prospectus will be submitted after the student's successful completion of the candidacy exam. If the student's proposed dissertation committee approves the prospectus, the student will proceed to research and write the dissertation (ENGL 899). An oral defense of the dissertation will be scheduled after a draft of the completed dissertation is approved by the student's dissertation committee.

## Research Competency

Because the PhD is a research degree, all students are expected to present evidence of mastery of a basic research competency over and above the usual course work. Students select one of the following three options to meet this requirement:

### Foreign Language

To enter candidacy for the doctoral degree, students may present evidence of mastery of a foreign language equivalent to second-year undergraduate facility. This can be done by transcript, by demonstration of native language proficiency (for those who speak English as a second language), by taking coursework at Old Dominion or elsewhere equivalent to second-year language facility (at Old Dominion University, through language courses numbered 202), by passing a standardized test at the appropriate level, or by passing an examination administered by the Department of Foreign Languages geared to second-year language mastery. A grade of B or above in both semesters of second-year instruction will demonstrate competency in that language. Evidence of completion of the foreign language requirement should be presented to the GPD as soon as possible in the student's career and certainly before enrolling in the Dissertation Seminar.

### New Media Application

Students may choose the option of presenting evidence of mastery of computer and new media applications beyond the usual knowledge of word processing, spread sheets, projection applications (e.g., PowerPoint), portable document format (pdf), and similar, common applications and software. This would include programming languages such as:

- C, C++, or C#
- Java or JavaScript
- Go
- PHP
- Python
- Ruby
- Scala
- Shell
- TypeScript

In lieu of standardized examinations to test such knowledge, students choosing this option must submit a multimodal digital project in which demonstration of one of the allowed programming languages is paramount. The project should include:

- a project proposal for approval,
- a project log,
- 3 versions (revisions) of a portfolio of self-produced material,
- a statement of which applications or programs one is presenting and level of expertise,
- and, if needed, a demonstration of facility before members of the PhD Advisory Council, which shall have final say on whether the option has been satisfied.

Projects should be multimodal and interactive. As with seeking credit in a foreign language, students should submit evidence of completion of the requirement to the GPD as soon as possible in their careers and certainly before enrolling in the Dissertation Seminar.

### Statistics

Students whose research requires advanced knowledge of quantitative research design and statistics may show mastery of statistical methods through the following:

- Successful completion of one graduate-level course in statistics with a grade of B or higher (courses completed as part of the student's master's degree may count for this requirement). Courses offered at ODU that may fulfill this requirement include:
- STAT 613
- FOUN 722

  OR

- Successful completion of two undergraduate-level courses in quantitative research design and statistics with a grade of B or higher in both courses.

  AND

- Providing evidence to the GPD that they designed and completed a project using statistical methods (e.g., a course project, conference paper, or journal article).

## Candidacy Exams

After students have completed all course requirements and research requirements, they must pass a written and an oral examination related to their chosen field. Students who fail either exam will not be allowed to submit their dissertation proposal or to begin work on their dissertation.

## Grade Requirements

All PhD students will be graded on the traditional A, B, C, F scale (with pluses and minuses) in all courses. Pass/Fail evaluations will be used only in the case of registration for internships or for thesis or dissertation research, or when specifically approved by the director. Graduate students whose grade point averages fall below 3.00 (B) will be placed on a probationary status. After two consecutive semesters below this average or the accumulation of two grades of "C" or below, the graduate program director may dismiss the student from the doctoral program.

## Time Limit and Continuance

Students will be required to complete and successfully defend a dissertation prospectus two years after the student passes the Dissertation Seminar, ENGL 892. Students who take/pass the candidacy exam the spring after ENGL 892 will have two years from the last day of the exam. Students, however, can appeal for an extension by submitting to the PhD GPD 1) a letter that explains the reasons for needing an extension, the length of the extension, and what the student will do during this time to complete and successfully defend the prospectus, and 2) a letter from the dissertation director supporting or dismissing the appeal. The PhD program will consider the student's appeal and make a decision. If the program does not accept the appeal, the student may be dismissed; this decision is final. If the student does not complete the work according to the approved plan, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Similarly, students will be required to complete, successfully defend, and deposit a dissertation eight years after entering the program. Students, however, can appeal for an extension. For this form to be approved, students will need to submit to the PhD GPD 1) a letter that explains the reasons for needing an extension, the length of the extension, and what the student will do during this time to complete, successfully defend, and deposit the dissertation and 2) a letter from the dissertation director supporting or dismissing the appeal. The PhD program will consider the student's appeal and make a decision. If the PhD program does not accept the appeal, the student may be dismissed; this decision is final. If the appeal is approved, the student will need to re-validate courses that had been taken eight years prior in accordance with ODU policy and this should be reflected in the student's

proposed plan. If the student does not complete the work according to the approved plan, the student may be dismissed from the program.

## Transfer Credit

Twelve graduate hours not used to fulfill the requirements of a degree at other institutions or at Old Dominion University may be applied toward the fulfillment of degree requirements.  Transfer credit is accepted as degree credit at the discretion of the graduate program director.

## Financial Aid

Full-time students are eligible to apply for university fellowships and teaching and research assistantships, which are awarded on a competitive basis.

For more information relating to this program and its requirements, please visit website (https://odu.edu/englishdept/graduate/phd-english/).