

Rhetoric & Composition PhD Qualifying Exam Guidelines Updated April 2021

To take an area examination in composition and rhetoric, you are expected to do the following:

- Complete required coursework and, by the end of your second year, select two faculty members to direct your exam areas and a moderator who will keep time during your exam as well as participate in discussion.
- Complete core readings from the four major areas listed below and develop, in consultation with your examiner, a module of individualized readings. See the [Resource for Developing a Reading List](#) for ideas on module topics. The core and module constitute one area exam. (Approximately 48-50 texts.)
- **Relevant to RC students only:** The second exam area is designed in consultation with a second advisor and should reflect your research interests as you move toward the dissertation. (Approximately 48-50 texts.)
- Approximately two weeks prior to taking exams, submit to your committee a double-spaced, six-to-eight-page rationale that describes the central themes and/or critical viewpoints made available in each area of study, articulates interrelationships between areas, and addresses the overall relevance of the exam to your future work.
- Prepare for the writing portion of the exam, for which you have two options:
 - **Four Day Option:** Receive your questions for both areas of exam on agreed-upon day and return your responses via email four full days later. So, if you receive questions at 9am on Monday, you return responses at 6pm on Thursday.
 - **Two Day Option:** Receive exam #1 on the morning of agreed-upon day and return it 9 hours later via email. One to three days later, take exam #2 in the same manner.

Students are expected to produce 24-40 pages of exam writing at the end of the exam period (double-spaced, 12" font, and 1" margins). For option one, students might aim to produce 6-10 pages per day. For option two, students compose essay(s) totaling 12-20 pages each exam day.

- The oral exam should be scheduled one week or less from the completion of the written exam. For a full explanation of the oral exam process, see p. 34 in the [Graduate Program Handbook](#).

Please note that sample lists, exam questions, and rationales are available on the [Rhetoric and Composition Canvas site](#).

EXAM AREA DEVELOPMENT

RC Doctoral Students (Approximately 100 texts total)	Non-RC Doctoral Students (Total number of texts dependent on field requirements)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Exam Area One with one faculty member:</i> Core readings + module(s) (48-50 texts)• <i>Exam Area Two with second faculty member:</i> List developed with faculty member (48-50 texts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Exam Area One with one faculty member:</i> Field specific for creative writing, literature, and/or cultural studies• <i>Exam Area Two with RC faculty member:</i> RC core readings + module(s) (48-50 texts)

CORE READINGS

The core readings are intended to familiarize you with major debates and issues in the field and establish context for understanding the field's formation and development. These readings in four areas support your individualized reading module (or set of smaller modules) that you develop based on your interests and in consultation with your advisor. For the core area exam, select **at least 6 texts from each of the following four areas:**

Disciplinarity (pick 6)

Adler-Kassner, Linda, and Elizabeth Wardle, editors. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Utah State UP, 2015.

Berlin, James A. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. SIUP, 1987.

Bullock, Richard, and John Trimbur, editors. *The Politics of Writing Instruction: Postsecondary*. Boynton/Cook, 1991.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea A. Lunsford, editors. *Selected Essays of Robert J. Connors*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

Harris, Joseph. *A Teaching Subject: Composition Since 1966*. Utah State UP, 2012.

Jarratt, Susan, C., and Lynn Worsham, editors. *Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words*. MLA, 1998.

Kynard, Carmen. *Vernacular Insurrections: Race, Black Protest, and the New Century in Composition-Literacies Studies*. SUNY, 2014.

Malencyk, Rita, Susan Miller-Cochran, and Elizabeth Wardle, editors. *Composition, Rhetoric, and Disciplinarity*. Utah SUP, 2018.

McComiskey, Bruce, editor. *Microhistories of Composition*. Utah SUP, 2016.

Palmeri, Jason. *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*. SIUP, 2012.

Ruiz, Iris D., and Raúl Sánchez, editors. *Decolonizing Rhetoric and Composition Studies: New Latinx Keywords for Theory and Pedagogy*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Schell, Eileen E. *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers: Gender, Contingent Labor, and Writing Instruction*. Boynton/Cook, 1998.

Sirc, Geoffrey. *English Composition as a Happening*. Utah SUP, 2002.

Strickland, Donna. *The Managerial Unconscious in the History of Composition Studies*. SIUP, 2011.

Rhetorical Theory (pick 6)

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Routledge, 2004.

Aristotle. *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civil Discourse*. Trans. George Kennedy. Oxford UP, 1991.

Baca, Damián, and Romeo Garcia. *Rhetorics Elsewhere and Otherwise*. NCTE, 2019.

Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." 1968. *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, edited by Carl R. Burghardt. Strata, 1995, pp. 58-67.

- Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Bedford, 1990. (selections)
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 1990.
- Carter, Christopher. *The Corruption of Ethos in Fortress America: Billionaires, Bureaucrats, and Body Slams*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2020.
- Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 4th edition. Longman, 2008.
- Devitt, Amy J. *Writing Genres*. SIUP, 2004.
- Gries, Laurie. *Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics*. Utah State UP, 2015.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. U of Chicago P, 1980.
- Lunsford, Andrea, editor. *Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition*. U of Pittsburgh P, 1995.
- Plato. *Gorgias*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford UP, 1998.
- . *Phaedrus*. Trans. Robin Waterfield. Oxford UP, 2003.
- Ratcliffe, Krista. *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*. SIUP, 2005.
- Ritchie, Joy, and Kate Ronald, editors. *Available Means: An Anthology of Women's Rhetoric(s)*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2001.
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones. *Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2000.
- Smitherman, Geneva. *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Wayne State UP, 1977.
- Yergeau, Melanie. *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness*. Duke UP, 2018.

Methods & Methodologies (pick 6)

- Brandt, Deborah. *Literacy in American Lives*. Cambridge UP, 2001.
- Brandt, Deborah. *The Rise of Writing: Redefining Mass Literacy*. Cambridge UP, 2014.
- Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. Sage, 2014.
- Gaillet, Lynee Lewis, Helena Diana Eidson, and Don Gammill, Jr., eds. *Landmark Essays on Archival Research*. Routledge, 2015.
- Geisler, Cheryl, and Jason Swarts. *Coding Streams of Language: Techniques for the Systematic Coding of Text, Talk, and Other Verbal Data*. The WAC Clearinghouse/UP of Colorado, 2019.
- LaFrance, Michelle. *Institutional Ethnography: A Theory of Practice for Writing Studies Researchers*. Utah State UP, 2019.
- Martinez, Aja Y. *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory*. NCTE, 2020.
- Middleton, Michael, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook. *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in Situ*. Lexington Books, 2015.
- Nordquist, Brice. *Literacy and Mobility: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Agency at the Nexus of High School and College*. Routledge, 2017.
- Prior, Paul, and Jody Shipka. "Chronotopic Lamination: Tracing the Contours of Literate Activity." In *Writing Selves/Writing Societies: Research from Activity Perspectives*, edited by Charles Bazerman and David R. Russell. The WAC Clearinghouse, 2003, pp. 180-238.
- Ramsey, Alexis E., Wendy B. Sharer, Barbara L'Eplattenier, and Lisa Mastrangelo, eds. *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. SIUP, 2019.
- Restaino, Jessica. *Surrender: Feminist Rhetoric and Ethics in Love and Illness*. SIUP, 2019.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. 2nd ed. Zeb Books, 2013.

Writing Pedagogy (pick 6)

- Arroyo, Sarah J. *Participatory Composition: Video Culture, Writing, and Electracy*. SIUP, 2013.

- Bartholomae, David. *Writing on the Margins: Essays on Composition and Teaching*. Bedford, 2005.
- DeJoy, Nancy C. *Process This: Undergraduate Writing in Composition Studies*. Utah State UP, 2004.
- Durst, Russel. *Collision Course: Conflict, Negotiation, and Learning in College Composition*. NCTE, 1999.
- Condon, Frankie, and Vershawn Ashanti Young, editors. *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy in Rhetoric, Writing, and Communication*. CSU Open Press, 2017.
- Elbow, Peter. *Everyone Can Write: Essays Toward a Hopeful Theory of Writing and Teaching Writing*. Oxford UP, 2000.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. Herder and Herder, 1970.
- Inoue, Asao. *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*. Parlor Press, 2015.
- Lewiecki-Wilson, and Brenda Jo Brueggemann, editors. *Disability and the Teaching of Writing: A Critical Sourcebook*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Lunsford, Andrea, and Lisa Ede. *Writing Together: Collaboration in Theory and Practice*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.
- McKee, Heidi A., and Daniëlle Nicole DeVoss, editors. [*Digital Writing: Assessment and Evaluation*](#). Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State UP, 2013.
- Newkirk, Thomas. *The Performance of Self in Student Writing*. Boynton/Cook, 1997.
- Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared*. Free Press, 1989.
- Shaughnessy, Mina. *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*. Oxford UP, 1977.
- Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper Taggart, Kurt Schick, and H. Brooke Hessler, editors. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford, 2014.
- Tobin, Lad. *Writing Relationships: What Really Happens in the Composition Classroom*. Boynton/Cook, 1993.
- Villanueva, Victor. *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. NCTE, 1993.