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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RC Doctoral Students (Approximately 100 texts total)</th>
<th>Non-RC Doctoral Students (Total number of texts dependent on field requirements)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Exam Area One with one faculty member: Core readings + module(s) (48-50 texts)</td>
<td>• Exam Area One with one faculty member: Field specific for creative writing, literature, and/or cultural studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exam Area Two with second faculty member: List developed with faculty member (48-50 texts)</td>
<td>• Exam Area Two with RC faculty member: RC core readings + module(s) (48-50 texts)</td>
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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)**
Jarratt, Susan, C., and Lynn Worsham, editors. Feminism and Composition Studies: In Other Words. MLA, 1998.

**Rhetorical Theory (pick 6)**


**Methods & Methodologies (pick 6)**


**Writing Pedagogy (pick 6)**