

PhD Program with a Creative Dissertation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas: Admissions and Degree Requirements

Requirements for Admission

Application forms are available from the UNLV Graduate College (see <http://english.unlv.edu/gradforms.htm>; there is no separate departmental or fellowship application. Only students who are awarded the Schaeffer Fellowship may pursue the Ph.D. in English with a creative dissertation. The creative writing faculty and the English graduate committee will review applications soon after the January 15 application deadline. Admission is for the fall semester.

Applicants will be admitted on the basis of their previous training and future promise. The following are minimum requirements for admission to the program:

- A 1-2 page statement of purpose to the English Department graduate committee stating the applicant's reasons for wanting to enter the program and desired area of specialization.
- A 50-page or longer creative writing sample in either poetry or fiction.
- Three letters of recommendation from professors of English or creative writing specifically addressing the candidate's readiness for a Ph.D. in English with a creative dissertation.
- An MA or MFA in English or creative writing from an accredited institution and a graduate GPA of 3.5 or better.
- GRE scores in the 75th percentile or better on the general verbal test and in the 50th percentile or better on the advanced literature subject test.

Requirements for the PhD in English with a Creative Dissertation

The Schaeffer Fellowship program is designed to build on the foundations of general literary knowledge by requiring students to develop expertise in three areas selected from historical periods, genres, major figures, and special topics in creative writing. Competency is tested in a qualifying examination, usually taken during the candidate's third year. The dissertation is a creative work, such as a book-length manuscript of poems, short stories, or a novel.

Course Requirements

A total of 48 credits of approved course work beyond the MA or MFA degree, as follows:

- 24 credits in non-Creative Writing English courses with grades of B or better. Credits must include ENG 704, *Editing*, to be taken once. Credits may include ENG 729, *Forms of Fiction or Poetry*, to be taken once. Of the required 24 credits, at least 21 credits must be taken at the 700-level.

- 6 credits in ENG 705, Creative Writing, or an approved independent study with a member of the creative writing faculty.
- 18 credits in ENG 799, Dissertation.
- A creative dissertation of high quality and substantial length.
- Superior performance on a qualifying examination to be administered by the graduate committee upon the completion of coursework.
- Reading knowledge of one foreign language. Knowledge must be demonstrated by completion of a qualifying foreign language course, or by passing a reading test arranged by the English Department. Courses taken to fulfill the language requirement do not count toward the 48-credit total.

The Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination consists of a twelve-hour, three-part written examination, plus a 90-minute oral examination. The examination is taken after the foreign language and course requirements have been completed. The student must pass the qualifying examination on the first or second attempt or be disqualified from continuing the program. The examination is administered by a four-person committee, chosen by the student, comprised of three faculty members from the English department and one Graduate College representative from an outside department. At least two of the three examining committee members from the English department must hold the Ph.D.

In part one of the examination, the student will demonstrate detailed knowledge of English Literature in one of the following periods: Old and Middle English, Renaissance, Restoration and Eighteenth Century, Nineteenth Century British, American Literature to 1900, or Twentieth Century literature.

In part two, the student will demonstrate a substantial knowledge of literature (in English or in translation) in one of the following forms: drama, lyric and reflective poetry, epic and narrative poetry, prose fiction, or nonfiction prose.

In part three, the student will demonstrate extensive knowledge of an additional time period chosen from the list in part one; a major author; a special topic approved by the student's committee; or an examination of the student's own writing in relationship to other writers.

This exam is scheduled at some time after the student has completed his/her 30 credits of required course work. The student chooses an examination committee of three faculty members, the majority of whom normally are in the student's field of specialization. The student chooses a faculty member from another department to be their Graduate College Representative. The student is responsible for getting signatures on the appropriate form (see <http://english.unlv.edu/gradforms.htm>) from his/her Committee members that they are willing to serve on the Committee.

Committees may or may not choose to provide the student with a reading list of primary and secondary works in the student's areas of examination. If such lists

are provided, they may serve as guides to the examining fields rather than exclusive/exhaustive lists. How these lists are used is up to the examination committee.

The student is responsible for finding a suitable date (in consultation with his or her Committee) and room for taking his/her written exams. (Departmental secretaries' help may be sought here; see <http://english.unlv.edu/staff.htm>; FDH 608 is frequently available if scheduled far enough in advance.) Three of these exams must be taken and each lasts four hours. (Information about what periods are covered in the exam may be found in the accompanying description of the PhD program.) The number of questions and the kinds of questions asked are determined by each committee. Many faculty members have given these exams and may have sample questions that can be provided to students.

After the written exams are completed, the student and her or his Committee should schedule an oral exam in a timely manner (i.e., within one or two weeks after the written exams); again, the student should schedule a time and place for this exam in consultation with his or her Committee. This exam may cover material discussed in the written exam; it may also cover as well material not asked about on the written exams but for which the student was responsible. A DEPARTMENTAL FORM (there is no Graduate College form; see <http://english.unlv.edu/pdfs/compexam.pdf>) should be signed at this exam by all Committee members, stating whether or not the student has passed their Comprehensive Exam, written and oral. Designations of "Honors," "Pass," or "Fail" may be given for the Comprehensive Exam.

The Chair of the Examination Committee sends to the Director of Graduate Studies an assessment (300-500 words) of the student's performance on the exam.

After the Qualifying Exam is passed, the student, in consultation with his or her Committee, prepares a Dissertation Prospectus, a form for which is on the Graduate College website (see <http://english.unlv.edu/gradforms.htm>).

When the dissertation is completed, it is defended in a final exam. The student should arrange for the date, time and room for this examination. All Committee members must be present. When the Defense is passed, a form must be signed by all Committee members (see <http://english.unlv.edu/gradforms.htm>).

The Chair of the Dissertation Committee sends to the Director of Graduate Studies an assessment (300-500 words) of the student's dissertation.

The Dissertation

The student may begin work on his or her dissertation at the outset of the program and under the direction of an advisor from the creative writing faculty. The dissertation must be written under the close supervision of that advisor and a dissertation committee. The four-person dissertation committee, assembled by the

student, may be comprised of the same faculty as the student's examination committee, although the student is free to assemble a separate committee. The committee must include three faculty members from the English department and one Graduate College representative from an outside department. At least one of the three dissertation committee members from the English department must hold the Ph.D.

To earn course credit for the dissertation, students must enroll in eighteen credits (nine credits each semester for two consecutive semesters) of ENG 799. The student's dissertation advisor is the instructor of record for both semesters of ENG 799. Upon completion, the student's dissertation must be approved without dissent by the members of the dissertation committee and by a representative of the graduate faculty outside the English Department.

Representative Course of Study

- Year 1: 6 credits in ENG 705 (Creative Writing); 3 credits in ENG 729 (Forms of Fiction or Poetry); 6 - 9 credits in non-Creative Writing English courses; 3 credits in Foreign Language (as needed)
- Year 2: 15 credits in non-Creative Writing English courses; 3 credits in ENG 704 (Editing)
- Year 3: 18 credits in ENG 799 (Dissertation)

Fellowship Monies and the Graduate Assistantship

The amount of time necessary to complete the Ph.D. in English with a creative dissertation will, of course, vary for each candidate. However, the Graduate College imposes a six-year limit on all students pursuing a doctoral degree.

The Schaeffer Fellowship is generally applied as follows:

- Year one: the student receives \$25,000, approximately half from an awarded graduate assistantship and half from the Schaeffer Fellowship monies. Graduate assistantships require that the student teach two courses in the English Department each semester, or do equivalent work in the Writing Center, or in some other way complete a maximum of 20 hours weekly of teaching or research as approved by the graduate committee.
- Years two and three: the student either receives \$25,000, exclusively from Schaeffer Fellowship monies, with no teaching or other duties required, or the student receives \$25,000, half from Schaeffer Fellowship monies and half from a two-course graduate assistantship. Each option is available only once, so if the student chooses not to teach during the second year, he or she must teach during the third year, and vice versa.

After the first six semesters of study, although the student remains a Schaeffer Fellow, all financial obligations fall to the student alone. Graduate assistantships will continue to be available to the student per the standard Graduate College arrangement (\$12,500 per year for two courses).

Teaching Opportunities

Fellows who elect to teach in fulfillment of their graduate assistantship have a broad array of courses from which to choose. Depending on availability, these courses include Creative Writing I and II, Introduction to Poetry, Introduction to Literary Study, World Literature I and II, American Literature, British Literature, and Composition. Summer teaching opportunities are also available.

How to Apply

Note: The UNLV English Department is not currently accepting applications for the Schaeffer Fellowship Program for the 2007-2008 academic year. Please check back for updates.

Send the following to:

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway
Box 451017
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1017

1. A completed application (including the graduate assistant application) and the application fee. Applications are available from the UNLV Graduate College web site. There is no separate departmental or fellowship application.
2. One official transcript from each post-secondary institution attended, showing all degrees, dates awarded, and any extension or correspondence work. Only transcripts sent directly from the institution are considered official.

Send the following to:

Department of English
Schaeffer Fellowship Program
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
4505 Maryland Parkway
Box 455011
Las Vegas, NV 89154-5011

1. A 1-2 page letter of application to the English Department graduate committee stating the applicant's reasons for wanting to enter the program and desired area of specialization.
2. A 50-page or longer creative writing sample in either poetry or fiction. No critical writing sample is necessary.
3. Three letters of recommendation from professors of English or creative writing familiar with the student's academic work specifically addressing the candidate's readiness for a Ph.D. in English with a creative dissertation.

4. One official transcript from each post-secondary institution attended, showing all degrees, dates awarded, and any extension or correspondence work. Only transcripts sent directly from the institution are considered official.
5. Current, official scores for both the GRE general and Literature in English subject tests. Scores must be sent directly from the testing agency. UNLV's institution code is 4861. The English/Creative Writing department code is 2503. The subject test must be completed by the December testing date for scores to be received by the department in January; please visit www.gre.org for registration and testing dates. Applicants who do not meet the minimum GRE score requirements, or who fail to complete the subject exam by the December testing date, will not be considered for admission.