

Department of English Graduate Studies
Ph.D. Special Area Candidacy Examination

Special Area Reading List Guidelines.

The Special Area exam is intended to provide the student with the historical or contextual background necessary for writing the doctoral thesis. The lists should consist of between fifty and sixty works by between twenty and thirty authors. A "work" consists of a novel or a collection of poetry, drama or fictional or non-fictional prose by a given author or a substantial selection of thematically linked poetry or prose. Topics should be formulated to ensure that they are manageable within these limits. Each student will develop the list and a brief (one- to two-page) rationale in consultation with his or her advisor; it must then be approved by the examining committee (two other members of the department with expertise in the area) and the Graduate Chair or designate (if the Graduate Chair is a member of the examining committee). The range of chronological coverage will be left to the discretion of the supervisor and committee, but in no case is there to be more than a fifteen to twenty percent overlap with authors covered in the period exam. This list should be drawn up and approved by or as soon as possible after the completion of the period exams in November, and the Special Area exams should be written by the end of the following May.