

Creative Writing PhD Prospectus

Overview:

Creative Writing students must submit a prospectus in advance of the rest of the dissertation. The critical introduction of the creative dissertation serves in this capacity.

Timeline:

- Fall semester: Students produce a draft of the prospectus in consultation with their director. The director will guide their revisions in preparation to share with the committee.
- January/start of spring semester: All graduating students have the prospectus/critical introduction ready to share with their director and committee members.
- At least one month before the defense, students share their critical introduction with the committee.
- After receiving feedback, the student has one week to make revisions to the introduction. Two weeks before the defense, the student will share the entire dissertation with the committee including the revised critical introduction and the creative work.
- At the defense, the committee will discuss the revised prospectus/critical introduction and then move on to the creative work.

Rubric for the CW Prospectus

Purpose and Approach:

The Critical Introduction/Prospectus serves as a substantive academic essay that contextualizes and illuminates the creative portion of the dissertation. Students should work with their dissertation director to determine the most appropriate form for their introduction, which may include craft-focused essays, critical analyses, theoretical inquiries, or other scholarly approaches. The introduction must demonstrate a clear relationship to the accompanying creative work.

Basic Requirements:

Length and Format

- Word Count: Approximately 5,000 to 6,500 words (20-25 double-spaced pages)
- Documentation: Proper citation style and format, including footnotes and endnotes where applicable
- Standards: Scholarly rigor, clear argumentation, and polished prose suitable for academic publication

Research and Source Requirements

- Scholarly Sources: Minimum of two peer-reviewed scholarly sources in literary studies or a related field. Scholarly in this case means coming from a press affiliated with a university or one of the respected academic publishers (e.g., Routledge). Interviews or craft discussions of authors may be used in the introduction, though they do not normally count as scholarly sources.
- Creative Work Integration: The student's creative component must be cited (normally with quotations) and analyzed in detail at least five times throughout the introduction.
- Literary Analysis: Close reading and critical analysis of outside works of literature and of the student's creative portion are expected components.

Content Expectations

The Critical Introduction should function as a focused academic exploration of one or more problems in literary studies, aesthetics, history, philosophy, or other fields relevant to the student's creative work. Successful introductions will:

- Engage meaningfully with existing scholarship and demonstrate original thinking
- Present a coherent argument or interpretive framework
- Analyze the student's creative work within broader literary, cultural, or theoretical contexts
- Highlight works that have influenced the student's creative and critical thinking and put those works in conversation with the student's creative writing