



Department of  
**INTERDISCIPLINARY  
STUDIES**  
*Rhetoric, Communication  
and Information Design*

# RCID

## HANDBOOK AND GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY

RHETORICS, COMMUNICATION, & INFORMATION DESIGN

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# A NOTE ON THIS HANDBOOK

Throughout this handbook and guide, *faculty member in RCID* refers to someone in CAH or potentially across all Colleges at Clemson who *participates in the life of the program*. Faculty members participate by teaching seminars, serving on exam/dissertation committees, chairing or participating on a regular basis in RCID working groups or events, presenting research at the RCID Research Forum, and serving on the RCID Program Advising Council (PAC). Additionally, ALL policies and procedures of the University supersede those in this handbook. Moreover, Graduate School policies and procedures are noted throughout and for the most part supersede guidelines established by the RCID program. The Graduate School recognizes that “best practices” vary across fields and disciplines. As such, these guidelines do not constitute a contract nor an official catalog of the University. Students and faculty members in the RCID program, however, should follow the guidelines as updated. The Graduate School Policies and Procedures Manual may be found here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/academics/policies-and-procedures.html>. For all University Policies and Procedures, see <https://www.clemson.edu/policies/index.html>.

## 1. GUIDELINES FOR COURSES

While it is the professional prerogative of our faculty colleagues to manage RCID seminars as they deem best in relation to selected content and the doctoral program itself, some necessary programmatic guidelines set forth by the Graduate School (GS) and the RCID program should be followed. Additionally, as in all programs, emerging guidelines and best practices develop from the everyday lived experiences of faculty members and students actively participating in the program. RCID residential and online students follow the same basic policies and have the same privileges (e.g., access to Cooper Library books, journals, and services, financial support to present research papers at conferences, access to the working groups and other live events, in-person or via Zoom when possible, etc.). Where policies and practices may differ for residential and online students, the handbook will point them out.

### **The Graduate School’s Guidelines (Policy Handbook)**

The Graduate School requires that the course description/syllabus include information concerning (a) academic integrity, (b) attendance policy, and (c) grading system. Each semester, the Graduate School dean distributes “Graduate Class Regulations” with additional requirements and policies. For more detailed information/policies, faculty and students should review the Graduate School’s *Policies and Procedures Handbook*: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/index.html>, which covers grading policies and Incompletes, leaves of absence, withdrawals, grievances and appeals, and more.

### **The RCID Program’s Guidelines for Courses**

The RCID program has the following policies:

In general, all work

- should have as its primary purpose the *professionalization* of the students;
- should place less emphasis, if any at all, on the giving of grades, and more emphasis on the mentoring of future colleagues in the profession;
- should require doctoral-level coursework.

A seminar leader should discuss with the Director and other seminar leaders what locally as well as globally constitutes “doctoral level.” Students and faculty members can review past course syllabi for models of what constitutes doctoral-level work.

Seminars that are **Core** and **Cognate** are for the most part fundamentally different. The *Core* seminars, though radically different in their emphases, function in breadth and serve as *propaedeutics* for all future studies in respect to theoretical, practical (pedagogical, experiential), and productive knowledge, while *Cognate* seminars function in depth and provide opportunities for the investigation and further growth of this knowledge in special scholarly areas and problems. The three-credit hour course **Studio** course differs from the Core and Cognate courses.

RCID 8800: Applied Experience in Research and Communication in Studio

Students apply their seminar work systematically to individual research projects in a primary area and two support areas. Introduction to applied research in a variety of fields and places, both actual and virtual (archives, labs, studios), and to ever-changing notions of intellectual property and creative commons.

The Studio facilitator should meet with the Director and previous facilitators to develop schedules and strategies for initially preparing students for the qualifying exams and for working on their dissertation topics. Guidelines for committee selection and the Plan of Study are discussed later in this handbook.

## Course Descriptions/Syllabi

Students appreciate having access to course descriptions and syllabi prior to the first course meeting. The course description should provide detailed information about the course and include a list of required course readings (in print/online), recommended readings/viewings, and any other software or equipment required for full participation in the course. The descriptions/syllabi should be ongoing works by individual and collective seminar leaders that students can turn to during the course and review afterward for guidance and reflection. The descriptions/syllabi also constitute a public archive of the RCID program. The URL or .pdf file of the syllabus should be sent to the Program Coordinator. By the end of the first week of classes, the syllabus should be completed in Canvas. These syllabi will also be uploaded to Simple Syllabus and can be accessed internally ([https://clemsun.simplesyllabus.com/en-US/syllabus-library?organization\\_id=ad88c971-a8db-48b9-ae2d-77b84467956a](https://clemsun.simplesyllabus.com/en-US/syllabus-library?organization_id=ad88c971-a8db-48b9-ae2d-77b84467956a)).

## Assignments

Students should approach most course projects with any eye for their eventual publication in a professional venue (journal, website, blog, professional network, book, etc.). Assignments may vary in a number of ways. Given that some seminars, such as those with a pedagogical emphasis, might stress a particular disciplinary approach (e.g., technical-business writing or cultural studies), assignments need to be detailed in their expectations according to that discipline's writing/research protocols and its various journals and editors' expectations. For example, if in one discipline the editors expect five to six opening pages with a review of the literature on the subject, while another discipline's protocols and its editors expect two to three opening paragraphs with a review further documented in notes, or none at all, then, these research and writing protocols need to be detailed in the assignment. For the most part, as students progress into their assignments through the core/cognate seminars, they will have had a chance to learn more about disciplinary expectations as stated and practiced in a wide array of journals. These principles apply not only to disciplinary but also to transdisciplinary writing/research protocols and journals as well. RCID is interdisciplinary, which encourages extra attention to the different and shared practices of multiple fields of advanced study. Additionally, given that the RCID program is concerned not only with print cultures but also with other media cultures, such as photography (including photo essays and photomontage), graphic narrative (in comics, novels, reports, ads), audio (oral/aural), video, film, architecture, information design, serious games, etc., students should become proficient in these various media and, therefore, should be allowed and encouraged to work in these other media in completing their assignments for online as well as print media. In a seminar that has, say, five

assignments, the facilitator should expect the students to attempt at least one or two of the assignments in media other than print. Length of written papers may vary according to the genre or the assignment, from shorter evocative papers, exploratory-position papers, or book reviews to longer articles or multimedia projects; length and amount of other media—singular or in assemblages—may vary according to publishers’ and audiences’ expectations and generic technological constraints.

## **Assessments**

Students should be allowed—rather, expected—to revise their work after initial submission in the seminar, with the understanding that final assignments will leave no time for revisions during the course but may also be developed for publication afterward. With the idea of revision in mind, the seminar facilitator should be less concerned with assigning a grade to what constitutes a draft and be more concerned with helping the student improve the draft on its way to publication. While seminars end, the work of scholarship in the seminars never ends. This goal assumes that the assignments and the works completed warrant such attention. If the assignment is an exercise, the purpose of that assignment may have been satisfied. However, if the goal of the assignment is to advance knowledge, as most should be, then students should disseminate what has been found and learned by presenting at conferences, publishing in journals, or even staging public exhibitions. The processes and practices in a doctoral-level seminar should reflect the professional activities of publishing scholars and professionals while recognizing that all writers and artists take risks with their work, benefit from the feedback of mentors and peers, and learn to revise and shape their work across contexts for multiple readers or audiences. As students revise their work during and after seminars, they will develop an emergent professional portfolio of work that may inform their dissertation research and later define their expertise in their respective field(s). The Studio facilitator and committee chairs will also help students develop this work even further.

## **Decorum, Professional Communication, and Antiharassment**

All students are expected to behave responsibly and collegially in their courses as students or teachers, a course’s or program’s online space, via email, or in any other interactive course context. Everything students write in the course, including email with each other and the instructor, discussion posts and replies, peer responses, and even text messages, should be conducted professionally and (probably) more formally than you might expect. As a writer, you should be especially mindful of decorum, which is alertness to the ethical practices of a community. Harassment of any kind in email, discussion posts, or other communication will not be tolerated and may be subject to a warning from the instructor, dismissal from the course, or referral to the Director of RCID or the Dean of the Graduate School. Students who feel they have been harassed in some way should contact the instructor privately by email, text, or phone.

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran’s status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix>.

See the *Office of Access Compliance and Education*, <https://www.clemson.edu/ceba/ace/>. Chairs of dissertation committees, as well as faculty participating in the program, should study this site and can find more information on Title IX at this site: <https://www.clemson.edu/ceba/ace/title-ix/>. The legal phrase “Sexual Harassment” has a variety of meanings and, therefore, it would benefit faculty as well as GTAs to study the full array of what that phrase constitutes. Additionally, Clemson has its own policy in terms of reporting any issue concerning access compliance and education.

Any complaint alleged or reported to the Director that appears to be a violation of basic principles of access and equity (broadly and specifically defined by the Federal Government as well as in the policies set forth by Clemson University), must be reported. It is not the responsibility of the Director or other “managers” to help those involved or to investigate the matter; rather, it is the responsibility of the Director to report the matter to the proper person (a Chair of a Department or a Dean of a College) or agency (Access Compliance and Education, etc.).

## **RCID Policy on Race and Racism**

Our program acknowledges the presence of historical systemic racism in cultures, political systems, educational institutions, and every aspect of our lives. To help address racism, RCID students have written the following recommendations for RCID:

- Encourage the formation of a more diverse student body. RCID is a predominantly white PhD program, and more can be done to actively bring more students of color into the program.
- Encourage more representation of black, indigenous, and disabled writers in RCID courses, colloquia, and reading lists.
- Encourage coursework in RCID devoted fully and explicitly to critical theory, to antiracist pedagogies and assessment, to cultural and feminist rhetorics, and to the languages, literacies, and rhetorics of social justice movements.
- Encourage active engagement with antiracist and socially just pedagogies, as many are teachers in addition to being PhD students.
- Encourage a more robust effort to probe questions of privilege, intersectionality, and inequality in everything S3S and RCID do.
- Encourage more active and vocal accountability among program stakeholders in an effort to improve the program from the inside.
- Encourage fundamental shifts in the everyday attitudes, approaches, sensibilities, and practices of the program to more actively foreground social justice in our lives, our curricula, and our discussions.

## **Difficult Conversations and Freedom of Speech**

The study and discussion of rhetorics, communication, and information design will sometimes lead to difficult, even uncomfortable conversations about how people use language and writing in their lives to create or challenge community ideals, social, racial, gender, and class norms, and other ethical practices and inequities. Talking and writing about these rhetorics to challenge, question, or support them should be expected. Advocacy and dissent in course readings and discussions will be common. Faculty and students should make every effort, as ethical and responsible rhetoricians, to engage uncomfortable topics professionally and with empathy for those who may experience difficult topics differently. Clemson University has adopted the core principles articulated in the [“Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression”](#) at the University of Chicago.

## **Generative AI**

Refer to individual instructor policies.

## 2. CORE, COGNATE (SPECIAL-TOPIC), STUDIO, AND RESEARCH COURSES

### The RCID Curriculum

The RCID program is a 54-credit hour program that consists of 15 credit hours of core coursework, 15 credit hours of cognate coursework, six credit hours of applied research coursework to develop the dissertation research primary and secondary support areas plus the dissertation prospectus, and 18 credit hours of dissertation research beyond the exams. The total number of credit hours required is 54. This list shows available courses and the number of credits required:

Core Seminars: 15 hours (all courses are 3 credit hours)

- RCID 8010 - Histories of Rhetorics
- RCID 8020 - Cultural Research Methods
- RCID 8030 - Empirical Research Methods
- RCID 8040 - Visual Rhetorics
- RCID 8050 - Rhetorics, Communication, Information Technologies

Cognate Seminars: 18 hours with any combination of 8110 and 8130

- RCID 8110 - Perspectives in Information Designs
- RCID 8130 - Special Topics 3 Credits

Studio: 3 hours

- RCID 8800 - Applied Experience in Research and Communication in Studio

Dissertation Hours: 18 hours

- RCID 9910 - Doctoral Dissertation Research

\* RCID 8310 and RCID 8330 are research courses for residential students on an assistantship only after the two sections of the Studio, 8800, are completed. It is necessary to take a full course load to maintain an assistantship. These courses are not used as substitutes for cognate courses.

Appendix A includes a “Checklist for the PhD Program” that students can use to track their progress through the program.

### For Faculty: How to Submit a Seminar Proposal

At least once per year, a call will invite CAH faculty and others to submit proposals for core and cognate (special topic) seminars, either ones that are new or may have been taught previously. A proposal to teach a core or cognate (special topic) course in RCID should include the following:

- the name of a faculty member/s who would teach it and names of any students who have requested it;
- a seminar description, including a short discussion of how the course suits the program’s three areas of rhetorics, communication, and information design;
- a well-developed syllabus that must include seminar objectives (what will have been accomplished), how objectives are to be implemented through assignments, and the nature of assignments;
- course texts;
- weekly reading assignments along with additional recommended readings,
- assessment methods and grading criteria.

New courses may emerge from the interests of students and faculty expressed in colloquia or working groups. Those who participate in both should be equal partners in the development of the proposals. RCID students and Clemson faculty may and should collaborate to create and propose new courses. All course proposals will be considered by the RCID curriculum committee to determine which and when seminars may be offered.

The selections will be based on students' as well as programmatic needs at the time and on faculty availability.

### 3. REGISTERING FOR COURSES

The Director and the Program Coordinator for Interdisciplinary Studies (Jennifer DeLong) serve as registration coordinators for all RCID students. Registration for the following semester's courses typically opens several months before a semester begins. The Director will provide a list of available Core and Cognate courses. Students who have not completed required coursework should consult with the Director about courses they would like to take, then, using the RCID Checklist for assistance, register in iRoar when it opens for registration. Seminars may have limited seats, so please register as early as possible in the process.

GTAs and GRAs must be enrolled full time, which means nine (9) credit hours. To get to the required nine hours, these students may take RCID 8330 (Graduate Readings) or RCID 9910 (Dissertation) to fulfill the requirement and if applicable. Students who have completed coursework who are not GTAs or GRAs should take one or more credit hours of RCID 8330 or RCID 9910 to maintain satisfactory progress toward the degree and to avoid having to request re-entry to the program, which is a fairly simple but necessary step that requires the Director's and Graduate School's approval. Students who plan to take exams or defend the dissertation in a given semester must be enrolled in at least one (1) credit hour that semester.

Cognate seminars (RCID 8110 or 8130) have prerequisites that require completion of all Core seminars (RCID 8010, 8020, 8030, 8040, and 8050). In many cases, you will need to request an override to enroll in a Cognate seminar since not all Core courses can be completed in a single semester. To request an override, follow the instructions below.

To enroll in RCID 8330 (Graduate Readings) or RCID 9910 (Dissertation), follow the instructions below.

Some faculty members may agree to mentor students in an independent study, but before asking someone, consider these restrictions:

- Independent study courses should not serve as substitutes for Core or Cognate seminars that are routinely offered;
- The student is largely responsible for designing the independent study course, which must be subsequently approved by the faculty mentor and the Director;
- The faculty member must agree and have graduate teaching faculty status in RCID, Interdisciplinary Studies, the College of Arts and Humanities, or, with advanced approval by the Director, another College at Clemson. Independent studies with external faculty members aren't an option;
- Independent study courses may fulfill Cognate course requirements and, only in exceptional circumstances, Core seminars, both with the approval of the Director.
- You must submit a copy of the course syllabus and the registration information discussed below to the Director and scheduling coordinator before the start of the relevant semester.

#### **Requesting Overrides, Independent Studies, Dissertation Hours or Other Registration Assistance**

If you need assistance with registration, please submit the following information with your request to override, add, or drop courses:

- Name:
- Email address:
- Clemson ID (CID):
- Instructor name:
- Course number and credit hours preferred:
- Online or residential student?:
- Notes:

The Department Chair and Jennifer DeLong (Interdisciplinary Studies Program Coordinator) serve as the registration coordinators for RCID.

## 4. PROGRESS TOWARD THE DEGREE

Structural steps built into the program help the faculty, students, and administration determine successful progress toward completion of the degree. Successful completion of all work is mandatory. The maintenance of a grade-point average of at least a “B” is only one of several determining factors. At any step along the way, if a student fails to move to the next step, they may be dismissed from the program. Only the RCID program can recommend to the Graduate School that a student be dismissed. If the chair of the dissertation committee sees a student not making progress and has determined that the student will not succeed in the program, the chair, in consultation with the Director, should document a request to have the student dismissed from the program and submit the document to the Director, who may present the request to the Graduate School.

Here are the four critical steps in progress toward the degree:

1. Completion of all core and cognate courses. For residential students, the final six hours of core and cognate courses should be taken in the same term as the RCID Studio. For online students, you need to have completed or will be completing all core and cognate courses in the same term you take studio.
2. Completion of the RCID Studio course.
3. Completion of exams: prospectus and four exams.
4. Completion and successful defense of the dissertation.

Failure to advance through each of these successive steps can and most likely will contribute to dismissal. Common obstacles are Incomplete grades in courses that aren’t successfully resolved by the deadline for completing required work. Instructors can only give Incompletes in extreme situations (illness, death in the family, etc.) and when all but the final course assignment remains to be completed. If significant coursework is incomplete, the student will simply have to retake the courses when offered, if allowed. Some courses are offered on a two-year cycle, so postponing or retaking courses may not be possible. Every reasonable opportunity will be afforded the student to successfully complete a course or courses.

Students may request a leave of absence that should be discussed with your advisor or RCID Director. The Graduate School no longer requires continuous enrollment, so no leave of absence paperwork is required. Additionally, problems may arise when students do not communicate regularly and professionally with their faculty mentors and the Director, who are primarily responsible for managing the student’s program. Students should not be managing their programs by themselves without direction and guidance.

For additional information regarding Incompletes and dismissals, see the Graduate School’s Policy and Procedures Handbook: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/policies-procedures/index.html>.

## Length of Time for Completion

Length of time for completion of the exams and dissertation should not exceed two or three years. Residential students with assistantships should complete Core and Cognate requirements in the first two years. Online students may take more time but should make steady progress. Students planning to go on the job market should have significant portions of the dissertation completed near the beginning of their terminal year, when the job search will likely begin if it hasn't already. One possible scenario for the timing and preparation through the exams looks like this:

- Tentative dissertation prospectus and examination reading lists (by the end of Studio)
- Examinations taken and oral/multimodal presentation (four exams, during the fall semester or the penultimate year)
- Meeting with dissertation committee following exams
- If necessary, revision of the final dissertation prospectus.
- Two to three chapters of the dissertation approved by fall in the terminal year.

The “Checklist for the RCID PhD Program” (Appendix A) should be used to record progress toward the degree. You can or request the current version from the Program Coordinator.

# 5. STUDIO: EXAM AREAS AND THE DRAFTING OF THE PROSPECTUS

## Overview of Studio

### Catalog Description

RCID 8800 (Studio): “Students apply their seminar work systematically to individual research projects in a primary area and two support areas. Introduction to applied research in a variety of places, both actual and virtual (archives, labs, studios), and to ever-changing notions of intellectual property and creative commons.”

### Format of the Studio Course

The instructor of Studio will be more like a facilitator and respondent. The course is not a seminar but a working studio, with student writing and research at its core.\* The overall task in this studio is for the students to get a practical and theoretical sense of what variously constitutes research in their primary disciplinary areas and other “spaces,” in disciplines in and outside the College, and to search for ways of appropriating and recombining what is learned outside the field and how it might work for their own research habits and goals.

Studio is not so much a class as a workshop for students to identify, explore, analyze, and present research and communication conventions and practices occurring in their own and supporting disciplines. In Studio students will share questions and insights about your research and readings, deliver a few oral/multimodal presentations about ongoing work, submit a series of exploratory written assignments on a secondary area or discipline, create 3 research areas with bibliographies, and draft a dissertation prospectus. Some attention in Studio will also be paid to research ethics (including the IRB process), intellectual property, plagiarism, and the scholarly publication process.

### Exam Areas

Students develop the draft of a dissertation prospectus in RCID 8800 (Studio). The process begins with a focus on the primary research area while students also explore and articulate the research and communication

practices in two support areas, which may originate in disciplines other than that of the primary research area. As students focus on their primary area of research interest (and a specific issue, question, or problem), they elaborate the terminologies, organizational structures, argumentative conventions, scholarly conversations, stylistic patterns, and networks/network sense that define it. The secondary area(s) of research interest should emerge from this exploration over time and are more prone to be fluid/in flux at this stage of thinking and research. In-depth exploration of other disciplines in Studio may lead in or out of a secondary area, and/or provide a different perspective on or insights about potential secondary areas that otherwise might not be known. For the primary and secondary areas, student will need to understand historical contexts and contemporary areas of inquiry.

#### Identification of Primary Area and Secondary (Support) Areas

Students will eventually take comprehensive exams on one primary area and two secondary support areas. You should list these concisely at the start of the prospectus.

Students and instructors can review past instances of the Studio course(s) by reaching out to the Program Coordinator and requesting copies of these.

### **Examples of Primary/Secondary Area Configurations**

Working Title: The Rhetoric of Information Design

Primary Area: Information Design

Secondary Support Area: Visual Rhetorics/Communication

Secondary Support Area: History of Rhetoric (Delivery)

Working Title: The Emergence of Postmodern Ethnography

Primary Area: Postmodern Ethnography

Secondary Support Area: Revisionary Anthropology

Secondary Support Area: New Media Theory

Working Title: Transmediated Rhetorical Invention

Primary Area: Rhetorical Invention

Secondary Support Area: Electronic Discourse (Electracy)

Secondary Support Area: Critical Theory

Working Title: A Burkean Herstory: Liminal Narratives in the Life and Work of Kenneth Burke

Primary Area: Feminist Rhetorical Historiography

Secondary Support Area: Burkean Studies

Secondary Support Area: Archival Research

### **The Prospectus**

The dissertation prospectus must follow and include the outline of topics shown here. Ultimately, the dissertation committee chair and members will need to approve the prospectus prior to the comprehensive exams. See Chapter 5, “Guidelines for Exams/Dissertation Committees.”

Working Title

A good title includes relevant keywords and, if possible, helps readers understand the focus of your dissertation. At this stage, you should probably avoid overly playful or allusive titles in favor of descriptive and informative titles. (Playful or allusive titles sometimes don't age well or transcend their immediate or local contexts.)

#### Statement of Research Problem, Question, Issue, Conjecture

Research, at the stage of a needed rationale, begins with the discovery and statement of a problem, question, or crucial issue. Therefore, you should state, as clearly as possible in at least one page, what your research problem is. To avoid the exclusive use of high-level abstractions, you should give several examples of how the problem manifests itself in specific situations.

#### Review of Scholarship

You should summarize as succinctly as possible the major as well as minor or even tangential researchers who have worked on the problem, question, or crucial issue that you will investigate. You should report comprehensively what has been written and researched on your subject. This review should include accounts of the approaches and results. You should explain how your assumptions and approach might be different from previous researchers, or investigators.

#### Significance of the Research

You should explain why the research project is important to you and how the project will contribute to the growth of knowledge. You should not assume, however, that others will necessarily see and agree that there is a problem worth researching further. You have to make the case that a problem is worthy of investigating and offering a solution. You should argue for both a statement of fact and a statement of value, citing both the current situation and why it matters or what difference your research will make in understanding it more fully or complexly. If the problem is a common, ongoing and a valued one acknowledged in the research community, you don't need to re-argue its value or importance in depth but should instead focus on why your approach/ methodology will reveal new insights.

#### Methodology and Methods

You should indicate how will research the problem, question, or critical issue, and show why your approach is an appropriate methodology and methods. You should use the methodologies and methods studied in Core Courses in research (RCID 8020 and 8030), either empirical or cultural methodologies and methods or perhaps both. You should be specific in terms of method and expected outcomes.

#### Provisional Organization

In outline form, you should list chapters with titles and give brief yet informative, summaries of what will be covered in each chapter. The structuring and sequencing of the chapters should unfold in a systematic, logical way.

#### Preliminary Bibliography Related to Your Dissertation Project

The prospectus should provide a comprehensive list of works that you will have read and studied critically for both the qualifying exams and this project. You should get as much help as possible from your chair as well as other faculty and students, perhaps in the relevant colloquia or working groups, and should take care to determine what sources might be needed that are not presently available in the Clemson libraries. In the end, the compilation of works to study should come your reading and studying of the works themselves. You

should try to explain the ongoing conversation's themes, which are almost always signaled in the early pages of books and articles on the subject. Your bibliographies should be the key works that anyone seeking a deep understanding of the issues should read to become well versed in the subject matter. The actual bibliography in the prospectus should be composed of three separate, yet complementary bibliographies, one each for the primary and two secondary areas.

In general, a complete, well-thought-out prospectus will run approximately 30 to 35 pages plus bibliographies.

#### Additional Considerations

- *Timelines*. You may include a timeline for completion of individual chapters and the full draft of the dissertation.
- *Multimedia Components*. If you plan to include images, video, audio, or other multimedia components in the dissertation, you should say so somewhere in the prospectus.
- *Headers*. Use informative headers to clearly identify the focus of a section and as signposts that help your reader understand the flow of the argument.
- *Metadiscourse*. Avoid using too much of it. Instead, create expectations with statements about your subject matter and informative headers. For more information, see "Some Exploratory Discourse on Metadiscourse" by William J. Vande Kopple, *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 36, no. 1 (Feb., 1985), pp. 82-93. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357609>.
- *Style*. Most of your readers will appreciate clear and elegant prose. Umberto Eco has some helpful suggestions in *How to Write a Thesis*. Here's an excerpt: <https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/umbertoeco-how-to-write-a-thesis/>.

## 6. GUIDELINES FOR EXAMS & DISSERTATION COMMITTEES

### Forming the Committee and Completing the Plan of Study (GS2)

After, students should then form a dissertation committee near the end of the second year for full-time residential students and for online students immediately following studio. When students have commitments for the committee, they should fill out the Graduate School's GS2 form for forming the committee and finalizing the Plan of Study. For help with the Plan of Study, students should familiarize themselves with the RCID Checklist, which is included in Appendix A. The GS2 and Plan of Study process and forms are on the Graduate School's website here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/plan-of-study/index.html>.\*

### The Committee Chair

It is generally assumed that the student has had some communication with a prospective committee chair and has ideally taken a course with the faculty member. The chair is usually someone with a disciplinary identity and home department or professional affiliation that will aid the student not only with the exams and the dissertation topic but also in a job search in the academy, industry, government, or nonprofit career path. Put simply, areas of interest and expertise should align. Chairs are typically limited to directing three committees but in some cases may take on more in rare instances.

The prospective chair should have an active interest in the RCID program, in its colloquia, research forums, working groups, and other events, or be willing to develop such an interest, and have some knowledge or experience in the interdisciplinary areas of rhetorics, communication, and information design.

After meeting with the student and discussing the proper choice for a chair, the Director may meet with the proposed faculty member to determine interest and availability and to provide information about responsibilities as chair.\* The Director may also meet with the faculty member's department chair to discuss availability. All chairs must be members of Clemson's graduate faculty and have directing status, or must become members before the GS2 can be completed. Before final approval, the Director may consult with the chair of the faculty member's department to determine if he or she is available for chairing a doctoral committee.

The chair will have the major responsibility of mentoring and overseeing the student's work toward the completion of the doctorate.

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\* Students with an external advisor (committee member) currently have to complete a paper GS2 form for the committee and plan of study. Ask the RCID program coordinator for a current copy of the fillable PDF form.

## **The Committee Members**

The constitution of the committee should be arrived at through discussions between the chair and student in consultation with the Director, who will eventually have to approve and sign the GS2 Plan of Study form. Along with the chair, the Graduate School requires three additional members. These three committee members should be selected, if at all possible, in light of the student's two secondary support areas. In some cases, the student, with the approval of the chair, may have a fifth committee member. Since RCID is a transdisciplinary program, no student, however, should have all members of the committee with a single disciplinary focus.

When the student, then, selects a chair and three readers, the committee must be constituted with CU faculty ideally from at least three disciplinary backgrounds. Check with the RCID Director for pre-approval.

## **External Advisors on Committees**

Students may include an additional reader from another university, but that person must be a member of the graduate faculty at their home institution, if applicable. Faculty advisors outside CAH or from another university, should be fully apprised of the program by the chair of the committee (with the help of the Director, as needed) and its basic requirements so that there will be no misunderstandings of the student's process of completing the exams and dissertation successfully. External advisors do not figure in the distribution of committee members across three different departments.

To obtain approval for an external advisor—a non-Clemson faculty member—the student or the chair of the student's committee should contact the Program Coordinator. Students with an external advisor (committee member) currently have to complete a paper GS2 form for the committee and plan of study.

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\* If a faculty member who has been asked to serve as chair of a committee has expectations of leaving Clemson (for a sabbatical, for a position elsewhere, or for retirement), the faculty member should not agree to serve. A faculty member who agrees to serve as a chair of a student's committee is expected to be present and available to mentor the student through the qualifying exams, through the dissertation process with a successful defense, and through the job search process.

## **Responsibilities of the Committee**

Once selected and approved, the chair with the three or more readers will become the student's committee, guiding, recommending, and assessing the student's path and work toward completing comprehensive exams and the dissertation project. Before taking the exams, the chair will help the student further develop the prospectus, which is the basis of the exams (written and oral). Committee readers are encouraged to respond to prospectus and dissertation chapter drafts throughout the process. Some may choose to respond closer to the end once the prospectus or dissertation nears completion. The committee chair should offer direction and feedback throughout all stages of the process and will meet with the student regularly.

## **Communication Throughout the Exam and Dissertation Process**

Open and regular communication is important at all stages. The committee chair, readers, and students should respond to each other promptly when requesting consultations or setting up meetings and defenses via email, usually within 24 hours. When documents are exchanged, recipients should acknowledge receipt.

## **Responsibilities of the Student**

Students and the committee members work through the chair of the committee. Under no circumstances should students attempt to chair (i.e., manage) their own program. Throughout the prospectus, exam, and dissertation process, students should be mindful to stay in regular touch with the chair and committee readers occasionally when updates would help demonstrate good progress toward the degree. Students are solely responsible for providing well-written or designed content for review by the chair and readers. The prospectus and dissertation chapter drafts should always be carefully edited and proofread, with all citations properly documented with works cited or references included. The chair and readers appreciate notes that explain or contextualize the submission (i.e., "submission notes" or "artist's statement"). In many cases, students may have to write several drafts of the prospectus before taking exams or multiple drafts of a dissertation chapter before it is approved for distribution to committee readers.

## **Committee Changes**

Committee changes should not be made casually. If a student wishes to change the chair of a committee, consultation with and approval of the Director is required. Replacing committee members may be possible with approval of the Chair and/or the Director.

# **7. GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS**

The RCID comprehensive exams meet the requirement for the comprehensive exam as described in the Graduate School Policies and Procedures Handbook:

<https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/academics/policies-and-procedures.html>

## **GS2 and the Exams**

Committee chairs should ensure that before a committee member agrees to serve on a student's committee, they have read either the student's draft of the prospectus or a well-crafted summary of the proposed project. Then and only then should the student fill out the Graduate School's GS2 forms for creating the committee

and finalizing the Plan of Study. Students should familiarize themselves with the RCID Checklist, which is included in Appendix A, and consult with the Director as needed.

### **Aim of the Exams**

The aim of the comprehensive exams is to prepare students for their transdisciplinary emphasis in research and for writing their dissertation.

### **Timing of the Exams**

The exams should be taken as early as possible during the third year—in a four-year program—after the satisfactory completion of all Core and Cognate courses as well as the Studio and approval of the prospectus by the committee. Typically, full or part-time students take their exams within a year of completing Studio.

The chair with the approval of the committee may recommend, prior to taking the exams, that a student take an additional course or courses (up to 9 hrs) in the student's primary or secondary support areas. The chair will have the final say with the general approval of the committee on when the student is ready to take the exams (and later defend the dissertation). If the issue of timing becomes unresolvable for the student or the chair, the Director should be consulted.

### **Approval of the Prospectus**

Prior to scheduling the comprehensive exams, the chair of the student's committee must approve the prospectus and then seek the approval of the committee readers. Once approved, the chair and committee members must complete and submit the Graduate School's form, "GS-Approval of Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal," which can be found online here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/files/pdfs/GS-ResearchApproval.pdf>. Ask the Director if the form is unavailable on the web.

Once the final prospectus has been approved by the student's chair and committee, the chair should distribute copies of the final prospectus to the committee and send the original to the Director of RCID, along with a copy of the completed Research Approval form. The prospectus and approval form will be kept on file by the Director. See chapter 6, "Guidelines for Comprehensive Exams," for a discussion of the prospectus's role in the exam process.

After a student has written the dissertation prospectus and three reading lists for the primary and two support areas, and the committee chair is satisfied with all of that, these documents should be given to the other committee members for review and approval. Chairs should explain to the committee that this is the time for them to communicate to the student any feedback on the prospectus and any additions or deletions they recommend for the reading lists. Students should communicate with all of their committee members prior to being green-lighted to take the exams. Suggestions for significant revisions of the prospectus or plan for the dissertation should be discussed before the student takes the exams. Chairs and committee members should not hold students responsible for knowing or drawing from sources not on their reading lists. Nevertheless, students should expect that constructive feedback will be offered by committee members during an exam defense and that the prospectus may need further revision before final approval.

At some point after the committee has provided prospectus feedback to the student, the chair should query the committee to ask whether they believe the student is ready to move forward with taking the exams. If they agree, then the chair and student work out a schedule that includes the exact date they receive their questions, the two-week period over which they'll write their exams, and the exact date they will present their fourth exam, the multimodal presentation to the public. Sometimes it may be necessary to lock down the presentation/defense date in advance of the committee having given the "thumbs up" on the prospectus and

reading lists. Please be sure to state that this step is necessary to get the event on everyone's calendar. Until the committee approves the prospectus and readings lists with the chair, the date for the fourth exam is conditional. It is still incumbent upon the chair to get all committee members' approvals before moving forward with the exams.

Here is a summary of the key steps throughout the exam process:

1. The chair approves the prospectus for distribution to committee members.
2. The chair distributes the prospectus to committee members, asking them to a) agree (or not) that the student is ready to take exams); b) identify any additional readings for the primary or secondary area reading lists; and c) agree to a timeline for the student to receive exam questions, write the first three exams, and present the fourth exam publicly.
3. The chair sends the exam directions and questions to the student on the specified date, after which students have two weeks to return the completed written exams.
4. The student returns the three written exams to the chair two weeks after receiving them.
5. The chair distributes the written exams to committee members for their review.
6. Approximately seven to ten days later, the student presents the fourth exam to the public and committee members and then meets with the committee privately to discuss the exams and the plan for the dissertation.

## Readiness for the Exams

The student's readiness for the exams is of the essence. For example, the exams may be given after several drafts of the prospectus have been developed over a period of time and strongly demonstrate to the committee that the student is well prepared to complete the exams successfully. It is especially the chair's responsibility to determine the student's preparedness. If the chair believes a student may not be ready, the student may be asked to take a mock oral exam on the readings to determine, as much as possible, whether the student has read and understands the works included in the approved three bibliographies in the prospectus.

## Exam Questions

The following sections describe best practices and guidelines for crafting the exam questions. It is up to the chair to decide whether they write all the questions following the handbook samples or whether they prefer to ask the whole committee to collaborate on creating the questions. If the latter, then the chair should provide the committee with relevant sample questions and language from this handbook to guide them.

The exam questions are given to the student by email on the date agreed to by the student and the chair. At the end of the two-week period, the student returns the written exams to the chair for distribution to committee readers.

**The exams are open book, take-home written exams. Students may refer to notes and texts. They are not allowed to repurpose previously written content. The writing on the exams must be original and new, as well as responsive to the specific nature of the questions. Any quoted or paraphrased content from external sources must be cited properly in MLA, Chicago or APA documentation style, with a Works Cited or References section at the end of each written response.**

## Format of the Exams

The exams consist of three written essays and one oral-multimodal presentation based on the emphasis of the dissertation.

The three written exams typically include one exam in a student's primary area, one that covers the two support areas, and one that asks the student to apply their knowledge to develop a pedagogy or similar application that teaches the subject of the dissertation. The distribution of the three areas need not be fixed in terms of dealing with each primary or secondary area in a separate exam. For example, while the three areas (one primary and two secondary areas) may each individually inform an exam, other combinations may be possible. The first may be primary, while the second may be a combination of the two secondary areas in support of the primary area, and the third may focus on combined pedagogies of the three areas. This latter approach has been generally followed. (See such a paradigm for the three exams below.) The chair may ask the student to focus on the secondary areas in the second and third exams if an applied focus seems unnecessary or irrelevant given the student's career trajectory.

The exams should be **formal essay exams** with a set of carefully worded questions with stipulations. The chair should give precise directions at the head of each exam. Here's an example:

### **Instructions**

Your RCID comprehensive exams are open book, take-home written exams. Students may refer to notes and texts. You are not allowed to repurpose previously written content. The writing on the exams must be original and new, as well as responsive to the specific nature of the questions. Any quoted or paraphrased content from external sources must be cited properly in MLA, Chicago or APA documentation style, with a Works Cited or References section at the end of each written response.

The questions being put to you demand an essay response. Be sure that you respond in standard academic essay form and prose (with claims and support all the way through); be sure that you compose clear and cogent arguments. Your response to each question should be fifteen to twenty pages in response to each question, not including your bibliography of cited sources. Use double-spacing, one-inch margins all around, and an 11 or 12 pt legible font. When you have completed your essays, be sure to proofread them carefully, looking for omissions, typos, etc. Include the exam prompt at the beginning of each essay. When finished with your exams, send a Word or PDF file to your chair.

The three written exams must be completed over a two-week period. Here is a sample sequence:

November 14: Three Exam Questions Distributed to Student

November 28: Three Exams Completed and Returned to Chair as a Word or PDF file.

December 6, 10am: Presentation / Oral Examination

Each exam question may have one question with subparts, or two to three questions on some specific aspect of the project or support areas. The questions will be most likely determined by the nature of the problem or issue at the heart of the dissertation project. The exams should ask students to display *theoretical knowledge*, or knowing; *practical knowledge*, or pedagogy and praxis; and *productive knowledge*, making.

These exams should draw on the selected, yet comprehensive, primary and secondary sources identified in the student's approved prospectus, which itself outlines the research focus and plan for the dissertation. For the three written exams, these readings should consist of approximately fifty to one hundred books or articles, with three to four articles being equivalent to one book, with the three bibliographies in the prospectus focused on the primary and two support areas.\*

The *oral-multimodal exam* is a twenty to thirty minute presentation to the dissertation committee and other interested RCID faculty and students and should be about a week after the written exams have been sent to the committee. The oral-multimodal exam should be comparable to a conference presentation or an on-site job talk, both of which normally include multimodal components, such as slides, audio, or video. Presenters should avoid simply reading a prepared text with no audience engagement. Avoid simply reading slides.

Instead, summarize them or weave them into broader argument or narrative. Be careful that any audio or video clips are short and that technical issues with sharing them, including WiFi performance, have been resolved in advance. Since the RCID program prepares students to develop their thinking across a number of traditional and emergent media, students should demonstrate their fluency in a variety of oral and new media formats. The committee and the audience expect more engaging than a simple slide presentation. Students should also be mindful to make their multimedia presentations accessible, with scripts for people with visual or hearing disabilities. Provide a script or supporting documents when possible.

## Sample Exam Questions

The exams should be essay questions—usually one per exam—and given to the student at the start of the two week exam period. The three written exams should focus on the primary and two secondary areas and, in most cases, a pedagogical or workplace application, if the topic lends itself to such.

### Sample First Exam: Primary Area (Feminist Circulation)

Articulate and defend the scholarly, yet everyday, *importance* and *value* of your proposed dissertation on “feminist circulation.” In other words, what is your point of issue? What is your *conjecture*? How is it rooted in a rhetorical situation, arising from a conflict of issues among thinkers/researchers in or across disciplines/fields? How do you see yourself entering and contributing at the level of *theory* to this situation? What’s in it for the general public?

Here is one general way, according to stasis theory in feminist circulation, to take on this first prompt: *Conjecture*: Is there an issue or crisis in feminist rhetorics as well as communication and information design (specifically in the canon of feminist circulation) that needs to and should be addressed? *Definition*: How would you define this issue or crisis? *Quality*: How serious to the growth of knowledge is this issue or crisis? *Policy*: How should this issue or crisis be addressed?

### Sample Second Exam: First and Second-Support Areas (Intersectional Theory and Rhetorical Listening)

Articulate and defend your two support areas for your primary area. Concentrate on how each support area complements the other in their overall support of the primary area of feminist circulation. Develop your answers according to this triangulation of areas. One approach might be to take four contributors to each of the two support areas and bring their thinking to bear on this complementary/collaborative support of the primary area. An additional approach might be to explain this: what common or different grounds, if any, do the two support areas bring to this effort? Once you have determined how the two support areas complement each other and together complement the primary area, then, explain where you see connections, point of contention, or unexplored implications that you wish to explore in your dissertation.

### Sample Third Exam, A Pedagogy of Knowing, Doing, and Making

The RCID program is concerned with the complementarity of *knowing*, *doing*, and *making*; that is, theoretical knowledge, practical-pragmatic knowledge, and productive knowledge. The middle form of knowledge we often refer to as pedagogical or applied knowledge, that is, how best, given a variety of situations and genres/media, to teach and to learn about *rhetorical invention*. Develop your course (academic or workplace) and the rationales for readings, assignments, etc., as an article that describes an advanced undergraduate or professional course in *feminist circulation* as you have redescribed and theorized it in your two previous essays. Include a course description that a) identifies the institutional context, including the student audience/level; b) provides an overview and justification of the course topic, lists specific course readings/viewings; and c) describes major course assignments, goals, sequence, and criteria for assessment. Your essay should include a

**theoretical rationale** for the course as you've designed it. A **critical reflection** should raise and address questions about such a course, consider alternatives, identify what problems the course might pose, and how it prepares students for more advanced research in the area. Additionally, because this essay could be the draft of an essay for publication, choose your audience (e.g., readers of a particular journal) and then contextualize your course planning and philosophy of teaching it with references to appropriate secondary sources.

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\*The exact number, however, is not the issue; rather, the scholarly sources should elaborate the project of interest, be of high quality and important and relevant to an on-going historical scholarly conversation on the topic(s). In as much as the written exams are qualifying and diagnostic, they are, nonetheless, comprehensive in terms of the primary and secondary areas.

## **Fourth Exam/Multimodal Presentation**

About seven to ten days after the student turns in the three written exams, they give a twenty to thirty minute multimodal presentation on the dissertation project, which constitutes their fourth exam. The chair will coordinate with the program coordinator to announce the exam. The public is invited. At the defense—either in Zoom only or F2F and Zoom—the chair should welcome everyone, introduce the committee members, and hand the floor over to the student. After the presentation, the public will have up to thirty minutes to make comments and ask questions. (Committee members are asked to reserve questions for the private discussion with the student.) The chair will dismiss the public once the discussion subsides and offer a short break to the committee and student before the private conferral period starts with the student and committee only.

During the conferral period, committee readers should make comments and ask questions about the three written exams, the multimodal presentation, etc. This time should be devoted to feedback on the student's exams and presentation, most especially on helping the student (through a robust conversation) move forward to the dissertation. Once the chair and the committee are ready to deliberate among themselves, the student should leave the room (or Zoom). Again, it is the committee's task to determine whether the student is ready to move forward to the dissertation. If the committee feels the student is ready to proceed with the dissertation, the student passes the exam.

There must be a majority vote of the committee to pass. If the committee feels that one or more of the responses requires a rewrite, then they must explain to the student explicitly what that involves and give them a date for turning in the rewrite(s). This constitutes a kind of "conditional pass" where the chair withholds the GS5D form until the committee is satisfied with the rewrites. The alternative is to fail the student and require them to retake the exams with entirely new questions. Retaking exams cannot occur before two months have passed (according to the Graduate School Policies and Procedures).

If all goes well, and the student passes, the student is asked to return to debrief with the committee. See below for next steps.

## **Assessment of Exams**

The chair and committee evaluate and determine the exams to be either Pass or Fail. No other ranking exists (e.g., "distinction," "low pass," etc.). If the committee recommends a retake, a student failing any part or whole of the exams may retake those parts or the whole exam once. If the student fails the exams the first time without a recommendation of a retake or fails the exams the second time, the student's chair and committee should request, through the Director, that the Graduate School dismiss the student from the program. (These options and limits described further in *Graduate School Policies and Procedures*.) The proper form for reporting Pass/Fail and retake/no retake is the "GS5D—Results of the Doctoral Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Form." The opportunity to retake the exam(s) is not guaranteed but is decided by the chair

and committee. The chair of the student's committee should submit the GS5D form to the Graduate School registrar (following directions on the form), cc-ing the RCID Director and Program Coordinator.

### *Suggestions to the Chair and Committee for Assessing the Written and Oral Exams*

The chair and committee, in assessing the *written exams*, should take great care to determine

- How well the student articulates and defends the importance and value of the project to the major area of interest;
- How well the student demonstrates ability to identify research in the primary and secondary areas;
- How well a student grasps the importance of the work (judging it, vetting it, assimilating it); and
- How well the student incorporates and further develops the research (assimilating the work by thinking logically and creatively with it) toward the advancement of knowledge within the major area of interest. The chair and committee, in assessing the *oral exam*, should take great care to determine
- The overall quality of the student's multimodal presentation (both simultaneously oral and visual) on the proposed dissertation;
- How responsive and articulate the student is during Q & A with the public audience; and
- Whether the student joins discussion of the written essays and multimedia presentation with their committee attentively and productively, with an eye for improving the dissertation.

One final consideration for the chair and committee: Suppose this presentation had been delivered on-site or virtually as part of a job search (as a "job talk"). Would the student's presentation be received well? What could the student do to improve it?

Additionally, in the written exams and the presentation exam, the chair and the committee should determine the ability of the student to conduct, at best, *transdisciplinary* work when researching and writing the dissertation.

In general, in assessing the exams, the chair and the committee must determine the over-all probability of the student's ability to write a dissertation with identifiable research and interpretive protocols (from the two RCID methods seminars, 8020 and 8030). While seminars test one group of abilities, independent research and the writing of a dissertation test a varied, different group of abilities. An "A" in a course does not necessarily suggest that a student will succeed at independent study in preparation for exams and will be able to research and write (revise) a dissertation.

**Caveat:** While the exam is diagnostic of a **comprehensive approach** to the primary project and two support areas, under no circumstances should the chair and the committee pass the student merely on the promise or prospect that s/he will eventually figure out the approach or understand the material well enough to make a scholarly contribution to the field. The student, in the written exams, must demonstrate a wide-scope along with an intricate and intimate understanding of the subject matter.

## **Public Announcements**

### **Notice of the exams**

If approved by the student, the Program Coordinator will make a public announcement about the student's exam presentation.

### **Results of Exams**

If approved by the student, the Director will make a public announcement stating that the student has successfully passed the comprehensive exams and will now move to candidacy for the dissertation/PhD (i.e., ABD). *Exams are simply passed (or not) and without superlatives, such as "with distinction" or any other marker of accomplishment that would set the student apart from their peers who have also passed the exams successfully.*

## Academic Integrity and Exams

Students should not share exam questions or essay responses with any other students or outside entity. Students are encouraged, however, to present their ideas to the public during the fourth exam/public presentation and develop them into publishable work later.

## After the Exams Have Been Defended Successfully

At this stage, the student should proceed to writing the dissertation. There should be no required rewrites of the prospectus itself or readings lists because that should have been part of the process after the committee first receives the prospectus and readings lists and have been in communication with the student and chair if such revisions are required before moving on to the exams.

After successfully completing the exams, the student will commence writing the dissertation and the chair will assist when needed. There should be meetings or email exchanges between the student and chair frequently to check on progress. The chair, when relatively satisfied with a chapter, should pass it on to the three readers. From time to time, the committee may have to meet with or without the student to discuss the development of the dissertation.

**Caveat:** If by chance, as commonsense dictates, a student changes the dissertation project in a major way (e.g., choose a substantially different topic), after passing the exams, whether with the original chair or a new one, the student must start over by developing a new prospectus with the proper primary and two secondary areas; and must retake exams based on the new prospectus.

# 8. ADMINISTRATION, ASSESSMENT, AND DEFENSE OF THE DISSERTATION

The protocol for administering and assessing the writing and reading of the dissertation chapters is best determined by the chair with the assent of the committee. Under no circumstances, however, should the chair tell the student to go off and read/write and come back when the dissertation is done. The student writing the dissertation should expect and realize from the chair timely responses and productive assessment of the chapters as they are written recursively. The major task of the chair is to mentor the student. The chair, in turn, should expect that the student writer submits the very best work to be assessed. If by chance, the student is stuck, there should be ample opportunity for discussions between the chair and the student with the idea of helping the student take the next steps in additional research and in writing the dissertation. The chair is the primary reader and should pass on work (chapter by chapter) to the committee when he or she believes it is ready for the committee to read. The chair, of course, should feel free to consult one or more members, if warranted, to read a problematic draft of a chapter.

It happens, on occasion, that during the summer, when a chair is away from Clemson, the student may not have the benefit of the chair's help. Therefore, prior to establishing a committee, the student and the chair must have a clear understanding of what the expectations will be concerning contact and support during the summer. The student has the right to expect that he or she will be mentored without sustained interruptions during the academic year. There are, of course, exceptions.

**Caveats:** If the chair cannot be available, say for a month, during the summer to help the student, then, the chair should make arrangements for at least one member of the committee to mentor the student.

Additionally, if by chance the student continues to work on the dissertation into the fifth year and thereafter, the chair of the committee should notify and inform the Director about the nature of the delay. The notification should be at least twice during each semester (at the beginning and the end of each semester).

The dissertation itself is solely approved by the student's chair and committee as long as they are within the guidelines established by the Graduate School. If a student is attempting to graduate during a particular semester, including summer, the chair should review the graduation deadlines here:

<https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html>. Also, upon approval of the dissertation defense, the chair with the committee should use form GS7D found at <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/forms.html> to report to the Graduate School successful completion of the defense.

It is crucial that the chair work not only with the student and the committee but also with the Director of RCID, Program Coordinator and with the CU Graduate school in order to follow guidelines.

Before and during the writing of the dissertation, the student and the chair should familiarize themselves with all procedures concerning the dissertation process. *The chair should assist the student in the final format of the dissertation if needed.* Failure to follow the correct format can delay the final submission in time for graduation.

For additional information, templates, and guidelines, see the Graduate School's page here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/theses-and-dissertations/index.html>.

### **Use of Preferred Name on the Dissertation**

Graduate students may use a preferred name on their dissertations. The procedure for using a preferred name on a thesis or dissertation begins with the Preferred Name Procedure already described by the university, followed by notifying the Graduate School.

### **Public Announcements about the Results of Defenses**

If approved by the student, the Director will make a public announcement stating that the student has successfully passed the dissertation defense and has now earned the PhD. *As with exams, defenses are simply passed (or not) and without superlatives, such as "with distinction" or any other marker of accomplishment that would set the student apart from their peers who have also passed the exams successfully.*

## **9. RESEARCH FORUMS (RCID RFs)**

RCID Research Forums began in 2009. The Director of RCID will coordinate each event. The purpose of these forums is to invite researchers from across Clemson and beyond to speak about their current research. Research forums foster research communities in CAH and more broadly. Researchers outside CAH and beyond Clemson will be invited to speak occasionally. Presenters should provide a reading in advance and then speak for about 30 minutes on their research. Following the presentation, there will be a Q&A. **All graduate students are expected to attend**, and faculty are invited to attend. The forums will usually be held late in the afternoon before seminars Mondays through Thursdays, alternating SWIP and other events, either online in Zoom or in hybrid format in Zoom and F2F.

### **Colloquia and Working Group Focus**

**Colloquia.** Students as well as prospective faculty throughout College of Architecture, Arts, and Humanities, and across the campus, are encouraged to attend and participate in the available colloquia throughout the

academic year when available. (**RCID students are expected to participate in all events possible**) The colloquia and working groups supplement seminars and research work with standing, informal communities designed to bring all RCID faculty and students together on the basis of shared interests. Colloquia typically have a faculty member facilitator. Participants decide on their focus each semester. Past topics include criticism-theory, serious games, transmedia, and cinema. Both faculty and students should have equal opportunity to determine the focus of colloquia.

**Working Groups.** More informal and organically emergent than colloquia, working groups provide students and faculty opportunities to meet regularly to discuss shared interests in *doing* and *making* and, importantly, put ideas to work on real projects, both to gain experience and share research and creative work but also to develop professional, high-quality projects and innovations for portfolios and CVs. Working groups will form and evolve organically over time. RCID has acquired user licenses for the Yellowdig app to facilitate communication and build working group communities. Currently, four new working groups are forming: **film production, entrepreneurship, video game development, and artificial intelligence.** Anyone with an idea for a working group focus can seek guidance and participation from the Director, faculty, and RCID students.

The colloquia and working groups are, in part, *the life of the RCID program.* They build scholarly communities within RCID by bringing together students and faculty with interdisciplinary interests across CAH to create transdisciplinary communities with stakeholders from all departments and programs.

Additionally, the purpose of the colloquia and working groups is to introduce all students to all faculty, as well as faculty to students, in informal discussion groups outside of formal seminars, both to provide additional learning experiences and to help students form dissertation committees.

#### Implementation of the Colloquia and Working Groups

- Announcements about the RCID research forums, colloquia, and working groups should be sent a week in advance to RCID-L@lists.clemson.edu, which is the mailing list that includes current students, faculty, RCID alumni, and other friends of the program.
- Announcements should include an image (book cover, author photo, etc.) along with the information—something similar to the announcements posted for the research forums. If there are any questions/concerns or help needed, please contact the Director.
- The chair of the colloquia or convener of the working group should disseminate readings well in advance.

All communication about the colloquia, research forums, and working groups should be open and transparent to all students and faculty across CAH and when appropriate in other Colleges. All RCID events can be posted to the University Events Calendar to facilitate communication and promotion: <https://calendar.clemson.edu/>.

#### Implementation of the Working Groups

Working groups may be planned and launched at any time with the assistance of the Director or other RCID core faculty. Each working group should have a short description of its focus, which will be posted on its respective community in Yellowdig. Meeting times and format will be decided by group members and with attention to accessibility for all those who wish to join. Working groups are open to current RCID students and Clemson faculty but may expand to include others with shared interests or expertise, subject to the desires of group members. Working groups should meet regularly throughout the semester. Working groups may be discontinued if/when its members no longer wish to meet, in which case the Director should be notified.

## Colloquia as Reading Groups and Opportunities to Develop Special-Topic Seminars

In practice, each colloquium meets as a reading group. Every attempt should be made by the members of each colloquium to include all suggestions of articles/chapters/books as well as other media (film, video, audio, etc.) by all colleagues (both faculty and students who actively participate on a regular basis).

Additionally, the members should attempt

- to monitor the library holdings for needed works in all media and to share them with the Director of RCID; and
- to propose special-topic seminars based on the general rubric of the colloquium—to the Director, who will take the proposal to the RCID Program Advising Council, composed of faculty and students.

### **Student-Works-In-Progress (SWIP)**

These forums began in 2011 and mirror RCID Research Forums. SWIP events give RCID students an opportunity to present their research for publication, develop their grant proposals for submission, and rehearse their presentations for delivery at conferences. The President of S3S (the RCID student organization) along with the Vice President and RSA Coordinator and interested students will schedule and select students and faculty to make presentations.

## **10. TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS**

### **Full-Time Enrollment Required**

Students with teaching and research assistantships are required to enroll full time, nine hours during the fall and spring semesters of their appointment. Students with summer support are required to enroll in 3 or 6 hours, depending on the length of the summer course being taught.

### **Additional Work Restrictions**

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) teaching two courses or Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) on a funded project are considered to be working twenty (20) hours per week. GTAs and GRAs should not be working more than twenty hours per week without the approval of the Director. If GTAs or GRAs have been approved for additional work on campus, they cannot work more than eight (8) additional hours per week (no more than 28 per week during fall and spring semesters). In summer semesters, an assistantship counts for ten (10) hours per week, so GTAs or GRAs may typically work an additional eighteen (18) hours. Please check with your supervisor to verify your eligibility for additional hours.

### **Non-teaching Assistantships**

Research assistantships and other non-teaching assistantships may be available. The IDS Chair will determine assignments and schedules. Contact the Program Coordinator for more information.

# 11. TRAVEL AND RESEARCH SUPPORT

## RCID Travel and Research Support

The RCID program can provide some support for travel to conferences and research sites. Funds are limited, and there's no set upper limit as in years past. To request travel support, CAH fiscal form: <https://www.cognitofrms.com/CollegeOfArtsHumanitiesDeansOffice/StudentTravelRequestFormSubmission>. This form will start the process of confirming the amount of support and then you will need to start the Concur travel process. You will access Concur here: <https://www.clemson.edu/procurement/concurtravel/>. To set up your account in Concur, follow the directions in the Concur Quick Start Guide here: <https://www.clemson.edu/procurement/concurtravel/travel-resources/travel-training/traveler-guide.html>. Tonya Monroe must be added as your “delegate.” Tonya cannot complete the forms for you, but she can assist in other ways. **Please note:** Without the pre-authorization steps within the department and within Concur, reimbursements will not be approved.

## RCID Students Not Employed by Clemson

1. To request travel support, CAH fiscal form: <https://www.cognitofrms.com/CollegeOfArtsHumanitiesDeansOffice/StudentTravelRequestFormSubmission>. You are expected to pay for all travel expenses up front and will be reimbursed after travel has been completed. Alcohol expenses are not reimbursable. Meals are paid at per diem rates as listed on the travel reimbursement form.
2. As SOON as you return from travel: Submit your Travel Reimbursement Form (Excel worksheet) and receipts within thirty (30) days of your return. Late submission will likely mean no reimbursement.

Contact Tonya Monroe to get the necessary form(s) to submit the required information.

If you are traveling in state or internationally, please use the appropriate form. Complete the worksheet and attach it to an email along with all of your receipts (in a single PDF is appreciated!). Email the information to Tonya, who will make sure the worksheet is completed correctly. Tonya will return it to you as a PDF for your signature.

NOTE: Please enter each individual date of travel across the top green column and the corresponding expenses for each date in the columns below. You'll see the per-diem amounts for meals; complete those in the columns. No meal receipts are necessary because you are reimbursed at a per diem rate, as noted on the form.

3. If you are being reimbursed for mileage, print out Google Map or Mapquest directions from point of departure to destination and back. The total amount of mileage should be listed on the on the map directions.  
Save this map as a PDF by selecting print and then “Save as PDF).

## Clemson-Employed RCID Students

Clemson-employed RCID students (GTAs, GRAs, or staff) are now required to submit travel requests via the Concur system: <https://www.clemson.edu/procurement/concurtravel/>. On the drop-down menu under

“Before you Travel,” select “Quick Start Guide” to begin. You will need to set up an account and be sure to make Tonya Monroe (IDS and RCID fiscal analyst) a “delegate.”

1. Go to the Concur Webpage here: <https://www.clemson.edu/procurement/concurtravel/>. You will start with the drop down tab “Travel Process” and select “Before You Leave”.
2. Select Concur QuickStart Guide. This will instruct you on how to set up your profile.  
\*\*\*\* Remember to make Tonya a delegate!\*\*\*\*
3. Please review the Information in the “Travel Resources” > “Travel Training Library.” The explanation you find there will be very helpful.
4. Once you have completed these steps, select the “Before You Leave” tab and scroll down to select “Create a Travel Request.” Create the travel request but DO NOT SUBMIT it. Once you create it, email Tonya (tonyam@clemson.edu). Tonya will go in as a delegate and make sure all the account codes and information is correct. Completing this step helps Tonya get your planned travel on our books.
5. You will be expected to pay for all travel expenses up front to be reimbursed after travel.
6. After you ravel, you will need to go back to Concur and follow the instructions for “Creating an Expense Report.”
7. As soon as you return from travel: Submit forms and receipts within thirty (30) days of your return. Late submission will likely mean no reimbursement.

Please email Tonya with any questions about the Concur process.

## 12. PRE- AND POST-DISSERTATION (PLACEMENT, THE JOB MARKET)

The chair of the student’s committee will be the primary faculty member helping the student with and during the whole search for a position in academia or industry upon graduation. RCID students regularly organize colloquia and workshops to support career planning and the job search. RCID faculty may also mentor students through the job search process. Clemson’s Graduate School also provides professional development and career advice via Grad360: <https://grad360.sites.clemson.edu/>. While not “required,” all students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these professional development and career planning activities.

It is customary to begin the job search well before the completion of the dissertation but usually not until one or ideally two chapters of the dissertation have been drafted, revised, and approved by the chair and committee. chair.

### Academic Positions

**Academic positions** are typically advertised starting in August for the following year, which means that students should have one or more chapters nearly completed by August or September during the academic year of their search. For academic jobs, there has to be a reasonable expectation that the student can and will defend, at least, in the late spring semester or no later than mid-summer. Most contracts for new hires state that the degree must be in hand prior to the start date.

## Industry, Government, and Nonprofit Positions

Positions in industry, government, and the nonprofit sector are advertised year-round, but they still require that students be well on their way to completing the dissertation at the time of application. Students should begin their search well before they intend to defend.

**Caveat:** If the student projects that his or her dissertation will be defended in the summer, both the chair and the student must be sure that everyone on the committee will be available and agrees to appear for the defense. Students must be enrolled in at least one credit hour of RCID 9910 during the semester of the defense. Students must also apply for graduation very early in the semester of the defense, so be sure to check graduation deadlines here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html>.

The chair guides the student through the search for a position, including help in locating ads that suit the student's background, reviewing job application materials (the application letter, CV, teaching philosophy, diversity statement, etc.), prepping the student for interviews, and more. The chair and the student should expect additional help from the RCID faculty and the RCID Job Placement Committee. The Director should be periodically informed about applications submitted, interviews, campus visits, and other milestones in the process. Students should keep the chair well informed through the search process so they can assist with networking and finding new opportunities. You are not in the game alone!

It is important for the chair of a student's committee, as well as committee members, to understand that those hiring my contact the Director to discuss the job candidate, so it is in the best interests of all concerned to keep the Director fully informed. The Director will work with a job placement committee and S3S officers to coordinate activities and workshops designed to help students develop high quality application materials, prepare for interviews, and even negotiate the terms of a job offer. Student Work-in-Progress (SWIP) workshops will help students develop work for publication, learn how to target specific publication venues (journals, magazines, book publishers, etc.), and more.

## Best Practices for ABD Students in a Job Search

- Work with the chair, committee members, and the Director of RCID (all of whom will help you establish a network with the faculty in the program/colloquia, and in the wider scope of the field itself);
- Apply across disciplines if you are competent specifically and generally across comparable disciplines. Do not overly limit yourself unnecessarily, but be aware, with the help of your chair and others, that some programs hire mostly specialized, not generalist or multidisciplinary colleagues;
- Realize that your virtue, in the RCID program, is virtuosity in multiple hybridic interests and practices; see how recent RCID students (Hannah Taylor, Haley Swartz, Jacob Richter, and Mary McDermott) describe their interdisciplinarity as preparation for teaching composition: "Rethinking the Rhet Comp PhD: An Interdisciplinary and Rhetoric-Centered Approach to Graduate Studies at Clemson University," *Composition Forum* vol. 50 (Fall 2022), <https://compositionforum.com/issue/50/clemson.php>.
- Study the job ads carefully and notice requests for applicants in specific subdisciplines. Ask faculty and the Director for help interpreting ads so that you can better tailor your application materials to them;
- Determine the positions you want to apply for and then study the website of the field/programs (the programs themselves, the chair of the department, especially the faculty and their research interests, the course/seminar offerings, and the general history of the department, etc.); look for affinities between your interests and theirs, between RCID faculty and theirs, or even between important figures in your research and the research of their faculty members;

- Customize letters of applications for each position and incorporate what you have learned from your research of the hiring organization's website. Answer the presumed question about *how* you can complement what they already do well;
- Start early, as early as the moment you enter this program. Who am I as a teacher/scholar/practitioner? What sort of position would you like to have when you graduate? At what type of university, college, or organization? Will you be geographically confined or open to possibilities anywhere? Be aware: universities typically do not hire their own graduate students after they've defended the dissertation, unless the position is temporary or non-tenure-track.
- Obtain at least three letter writers of reference for your job search. Provide your letter writers with information about the type of jobs you seek, contact information for the search committee/chair, of specific searches, and deadlines for submitting letters. Use Interfolio.com to help with the application process and letters of recommendation. Additional best practices will be discussed in Job Placement Committee meetings and SWIP Workshops.

# A Checklist for the PhD Program

## Overview

The program has four “stages”:

1. Complete **core and cognate seminars** (eleven seminars, 33hrs, required & elective);
2. Research in one **studio** (3hrs) and, through independent studies, mixed possibly with additional seminars, as determined by the student’s chair and committee, in an area of specialization (one primary & two support areas);
3. Prepare a dissertation prospectus and complete **written exams** on the primary and support areas, followed by an **oral multimedia defense** of the exams;
4. Successfully **write and defend** the dissertation.

## Core Seminars

15 HOURS

This form is fillable. Check all five boxes in this section when each seminar has been completed and list the year.

<p><b>8010</b> Histories of Rhetorics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8020</b> Cultural Research <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8030</b> Empirical Research <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>
<p><b>8040</b> Visual Rhetorics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8050</b> Rhetorics, Communication, and Information Technology <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	

## Cognate Seminars

18 HOURS

ANY 6 cognate courses (e.g., 8100, 8110, 8130 multiple times, and/or others as available). Check six of the boxes.

<p><b>8100</b> Pedagogy, Administration and Assessment <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>
<p><b>8110</b> Perspectives on Information Design <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>
<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>
<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>	<p><b>8130</b> Special Topics <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>

## Studio

3 HOURS

<p><b>8880</b> Applied Research (Studio) <i>3 hours</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> YEAR</p>
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# A Checklist for the PhD Program

## DISSERTATION HOURS

18 HOURS

In the Studio course, students begin the dissertation process by choosing a Primary Area and two Secondary Support Areas that will guide their research and be the focus of their comprehensive exams. They also complete a draft of the dissertation prospectus. Students must complete 18 credit hours of RCID 9910 (Dissertation Research). They may also take RCID 8330 (Graduate Readings) while studying for exams and as needed for full-time status (as required for a Teaching or Research Assistantships).

## Committee Selection

Clemson's Graduate School requires that students select a chair and committee members, then file a Plan of Study (including the **GS2 form**) in their second year and before they complete 36 credit hours (see <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/plan-of-study/index.html>). Students should consult with the RCID director and the Studio professor about committee options. A committee must include at least four advisors, with no more than two from a particular Clemson discipline. Students may also include one external advisor, subject to the approval of the RCID director, committee chair, and Graduate School.

[Redacted] (chair)

[Redacted]

## Dissertation Prospectus

Following completion of the Studio seminar, students submit a polished prospectus to the committee chair for review and further development and revision. If the project includes Human Subject research, **consider whether IRB review may be necessary**. The prospectus becomes the basis of the Comprehensive Exams (written and oral). Once approved by the chair, the prospectus must be reviewed and approved by all committee members. The prospectus may need multiple iterations before approval by the committee. Once approved, a GS-ResearchApproval form must be completed and submitted with the GS5D form (reporting the results of the Comprehensive Exams; see below). For further information about the prospectus genre, please review the *RCID Handbook and Guide for Students and Faculty*.

## Comprehensive Exams

Once the prospectus has been approved by the committee, students work with the committee chair to schedule the comprehensive exams. Students may take their exams in the fall or spring semesters of their third year. There are **three written exams** (**one primary area** [P], **two support areas** [SA1, SA2], and a **pedagogy or application question**) followed by an **oral and public multimedia presentation** (20–30 minutes) on the dissertation project (4th exam). Students are given the three written exam questions then have two weeks to complete them. Each essay should be no more than 5,000 words. Students may refer to notes and quote and cite sources, but note that essays are not meant for students to showcase that they have read the material but instead to integrate scholarship in responses to the questions.

P [Redacted] SA1 [Redacted] SA2 [Redacted]

Presentation title: [Redacted]

## Dissertation Writing

After successfully completing exams, students write the dissertation in frequent consultation with the chair. The protocol for distribution of dissertation chapters is determined by the chair and the preferences of the committee members. Students may only distribute chapters after approval by the chair.

## Dissertation Defense

The defense consists of a 20 to 30 minute formal and public multimedia presentation of the research and discussion with the public audience followed by private consultation with the committee. Dissertations may be approved solely by the student's chair and committee, provided the dissertation also meets guidelines established by the Graduate School. Graduating students should notify chairs well in advance of the graduation semester and must formally apply to graduate with the Graduate School early in the relevant semester. Students and chairs should familiarize themselves with all graduation deadlines here: <https://www.clemson.edu/graduate/students/deadlines.html>. Upon approval of the dissertation and successful defense, the chair with the committee will submit a completed **form GS7D** to the Graduate School.

## Hooding

PhD hooding ceremonies take place at the end of fall, spring, and summer semesters and are scheduled by the Graduate School. Additional awards ceremonies may occur on graduation day.