Michigan Technological University
1885

Rhetoric Theory and Culture
Graduate Handbook
Updated Fall 2022
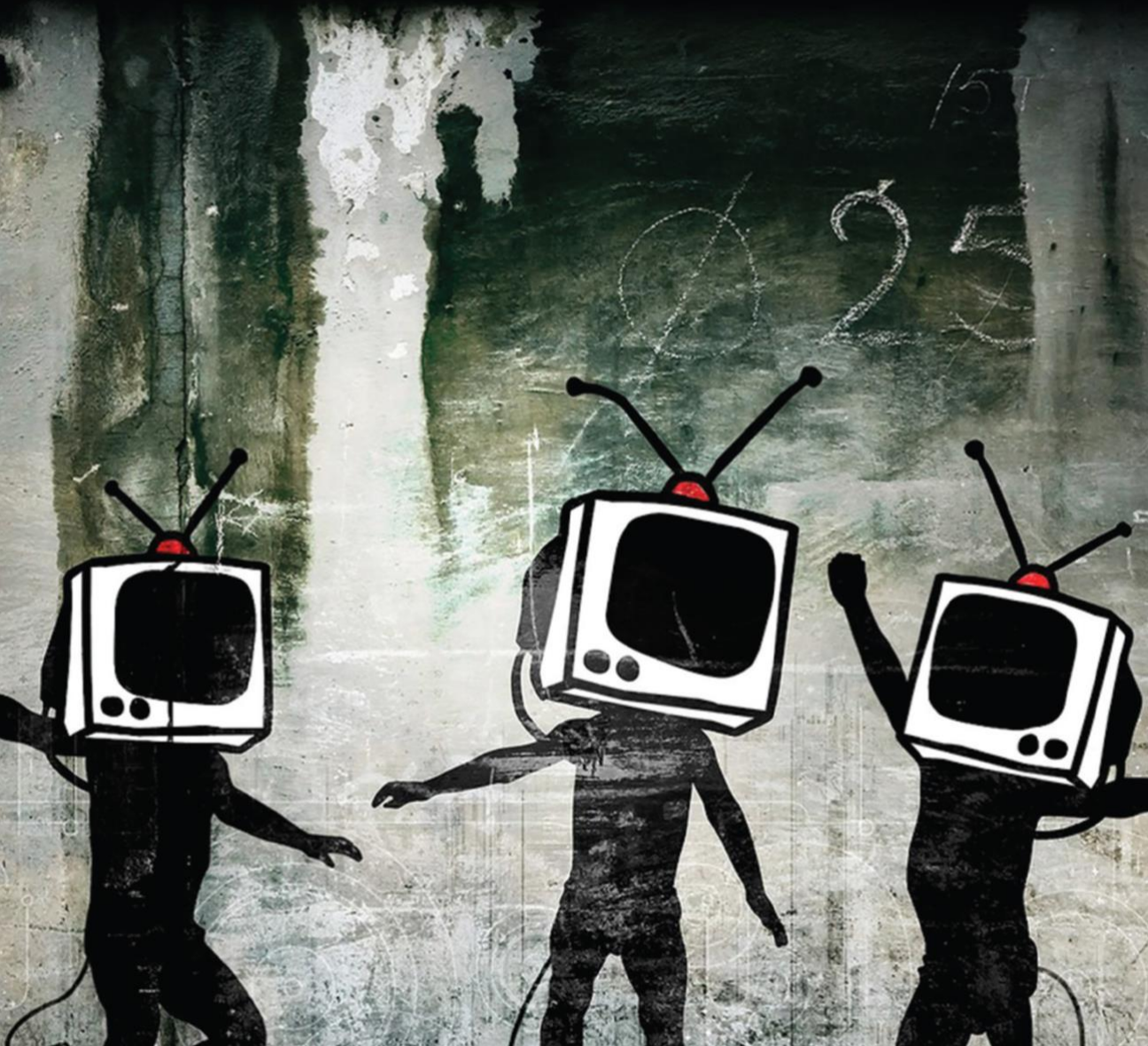
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1 Introduction to Program and Handbook

The Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture program at Michigan Technological University is a vibrant intellectual community dedicated to the study of contemporary issues and problems from a variety of critical and theoretical standpoints within the humanities.

We think about connections among

Technology — systems, objects, practices, usability, new media, visuality

Communication — composition, technical writing, rhetoric, language, discourses, gender, representation, and power

Globalization — intercultural communication, transnational flows, post-colonial critiques

What unites these areas of inquiry is our broad orientation, as a Humanities department, to the study of culture in all its dimensions. Whether your interest is in rhetoric, cultural studies, technical communication, media studies, or beyond, as an RTC program graduate you will have a rich understanding of the ways in which communicative practices are embedded in cultural contexts with political, material, and social dimensions.

The new technological and media landscape of globalized post-modernity has produced new objects and areas of study, calling for new kinds of scholars who can work across disciplines to grapple with complex cultural realities.

Our faculty come from a variety of fields, including communication, composition, cultural studies, film studies, linguistics, literature, modern languages, media and visual studies, philosophy, rhetoric, postcolonial studies, and technical communication. Faculty work closely with students, encouraging them to think critically about substantive issues and problems within their areas of interest, incorporating a variety of approaches and appropriate methodologies. This gives our program a distinct interdisciplinary character.

1.1 Degrees Offered

The Humanities Department offers two advanced degrees in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture:

- [Master's in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture](#) (MS)
- [Doctorate in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture](#) (PhD)

The RTC program is unique at Michigan Technological University because of its interdisciplinary humanities focus. Because of that focus, RTC students pursue specialized interests within a diversity of offerings and experiences; develop professional skills through teaching and related pedagogical courses/trainings; and pursue their own research agendas through seminar papers, proposals, theses, projects, dissertations, as well as scholarly presentations and publications.

Graduate Learning Objectives

The RTC program has a high placement rate for our graduates, particularly in academic positions, industry, and university administration. The RTC program has Graduate Learning Objectives (GLOs) to clarify student learning in our program and collect feedback for continuous improvement.

Through completion of the Master's program, students will learn and demonstrate:

1. Mastery of theories and theoretical approaches
2. Ability to make connections across disciplines
3. Facility in written communication
4. Ability to select and apply appropriate theories and methods
5. Ability to design and teach undergraduate courses

Through completion of the Doctoral program, students will learn and demonstrate:

1. Mastery of theories and theoretical approaches
2. Ability to engage with and synthesize interdisciplinary content
3. Facility in written communication
4. Ability to formulate a research agenda
5. Ability to design and teach undergraduate courses

RTC faculty assess the shared GLOs in coursework (for GLOs 1 and 3) and teaching experiences (GLO 5). At the PhD level only, the Qualifying Exams serve as an assessment point for GLOs 1-3. At both MS and PhD levels, proposals, theses/projects/dissertations, and defenses serve as assessment points for GLOs 1-4. Throughout, assessment is not a measure of student ability but rather an opportunity for improvement of the broader RTC program.

1.2 Handbook Contents and Structure

The pages that follow constitute the Graduate Handbook, a guide to requirements, policies, and procedures for the MS and PhD degrees in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture (RTC) at Michigan Tech. This manual discusses the Master's and Doctoral degree requirements, advising structure and procedures, examinations, curricular policies, student and faculty policies, financial aid, grievance procedures, student support structures, and personal and professional opportunities.

The Graduate Handbook is organized into six sections: **Section 2** presents common requirements for the Master's and Doctoral programs (i.e., the coursework phase of both programs); **Section 3** deals with requirements and procedures pertaining particularly to the Master's program; **Section 4** deals with the Doctoral program requirements; **Section 5** deals with general program policies, including financial support; **Section 6** discusses student opportunities and student resources.

This document should serve as your guide, a reference that will help you navigate through the RTC program. As policies are revised, they will be distributed to students by e-mail and placed on the departmental website. For any issues not addressed by this document or the website, use your judgment and seek advice from your Advisor, the RTC Office, or the Graduate School as appropriate.

2 Common Requirements and Coursework for MS/PhD

Section 2 presents common requirements for the Master's and Doctoral programs, emphasizing types of courses unique to RTC.

RTC is particularly successful as an interdisciplinary humanities program because of it:

- Offers a mix of foundational and specialized coursework: Groundwork Courses and a specific Introduction to Graduate Studies, as well as Focus Courses and some options for Supplementary Coursework
- Provides professional development through Composition Pedagogy and Other Practica
- Supports student-led research through trainings in Responsible Conduct of Research and Methodologies/Methods Preparation, as well as distributed advising among humanities faculty with varied research agendas and a culture of student-led research and involvement

2.1 Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU5000)

Introduction to Graduate Studies is a year-long course taken in the student's first year. It:

- Introduces students to the structure, processes, and timelines of the RTC program and to expectations and skills for graduate-level inquiry
- Introduces graduate faculty and their scholarly specializations
- Surveys methodologies/methods for interdisciplinary humanistic inquiry
- Assists students to identify a focus of interest, generate research ideas, and articulate their research

2.2 Composition Pedagogy (HU 5931)

The Composition Pedagogy is taken for 3 credits in a student's first semester, for funded students. It is designed for GTA/GTIs teaching UN 1015 - Composition for the first time. Weekly readings and assignments, as well as ongoing mentorship and consultation, are designed to support continuous improvement as a writing teacher/scholar.

2.3 Other Practica

Other practica are available by consent of instructor. Available practicum courses include the Practicum in Teaching Technical Communication (HU 5932), the Practicum in Modern Language Pedagogy (HU 5933), the Practicum in Communication Pedagogy (HU 5934), and others.

These pedagogy courses are offered as needed in order to prepare graduate students for teaching a variety of courses other than the Composition course. Practica may be dedicated to teaching courses in Technical Communication, Modern Languages, Communication, or other subjects.

Sample Practica Contents
- Read current research on best pedagogical practices within a specific academic field
- Observe undergraduate teaching by faculty and advanced graduate students
- Design syllabi and assignments
- Attend courses taught by graduate peers and reflect on practices
- Participate in group grade norming

2.4 Groundwork Courses

Graduate study in the RTC program includes groundwork courses organized within five clusters. These courses have been selected as critical to building common foundations for graduate students' future work in the program. Each program has its own requirements regarding the number and distribution of groundwork courses (see MS and PhD requirements for details). Within those requirements, students can select courses according to their areas of interest.

Writing, Literacy, and Technical Communication

Rhetoric and Composition HU 5002

Technical and Scientific Communication HU 5003

Philosophy and Rhetoric

Continental Philosophy HU 5006

History and Theory of Rhetoric HU 5070

Technology, Media, and Visual Studies

Theoretical Perspectives on Technology HU 5112

Visual Theory and Analysis HU 5114

Language, Literature, and Globalization

Critical Approaches to Literature and Culture HU 5008

Critical Perspectives on Globalization HU 5007

Communication and Culture

Communication Theory HU 5012

Cultural Theory HU 5004

2.5 Focus Courses

Focus courses provide an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of a specific topic, issue, or area of scholarly inquiry.

Class Size

Focus courses and groundwork courses are limited to 12 students. In certain situations, they may be canceled if they do not reach certain enrollment minimums, as determined by the Chair of the Department, in consultation with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. As an alternative, individual student's work may be supported through supplementary courses.

2.6 Supplementary Coursework Options

Supplementary courses are in three categories: 4000-level courses (i.e., advanced undergraduate courses); cognate courses (i.e., graduate courses in Michigan Tech departments other than Humanities); and one-on-one courses set up by arrangement with individual faculty (i.e., independent study/directed reading/internships). Students may apply a maximum of three (3) credits toward the 36-credit coursework portion of their degree. Note: Students with a compelling reason for applying more than 3 credits of supplementary coursework toward the coursework portion of the degree may, with approval of the student's Advisor, submit a request for a waiver to the RTC Steering Committee using the RTC Waiver Form.

- **4000-level courses:** MS and PhD students are limited to taking one 4000-level course, with the stipulation that they consult with the course professor on appropriate additional readings, papers, etc. This must be approved by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the student's Advisor.
- **Coursework outside RTC:** All coursework outside the RTC program must be approved by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the student's Advisor.
- **Independent Study/Directed Reading/Internship:** These one-on-one courses are typically arranged directly between a student and faculty member. A Supplementary Coursework Form must be completed and signed by the student, the faculty member, and the RTC Director of Graduate Studies as part of the process of enrolling these credits.

Note: Supplementary courses must be approved prior to registration, and the RTC Steering Committee recommends that such independent work be reserved for advanced students who have completed the bulk of their MS or PhD coursework.

2.7 Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR)

The Graduate School requires all graduate students to complete two Responsible Conduct of Research courses. The Basic RCR course is offered online during the new graduate student orientation prior to the start of classes each semester. The Advanced RCR requirement can be fulfilled by taking one of the courses offered by various departments. The Humanities Department currently offers a Research Integrity Workshop each summer that fulfills this requirement.

When RTC research involves human subjects, students should consider the Institutional Review Board's question: Does Your Project Require Review?

2.8 Methodologies and Methods (M/M) Preparation

Students must consult with their Advisors in order to determine which M/M preparation would be most appropriate for their focus of study and for their dissertation, thesis, or project.

Methodologies/Methods (M/M) Preparation is defined as relevant qualifications to conduct proposed research. Because of the wide variety of approaches to the generation of new knowledge in Rhetoric, Theory, and Culture, means of adequate preparation should be determined by the student's Advisor in consultation with the student and the Advisory Committee. Depending on the nature of the project, appropriate M/M preparation may include dedicated methodology courses, courses with a designated M/M component, relevant prior research experience, or other special preparation approved by the student's committee.

MS and PhD students should complete M/M preparation soon after declaring an advisor, and advisors must indicate that this preparation has been completed in the [Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form](#).

2.9 Transfer Credits

Credits earned in other graduate programs but not applied to previous degrees may be considered for transfer to fulfill up to nine credits for graduate degrees in the RTC Program. The RTC Director of Graduate Studies reviews written requests for transfer credits and recommends to the Graduate School what transferred credits will and will not be accepted by the RTC Program. The student should complete the [RTC Waiver Form](#) and provide transcripts, course descriptions, and other relevant materials to document the request for transfer. (See also the [Graduate School's website about transferring in Graduate Credits](#) for additional forms.)

3 Master's Degree

Section 3 deals with requirements and procedures pertaining particularly to the Master's (MS) program.

3.1 Curriculum for MS

Masters students take 36 credits or 2 years of coursework. The final 9 credits may be taken as thesis credits, project credits, or final coursework.

3 cr.   Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU5000)

1-3 cr.   Pre-Approved Course for Advanced RCR training

0-3 cr.   Composition Pedagogy (if applicable)

9 cr.   3 Groundwork courses. These might be distributed as either one course in each of three areas or two courses in the student's area of concentration and one course in one other area.

3 cr.   1 Focus course in a selected area of concentration

6-11 cr.   Other courses, including 1 course in Methodologies/Methods or certification by advisor(s) of methods preparation

9 cr.   Final option

                     Coursework option: 3 courses

                     Project option: 3-6 cr. HU5990 plus 1 course to equal 9 cr.

                     Thesis option: 9 cr. HU5990

See the Graduate school degree completion timelines for specific dates and advice.

3.2 Timeline for the MS

	Fall semester	Spring semester
Year 1	(Intro to Graduate Studies) 3 cr. Composition Pedagogy (if applicable) 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	(Composition Pedagogy) 3 cr. Intro to Graduate Studies 3 cr. course 3 cr. course Advanced RCR (often in Summer)
Year 2	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course Proposal defense	9 cr. courses [Coursework option] 3-6 cr. HU5991 + 3-6 cr. courses [Project option] 9 cr. HU5990 [Thesis option]

3.3 Master's Advisory Committees

Initial Advisory Interview

When students first enter the RTC Program they meet with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies for an advisory interview early in their first semester at Michigan Tech.

The initial advisory interview establishes how the student's interests match interests of RTC faculty members and offers suggestions regarding potential members of the student's Advisory Committees.

The following kinds of issues and questions may be explored in the initial advisory interview:

- Past coursework and intellectual history
- Areas of interest and expertise
- Directions and goals for graduate work
- Career goals
- Preliminary plans for a Coursework-Only Option, Project, or Thesis
- Preferences for working with particular faculty

Forming an Advisory Committee

Prior to making requests for full Advisory Committees, it is suggested that students write a 250-word Preliminary Proposal describing their intended course of study. Students who choose to pursue the coursework option must have an advisor but are not required to form Advisory Committees; for students pursuing the coursework option the advisor will assist the student in selecting a course of study suitable to the student's plans and research interests. Master's Committees will normally consist of three faculty members from the RTC graduate faculty. If desired, one additional member may be a graduate faculty member from a department other than the Department of Humanities. Such a person must hold graduate faculty standing at Michigan Tech. (Please consult with the Director of Graduate Studies if you wish to have an additional non-Michigan Tech person serve on your committee.)

It is in the student's best interest to form a complete Advisory Committee before completing the first year of graduate studies. In order to complete the degree within the two-year funding period, Master's students should establish a plan of study as early as possible. Students must receive Advisory Committee approval regarding their research plans before beginning research for Theses or Projects, especially before registration for their fourth semester.

Master's students may wish to discuss their research plans with potential committee members; however, requests for faculty members to be added to a committee must go through the RTC Director of Graduate Studies who will confirm each faculty member's willingness to participate. (Faculty members are asked to respond to these requests in writing within two weeks.) Once faculty members have indicated their willingness to serve on a committee, the RTC Program Office will prepare an [Advisor and Committee Recommendation Form](#), then submitted to the Graduate School on the student's behalf.

In general, students tend to work most closely with their Advisors. It is each Advisor's responsibility to work with students and the RTC Director of Graduate Studies to guide and monitor student progress and advise students accordingly. Student progress is formally reviewed on an annual basis by the student's committee chair and the RTC Steering Committee, in the [Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form](#).

Student-Initiated Committee Changes

During the course of their graduate study, students may ask to change Advisory Committee members. Students may request that their committee be changed for the following reasons:

- Research interests change.
- Committee members become unavailable.
- Irreconcilable differences develop between a student and a committee member.

Students may discuss potential changes with any member of their Advisory Committee or with the Director of Graduate Studies. Students, however, must follow the same procedure when reconstituting their committee as when initially forming them. Students who wish to reformulate their Advisory Committee more than once must petition to do so and have their request approved by the RTC Steering Committee.

When new committee members have accepted their invitations, the RTC Program Office will notify the student and the rest of the committee. When any changes are made to the membership of an Advisory Committee, the RTC Program Office will send the appropriate paperwork to the Graduate School.

Faculty-Initiated Changes

Faculty may also request that they be removed from Advisory Committees. Such requests are appropriate for the following reasons:

- Other commitments will not allow time to devote to the student (e.g. this may apply if faculty go on leave or take sabbaticals)
- The student's research develops in a direction that does not coincide with the committee member's areas of expertise or professional development
- Irreconcilable differences develop between faculty and student.

Faculty members should address any written requests for removal from Advisory Committees to the RTC Director of Graduate Studies.

3.4 Masters Options for Fourth Semester

Thesis

The thesis option consists of a proposal defense and a public thesis defense.

Thesis Proposal Defense

A proposal defense with the full committee should be held at the end of the third semester or the beginning of the fourth semester. The proposal defense document should be no less than five pages + bibliography. This defense is not public but should include all committee members.

Students must submit the departmental Two-Week Notification form at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense.

Thesis Defense

Taking 9 credits of HU 5990 – Thesis in the fourth semester, work for the Thesis Option requires in-depth analyses of some issue or question in rhetoric, theory, and culture based on extensive research in the student's area of research. The scope of the research and writing should be appropriate to the time allotted for nine research credits. The thesis should be 40 to 60 pages and must include a reference list.

Students must submit the departmental Two-Week Notification form at least 2 weeks prior to the thesis defense.

Project

The project option consists of a proposal defense and a public thesis defense. Projects are generally of a more limited scope and result in some form of applied product. Examples might include an innovative curricular design or a website that makes academic research accessible to public audiences. The student's work should also include some explicit discussion of a theoretical framework, explaining how it informs the project, as well as a literature review that indicates the project's exigency.

Project Proposal Defense

A proposal defense with the full committee should be held at the end of the 3rd semester or the beginning of the 4th semester. The proposal defense document should be no less than five pages + bibliography. This defense is not public but should include all committee members.

Students must submit the departmental [Two-Week Notification](#) form at least 2 weeks prior to the proposal defense.

Project Defense

Taking 3-6 credits HU 5991 - Special Projects in the fourth semester, the scope of the project should be appropriate to the time allotted for 3-6 research credits. The Project Report should be 25-30 pages and must include a reference list.

After their project research work is completed and has been approved by their Advisory Committee, students then write Project Reports describing and analyzing their conclusions, and, where appropriate, their application of any relevant research methodologies. Prior to beginning Project Reports, students must meet with their Advisory Committee to discuss the format and structure of the report, and students should meet with their Advisory Committees to discuss their final Project Report at least three weeks before the final defense.

Students must submit the departmental [Two-Week Notification](#) form at least 2 weeks prior to the final defense.

Coursework-Only Option

The RTC program also offers an all-coursework Master's option. Students complete 9 credits of coursework in their final semester. Students taking this option do not require a full Advisory Committee, but work with an advisor to select courses appropriate to their interests. Completion of the degree will require satisfactory completion of these credits.

3.5 Master's Defense

Advancing to the Defense

When a student and their Advisor judge it appropriate to proceed with a Thesis or Project Defense, also known as a Final Oral Examination, the student should meet with the full Advisory Committee to discuss the defense format (outlined below). Generally, this stage is reached when students near the end of their Projects or Theses. Advisory Committees who believe that their students are *not* progressing satisfactorily in their research should report to the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, who will then meet with both the student and Advisory Committee to consider an appropriate course of action.

Defense Formats

The defense consists of two parts: a public presentation and a closed examination. Students who have chosen the Thesis or Project Options develop presentations based on their research for part one, lasting approximately 25 minutes. For the next half hour, students answer questions from the audience, exclusive of committee members. The chair of the Advisory Committee (i.e., the Advisor) moderates this discussion to ensure an open dialogue.

During part two, committee members ask questions of the student in a closed session for about 45 minutes. Committee members ask about relevant contexts, backgrounds, and implications of the research, and students are expected to draw on detailed knowledge of the theories, methods, and other materials most relevant to the arguments presented in the Thesis or Report.

Evaluation of the Defense

After excusing the student from the room, Advisory Committee members deliberate about the quality of the student's work and performance during the defense. They base their decision on two criteria: quality of the argument in the Thesis or Project Report, and the quality of work and knowledge demonstrated during the defense.

Passing

A student passes when no more than one member of the Advisory Committee is in dissent about the quality of work demonstrated in the Project or Thesis and in the defense. If a member of the Advisory Committee dissents, the student must address that member's dissenting comments prior to receiving final approval for passing. The Advisor will then judge whether the student has satisfactorily addressed the dissenting reader's comments.

Passing with Revisions

If members of the Advisory Committee agree that the student's work needs revision, they may ask the student to revise the Thesis or Project Report before certification of the Master's degree. The Advisor, acting as Advisory Committee chair, will determine whether the student's revisions are satisfactory.

Unsatisfactory Completion

A student fails when more than one member of the Advisory Committee is in dissent about the quality of the work demonstrated in the Thesis or Project Report and in the defense.

Students who fail may petition the RTC Steering Committee to retake the examination once, no sooner than the next academic semester. A second failure provides sufficient grounds for dismissal from the RTC Program. The RTC Steering Committee determines the status of students who fail twice.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

When the Advisory Committee has completed deliberations, it will reconvene to inform the student regarding their evaluation of the written document and oral defense, as above. If the student is judged to have passed, their Committee will discuss any additional conditions or recommendations. If the student has failed or has passed with revisions, the Committee will discuss their reasons.

Upon completion, the Report on Final Oral Examination must be submitted by the chair of the Advisory Committee to the RTC Program Office who will then forward it to the Graduate School. Details regarding this form and other required documentation are on the Graduate School's Forms and Deadlines webpage.

University Graduation Requirements

Commencement information is mailed by the Graduate School to eligible students approximately three months prior to either the December or May ceremony.

Students who have defenses scheduled prior to graduation may be eligible to walk at commencement, provided they fill out a Commencement Application Form ten weeks prior to the ceremony. Other requirements and information about graduation and degree certification can be found at the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures webpage, which is updated frequently.

Note that the RTC program does not permit "early walks." Under no circumstances may students participate in graduation ceremonies prior to completing their Master's coursework or defending their project or thesis.

Congratulations on reaching this stage!

4 Doctoral Degree

Section 4 deals with requirements and procedures pertaining particularly to the Doctoral (PhD) program.

4.1 PhD Degree Requirements

Previous Coursework Preparation

Upon admission, the RTC Director will determine each new student's background and preparation for study in the RTC Program. Coursework requirements may vary depending upon a student's prior experience with the content and context of rhetoric, theory, and culture. The Program of Study generally requires 36 credits of coursework.

General scenarios for incoming students include:

Prior Master's in Closely Related Fields from Another University

Students with a Master's degree in a field closely related to RTC, but from another university, will undertake the program of study outlined below but should meet with the RTC Director to discuss how their previous preparation maps to the courses offered by Michigan Tech, so as to avoid unnecessary overlap.

Prior Master's in Other Fields

For a student with a previous Master's degree in an area not central to the coursework of the RTC degree (either from Michigan Tech or elsewhere), the RTC Director may determine that the student needs to build a stronger background knowledge in RTC. This may require coursework in addition to the basic program of study outlined below before the student can move on to study for Qualifying Examinations. In some cases, the RTC Director may recommend completing a Master's degree in the RTC program before moving on to the PhD.

Prior Master's in RTC at Michigan Tech

Students who have completed an MS in the RTC program can count groundwork courses that match distribution requirements for the PhD, up to 12 credits. Thus, PhD students who have graduated from the RTC MS program would have to complete only one further groundwork course and a total of 24 coursework credits.[1]

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[1] As Master's students are only required to take three groundwork courses in 2 different clusters, and PhD students are required to cover 3 clusters, PhD students exercising the above option will have to take their one groundwork course in a third cluster that they did not take a groundwork course in as an MS student.

4.2 Curriculum for the PhD

PhD students take 36 credits or 2 years of coursework before moving on to the Qualifying exams.

3 cr.   Introduction to Graduate Studies (HU5000)

1-3 cr.   Pre-Approved Course for Advanced RCR training

0-3 cr.   Composition Pedagogy (if applicable)

12 cr.   4 Groundwork courses. Two of these should be in the student's area of concentration and one course each in two other areas.

6 cr.   2 Focus courses, one of which can be at the 5000 level

9-14 cr.   Other courses and up to 3 credits of practica, including 1 course in Methodologies/Methods or certification by advisor(s) of methods preparation

See the Graduate school degree timeline for specific dates and advice.

4.3 Timeline for the PhD

	Fall semester	Spring semester
Year 1	(Intro to Graduate Studies) 3 cr. Composition Pedagogy (if applicable) 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	(Composition Pedagogy) 3 cr. Intro to Graduate Studies 3 cr. course 3 cr. course Advanced RCR (often in Summer)
Year 2	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. course	3 cr. course 3 cr. course 3 cr. Course
Year 3	Qualifying exams 9 cr. of HU6903 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)	Dissertation proposal and defense Petition to Enter Candidacy 9 cr. of HU6990 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)
Year 4	Dissertation research/writing (Candidacy Mode) 9 cr. of HU6990 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)	Dissertation research/writing (continued funding depends on demonstrable progress) 9 cr. of HU6990 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)
Year 5	Dissertation writing and job search 9 cr. of HU6990 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)	Dissertation defense and job search 9 cr. of HU6990 (usually 3 cr. with each of 3 committee members)

4.4 PhD Advisory Committees

Initial Advisory Interview

When students first enter the RTC Program they meet with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies for an advisory interview early in their first semester at Michigan Tech.

The initial advisory interview establishes how the student's interests match interests of RTC faculty members and offers suggestions regarding potential members of the student's Advisory Committees.

The following kinds of issues and questions may be explored in the initial advisory interview:

- Past coursework and intellectual history
- Areas of interest and expertise
- Directions and goals for graduate work

- Career goals
- Preliminary plans for a Dissertation
- Preferences for working with particular faculty

Forming an Advisory Committee

Prior to making requests for full Advisory Committees, it is suggested that students write a 250-word Preliminary Proposal describing their intended course of study. PhD Committees eventually consist of three faculty members from the RTC graduate faculty plus an "external" committee member. An external committee member may be a member of the Michigan Tech graduate faculty from some department other than Humanities or may be a faculty member from another university whose expertise in a particular area makes them a suitable addition to the committee. External members may be appointed at any point in the student's program of study but not later than twelve (12) weeks prior to the Final Oral Defense. (Please consult with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies if you wish to have a non-Michigan Tech person serve on your committee, and be sure to do it in plenty of time as the approval process can take some weeks.)

PhD students should form an Advisory Committee (not including the external member) during the second year of graduate studies, particularly before registration for their Qualifying Exam (HU6903). Doctoral students should discuss their research plans with potential committee members; however, requests for faculty members to be added to a committee must go through the RTC Director of Graduate Studies who will confirm each faculty member's willingness to participate. (Faculty members are asked to respond to these requests in writing within two weeks.) Once faculty members have indicated their willingness to serve on a committee, the RTC Program Office will prepare an [Advisor and Committee Recommendation Form](#), then submitted to the Graduate School on the student's behalf.

In general, students tend to work most closely with their Advisors. It is each Advisor's responsibility to work with students and the RTC Director of Graduate Studies to guide and monitor student progress and advise students accordingly. Student progress is formally reviewed on an annual basis by the student's committee chair and the RTC Steering Committee, in the [Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form](#).

Student-Initiated Committee Changes

During the course of their graduate study, students may ask to change Advisory Committee members. Students may request that their committee be changed for the following reasons:

- Research interests change.
- Committee members become unavailable.
- Irreconcilable differences develop between a student and a committee member.

Students may discuss potential changes with any member of their Advisory Committee or with the Director of Graduate Studies. Students, however, must follow the same procedure when reconstituting their committee as when initially forming them. Students who wish to reformulate their Advisory Committee more than once must petition to do so and have their request approved by the RTC Steering Committee.

When new committee members have accepted their invitations, the RTC Program Office will notify the student and the rest of the committee. When any changes are made to the membership of an Advisory Committee, the RTC Program Office will send the appropriate paperwork to the Graduate School.

Faculty-Initiated Changes

Faculty may also request that they be removed from Advisory Committees. Such requests are appropriate for the following reasons:

- Other commitments will not allow time to devote to the student (e.g. this may apply if faculty go on leave or take sabbaticals)
- The student's research develops in a direction that does not coincide with the committee member's areas of expertise or professional development
- Irreconcilable differences develop between faculty and student.

Faculty members should address any written requests for removal from Advisory Committees to the RTC Director of Graduate Studies.

Upon successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, the student's Advisory Committee will be dissolved. The student will have 30 days to arrange a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies to discuss either retaining the original Advisory Committee or constituting a new one. If the student does not indicate any desired changes within this 30-day period, the original Advisory Committee will be reinstated.

4.5 PhD Third- and Fourth-Year Requirements

Qualifying Examination

Qualifying Exams should be taken during the student's fifth semester (third year). Students should have their Advisory Committee in place before registration for their Qualifying Exam credits (HU6903). The Advisory Committee will normally consist of three faculty members from the RTC graduate faculty.

Preparing for the Qualifying Examination

For the exam, the student prepares two to three reading lists in consultation with the Advisory Committee. The reading lists will draw upon the readings and preparation from the first two years of coursework, with a limited set of additional readings that the faculty and student agree are necessary to enable the student to articulate a general question and response and to demonstrate the following:

- Familiarity with the most important research in those areas
- Understanding of the primary issues and controversies in those areas
- Ability to articulate a position and argument within the context of those areas

(Readings may overlap between lists.)

The student and their Advisory Committee will formulate approximately one question for each reading list. Each question should provide the student with a framework for making scholarly arguments about issues, theories, and/or traditions central to the area of study to which the question is directed. Students who are attending graduate school full time will undertake to complete all of this writing by the end of the first semester of the third year.

Timeline for the Qualifying Examination

The initial paperwork is due to the RTC Office six (6) weeks before the Qualifying Exam defense is scheduled to be held because of:

- **2 Weeks for Notification:** The advisor must collect the reading lists and questions from all committee members and send them to the RTC Program Office at least two weeks before the beginning of the exam accompanied by the RTC Two-Week Notification form. These lists and questions will be distributed by the RTC Program Office to the committee members who will indicate their approval. After the exam, copies of the reading lists will be kept as resources for future students and advisors.
- **3 Weeks for Student Writing:** The student will write the qualifying exams over the course of three weeks. The student should submit 35-45 pages total (about 8,750-12,500 words) including a works cited list.
- **1 Week for Committee Review:** Once the student submits responses, all responses will be distributed to all committee members by the RTC Program Office. The committee will have one week before the scheduled date of the Oral Defense to review the answers and agree that the student can participate in a defense. At that time the Advisor will indicate to the RTC Director that the committee agrees to proceed with the defense.

Distributing the Qualifying Examination

On the first day of the three-week exam period, the student must pick up the questions from the RTC Program Office either in person during scheduled office hours or by email.

Students have three (3) weeks to complete exam answers. Once writing is completed, the student must email the answers to the RTC Program Assistant, who will distribute the answers to committee members. The committee has one (1) week to review the submitted answers and approve a defense.

Qualifying Examination Defense

When a student and their Advisor judge it appropriate to proceed with a Qualifying Exam defense, the student should meet to discuss the exam format. The defense is not open to the public but might borrow features from the thesis/project defense or dissertation proposal defense.

The student should have their defense date set up with the committee in advance and a room reserved for a two-hour oral defense. If the student is not approved to go forward, these arrangements must be canceled.

Students should bring the Graduate School form for reporting on Qualifying Exams to their defense.

Evaluation of the Defense

After excusing the student from the room, Advisory Committee members deliberate about the quality of the student's work and performance during the defense. They base their decision on two criteria: quality of the written responses, and the quality of work and knowledge demonstrated during the oral defense.

Passing

A student passes the Qualifying Examination when the Advisory Committee agrees about the successful quality of work demonstrated in the written responses and oral defense. It is not recommended to require revisions for passing.

Unsatisfactory Completion

If at least one member of the student's Advisory Committee is not satisfied with the student's performance on their Qualifying Exam, the student may fail. The Committee must take appropriate steps as a result, which may include requiring the student to retake the Exam (with a new set of questions) or suggesting dismissal of the student. The exam may not be taken more than twice.

Upon successful completion of the Qualifying Exam, the student's Advisory Committee will be dissolved. The student will have 30 days to arrange a meeting with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies to discuss either retaining the original Advisory Committee or constituting a new one. If the student does not indicate any desired changes within this 30-day period, the original Advisory Committee will be reinstated.

Proposal and Proposal Defense

After the student successfully completes the Qualifying Exam, the student then writes a dissertation proposal and defends it by the end of the 3rd year (6th semester). This may take a full semester, especially if the student needs to develop expertise in new areas (beyond coursework and the Qualifying Examination). During this time, the student should register for HU 6990 - Doctoral Research.

Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal should be 15-20 pages (3,750-5,000 words) plus references. The student should consult with their Advisor for appropriate format for the diverse fields within the department. One possible outline consists of:

- **Introduction –** articulating an area of focus leading to a defensible question
- **Literature Review –** situating the research question within the context of other current conversations and work in the field
- **Rationale for Study**
- **Articulation of Research Question(s)**
- **Methodologies/Methods** – articulating an understanding of the appropriate means for undertaking the collection and analysis of data, or the articulation of appropriate rhetorical/hermeneutic approaches, as approved by the student's committee, that will lead the student to contribute productively to their area of interest
- **Chapter Outline –** as presently projected
- **Significance of Study –** projected contributions to the field
- **Reference List**

Another possible outline consists of:

- **Introduction –** articulating an area of focus
- **Position –** situating the research within the context of other current conversations and work in the field
- **Proposed Timeline for Research –** emphasizing Methodologies/Methods
- **Chapter Outline –** as presently projected

- **Reference List**

When the student and Advisory Committee agree, the proposal can move to a defense.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

Ahead of the defense, the student and Advisor should meet to discuss the defense format. The defense is not open to the public but might borrow features from the thesis/project defense. The dissertation proposal defense should involve all members of the Advisory Committee, though at this time, the RTC program considers involvement of the external member optional at the proposal defense.

The student should have their defense date set up with the committee in advance and a room reserved for an oral defense. If the student is not approved to go forward, these arrangements must be canceled. At least two weeks prior to their defense, the student must submit a copy of the proposal to the RTC Program Office along with the Two-Week Notification form.

Evaluation of the Defense

After excusing the student from the room, Advisory Committee members deliberate about the quality of the student's work and performance during the defense. They base their decision on two criteria: quality of the proposal, and the quality of work and knowledge demonstrated during the oral defense.

Following a successful defense, the student must submit the Report on Proposal Defense. If at least one member of the student's Advisory Committee is not satisfied with the student's Proposal and Defense, the student may fail. The Committee and student must take appropriate steps as a result, which may include scheduling another defense in a future semester. Committees, however, are urged to consider if a proposal seems defensible ahead of time and reschedule preemptively.

Following a successful defense, and following the appointment of an external member to the Advisory Committee, students are required to petition for PhD candidacy by completing the Petition to Enter Candidacy. The semester following approval of this petition, the student may register for HU 6990 - Doctoral Research at the reduced tuition rate.

4.6 Doctoral Dissertation

The central doctoral degree requirement is completing a research project that leads to a Dissertation contributing to knowledge in the student's field. Dissertations reflect a variety of perspectives and methods in their form and content.

Although the creation of communication products such as manuals, videos, tools, or software may form a part of the doctoral research, such products cannot be submitted in place of Dissertations.

Working on the Dissertation

The student's Advisor is responsible for advising the student on the preparation of the dissertation proposal, advising the student on choosing additional committee members, meeting with the student to recommend further reading and to discuss ideas, reading all drafts of chapters and approving them to go to the rest of the committee, and helping the student stay on track to finish in a timely way. In cases where another member of the Advisory Committee has special expertise not held by the Advisor (on methodology, for example), such committee members may also be asked to read early drafts. Additionally, advisors have primary responsibility for assisting their advisees with the job search process. This includes providing feedback on draft vitae, cover letters, and teaching materials. Ideally such feedback should come the semester before the student is going to enter the job market.

Students should communicate regularly with their Advisor on their progress in completing the dissertation and submit chapters for review on a regular basis. Students are not advised to submit the entire dissertation at once for review by the Advisor. Students should check with faculty regarding availability to read dissertation chapters during the summer. Advisors must provide feedback on draft chapters in a timely manner but no later than one month after they have received them. Once all members of the committee have read the final draft dissertation and decided it is defensible, the Advisor should meet with the student to discuss the logistics of the oral defense. The oral defense is then scheduled to take place at least two weeks after the committee has agreed to go forward. An external member must be present for the Dissertation's Oral Defense.

Dissertation's Oral Defense

Once the Advisory Committee agrees that the student may defend their Dissertation, the Oral Defense, or Final Oral Examination, is scheduled. This agreement requires that committee members will have read the version of the dissertation that will be defended and have provided students any feedback they judge necessary to improve the dissertation.

Preparing for the Oral Defense—Student Responsibilities

Students work in consultation with their Advisor to schedule the time and place of their defense and to prepare the abstract of their Dissertation. At least two weeks prior to their examination, the student must submit the pre-examination version of their Dissertation along with the abstract to the RTC Program Office and the final notification of the examination date along with the Two-Week Notification form. The Graduate School also has additional requirements, as indicated in the policies for defending the dissertation.

Copies of pre-defense drafts of the Dissertation must be distributed to all members of the student's Committee at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defense date. Copies of pre-defense drafts of Dissertations may also be made available in the Petersen Library to interested faculty and graduate students within this timeframe. Students should bring the Report on the Final Oral Examination form to their defense.

Preparing for the Oral Defense—Committee Responsibilities

The Advisor should convene the full Dissertation Committee prior to the Oral Defense to discuss issues such as appropriate examination format and procedures. All such discussions should be finalized prior to the defense date.

Procedures for the Oral Defense

The Oral Defense of the Dissertation consists of two parts: a public presentation and a closed examination. During part one, the student makes a brief, public presentation including an overview of the major contributions of the Dissertation. The student then fields questions from the audience. This section of the defense should run no longer than one hour, and the Advisor moderates the discussion to ensure an open dialogue.

During part two of the Oral Defense, committee members question the student in a closed session for no longer than one hour. Committee members ask about the validity of the methods and conclusions contained in the Dissertation and about the significance of the student's research with respect to the larger body of existing knowledge within the field. Part two is closed to the public.

Evaluating the Oral Defense

After the Oral Defense, the Dissertation Committee asks the student to leave, allowing the committee the opportunity to deliberate in private about the quality of the student's work and performance during the Oral Defense. They base their decision on two criteria:

- Quality of research represented in the Dissertation and Oral Defense;
- Knowledge and evidence of contribution to the field represented in the Dissertation and Oral Defense.

Passing

A student passes their Oral Defense when no more than one member of their Dissertation Committee is in dissent about the quality of the work demonstrated in both the Dissertation and Oral Defense. If a member of the Dissertation Committee dissents, the student must address that member's dissenting comments prior to receiving final approval for passing. The student's Advisor and the Graduate School will judge when the student has satisfactorily addressed the dissenting committee member's comments.

Passing with Revisions

If the Dissertation Committee agrees that the student's work needs revision, they may ask the student to revise the Dissertation before being certified for completing the requirements of the Doctoral degree. The student cannot proceed with submission of the dissertation to the Graduate School or with graduation until the Advisor approves these revisions.

Unsatisfactory Completion of the Final Oral Examination

A student fails their Oral Defense when more than one member of the Dissertation Committee is in dissent about the quality of the work demonstrated in the Dissertation and Oral Defense.

Students who fail their Oral Defense may petition the RTC Steering Committee to defend again, no sooner than the next semester and perhaps with some different committee members. However, students must wait at least one semester before proceeding with a second Oral Defense. A second failure of the Oral Defense provides sufficient grounds for dismissal from the RTC Program. The RTC Steering Committee determines the status of students who fail their Final Oral Examination twice.

Post-Evaluation Procedures

When the Advisory Committee has completed deliberations, it will reconvene to inform the student regarding their evaluation of the written document and oral defense, as above. If the student is judged to have passed, their Committee will discuss any additional conditions or recommendations. If the student has failed or has passed with revisions, the Committee will discuss their reasons.

Upon successful completion of the Final Oral Examination or after the second failure of the Examination, the Report on Final Oral Examination form must be submitted by the Advisor to the RTC Program Office who will then forward it to the Graduate School. Details regarding this form and other required documentation are on the Graduate School's Forms and Deadlines webpage.

Following the successful defense/revision of their Dissertations, the student must submit an electronic copy to the Graduate School, along with other documents. Please consult their updated policies for completing the dissertation and after completing the degree.

University Graduation Requirements

Commencement information is mailed by the Graduate School to eligible students approximately three months prior to either the December or May ceremony.

Students who have defenses scheduled prior to graduation may be eligible to walk at commencement, provided they fill out a Commencement Application Form ten weeks prior to the ceremony. Other requirements and information about graduation and degree certification can be found at the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures webpage, which is updated frequently.

Note that the RTC program does not permit "early walks." Under no circumstances may PhD students participate in graduation ceremonies prior to completing all requirements for the degree, including submission of the final Dissertation and all Graduate School paperwork.

Congratulations on reaching this stage!

5 General Program Policies

Section 5 deals with general RTC program policies, including financial support.

5.1 Student Policies

Continuous Enrollment

The Michigan Tech Graduate School requires that all graduate student maintain [continuous enrollment](). That is, students must be enrolled for Fall and Spring semesters in all years between initial admission and graduation. Students who receive financial support during the Summer semester must be enrolled for that term as well.

Please consult the RTC Office with questions about continuous enrollment. Because enrollment expectations vary based on candidacy, international status, and other factors, the Graduate School maintains the [updated policies about registration, enrollment, and full-time status.]() HU5990/6990 Thesis/Doctoral Research, HU5900/6900 Independent Study, HU5901/6901 Directed Reading, HU5902/6902 Internship, HU6903 Doctoral Qualifying Exam Prep, and HU5991 (Master's) Projects, among other courses, may be taken for variable credit. If a student is not able to maintain enrollment, the Graduate School has a range of options, including Continuous Enrollment courses.

The RTC Director of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Graduate School must approve all waivers of continuous enrollment. Such waivers are approved only when it is necessary for students to interrupt their studies for some reason. Students conducting either on- or off- campus research or internships are considered to be using university services and thus must be enrolled for at least one credit each term.

Residency Requirements

Master's

The RTC Program currently expects that students will be on campus for the required coursework for an MS degree. Research credits used to satisfy degree requirements (such as, HU5990 Thesis Research or HU5991 Projects) can be taken remotely but must be taken through Michigan Tech and must be supervised by a member of the RTC graduate faculty.

PhD

The RTC Program currently expects that students will be on campus for the required coursework for an PhD degree. Research credits used to satisfy degree requirements (such as, HU6990 Doctoral Research) can be taken remotely but must be taken through Michigan Tech and must be supervised by a member of the RTC graduate faculty.

Student Progress

Time and Funding Limits

According to [Graduate School MS requirements](), all work required for the Master's degree must be completed within five calendar years from the first semester of enrollment. However, the normal RTC funding limit for Master's students is two years.

According to Graduate School PhD requirements, Doctoral students (both those who enter with a Bachelor's degree and those who enter with a Master's degree) must complete their Qualifying Exams within five calendar years and must complete all requirements within eight calendar years from their first enrollment in the RTC Program. However, the funding limit for RTC doctoral students is four or five years with the possibility of extension contingent on satisfactory progress.

Annual Student Progress Evaluation Forms

The Annual Student Progress Evaluation Form verifies that students are making timely progress toward degree completion and provides students with guidance and feedback from their committees. Annual Student Progress Evaluation Forms are also a factor in determining students' future funding in the program. With the exception of certain students on leave, any student not making satisfactory progress toward the degree will not be considered in good standing and could lose funding. Satisfactory Progress will be indicated on the form by a designation of "Satisfactory" from the Advisor and RTC Steering Committee. A designation of "Needs Improvement" or "Serious Concerns" will be accompanied by an explanation of any actions the students must undertake in order to return to satisfactory status. The Annual Progress Evaluation process will normally take place in March/April and will include consultations between students and their Advisors as well as one-on-one meetings between students and the RTC Director of Graduate Studies.

Grades

In the RTC Program, grades generally reflect progress as described in the following table.

Grade	Level of Progress
A	Excellent and good graduate work
A/B	Acceptable graduate work
B	Marginally acceptable graduate work
B/C	Unacceptable graduate work
C	Unacceptable graduate work (all requirements completed)
F	Unacceptable graduate work (all requirements not completed)

The Registrars Office maintains broader grading policies and definitions. Particularly relevant for the RTC program:

- I (incomplete) grade for extenuating circumstances preventing completion of a course.

- P (progress) grade for satisfactory work in a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research).
- Q (inadequate progress) for unsatisfactory work in a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research). A Q grade means that a graduate student is no longer in good academic standing.
- S (satisfactory) for satisfactory completion of a 5000- or 6000-level research course that is not completed in a single semester (i.e. HU 6990 Doctoral Research).

RTC faculty may opt to distinguish between excellent and good graduate work and inform students of those distinctions. The Registrar's Office maintains Michigan Tech Grading Information.

According to the Graduate School's Good Academic Standing policies, graduate students must maintain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average in the courses required for a graduate degree. Additionally, graduate students are expected to receive grades of P (progress) in research credits, maintain continuous enrollment, pass required defenses, and make satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree.

If a student does not maintain good academic standing, the RTC Director consults with the RTC Steering Committee, and with their approval, may place a student on probation or may recommend a student's withdrawal or dismissal from the RTC Program. Students receiving anything less than a designation of "Satisfactory" on their Annual Student Progress Evaluation Forms must discuss required actions to remediate their status with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. During academic probation, students are expected to maintain enrollment. Probationary status is reviewed at the end of each semester by the RTC Director in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee in order to determine appropriate actions.

Voluntary Withdrawal

In consultation with the RTC Steering Committee, the RTC Director of Graduate Studies may suggest that an individual student on academic probation or making unsatisfactory progress withdraw from the RTC Program. If the student does not voluntarily withdraw from the program, the RTC Steering Committee may advise the RTC Director to begin dismissal proceedings.

Dismissal

Students may be dismissed from the RTC program if any one of the following occurs:

- Student does not maintain good academic standing or does not make satisfactory progress in their work toward a degree.
- Student does not maintain continuous enrollment.
- Student fails the M.S. Thesis or Project defense.
- Student fails the Doctoral Qualifying Exam twice.
- Student fails the Dissertation Defense.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of others' ideas, words, or images without proper attribution or acknowledgment. Plagiarism is a serious matter and may result in a student's dismissal from Michigan Tech. Faculty suspecting that a student has committed plagiarism ought to first discuss the matter with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. If the suspicion can be substantiated, the Director informs the RTC Steering Committee and the Department Chair. The Director also advises the faculty member to bring the matter to the attention of the Dean of Students for resolution according to Michigan Tech procedures. Academic misconduct cases will be handled in accordance with Michigan Tech's Academic Integrity Policy.

5.2 University Policies

Michigan Tech maintains syllabus policies that hold at the program level as well as the level of a course.

"If you have a disability that could affect your performance in any class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor or Disability Services at 487-1494 as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcomed and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to their instructor(s).

For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, Chair/Dean of your academic unit, Dean of Students Office at 487-2212 or The Office of Institutional Equity at 487-3310."

The RTC Office can advocate for you in communicating with any of these offices or other university units.

Additionally, Michigan Tech's Diversity Council promotes a statement of CommUNITY:

At Michigan Tech, we are all members of an academic community where it is our shared responsibility to cultivate a climate where all individuals are valued – where both they and their ideas are treated with respect.

Finally, please be aware that Michigan Technological University is located within Ojibwa (Chippewa) homelands and ceded-territory established by the Treaty of 1842, the shared lands and waters of Native America nations in Gakiiwe'onaning (Keweenaw Bay), Gete-gitgaaning (Lac Vieux Desert), Mashkii-ziibing (Bad River), Odaawaa-zaaga'iganing (Lac Courte Oreilles), Waaswaaganing (Lac Du Flambeau), Miskwaabikong (Red Cliff), Wezaawaagami-ziibiing (St. Croix), Zaka'aaganing (Sokaogon Mole Lake), Nagaajiwanaag (Fond du Lac), Misi-zaaga'iganiing (Mille Lacs), and Gaa-mitaawangaagamaag-ininiwag (Sandy Lake). We also commit to respecting the land and each other.

Grievance Procedures

Faculty or students with concerns or complaints about the behavior of other faculty or students in professional situations or in interpersonal relationships should follow the grievance procedures described below. Note that questions of plagiarism should be taken to the Dean of Students, and gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault/violence should be reported using Title IX Reporting Options.

These procedures are designed to protect the rights and privacy of both faculty and students and to equitably adjudicate conflicts among faculty and students.

General Guidelines for Grievances

Generally, faculty and students should avoid discussing their complaints with colleagues. Faculty or students who believe they have been subjected to discrimination based on sex or sexual harassment, suspect that an unfounded discrimination complaint may be filed against them, or have been threatened with the filing of such a complaint should Report a Concern as soon as possible.

Student-Initiated Grievances

Students have the right to fair and equal treatment by administrators and to expect professional behavior from other faculty and students. Professional behavior includes such matters as a respect for expertise, individual beliefs, and personal privacy.

Students should be aware that the campus provides an Ombuds Office, a resource for problem-solving and conflict resolution. Students who have complaints about administrators, faculty, or other students should first discuss their complaints with the person concerned, if possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, they should discuss the complaint with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies. The RTC Director then consults with the RTC Steering Committee (unless inappropriate), discusses the complaint with the administrator, faculty member, or student in question, attempts to resolve the problem, and reports to the Humanities Chair and the RTC Steering Committee. If resolution is not possible at this level, the complaint will be referred to the Humanities Chair. If the complaint concerns the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, it should be referred to the Humanities Chair directly. If the complaint concerns the Chair and resolution is not possible within the department, the complaint should be referred to the Dean.

Faculty-Initiated Grievances

Faculty members have the right to fair and equal treatment by administrators and to expect professional behavior from other faculty and students. Professional behavior includes such matters as a respect for expertise, individual beliefs, and personal privacy.

Faculty with complaints about graduate students should first discuss their complaints with the person concerned, if possible. If the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, they should discuss the complaint with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies, who will consult with the RTC Steering Committee, discuss the complaint with the student, attempt to resolve the problem, and report to the Chair. If resolution is not possible at this level, the complaint will be referred to the Chair.

Faculty members should be aware that the campus provides an Ombuds Office, a resource for problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Title IX

As the Title IX Office explains:

"Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities that receive Federal funds. It states:

'No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.'"

"Michigan Technological University does not discriminate in its employment practices or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of sex and gender. Michigan Tech also prohibits retaliation against any person opposing discrimination or participating in any discrimination investigation or complaint process internally or externally. Reports of misconduct, questions regarding Title IX, and concerns about noncompliance should be directed to the Title IX Coordinator. For a complete copy of the policy or more information, please contact the Title IX Coordinator or the Assistant Secretary of Education within the Office of Civil Rights (OCR)."

To officially report an incident of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual assault/violence, consult the Title IX Reporting Options, which includes private resources and confidential assistance.

5.3 RTC Faculty as Mentors

RTC faculty mentor students in both teaching and research.

Graduate Students Teaching New Courses

Graduate students work with the Director of Composition, and other course coordinators, in a mentoring relationship regarding teaching.

In such a relationship, RTC students regularly:

- Work with faculty before the term begins to articulate the instructional goals associated with a course
- Draft and revise syllabus and/or policy statements
- Learn strategies for making assignments appropriate to a course
- Prepare effective feedback on student assignments (e.g., papers, drafts, presentations, and tests)
- Develop productive strategies for grading, evaluating, and conferencing
- Observe experienced teachers and arrange for observation of their work
- Reflect systematically on instructional goals, assignments, and class activities
- Connect theoretical perspectives on course content with practical pedagogical approaches to class activities

Independent Studies and Research Credits

The RTC Program offers a variety of courses for students who want to pursue individual scholarship under the supervision of a faculty member. Note that while such independent work may be a valuable part of graduate work, it must be considered in the context of other departmental needs. Thus, the RTC Steering Committee recommends that such independent work be reserved for advanced students (second year and beyond), that is, students who have completed a significant portion of their coursework. Students will normally only be permitted to apply three (3) credits total of Independent Studies, Directed Reading, or Internship credits toward the coursework requirements for their degree.

Independent work is a natural part of a student's final stages of work and involves registering for research credits. MS students working on theses or projects should register for HU5990 or HU5991 respectively; PhD students preparing for their Qualifying Exams should register HU6903 during the semesters immediately before and during the taking of their Qualifying Exams; PhD students working on dissertations after passing their Qualifying Exams should enroll for HU6990 Dissertation Research credits.

During summer semesters, students receiving Michigan Tech support must register for coursework, which be in the form of an Independent Study or research credits, depending on progress through the degree. All students should consult with their advisors before registering for summer, and no student will be allowed to sign up for independent work without prior written approval of the faculty and RTC Director according to the RTC Supplementary Coursework Form.

5.4 Financial Support

The RTC Program endeavors to support all students needing financial support, using a combination of external and internal funding. The RTC Steering Committee makes support recommendations after decisions on admission have been made.

Decisions on financial support and contract offers for the coming academic year are made in spring or early summer. However, some funding opportunities may become available at other times during the year.

Student support is primarily through teaching assistantships, beginning as Graduate Teaching Assistants and proceeding to Graduate Teaching Instructors (of Record) (GTIs), as defined by the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures for Assistantships. Appointments are reviewed by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee, the Director of Composition, Coordinators, and faculty mentors.

Other students may be appointed as graduate administrative assistants (GADIs), graduate research assistants to faculty (GRAs), or as assistants in the Michigan Tech Writing Center, HDMZ, or elsewhere. Applications for such positions are evaluated by the RTC Director of Graduate Studies in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee and supervising faculty.

Funding Terms

Our goal is to provide at least two years of funding for every Master's student and four-five years of funding for every PhD student who requests support in their application for admission.

Funding decisions are competitive and always contingent upon budgetary decision-making at state and university levels. The RTC Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the RTC Steering Committee and Department Chair, makes all funding decisions as part of the admissions process.

As indicated in each student's contract letter, continued funding is based on successful job performance and satisfactory academic progress.

Support Package

Tuition & Fee Waivers, Stipends

During the regular academic year (Fall and Spring semesters), all supported students receive tuition waivers for up to 9 credits and computer-lab fee waivers. Students are expected to maintain appropriate enrollment, as governed by the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures for Assistantships.

Workload

The graduate workload consists of a total of three academic year assignments (courses or their equivalents) over the fall and spring semesters. Each course (or equivalent appointment) counts for approximately 10 hours per week. Thus, a student may carry a teaching load of 1-2 or 2-1 assignments, but the total workload is expected to average out to 20 hours per week over the course of the term. Administrative assignments continue over Fall and Spring semesters.

The teaching load is usually arranged so that new RTC students teach one course the first term and two the second. Advanced students may receive 1-2 or 2-1 loads, or receive administrative or other assignments over the year. This depends on factors such as the availability and timing of particular courses or other administrative assignments as well as students' own plans for progressing along their MS or PhD.

Summer Support

Summer support is limited and is offered first to PhD students followed by Master's students. Summer teaching appointments also are determined on the basis of the student's experience and preparedness to teach a particular course. Support consists of a tuition waiver for one research credit, plus computer fees, and a stipend for teaching a seven-week course or serving in another research or administrative role.

Department and Student Commitment to Contracts

Contracts for graduate assistants commit the Department of Humanities to offering training and fiscal support to students and likewise commit students to professional behavior with regard to their teaching and employment. In order to meet our teaching and administrative commitments, it is important that the RTC Program staff classes and administrative positions with qualified assistants.

Students who find they must resign their positions during the year should make every effort to inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the appropriate supervisor as soon as possible, but not less than two weeks prior to the beginning of the semester. Students who are scheduled to teach in summer sessions should inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the appropriate teaching supervisor no later than five weeks prior to summer semester.

Types of Support

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

RTC students may be assigned to teach lower division University (UN) or Humanities (HU) courses, or to assist regular faculty in other Humanities or University courses.

The most common form of funding offered by the Department of Humanities is as Graduate Teaching Assistants/Instructors (GTAs/GTIs) for University courses, primarily UN1015 Composition. RTC students assigned to teach courses are required to enroll for HU5931 – Composition Pedagogy during the first term of their employment, as well as attend the intensive training session prior to the Fall term in which they begin their employment.

While GTAs assist faculty in their teaching, GTIs are instructors of record and therefore are required to:

- Design courses and prepare a syllabus for each class
- Meet their classes according to the Registrar's schedule
- Design and evaluate assignments
- Hold office hours
- Keep accurate records and report grades
- Conduct, receive, and review student evaluations

GTIs are also expected to attend staff meetings and to meet regularly with their faculty mentors.

Beyond Composition, other teaching appointments require students to have completed appropriate training, usually through taking practicum courses. RTC faculty regularly offer:

- HU 5932 Practicum in Teaching Technical Communication – for new teachers of HU 3120 Technical and Professional Communication
- HU 5934 Practicum in Communication Pedagogy – for new teachers of HU 2830 Public Speaking & Multimedia

Additionally, RTC faculty occasionally offer:

- HU5933 Practicum in Modern Language Pedagogy – for new teachers of Spanish, French, or German
- HU5935 Practicum in Writing Center Administration – for leadership in the Writing Center
- HU6090 Special Topics in Pedagogy – for new teachers of HU 2503 Introduction to Literature, HU 3015 Advanced Composition, or other courses

Enrollment in these practica are by permission of the Instructor.

Note: Because a majority of RTC graduate funding comes via teaching, international students must show clear evidence of experience and excellence in spoken and written English. International students who are native speakers of languages other than English must follow the Graduate School admissions requirements and the Graduate School policies for Graduate Language Assessment and Support.

Graduate Administrative and Research Assistants

Graduate Administrative Assistants (GADIs) and Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) perform administrative support duties or research activities under the direction of RTC faculty or faculty from other departments. Such assignments are usually awarded only to advanced students, may require previous internships or training, and are frequently mixed with teaching assignments. GADIs and GRAs receive comparable financial support to GTIs. Students are encouraged to communicate their interest in one of these positions by filling out an Appointment Request Form and submitting it to the RTC Program Office.

Finishing Fellowships

The Graduate School offers a limited number of competitive Finishing Fellowships to PhD students who are close to finishing their dissertations.

Other Funding

RTC students should consider the funding opportunities that will work well with their degree progress. RTC students with assistantships are strongly discouraged from adding positions at other universities to their workload. The following are some recommended sources for external funding.

King/Chavez/Parks Fellowship

The Michigan King/Chavez/Parks Fellowship programs provides grants to support graduate education for students from under-represented groups.

Research Grants (NSF, etc.)

Faculty in the Humanities Department, or from across campus, may secure research funding that contains employment opportunities for qualified graduate students (for instance, through the National Science Foundation, NSF). Students are encouraged to seek outside support and funding, as long as the work or research entailed is consistent with and supportive of a student's progress towards completion of the MS or PhD degree.

Fellowships (University, National)

A number of competitively awarded fellowships are available for research and dissertation completion. Securing prestigious awards provides time for concentration on one's research and writing. A partial list of available awards is through Graduate School Financial Support.

Summer Funding (Outside the RTC Program)

Students may find employment as counselors or instructors in various Summer Youth Programs, outreach programs offered by the university.

Travel Funds

Students presenting papers at conferences can request partial assistance for travel expenses from the Graduate Student Government and from the Department of Humanities.

The Graduate Student Government regularly offers travel grants, to help with the cost of presenting at a conference or attending a conference. GSG Travel Grants lists the latest rates and procedures.

The Department of Humanities also sets aside travel funds to support student conference travel. Applications should be made through the RTC Graduate Travel Funds Application.

Any additional questions about program policies or financial support? Please ask at the RTC Office.

6 Student Opportunities and Student Resources

Section 6 discusses student opportunities and student resources.

6.1 Graduate Student Opportunities

Committees

Graduate students may serve on a variety of Humanities Department committees, including the RTC Steering Committee. Committee positions are filled either by an election process or by invitation and appointment. Students who are interested in serving on committees should talk to the RTC Director of Graduate Studies or the student representatives.

Graduate Student Government

The Graduate Student Government (GSG) of Michigan Tech represents the professional, intellectual, and academic concerns of graduate students to the various governing bodies of the university and generally advocates for graduate students. The GSG holds events for graduate students and provides travel grants and other resources. As their events and services change often, please consult the GSG website.

Joint Authorship

Graduate students may work closely with faculty on articles, books, and other research projects. Graduate students who contribute substantially to research projects leading to publication should be listed as joint authors.

Studying Abroad

Michigan Tech may participate in foreign exchange programs at the graduate level, with financing available through scholarships or employment arrangements. These programs will be announced as they become available.

6.2 Graduate Student Resources

The RTC Program Office

The RTC Program Office manages records and paperwork pertaining to graduate students, faculty, and the RTC program. The RTC Program Office is also a source for information regarding the university, the department, and the local community. Questions about MS and PhD registration, forms, contracts, financial support, grades, student records, committees, and offices should be addressed to the RTC Program Office.

Graduate Student Mentors

Advanced graduate students volunteer to be informal mentors for newly admitted graduate students. Assignments are made in consultation with the RTC Director of Graduate Studies before new students begin their studies. Mentors contact the new students before they begin the program to make introductions, ascertain what types of information and support new students will find useful, and determine how frequently to meet with new students during their first year of study. Mentors share their knowledge about practical and everyday resources available in the larger community; the cultures of the department, campus, and community; program expectations and guidelines; strategies for problem-solving and success as a graduate student; and knowledge of faculty research interests. Mentors are encouraged as a group to plan a social and informational gathering for the mentor-mentee cohort early to promote a sense of community, knowledge of academic interests, and the wider availability of resources and information.

RTC Colloquium Series

The RTC program regularly schedules an RTC Colloquium Series, which showcases research conducted by members of the RTC program. With support of graduate students, the RTC Steering Committee reviews papers and organizes panel presentations modeled on conference presentation formats. When graduate students receive travel funding, their conference paper is automatically considered for inclusion.

Graduate Student Professional Development Seminars

The RTC program may provide professional mentoring assistance to new and advanced graduate students by hosting a series of seminars aimed at Graduate Professional Development. Such seminars have included a wide range of professional development advice and discussions, including such topics as surviving and thriving in graduate school, the formatting and content of vitae and résumés, practice sessions for job interviews, the working conditions at a variety of academic institutions, on-campus and off-campus professional development opportunities, and job searching. If you have a particular topic you would like addressed, contact the RTC Director of Graduate Studies.

Reading Groups

Students frequently form reading groups, with or without faculty, around special interests or topics. Particularly useful are dissertation support groups, in which students in the final stages of the PhD program join together to read drafts and offer each other support.

Writing Center

The Michigan Tech Writing Center offers many ways of supporting RTC students. RTC students are welcome to bring their projects to the center for feedback and conversation. Graduate teaching assistants/instructors are encouraged to recommend the Writing Center to their undergraduate students. Finally, the Michigan Tech Writing Center does provide funding opportunities for interested RTC students. Please consult the Michigan Tech Writing Center website for further information.

HDMZ: Humanities Digital Media Zone

The Humanities Digital Media Zone provides media-development and language-learning resources. Digital media equipment and resources may be checked out by graduate students, as well as undergraduates in relevant courses and majors. Also, the HDMZ has occasionally funding opportunities for interested RTC students. Please consult the HDMZ website for further information.

The J. R. Van Pelt and Opie Library

The J.R. Van Pelt and Opie Library maintains a collection of print and online resources and coordinates with other libraries. RTC students are expected to consult their collections and databases, as well as engage with their other research resources. Additionally, the library provides instructional support for graduate teaching assistants/instructors, which can the take the form of course reserve, library instruction, or other services. Finally, the library building has several study rooms, computers, printing and photocopying areas, a café, University Archives and Historical Collections, and other amenities. Any questions about the library? Please begin with the Library website.

Center for Diversity and Inclusion

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) hosts student-centered events and groups. RTC students are welcome in the space and often take on leadership roles. For more information, please see the CDI website.

Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being

The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being hosts events and groups focused on the overall well-being of Michigan Tech students.

Graduate School

The Michigan Graduate School determines the relevant policies and procedures for graduate study at Michigan Tech, and it also provides resources for graduate students. If you feel you are struggling, feel free consult the RTC Office, and we will likely recommend GSG resources or Graduate School resources.

Humanities

Walker Arts and Humanities Center, 1400 Townsend Drive

Houghton, Michigan 49931-1295

Ph: 906-487-2540 | Fax: 906-487-3559

mtu.edu/humanities

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