



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**TEXTS *and*
TECHNOLOGY *Ph.D.***
COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Fall 2016 Workshop Series
Candidacy Examination
October 18, 2016

Texts and Technology Resources

T&T Doctoral Student Handbook: http://tandt.cah.ucf.edu/files/tt_handbook16-17.pdf
Pages 24 to 30 of the handbook provide information about selecting a committee, best practices for preparing, scheduling the exams, a breakdown of the three exams, and grading policies.

2016-2018 Core Exam Reading List: <http://tandt.cah.ucf.edu/files/2016-18TTReadingList.pdf>

Grading Criteria for Candidacy Exams: http://tandt.cah.ucf.edu/files/Exam_Rubric.pdf
This is the exam rubric used for grading the candidacy exam. It gives a brief, but helpful, rundown of the criteria of grading and what is needed to pass.

Strategies and Advice

How to think about the process

- **What's the exam for?** Why do the faculty ask you to do it?
 - “The process is meant to develop the tools needed to approach the dissertation” (Handbook, p. 29).
 - What does that mean?
 - Can you **look at a body of scholarship, synthesize it, and stake out your own position** that builds from it?
 - Historically, the idea was that after taking an exam you would be prepared to teach a course in that area. This gives insight into the philosophy of the milestone.
- What is your committee looking for?
 - “not merely a rehashing of the theorists’ work” (Handbook, p. 29), but **you exercising scholarly judgment** of how works are useful (or not) for particular topics or questions
- What's it NOT for?
 - Hazing, torture, making you memorize everything that has ever been said
- **We want you to succeed.**

How does it work?

1. **You select the 5-hr time block you want** between 8:30am and 5pm.
2. **You may bring snacks and drinks**, but no notes, texts, etc. Patty will hold your phone and any electronic devices for safekeeping during the exam. If you have any favorite pens or pencils, you may bring them! **T&T will provide notepaper, sticky notes, pens, highlighters, pencils**, etc. as well.
3. **During the exam you can take short breaks**, go to the restroom, etc.—you manage your time during the test, although Patty will usually check on you a few times during the day.
4. You will be **provided the exam questions electronically** (in a word document on the desktop) **and in hard copy, as well as the exam rubric**.
5. You will be asked to respond to two questions and each response should be its own document. Here are **sample exam directions**:

Welcome. This is the first exam of the series of comprehensive exams for the Texts and Technology program. We will expect you to answer the questions fully and give a careful account of the texts you decide to use in your essays. You will have five hours to work on your answers, but may not use notes, articles or texts when forming/shaping your answers. You must answer two questions out of the four listed below; try to spend an equal amount of time on both of your answers.

This exam aims to test your understanding of Texts and Technologies as a field of knowledge as measured by the 30 texts you have selected from the T&T Core Ph.D. Candidacy Exam Reading List. No books, notes, Internet access, or other electronic devices are to be used.

Each essay should be a minimum of six pages in length. Please save each response as its own document, using your name and the question number: LASTNAME.CoreExam.Q#. Please include the question at the beginning of each of your response essays. Double-space your responses (using 12-point font) and use page numbers. Regularly save your answers onto the desktop. At the end of the exam, Patty will transfer your response documents to a flash drive and send them to your Chair.

The exam will be evaluated on your ability to answer the questions and provide substantive responses in an organized, clear, coherent manner. The committee will grade your essays separately as Pass/Fail or holistically. You may refer to the attached rubric for the evaluation criteria.

Staying organized

- Before the Exam
 - <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/5-strategies-organizing-notes-comprehensive-exams>
Strategies for organizing notes (both digital and low-tech options).
 - <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=31450&p=199968>
Every major digital research manager system with information on how to choose and learn how to use the software.
 - <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/marycatonl/2012/01/09/study-habits-digital-age-what-are-yours>
The value of this post lies in the comments. An English PhD student asked “what are your study habits in the digital age,” and the responses are all varied and extremely helpful. Most cite using a reference manager like Zotero, Evernote, or EndNote, but there are numerous other interesting ways people have organized their research.
- During the exam
 - Some students, before even looking at the questions, **take a few initial minutes to jot down key notes** – perhaps a list of authors /theorists and key words.
 - Once you review the questions and decide which two you plan to respond to, some students **jot down a brief outline with some initial thoughts for each question.**
 - That way, after diving answering one of the questions, you don’t draw a total blank when you get to second question and can’t remember why you even thought it was one you wanted to respond to.
 - The **5-paragraph essay structure is your friend** (<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/surviving-writing-comprehensive-exams>)
 - “Not that you need to use 5 paragraphs, but that kind of rigid structure can help you focus on content over form. Start by writing **an introductory paragraph that speaks directly to the prompt. Answer the question immediately.** Then, sketch **where the rest of your answer is going to go.**”
 - “use lots of sign-posting. Talk about **what each paragraph or section is going to do, and why.**”
 - “Then, write **a beginning sentence to each paragraph that acts as a mini-introduction.** Tie the paragraph back to your thesis, and outline what you are going to do in the paragraph.”

Texts and Technology Blog Resources

<http://tandt-blog.cah.ucf.edu/2016/07/12/candidacy-exams-advice-for-preparation-and-motivation-during-the-summer-months/>

“Candidacy Exams: Advice for Preparation and Motivation during the Summer Months,” by Mark Kretzschmar, 3rd year T and T student, is a great way to see the preparation strategy of a student in our program.

<http://tandt-blog.cah.ucf.edu/2016/06/28/stress-and-success-five-strategies-for-self-care/>

“Stress and Success: Five Strategies for Self-Care,” by Ruth Currey, outlines some useful tips to manage stress during difficult academic times.

College of Graduate Studies Pathways Series Workshops

<https://www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/PathwaysDescriptions2/#CitationManagement>

UCF Graduate Studies holds a “Citation Management Workshop” featuring EndNote and RefWorks.

<https://www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/PathwaysDescriptions2/#StrategiesforPersonalandAcademicSuccess>

“Time Management: Strategies for Personal and Academic Success,” may be of help for those of you looking for time management skills to support you during your comp exam semester.

<https://www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/PathwaysDescriptions2/#Strategies>

“Strategies for Graduate Students to Manage Stress” could be useful at any time during your graduate career, but could help particularly with managing stress during comp exams.

UCF Resources for Student Wellness

SDES Wellness and Health Promotion Services: <http://whps.sdes.ucf.edu/services>

This website lists all of the services available for students to maintain wellness during their studies. Services that may be useful during the comp exams period include a map and location times for the “relaxation station,” opportunities for wellness coaching, biofeedback relaxation training program, and a workshop on stress management.

Counseling and Psychological Services: <http://caps.sdes.ucf.edu/>

UCF’s Counseling and Psychological Services are here to help if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed. You can schedule an individual appointment or attend group sessions such as “From Stress to Success” and introductions to mindfulness-based therapies. On their “About” page, they specifically list “academic difficulties,” “stress and anxiety,” and “procrastination / work blocks / lack of motivation” as areas in which they help students.