PhD Sample Timeline

First Year

**Fall**
- Read degree requirements (general and program-specific) on English website and Graduate School website
- Read the Graduate Student Survival Handbook on the Graduate School Web site
- Meet with Director of Graduate Studies in English in the early weeks of the semester
- Meet twice with appointed faculty mentor
- Plan approach to fulfill the requirements for your degree (including language requirements)
- Submit Transfer Credit Evaluation form to Director of Graduate Studies
- Meet and talk with faculty members who share your interests

**Spring**
- Check progress toward degree requirements, including foreign languages
- Start thinking about who you might want to chair your committee and about fields for your exams
- Consider applying for internships, volunteer work that gives professional experience
- Consider attending a professional conference and/or joining a few professional organizations

**Summer**
- Consider doing a summer internship, field institute, or volunteer work
- Consider and begin to research possible scholarly focus areas
- Continue language classes if requirements not met

Second Year

**Fall**
- Choose a committee chair, and in consultation with chair form rest of your committee
- Check progress toward degree requirements, including foreign language requirements
- Submit Program of Study form to Director of Graduate Studies
- Discuss comprehensive exams with your chair and begin planning your approach
- Become more professionally involved (memberships, internships, conferences, etc.)

**Spring**
- Complete coursework and any outstanding requirements (foreign language, etc.)
- In consultation with chair, complete reading list for exams

**Summer**
- Continue preparing for comprehensive exams
- Consider doing a summer internship, field institute, or volunteer work
- Become more professionally active (presenting work, publishing book reviews, etc.)

Third Year
Complete any outstanding coursework or requirements (foreign language, etc.)
Complete comprehensive exams this year
When comp exams are passed, submit “Admission to Candidacy” form to Graduate School
In consultation with chair, begin to determine dissertation topic
Draft a dissertation prospectus
Talk with your chair about the following issues:
   Presenting papers at conferences and making professional connections
   Sending out an essay or two for publication
   Applying for grants and fellowships
Attend department Academic Job Placement Workshop
After you have completed comprehensive exams, consider diversifying teaching

**Fourth Year**

Get dissertation prospectus approved by committee if you haven’t already done so
Determine dissertation completion timeline with your chair
Consider sending out modified dissertation chapters for publication
Continue presenting papers at conferences and making professional connections
Attend department Academic Job Placement Workshop
Familiarize yourself with the job market and application procedures
Draft strong c.v., cover letter, writing sample(s), statement of teaching philosophy
Continue to diversify teaching experiences
Consider applying for research and/or dissertation fellowships
Consider attending the MLA (and/or CCCC) conference

**Fifth Year**

Complete your dissertation
Defend your dissertation
Participate in department Academic Job Placement Workshop
Revise c.v., cover letter, writing sample(s), statement of teaching philosophy
Establish a dossier and solicit letters of recommendation
Go on the job market
Continue to diversify teaching experiences
Plan to attend the MLA (and/or CCCC) conference for job interviews
Continue applying for jobs through spring
Submit application for graduation to Graduate School early
Submit dissertation to Graduate School

**Note:**

A TAship in the PhD program may be held for a maximum of five years. The PhD degree must be completed within eight years. This timeline represents a general model for your progress toward the degree. The key is to be aware of what you’re doing, keep medium- and long-range goals in mind, and consult frequently with your mentor/chair.