

Rationale of Study

SDSU Department of English and Comparative Literature

Description:

The **Rationale of Study** is an opportunity for you to describe your scholarly development in the MA program. It asks you to explain to the department's Graduate Committee why you have taken the classes you have and what kind of scholar you consider yourself to be. It is an opportunity for you to think about the kinds of scholarship you are interested in and should provide an intellectual rationale for your choice of seminars. The committee will review this material and determine whether you can be Advanced to Candidacy.

Advancement to Candidacy is required before you can enroll in either the thesis (ECL 799A) or portfolio (ECL 790).

Process:

Since Advancement to Candidacy is required for enrollment in your culminating experience (either the thesis or the portfolio), you will need to submit the Rationale of Study to the department in the semester before you plan to enroll in thesis or portfolio units. A Rationale of Study must be submitted to Olivia Perez (oaperez@sdsu.edu) by either **October 1st** or **March 1st** if it is to be considered by the Graduate Committee. If you do not meet this deadline, your enrollment in the thesis or portfolio seminar will be delayed by a semester.

If the committee determines that it needs additional material before it can approve your Rationale of Study and recommend that you be advanced to candidacy, the Graduate Director will inform you of any revised deadlines. In general, however, this should be no later than December 1st or May 1st in the semester before your planned enrollment in thesis or portfolio credit hours.

Rationale of Study:

Your rationale needs to address the following questions. As a general guideline, your response should be at least 500 words in length, double-spaced, with regular margins, and submitted as a Word doc (.docx).

1. What courses have you taken as part of your MA program? What courses do you plan to complete next semester? Please provide a list with course numbers and titles.
2. What specific area(s) of study have you focused on in the course of your MA studies? You might choose to answer this in terms of geography, period, methodological approach, genre, or other literary topic, but your answer should set out at least three courses you have taken that allow you to address this area of emphasis. As part of your response, briefly identify how these (three) courses relate to your specific research field or set of scholarly questions?
3. Do you plan to complete a thesis or a portfolio? Please provide an explanation of why you are choosing thesis or portfolio and what your thesis or portfolio will focus on, indicate the scholarly conversation(s) you will be joining, and describe the research question or issue that you plan to address. In most cases your thesis or portfolio should relate to your area of emphasis.

Please note: you should meet with the Graduate Advisor each semester to discuss your class selections and emerging area(s) of emphasis. This will ensure that you are able to offer a cogent rationale of study.

June 12, 2024