

NDSU PhD in English: Rhetoric, Writing, & Culture
Foreign language requirement

Rationale

1. English is first and foremost a language. The sub-disciplines that an English department comprises are united by the commonality of language and its use in texts composed in that language.
2. A language and its literature and rhetorics are better understood with a knowledge of other languages. This is especially the case with English, a unique and thorough blend of Germanic and Romance languages, with thousands of words imported from still other languages worldwide during periods of colonization. Such knowledge allows one to recognize the language's, literature's, and rhetorics' distinguishing linguistic and cultural features through comparison and contrast. All scholarship in the disciplines of English studies is enhanced by a knowledge of other languages.
3. A reading knowledge of a second language allows scholars to keep abreast of developments in one's field beyond publications in one's first language.
4. Advanced knowledge of one other language pays higher dividends than intermediate knowledge of two other languages. Also, focused learning of one language is easier than dividing one's focus by trying to learn two.
5. PhD candidates in English at other universities in our region are required to demonstrate competency in at least one and sometimes two languages besides English. Several require advanced competency.
6. NDSU's MA in English already requires foreign language competency at the intermediate level, defined by the Modern Languages Department as the completion of two years of language study at the undergraduate level. As a more advanced degree, the PhD can reasonably require more advanced proficiency, defined by the Modern Languages Department as the completion of three years of language study at the undergraduate level.
7. Translation studies are becoming increasingly important in rhetoric, professional communication, and literature.
8. Increasingly, the fields of technical communication and translation are showing evidence that they are converging, in large part in response to the development of content management systems. See Gniecchi, Marusca, Bruce Maylath, Federica Scarpa, Birthe Moustén, and Sonia Vandepitte. "Field Convergence: Merging Roles of Technical Writers and

Technical Translators." *IEEE-Transactions on Professional Communication* 54 (2011): 168-184.