

Master of Arts in English

Administrative Unit

The program is administered by the Office of Graduate Studies and Research through the Faculty of English, Department of Literature and Languages, College of Arts and Sciences.

Objectives

The purposes of the Master of Arts program in English are at least five-fold: to train students to work with the materials of literature with scholarly competence and maturity; to prepare students to teach English in schools and colleges; to provide additional professional training for English teachers currently employed in elementary and secondary schools; to prepare students for such non-teaching vocations as publishing, advertising, editing, civil service, and management; and to offer sound professional training on the master's level for students who intend to pursue a doctorate elsewhere in literary studies, including rhetoric and composition.

Admission Requirements

Requirements for acceptance include a minimum of 24 undergraduate semester credits in English at the sophomore level and above. Students who have not taken an undergraduate course on critical theory need to submit a writing sample which demonstrates familiarity with theoretical approaches to literature. After reviewing this sample, the English faculty will recommend whether or not the student needs to take English 3300: Theoretical Approaches to Literature.

Options

After completing 18 graduate hours, at the beginning of their first semester of research (by the end of the first 4 weeks), students who choose the Thesis, Article or Project should submit to their committee a 5-10 page prospectus with a working bibliography.

Thesis

At the MA level, the thesis should constitute a contribution to the scholarly discourse on a well-defined topic. The thesis will demonstrate the writer's grasp of the history of that discourse and the major voices within it. The thesis will be a lengthy paper (typically 50-70 pages of text) combining original analysis with thorough research. The thesis is not a doctoral dissertation or a book. A total of 6 credits will be devoted to ENGL 6399.

Scholarly Article

A scholarly article, to be submitted for publication after its completion and the suggested revisions by the student's committee, should be an original contribution to scholarship. The student's committee must agree that the student's proposed work at the prospectus level is a publishable article. The scholarly article option involves two phases, the first of which is the passage of a broad oral exam in the area in which the student wishes to write the article. Once the exam is passed, the student may write an article suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal. Students choosing this option must also successfully perform in an oral examination following the completion of their writing in which they defend their work. The examiners will be members of the candidate's committee and a representative of the Graduate Faculty. The article will be a lengthy paper (20-25 pages of text) combining original interpretation with thorough research. A total of 6 credits will be devoted to ENGL 6399 for this option.

Written Exam

The exam will cover three areas, to be agreed on by the examining committee and the candidate. These areas can be relatively narrow (e.g. the Victorian novel) or relatively broad (e.g. literature by American ethnic groups, colonial to 1900; rhetoric and composition); however, the exam must include both British and American literature, some post-1800 British or post-1865 American literature, and some pre-1800 British or pre-1865 American literature. The exam will be written during a six-hour period, which can be divided as the examining committee and the candidate deem appropriate.

Project

The candidate, in consultation with her or his committee, will design a nine hour concentration of course work (a maximum of three hours of which may be taken as ENGL 6390) which will lead to the preparation of a 30-40 page Research Report. This Research Report is not intended to constitute an original contribution to scholarship but will otherwise conform to the standards of scholarly discourse in the field of English.

Core Requirements

Requirements for the MA in English include the following:

The successful candidate for the MA in English will complete at least 36 credits and pass an oral exam. Students electing the Thesis option will take 30 credits of course work and six of thesis research; students electing the Written Exam option will take 30 credits of course work and six of Directed Reading; students electing the project will take 33 hours of course work and three of Directed Reading.

Course Work

A minimum of 30 credits must be earned in course work at the 6300 level. A maximum of 6 credits of course work may be taken in a field other than literature with prior written approval of the student's committee. The student will work out the required degree plan in consultation with his/her advisor. The plan will reflect the following requirements:

a. Rhetoric and Composition Requirement

Students serving as Graduate Teaching Assistants in English are required to complete ENGL 6372, Rhetoric and Composition, either before being selected for this position or during the first semester of service. This requirement can be waived for students with extensive teaching experience or a similar course on the record.

b. Breadth Requirement

Each student shall complete a minimum of nine credits in British literature and nine credits in American literature.

Oral Examination

The candidate for the MA degree in English must also perform successfully in an oral examination. The examiners will be members of the candidate's committee and a representative of the Graduate Faculty. For students writing a thesis, the examination will include, but not be limited to, a defense of the thesis or the article. For students doing a written exam, the oral exam will cover the exam areas. For students doing a project, the oral examination will include, but not be limited to, the Research Report.

Special Program Features: Graduate Teaching Assistantships

Full-time M.A. students may assist as teaching assistants in lower level classes for two semesters. After completion of 18 graduate hours and ENGL 6372, they may be requested to teach their own ENGL 1301 or ENGL 1302.

Professional Certification Preparation

Students who wish to obtain teacher certification should consult the School of Education. Those requirements are not part of the M. A. requirement in English.

Course Listings

ENGL 6302 American Romanticism (3)

The American and European roots, and philosophical, literary, and social tenets, of American Romanticism as reflected in the works of recognized romantics (Poe, the Transcendentalists, Melville) as well as of non-cononical figures.

ENGL 6303 American Realism (3)

The American and European roots, and philosophical, literary, and social tenets, of American Realism as reflected in the works of recognized realists (Howells, Wharton) and naturalists (Dreiser), as well as of non-cononical figures.

ENGL 6304 American Literature, 1900-1945 (3)

Development of fiction and poetry primarily between WWI and WWII, with emphasis on the Modernist Movement. Nonfiction may also be included.

ENGL 6305 American Literature, 1945 to the Present (3)

The splintering of Modernism in the context of a large, cultural crisis, with emphasis on the diversity of response to this crisis rather than on individual figures.

ENGL 6310 American Nature Writing (3)

This course explores the development of American Nature Writing from European contact to the present. The course also makes extensive use of literature from exocriticism, a cross-disciplinary school of literary and environmental thought.

ENGL 6321 British Literature to 1660 (3)

Chaucer, English Renaissance humanists, the Elizabethan Lyric, Spenser, Shakespeare, Jacobean and Caroline drama, classical Lyricists, the metaphysicals.

ENGL 6323 British Literature, 19th Century (3)

Major Victorian and/or Romantic writers in their historical, cultural, and philosophical contexts.

ENGL 6324 British Literature, 1900 to the Present (3)

Emphasis on fiction, drama, or poetry; major figures include Conrad, Woolf, Joyce, Shaw, Synge, Lawrence, Yeats, O'Casey, Auden. Nonfiction may also be included.

ENGL 6330 Literature and Mythology (3)

This course explores the power of myths in shaping the human psyche and in developing cultural and sociopolitical perspectives. Simultaneously it emphasizes the importance of mythology to the understanding of literature, art and music.

ENGL 6332 Literature and Visual Arts (3)

This course explores the nonverbal dimensions of literature, in particular its evocations of art and music, that extend verbal discourse and simultaneously articulate what the verbal discourse conceals and silences.

ENGL 6351 Topics in Fiction (3)

Comparative studies in the novel.

ENGL 6352 Topics in Drama (3)

Comparative studies in drama.

ENGL 6353 Topics in Poetry (3)

Comparative studies in epic or lyric poetry.

ENGL 6354 Topics in Non-Fiction (3)

A study of the production and reception of Non-Fiction texts including attention to writing process, critical interpretation, and cultural context.

ENGL 6357 Writing Center Theory and Practice (3)

A study of the history, theory and practice of writing center tutoring and administration.

ENGL 6359 Special Studies In Literature (3)

Selected works of several authors organized according to historical era, genre or theme. Content varies.

ENGL 6360 Topics in Film and Media (3)

Studies in film and electronic media like television in relevant historical and critical contexts, including theories of interpretation. Topics could include Film and Theories of Post Humanity; Film, Television and Trauma Theory; Feminist Approaches to Film and Media; Film and Pedagogy--to name a few.

ENGL 6369 Studies in a Major Author (3)

Works of a major American or British author.

ENGL 6372 Rhetoric and Composition (3)

This course will cover current theory and practice in the teaching of writing. Focus will be twofold. To study the history of contemporary composition and rhetorical theory in order to consider how competing and complementary methodologies have influenced the evolution of pedagogy in the writing classroom. To discuss the practical application of theory for improving as teachers and writers. Emphasis will be given to preparing reflective teachers of composition. This course is required for all students serving as Graduate Teaching Assistants in English.

ENGL 6390 Directed Reading (3)

A required reading list and faculty guidance are provided for students electing the project or comprehensive examination rather than the thesis.

ENGL 6391 Contract Study (1-3)

For students who are pursuing independent study or research (as described in the contract study format).

ENGL 6399 Thesis or Article Research (6)

Students electing the thesis or scholarly article option will work under the supervision of a major advisor. A maximum of six credits of ENGL 6399 may be counted toward the MA.