

The English Major

Students may complete a major or minor in English.

A rich variety of courses allows students to engage with all periods and genres of literature in English, as well as modern forms such as film. In addition to courses that promote mastery of the critical, analytical essay, the department offers a range of courses that develop skills in writing in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences. The department stresses critical thinking, effective writing and speaking, close reading, and independent literary research, using appropriate resources and technologies.

With their advisers, English majors design a program of study that deepens their understanding of the variety of interpretative strategies through which readers may approach a text and the interconnectedness of literary texts and the conversations between them. We encourage students to explore how literary texts both shape and are shaped by their historical and cultural contexts. Throughout their course of study, majors learn to apply skills of close reading and analysis to a variety of texts and, in the process, begin to understand the complex ways meaning is made.

The major culminates in an independently written essay of 20-25 pages, developed during a thesis seminar take during the spring semester of the senior year. Students will also present a 20-minute paper in a senior symposium in the spring (based on the senior essay) and compile a portfolio as part of a one-credit spring capstone course.

As students construct their English major, they should seek to include courses that provide:

- **Historical depth**—students should acquire experience with older traditions in literature and take one pre-1900 upper-level literature course.
- **Formal breadth**—students should acquire experience with more than one genre and more than one medium and should take upper-level courses in more than one genre.
- **Cultural range**—Students should acquire experience with the literature of more than one cultural tradition and should take upper-level courses from more than one cultural tradition.

Students are **required** to demonstrate historical and cultural range in their choice of courses and are encouraged to develop range in all three categories.

Summary of the Major:

Majors must take 41 credits in English, including:

- One course from either:
 - ENGL 180 Themes and Traditions in Literature – 4 credits
 - ENGL 190 Topics in World Anglophone Literature – 4 credits
- ENGL 270 Literary Form and Interpretation – 4 credits
- ENGL 280 British Literary Genealogies – 4 credits
- ENGL 290 American Literary Genealogies – 4 credits
- Three 300-level literature seminar courses – 12 credits
- Eight additional credits from any of the following categories of courses:
 - Literature Seminars,
 - Words at Work, and
 - Literary Immersion courses
- ENGL 404 Directed Senior Thesis Workshop (or ENGL 499 independent honors thesis) – 4 credits
- ENGL 405 Senior Exercises (includes senior presentation and e-portfolio) – 1 credit

Majors must complete at least twenty credits at the 300 level or above. Of those twenty credits, four credits must be in pre-1900 literature. All twenty credits cannot be in the literature of one cultural tradition (i.e. American, British, and/or World Anglophone).

English Major Checklist

1. Introductory courses (16 credits)

- ENGL 180 Themes and Traditions in Literature OR ENGL 190 Topics in World Anglophone Literature
- ENGL 270 Literary Form and Interpretation
- ENGL 280 British Literary Genealogies
- ENGL 290 American Literary Genealogies

2. Advanced Courses (20 credits)

Majors must complete at least 20 credits at the 300 level or above. Of those 20 credits, 4 credits must be in pre-1900 literature. All 20 credits cannot be in the literature of one cultural tradition (i.e., American, British, and/or World Anglophone).

Three literature seminars (12 credits); one of those seminars must be in pre-1900 literature

- 3 _____
- 3 _____
- 3 _____

Additional eight credits:

In addition to 12 credits in literature seminars, students must take an additional eight credits. These credits can be taken in ANY of the following categories or combination of categories:

Literature Seminars:

Words at Work (2-4 credits - only four credits can be at the 200 level):

Literary Immersion (2 credits):

3. Senior Capstone Experience (5 credits)

Directed Senior Thesis Workshop – 4 credits

- ENGL 404 Directed Senior Thesis Workshop or ENGL 499 Honors Thesis (only four credits can count toward the major)

Senior Capstone Course – 1 credit

- ENGL 405 Senior Exercises (includes e-portfolio and senior presentation)

Advising Checklist

1. Does the program of study include literary range?

Historical range (at least one pre-1900)

Formal breadth

Cultural range: 3 cultural traditions

1st tradition _____

2nd tradition _____

3rd tradition _____

2. Does the program of study develop skills in writing in a variety of forms and to a variety of audiences?

List courses below:

1) _____

2) _____

3. Does the program of study offer a deeper understanding of a particular genre, historical period, author, or interconnected set of texts?

List courses below:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. If considering graduate school in literature, does the program have sufficient breadth and depth?

List additional courses recommended:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

5. If considering graduate study, does the program of study include an honors thesis or senior creative writing project?

6. Does the program of study include opportunities for internships?

7. Does the program of study include opportunities for study abroad?

8. Does the program of study include opportunities for studying literature in translation?

Senior E-Portfolio

During spring semester of the senior year and as part of the senior exercises capstone, English majors will prepare and submit an e-portfolio. This portfolio will include:

- **A brief (2-3 pages) description of the portfolio**, including a list of the English courses you have taken (number, title, semester, professor) and an explanation of why you chose each of the pieces you have included.
- **Vita or resume** (we will have a workshop to help you shape this)
- **A paper from an English class that best demonstrates your critical thinking and research skills**
- **A paper from an English class that best demonstrates historical and social context skills**
 - **N.B. You must identify one of the above two papers to represent your close-reading skills.** Be sure to identify which one you wish to be assessed on this criterion and which passages you wish the reader to specifically attend to.
- **A paper, preferably from an English class, that best demonstrates your ability to write in varied forms and for varied audiences**
- **Letter (2-3 pages) describing the value of the major.** This letter can take a variety of forms and can be addressed to a variety of audiences. The following are some examples of the direction you can take in this letter, by addressing it to:
 - a future employer – identify skills and aptitudes acquired in the major
 - a graduate school – identify courses that have prepared you for further study
 - your parents – identify why the English major was the right major for you
 - a prospective English major – identify what they will learn in the major and its value

The portfolio will be submitted and stored electronically for purposes of departmental assessment and for future reference as needed (future letters of recommendation, for instance).