ENGLISH, WRITING - MASTER OF ARTS

(CODE 540-809)

Designed for poets, writers of fiction and creative non-fiction, for professional writers in or aspiring to a career requiring high-level communication skills, for those who teach or aspire to teach in high school or college, and for those who wish to pursue further graduate work in English or a related field, the Master of Arts—English: Writing program offers advanced workshops in prose and poetry writing that emphasize professional production in literary genres. Other advanced courses focus on scientific and technical writing, rhetoric and composition pedagogy, literature, critical theory, and linguistics.

The Writing emphasis curriculum consists of 33 credits in coursework and thesis work. All but 3 of these credits must be in English. Writing emphasis students typically take 27 semester credits in graduate course offerings and write a 6-credit creative thesis.

**Required Courses**

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 711</td>
<td>Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing ¹</td>
<td>3</td>
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Student must complete 15-18 credits (depending on thesis option) of graduate-level writing/language courses, including:

- At least six credits of 700-level writing/language course work selected from:
  - ENGL 721 Studies in Writing, Language, or Pedagogy
  - ENGL 723 Story Writing Seminar
  - ENGL 724 Poetry Writing Seminar
  - ENGL 727 Studies in Scientific and Technical Communication

At least nine additional credits of writing electives selected from:

- ENGL 507 Editing and Publications Management
- ENGL 521 Topics in the Structure of English
- ENGL 525 Topics in Language in Society
- ENGL 609 Grant Proposal Writing
- ENGL 610 Creative Writing Workshop - Poetry
- ENGL 611 Creative Writing Workshop - Fiction
- ENGL 612 Seminar in Nonfiction Writing
- ENGL 613 Prose Writing Workshop - Topics
- ENGL 615 Seminar in Science and Nature Writing
- ENGL 621 Seminar in Linguistic Research
- ENGL 655 Seminar in Rhetorics of Science, Technology, and Culture
- ENGL 715 Critical Theory and English Studies
- ENGL 721 Studies in Writing, Language, or Pedagogy
- ENGL 723 Story Writing Seminar
- ENGL 724 Poetry Writing Seminar
- ENGL 727 Studies in Scientific and Technical Communication

**Thesis Option**

As a culminating project, students produce a thesis for 3 or 6 credits (see Thesis Options Below) ²

**Thesis Options**

To respond to the diverse needs of its master’s program students, the English Department offers 4 thesis options.

**Critical Interpretive Thesis (6 credits):**

The traditional critical interpretive thesis is an option for all graduate students. The critical thesis will consist of an argument of approximately 60 pages that the student will complete under the guidance of a committee of two English Department graduate faculty members and one graduate faculty member from a different department in a related field. The student will defend the thesis in an oral exam. Writing the thesis provides experience in designing and executing a sustained research-based writing project that requires effective independent research, writing, and revision. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the field by including a literature review appropriate to the project and a sustained, theoretically informed main argument. The project increases the student’s depth of knowledge in a chosen area of inquiry within English studies.

**Scholarly Publishable Paper (3 credits):**

An alternative option for the exceptional student in the MA—English: Literature and Textual Interpretation program is the scholarly publishable paper. With the approval of the Graduate Director and an English graduate faculty member, a student may produce a scholarly paper of publishable caliber. The publishable paper will typically originate from a writing project completed in a graduate seminar course or an independent study experience. It will consist...
of an advanced work of textual criticism of approximately 25-30 pages that the student will complete under the guidance of two English Department graduate faculty members and one graduate faculty member from a different department in a related field. The student will defend the paper in an oral exam. The project will include an explicit and compelling, if brief, argument for the contribution the article will make to prevailing disciplinary conversations. The paper will make a rhetorically sophisticated and theoretically informed argument. The project will demonstrate that the student has achieved familiarity with the audience expectations of relevant publications. This work must be submitted to a peer-reviewed publication to qualify as completed. This option will give students experience in preparing the kind of publication they will be expected to produce as practicing scholars in literary criticism, including the research and argumentation skills necessary to produce a rigorous and compelling textual analysis.

Students writing a scholarly publishable paper to complete their degree must take a minimum of 30 course credits in addition to 3 thesis credits.

Creative Thesis (6 credits):

A student enrolled in the MA—English: Writing program opt for a Creative Thesis consisting of a minimum of 30 pages of original poetry or 75 pages of original prose or drama. The Creative Thesis, which must include an introduction, will demonstrate the author’s ability to produce work of a publishable caliber. To be eligible for this option, students must acquire the approval of two members from the creative writing graduate faculty or, as appropriate to the project, the approval of one graduate faculty member from science and technical writing and one graduate faculty member from creative writing. The student will work under the guidance of a committee of two English Department graduate faculty members and one graduate faculty member from a different department in a related field. The student will defend the thesis in an oral exam.

Pedagogy Paper (3 credits):

MA students who are currently working as middle or high school teachers may use this option to explore a teaching question related to textual analysis and/or production in English that has emerged from their graduate studies. The pedagogy paper will consist of approximately 25-30 pages intended for other practitioners in the field, which the student will complete under the guidance of one specialist in English Education, one English Department faculty member who is not in English Education, and one member of the graduate faculty from a different department in a related field. The student will defend the paper in an oral exam. The study will bring contemporary practices of textual analysis and/or production to bear on classroom practice, and it must include a review of literature that theoretically informs the research question(s) and justifies the selected mode(s) of inquiry. This option will provide middle and high school teachers a bridge from the study of textual analysis and/or production to classroom practice.

Students writing a pedagogy paper to complete their degree must take a minimum of 30 course credits in addition to 3 thesis credits.