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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 610</td>
<td>Seminar in American Literature Before 1865</td>
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<td>ENGL 648</td>
<td>Seminar in American Literature Since 1865</td>
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<td>ENGL 652</td>
<td>Seminar in Early British Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 659</td>
<td>Seminar in British Literature After 1790</td>
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<td>ENGL 668</td>
<td>Seminar in American Ethnic Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 681</td>
<td>Seminar in Film, Video, and Moving-Image Culture</td>
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<td>ENGL 684</td>
<td>Seminar in Critical Theory</td>
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<td>ENGL 696</td>
<td>Seminar in Women's Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 715</td>
<td>Critical Theory and English Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 733</td>
<td>Studies in World/Postcolonial Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 743</td>
<td>Studies in North American Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 753</td>
<td>Studies in British and Irish Literature</td>
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<td>ENGL 769</td>
<td>Studies in Figures and Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENGL 779</td>
<td>Studies in Themes and Genres</td>
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<td>ENGL 789</td>
<td>Studies in Theory and Culture</td>
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Plus additional elective credits in English graduate course work (500-level or higher) to total at least 33 credits, with at least 18 credits at the 700-level.

Thesis Option

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

1 Should be taken in the first or second semester.  
2 If a student elects a 3-credit thesis option, he or she must take 30 semester credits of graduate coursework.

NOTE: students may include no more than 3 semester credits of independent or directed study courses. Independent and directed study credits must be approved in advance by the Graduate Director.

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.