

Catalog Search

Entire Catalog

Search Catalog

Advanced Search

Catalog Home

About the University

Colleges & Curriculum Pages

Undergraduate & Graduate Degrees

Undergraduate Minors

General Education Courses

Course Descriptions

Undergraduate Studies

Graduate School

Policies

Programs & Services

Academic Administration

My Catalog

English, M.A.



Return to: Undergraduate & Graduate Degrees

The degree of Master of Arts with a major in English is designed to satisfy the needs of a variety of students: those who wish to prepare themselves for college teaching on the freshman and sophomore levels or for continuation into doctoral studies; those who are currently high school English teachers and wish to broaden their knowledge of their specialty; those who plan to enter high school teaching; and those who wish to receive training in professional writing. Students may concentrate in English or American literature and language; in creative or professional writing; in rhetoric; in linguistics or TESOL studies; in folklore; or in American culture, which emphasizes American literature with additional coursework in other American studies such as history or sociology.

Admissions

A student applying for acceptance into the graduate program in English should note the following policies:

1. Graduation from an accredited university with a minimum overall average of 2.75 and an average of 3.0 in all English courses undertaken is required.
2. Submission of Graduate Record Examination scores is required, although the Graduate Record Examination is no more than one of several indices that predict success in English graduate studies. The Department will not, therefore, base admission or rejection solely on this score. Applicants should have a minimum of 12 hours of intermediate or advanced literature courses on transcripts. The literature subject test is optional. Applicants must submit a critical writing sample (10–20 pages), a statement of purpose, and a curriculum vitae.
3. International students who are not native speakers of English are required to have a minimum score of 600 on the TOEFL. Those applying for assistantships must also demonstrate oral fluency.

Course Requirements

The M.A. in English has both thesis and non-thesis tracks. For the non-thesis track, a minimum of 33 hours of course work is required; for the thesis track, course work ranges from 24 to 30 hours, plus 6 hours of thesis credit.

English offers several M.A. concentrations: English or American literature and language, creative or professional writing, rhetoric, linguistics, TESOL studies, folklore, and American Culture. Requirements and curricula for all concentrations and thesis or non-thesis tracks are available from the Department of English.

Language Requirements

All students pursuing the M.A. degree in English, regardless of emphasis or minor, must demonstrate reading knowledge of an approved language other than English in one of the following ways:

1. by successful completion of a reading knowledge examination administered by the Department of Modern Languages;
2. by presenting evidence of having completed, within the past six years, the second semester, sophomore-level college course in any non-English language with a grade no lower than C;
3. by presentation of a satisfactory score in a particular language on the ETS Graduate School Foreign Language Test.

Students must satisfy the language requirement before taking the comprehensive examination.

M.A. Comprehensive Examination

Successful completion of the M.A. Examination in English is required of all degree candidates on the non-thesis track, except TESOL. Offered each regular semester, the examination consists of a three-and-a-half hour comprehensive written portion and a one-hour oral. A student may take the oral examination only after passing the written examination. The student must pass both the written and the oral components to satisfy the degree requirements.

The written examination consists of two components. The first, which is standard for all examinees, is devised and evaluated by the faculty M.A. Examinations Committee according to a prescribed format. This format is posted in the English Department office. The second component, which is tailored to reflect each student's program of graduate courses, is devised and evaluated by the student's faculty advisory committee. The student must pass both components to pass the written portion of the M.A. Examination and thus be eligible to stand for the oral portion, which is comprehensive and is conducted by the student's advisory committee. Students who have chosen the thesis track will present an oral defense of their thesis, to be conducted by their thesis committee.

[Return to: Undergraduate & Graduate Degrees](#)



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