

In the English Department, students have the opportunity to read widely across different genres and periods of English, American, and Anglophone literature and to explore numerous approaches to literary study with a distinguished, internationally renowned faculty. The faculty brings both excitement and wide-ranging expertise to the process of reading. Its members include historicists and formalists, theorists and poets, postcolonialists and feminists; their teaching concerns not just poetry, drama, and prose, but film, music, art, architecture, and technology. The faculty shares, however, a passion for talking about works that inspire and fascinate, and for thinking about what and how they mean.

The department offers courses that cover nearly two thousand years of literature and culture, and teaching formats range from large lectures, to small seminars, to one-on-one advising. A typical program of study embraces the most hallowed texts of the Western literary tradition as well as new or newly-rediscovered works. Students acquire a common critical vocabulary and join faculty in debating enduring questions regarding the interactions of art, society, and language.

All majors enroll in one of a diverse array of junior seminars coupling the study of a specific subject with methodological training in critical reading and writing. Majors also pursue independent work on subjects of their own choosing in collaboration with the faculty during their junior and senior years, and they may choose concentrations that involve the study of English-language literature in conjunction with creative writing, theater, American Studies, or a second national literature. *The Department encourages majors to pursue interdisciplinary work*, particularly through the certificate programs, such as American Studies, the Center for African American Studies, Creative Writing, Judaic Studies, Theater and Dance, Women and Gender, Medieval Studies, Visual Arts, European Cultural Studies, and Environmental Studies.

Students in 200-level classes develop an awareness of various interpretive strategies, both identifying those they already employ and adding to them. In 300-level classes and in junior independent work, students join conversations in the critical discourse, bringing their interpretive acumen to bear in research and writing that embraces multiple genres and periods. In the fourth year, students develop the skills to complete their independent theses as well as departmental comprehensive exams successfully, demonstrating their knowledge of a broad array of literary texts and strategies, along with the methodological and critical sophistication required to make them speak most fully.

Departmental majors graduate as incisive readers, cogent thinkers, and powerful writers, well-prepared for any profession requiring a rigorous understanding and mastery of language. They also carry with them a lasting ability to take informed pleasure in all forms of literature, in the process of writing, and in the meanings and powers of culture. While some graduates pursue careers in teaching, many go on to become leaders in such fields as law, medicine, business, and the creative arts. Simply put, learning to read closely and write fluently—the twin centers of the English major—are two of the most valuable skills students can bring to any career.

**Prerequisites.** To enter the department, students must have successfully completed one of the following two courses before entering the department, and should complete the second of these courses before graduation:

1. One “Reading Literature” course. These courses introduce students to the traditional genres of the English major. These courses include: ENG 200 Poetry; ENG 201 Fiction; ENG 202 Drama; ENG 203 The Essay.

2. ENG. 205: Introduction to English Literature. This course introduces students to the foundational historical texts of English literature. Primarily a historical survey that covers English literature from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 205 prepares students to consider how the first conceptions of “English” and “literature” have changed over time and over national borders. The department recommends taking 200, 201, 202, or 203 before 205.

Prospective concentrators who have not satisfied the prerequisites by the end of sophomore year may still enter the department but should consult with the departmental representative.

**Additional Prerequisites for Certificate Programs and Departmental Programs.**

The Department of English works in close collaboration with many certificate programs. While students are responsible for learning the requirements for the various certificate programs available to English students, the English Department facilitates interdisciplinary work by a series of set “programs” within the major. Freshmen and sophomores interested in Program 2 (English in Comparative Contexts) should prepare to take 300-level courses in the foreign literature of their choice. Those considering Program 3 (English and American Studies) should try to take AMS 201 in their sophomore year. Those considering Program 4 (English and Creative Writing) should complete at least one course in creative writing. Students considering Program 5 (English and Theater) should enroll in an introductory course in theatre and dance. Though there is no specific program to this effect, students in the English Department also are encouraged to consider pursuing certificates in the Program in Women and Gender and the Center for African American Studies. Students should consult with the departmental representative for information about their particular interests and how these interests might fit in the department.

**Course & Distribution Requirements.** Because its fields of study are so broad, the department has general distribution requirements so that each student has both a historical and theoretical sense of the discipline. As stated above, students take two prerequisites (“Reading Literature” and ENG 205). Students also are required to take a 300 level Junior Seminar in the first term of the junior year (see below).

In addition to these three requirements, all majors must *take eight courses in the department* (seven of which must be at the 300 level) *for a total of eleven courses* (not counting independent work). All English courses numbered 300 or above (including cross-listed courses and courses taken in under-class years) must be counted as departmentals. Students are not permitted to PDF departmentals. Often, students may use cognate courses from outside the department as “departmentals” (courses that count toward the course and distribution requirements). The rules for the use of cognates vary among the five programs described below. All cognates must be approved in advance by the departmental representative.

**Distribution Requirements.** All majors fulfill the following departmental distribution requirements:

1. Three courses in literature before 1800
2. Two courses in literature after 1800
3. One “Approaches to Literature” course (a designated major author, special topic, or theory course)

A list of courses satisfying these requirements is available from the department.

***Program 1: English and American Literature:*** Most majors choose Program I, which has the broadest and most flexible requirements. Students should have completed at least one of the prerequisites (English 200, 201, 202, or 203, and 205) before the end of sophomore year. In addition to the Junior Seminar in the fall of junior year, majors take two English courses in each of the four upper-class terms for a total of nine departmentals. With the approval of the departmental representative students may substitute for one of these nine courses a cognate 300-level course from another department or program. This cognate may not be used to satisfy a departmental distribution requirement.

***Program 2: English in Comparative Contexts:*** Students wishing to enhance their knowledge of the English and American literary traditions with the study of another national literature may elect Program 2. Students should have completed at least one of the prerequisites (English 200, 201, 202, or 203 and 205) before the end of sophomore year, and maintain an average of B or better in English and foreign language courses. Students take nine departmentals, including the Junior Seminar. At least three and not more than four of these nine must be 300-level courses in a single foreign language. With the approval of the departmental representative, students in Program 2 may use their foreign language courses to satisfy departmental distribution requirements. They are allowed no other cognates.

***Program 3: English and American Studies:*** Students should have completed at least one of the prerequisites (English 200, 201, 202, or 203 and 205, and American Studies 201) before the end of sophomore year. Program 3 students take a total of nine departmentals, including the Junior Seminar. A minimum of seven of these must be courses in the Department of English. At least two must be courses in the American field, normally from the offerings of the department or the Program in American Studies. American Studies courses taken to meet this requirement may, with the approval of the departmental representative, be used to satisfy departmental or distribution requirements. Up to two American Studies courses may count as cognates; no other cognates are permitted. Program 3 students also must complete the requirements for the Program in American Studies.

***Program 4: English and Creative Writing:*** Students should have completed at least one of the prerequisites (English 200, 201, 202, or 203 and 205, and at least one 200-level course in the Program in Creative Writing) by the end of sophomore year. Students entering the department elect Program 4 *provisionally*: final admission depends on securing the permission of the Program in Creative Writing to undertake a creative thesis. Juniors in Program 4 normally take two creative writing courses at the 300-level in addition to the Junior Seminar and other departmentals. At the end of the junior year, they apply to the Program in Creative Writing for

permission to write a creative thesis. Those whose applications are accepted by the Program may count two 300-level creative writing courses towards their required total of nine departmentals and submit a creative thesis in lieu of a critical thesis (see below). They are allowed no other cognates. Students not admitted to the Program of Creative Writing normally revert to Program 1. They may use *one* 300-level creative writing course as their Program 1 cognate.

**Program 5: English and Theater:** Students should have completed at least one of the prerequisites (English 200, 201, 202, or 203 and 205, and an introductory course in the Program in Theatre and Dance). Program 5 students take nine departmentals, including the Junior Seminar. Among these must be:

1. One upper-level course in Shakespeare (normally English 310 or 311)
2. One course in drama before 1700 (normally English 316 or Classics 323)
3. One course in drama after 1700 (normally English 345 or 356, but Comparative Literature 326 or Slavic 312 also may be used)

At least six of the student's departmentals must be chosen from the offerings of the Department of English. At least two and not more than three must be from the Program in Theater and Dance, and at least one of these must be at the 300 or 400 level. With the permission of the departmental representative Program 5 students may use courses in dramatic literature taken outside the department to fulfill departmental distribution requirements. No other cognates are allowed.

Note: Program 5 and the Certificate in Theater and Dance are distinct entities with distinct requirements. For information on the latter, see the Director of the Program in Theater and Dance.

**Individualized Program of Study:** Students who wish to pursue a particular interdisciplinary interest—e.g., Literature and Philosophy, Literature and History, Literature and Journalism, Literature and the Visual Arts—should follow the guidelines for Program 1, but may request additional cognates (these cognates may serve as departmentals, but not as distribution requirements). Proposals for such individualized programs of study will normally be submitted to the Director of Undergraduate Studies when the student signs into the department at the end of the sophomore year.

**Junior Independent Work.** All juniors in the Department of English take a junior seminar (English 300) during the fall term. Exceptions are made for junior year abroad and students entering the department midway through the junior year. (Please consult the Departmental Representative if you fit into one of these categories.) During sophomore sign-in, prospective majors will receive seminar descriptions and submit a ranked list of their preferences; assignments will then be made by lottery.

The junior seminar has two purposes. First, it introduces departmental students to upper-level literary study. Second, it offers intensive practice in critical writing as preparation for spring term independent work and the senior thesis. Students become familiar with the research methods, critical approaches, and philosophical issues entailed in literary study. These

writing-intensive seminars focus on particular themes, periods, authors, or critical issues in literary study. Students attend weekly seminar meetings (three hours); read a generically diverse, but limited, body of material; and write and revise a series of short papers. At the end of the term they receive a grade for the seminar.

During the first term of junior year, students will write a research paper under the supervision of their ENG 300 seminar leaders. This paper will constitute junior independent work for the fall semester and will receive a grade separate from that awarded for work completed in the course (there is no requirement that the topic of the junior paper be related to the subject of the Junior Seminar). During the second term of junior year, students will write approximately 20-25 pages to be submitted at the end of term. Students in Programs 1, 4, and 5 choose a topic within the field of English and American literature. Students in Program 2 must choose a topic that reflects their interest in the foreign literature of their choice. Students in Program 3 choose a topic within the field of American literature. In consultation with their advisers, students also may have the option of having their second junior paper lay the groundwork for their senior thesis (in this instance, the junior independent work later can serve as a basis for a thesis chapter, although it must be revised and developed more fully). All subjects must meet the approval of the Committee on Departmental Studies.

**Senior Thesis.** During senior year, departmental students will write a thesis (normally limited to 20,000 words) on a subject approved by the Committee on Departmental Students. The department requires a submission of at least 20 pages of the senior thesis in December, on or before the last day of fall term classes. The deadline for the completed thesis is set by the Committee. Program 1 students will normally select a subject within the field of English and American literature. Program 2 students must select a subject that will involve some common aspect of English literature and the foreign literature of their choice. Program 3 students must select a subject directly connected with American literature. Program 4 students will write a collection of stories, a novel, or a group of poems or translations under the supervision of faculty of the Program in Creative Writing. Program 5 students may, at the end of the junior year, propose a creative thesis such as a full-length play, an actor's, director's, or choreographer's notebook, or a production design. Such a thesis proposal must be approved by the departmental representative in tandem with the director of the Program in Theater and Dance. Any creative project, other than playwriting, must combine practical work in the theater or dance studio with a critical approach incorporating scholarly research. Creative theses will involve advisers from both the Department of English and the Program in Theater and Dance.

Theses are submitted in duplicate to McCosh 22 by noon of the due date. For information on the preparation of theses, please consult the department's style sheet. All late theses must be accompanied by letters of explanation addressed to the Committee on Departmental Students. Failure to submit the thesis is a failure to complete the requirements for graduation. The supervisor and one other faculty member read the thesis and collaborate on the comment and grade. Theses are returned with a typed comment and grade at the conclusion of the comprehensive examination.

**Departmental Examination.** At the conclusion of the senior year, all departmental students will take a comprehensive examination devised by the Committee on Departmental Students. The comprehensive examination is scheduled for the days immediately preceding spring term course examinations. The exam will consist of two four-hour exams taken on consecutive days. The first exam will consist of a series of 15-20 passages of poetry, prose, and drama, covering the range of English and American literature from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present and students are asked to write on three of these passages. The second exam is divided into two parts: first, period, and, second, genre/theoretical. Students are asked to write on one of 7 or 8 questions in each of these two parts. In both exams, students have a great deal of choice in what questions they wish to answer, and they are only asked not to use materials from their senior thesis in their answers.

Seniors are urged to attend the informational meeting on comprehensive exams and to consult a sample examination available in McCosh 22.

**The Rule of 12.** The University stipulates that a student who graduates with 31 courses **may take no more than 12 courses listed or cross-listed as English courses.** This includes all courses numbered 200 or above (including English 200-201-202-203-205-300) but does **not** include independent work or cognates. (That is, it would **not** include JP's, thesis, a Comparative Literature course taken as a Program 1 cognate, or any course in Theater and Dance, Creative Writing, American Studies, etc., counted as a departmental). The limit of 12 courses may be increased by one for every course taken beyond the required 31 courses.

First-term juniors should plan a program of departmental courses and electives for the following two years. If they have entered the department with several 300-level English courses to their credit, they may reduce the number they elect in junior and senior years. (Please note "The Rule of Twelve.")

Courses should be selected in conference with the supervisor so that adequate consideration is given to distribution and variety. The supervisor is responsible for signing SCORE cards each term and should be consulted well in advance of the deadline.

Departmental courses are taught by various methods: lectures and precepts, lectures and seminars, classes only, seminar only. At meetings of small groups (classes, seminars, precepts), attendance is taken and participation is expected of all members. **Unexcused absences from more than three meetings of a class, seminar, or precept allow instructors to fail students in this portion of their work for the course.**

The number and importance of written papers in a course vary with the instructor. Failure to submit a required paper is grounds for failing the course. For course papers only, a brief extension beyond the due date may be offered at the instructor's discretion, but University regulations prohibit extensions beyond the last day of reading period. If term papers are substituted for a final examination, these papers must be submitted by the last day of reading period, not on the day of the examination. Final examinations, if required, are as important as papers and class attendance, and failure to take the examination automatically fails the student in the course. Final grading components are generally class performance, written papers, and the final examination. Most instructors weigh the final examination less heavily than the work produced during the whole semester. A final examination may not count for more than half the final grade.

**Rules on Cognates.** Under certain conditions students may use cognates (300/400-level courses related to their course of study but taken outside the English Department) as departmentals. All cognates must be approved by the departmental representative. Students wishing to take a cognate as a departmental should consult the Departmental Representative before registering for the course; if possible, they should have in hand the course syllabus. An approved cognate should be designated as a departmental on the SCORE card at the time of registration, but in any event no later than December of the senior year when spring courses are filed with the Registrar.

Students may only designate as departmentals the number of cognates required or permitted for their particular program of study.

**Honors in English** at graduation are computed according to the following percentages:

1. Departmentals (excluding the junior seminar): 50%
2. Thesis: 25%
3. Junior Independent Work (5% for each JP and 5% for the junior seminar): 15%
4. Comprehensives: 10%

**Study Abroad.** The department encourages students to consider studying abroad for a semester or a year. Courses taken abroad may, with approval, receive both departmental and distribution credit (in general, the department can accept up to two courses for each semester abroad). Students considering study abroad should consult the departmental representative at an early stage.

**Further Information.** For further information, consult the departmental representative and the department's home page (<http://english.princeton.edu>).

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