Department of English

William Connelly, Chair
Peck Hall 302

The Department of English offers the Master of Arts, the Doctor of Arts, and a minor at the graduate level.

Normally, the combined test score for consideration for admission to the Master of Arts program is at least 900 on two parts of the Graduate Record Examination. For admission to the Doctor of Arts program, a minimum score of 1,000 on the GRE is expected. Scores will be calculated using two of the following parts of the GRE: Verbal, Analytical, Subject.

Admissions Process

Admission to graduate study is not automatic by meeting minimal admission requirements. Students are selected from a pool of qualified applicants. Applications for summer/fall admission must be complete by May 1. Application for spring admission must be complete by November 1. Those seeking teaching assistantships must provide a 500-word statement of purpose and apply by March 1 for the following fall semester.

Requirements for the Master of Arts
(5000 and 6000 level)

Thesis Option

Candidate must
1. have earned at least 30 semester hours of undergraduate English;
2. fulfill a foreign language requirement in one of the following ways:
   a. complete 18 undergraduate semester hours of a foreign language or complete 6 semester hours of 3000-level work in a foreign language,
   b. earn a final grade of A or B in a foreign language course number 5990,
   c. pass a reading examination administered by the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department;
   d. earn a final grade of B or better in both ENGL 6010 (Old English) and 6020 (Beowulf), which must be taken sequentially.
3. either
   a. complete 30 semester hours in English, including ENGL 6640 and 6660 with no more than 30 percent of the total degree hours dually listed as undergraduate/graduate courses, or
   b. elect a minor, in which the student takes a minimum of 12 semester hours, plus a minimum of 18 hours in English including ENGL 6640 and 6660;
4. file a Candidacy Form with the Graduate Office prior to the completion of 24 credit hours;
5. successfully complete a thesis defense.

Non-Thesis Option

Candidate must
1. have earned at least 30 semester hours of undergraduate English;
2. fulfill a foreign language requirement in one of the following ways:
   a. complete 18 undergraduate semester hours of a foreign language or complete 6 semester hours of 3000-level work in a foreign language;
   b. earn a final grade of A or B in a foreign language course number 5990;
   c. pass a reading examination administered by the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department;
   d. earn a final grade of B or better in both ENGL 6010 (Old English) and 6020 (Beowulf), which must be taken sequentially.
3. either
   a. complete 36 semester hours in English with no more than 30 percent of the total degree hours dually listed as undergraduate/graduate courses;
   b. elect a minor, in which the student takes a minimum of 12 semester hours, plus a minimum of 24 hours in English, including ENGL 6660
4. file a Candidacy Form with the Graduate Office prior to the completion of 24 credit hours;
5. successfully complete a written examination in a selected area of concentration (the examination may be taken no more than twice).

Requirements for the Doctor of Arts
(6000 and 7000 level)

1. Candidate must have earned undergraduate prerequisites of at least 30 semester hours in English and 20 semester hours of English at the master’s level.
2. There are two alternatives:
   Alternative #1
   48 semester hours above the master’s level with at least two-thirds of the program on the 7000 level and ENGL 7660 or its transfer equivalent. 5000-level course may not be applied. Work in the major teaching field will consist of at least 24 semester hours of classwork, plus 6 semester hours of the internship, plus at least 6 semester hours for the dissertation.
   Alternative #2
   60 semester hours above the master’s level with at least two-thirds of the program on the 7000 level and ENGL 7660 or its transfer equivalent. 5000-level courses may not be applied. Work in the first teaching field will consist of at least 18 semester hours of classwork in English, with that in the second teaching field consisting of at least 18 semester hours of classwork in any subject which is offered as a major at the master’s level, plus 6 semester hours of internship/externship, plus at least 6 semester hours for the dissertation.
3. A core of professional education courses of 12 semester hours must be taken consisting of FOED 7520 and 7560 and SPSE 7540 AND 7550.
4. A foreign language requirement must be fulfilled in one of the following ways:
   a. earning a final grade of A or B in a foreign language course numbered 5990;
   b. passing a reading examination administered by the Foreign Languages and Literature Department;
   c. earn a final grade of B or better in both ENGL 7010 (Old English) and 7020 (Beowulf), which must be taken sequentially;
   d. meeting this requirement at the M.A. level.
5. A Candidacy Form must be filed with the Graduate Office prior to the completion of 30 credit hours and appointment of a doctoral committee.
6. A written examination must be completed successfully in two selected areas of emphasis.
7. Following successful completion of written exams, a dissertation must be prepared according to one of the following:
   a. a problem in the student’s major field aimed at specific curriculum development;
   b. research into or critical analysis of a body of literary materials;
   c. an interdisciplinary topic.
   In case a, the dissertation committee should be composed of members from English and education; in case b, the committee may be composed solely of members of the English Department; in case c, the committee should be composed of members from English, the related field, and education.
8. A final oral defense of the dissertation must be completed successfully.

Courses in English [ENGL]

5010 (501) Folklore. Three credits. Forms and types of folk culture with particular emphasis on the folk literature of the United States.


5530 (553) History of the English Language. Three credits. Traces the development of the English language from cuneiform writing systems, Semitic and Phoenician syllabaries, through Greek and Latin contributions, Old and Middle English, up to Modern English.

5540 (554) Approaches to Teaching ESL Grammar and Writing. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 4510/5510. A survey of the background and basic methods needed to teach English grammar and composition to students for whom English is a second language. Emphasizes understanding the problems non-native speakers face and developing techniques for helping non-native speakers express themselves in written English.

5860 (586) Special Topics in Film Studies. Three credits. A selected director, genre, period, aspect, or theme. Subject will vary each time course is taught.

6000/7000 (600/700) Poetry Workshop. Three credits. A rigorous writing course to develop the advanced writer’s use of point-of-view, tone, rhythm, meter, line, and stanza. Practice in both the spontaneity of composition and the deliberate, disciplined work of revision. Examination, through poems and essays by relevant authors, of the movements, forms, and possibilities of contemporary poetry.

6010/7010 (601/701) Old English Language and Literature. Three credits. Prerequisite for ENGL 6020/7020, Beowulf. Introduction to Old English language (grammar, phonology, syntax, and vocabulary) and literature (poetry and prose) and to the historical and cultural background of the Anglo-Saxon period.

6020/7020 (602/702) Beowulf. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 6010/7010. Intensive line-by-line study of Beowulf in Old English, with special emphasis on its sources and analogues, twelfth-century criticism, and current dating studies of the poem.

6030/7030 (603/703) Chaucer Seminar. Three credits.

6040/7040 (604/704) Medieval English Literature. Three credits. A study of Middle English literary types (in poetry, prose, and drama) and of the major authors and texts of the Middle English period. Includes study of Middle English dialects.


6110/7110 (611/711) Spenser Seminar. Three credits.


6130/7130 (613/713) Studies in Seventeenth-Century English Prose and Poetry. Three credits. Selected nondramatic literature of the century, with primary emphasis on the seventeenth century before the Restoration. Included are Donne, Herbert, and the metaphysical poets and Jonson and the Cavalier poets.


6150/7150 (615/715) Studies in Shakespeare. Three credits. Shakespeare’s poems and plays, emphasizing poetic and dramatic techniques in Shakespeare’s works and critical reaction to those works.

6200/7200 (620/720) Studies in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature. Three credits. Designed to give students a definite critical knowledge of the major literary works of restoration and eighteenth-century England, 1660-1800. Course may focus on either drama, poetry, or prose or a combination.


6230/7230 (623/723 A,B) Major British Writers. Three credits. An in-depth study of one, two, or three British writers. Course varies according to interests of instructor and students.

6290/7290 (629/729) Modern British Literature. Three credits. Intellectual backgrounds of modern British literature; major novelists: Forster, Woolf, Joyce, Lawrence; major poets: Yeats, Eliot, Auden, Thomas; selected minor writers.


6330/7330 (633/733 A,B) Major American Writers. Three credits. An in-depth study of two or three American writers. Course varies according to interests of instructor and students.

6340/7340 (634/734) African-American Literature. Three credits. An in-depth study of the African-American literary tradition, with emphasis on significant authors, genres, texts, and contexts.

6350/7350 Critics and Criticism. Three credits. Examines significant critical movements in Western literature from classical times into the twentieth century. Focusing on major critics such as Aristotle, Johnson, Coleridge, and Eliot, the course also treats less influential figures and considers practical applications of theory to specific texts.

6360/7360 (636/736) Studies in Southern Literature. Three credits. Themes, theories, movements, and types of literature produced in the American South with particular emphasis on selected authors and texts.

6370/7370 (637/737) Satire. Three credits. Satire as a distinct genre, emphasizing its continuity in Western literature from its roots among the Greeks to its resurgence in the twentieth century: representative works from four periods: ancient, medieval and Renaissance, eighteenth century, and modern; prose, poetry, and drama.

6380/7380 (638/738) Modern Critical Theory. Three credits. Covers major critical trends in literary theory since 1965, including feminist, Marxist, structuralist, and deconstructive approaches to literature. Students explore background and implications of these theories and analyze selected works of literature in light of these approaches.

6390/7390 (639/739) Reading Postmodernism. Three credits. Theoretical discourse which works to define the cultural mindset known as “postmodern.” Theories examined will be applied to examples of postmodern literature, film, and/or television. Topics emphasized include the instability of social and cultural categories, the dissolving boundaries between “high” and “low” culture and art, and the subversion of realist narrative strategies.

6400/7400 (640/740) American Literature to 1800. Three credits.


6440/7440 (644/744) Popular Literature of the Twentieth Century. Three credits. The forms of literature reflecting the mass culture of America from 1900 to the present, including such genres as the mystery, the western, science fiction and fantasy, popular humor, comic strips, popular poetry, song lyrics, and the aesthetics of non-print media.

6450/7450 (645/745) Contemporary Women’s Literature. Three credits. Study of recent women writers with emphasis on the relationship between literature and the social and political status of women. Course addresses diverse writers and issues of difference among women, including race, class, ethnicity, nation, sexuality, and other determinants of individual and group identity.

6460/7460 (646/746) Studies in Contemporary Drama. Three credits. The development of world drama from 1950 to the present, with attention to related criticism and theory.

6470/7470 (647/747) Studies in Narratology. Three credits. Examines modern and contemporary theories of narrative (modernist, rhetorical structuralist, dialogical) with particular application to selected authors and texts.

6480/7480 (648/748) Studies in Contemporary Literature. Three credits. Intellectual backgrounds of contemporary literature; significant developments in fiction, non-fictional prose, poetry, and drama.
6490/7490 (649/749) Studies in the Novel. Three credits. The novel as a literary genre may be approached from a variety of perspectives, including generic, historical, theoretical, or single-author approaches. Course varies according to interests of instructor and students.

6500/7500 (650/750 A, B) Selected Topics in Literature and Language. Three credits. A specialized field of literary or linguistic inquiry, its bibliography, critical problems, and probable solutions. Topics vary with the professor assigned to the course.

6510/7510 (651/751) Modern Rhetoric and Prose Style. Three credits.

6520/7520 (652/752) Essentials of Linguistics. Three credits. Major linguistic approaches to the study of language-dominant trends and current issues in linguistics; the phonological, morphological, and syntactic structure of the English language.

6560/7560 (656/756) Seminar in Teaching Composition. Three credits. Open only to first-year teaching assistants or with consent of instructor.

6570/7570 (657/757) Teaching Practicum in Portfolio Assessment. Three credits. Prerequisite: ENGL 6560/7560. A supervised teaching experience using the portfolio system of writing assessment. Students will teach one or two sections of ENGL 1010 and participate in workshops for portfolio teachers and in team assessments of freshman portfolios. Open only to first-year teaching assistants or with consent of instructor.


6590/7590 (659/759) Seminar in Teaching of Literature. Three credits. Recommended for second-year teaching assistants and others interested in teaching literature.

6620/7620 (662/762) Directed Reading and Research. Three credits. Prerequisite: Permission of the director of graduate studies. Individually supervised reading and research either in a historical period of English or American literature or in a major literary genre.

6640 (664) Thesis Research. One to six credits. Selection of a research problem, review of pertinent literature, collection and analysis of data, and composition of thesis. Once enrolled, student should register for at least one credit hour of master’s research each semester until completion. S/U grading.

6660/7660 (666/766) Introduction to Graduate Study: Bibliography and Research. Three credits. Literary scholarship: its nature and scope; traditional and modern methods; the definition and solution of research problems; the production of literary scholarship. Required of all Master’s students enrolling in English.

7600/7610 (760/761) Internship. Three credits each.

7640 (764) Dissertation Research. One to six credits. Selection of a research problem, review of pertinent literature, collection and analysis of data, and composition of dissertation. Once enrolled, student should register for at least one credit hour of doctoral research each semester until completion. S/U grading.