Master of Arts in English

The Master of Arts (MA) program in English equips graduate students with the knowledge and skills necessary both to the outstanding teacher and to the well prepared candidate for further graduate study. The graduate committee of the department accordingly requires its master’s candidates to follow a course of advanced study that leads to a comprehensive knowledge of English and American literature. Candidates are also given training in the principles of literary criticism and in the use of bibliographic tools so that they will have a general competence in criticism and research.

Admission Requirements
Applicants must meet the general requirements of the Graduate School, with the additional requirements that they have a 3.0 grade point average in their previous English courses. The coordinator of graduate studies in English will then evaluate the applicant’s transcript, prescribing additional undergraduate hours for those who have fewer than 24 credit hours in English and American literature or in other work acceptable to the Department of English. Courses in freshman composition, grammar, teaching methods, journalism, speech, etc., may not be included in the required 24 hours. Exceptions may be made for outstanding students who have majored in related fields.

In addition to Graduate School application materials, applicants to the MA English program should submit a 500 word statement of purpose explaining their goals or reasons for pursuing an MA in English as well as their skills, accomplishments, or experiences that suggest they will be able to succeed in the program. The English department Master of Arts program accepts applications for admission on an ongoing basis.

Applicants who are non-native speakers of English must score at least 600 (paper based test), 100 (internet based test) on the TOEFL examination OR a minimum overall band score of 7.5 on the IELTS examination before being admitted to the MA degree program in English.

Degree Requirements
There are three options leading to the Master of Arts degree in English: Plan A, which emphasizes literature, composition, and pedagogy, is especially designed for teachers; Plan B, which requires the student to submit a master’s thesis, places more emphasis on research, scholarly writing, and the independent study of literature; and Plan C, which emphasizes comprehensive and cohesive study of literature, is designed for students who wish to pursue advanced study of literature through coursework.

All three degree plans require the following core literature coursework: ENGL 700, Introduction to Graduate Study in English; two major author(s), genre or special topics classes; two courses from British Literature before 1900; one course in American literature before WWI; and one course in 20th/21st century studies—British, American or Anglophone. All three plans require a written comprehensive examination guided by their coursework and a standard suggested reading list.

**Plan A** requires the completion of the core requirements plus one course in composition theory and pedagogy and three elective classes in Linguistics, Literature, or methods of teaching English. A Master’s thesis is not required.

**Plan B** requires the completion of the core requirements plus two elective classes in Linguistics, Literature, or methods of teaching English; and a Master’s thesis (ENGL 890). A maximum of 3 hours of ENGL 890 can be applied toward the degree. Plan B also requires an oral thesis defense administered by the thesis committee.

**Plan C** requires the completion of the core requirements plus four elective classes in Linguistics, Literature, or methods of teaching English chosen in consultation with the graduate coordinator.
Financial Aid
The program awards several graduate teaching assistantships. Graduate teaching assistants typically teach two sections of composition-six hours per week of teaching plus office hours. The assistantships provide a stipend and one hundred percent tuition waiver. Application deadlines for teaching assistant positions are October 1 for Spring, and February 10 for Fall. Applications received after these dates will still be considered, but for full consideration, meeting the stated deadlines is strongly encouraged. The department also offers two competitive semester long fellowships every year, available to MA students with advanced standing. Fellowships provide a stipend but no tuition waiver.

Other financial aid may be available through the graduate school or through the department in the form of occasional competitive scholarships and awards.

Faculty

Tina Bennett-Kastor, PhD, University of Southern California, 1978. Linguistics, Language & Composition

Rebeccah Bechtold, PhD, University of Illinois, 2012. Graduate Coordinator. Early American Literature

TJ Boynton, PhD, University of Illinois, 2011. Modern and Contemporary British Literature.

Christopher K. Brooks, PhD, Purdue University, 1987. Eighteenth Century, Film, Critical Theory.

Francis Connor, PhD University of Virginia, 2010. Early Modern British Literature and Print Culture

Darren DeFrain, PhD, Western Michigan University, 2000. Composition Director; Creative Writing

Carrie Dickison, ABD, University of Illinois. Nineteenth-Century British Literature, Professional Writing, and Online Instruction.

Kimberly Engber, PhD, The City University of New York, 2003. American Literature

Jean Griffith, PhD, Texas A & M University, 2003. American Literature

Danielle Koupf, PhD, University of Pittsburg, 2014. Composition and Pedagogy.

Mary Waters, PhD, University of California at Davis, 2001. Chairperson and Melba V. Hughes Professor of English; 19th Century British Literature, Poetry & Fiction

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