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 requirement that they have a 3.00 grade point average in their previous work in 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 credit hours. Exceptions may be made for outstanding students who have majored in related fields.

In addition to Graduate School application materials, applicants to the English MA 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 have earned degrees at institutions in countries in which English is not the native language must score at least 600 paper-based, or 100 Internet-based on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Examination, or an overall band score of 7.5 on the IELTS, or a score of 73 on the PTE-Academic before being admitted to the MA degree program in English.

Degree Requirements
There are three programs leading to the degree. Plan A, which emphasizes literature, composition and pedagogy and consists of 33 credit hours, is especially designed for teachers. Plan B, a 30-credit-hour plan which requires the student to submit a master’s thesis, places more emphasis on research, scholarly writing and the independent study of literature. Plan C, which emphasizes a comprehensive and cohesive study of literature, also requires 33 credit hours and 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, Rhetoric, or methods of teaching English. A master’s thesis is not required but students must take a comprehensive examination guided by their coursework and a standard suggested reading list. A Plan A student will be examined on two literary periods, one American, one British. At least one of the two literary periods must cover literature before 1900. Students in Plan A will also be tested on a question drawn from composition and rhetoric pedagogy.

Plan B requires the completion of the core requirements plus two elective classes in Linguistics, Literature, Composition Theory, Rhetoric, or methods of teaching English. Plan
B also requires a written comprehensive examination and an oral thesis defense. The oral defense committee includes the director of the thesis, a graduate faculty member from the English department, and a reader from outside the English department who is a graduate faculty member. The written comprehensive examination will be guided by their coursework and a standard suggested reading list. A Plan B student will be examined on three literary periods, with at least one each from American and British. At least one of the three literary periods must cover literature before 1900.

**Plan C** requires the completion of the core requirements plus four elective classes in Linguistics, Literature, Composition Theory, Rhetoric, or methods of teaching English chosen in consultation with the graduate coordinator. Plan C students must take a written comprehensive examination guided by their coursework and a standard suggested reading list. A Plan C student will be examined on three literary periods, with at least one each from American and British. At least one of the three literary periods must cover literature before 1900.

**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**
**Rebecca Bechtold**, PhD, University of Illinois, 2012. Graduate Coordinator. Early American Literature
**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.
**Jean Griffith**, PhD, Texas A & M University, 2003. American Literature
**Mythili Menon**, PhD, University of Southern California, 2016. Linguistics.
**Mary Waters**, PhD, University of California at Davis, 2001. Chairperson and Melba V. Hughes Professor of English; 19th Century British Literature, Poetry & Fiction

**For More Information:**
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