ENGLISH, PHD

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

head of department: Bob Markley
director of graduate studies: Andrew Gaedtke
overview of graduate college admissions & requirements: Graduate Admissions (https://grad.illinois.edu/admissions/apply/)
overview of department admissions & requirements: https://english.illinois.edu/admissions/graduate-admission/
department website: http://www.english.illinois.edu
college website: https://las.illinois.edu/
department office: 210 English Building, 608 South Wright Street, Urbana, IL 61801
phone: (217) 333-3646
e-mail: shockey@illinois.edu

The Department of English offers programs of study leading to the Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy degrees. We welcome qualified students who wish to pursue their interests in English, American, and Anglophone language, literature and film beyond the undergraduate level. The Ph.D. program is, in general, designed to educate and train teacher-scholars who will take positions in colleges and universities throughout the country. We consider the Master of Arts program to be the first step toward the Ph.D. degree; we expect students admitted to the M.A. program to receive the M.A. and go on to complete a Ph.D. We therefore do not offer a formal terminal M.A. program.

Both the M.A. and Ph.D. may be earned with a specialization in Writing Studies. Also, doctoral students specializing in other fields may earn a graduate concentration in Writing Studies.

Graduate Degree Programs in English

English, MA (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/english-ma/)
  concentration: Medieval Studies (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/concentration/medieval-studies/)

English, PhD (p. 1)
  concentration: Medieval Studies (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/concentration/medieval-studies/)
  Writing Studies (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/concentration/writing-studies/)

For information on the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) program in Creative Writing, see Creative Writing (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/las/creative-writing-mfa/).

Affiliated Programs offering certificates or minors:
  • Department of African American Studies
  • Asian American Studies Program
  • American Indian Studies
  • Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies
  • Gender and Women's Studies Program
  • The Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies Initiative
  • Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities
  • Latina-Latino Studies Program
  • The Program in Jewish Culture and Society
  • Unit for Cinema Studies
  • Unit for Criticism and Theory

Admission

A student who wishes to be considered for admission to graduate studies in English must present the equivalent of at least 20 semester hours of undergraduate work in English and American literature, excluding required work in rhetoric or composition. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores are required for those applying for the Literary Studies and Writing Studies programs. The GRE subject test for literature in English is not required.

For the 2021-2022 application season, the English Department is not requiring the GRE general test, and such scores will not be considered by the readers of applications in their deliberations. All applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores. Currently, a minimum score of 550 on the paper-based test (213 on the computer-based test) is required. Before a teaching assistantship involving classroom instruction or student consultation can be awarded to a non-native speaker of English, the applicant must take the Test of Spoken English (TSE) and achieve a score of 50 or higher (230 or higher before 1996). Because applications for admission usually far exceed capacity, in recent years undergraduate grade point averages of students admitted have been significantly higher than the 3.0 (A = 4.0) required by the Graduate College. The committee on admissions tends to select those applicants who have a solid array of undergraduate courses, knowledge of a foreign language, strong recommendations, and a compelling writing sample: in short, an academic record that shows promise of doing outstanding
work in the field and earning degrees within a reasonable time. We do not admit part-time students. Applicants are considered only in spring for fall admission, and the deadline for submitting applications is noon on December 2nd.

**Graduate Teaching Experience**

Experience in teaching is considered a vital part of the graduate program and all M.A. and Ph.D. candidates will have ample opportunity to teach undergraduate writing classes.

**Financial Aid**

Financial aid is available to students in the form of fellowships, teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and waivers of tuition and service fees. For complete information about the program, prospective applicants should consult our website at https://english.illinois.edu/admissions/graduate-admission/ or write to the above address.

---

**for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**

Students in the program who have earned their master's degrees must apply formally to the Ph.D. program. Applicants who have completed their master's degrees elsewhere may also apply. Seldom are applicants accepted with graduate grade point averages below 3.5. Students must choose to complete a specialization in Literature or Writing Studies. In addition, students may choose to complete the graduate concentration in Writing Studies (http://catalog.illinois.edu/graduate/graduate-majors/writing-studies/).

Interdisciplinary work is encouraged. Students may take courses outside of English. The special field examination is taken as the student completes coursework and prepares to write the thesis. The student then goes on to complete and defend the thesis under the direction of a committee composed of four professors. A full-time student can complete this program in four years beyond the master's degree.

*For additional details and requirements refer to the department's Graduate Studies in English (http://www.english.illinois.edu/graduate/) Website and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/).*

---

**Course work listing for Ph.D. requirements for the Literature Specialization:**

- Eight additional semester-long courses at the 400 and 500 level. These, selected in consultation with a faculty advisor, either focus on the proposed field of specialization and allied fields—in English or in other disciplines—or fill gaps in the student’s background.
- Doctoral students in literature will either take a Professional Seminar in the teaching of literature or film or act as a teaching assistant for two semesters in a large lecture course before they teach literature courses. They are expected to teach at least one literature course during their Ph.D. work.
- The Foreign Language Requirement (if not already satisfied at the M.A. level) may be satisfied by demonstrating a reading knowledge of an appropriate foreign language in one of the following three ways: By completing the equivalent of three full years of undergraduate work; By passing a proficiency exam administered by a UIUC foreign language department; By passing a non-credit 501 language course with a grade of B or better.

---

1 For additional details and requirements refer to the department's Graduate Studies in English (http://www.english.illinois.edu/graduate/) Website and the Graduate College Handbook (http://www.grad.illinois.edu/gradhandbook/).
• Completion of a Special Field Examination (oral, written, or both). The exam, administered by a committee of four faculty members selected by the student, is based upon the student’s approved Special Field list of primary and secondary sources, including a discussion of its rationale and relation to the proposed dissertation topic. Approved fields include historical periods, genres, film, and critical theory.

• Completion and two-hour oral defense of a dissertation. Students working on their dissertations are eligible for fellowship support or released time from teaching. All students in good standing and making good progress will ordinarily receive at least one semester free from teaching. A few students receive a year or more of fellowship aid to work full-time on their dissertations.

Course work listing for Ph.D. requirements for the Writing Studies Specialization:
• Eight additional semester-long courses at the 400 and 500 level. These selected in consultation with a faculty advisor, focus on the proposed field of specialization and allied fields—in English or in other disciplines—or fill gaps in the student’s background and include ENGL 505 and 2 methodology courses (at least one of which is an ENGL 582; the second methodology course should be approved by the advisor and typically will be approved by the Center for Writing Studies for the methodology requirement in its Writing Studies Graduate Concentration). In addition, students must take one course in Literature or Theory. Specific courses taken at the MA level (ENGL 505 and ENGL 582) are counted as fulfilling those specific requirements at the PhD level.

• Students who enter the Ph.D. program with an M.A. from another institution must show demonstrated reading knowledge of a foreign language.

• Completion of a Special Field Examination (oral, written, or both). This exam, administered by a committee of four faculty members selected by the student, is based upon the student’s approved special field list—which includes a discussion of its rationale and relation to the proposed dissertation topic. Lists are representative of the field of Writing Studies and include two or three concentrations within it. Approved fields include: Cognition and Composition, Computers and Composition Studies, Classical Rhetoric, Critical Theory, Discourse Processes, Gender and Writing, Literacy Studies, Technical Communication, Writing Across the Curriculum, Writing in the Disciplines, and Writing Assessment. Other combinations of fields are possible, including those that combine disciplines (e.g. African-American Studies, women’s studies, and literacy).

• Completion and two-hour oral defense of a dissertation. Students working on their dissertations are eligible for fellowship support or released time from teaching. All students in good standing and making good progress will ordinarily receive at least one semester free from teaching. A few students receive a year or more of fellowship aid to work full-time on their dissertations.