

**Program Title:** English

**Program Degree:** MA in English

**A. Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

**1. Program will prepare students to carry out the independent and original scholarship that informs research, teaching, and service in English departments.**

- a. ***Core Knowledge, Methods, and Scholarship:*** Students will acquire general knowledge of a range of historical fields that comprise an English Department, and a range of theories, methods, research protocols, and scholarly practices that are necessary for strong research, teaching, and service in our discipline, and that are crucial supplements to undergraduate degrees and professional degrees for students who do not plan to pursue PhDs in English (generally these students have opted for publishing, high school teaching, library science, and other careers that depend on careful research, writing, and analysis).
- b. ***Specialization knowledge, methods, and scholarship:*** Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the literature (or film) in their chosen historical field(s) or research focus.
- c. ***Creative synthesis and critical thinking:*** Students will learn a number of strategies for analyzing individual examples of literature and film, and for thinking synthetically about works that share a formal, generic, topical, or historical impulse. They also will learn a number of strategies for sorting through the applicability of and connections among a range of scholarly approaches to those works. This training will allow them to produce original insights about the literature and about the scholarly practices whose explanatory power is most compelling.
- d. ***Research/Methods:*** Students will learn how to design and carry out original and persuasive research in English literature with particular attention to their chosen historical field(s) or research focus.
- e. ***Scholarship:*** Students will produce original scholarship that contributes to the growth of knowledge in their historical field.
- f. ***Independent Learner:*** Students will demonstrate an ability to define projects and conduct research independently.

**B. Program Assessment Methods – Direct Methods**

- ***Advising Structure***
  - Before the beginning of their first semester, incoming students meet as a group and then individually with the MA Advisor for orientation and advising. The MA Advisor reviews each student's proposed program of study for that semester.
  - The MA Advisor remains the primary (and the Director of Graduate Studies the secondary) advisor for all MA students. Because this is a one-year MA Program, this sort of centralized oversight is necessary. Students also are encouraged to consult with and seek advice from other members of the faculty.

- Soon after the end of the Fall semester, the Graduate Secretary reviews the grades to see if any MA students have received a grade below a “B-”. If so, the Director of Graduate Studies and the MA Advisor will contact the faculty member who awarded the grade to see if there are particular skills that need reinforcing in order to improve the student’s oral or written performance. The Director of Graduate Studies and MA Advisor will consult with each other, the latter will meet with the student, and then the DGS and MA Advisor will consult once again. The DGS and MA Advisor will monitor closely the student’s progress the following semester.
- Soon after the end of the Fall and Spring semesters, the Director of Graduate Studies sends an email to students with incompletes to ensure that they have filled out incomplete contracts, are on-target to complete their work, and are not in danger of falling behind with Fall courses or Summer exam/essay preparation.
- ***Courses***
  - Individual faculty evaluate (assign a grade and provide written comments) each student’s oral and written performance in their graduate seminars. Some seminars require oral reports; all require participation in seminar discussions that model creative and original engagement with literary and scholarly traditions. All require original scholarly writing and research (roughly 25 pages in length).
- ***Summer Essay or Exam***
  - Students have the option of completing the MA Program with an MA Essay (roughly 50 pages in length). Students select a faculty advisor and work closely with that advisor on an independent critical/scholarly or creative MA Essay to be submitted no later than August 1. Students are advised to begin the process of sorting through topics and advisors soon after the end of their first semester, and are assisted in this process by the MA Advisor. The MA Essay Proposal forms are submitted to the department no later than April 15; these proposal forms offer a provisional title and short abstract of the essay, are signed by the student and their faculty advisor, are reviewed by the MA Advisor, and are placed in the student’s file. Students eventually will need a second reader (selected by the student or by the MA Advisor in consultation with the student); some will work with a second reader beginning with the earliest stages of the project. The MA Essay is evaluated (pass/fail) by the faculty advisor and second reader. If there is a significant difference of opinion, the MA Advisor (and/or the DGS) reads the MA Essay and adjudicates. If the MA Essay is not passed in August, the student has the option of paying the continuation fee and completing the work the next semester.
  - Students have the option of completing the MA Program with an MA Exam. By no later than April 15, students planning to write an MA Exam will finalize details with the MA Advisor. The MA Exam is held no later

than August 1. The student is expected to answer four questions on the examination (one from each of four fields, pre-selected by the student from a list of designated periods/topics). The exam is written and evaluated by an exam committee, consisting of one faculty member per field (each field receives a pass/fail). The student may assemble this committee him/herself, or ask the MA Advisor to do so. It is recommended that the student then consult with each member of the committee at least once prior to the exam, to get a sense of the kinds of questions he/she might put on the exam, and to talk through sample answers. Sample exam reading lists and sample exam questions are available on our graduate website. The exam consists of two parts, to be taken in the morning on two consecutive business days; each part covers two fields. Students will respond to one question from among a selection of two or three per field. For each question, the student is given half an hour to read and plan out his/her answer, plus 1.5 hours for writing. Should an evaluator recommend a “fail,” the MA Advisor (and/or the Director of Graduate Studies) reads and evaluates the exam. The evaluator and MA Advisor consult about the exam and a possible schedule for re-taking the section; both the MA Advisor and the evaluator consult with the student about the strengths and weaknesses of their initial exam response and about possible study and exam strategies for the re-take.

- ***Research – Opportunities beyond the Department***

- Qualified students are encouraged to apply for the “Master’s Seminar” at the Folger Institute of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The faculty member serving as Folger Institute Representative reviews applications for this Spring semester seminar, asks qualified applicants to revise as necessary, and then forwards an institutional recommendation to the Folger Institute. Students accepted by the Folger Institute review committee attend with Folger Institute funding for travel and lodging.
- Master’s students are eligible to apply for internships sponsored by Open Letter Press or to gain experience by working with departmental publications (the Blake Archive, TEAMS/METS) although the latter often prefer PhD students who provide greater continuity given their longer period of residence.

- ***Professional Workshops***

- The MA Advisor coordinates workshops throughout the year on a series of topics relevant to MA Students (for instance, deciding between and preparing for the MA Essay or Exam, applying for PhD programs, strategies for finding summer employment, opportunities for non-academic careers like publishing).

### **C. Program Assessment Methods – Indirect Methods**

- MA Students receive an Exit Survey as they leave the program. The form asks for contact information and any current employment/educational plans.

- We update our full alumni (1960s-present) database annually with current contact information and employment.
- The information from the exit survey and updated database is forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Studies Committee reviews these materials annually.
- All information about incompletes (number, time to completion), MA Exam results, MA Essay results, numbers of students who opted for the exam and for the essay, and time to completion (how many completed within the one-year mark, how many extended into the following semester or beyond) are compiled annually and reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee. Comparisons with results over a larger number of years are provided as relevant.
- The MA Advisor meets throughout the year with the students individually and in small groups, and forwards all suggestions for changes to the Graduate Studies Committee. The Committee reviews these suggestions as part of its continual monitoring and revising of the Graduate Program.