English Language and Literature

Department Website: http://english.uchicago.edu

Program of Study

The undergraduate program in English Language and Literature provides students with the opportunity to intensively study works of literature originally written in English. Courses address fundamental questions about topics such as the status of literature within culture, the literary history of a period, the achievements of a major author, the defining characteristics of a genre, the politics of interpretation, the formal beauties of individual works, and the methods of literary scholarship and research.

The study of English may be pursued as preparation for graduate work in literature or other disciplines, or as a complement to general education. Students in the English department learn how to ask probing questions of a large body of material; how to formulate, analyze, and judge questions and their answers; and how to present both questions and answers in clear, cogent prose. To the end of cultivating and testing these skills, which are central to virtually any career, each course offered by the department stresses writing.

Although the main focus of the English department is to develop reading, writing, and research skills, the value of bringing a range of disciplinary perspectives to bear on the works studied is also recognized. Besides offering a wide variety of courses in English, the department encourages students to integrate the intellectual concerns of other fields into their study of literature. This is done by permitting up to three courses outside the English department to be counted as part of the major if a student can demonstrate the relevance of these courses to his or her program of study.

Students interested in creative writing who are not majoring in English may complete a minor in English and Creative Writing. Information follows the description of the major.

Program Requirements

The Department of English requires a total of 13 courses: 11 courses taken within the Department of English and two language courses or their equivalent, as well as a cluster statement to be submitted by the end of the third week of Spring Quarter of a student’s third year. The program presupposes the completion of the general education requirement in the humanities (or its equivalent), in which basic training is provided in the methods, problems, and disciplines of humanistic study. Because literary study is enriched by some knowledge of other cultural expressions, the major in English requires students to extend their knowledge of a language beyond the level required of all College students.
Language Requirement

Two quarters of study at the second-year level in a language other than English (or credit for the equivalent as determined by petition).

Alternatively, students may take two courses in an advanced computer language. Students must submit an Intent Form (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources) to inform the department of their plan to use the Computer Science combination in place of the traditional language option. As of Autumn 2013, the following course combinations may be taken to satisfy the language requirement: CMSC 12100-12200 Computer Science with Applications I-II, CMSC 15100-15200 Introduction to Computer Science I-II, or CMSC 16100-16200 Honors Introduction to Computer Science I-II.

Course Distribution Requirements

The major in English requires at least 11 departmental courses. Students may substitute up to three courses from departments outside English with the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Departmental courses should be distributed among the following:

Gateway Requirement

Early on, students are required to take at least one of our three introductions to a genre (fiction, poetry, or drama), all of which introduce students to techniques for formal analysis and close reading. Alternatively, one course from the "Approaches to Theater" sequence (ENGL 10950 Approaches to Theater I: Ancient to Renaissance or ENGL 10951 Approaches to Theater II: Late 17th Century to the Present) may be taken to fulfill this requirement.

One English "Introduction to" a genre or "Approaches to Theater" course

Genre Requirement

Because an understanding of literature demands sensitivity to various conventions and genres, students are required to take at least one course in each of the genres of fiction, poetry, and drama (one of these courses may be the gateway course above).

One English course in fiction

One English course in poetry

One English course in drama

Period Requirement
Reading and understanding works written in different historical periods require skills and historical information that contemporary works do not require. Students are accordingly asked to study a variety of historical periods in order to develop their abilities as readers, to discover areas of literature that they might not otherwise explore, and to develop their knowledge of literary history. To meet the period requirement in English, students should take at least one course in each of the following:

One English course in literature written before 1650

One English course in literature written between 1650 and 1830

One English course in literature written between 1830 and 1940

One English course in literary or critical theory. Courses fulfilling this requirement are designated in our course listings.

NOTE: Many courses satisfy several requirements. For example, a gateway course could also satisfy a genre requirement, or a course on Chaucer could satisfy the genre requirement for poetry and the pre-1650 requirement. For details about the requirements met by specific courses, students should consult the Undergraduate Program Assistant.

Program Statement and Cluster Requirement

By the end of the third week in Spring Quarter of their third year, students should submit a one-page statement to their departmental advisor and the Undergraduate Program Assistant outlining their interests in the field and designating a “cluster” of at least five courses. With the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, two of these courses may be from departments outside English and may be among the three non-departmental courses that can count toward the major’s course requirements. A cluster is a group of courses that share a conceptual focus; the purpose of the cluster is to help students think about the organization of their program. Students will design a personalized cluster that falls under one of the following four general rubrics: (1) literary and critical theory, (2) form/genre/medium, (3) literature in history, (4) literature and culture(s). Students may include Creative Writing courses within their clusters. See the Department of English website (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/undergrad-requirements/#Cluster) for more information.

Electives

Electives to make up a total of 11 courses. These may include:

Junior Seminar

Junior Seminars, limited to 15 third-year students who have already fulfilled the department’s gateway requirement and taken at least two further English courses, examine different topics and change from year to year. All seminars focus on the analytical, research,
and bibliographic skills necessary for producing a substantial seminar paper (around 15–20 pages). They aim to help students prepare the kind of polished writing that some may want to use when applying to graduate school. They are particularly recommended for those wishing to pursue graduate studies in English or those who wish to write a strong critical BA paper.

**Seniors-Only Course**

Seniors-only courses provide fourth-year English majors with the opportunity to examine literary topics in a particularly focused way. These courses may not be offered every year.

**BA Project (Optional)**

Students who wish to be considered for departmental honors must submit a critical or creative BA project. For honors candidacy, a student must have at least a 3.0 grade point average overall and a 3.5 grade point average in departmental courses (grades received for transfer credit courses are not included in this calculation). A BA Project may take the form of a critical essay, a piece of creative writing, or a mixed media work in which writing is the central element. The student is required to work on an approved topic and to submit a final version to the Director of Undergraduate Studies that has been critiqued by both a faculty advisor and a preceptor and then revised. To be eligible for honors, a student's BA Project must be judged to be of the highest quality by the graduate student preceptor, faculty advisor, and Director of Undergraduate Studies. Completion of a BA project does not guarantee a recommendation for departmental honors. Honors recommendations are made to the Master of the Humanities Collegiate Division by the department and it is the Master of the Humanities Collegiate Division who makes the final decision.

Students who wish to use the BA Project in English to meet the same requirement in another major should discuss their proposals with both Directors of Undergraduate Studies no later than the end of their third year. A consent form is available from their College adviser. It must be completed and returned to their College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

**The Critical BA Project**

The Critical BA Project may develop from a paper written in an earlier course or from independent research. To do a Critical BA Project, students must fill out a declaration form (available on the English departmental website (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources)) by the end of Spring Quarter of their third year. On this form, they identify a faculty field specialist who has agreed to serve as their advisor. Students work on their BA project over three quarters. Early in Autumn Quarter of their fourth year, students will be assigned a graduate student preceptor who will help them think about their project. In Autumn Quarter of their fourth year, students will attend a series of mandatory colloquia led by the preceptors that will prepare them for the advanced research and writing demands of thesis work.
In Winter and Spring Quarters, students will continue to meet with their preceptors and will also consult with their individual faculty advisor. Students will submit a full draft of the BA Project to their preceptor and faculty advisor by the end of the second week of Spring Quarter. By the beginning of the fifth week of Spring Quarter, students submit the final version of their Critical BA Project to their preceptor, faculty advisor, and the Undergraduate Program Assistant.

Students may elect to register for the BA Project Preparation Course (ENGL 29900 Independent BA Paper Preparation) for one quarter credit. Note that the grade for this course is on work toward the BA Project and is normally submitted in Spring Quarter even when the course has been taken in an earlier quarter.

The Creative BA Project

Prerequisites: Students majoring in English who wish to produce a Creative Writing BA Project must take at least two Creative Writing courses in the genre of their BA Project (poetry, fiction, or nonfiction) by the end of their third year. At least one of these courses must be an advanced course, in which the student has earned a B+ or higher.

To do a Creative Writing BA Project, students must fill out a declaration form (available on the English departmental website (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources)) by the end of Spring Quarter of their third year. On this form they declare their intent to write a Creative Writing BA Project in a specific genre and list the two Creative Writing courses in the relevant genre that they have taken as prerequisites for doing the BA Project.

Students work on their project over three quarters. Early in Autumn Quarter of their fourth year, students will be assigned a graduate student preceptor, who will lead a series of mandatory colloquia over the course of the quarter. In Winter Quarter, students will continue meeting with the graduate preceptor and must also enroll in one of the Creative BA Project Workshops in their genre. Students are not automatically enrolled in a workshop; they must receive the consent of the workshop instructor, who will also serve as their faculty advisor for their Creative BA Project. These workshops are advanced courses limited to eight students and will include not only students majoring in English but also those in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities (ISHU) and the Master of Arts Program in the Humanities (MAPH) who are producing creative theses. Students will work closely with their faculty advisor and with their peers in the workshops and will receive course credit as well as a final grade for the workshop. Students should be aware that because of the high number of students wishing to write fiction for their BA projects, students will not necessarily get their first choice of workshop instructor and faculty advisor.

In consultation with their faculty advisor and graduate preceptor, students will revise and resubmit a near-final draft of their Creative BA Projects by the end of the second week of Spring Quarter. Students will submit the final version of their Creative BA Project to their preceptor, faculty advisor, and the Undergraduate Program Assistant by the beginning of
the fifth week of Spring Quarter. The project will then be evaluated by the faculty advisor, graduate preceptor, and Director of Undergraduate Studies to determine whether the student will be recommended for Honors.

A creative thesis worthy of Honors will demonstrate exceptional artistic excellence and show promise of significant achievement in the future.

Summary of Requirements

The Department of English requires a total of 13 courses: 11 courses taken within the Department of English and two language courses or their equivalent, as well as a cluster statement to be submitted by the end of the third week of Spring Quarter of a student’s third year. By Winter Quarter of their third year, students must also meet with the Undergraduate Program Assistant and submit a worksheet that may be obtained from the English departmental website (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources).

Two quarters of study at the second-year level in a language other than English or credit for the equivalent as determined by petition

or two quarters of a computer language by permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies

A total of 11 additional English courses is required to meet the distribution requirements of the major (one course may satisfy more than one requirement):

One English introduction to a genre course or "Approaches to Theater" course

One English course in fiction

One English course in poetry

One English course in drama

One English course in literature written before 1650

One English course in literature written between 1650 and 1830

One English course in literature written between 1830 and 1940

One English course in literary or critical theory

1-7 English electives (may include ENGL 29900)

Cluster statement with five courses

BA Project (optional)

Total Units

Courses Outside the Department Taken for Program Credit

A maximum of three courses outside the Department of English may count toward the total number of courses required by the major. Two of these may count toward the student’s “cluster.” The student, after discussion with the Undergraduate Program Assistant or his or her faculty advisor, must submit a petition for course approval to the Director of Undergraduate Studies before taking courses outside the department for credit toward the major. Such courses may be selected from related areas in the University (history,
philosophy, religious studies, social sciences, etc.), or they may be taken from a study abroad program.

English courses that originate in Creative Writing (CRWR) may be counted toward the elective requirement without a petition.

Transfer credits for courses taken at another institution are subject to approval by the Director of Undergraduate Studies and are limited to a maximum of five courses. Transferred courses do not contribute to the student’s University of Chicago grade point average for the purpose of computing an overall GPA, dean’s list, or honors. NOTE: The Office of the Dean of Students in the College must approve the transfer of all courses taken at institutions other than those in which students are enrolled as part of a University sponsored study abroad program. For details, visit Examination Credit and Transfer Credit (collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/examinationcreditandtransfercredit).

Reading Courses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 29700</td>
<td>Reading Course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 29900</td>
<td>Independent BA Paper Preparation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon prior approval by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, undergraduate reading courses (ENGL 29700 Reading Course) may be used to fulfill requirements for the major if they are taken for a quality grade (not P/F) and include a final paper assignment. No student may use more than two courses in the major. Seniors who wish to register for the BA Project Preparation Course (ENGL 29900 Independent BA Paper Preparation) must arrange for appropriate faculty supervision and obtain the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. ENGL 29900 Independent BA Paper Preparation counts as an English elective but not as one of the courses fulfilling distribution requirements for the major.

NOTE: Reading courses are special research opportunities that must be justified by the quality of the proposed plan of study; they also depend upon the availability of faculty supervision. No student can expect a reading course to be arranged automatically. For alternative approaches to preparing a BA Project, see the BA Project section above.

Grading

Students majoring in English must receive quality grades (not P/F) in all 13 courses taken to meet the requirements of the program. Non-majors may take English courses for P/F grading with consent of instructor.

Advising

Students who wish to major in English should declare an intention to do so as early as possible, ideally before the end of Spring Quarter during their second year. Students who declare the major after their second year must notify the Undergraduate Program Assistant to ensure that departmental advising assignments are arranged. After declaring
their intention to major in English to their College advisers, students should arrange a meeting with the Undergraduate Program Assistant in English, who will help students fill out the English Requirements Worksheet (available on the English departmental website (http://english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources)). Students should also subscribe to the departmental email list for majors: ugrad-english@lists.uchicago.edu to ensure that they do not miss important communications from the undergraduate office.

Third-year students will be assigned a departmental faculty advisor. Students should meet with their faculty advisor at least twice a year to discuss their academic interests, progress in the major, and long-term career goals. The Undergraduate Program Assistant and Director of Undergraduate Studies are also available to assist students. Students should meet with the Undergraduate Program Assistant early in their final quarter to be sure they have fulfilled all requirements.

The London Program

This program, offered in Autumn Quarter, provides students with an opportunity to study British literature and history in the cultural and political capital of England in the Autumn Quarter. In the ten-week program, students take four courses, three of which are each compressed into approximately three weeks and taught in succession by Chicago faculty. The fourth, project-oriented, course is conducted at a less intensive pace. The program includes a number of field trips (e.g., Cornwall, Bath, Canterbury, Cambridge). The London program is designed for third- and fourth-year students with a strong interest and some course work in British literature and history. English and History courses are pre-approved for use in their respective majors. Applications are available on the University of Chicago's Study Abroad home page (study-abroad.uchicago.edu) and typically are due in mid–Winter Quarter.

Minor Program in English and Creative Writing

Undergraduate students who are not majoring in English may enter a minor program in English and Creative Writing (collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/creativewriting). Students interested in pursuing this option should contact the Program Coordinator for Creative Writing to obtain a minor consent form before the end of the Spring Quarter of the third year of study. Please note that there is no minor solely in English. The minor in English and Creative Writing for non-English majors is the only minor available through the Department of English Language and Literature.

Course Listings

Boldface letters in parentheses after the course descriptions refer to the program requirements that a course fulfills: (A) gateway, (B) fiction, (C) poetry, (D) drama, (E) pre-1650, (F) 1650–1830, (G) 1830–1940, and (H) literary or critical theory.
For updated course information, visit english.uchicago.edu/courses. For required student forms, visit english.uchicago.edu/undergrad/resources.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leeffrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.