

English Department

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Degrees Awarded

M.A. in English; Ph.D. in English

English Department

Stony Brook's Department of English, in the College of Arts and Sciences, is known for scholarship and teaching. Over the past ten years, faculty members have published more than 47 books of criticism, fiction, and poetry. Among the many awards individuals have won are the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics' Circle Award, Guggenheim fellowships, Fulbright research and teaching fellowships, and National Endowment for the Humanities fellowships and grants. Five faculty members have received both the Chancellor's and the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching, two have been appointed SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professors, and two have been named SUNY Distinguished Professors. Supplementing the resources of the English department's staff are campus institutes with which the department is affiliated. The Humanities Institute provides a place for interdisciplinary and theoretical work, offers an annual graduate student seminar, and sponsors an ongoing lecture series and annual conferences of international speakers.

Students enrolled in the Master of Arts program pursue a course of study that includes courses in historical periods, literary genres, topics in gender, race and cultural studies, and various writing workshops. The program offers students the opportunity to broaden as well as deepen their knowledge of literature while also developing their own writing skills. This course of study leads to the Master of Arts degree and requires 30 credits, including a master's thesis, for completion. While pursuing the M.A. in English, students may also earn an interdisciplinary graduate certificate in women's studies, cultural studies, or composition studies.

Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program pursue a course of study that is designed, in large part, around individual interests and that moves from a broad-based survey to a more narrowly focused specialization. Eleven courses are required of each student. EGL 600, The Discipline of Literary Studies, must be taken during the first fall semester of study, as it introduces students to the variety of approaches to literature represented in current criticism. Students select their remaining courses in consultation with faculty advisors; these courses are intended to strengthen the student's literary background and theoretical knowledge, and further define chosen areas of inquiry. To accommodate the latter goal, students may take courses in other departments with approval from the graduate director. While pursuing the Ph.D. in English, students may also earn an interdisciplinary graduate certificate in women's studies, cultural studies, or composition studies.

Corresponding to the pattern of study that underlies the Ph.D. program are the oral examination and the special field conversation that all students take. The first, a three-hour general examination taken at the end of the fifth semester, enables each student to concentrate on three literary periods or two literary periods and one issue, genre, or theory relevant to the student's interests. The two-hour special field conversation, conducted in the sixth semester, focuses on the student's intended area of research and fosters the bibliographical and methodological skills needed to compose the dissertation proposal.

Ph.D. students receiving financial support teach one course each semester. Teaching assignments are varied and flexible. Teaching assistants teach courses in composition or introductory courses in literature, and assist professors in large lecture courses. During their first semester of teaching writing at Stony Brook, students must enroll in the Teaching Practicum, which provides them with pedagogical theory and teaching supervision. All Ph.D. students on financial support must be registered as full-time students.

Admission requirements of English department

Applicants for admission to all graduate programs in English should submit all materials by January 15 for fall semester admission. In all cases, admission is determined by the graduate admissions committee of the department under guidelines established by the Graduate School. Applicants are admitted on the basis of their total records, and there are no predetermined quantitative criteria that by themselves ensure a positive or negative decision. There is midyear admission to the M.A. program but not the Ph.D. program. The deadline for spring M.A. admission is October 1.

About the Graduate Record Examination: All applicants to the Stony Brook University are required to take the general aptitude portion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). The English Department does not require applicants to take the subject test.

Our admissions committee will review an applicant's file when all documents have been received. This includes the GRE score. Therefore, it is to the student's advantage to take the exam at the earliest opportunity. We do not admit provisionally. Information about testing dates can be obtained by contacting the Educational Testing Service at www.gre.org. While we have no set cutoff score for admission, we pay special attention to the score on the verbal and analytical writing sections of the examination.

Admission to the M.A.T. in English 7-12

The M.A.T. in English 7-12 is administered by the School of Professional Development. Individuals interested in this program should refer to the School of Professional Development's section in this bulletin.

Admission to the M.A. Program in English

The following, in addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, are required for admission to the M.A. program:

- A. A bachelor's degree from a recognized institution;
- B. An average of at least B in the last two years of undergraduate work;
- C. An official transcript of all undergraduate work;
- D. Letters of recommendation from three instructors;
- E. The applicant's score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test, required of all students by the Graduate School;
- F. A sample of recent scholarly or critical writing;
- G. Acceptance by both the Department of English and the Graduate School.

Admission to the Ph.D. Program in English

The following, in addition to the minimum Graduate School requirements, are required for admission to the Ph.D. program:

- A. A bachelor's degree from a recognized institution;
- B. An average of at least B in the last two years of undergraduate work;
- C. An official transcript of all undergraduate work and of any graduate work that may have been done;
- D. Letters of recommendation from three instructors;
- E. The applicant's score on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test, required by the Graduate School of applicants in all departments;
- F. A sample of recent scholarly or critical writing;
- G. Proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to two years of college work;
- H. Acceptance by both the Department of English and the Graduate School.

Requirements for the M.A. Degree in English

In addition to the minimum requirements of the Graduate School, the following are required:

A. Course Requirements

A master's degree in English requires ten three-credit graduate courses completed with a 3.0 overall grade point average, competence in one foreign language, and submission of a master's thesis. Of the ten courses, one must be in the history and structure of the English language and one must be in rhetoric or composition theory (including problems in the teaching of composition); courses previously taken on the undergraduate level and passed with a grade of B or better may be accepted as fulfilling these requirements and replaced with an elective. Students will sign up for three credits of thesis research while writing a master's thesis. The other seven courses must include one course on literature before 1700 and one course after 1700, and four courses in at least two of the following topic areas:

EGL 583: Topics in Theory

EGL 584: Topics in Genre Studies

EGL 585: Topics in Cultural Studies

EGL 586: Topics in Gender Studies

EGL 587: Topics in Race, Ethnic or Diaspora Studies

EGL 588: Writing Workshop

Note: Topic courses may be repeated as long as content varies. Courses run through the School of Professional Development are not accepted for English M.A. requirements.

B. Independent Studies

Only one course numbered EGL 599, Independent Studies, will be permitted to count toward the total courses required for the degree of Master of Arts in English. EGL 599 cannot be elected during the student's first semester of work toward the master's degree. EGL 599 may be elected during the second semester only if the student has a B+ average in the first semester and has no Incompletes at the time of registering for EGL 599. A proposal for an EGL 599 course should be submitted in writing to the faculty member under whose direction the student plans to study. This proposal must be submitted before the end of the semester previous to that in which the student will register for EGL 599. The proposal must be approved in writing by both the directing faculty member and the graduate program committee of the English Department before the student registers for EGL 599.

C. Foreign Language Requirement

Competence in one foreign language may be satisfied by having completed the second year of a foreign language at the undergraduate level within the past five years with a grade of B or better, or by examination arranged by the English department. The following languages are automatically accepted for fulfilling this requirement: Greek,

Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Hindu, and Bengali. Other languages relevant to a student's graduate program may be approved upon petition to the graduate program committee.

D. Master's Thesis

Students enroll for EGL 598 while writing a master's thesis of 30-40 pages under the guidance of a thesis advisor (chosen by the student with approval of Graduate Director) and an additional faculty member chosen by the student and the advisor. A final copy of the thesis and written approvals from the advisor and reader must be submitted to the Graduate School by the last day of classes in the semester in which the student graduates. Students must be registered in the semester in which they graduate.

Transfer Credit and Standards of Performance in English at the M.A. Level: The department permits the transfer of six hours of credit in suitable graduate work done elsewhere that resulted in a grade of B or better. The student must, however, make special application after admission. In all coursework done at Stony Brook, an average grade of B is the minimum required, but no more than two grades below B- will be permitted. The time limit for completion of the M.A. degree is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. Any student who plans not to enroll in classes for a semester must apply for an official leave of absence; failure to do so will lead to a lapse in enrollment. To re-apply, the student must pay a \$500 readmission fee.

Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree

In addition to the minimum requirements of the Graduate School, the following are required:

A. Course Requirements

The minimum course requirement for students in the doctoral program is 11 courses, including at least seven 600-level seminars. No course with a grade below B- may be used to satisfy course requirements. In order to continue in the program, students must maintain an average grade of B or better in all coursework, and no more than two grades below B- will be permitted. No transfer credit is accepted at the seminar level.

One of the seven seminars the student must satisfactorily complete is the proseminar, EGL 600, The Discipline of Literary Studies. Students must take this course in their first fall semester in the program.

While the majority of courses for the Ph.D. requirements must be taken in the English Department, students may, in consultation with their advisors, take courses of an equivalent level in other departments or programs. Requests must be approved in writing by the Director of Graduate Studies.

It is assumed that students entering the Ph.D. program will have studied Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and a variety of literary periods in their B.A. or M.A. programs. However, students with a variety of backgrounds are welcome into the Ph.D. program; those without the kind of broad-based knowledge outlined above will work out a suitable program of study with their advisors.

Students with teaching assistantships must pass the Teaching Practicum in their first semester of teaching in the Writing Program.

B. Foreign Language Requirements

Students must complete one of two options:

Option I: Students must, on examination, demonstrate ability to translate writings of moderate difficulty in two foreign languages appropriate to the area of study, and hence ability to make use of relevant literary and scholarly writings in those languages. Students can satisfy this requirement by obtaining a grade of B or higher in a 500-level reading/translation course (e.g., FRN 500, GER 500). Other language courses offered to fulfill this requirement will need the approval of the graduate program director.

Option II: Students must, on examination, demonstrate (1) ability to read, understand, and speak well one living foreign language, or ability to read and understand well one classical language appropriate to the area of study, and (2) knowledge of the major literature of that language in the original language, and hence ability to make full use of the literature of another language. This option can be satisfied by passing a half-hour oral examination conducted in the language on the major literary figures or works of the language. Students should consult the graduate program director about setting up such an examination. Passing the reading and/or comprehensive examination at the M.A. level shall not be sufficient evidence that the student has met Option II.

The following languages are automatically accepted for fulfilling the language requirement: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Other languages relevant to a student's graduate program may be approved upon petition to the graduate program director.

Students will not be permitted to take the Special Field Conversation without first satisfying the foreign language requirement. Students choosing Option I must satisfy one language requirement before taking the General Examination and the second before taking the Special Field Conversation.

C. General Examination

The general examination is a three-part, three-hour oral with three examiners. Two parts of the examination must focus on different literary periods of approximately 100 years each, and the third will either address another literary period or engage a problem or area of special interest (e.g., a genre, issues, or a line of theoretical inquiry).

In consultation with their examiners, students will offer reading lists for this examination that outline the area of inquiry for each part of their exam. Because one of the purposes of the exam is to give students the opportunity to make sense of their lists, the period lists may or may not vary from the traditional literary historical divisions of the anthologies. Whereas one student may follow traditional texts for a literary period, another may choose to study noncanonical texts within a traditional chronological range, while another may redefine the range (e.g., 1750-1850 or 1850-1945 instead of the 18th century, 19th century, or 20th century).

Taking this examination brings students a step closer to entering a profession in which one writes and publishes scholarship and constructs and teaches courses. To promote this kind of professional development, to facilitate students' focus, and to enhance the conversations that make up the examinations:

1. For the first part, the student will submit to his or her committee, at least two weeks prior to the exam, a 15-30 page paper related to a particular period or problem area. In most cases, this will be a revised seminar paper, and will include a bibliography. The paper is not intended as additional work, but rather as a way for the student to organize an approach to one of the lists. During the exam, the paper will serve as a springboard for discussion of the entire period or area being examined.
2. For the second part, the student will submit to his or her committee, at least two weeks prior to the exam, a syllabus and bibliography of background reading for an advanced undergraduate course in a particular period or problem area. Questions regarding pedagogical and theoretical approach, as well as inquiries into criteria of selection and content, will help to initiate and focus discussion of the entire period or area being examined.
3. For the third part, the student may simply invite questions without using one of the above devices, or may submit another paper or syllabus (or some other piece of writing agreeable to the committee) as a means of generating and directing discussion of the entire list.

The examination committee will consist of a chairperson selected by the student and two other faculty members selected in consultation with the chairperson. The committee must be formed no later than the student's fourth semester in the program (preferably earlier), and the exam must be taken before the end of the fifth semester. In consultation with his or her chairperson, the student may choose to take this exam in two parts. All three committee members must sign all three of the reading lists at least one month prior to the examination. The student must submit to the Graduate Director the signed reading lists along with a memo, stating the names of the members on the committee, one month before the exam.

Each of the three parts will be judged separately as either pass or fail. Each failed part may be retaken one additional time, no later than a year after the original examination.

It is the responsibility of the examination committee chairperson to inform the Graduate Office in writing of the date, time, and place of the examination two weeks before the examination.

D. Special Field Conversation

This conversation will be based on a written rationale and a reading list prepared by the student with the advice and approval of the student's chosen committee, and approved by the graduate program director at least one month before the conversation. The focus of the conversation will be the topic that the student has chosen for his or her dissertation; thus, the reading list will embrace the various kinds of text that the student must engage in order to begin writing. All three members of the committee will be chosen by the student. Two members must be from the English Department.

Students must contact the Graduate Director six weeks prior to the date they wish to schedule the conversation to fill out the necessary papers. The conversation will be scheduled by the Graduate Office. Within one week following the special field conversation, the student, in consultation with the director, will write a summary of the important issues in the conversation. A copy of this summary must be signed by the director and submitted to the Graduate Office.

All the doctoral requirements described above must be completed before a student is allowed to schedule the special field conversation.

E. Advancement to Candidacy

After successful completion of the Special Field Conversation, the student is recommended to the dean of the Graduate School for advancement to candidacy.

F. Dissertation

No later than the beginning of the seventh semester, students will prepare a written statement setting out the scope and method of the dissertation and submit it to their dissertation director, two other members of the department who will serve as readers, and a reader from outside the department. After the student's director has conferred with the other readers and the dissertation committee has approved the proposal, the student will submit the proposal and the signed dissertation contract to the Graduate Director for approval. Students should contact the Graduate Office of the department for details on how to submit the proposal.

The four readers of the dissertation must recommend acceptance of the dissertation before it can be approved by the Graduate School. Students will present the results of dissertation research at a colloquium convened for that purpose by the Department of English, which will be open to interested faculty and graduate students.

G. The Dissertation Defense

At least eight weeks before the Graduate School's deadline for submitting the completed dissertation, the student will submit to his or her readers what is intended to be the final draft of the dissertation. No more than four weeks after that, if the readers have agreed that the dissertation is ready to be defended, the director will schedule the defense. (This is distinct from the actual acceptance of the dissertation, which can take place only at the defense itself.)

H. Teaching Program

Training in teaching is stressed by the department, and every student should expect to teach as part of the doctoral program. Teaching assistants instruct in a variety of courses, including composition and introductions to poetry, fiction, and drama, and assist in large lecture courses. An important part of the teaching experience is the Practicum in Teaching, required of all teaching assistants.

I. Residency Requirement

The Graduate School requires at least two consecutive semesters of full-time graduate study beyond the baccalaureate. Students will be considered in full-time residence during any semester in which they (1) are taking at least one 500-level course or 600-level seminar or are, in the opinion of the graduate program committee, properly preparing for the special field oral examination; (2) are holding no position other than that required under the teaching program; or (3) are registered for EGL 699 Dissertation Research or EGL 690, Directed Reading for Doctoral Candidates, for three, six, nine, or 12 credit hours, depending on the number of other courses being taken, and the teaching assignment. The total of all these credits and teaching hours is to be no more than 12 for G3, 9 for G4, and 6 for G5 students.

J. Advising and Review of Student's Progress

Each incoming student will meet with an assigned advisor before the start of classes to plan his or her first semester's coursework. The student will also meet with his or her advisor in November and May before pre-registration for each semester's courses. Students will meet at least once each semester with advisors to plan their coursework.

Each spring semester, the graduate program committee will review each student's progress and determine whether the student may proceed with doctoral studies, may continue if certain requirements are met, or may not continue in the doctoral program because of unsatisfactory work. In order to retain financial support, teaching assistants must maintain a 3.5 GPA, in addition to satisfying the program requirements described above.

Matters Pertaining to All Advanced Degrees in English

A. Extension of time limits: Extensions of time limits are granted at the discretion of the graduate program director of the department and the dean of the Graduate School and are normally for one year at a time.

B. Incompletes: Faculty may choose to grant graduate students an Incomplete. However, the Incomplete must be made up--the work must be submitted to the faculty member--on or before the beginning of the next semester. Students who take Incompletes in the fall must finish their work before the first day of class in January, and those who take Incompletes in the spring must finish their work before the first day of class in September. Students who have special circumstances that justify having more time to make up the Incomplete should meet with the Graduate Director, then file a written request for an extension. The Graduate Director will make a decision on each case in consultation with the Graduate Program Committee.

C. Graduate courses in the 500 series are open to all graduate students. Courses in the 600 series are normally open only to students admitted to study for the Ph.D. degree, although M.A. students with adequate preparation and background can sometimes be admitted with the permission of the instructor. All graduate courses normally carry three credits. Each course in the 500 and 600 series to be offered in a given semester will be described by the instructor in some detail in a special departmental announcement prepared and distributed toward the end of the semester prior to that in which it is to be offered. None of the courses numbered 690-699 can be taken to satisfy the requirement of seven seminars as stated in the sections outlining course requirements for the English Department. Courses run through the School of Professional Development are not accepted for the requirements of the degree.

D. Advising: There are a number of problems that the preceding explanations make no attempt to cover; students are encouraged to raise individual questions about the graduate program with the graduate program director in English.

Faculty of English Department

Distinguished Professors

Kaplan, E. Ann⁵, Director of the Humanities Institute. Ph.D., 1970, Rutgers University: Literary and film theory; feminist studies; modern American literature; 19th-century American literature; postcolonial British literature; film.

Rosenblatt, Roger, Ph.D., 1968, Harvard University: Creative writing; 20th-century American literature

Professors

Huffman, Clifford C.¹, Ph.D., 1969, Columbia University: The Renaissance; Shakespeare.

Martinez-Pizarro, Joaquin⁵, Ph.D., 1976, Harvard University: Literary history of the Middle Ages; classical and medieval backgrounds; comparative studies.

Manning, Peter, J., Ph.D., 1968, Yale University: English Romantic literature; literary theory.

Munich, Adrienne, Ph.D., 1976, City University of New York: Victorian literature, art, and culture; feminist theory and women's studies.

Olster, Stacey^{3,4}, Ph.D., 1981, University of Michigan: American literature; 20th-century fiction; popular culture; film.

Rosen, Carol, Ph.D., 1975, Columbia University: Dramatic theory and criticism; dramaturgy; comparative modern drama; Renaissance drama and Shakespeare.

Spector, Stephen, Chairperson. Ph.D., 1973, Yale University: Old and Middle English literature; history of the English language; the Bible; intolerance in medieval literature; Christianity and Judaism; drama through Shakespeare; manuscript study and bibliography; the "other" in medieval literature and society.

Associate Professors

Dunn, Patricia A., D.A., 1991, The University at Albany: Composition and rhetoric; English education; disability studies.

Haralson, Eric, Ph.D., 1993, Columbia University: 19th- and 20th-century British and American literatures; Anglo-American modernism; Henry James.

Hutner, Heidi, Ph.D., 1993, University of Washington: Restoration and 18th-century studies; colonial and postcolonial discourse; women writers; women's studies; eco-feminism.

Lindblom, Kenneth, Director of the English Teacher Education Program. Ph.D., 1996, Syracuse University: English education; theory, history and practice of composition-rhetoric; discourse pragmatics.

Marshik, Celia⁷, Graduate Program Director. Ph.D., 1999, Northwestern University: British and American modernism, cultural studies, women's studies.

Phillips, Rowan Ricardo, Ph.D., 2002, Brown University: Poetry; African-American literature; Caribbean literature; the writing of poetry.

Robinson, Benedict, Undergraduate Program Director. Ph.D., 2001, Columbia University: Early modern literature and culture; representations of Islam; religion and literature; Shakespeare; Milton.

Scheckel, Susan, Ph.D., 1992, University of California, Berkeley: 19th-century American literature and culture.

Assistant Professors

Choi, Helen Onhoon, Ph.D., 2006, UCLA: 20th-century American literature, race and ethnicity, cultural studies.

Newman, Andrew, Ph.D., 2004, University of California, Irvine: Early American literatures; literacy theory; comparative literatures of contact.

Pfeiffer, Douglas, Ph.D., 2005, Columbia University: Renaissance; humanism; history of literary theory and rhetoric; Erasmus; Spenser; Donne.

Ramachandran, Ayesha, Ph.D., 2008, Yale University: Early modern poetry and prose; continental influences on the English renaissance; history of ideas, especially political theory and aesthetics.

Santa Ana, Jeffrey, Ph.D., 2003, University of California, Berkeley: American literature and culture; Asian American literature and film; Filipino diaspora; global migration and transnationalism; gender and sexuality studies; race and ethnicity; emotion studies.

Wakankar, Milind, Ph.D., 2002, Columbia University: Post-colonial literature and theory; vernacular literatures.

Full-time Lecturer

Videbaek, Bente., Ph.D., 1992, Northwestern University: Renaissance drama and theater; Scandinavian literature.

Affiliated Graduate Faculty

(Faculty members from other departments who may serve as "inside" members of English Ph.D. exam committees.)

Mary Jo Bona (European Languages): Italian American studies; ethnic American women writers; theories of race and ethnicity.

Krin Gabbard (Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies): Film; psychoanalysis; jazz.

Lorenzo Simpson (Philosophy): Critical race theory; Frankfurt school; cosmopolitanism.

Tracey Walters (Africana Studies): African-American; African diasporic writers.

Number of teaching, graduate, and research assistants, fall 2009: 38

- 1) Recipient of the State University Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1993. Recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1993
- 2) Recipient of the State University Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1991
- 3) Recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1987
- 4) Recipient of the State University Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, 1988
- 5) Joint appointment, Comparative Literature
- 6) Recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching as Part-time Faculty, 2003 and the Students' Choice Award for Most Influential Professor, 2004
- 7) Recipient of the Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching, 2007

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.