Program Description

The Master of Arts in English provides: (1) a carefully planned and integrated program ensuring a foundation of professional skills through a common core of courses; (2) some uniform degree of coverage in the areas of British and American literature; (3) more intensive training in reading, critical analysis, research, and writing than is possible in undergraduate work, and (4) breadth through an emphasis on the fields of literature, language, and composition.

To meet these objectives, the English graduate program has been designed primarily to provide: (1) a well-balanced program for those who wish to terminate their studies at the master’s level and whose primary aim is to teach in a community college; (2) advanced training for teachers who wish to improve their professional skills and status; (3) a variety of courses for students who plan to continue towards the Ph.D. degree at another institution, and (4) continuing education for those who wish to extend their knowledge as an end in itself through an interesting and stimulating series of classes in literature, criticism, language, as well as the teaching of composition and English as a Second Language.

The MA qualifies students to teach in the California community college system or secondary schools as well as prepares them for careers in editing, advertising, and public information.

APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

Application Procedure

Persons seeking graduate study in English must apply for admission to the University Office of Admissions. Applications are available online. Admission to graduate study by the university does not constitute acceptance into the English MA Program.

Students must also notify the English Department’s Graduate Program Coordinator of their intention to pursue the MA degree. The Graduate Coordinator will familiarize the student with the requirements and timetable of the MA Program. Students wishing to pursue graduate studies culminating in a master’s degree in English must file an application with the Department of English. To obtain this application, students may write to the Graduate Program Coordinator of the Department of English, or they may go to the web site described above. Although the application asks for scores for the Graduate Record Examination, students need not fill out that section.

Admissions Requirements. Admission to the graduate program leading to the Master of Arts in English requires the following:

1. A baccalaureate degree in English from an accredited college or university, including two period courses and the equivalents of ENGL 300, ENGL/LING 319, ENGL/LING 414;
2. A 3.0 GPA (A=4.0) for the last 90 quarter units (60 semester units) attempted and a 3.0 GPA in upper division English courses;
3. A combined score of 1000 on both the verbal measure of the Graduate Record Exam General Test and the Literature in English Subject Exam, with a minimum of 500 on the verbal measure for those students who do not fulfill the minimal GPA requirement described in point 2;
4. Submission of the graduate program’s application form, which is available online.
5. For international students whose first language is not English, a TOEFL score of 550 or higher (or 213 on the new conversation scale for the computer-based TOEFL). Documentation must be provided in original form by the testing institution; copies submitted by the applicant are not acceptable.

Students who have a baccalaureate degree in a subject other than English must complete the eight-course (40 units) undergraduate core requirements for English with a GPA of 3.00 before being considered for admission to the master’s degree program in English. The undergraduate core requirements are described below. All courses are to be selected in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator for English.

1. ENGL 300
2. One course in a major figure or group: ENGL 325, 335, 336, 337, or 375
3. One course in the structure of English: ENGL/LING 319
4. One course in the history of the language: ENGL/LING 414
5. One course from the period 450-1785: ENGL 350, 351, 360, 361, 380, 381, or 382
6. One genre course: ENGL 475, 476, 478, or 404
7. Any other upper division literature course
Classification of Graduate Students

There are three classifications for students in the English graduate program:

Classified. A student who meets all the requirements for admission to the master’s degree program in English will be admitted as a Classified Graduate Student. A Classified Graduate Student may take any graduate-level course meeting the requirements of his or her plan of study as long as the appropriate prerequisites have been met.

Conditionally Classified. A student who meets most but not all of the requirements for admission as a Classified Graduate Student may be admitted as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student. The Graduate Committee for English will determine the conditions which the student must meet in order to be advanced to Classified Graduate Student status. A Conditionally Classified Graduate Student may take no more than two five-unit courses that count towards the requirements for the MA in English while meeting the specified conditions.

Candidacy. Classified students who have maintained a 3.25 GPA will be advanced to candidacy in the term in which they intend to graduate.

Academic Advising. It is essential that MA students stay in contact with the Graduate Program Coordinator, so the department can provide current information to help the student move expeditiously through the program. It is the student’s responsibility, in consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator, to choose appropriate courses and to organize a thesis or examination committee. Meeting with the Graduate Program Coordinator is an important first step in the MA program. The Graduate Program Coordinator advises and guides students during the period of graduate study and responds to any misgivings students may have while in the program. Students have a responsibility to schedule regular meetings with the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Committee Selection. Each MA student in English must have a committee, either to provide examinations or to read and guide the thesis. The Graduate Program Coordinator can provide assistance in forming an MA committee.

Program Requirements

Note: Students who wish to pursue the doctorate in English are strongly encouraged to begin or continue the study of one or more foreign languages. Courses in French and Spanish are available at CSUB in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

Each master’s candidate must complete a minimum of nine English graduate courses of five units each plus two three-unit courses (ENGL 500 and either ENGL 690 or ENGL 691). Students must earn a GPA of 3.0 (B) or better. (No course in which the student receives less than a “B-” (2.7) will count toward the degree.)

Required courses:
1. ENGL 500 Must be taken as one of the student’s first three graduate English courses.
2. ENGL 515 or 518
3. ENGL 570

The remaining class requirements are divided into seven groups marked with Roman numerals below, which are in turn divided into twelve fields. Students take one class to fulfill each group, meaning that most students will not take classes in five of the twelve fields. The content of the missing fields constitutes the material for the comprehensive examination.

I. 1. ENGL 525
2. ENGL 533 or 535

II. 3. ENGL 541 or 576

III. 4. ENGL 552
5. ENGL 564 or 565 or 568

IV. 6. ENGL 582 or 583
7. ENGL 584 or 585 or 580

V. 8. ENGL 504
9. ENGL 505

VI. 10. ENGL 506 or 578
11. ENGL 507 or 508

VII. 12. ENGL 565 or 580

ENGL 690 or 691. Upon completion of all course work, students enroll in ENGL 690 or 691. ENGL 690 is an independent reading which culminates in a written comprehensive examination based on the department’s standardized reading list. Students study the fields in which they have not had a class. The examination must be passed with a grade of “B-” (2.7) or better, and it may be taken no more than two times.

Undergraduate Courses for Graduate Credit.

Graduate students normally will take courses from those numbered in the 500-600 level series, but they may substitute one or two 300- or 400-level classes (supplemented by additional graduate-level work) with the permission of the instructor and the Graduate Program Coordinator. Also with the approval of the instructor of the class and the Graduate Program Coordinator, graduate students may take up to two graduate courses in independent study mode; however, ENGL 500, 515, 518, and 570 are not available through independent study mode.
Additional Requirements

Writing Competency Requirement. All graduate students must satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) as soon as possible, unless they have already done so as undergraduates or graduates at CSUB or at another California State University. This requirement may be met by passing the regularly scheduled examination or by successfully completing ENGL 305, or 310, or 311; this requirement must be satisfied before the student may take the final comprehensive examination.

Time Limitation on Course Requirements. State law mandates a seven-year limitation on course credits. Students who fail to complete their degree programs within the seven-year limit may petition the Department's Graduate Committee to permit the revalidating of outdated courses. If granted, such revalidation will normally require an oral or written examination on the course content supervised by a specialist in the field.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Teaching Assistant Program in Writing. The Teaching Assistant Program in Writing begins with a one-quarter apprenticeship in a composition course or courses in the department. If the faculty mentor's evaluations are positive and enrollment is sufficient, the student will be assigned to his or her own class for a maximum of three quarters. Students are required to take ENGL 600 in conjunction with their apprenticeship. Prerequisites for the Teaching Assistant Program in Writing are: (1) completion of ENGL 506 with a grade of “B+” (3.3) or better, (2) completion of 20 hours of tutoring, (3) advancement to classified status, and (4) graduate GPA of at least 3.5.

Teaching Assistant Program in Literature. The Teaching Assistant Program in Literature begins with a one-quarter apprenticeship in a literature course in the department. If the faculty mentor’s evaluations are positive, the student may apply to work as a teaching assistant for an instructor in ENGL 101. Students are required to take ENGL 600 (3) in conjunction with their apprenticeship. Prerequisite: ENGL 578 with a grade of “B+” (3.3) or better.

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Writing. Certifies the completion of specialized training in writing by those who hold a BA or an MA degree, whether or not they are involved in a graduate degree program. Candidates for this certificate must complete with a “B-” or better three specific graduate writing courses, ENGL 504, 505, and 506, and one course chosen from either ENGL 507 or 508.

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Certifies the completion of specialized training in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) by those who hold a BA or an MA degree, whether or not they are involved in a graduate degree program. Candidates for this certificate program must complete with a “B-” or better five specific graduate courses, ENGL 590, 591, 592, 593, and 594, an observation practicum, ENGL 595, and a teaching practicum, ENGL 596.

The TESOL Certificate is offered through the Extended University Division.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENGL 500 Methods of Scholarly Research (3)
The study of the nature and function of imaginative, expository, and argumentative writing. The resources for scholarship in composition and in literature and the problems of method in the major areas of research in English. Must be taken as one of the student's first three graduate English courses.

ENGL 504 Approaches to the Analysis of Writing (5)
A study of various linguistics approaches for analyzing the structure of written texts.

ENGL 505 Rhetorical Theory (5)
An introduction to recent research on written composition, the most current theories of rhetoric, and the implications of these theories for the teaching of writing.

ENGL 506 Composition Theory and Practice (5)
Emphasis on the understanding of grammar, syntax, structure, and form, in principle, as well as of the problems in communicating effective and acceptable language usage in a classroom situation.

ENGL 507 Writing in a Second Language (5)
The writing process and the written products of people composing in English as a foreign language. Topics of discussion include contrastive rhetoric, error analysis, and evaluation. Special attention will be given to the writing problems of international students learning English and to appropriate instructional procedures helpful to such students.

ENGL 508 Teaching Basic Writers (5)
This course includes both the traditional underpinnings and the practical applications for teaching developmental writers and addresses the diverse cultural, emotional, and academic needs of these students.
ENGL 515 Theories of English Grammar (5)
Study of the assumptions, systems, and applications of one or more modern approaches to the English language. Prerequisite: ENGL/LING 319 and 414 or equivalents.

ENGL 518 History of the English Language (5)
Studies in the development of English phonology, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary from the Old English period to the present. Prerequisite: ENGL/LING 319 and 414 or equivalents.

ENGL 525 Chaucer (5)
Studies in The Canterbury Tales and/or Troilus and Criseyde, and a selection of Chaucer's shorter poems.

ENGL 533 Seventeenth-Century British Literature (5)
Study of seventeenth-century poetry, prose, and/or drama. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 535 Shakespeare (5)
Study of selected plays. Prerequisite: ENGL 335 or 336 or consent of the instructor.

ENGL 541 Eighteenth-Century British Literature (5)
Study of eighteenth-century poetry, prose, and/or drama. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 552 Nineteenth-Century British Literature (5)
Study of nineteenth-century poetry, nonfiction prose, fiction, and/or drama. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 564 Twentieth-Century Poetry (5)
Survey of major British and American poets from about 1914 to the present. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 565 Postcolonial Literature (5)
Literature produced in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Course content will vary, in some cases focused on the literature and culture of a single area or era. Author selection will be diverse in terms of gender, race, and class, including authors belonging to both colonizing and colonized populations. A central course goal will be for students to develop a sense of the range and differences amongst colonial and postcolonial experiences and aesthetics. Authors might include Isabel Allende, Monica Ali, J.M. Coetzee, Kiran Desai, Brian Friel, Nadine Gordimer, Seamus Heaney, V.S. Naipaul, R. K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Jean Rhys, Wole Soyinka, among others.

ENGL 568 Modern British Novel (5)
Survey of major British novelists from 1900. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 570 Criticism (5)
Problems in the application of critical methods in both literature and language studies, with emphasis on the formation and development of major trends in critical theory. Prerequisite: ENGL 300 or equivalent.

ENGL 572 Poetry and Poetics (5)
Study of selected poetry, their works, and their poetics. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 576 Development of the English Novel (5)
Study of continuity and change in the structure and style of the English novel and novella.

ENGL 578 Special Methods in the Instruction of Literature (5)
An introduction for graduate students intending to teach high school or community college English, this course explores the implications of modern literary theory for classroom instruction of the literary text.

ENGL 580 Ethnic Literature (5)
Study of American ethnic writers, their viewpoints, and their aesthetics. The social and cultural contexts of the literature will also be studied. May be repeated with permission of advisor when course content changes, as in African-American Literature, Chicano Literature, Asian-American Literature, etc.

ENGL 582 Early American Literature (5)
Studies in American literature from the Colonial Period to the Civil War. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 583 Later Nineteenth-Century American Literature (5)
Studies in American Literature from the Civil War to 1900. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 584 Modern American Literature (5)
Studies in Twentieth-Century American Literature to WWII. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)

ENGL 585 Contemporary American Literature (5)
American Literature since WWII. (Note: May be repeated with permission of advisor if different course content.)
ENGL 591 Theories of Second Language Acquisition (5)
This class examines and compares the most recent and influential theories of second language acquisition including the monitor model, interlanguage theory, linguistic universals, cognitive theory, and acculturation/pidginization theory. The class applies towards the TESL Certificate, not towards the MA in English. Prerequisite: ENGL/LING 319 or 415 or 420 or 515.

ENGL 600 English Practicum (3)
A requirement for participation in the Teaching Assistant Program in English, this course allows students to observe and participate in the design and daily work of a college-level writing class (at BC or at CSUB). Students will work with a master teacher in and outside of class (inasmuch as we can accommodate specific requests) and be responsible for some independent work outside of class that is directly relevant to the assigned course. Can be repeated for different course content.

ENGL 690 Comprehensive Examination (3)
A comprehensive written examination on a reading list covering major works of English and American Literature. Readings selected in consultation with the student’s graduate committee. The examination must be passed with a grade of “B-” or better, and it may be taken no more than two times. Prerequisite: successful completion of the graduate course work.

ENGL 691 Thesis (3)
A carefully designed study of a selected topic or area in British or American literature, or in linguistics. Emphasis placed on original insights as contributions to graduate scholarship. Prerequisites: Classified Status and approval of the department's Graduate Committee.

ENGL 698 Directed Study in the Instruction of English (variable units)
A class in the theory and methods in undergraduate and graduate instruction in English. Weekly meetings with faculty sponsor and supervised experience which may include developing, administering, and scoring examinations; leading small group discussions; tutoring; and directing students in researching term papers. Offered on a credit, no-credit basis only. Prerequisites: consent of instructor who will serve as the sponsor and approval by chair of the Department of English.

ENGL 699 Individual Study (variable units)
Admission with consent of department chair.