

ENGLISH

Degree Types: PhD, MA, MFA+MA dual degree

The Graduate Program in the Department of English (<https://www.english.northwestern.edu/graduate/>) offers advanced study and research in literary history, criticism, and theory, with excellent opportunities for interdepartmental and interdisciplinary study. Courses within the department cover major genres, periods, authors, and a broad range of methodological and theoretical approaches.

The graduate curriculum is enhanced by frequent lectures and workshops with Northwestern faculty and visiting scholars. Student-organized colloquia, conferences, reading groups, and dissertation groups provide opportunities for students to present their research to an audience of peers.

Additional resources:

- Department website (<https://www.english.northwestern.edu/graduate/>)
- Program handbook(s)

Degrees Offered

- English MA (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/english/english-ma/>)
- English PhD (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/english/english-phd/>)
- Litowitz Creative Writing Graduate Program MFA+MA (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/creative-writing/english/creative-writing-english-mfa-ma/>)

English Courses

ENGLISH 302-0 History of the English Language (1 Unit)

Examines the history of English from its origins to the present day, with particular attention to the relationship between language and social power, including efforts to elevate the status of certain forms of English and the dynamics of self-consciously “low” registers of language such as slang and obscenity. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, History, or Linguistics.

Historical Studies Distro Area Historical Studies Foundational Discipline Interdisciplinary Distro - See Rules (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/#schoolrequirementstext>) *Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline*

ENGLISH 310-0 Studies in Literary Genres (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine the history, deployment, and function of literary genres in a range of texts and periods. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 311-0 Studies in Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore a wide range of authors and periods, with emphasis on poetry’s formal elements, genre conventions, and the historical, material, and cultural conditions that shape them. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 312-0 Studies in Drama (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore elements of drama as perceived in performance, examining how dramatic works communicate from text to stage to audience. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Theatre, Performance Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 313-0 Studies in Fiction (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine how authors have developed and contested fictional forms across a range of texts and periods, with special attention to narrative strategies and their historical and cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 322-0 Medieval Drama (1 Unit)

Examines the 15th-century English mystery cycles, miracle plays, and morality plays in their cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Theater, Performance Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

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ENGLISH 323-1 Medieval Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine medieval narrative and lyric poetry in their cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

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ENGLISH 324-0 Studies in Medieval Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine literature composed during the Middle Ages (c. 500 – c. 1500) across a range of potential themes, forms, and genres. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 331-0 Renaissance Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine narrative and/or lyric poetry from the early modern period (c. 1500 – 1660) in its cultural context. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 332-0 Renaissance Drama (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine dramatic works from the early modern period (c. 1500 – 1660) in their cultural contexts. Authors studied may include Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, Webster. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Theater, Performance Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 338-0 Studies in Renaissance Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine works from the early modern period (c. 1500 – 1660), exploring both literary forms and cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 339-0 Studies in Shakespeare (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine the works of Shakespeare in their cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Theater, Performance Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 340-0 Studies in 18th-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore works composed in the 18th century in their intellectual and cultural contexts. Potential genres include poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 344-0 18th-Century Fiction (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine 18th century prose fiction, with attention to the development of the novel as literary form. Authors may include Austen, Burney, Defoe, Equiano, Fielding, Radcliffe, Richardson, Sterne. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 351-0 Romantic Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine poetry composed during the Romantic era (c. 1790-1850) in its cultural context. Authors may include Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 353-0 Studies in Romantic Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine literature composed during the Romantic period (c. 1790-1850) in its cultural context. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 357-0 19th-Century British Fiction (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine 19th century prose fiction in its cultural context, with attention to the development of the novel as a literary form. Authors may include Shelley, the Brontë sisters, Collins, Dickens, Eliot, Gaskell, Hardy, James, Thackeray, Trollope, Wilde. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 359-0 Studies in 19th-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine literature written in English between 1800 and 1900. Students will consider how genre, narrative form, style, and cultural context shaped this era of literature. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 361-0 20th and 21st Century Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore 20th and 21st century lyric and narrative poetry. Will explore how modern and contemporary poetry creates meaning and elicits response, examining both forms and contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 363-0 20th and 21st Century Fiction (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine 20th and 21st century prose fiction in its cultural contexts. Students will consider how authors used genre and narrative form to explore identity and grapple with aspects of modernity and postmodernity. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 365-0 Studies in Postcolonial Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine postcolonial literary works produced outside of Britain and the United States. Students will read selected works, examine their formal properties, and consider theoretical and historical texts on colonialism and its aftermath. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 366-0 Studies in African American Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine African American literature in its cultural contexts. Students will read selected primary texts alongside theoretical works. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Black Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

ENGLISH 368-0 Studies in 20th- and 21st-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine literature of the 20th and 21st centuries in its cultural contexts. Students will consider how writers use genre, form, and style to explore identity and grapple with aspects of modernity and postmodernity. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 369-0 Studies in African Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore literature written by African authors, with an emphasis on 20th and 21st century Anglophone texts. Students will read selected primary texts alongside essential theoretical works. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, African Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Global Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 371-0 American Novel (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course situate American novels within their cultural contexts. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 372-0 American Poetry (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine American poetry in its cultural contexts. Students will consider poetry's formal elements, genre conventions, and the historical, material, and cultural conditions that shape them. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 374-0 Studies in Native American and Indigenous Literatures (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore Native American and Indigenous literatures in their cultural contexts. Texts may be drawn from any era from the pre-contact period to the present. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Native American and Indigenous Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

ENGLISH 378-0 Studies in American Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore American literature from the contact period to the present day. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 380-0 Studies in Multiethnic American Literature (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the specific course topic, all versions of this course examine the ways in which American ethnic identity has been constructed and discussed in literary works. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Asian American Studies, Black Studies, Latinx Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline U.S. Perspectives on Power, Justice, and Equity

ENGLISH 383-0 Special Topics in Theory (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine literature and culture through the lens of key topics and debates in literary theory. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 384-0 Studies in Literature and the Environment (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course examine the ways in which language, literature, and aesthetic production shape ideas about nature, varying widely across historical and cross-cultural contexts. Potential subjects of study include the literature of climate crisis, environmental racism and justice, human and nonhuman relations, catastrophe studies, ecopoetics, and the energy humanities. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Environmental Policy and Culture, or related disciplines. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 385-0 Studies in Literature and Culture (3 Units)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore the intersection between literature and culture. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 386-0 Studies in Literature and Film (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore literature and film as complementary modes of narrative communication. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Radio/Television/Film, or related disciplines. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 389-0 Studies in Gender, Sexuality and Embodiment (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course explore gender, sexuality, and embodiment. Students will examine literature and literary theories with a particular emphasis on the tangibility of the body. Possible topics include women's writing, LGBTQ + literature, and disability studies. Recommended for students with prior coursework in English, Gender and Sexuality Studies, or a related discipline. May be repeated for credit with a different topic.

Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 397-0 Research Seminar for Literature Majors (1 Unit)

Although content varies depending on the course topic, all versions of this course teach the advanced research skills needed to write an extended essay on a literary topic. Students will learn how to develop an original argument and situate it within appropriate theoretical and literary critical frameworks. Required for English literature majors and recommended for English literature minors. Students are generally ready to take English 397 after successfully completing 4-6 300-level literature courses. Students intending to pursue honors in English literature must take this course no later than spring quarter of the junior year. May be repeated for credit with a different topic with departmental permission.

Advanced Expression Literature Fine Arts Distro Area Literature and Arts Foundational Discipline

ENGLISH 403-0 Writers' Studies in Literature (1 Unit)

Writers' Studies in Literature. Students will learn about literature from a writers' perspective through close reading, as well as contextualization through generic, and thematic and formal lineage. Students will begin to see literature as a "body of enacted criticism" in a way that is essential to the program's interdisciplinary foundation and to their own development as writers. These courses will be taught by either creative writing faculty or literature faculty, with at least one major assignment in each course relying on research and critical writing.

ENGLISH 410-0 Introduction to Graduate Study (1 Unit)

Principles, techniques, and consequences of representative modes of literary inquiry exemplified in works of contemporary scholarship and criticism. Required of Ph.D. students.

ENGLISH 411-0 Studies in Poetry (1 Unit)

Content varies. Topics may include prosody or other formal aspects of poetry; comparative study of poems from different historical periods; consideration of poetics and the relationship of poetry to other cultural activities.

ENGLISH 412-0 Studies in Drama (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: theories of comedy; the history play.

ENGLISH 413-0 Studies in the Novel (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Richardson and Fielding; Gothic fiction; Dickens; theory of the novel from James to Kermode.

ENGLISH 422-0 Studies in Medieval Literature (1 Unit)

Literature of the medieval period, including, but not necessarily restricted to, literature written in Middle English.

ENGLISH 431-0 Studies in 16th-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Elizabethan romance; Spenser; Sidney.

ENGLISH 434-0 Studies in Shakespeare & the Early Drama (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Shakespeare's history plays; Marlowe and Shakespeare.

ENGLISH 435-0 Studies in 17th-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Donne's poetry; Milton.

ENGLISH 441-0 Studies in 18th-Century Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Swift, Blake, and sensibility from Rousseau to Austen.

ENGLISH 451-0 Studies in Romantic Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: the long poem in the Romantic period; Byron and the Byronic.

ENGLISH 455-0 Studies in Victorian Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Victorian poetics; biography and autobiography; Anglo-American literary relationships.

ENGLISH 461-0 Studies in Contemporary Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: James Joyce; experiments in fiction.

ENGLISH 465-0 Studies in Colonial & Postcolonial Lit (1 Unit)

Content varies. Colonial and postcolonial literatures of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and other formerly colonized cultures, with attention to theoretical accounts of colonial and postcolonial culture.

ENGLISH 471-0 Studies in American Literature (1 Unit)

Content varies. Samples: Henry James; historical backgrounds of colonial literature; Whitman.

ENGLISH 481-0 Studies in Literary Theory & Criticism (1 Unit)

Topics in literary theory and theories related to the study of Anglophone literature and culture, focusing on issues of methodology and interpretation. Content varies.

ENGLISH 490-0 Independent Reading (1 Unit)

Permission of department required. May be repeated for credit.

ENGLISH 491-0 Editorial Practicum (0 Unit)

Summer work as an editorial assistant for TriQuarterly Online. Open to students in the Litowitz Creative Writing Graduate Program, MFA+MA.

ENGLISH 496-0 MFA Poetry Workshop (1 Unit)

A graduate level poetry workshop for MFA+MA students. Open to other university graduate students by application.

ENGLISH 497-0 MFA Fiction Workshop (1 Unit)

A graduate level fiction workshop for MFA+MA students. Open to other university graduate students by application.

ENGLISH 498-0 MFA Creative Nonfiction Workshop (1 Unit)

A graduate level creative nonfiction workshop for MFA+MA students. Open to other university graduate students by application.

ENGLISH 499-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)

Permission of instructor and department required. May be repeated for credit.

ENGLISH 505-0 Professionalization Seminar (1 Unit)

Open to all graduate students. Topics may include choosing advisors, making the most of conferences, demystifying qualifying exams & the prospectus, planning ahead for academic and non-academic careers.

ENGLISH 520-0 Writing for Publication (1 Unit)

English department students in candidacy will develop professional skills related to writing for publication, whether for an academic or a broader public audience.

ENGLISH 570-0 Seminar in Teaching Composition (1 Unit)

An introduction to theories, practices and controversies in the teaching of writing in colleges and universities, within the context of various definitions of literacy in American culture.

ENGLISH 571-0 Teaching Creative Writing (1 Unit)

All MFA+MA students will take this specially designed pedagogy course during their first year. Students will study the history and models of teaching for Creative Writing programs. Students will design creative writing courses, set clear, achievable learning objectives, draft syllabi, generate exercises, and select reading material for introductory courses in poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction.

ENGLISH 590-0 Research (1-3 Units)

SEE DEPT FOR SECTION AND PERMISSION NUMBERS- Independent investigation of selected problems pertaining to thesis or dissertation. May be repeated for credit.

ENGLISH 591-0 MFA Thesis Tutorial (1-3 Units)

Registration for MFA+MA students writing an MFA Thesis project.