M.A. Handbook

Department of English
Wayne State University
# M.A. Handbook
Department of English  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Wayne State University

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M. A. PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

The M.A. program is designed to prepare students to go on to doctoral work as well as to accommodate students with specific interests (e.g., Creative Writing, teaching English at the secondary, college, or university levels) that may not lead to further graduate study in English. The M.A. program thus serves students with a variety of interests and aspirations and its educational resources are meant to accommodate a diverse constituency.

REQUIREMENTS

Course Work

The M.A. program requires 33 semester hours of course credit, which must include at least five 7000-level courses in English at Wayne State University. The remaining course work may be distributed among 5000-, 6000-, and 7000-level courses, selected with the advice of the Director of Graduate Studies. Creative writing students fulfilling the M.A. concentration in creative writing must take English 6800 (which counts as a 7000 level course). *(NOTE: As 5000-level courses in our department and many others in the university can also be taken for undergraduate credit, be advised that you are required to document the additional requirements that apply to graduate students in such courses.)*

Students with special interests, such as Rhetoric and Composition, Creative Writing, Film and Media studies, or Linguistics, should expect to take around one half of the total credit hours in that area, with the rest of the course work coming from other areas. Students interested in Creative Writing or Technical/Professional Writing are strongly urged to consult appropriate faculty as well as the Director of Graduate Studies to plan the course of studies.

With special permission from the Director of Graduate Studies, up to 6 credit hours may be taken from another department (permission is contingent upon the student’s demonstrating the relevance of such course work to his/her program). Up to 8 graduate credits can be transferred from another university as long as those credits have not already counted towards an earned graduate degree.

Degree Plans

The M.A. in English may be completed under any one of three different degree plans as designated in the Wayne State Graduate Bulletin.

- Plan A: Thirty-three credits, including a three-to-six-credit thesis.
• **Plan B:** Thirty-three credits, including a three-credit essay and demonstration of proficiency in at least one foreign language (for further details, see “Foreign Language Proficiency,” below).

• **Plan C:** Thirty-three credits, including a portfolio of representative work approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Because the requirements between the plans differ, students should decide as soon as possible and no later than the submission of their Plan of Work (see below) which degree plan they intend to follow.

**Plan of Work**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requires that students submit a Plan of Work in the semester in which they will complete 10 hours of course work. The Plan of Work is then submitted to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Graduate Office for approval. The Plan of Work includes courses already taken and those that will be taken to complete the degree. It is devised in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies. (*NOTE: Until the Plan of Work is approved, students should consult with the Director of Graduate Studies during the registration period for each semester; although such regular consultation is not necessary after the Plan of Work has been established and approved, students are encouraged to consult with the Director to determine progress towards the M.A. degree.*)

**Foreign Language Proficiency (Plan B Only)**

All M.A. students following Plan B must fulfill a foreign language requirement defined as an adequate reading knowledge of one language. In the same semester in which he or she files her Plan of Work, students must also submit to the Graduate Director an explanation of how they will satisfy the foreign language requirement and the relevance of this plan to their general program of study.

M.A. students will ordinarily meet the foreign language requirement by choosing one of three options. Students who intend to continue on to the Ph.D. in English at Wayne State should note that completing one of these options while an M.A. student will also fulfill the Ph.D.-level language requirement.

1. Arrange to take a translation examination administered by an appropriate individual. The examiner and test must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies. (*NOTE: this is the preferred option.*)

2. Pass the ETS (Educational Testing Service) examination in a language other than English with a score of 550 or better.

3. Take an intensive three-credit language course (e.g. Greek 5000), or an advanced non-translated literature course (5000-level or higher, 3
credits or more) taught in one of the foreign language departments. Credits earned in another department will not necessarily apply to the 33 hours required for the M.A. in English. Students who choose this option must achieve a grade of “B” or better in the course.

Capstone Project (Plans A and B Only)

The final requirement for the M.A. degree under all plans is the submission of a capstone project: an M.A. Essay, M.A. Thesis, or M.A. Portfolio. In order to obtain permission to register for any relevant credits, students should consult with the Director of Graduate Study and fill out the appropriate Authorization and Description Form for the project at least one semester before they plan to complete it.

A. The M.A. Thesis (Plan A). The M.A. Thesis is ordinarily restricted to creative writing students and may be composed of one or more works of fiction (including poetry and plays) or creative nonfiction. Like the essay, students who write an M.A. thesis also secure a faculty advisor and second reader who oversee his or her project and who must approve the thesis in order for the student to complete the M.A. degree. Students pursuing the M.A. Thesis must likewise submit the appropriate authorization form to the Director of Graduate Studies before registering for ENG 8999 (3-6 credits).

Students pursuing a 3 credit hour thesis will generally produce 40-50 pages of prose or a chapbook-length poetry manuscript (approximately 36 poems). Students pursuing a 6 credit hour thesis will generally produce 100-150 pages of prose (a short story collection, a novella, a cycle of plays) or a full-length poetry manuscript (above 48-80 poems). The time devoted to the thesis should not exceed one year.

B. The M.A. Essay (Plan B). The M.A. Essay is a 30-60 page research-intensive work of scholarly writing done under the supervision of a faculty advisor and a second reader of the student’s choice. Students taking this option must submit the appropriate authorization form to the Director of Graduate Studies with their readers’ signatures before registering for ENG 7999 (3 credits).

The M.A. Essay should demonstrate the student's ability to handle primary and secondary source material, to employ standard scholarly documentation techniques, and to present a clearly written and cogent discussion of a topic currently of interest to the profession. The time devoted to the essay should not exceed one semester.
B. The M.A. Portfolio (Plan C). The M.A. Portfolio consists of (1) a minimum of 60 pages (or the equivalent in multimedia work) of assigned work from graduate courses satisfying the M.A. course distribution requirements as well as (2) a 5-10 page reflective essay that serves as an introduction to the work and identifies how this work satisfies the learning objectives of the M.A. program (contact the Director of Graduate Studies for a list of these objectives).

The work presented in the portfolio may take the form of the traditional research essay required in most graduate courses, but may also include such items as scholarly publications or conference presentations of work that originated in those courses. The reflective essay that accompanies must make a strong case for how this work demonstrates the author’s mastery of the learning objectives for the M.A. degree in English. Students pursuing Plan C need not register for any particular course to submit their M.A. portfolio, but must submit the completed portfolio to the Director of Graduate Studies a minimum of four weeks prior to the end of the semester in which they intend to graduate.

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS

In addition to following all of the departmental requirements for the M.A. degree, all students must also abide by the following university-level requirements.

Residency: The University requires students to take at least 24 credit hours in residence (i.e., course work) at Wayne. Up to 8 hours may be transferred from graduate programs at other accredited institutions as long as those hours have not already counted towards an earned graduate degree. To have credits transferred, a petition must be filed with the Director of Graduate Studies; credits may be transferred only for courses with a grade of “B” or better.

Directed Study Credits: No more than eight credits of Directed Study courses may be counted toward the minimum credits requirement for the M.A. degree.

Time Limit: The work toward the M.A. degree must be completed within six calendar years from the end of the first semester of course work. While extensions are possible, they are not automatic. (NOTE: Students are advised to consult the Graduate Bulletin for a complete description of the rules and regulations of the university.)

CONTINUATION TO THE PH.D. PROGRAM

Students wishing to continue for a Ph.D. in English should obtain a description of the Ph.D. requirements upon entering the M.A. program and select their course work in
accordance with the requirements of the doctoral program insofar as that is possible. Admission to the Ph.D. program is determined by academic performance and promise.

M.A. students wishing to apply for admission to the doctoral program should adhere to the following criteria. They are required to submit a “Change of Status” form but otherwise must supply the same documents and adhere to the same schedule as do other applicants to the Ph.D. program. That is, the student needs to submit a new statement of purpose, two letters from English Department faculty members with whom the student has worked, scores on the General Tests of the Graduate Record Examination, a current writing sample, and updated transcripts. (NOTE: M.A. students wishing to continue to the Ph.D. should not take more than 8 hours beyond M.A. course requirements before admission to the Ph.D. program; students who take more than 8 hours risk losing the option of counting those credits toward Ph.D. requirements.)

COURSE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

In addition to earning a minimum of 33 credits, Ph.D. students must also satisfy the following course distribution requirements in their relevant degree Plan:

**PLAN A**
- ENG 6800 3 credit hours
- 4 7000-level English courses in English 12-16 credit hours
- ENG 8999 (M.A. Thesis) 3-6 credit hours
- Electives 8-15 credit hours

**PLAN B**
- 5 7000-level English courses in English 15-20 credit hours
- ENG 7999 (M.A. Essay) 3 credit hours
- Electives 10-15 credit hours

**PLAN C**
- 5 7000-level English courses in English 15-20 credit hours
- Electives 13-18 credit hours