M.A. Handbook, 2016-2017
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.

NOTE: Students should be advised that the full descriptions of university rules are to be found in the current Graduate Bulletin. The following description covers the Department of English’s procedures and some, but not all, of those of the university. In cases where this Handbook departs from relevant sections of the Graduate Bulletin, the Department of English By-Laws and/or the Collective Bargaining Agreement between WSU and the Graduate Employees Organizing Committee-American Federation of Teachers, then those documents will prevail.

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 Studies 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.
C. 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.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Student Assistantships, and Fellowships
Each year, students are invited to apply for Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Student Assistantships, and Fellowships. Students who receive an initial award of funding upon admission or in a later application will receive information about the number of years of funding they can plan on receiving, given continued satisfactory academic standing. For those years, students do not need to submit new application materials each year. If students wish to apply for an additional year of funding after the initial award, they submit application materials as described below. There are a limited number of funding opportunities in the department, so the awards are competitive. For a full list of available opportunities, visit the English Department website (clas.wayne.edu/English/Graduate-Studies)

Timing and Availability
Nine-month Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) typically begin in the Fall term, but may be available to start in the Winter term in special circumstances. Depending on availability and approval by the Graduate School, some number of English graduate students may also be supported via Graduate Student Assistantships (GSAs) and Graduate Research Assistantships (GRAs); these are typically twelve-month appointments that begin during the Fall term. Current GTAs, GSAs, and GRAs interested in such an assignment may also apply to teach summer courses in the department of English via a GTA appointment.
Due Date of Applications
Applications received by January 15th receive priority in the consideration for assistantships. Hiring decisions will begin on March 1 and continue until April 15. Decisions regarding the reappointment of assistantships are communicated to students no later than June 15 for appointments beginning the following Fall term and December 1 for appointments beginning in the following Winter term. Applications for summer teaching under a GTA appointment are typically due April 15 for positions beginning the following Spring/Summer term; notifications are made on a rolling basis between the time of application and the start of the semester.

Application Materials
Students who are seeking new admission to the graduate program in English will find materials about applying for funding at wayne.edu/admissions/graduate and on the Department of English website (clas.wayne.edu/English/Graduate-Admission). Application materials for the reappointment of assistantships or for students applying for an assistantship who are already enrolled but are currently not funded are distributed to all students on an annual basis via the graduate student listserv. Generally the materials include a statement of purpose and two letters of reference.

Criteria
According to English Department ByLaws, Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Student Assistantships, and Fellowships are approved by the Chairperson of the Department of English.

Assistantships are granted to superior students admitted to the M.A. and Ph.D. programs, taking into consideration the following criteria:

• In the case of new student hiring for 9-month teaching assistantships, the department considers the promise of and/or present achievement in research and teaching.
• In the case of internal or extended student hiring for 9-month teaching assistantships, the department considers the applicant's academic standing, progress toward the degree, teaching excellence and related professional development, and the applicant's promise of and/or present achievement in research.
• In the case of hiring for summer teaching as well as for nonteaching student assistantships (GSAs), hiring criteria specific to those positions will be identified at the time of posting.

Nondiscrimination statement (Article X of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between WSU and the Graduate Employees Organizing Committee-American Federation of Teachers):
A. Wayne State University and the GEOF (Graduate Employees Organizing Committee – American Federation of Teachers) recognize an obligation and reaffirm by this Agreement their commitment to achieve equal employment opportunity and
nondiscrimination within the University. Accordingly, it is agreed that, consistent with University policies, the University and members of the bargaining unit shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, veteran status, height, weight, ethnicity, religion, creed, political affiliation, political beliefs, membership in any social or political organization, national origin, ancestry, marital or parental status, age, gender, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or disability, including HIV status, of those capable of performing their professional duties. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit Wayne State University from the application of bona fide occupational qualifications as may be appropriate or from taking such measures as may be permissible by law, to protect the health and safety of the University community.

B. Employees who believe that they have been subject to discrimination in violation of this article may choose to pursue their claim either through the University’s internal discrimination process administered by the Department of Equal Opportunity or through the grievance procedure of this Agreement. The initial choice of one of these two internal procedures is binding as to the discrimination aspect of any claim and prohibits the filing or processing that same discrimination claim through any other internal procedure. An employee may first attempt to resolve his or her claim informally with his or her immediate supervisor without invoking the grievance procedure. If the employee proceeds through the grievance procedure, the grievance will begin at Step 2 as set forth in Article III of this Agreement.

C. The Parties agree that neither the University nor Union shall directly, or indirectly, discriminate against any employee with respect to hours, wages, or any terms, or conditions of employment by reason of such employee’s membership in the Union, such employee’s participation in any activities of the Union or collective professional negotiations with the University, or such employee’s institution of any grievance, complaint, or proceeding under this Agreement or otherwise with respect to any terms or conditions of employment.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress**
Students maintain satisfactory academic progress through satisfying enrollment requirements (part-time or full-time enrollment), meeting distribution requirements (five–7000-level courses throughout the degree program), completing a capstone project (thesis, essay, or portfolio), and maintaining at least a 3.0 GPA.

**Grade Appeals**
Students may appeal final grades in coursework (but not individual assignment grades) according to procedures published by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Students should first seek to settle grade disputes informally with the instructor. If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion, a formal grade appeal
may be filed within 30 days of the time the student has or should have received a final grade. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Grade Appeal Procedures are published on the CLAS website (clas.wayne.edu).

Other Appeals
Students may appeal program decisions by first discussing the matter with the DGS within 30 days of the DGS’s notification of the decision under discussion. If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved for the student, the next step is petitioning the Graduate Committee in writing within 30 days of the conference with the DGS. If the matter arises during the Spring/Summer semester, the Graduate Committee will consider it during the first meeting in the Fall semester. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the Graduate Committee, he or she may contact the Department Chairperson within 10 days of the Graduate Committee’s written notification. Should the matter not be resolved by the Chairperson, the student may follow procedures for appeal as outlined by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the University Bulletin, and by the Graduate School.

Exceptions
A student who wishes to request an exception to any of the M.A. program requirements should file a written, detailed petition with his or her advisor. If the advisor approves the petition, he or she will forward it, along with his or her recommendation, to the DGS, who will consider it with the Graduate Committee and the Chairperson. If approved by the department, and the exception is for a university requirement, the petition will be forwarded to the Graduate School. All exceptions must ultimately be approved by the Graduate School. Appeals of decisions follow the same process; appeals of Graduate School decisions may be presented to the Provost.

Time Limitation
Students have a six-year time limit to complete all requirements for the M.A. degree. The six-year period begins with the end of the semester during which the student was admitted and was completing work toward meeting the requirements for the degree. In order to request a time extension, a student may petition the DGS, and if approved, it is reviewed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Leaves of Absence
Students requesting a leave of absence from the M.A. program for any reason should be in touch directly with the Director of Graduate Studies and submit their request in writing. Requests for a leave of absence for more than one semester will be reviewed by both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chairperson and subject to approval from the Graduate School. Leaves of absence, when granted, do not pause the six-year time limitation of the M.A. degree. For specific information and
requirements for maternal leaves of absence for GTAs and GSAs, consult the *Collective Bargaining Agreement between WSU and the Graduate Employees Organizing Committee-American Federation of Teachers.*

**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