English, MA

The Master of Arts program in English introduces students to the professional study of literature.

The MA is appropriate for students who would like graduate training in English and who may have an undergraduate major in a different field or who may intend to earn a PhD at another institution. Students interested in careers in any area of book studies (professional writing, editing, web design, or publishing) may wish to earn the MA as a terminal degree, as may teachers seeking to enhance their credentials or students pursuing intellectual growth unrelated to a specific career.

MA and PhD students in English mix freely in graduate courses, share the same access to faculty, and meet the same standards of quality in their work.

Exam for the Master of Arts in Teaching

The department administers the English component of the exam for the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in coordination with the College of Education. MAT students should contact the Department of Teaching and Learning (College of Education) for information.

Learning Outcomes

- Writing skills: proficiency in writing means publishable-quality writing (e.g., what one would expect from an article placed in a scholarly or creative journal).
- Historical knowledge: comprehensive historical knowledge of literary history, reflected in courses taken across a range of literary periods and national/international traditions.
- Critical theory and approaches: rigorous study of critical methodologies and interpretive strategies.
- Research skills: familiarity with library research into secondary scholarship on primary texts, archival research methods, and field research, where applicable.
- Teaching skills: ideally, students will move from foundations-based grading positions under the supervision of tenure track faculty (introduction to the major) to rhetoric/composition coursework (rhetoric), and then on to literary analysis-focused courses (general education literature). Students learn to build their own syllabi, develop a teaching portfolio, and manage their own courses independently.
- Professional development: this includes conference presentations, curriculum vitae and résumé building, and teaching statements, along with exposure to career tracks, both academic (e.g., tenure track jobs, liberal arts colleges, community colleges) and alternative professions (e.g., digital humanities, humanities organizations, publishing).

Requirements

The Master of Arts program in English requires a minimum of 31–60 s.h. of graduate credit. The program is offered with two options: the literary studies subprogram (31 s.h.) and without a subprogram (60 s.h.). The subprogram in literary studies is designed for students pursuing the MA as a standalone program or for U2G students. The MA in English without a subprogram only applies to students admitted to the English PhD program; there is no direct admission to this subprogram.

The MA in English requires the following coursework.

Literary Studies Subprogram

The Master of Arts in English with a subprogram in literary studies requires a minimum of 31 s.h. of graduate credit. Students may earn credit for up to 6 s.h. of transfer courses toward the MA. They must maintain a Graduate College program grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.00. Applicable transfer courses must be approved by the director of graduate studies.

Requirements	Hours
Required Courses	6
Seminars and Readings: Historical Distribution Courses	6
Additional Courses	6
Electives	12
Capstone	1

Required Courses, Literary Studies

The criticism and theory course must be taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
ENGL:5000	Introduction to Graduate Study	3
Criticism and Theory		
One of these:		
ENGL:6000	Introduction to Contemporary Theory	3
ENGL:6050	Critical Readings in Cultural Studies: Stuart Hall's Legacy and Influences	3
ENGL:7010	Seminar: Literary Criticism and Theory	3
ENGL:7050	Seminar: Performance Theory and Practice	3

Seminars and Readings: Historical Distribution Courses

Students complete one course from two of the three historical areas for a total of 6 s.h. These courses must be taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Course #	Title	Hours
Pre-1700		
ENGL:6100	Readings in Medieval Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:6110	Medieval Authors	3
ENGL:6200	Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Authors	3
ENGL:6220	Shakespeare	3
ENGL:7100	Seminar: Medieval Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7200	Seminar: Early Modern Literature and Culture	3

1700-1900		
ENGL:6300	Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature	3
ENGL:6400	Romantic Literature	3
ENGL:6500	Victorian Literature	3
ENGL:7300	Seminar: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature	3
ENGL:7400	Seminar: Romantic Literatures	3
ENGL:7500	Seminar: Victorian Literature	3
1900-Present		
ENGL:6730	Modernist Studies	3
ENGL:6760	Topics in Contemporary Literature	3
ENGL:6800	Readings in Postcolonial Literature and Theory	3
ENGL:6850	Topics in Creative Writing	3
ENGL:7700	Seminar: Studies in the 20th and 21st Century	3
ENGL:7800	Seminar: Postcolonial Studies	3

Additional Courses, Literary Studies

Students complete two additional seminar or readings courses for a total of 6 s.h. Courses must be taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies. A course applied to the historical distribution requirement may not also count toward this requirement.

Course #	Title	Hours
6 s.h. from these:		
ENGL:6020	Literature as Letters	3
ENGL:6080	New Media Poetics	3
ENGL:6090	Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies	3
ENGL:6100	Readings in Medieval Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:6110	Medieval Authors	3
ENGL:6200	Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Authors	3
ENGL:6220	Shakespeare	3
ENGL:6300	Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature	3
ENGL:6315	MA Seminar: English Education	3
ENGL:6400	Romantic Literature	3
ENGL:6500	Victorian Literature	3
ENGL:6601	Readings in American Literature	3
ENGL:6602	Readings in American Literature II	3
ENGL:6603	Readings in American Literature III	3
ENGL:6610	Studies in African American Literature	3
ENGL:6620	Readings in Native American Literatures	3
ENGL:6630	Readings in Latina/o/x Literary and Cultural Studies	3
ENGL:6640	Readings in American Literary Genres	3
ENGL:6670	American Literary Magazines	3
ENGL:6730	Modernist Studies	3
ENGL:6760	Topics in Contemporary Literature	3
ENGL:6765	Literature, Culture, and Environment	3
ENGL:6800	Readings in Postcolonial Literature and Theory	3
ENGL:6850	Topics in Creative Writing	3
ENGL:7010	Seminar: Literary Criticism and Theory	3
ENGL:7050	Seminar: Performance Theory and Practice	3
ENGL:7100	Seminar: Medieval Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7200	Seminar: Early Modern Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7300	Seminar: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature	3
ENGL:7400	Seminar: Romantic Literatures	3
ENGL:7500	Seminar: Victorian Literature	3
ENGL:7600	Seminar: American Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7700	Seminar: Studies in the 20th and 21st Century	3
ENGL:7800	Seminar: Postcolonial Studies	3

Electives, Literary Studies

Students complete an additional 12 s.h. of English courses (prefix ENGL) numbered 5000–7899, excluding ENGL:5990 MA Portfolio in Literary Studies, ENGL:5999 MA Thesis in Literary Studies, ENGL:6950 Colloquium: Teaching Foundations of the English Major, and ENGL:6960 Colloquium: Teaching Literature. Elective courses must be taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Students may also select elective courses numbered 3000 or above from the following subjects outside of English. Students may wish to explore opportunities for interdisciplinary study, language study, experience in theory and practice of writing, or specialization in a field of literary scholarship.

Course Subject	Course Subject Prefix
African American studies	AFAM
American Sign Language	ASL
American studies	AMST
Arabic	ARAB
Art history	ARTH
Chinese	CHIN
Cinema	CINE
Creative nonfiction writing	CNW
Creative writing, Writers' Workshop	CW
Dance	DANC
Education teaching and learning	EDTL

Educational policy and leadership studies	EPLS
French	FREN
Gender, women's, and sexuality studies	GWSS
General art	ARTS
Graduate College	GRAD
German	GRMN
History	HIST
Italian	ITAL
Japanese	JPNS
Korean	KORE
Latin	CLSL
Latin American studies	LAS
Latina/o/x studies	LATS
Library and information science	SLIS
Linguistics	LING
Music	MUS
Philosophy	PHIL
Portuguese	PORT
Psychological and quantitative foundations	PSQF
Rhetoric	RHET
Russian	RUSS
Spanish	SPAN
Swahili	SWAH
Theatre arts	THTR
Translation	TRNS
UI Center for the Book	UICB
World languages, literatures, and cultures	WLLC

Capstone

Completion of the MA in English with a literary studies subprogram requires either a thesis or a portfolio. Students submit a written description of their choice to the director of the program before the semester in which they plan to graduate.

Course #	Title	Hours
One of these:		
ENGL:5990	MA Portfolio in Literary Studies	1
ENGL:5999	MA Thesis in Literary Studies	1

MA Thesis

The thesis entails a 25- to 35-page essay of literary criticism consonant in form and content with the variety of articles published in journals and periodicals. The essay may not be submission-ready; rather, it must be a body of writing that looks toward possible publication. If the essay originated in a course taken during the program, it should be substantially revised per input from the thesis director and possibly the original course instructor.

The thesis may also assume a form that diverges from a traditional literary critical article. Alternate thesis projects must be approved by the director of graduate studies.

Students who choose to write a thesis must submit a brief prospectus approved by their thesis director before they register for ENGL:5999 MA Thesis in Literary Studies and at least one semester before they submit the thesis. Refer to the Academic Plans [p. 5] in this section of the catalog for detailed timelines for the submission and defense process. The thesis committee consists of the thesis director, the director of the MA program, and one other faculty member. The thesis is evaluated by the committee as either satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U).

A copy of the thesis must be presented to the Graduate College for approval. For information about Graduate College deadlines and policies, visit the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

MA Portfolio

Near the end of their coursework, students who do not choose the thesis option must submit a portfolio of work to the MA examination committee, which consists of the director of the MA program and two other English faculty members. All three read the full portfolio. To pass, the candidate must have a majority vote of the committee members.

Students take the first step toward preparing to submit a portfolio by meeting with the director of the MA program to discuss the portfolio, early during the semester in which they plan to graduate. After fulfilling all distribution and eligibility requirements and clearing all incomplete grades, students present the director with a draft of the portfolio’s introductory statement. Students planning to graduate at the end of the fall semester should present the statement by the first week of October; those who plan to graduate at the end of the spring semester should present the statement by the first week of March. Once the director approves the statement, the student must submit three copies of the full portfolio; the submission deadline is Nov. 1 for students planning to graduate at the end of the fall semester and April 1 for those who will graduate at the end of the spring semester.

The work in the portfolio should demonstrate the student’s knowledge of literature as a broad historical and theoretical inquiry. Students submit approximately 50 pages (12,500 words) of their best work, along with a self-reflective introductory statement of five to seven pages. The body of the portfolio should contain revised versions of papers originally produced for classes. The introduction should detail the student’s trajectory in the program and the literary-critical or methodological skills gained. It should also explain the contents of the portfolio, contextualize each paper, and give a brief overview of the writing. Students are expected to describe the research methods used in assembling their portfolios and the critical practices that ground their work.

MA Without Subprogram

The Master of Arts in English without a subprogram requires a minimum of 60 s.h. of graduate credit. Students may earn credit for up to 18 s.h. of transfer courses toward the degree. They must maintain a graduate college program GPA of at least 3.00.

There is no direct admission to this subprogram; it is only open to students accepted into the English PhD program.

Each student must satisfy a portion of the course requirements of the PhD program. For the MA, the students must have completed the coursework that would normally be expected by that point in the program.

Requirements	Hours
Introduction to Graduate Study	3
Historical Distribution and Upper-Level Courses	27

Electives	21
Additional Courses	9

Introduction to Graduate Study

Course #	Title	Hours
This course:		
ENGL:5000	Introduction to Graduate Study	3

Historical Distribution and Upper-Level Courses

Historical Distribution

Students complete one course from each of the three historical areas for 9 s.h. total. Refer to the preceding list titled Seminars and Readings: Historical Distribution Courses for available courses. A grade of B-plus or higher is required for each course. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Upper-Level English Courses

Students complete an additional 18 s.h. of English courses (prefix ENGL) numbered 5000–7899, excluding ENGL:5990 MA Portfolio in Literary Studies, ENGL:5999 MA Thesis in Literary Studies, ENGL:6950 Colloquium: Teaching Foundations of the English Major, and ENGL:6960 Colloquium: Teaching Literature. These courses must be taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Seminars

Of the 18 s.h. in upper-level courses and 9 s.h. in historical distribution courses, 9 s.h. must come from seminars. A grade of B-plus or higher is required for each seminar. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

Course #	Title	Hours
ENGL:7010	Seminar: Literary Criticism and Theory	3
ENGL:7050	Seminar: Performance Theory and Practice	3
ENGL:7100	Seminar: Medieval Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7200	Seminar: Early Modern Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7300	Seminar: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature	3
ENGL:7400	Seminar: Romantic Literatures	3
ENGL:7500	Seminar: Victorian Literature	3
ENGL:7600	Seminar: American Literature and Culture	3
ENGL:7700	Seminar: Studies in the 20th and 21st Century	3
ENGL:7800	Seminar: Postcolonial Studies	3

Electives

Students complete 21 s.h. of elective coursework taken on an A–F graded basis. A course taken on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis may be counted with approval from the director of graduate studies.

In consultation with their advisor, students select English courses (prefix ENGL) numbered 3000 or above, excluding ENGL:5990 MA Portfolio in Literary Studies, ENGL:5999 MA Thesis in Literary Studies, ENGL:6950 Colloquium: Teaching Foundations of the English Major, ENGL:6960 Colloquium: Teaching Literature, ENGL:7910 Advanced Studies in a Literary Period, ENGL:7920 Advanced Studies in a Literary Form, and ENGL:7960 Advanced Studies in a Literary Theme.

Students may also select elective courses numbered 3000 or above from the following subjects outside of English.

Course Subject	Course Subject Prefix
African American studies	AFAM
American Sign Language	ASL
American studies	AMST
Arabic	ARAB
Art history	ARTH
Chinese	CHIN
Cinema	CINE
Creative nonfiction writing	CNW
Creative writing, Writers' Worshop	CW
Dance	DANC
Education teaching and learning	EDTL
Educational policy and leadership studies	EPLS
French	FREN
Gender, women's and sexuality studies	GWSS
General art	ARTS
Graduate College	GRAD
German	GRMN
History	HIST
Italian	ITAL
Japanese	JPNS
Korean	KORE
Latin	CLSL
Latin American studies	LAS
Latina/o/x studies	LATS
Library and information science	SLIS
Linguistics	LING
Music	MUS
Philosophy	PHIL
Portuguese	PORT
Psychological and quantitative foundations	PSQF
Rhetoric	RHET, excluding RHET:5350
Russian	RUSS
Spanish	SPAN
Swahili	SWAH
Theatre arts	THTR
Translation	TRNS
UI Center for the Book	UICB
World languages, literatures, and cultures	WLLC

With the permission of the program, students may be able to select additional courses from other subjects.

Additional Courses

Students complete 9 s.h. of additional coursework that may be taken either on an A–F or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) graded basis. They are required to complete the following three comprehensive exam preparation courses, each for a minimum of 1 s.h.

Students consult with their advisor on the number of credits they are required to enroll in for each course. In consultation with their advisor, students may select courses from the preceding list of elective subjects to complete the 9 s.h. as needed.

Course #	Title	Hours
At least 1 s.h. from each of these:		
ENGL:7910	Advanced Studies in a Literary Period	1-3
ENGL:7920	Advanced Studies in a Literary Form	1-3
ENGL:7930	Advanced Studies in a Literary Genre	1-3

Graduate Education

Graduate education prepares students with advanced knowledge and skills in specialized fields. At the University of Iowa, the Graduate College advocates for student-centered graduate education and supports equitable application of rules and policies across graduate programs.

Academics

University of Iowa graduate credentials are regulated by policies and requirements found in the Graduate College Manual of Rules and Regulations. This includes minimum grade-point average (GPA) requirements for academic standing and degree conferral. The Graduate College sets the minimum requirement. Individual graduate programs may establish higher GPA requirements.

Admissions

Graduate student applicants must meet admission requirements for both the Graduate College and the program to which they have applied. University of Iowa graduate admission requirements are published by the Graduate College and on the Graduate Admissions website.

Financial Support

Graduate students might be eligible for financial support. Several contingencies apply, including degree program and award type, satisfactory progress toward degree, satisfactory completion of all duties related to an appointment, and availability of funding. Graduate students should inquire directly with their program for more information about funding availability. The Graduate Student Employment Standards govern the employment relationship between the University of Iowa and all graduate teaching and research assistants in all matters except wages, which are covered by an existing collective bargaining agreement or the conditions of an applicable federal grant.

Admission

Applications and all supporting documents for graduate admission must be submitted electronically by Dec. 14. Applicants should submit their applications and supporting materials to the University of Iowa Admissions website.

Applicants must meet the admission requirements of the Graduate College; visit the Manual of Rules and Regulations on the Graduate College website.

Career Advancement

The Master of Arts in English degree helps prepare students for careers in professional writing, editing, web design, and publishing. It is also desirable for teachers seeking to enhance their credentials.

Academic Plans

Sample Plan of Study

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, visit MyUI.

English, MA

Literary Studies Subprogram

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
31 s.h. of graduate level coursework must be completed; up to 6 s.h. of graduate transfer credits allowed upon approval. More information is included in the General Catalog and on department website. [a]		
Graduate College program GPA of at least 3.00 is required. [b]		
	Hours	**0**
First Year		
Fall		
ENGL:5000	Introduction to Graduate Study [c]	3
Criticism and theory course [d]		3
Historical distribution course [e]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
Historical distribution course [e]		3
Additional seminar or readings course [f]		3
Elective course [g, h]		3
	Hours	**9**
Second Year		
Fall		
Additional seminar or readings course [f]		3
Elective course [g, h]		3
Elective course [g, h]		3
	Hours	**9**
Spring		
ENGL:5990	MA Portfolio in Literary Studies [i]	1
Elective course [g, h]		3

Exam: Master's Final Exam

Hours	**4**
Total Hours	**31**

a Students must complete specific requirements in the University of Iowa Graduate College after program admission. Refer to the Graduate College website and the Manual of Rules and Regulations for more information.
b Graduate College program GPA is comprised of all courses that are approved degree requirements. If a student takes more than the minimum required number of semester hours to complete the degree, but all courses taken are eligible to count toward the degree, those courses will be included in the Graduate College program GPA.
c Typically this course is offered in fall semesters only. Check MyUI for course availability since offerings are subject to change.
d Must be taken on an A-F graded basis. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
e Students complete one course from two of the three historical areas for a total of 6 s.h.; must be taken on an A-F graded basis. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
f Students must complete two additional seminar or readings courses for a total of 6 s.h.; must be taken on an A-F graded basis. See the General Catalog for list of approved courses. A course applied to the historical distribution requirement may not also count toward this requirement.
g Students may wish to explore opportunities for interdisciplinary study, language study, experience in theory and practice of writing, or specialization in a field of literary scholarship. Work with faculty advisor to determine appropriate coursework and sequence.
h Students complete an additional 12 s.h. of English courses (prefix ENGL) numbered 5000-7899, excluding ENGL:5990, ENGL:5999, ENGL:6950, and ENGL:6960; courses must be taken on an A-F graded basis.
i Present the director with a draft of the portfolio's introductory statement by the first week of March. Once the director approves the statement, the student must submit three copies of the full portfolio by April 1.