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, etc.) and alternative professions (e.g., digital humanities, humanities organizations, publishing, etc.).