

English, MA

Admission Requirements

To enter the graduate program in English a candidate must satisfy the requirements both of the Graduate School and the Department of English. A candidate should have a bachelor's degree, with at least 18 hours in English above the freshmen level, 12 of which must be in literature. Normally, only students with a grade point average of 3.0 in undergraduate English courses and an overall undergraduate average of 2.75 will be considered. Though the English department welcomes scores from the Graduate Record Aptitude Exam and letters of recommendation, it does not require either of these. (Students applying for Teaching Assistantships, please see "Financial Aid and Teaching Assistantships.")

The graduate coordinator of the English Department with the advice of the graduate committee will use the undergraduate record and, and if available, the scores of the GRE general test as the basis for a decision. We welcome letters of recommendation from the applicant's former English instructors and a sample of expository prose. Applications to the MA in English are considered at all times. However, because spaces in graduate courses are limited, it is strongly advised that prospective students submit their applications well before the semester begins in order to gain admission into their appropriate classes.

Teaching Assistantships

A number of teaching assistantships are available for qualified applicants. In addition to the undergraduate record and the scores on the GRE general test, applications should include two letters of recommendation from former English instructors. Applications should be submitted to the graduate coordinator of the English department no later than March 15 preceding the academic year for which the appointment is desired.

Degree Requirements

~~Master of Arts in English~~

In addition to the Graduate School requirements, students must complete at least ~~36~~ 30 hours, ~~24~~ 18 hours of which must be in 5000-level courses. ~~Twelve~~ Up to 12 hours may be taken in 4000-level courses approved by the department and Graduate School.

Required of both concentrations, literature and writing studies:

- ENGL 5000: Introduction to Graduate Study in English. Focuses upon bibliography, research methods, and literary criticism. Should be taken at the outset of the program, for graduate (not undergraduate) credit.

Students who choose a literature track must also take at least one course in each of the following six areas:

- Area 1, British literature before 1660
- Area 2, British literature between 1660 and 1900
- Area 3, Twentieth-century literature (British, American, post-colonial, or in translation)
- Area 4, American literature
- Area 5, Theories of writing, criticism, language, and/or culture
- Area 6, Literature in translation study of a particular literary genre, or a course in another relevant discipline

Students who choose the writing studies track must take:

- ~~18~~ 15 hours in literature courses providing broad coverage rather than a narrow focus on a particular genre or historical period (ENGL 5000 constitutes three of these required literature credits)
- ~~18~~ 15 hours in writing studies courses (including ENGL 5840)

If students choose the thesis option (6 hours) they will take ~~15~~ 12 hours in literature and ~~15~~ 12 hours in writing studies.

Thesis Options

Students may elect the thesis option, which requires a total of 6 hours of thesis credit. The thesis will engage the student in sustained and self-motivated study through the processes of research, conferring with advisors, drafting and revising text. The thesis must be approved and assigned a grade by a thesis committee. The student will select a major professor who, after consulting with the chair and the graduate coordinator, will select two other members of the committee.

Literature Emphasis: The thesis should demonstrate original thought and substantial research and may be a critical study of literary works or a theoretical exploration of issues related to literature.

Writing Studies Emphasis: The final document will demonstrate significant familiarity with scholarship in Writing Studies through the critical analysis and clear synthesis of published research, observational data (where appropriate) and the student's thoughts/views/reflections/positions. The thesis may be a critical study, theoretical exploration or descriptive assessment of fieldwork drawing on writing, language, rhetorical, socio-cultural or reading theories; literacy; and the history of writing instruction; composition pedagogies; technologies.

Rationale

Half of the MA programs in CAS are 30-credit-hour programs, and the English MA at regional competitors (SIUE, SLU, UMC, UMKC) are also 30/31 hours. Reducing the hours required will make the program more attractive and more affordable, particularly for the working adults who make up a significant proportion of our students.