

Master's Student Handbook

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce students to the practices and requirements of the UB English Department's MA Program. You will find information and advice here about a wide range of subjects relating to all stages of your progress through the MA degree, including coursework, examinations, and thesis writing. Do not hesitate to contact the appropriate departmental officers, especially the Director of the Master's Program, if you have any questions or if you need further information.

The Director of the Master's Program

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Your First Week at UB

At the end of August, incoming MA students must attend a week-long orientation in which they will be given pointers about the library system at UB, computer technology, immigration (for international students), and insurance issues. In addition, they will have an opportunity to meet English faculty members, the Chair of the Department, and the Directors of Graduate and Master's Studies. See the sample orientation schedule at the end of the appendix.

Note that international students will only be able to register for courses after attending the International Students' Orientation Session. The extra fees that appear on their bill will disappear after they attend the orientation session.

Working with the Director of the Master's Program

The Director of the Master's Program also serves as the instructor for the course ENG 501: Introduction to Scholarly Methods, which MA students are required to take their first semester. This course incorporates time for individual advisement with the Director so that each student can ask questions and discuss his/her goals. Remember that the Director is available throughout the year to guide you and facilitate your transition into graduate school. Please do not hesitate to set up a meeting with him or her should you have concerns about any aspect of your MA program.

Credit Transfers:

If you have completed graduate coursework at another institution, it may be possible to transfer credits, but bear in mind that a) transfer credit (up to 6 credits) is decided on a case-by-case basis and b) the transfer of credits can only occur **after** the completion of 24 graduate-level credits at UB while enrolled in the UB English Department's MA Program.

REQUIREMENTS

The basic requirement for the MA degree is the completion of a minimum of 30 approved and graded graduate credits. To be considered full-time, students need to register for 12 credits every semester. The required 30 graduate credits are to be accumulated in the following manner:

1. 9 credits from required MA courses:

*3 credits from ENG 501A: Introduction to Scholarly Methods

*3 credits from ENG 501B (this is not an actual class and has no coursework or meetings—it is just free time set aside for advisement and settling into graduate school in the first semester)

*3 credits from ENG 502: Introduction to Critical and Cultural Theory

2. 12 credits from 4 Intensive (A-section) Seminars

*3 credits each from 4 different seminars (not including ENG 501/502)

3. 3 credits from 1 Extensive (B-section) Seminar (or Independent Study or Reading Group)

4. Up to 6 credits from the MA Thesis or MA Project (ENG 700 or 598)

1. Required courses:

ENG 501: Introduction to Scholarly Methods

This course aims to introduce students to the structure of information within the field of literary studies and transmit the necessary skills, knowledge and methodologies required for the successful study of literature at the graduate level. During this course you will be introduced to key literary research tools, develop an awareness of the material history of printed books, learn how to locate relevant information from an exhaustive range of sources, and evaluate the relative authority of some sources over others. We will also be working on the correct compilation and organization of research bibliographies; the theory and practice of editing texts; and the preparation and delivery of scholarly presentations. The final component of the course involves writing a critical paper from a plan and first draft, through to the finished product. Class meetings take the form of practical demonstrations in the libraries, classroom discussions based around assigned readings and writing workshops.

Please note: having enrolled for ENG 501, you will automatically be enrolled for three credits in the corresponding “B” section (although it may not show up immediately on your schedule). The “B” section does not have a set meeting time but is instead time put aside for advisement. Consider it a bonus – free time we give you to settle into graduate school and get up to speed with the work. [You can also opt out of the “B” section and use those three credits toward another seminar for a heavier course load in your first semester.]

Part-time students should not enroll in the “B” section, so they should simply drop this section once it shows up on their schedule. If you run into any difficulties with this, please contact the Director of the Master’s Program or Gabrielle Young in the Graduate Office at 645-2567 or gamarek@buffalo.edu.

ENG 502: Introduction to Critical and Cultural Theory

This course is intended to enhance your familiarity and facility with the kinds of questions literary scholars ask today and their strategies for answering them. You will tour some of the foundational texts and landmarks of contemporary theory, study various critical approaches, and gain practice doing research.

2. Four “intensive” graduate seminars

In the list of English Department graduate courses for any given semester, you will notice that each seminar is divided into “A” (intensive) and “B” (extensive) sections. This is a distinction observed only by the English Department and the Comparative Literature Department at UB.

An “intensive” seminar is a regular seminar in which you are expected to attend every session, read all the set texts, and complete all the assignments. Intensive seminars constitute the core of the program and are selected from the “A” sections of all graduate seminars officially listed or cross-listed in the English Department’s course catalogue. In addition, you may, with the permission of the Director of the Master’s Program, take graduate seminars outside the English Department. In the past, MA students have taken courses offered by the departments of Comparative Literature, History, American Studies, Women’s Studies, Visual Studies, African-American Studies, Romance Languages, and Classics. The responsibility for finding courses outside English lies with the student. Discuss your rationale for taking particular courses outside the English Department with the Director of the Master’s Program.

Note: If you take a graduate seminar outside of either the English or Comparative Literature departments, bear in mind that other departments do not observe the intensive/extensive seminar distinction; consequently, any seminar taken in such departments will automatically count as one of your intensive seminars and you will be required to fulfill all assignments.

3. At least three “extensive” graduate credits

An “extensive” course is a course where you attend all the sessions, do all of the reading, and, at the faculty member’s discretion, complete some assignments during the course of the semester; you do not complete a final research assignment. Extensive courses are good if you are interested in exploring a new area, or wish to familiarize yourself with something without committing research time to it.

In addition to the “B” section within each of our seminars, you may wish to consider independent individual and group work for “extensive” credit. Such work consists in independent studies with individual professors or reading groups organized by graduate students and sponsored by a faculty member.

4. The final component

The MA Program offers two options:

i. The Thesis (ENG 700)

The student may write a conventional MA thesis (c. 60-80 pages) directed by a faculty member of the student’s choice. Usually you prepare for such a thesis by up to six credits of ENG 700: Thesis Guidance with the supervising professor. This thesis must be formally submitted and conform to the UB Graduate School’s formal guidelines. These guidelines, along with a booklet on formatting and submitting your thesis can be found on the Graduate School website: <http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/masters.php>.

ii. The Project (ENG 598)

The student may write a shorter paper (c. 25-35 pages) under the direction of one faculty member and take an oral examination covering one field represented by at least fifteen texts (the exam will be supervised by another faculty member). Preparation involves up to six credits of ENG 598: Project Guidance with the relevant, supervising faculty member.

Seminars: Intensive vs. extensive

How to decide which classes to take intensively or extensively:

It is important to strike a balance between taking classes in a wide range of areas with a wide variety of faculty members and taking seminars in areas that will directly relate to your area of interest and possible thesis. There is no simple rule of thumb when it comes to deciding which seminars to take intensively or extensively, but generally speaking, students take intensive seminars with the faculty members they will want to work with down the road on their thesis or exam/project committee.

Learning your Field: Course Work

When enrolling in seminars, be broad in your sense of what is useful to your field. Shape a concentration for yourself amid your varied interests without limiting yourself to seminars in a narrowly defined field that would fail to provide the context you need to complete your thesis or exam/project. For instance, although the UB MA in English has no language requirement, Early Modern students may benefit from Latin; Lacanians may benefit from a history class. Take courses in your field and in contiguous and related fields. A specialist in twentieth-century English or American literature will want to know something about Victorian literature. An African Americanist would benefit from coursework in African and Caribbean writing. If you write on twentieth-century fiction, it

would be useful for your understanding of that field to study relatively marginalized as well as mainstream fields: canonical writers but also, for example, African American and/or Asian American traditions, postcolonial or feminist/queer writing and approaches to reading, and/or popular literature. Make sure to read journals in the field(s) in which you are working. Some recent issues of journals may be found on the bookshelves of Clemens 306.

ENG 600: Independent Studies and Reading Groups

Independent Studies: what is the difference between independent studies and supervised readings?

Supervised readings (ENG 601) are reserved specifically for preparation for the PhD oral examinations. **Independent Studies** (ENG 600), by contrast, allow you to work closely with faculty members in a field where no coursework is offered. You need to approach individual faculty about the possibility of doing an independent study with them considerably before the time you wish to engage in such study. Independent Studies must be approved by the DGS before the end of the preceding semester. Only one Independent Study or Reading Group may count as an intensive seminar; only two may count toward seminar credits. We expect students to read independently and broadly without receiving credit.

Reading Groups constitute another way of satisfying some portion of your requirements. If you are interested in studying a subject (for example, science fiction) that is either absent from or under-represented in existing course offerings, you can find other students who want to study the same subject and form a reading group. You will need to find a faculty sponsor (you register for independent study credit with this faculty member) and you and the other students then draw up a reading list in consultation with this sponsor. You will hold regular meetings (usually eight or so) over the course of the semester in which the reading group meets and the faculty sponsor will meet with the group on 2-3 occasions over that period of time. Only one Independent Study or Reading Group may count as an intensive seminar; only two may count toward seminar credits. We encourage students to meet in independent reading groups without receiving credit.

You will need to submit your proposal for a Reading Group to the Director of Graduate Studies for approval. Sample proposals are available for perusal in the Graduate Studies Office.

Incompletes:

Although it is possible to take incompletes in graduate seminars at UB, faculty in English strongly discourage you from doing so. The grade for an I/U needs to be turned in within a year of your taking the incomplete, so it is important to remain in communication with faculty and give them enough time to read the submitted work before your grade is due. Two Incompletes unfinished after two semesters will lead to loss of good standing in the program. You must also have finished all Incompletes before taking your oral exam, if you choose this option for completing your degree.

The Master's Thesis and Project/Oral Exam:

The Master's Thesis

The Master's thesis is defined as a piece of extended scholarly writing between 60-80 pages in length, and generally split into two or three chapters plus an introduction. As befits a research-led assignment, full scholarly apparatus are required – footnotes or endnotes, meticulous citation, and a bibliography – consistent with the guidelines of either the *MLA Style Manual* or *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The UB Graduate School has a set of formal guidelines for theses:

<http://www.grad.buffalo.edu/policies/masters.php>

Picking a Topic

The commonest mistake when planning a thesis is biting off more than one can chew; the best topics for MA theses are focused and well-defined. For the sake of argument, a thesis title “Word and Image in Latin America, 1400-1900” (fascinating though it may sound) would be considered too large and unruly a topic for such a relatively small study. By contrast, something succinct like “Shame and Social Ritual in Three Novels by Saul Bellow” would be ideal, both in terms of structuring the thesis and scope. The appendix to this handbook contains a list of recent MA thesis titles to get a flavor of workable topics.

Most topics come out of seminar work – a paper that begs to be revised and extended, for instance, or an area of study that you would like to explore further. A simple question to ask yourself when looking for a thesis topic is simply “what did I enjoy most?” It is often advisable to follow these initial instincts as having a genuine interest in your topic will be of invaluable assistance when seeing it through to the end.

Choosing a Supervisor

Once you have chosen your topic – or at least got a few ideas together – you should approach a professor who works in an appropriate field (the Director of the Master's Program can help you if you are unsure of whom you should ask). If you have not taken a seminar with the professor before, introduce yourself and your topic in an email and ask if they would meet with you. As supervision workloads are not distributed evenly amongst the faculty and some professors may be oversubscribed, it may not always be possible to work with your first choice, especially if you have not taken an intensive seminar with that person. What is most important, however, is that you get regular opportunities to meet with someone who will discuss ideas, read your work and give you feedback on early drafts. There is no set number of meetings required for the thesis; talk to your thesis advisor about her or his requirements. Usually students take up to six credits of English 700: Thesis Guidance, when planning and preparing the thesis.

Research and Planning

Research is a fairly lonely business, but you can make it much easier with some rudimentary planning. Consult with your supervisor and ask for reading suggestions; do

a thorough survey of all the relevant library databases (MLA, ABELL, WorldCat, etc.), and start to compile a list of books and articles you intend to consult; scour the footnotes and bibliographies of books and articles you have already found looking for further leads. Most importantly, **KEEP METICULOUS RECORDS FROM THE START**. Always make sure you note the author, title, place of publication, publisher, date and page number of any quotes you take, and update your records regularly. If you are keeping these records electronically, make sure you back up your files regularly to avoid disasters. Keeping good records will alleviate the pain of searching for that elusive quotation that makes the whole thesis make sense... something you read right at the beginning and cannot quite remember now.

Once you are ready to start writing, it helps to break the workload into smaller sections. If you intend your thesis to have three chapters and an introduction, think of each chapter as a separate essay of roughly the same length as a seminar paper. You can write them in whatever order you choose, as once you have written drafts of all the chapters you can go back and make the revisions necessary to link the pieces together, by referring back to previous arguments or anticipating coming chapters. The final draft should convey the sense of a unified and coherent study. Generally speaking, introductions are written last.

Writing the Thesis

Although you can start writing whenever you like, the vast majority of MA theses have been written over the summer months. The writing experience is different for everyone, but you should aim to set yourself clear and realistic deadlines and stick to them. Try to write a little every day. The more you write the less daunting writing becomes and consistent daily efforts soon add up. This phase of the project is generally done alone as your supervisor will not be able to give you meaningful feedback until there is a substantial amount drafted for him or her to comment on.

Project/Oral Exam

As an alternative to writing a thesis, MA students have the option of taking an oral exam based on a semester-long reading list, along with a modest written project of between 25-35 pages. This option tends to be preferred by students who have not yet decided to specialize in a particular field. Note that the project option is no less rigorous than the thesis option. The 25-35 pp. writing assignment may result in a polished writing sample for further graduate applications and/or a submission for journal publication.

The aim of an oral exam list is to study a literary period, genre, theme, or author(s) in depth without the need to produce a thesis on the topic. The list is compiled in consultation with the professor you have chosen to direct your study. Lists vary in length depending on the material to be covered – lists of poetry will necessarily be longer than lists of Victorian novels, for example – but you should aim to challenge yourself while also limiting the list to what can be covered realistically in the course of a semester. Your professor will help you be the judge of this. A list should have a well-defined theme and a focus – which can be as broad as “experimental fiction” or as specific as “postcolonial

readings of *Jane Eyre*” – and should include some critical and historical (or theoretical) works.

Once the texts on the exam list have been approved by the supervising professor, the onus is then on the student to keep up with the reading schedule and make appointments with the supervising professor to discuss the material. Patterns of supervision differ from professor to professor; typically, you will set up a schedule of four or five meetings to discuss blocks of reading during the semester.

At the end of the semester, you will be examined orally on your list. The exam takes about one hour. Questions are asked by the supervising professor with a second professor sitting in as an observer. The examination seeks to determine not just how well you have absorbed the material, but the degree to which you can create links among texts and synthesize your thoughts about the list as a whole. [The structure of this exam (and of the PhD oral exam) is under review by the Graduate Review Committee and may change during the coming academic year.]

The project is an extended essay on a topic of your own choosing that complements your orals list. Though the project must be entirely new work and may not replicate work you have handed in for other seminars, it might be something that has grown out of seminar reading, or a response paper. The above advice on research for the thesis applies here. Again, the onus is on the student to approach a professor to supervise this piece of work.

Grading and Matriculation

With the exception of ENG 501 and ENG 502, MA students take all their courses with PhD students. While our PhD students are graded either “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory,” students in the MA Program are given traditional letter-grades for their courses. You should always remind your instructor of this fact and, in the case of extensive registrations, make sure that you complete enough oral and/or written work to make such a letter-grade evaluation possible.

When you have completed all your coursework short of your final component, you will need to fill out an official “Application to Candidacy” form. When you have completed your final component, you will fill out an official “M” (matriculation) form for the award of your degree. These forms are on file in the graduate office. Note that once your “Application to Candidacy” has been approved, you are eligible for full-time status by paying for as little as one academic credit while you work on your final component. (See Gabrielle Marek for the Certification of Full-Time Status Form. Eligibility is limited to two semesters.)

Completing the Program: How Long Does it Take?

Our program has been designed so that it is possible to be paid for as two semesters of full-time study and completed in one calendar year (two semesters and a summer). That

said, most students take three or four semesters to finish. The amount of time you take to finish is entirely up to you. Once you start, you are neither locked into a timetable, nor under any pressure to finish **as long as you finish within four years**.

Note: If you choose to complete the program in three or more semesters, you should talk with Gabrielle Marek about being “certified” for full-time status during the semesters when you are taking fewer courses. Obtaining this certification means that you may be registered for fewer than 12 credits but still technically be counted full time. The university will permit this for up to two semesters. For many students, full-time enrollment is important for maintaining insurance and deferring loan repayment.

EXAMPLES OF TWO-SEMESTER PLANS:

For MA students, full-time status is defined as 12 credit-hours. When paying for full-time status you can enroll for up to 18 credits at the same rate. Registration for full-time status extends, for degree conferral purposes, up to the late-August deadline for September degree conferral. Therefore you can schedule (and pay for) all of your required 30 credit-hours toward the degree by registering for either 12 hours in the fall semester and 18 in the spring, or for 15 in each semester, even though the work on your final component will most likely be finished during the summer. Following are two models for full-time study, together with their credit-hour calculations:

Model A:

Fall semester	Spring semester	Summer
1. ENG 501 A (3)	1. Intensive seminar 2 (3)	Complete work on thesis, orals, or project
2. ENG 501 B (3)	2. Intensive seminar 3 (3)	
3. ENG 502 (3)	3. Intensive seminar 4 (3)	
4. Intensive seminar 1 (3)	4. Extensive seminar, independent study, or reading group (3)	
	5. ENG 598 or 700 (3)	
	6. ENG 598 or 700 (3)	

Model B:

Fall semester	Spring semester	Summer
1. ENG 501A (3)	1. Intensive seminar 2 (3)	Complete work on thesis, orals, or project
2. ENG 501 B (3)	2. Intensive seminar 3 (3)	
3. ENG 502 (3)	3. Intensive seminar 4 (3)	
4. Intensive seminar 1 (3)	4. ENG 598 or 700 (3)	
5. Extensive seminar (3)	5. ENG 598 or 700 (3)	

The advantage of Model A is that it gives you time to adjust to graduate school and, for most of you, a new home. However, Model A does make for a very loaded spring semester. If you follow Model B and enroll for 15 credits in the fall, we recommend that you enroll for three of those credits in the “extensive” format.

N.B.: Because you would not be enrolling for any new coursework during the summer, you would probably not be eligible for new financial aid during that period. However, because your spring semester work toward your final component would still be ongoing, you would be construed (for the duration of the summer) as continuously and actively engaged in completing your program, and therefore not yet subject to repayment of student loans. Likewise, international students should not have any difficulty remaining in the U.S. for the duration of that summer period to complete their academic work. For additional, more authoritative advice on these matters, consult the Offices of Financial Aid (<http://src.buffalo.edu/financialaid/index.shtml>).

EXAMPLES OF THREE-SEMESTER PLANS:

Model A:

Fall semester	Spring semester	Fall semester (second)
1. ENG 501 A (3)	1. Intensive seminar #2 (3)	1. Intensive seminar #4 (3)
2. ENG 501 B (3)	2. Intensive seminar #3 (3)	2. ENG 598 OR 700 (1)
3. ENG 502 (3)	3. Extensive seminar (3)	
4. Intensive seminar #1 (3)	4. ENG 598 OR 700 (5)	

Note: In this plan, the writing of the thesis would begin in the summer and continue through the fall semester. Registering for the credits in the spring semester (rather than in summer or fall) would save money, since there is no charge for additional credits once you reach full-time status.

Model B:

Fall semester	Spring semester	Fall semester (second)
1. ENG 501 A (3)	1. Intensive seminar #2 (3)	1. Intensive seminar #4 (3)
2. ENG 501 B (3)	2. Intensive seminar #3 (3)	2. Extensive seminar (3)
3. ENG 502 (3)		3. ENG 598 OR 700 (6)
4. Intensive seminar #1 (3)		

Note: In this plan, you might begin writing the thesis in the summer, even though you would not be registered for “Thesis Guidance” until the final fall semester.

EXAMPLE OF A FOUR-SEMESTER PLAN:

Fall semester

1. ENG 501 A (3)
2. ENG 501 B (3)
3. ENG 502 (3)
4. Intensive seminar #1 (3)

Spring semester

1. Intensive seminar #2 (3)
2. Extensive seminar (3)

Fall semester (second)

1. Intensive seminar #3 (3)
2. ENG 598 OR 700 (3)

Spring semester (second)

1. Intensive seminar #4 (3)
2. ENG 598 OR 700 (3)

SEE THE COURSE-CREDIT WORKSHEET IN THE APPENDIX

Note: No matter which course plan you choose, plan to consult with Gabrielle Young each semester before registering. Gabrielle will ensure that you have the proper number of credits and that you are not paying for more credits than necessary.

BA/MA Program

This new program, which bridges the senior year of undergraduate study with a fifth year of graduate study, gives students of recognized academic ability and maturity the opportunity to pursue graduate work in literature and culture beginning in their senior year. This program is an excellent option for students seeking advanced training in English to further their research and critical skills. Qualified students will undertake limited graduate work in their senior year and then will stay on for a fifth year to concentrate exclusively on graduate studies.

This program is designed for students seeking additional preparation before applying for PhD Programs in English and related fields, as well as for those pursuing other career tracks (such as secondary teaching and publishing, law school) in which an MA degree in English is valuable. This program will give students the chance to work closely with faculty mentors and with doctoral students who come to UB from other institutions to study at a Research 1 graduate program. Applicants must be UB English majors in their junior year.

How does the BA/MA program work?

Enrolled students will take limited graduate coursework during their senior year as they complete the requirements for their BA degree (120 credits). The fifth year will focus exclusively on graduate seminars and the MA thesis or MA Project/Exam option [see below].

In the fall semester of the senior year, accepted students will register for English 501 A/B (Scholarly Methods) and English 502 (Introduction to Critical and Cultural Theory), in order to orient them toward critical approaches associated with graduate-level work in literary and cultural studies. In the spring semester of their senior year, they may take one additional graduate seminar if they have already completed all requirements for their BA in English. During the fifth year, students will take three seminars per semester while working on a Masters thesis with a faculty mentor (English 700 or 598). The number of credit hours for thesis coursework is flexible, depending upon the scope of the research involved.

The graduate courses taken in the undergraduate years cannot be counted toward the English major or toward the 120 credits required by the College of Arts and Sciences for the BA degree. The MA degree requires 30 credits distributed as 8 seminars.

Students continuing in the BA/MA program would also receive the conferral of the BA at the end of their senior year assuming they have successfully fulfilled all BA requirements.

Fourth year review

In the spring semester of the fourth year, students will undergo a review to determine whether their performance justifies continuing in the BA/MA program. If approved, students will continue as indicated above. If their performance is considered inadequate, students will conclude their work in English with the conferral of the BA. Students continuing in the BA/MA program would also

receive the conferral of the BA at the end of their senior year assuming they have successfully fulfilled all BA requirements. Students who are not approved to continue with the BA/MA program may reapply to the MA program at a later date.

Do I need to write an MA Thesis?

As in the stand-alone Master's Degree Program, students in the BA/MA Program can complete their requirements for the MA either by writing a thesis or through an MA Project/Exam. As described in our MA Handbook, the MA Project (Eng 598) is usually an oral exam based on a semester-long reading list, along with an essay of between 25-30 pages. This option tends to be preferred by students who have not yet decided to specialize in a particular field. This project may result in a polished writing sample for further graduate applications and/or submission for journal publication.

Will I still be able to do an undergraduate Honors thesis?

Yes. If you are enrolled in the BA/MA Program and plan to do Honors as well, you will take English 497, ideally in the fall of your senior year. During your senior year, you will write an Honors thesis. During your fifth year, you will have the opportunity to expand and significantly revise your Honors thesis, if you wish to make it the basis of your MA thesis. You may also pursue an entirely different research topic for your MA thesis or choose to take the MA project/exam.

Can I complete the Undergraduate Creative Writing Certificate AND the Innovative Writing Certificate at the MA level?

If you are interested in this option, you should speak with the Director of the Certificate in Innovative Writing to determine whether you could complete the required coursework (MA with Certificate) within a 5th year at UB

If you have further questions about Creative Writing and the Innovative Writing Certificate, please contact Professor Dimitri Anastasopoulos danastas@buffalo.edu

Will I be able to apply for departmental support (fellowships, teaching assistantships) while I am working toward my MA degree?

No. BA/MA students do not qualify for departmental support.

Can I earn a PhD after my BA/MA?

We recommend that students who have received their BA and MA degrees from UB pursue their doctorate elsewhere.

ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN INNOVATIVE WRITING

Director of Creative Writing

Dimitri Anastasopoulos
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The Certificate in Innovative Writing presents a unique form of graduate study in creative writing, unlike any other MA in Creative Writing or MFA program, by closely intertwining the practice of writing with literary and aesthetic inquiries.

Our program creates a collaborative space in which we reflect on the ethical and political implications of creative writing within the matrix of global citizenship; tease out evident and obscured connections between contemporary and historical texts; consider how aesthetic concerns are inflected by various systems of power; and create rigorous, sensuous, contentious—above all, evocative—forms of writing that embody imaginative and forward-thinking strategies.

Our hope is to create an environment in which new forms of writing will flourish. Poetry. Fiction. Hybrid forms. Digital and electronic media. We are here to help you explore and advance your own writing approach to our ever-changing literary environment.

Informed by UB's long history of innovation in the arts, the writing workshops and literature seminars in the Certificate in Innovative Writing program arise from our faculty's shared belief that writing engages with—and intervenes in—the worlds we inhabit as much as the identities we pose and perform; that writing is a situation layered by critical examination, inventive thought, wild speculation, complex, often paradoxical feelings, multiple, entangled media platforms and social circuits, differing perceptions of time, and an ongoing translation of languages, as much as people and cultures.

Our Certificate invites you to view writing as an investigative, exploratory process in its own right: a mode of inquiry that, at its best, can articulate and *rearticulate* diverse experiences of 21st century culture, and unearth, perhaps even overturn, our most foundational thoughts—freeing them for profound imaginative work.

Students in the Certificate program who are enrolled in the English Department receive a MA or PhD in English with an Advanced Certificate in Innovative Writing. Students in other departments receive a MA or PhD in (their field of study) with an Advanced Certificate in Innovative Writing.

The Certificate in Innovative Writing is particularly useful for students who are interested in enhancing their writing portfolios and/or their critical and literary backgrounds before applying to MFA and PhD programs. For PhD students, the Certificate is valued as a credential for writing related careers, including teaching creative writing, for future university appointments or alternative academic careers.

ELIGIBILITY & COURSE ENROLLMENT

Current MA and PhD students at UB, in English as well as other departments, are welcome to apply to enroll in the Certificate Program. These students earn the Certificate by taking the 4 required courses while satisfying their other degree requirements

Students who are enrolled in the Certificate have primary access to workshop courses in the curriculum.

Should there be open workshop seats, graduate students who are not enrolled in the Certificate program may request a seat *with the approval of the workshop professor*. Please contact the professor teaching the workshop directly for permission to enroll in the course. Permission may be offered at the discretion of the professor: permission is not guaranteed even if there are open seats.

REQUIREMENTS

In order to satisfy the Certificate in Innovative Writing requirements, students must complete the following courses for a total of 18 credits:

—ENG 547: Fall Workshop Colloquium in Fiction (6 credits) **OR** English 549: Fall

Workshop Colloquium in Poetry (6 credits.)

—English 548: Spring Fiction Workshop (3 credits) **OR** English 550: Spring Poetry Workshop (3 credits)

—ENG 502: Introduction to Critical and Cultural Theory (3 credits)

—English 598: Creative Project Guidance (6 credits)

PLEASE NOTE:

Students enrolling in the Certificate in Innovative Writing Program **AND** the MA in English take 4 *elective seminars* in addition to the above courses. You may retake the Fall Colloquia (counts as 3 credits the second time) or the Fiction and Poetry Workshops as electives. In addition, one of your elective literature courses may be taken extensively rather than intensively. This allows you to fulfill the requirements of a course (reading, response papers, short projects) without having to complete the final project or term paper. See the MA in English Handbook for explanation.

Students enrolled in graduate degree programs elsewhere at UB who are admitted to the Certificate in Innovative Writing are required to take **ONLY** the above 4 courses.

For more information, see the Graduate Handbook for the Advanced Certificate in Innovative Writing on the department website

OTHER ASPECTS OF GRADUATE STUDY

Seminar Attendance

Your responsibility to a graduate seminar is much greater than what you are likely to have experienced with undergraduate courses. Very simply, you should not miss class unless there is an emergency. In such a case, you should contact the professor leading the seminar.

Department Resources

All graduate students will receive a key to the graduate lounge (Clemens 309). See Gabrielle Young in 305 Clemens. All graduate students will receive photocopy privileges in either the Main Office or in the 307 Clemens, the Graduate Student Copy Room. The passcode will be the last five digits of your person number. Students can have access to the photocopiers during office hours: M-F, 8:30am-5:00pm.

Professors as Resources

Professors leading graduate courses may not ever require that you set up office meetings with them or that you attend office hours. This does not mean that you should not do so! As a graduate student, your work is more independent than it was as an undergraduate. Part of this independence means asking for help when you need it, as well as using your seminar leader as a resource. Whether you are having difficulty with a particular reading assignment or are interested in further engagement on a question that emerged during seminar discussion, contact the professor and arrange to talk about it. She or he will appreciate your initiative and interest.

Beyond the Classroom

Graduate school should be about more than what happens in seminar: it should be more broadly about participating in the intellectual life of the university and community. This can take many different forms at UB. Among them are:

The UB Humanities Institute

Since its founding in 2005, the University at Buffalo's Humanities Institute (HI) has quickly established itself as one of the most important entities supporting the humanities at UB and in Western New York more generally. With dynamic lectures, conferences and research workshops, the Humanities Institute fuels intellectual inquiry, vitality and interdisciplinary collaboration. Consider joining one of the dozen research workshops on topics from early modern culture and ecocritical studies to disability studies and queer studies. To receive the weekly electronic HI newsletter, send an email inquiry to huminst@buffalo.edu

To join a research workshop, go to the website and click on the workshop that interests you and write the faculty coordinator directly about joining their listserv about future events and meetings.

<http://humanitiesinstitute.buffalo.edu/research-workshops/>

Graduate Groups

Graduate study at UB offers multiple opportunities for non-credit learning and intellectual

stimulation. The Department strongly encourages you to become involved with the Graduate Groups in the fields closest to your interests. Current Graduate Field Groups include the Americanist Group, the British and Irish Studies Group, the Early Modern Studies Group, the Graduate Poetics Group, and the Transnational Studies Group. Typically, these groups hold colloquia, organize work-in-progress sessions, and invite outside speakers. Many of these groups are interdepartmental and interdisciplinary. Participating in these groups will enable you to become acquainted with graduate students and faculty from UB and elsewhere who have similar intellectual interests. Many students also participate in the English Graduate Students Association (EGSA)

The UB Gender Institute

The UB Gender Institute is a university-wide research center founded in 1997, which promotes research and teaching related to women, gender, and sexuality. The Institute offers grants and awards to faculty and students to support scholarship on women and on the intricate connections between gender and other social forces, such as sexuality, race, class, health, age, religion, and place. We convene interdisciplinary networks and organize lectures, workshops, conferences, film screenings, art exhibitions, and community events.

<http://www.buffalo.edu/genderin.html> ; to sign up for their regular electronic newsletter, contact ub-irewg@buffalo.edu), where their resources for students can be found: <http://www.buffalo.edu/genderin/opportunities/studentinformation.html> ;

Public Lectures

The intellectual life at UB is enriched by the many lectures, conferences and symposia that the English Department, the UB Humanities Institute and other departments at UB frequently offer. All MA students should make an effort to attend these events. They can be a wonderful way to explore your own area of interest further and to introduce yourself to new research areas and the faculty and graduate students working in them. They also provide valuable models of professional styles of presentation and research.

The Director of the Master's Program

The Director of the Master's Program is a resource meant to help you make the best of your experience at UB. Feel free to contact Randy P. Schiff at rpschiff@buffalo.edu to arrange an appointment or telephone conversation.

AI Policy for Graduate Work in English

The Use of Generative AI in Graduate Writing, Theses, and Dissertations

The scholarly dispositions, practical skills, and professional ethics fostered through graduate-level training in English cannot be outsourced to generative artificial intelligence technologies without seriously undermining the basic premises of the discipline. For this primary reason, the Department of English strictly prohibits the use of generative artificial intelligence technologies in the creation and revision of scholarly writing for all work done at the graduate level.

This department-wide prohibition applies especially to the variety of activities that go into the

production of scholarly writing: engaging in close and extensive reading; working with primary and critical sources and understanding their relationship; formulating viable ideas and understanding their viability; learning specialized vocabularies and concepts; crafting sentences and paragraphs in service to unique argumentation; and synthesizing the knowledge of past and present in original contributions to the discipline. These activities are nowhere more important than in the so-called milestone projects of graduate education, the theses or dissertations that often serve as the basis for professional proposals, presentations, and publication.

Violations of this policy will be treated like other violations of academic integrity and subject to probationary review (falling out of “good standing”) and the possibility of dismissal from the graduate program. The faculty members of the department’s executive committee will oversee these disciplinary decisions.

The use of generative artificial intelligence technologies in certain classroom situations and pedagogical settings may be entertained and is largely left to the discretion of individual faculty, but these occasions mark the exception to this policy. In these situations, faculty members must a) clearly define in the syllabus or lesson plan the scope, nature, and potential benefit of the use of generative artificial intelligence technologies; and b) generate a mandatory attestation statement, whereby students agree to document and describe their use of generative artificial intelligence technologies in assigned work.

This policy does not apply to the kinds of assistive artificial intelligence technologies, such as spell-check programs or thesaurus functions. The current ubiquity of assistive artificial intelligence technologies suggests, however, that this policy on generative artificial intelligence technologies will need to be regularly reviewed and, as need be, revised, as institutional priorities and industry fiat increasingly incorporate them into our everyday condition. As such, this policy on generative artificial intelligence technologies must be reviewed by the department’s executive committee on a yearly basis, with any substantive changes to its letter or tenor subject to departmental vote.

APPENDIX

Course Credit Worksheet

USE THIS ONLY IF YOU PLAN TO BE ENROLLED FULL TIME (12 OR MORE CREDITS)
IN THE FIRST SEMESTER

Once you have completed a course, write the name/number of the course in the box provided.
When you have finished the requirements for a section, write the total number of credits at the end
of that section.

Required Courses for the MA: 501A, 501B, 502 (each three credits)

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Intensive (A) Seminars (each three credits)

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Extensive (B) Seminar or Reading Group (each three credits)

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Thesis or Project Guidance (up to six credits to complete the total of thirty credits)

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THE TOTAL CREDITS FROM ALL FOUR SECTIONS MUST EQUAL 30

A Selection of Recent MA Thesis Titles: [All UB theses and dissertations are available through the UB Libraries database: [Proquest Dissertations & Theses @ SUNY Buffalo](#)]

Natasha Ghosh, “Sweet Dreams, Hamlet” (2016)

Matthew Allan Alexander, “About what remained: Freudian mourning in *The Crying of Lot 49*” (2015)

Chloe Barker-Benfield, "The thorn must pierce your heart": Compassionate organs, decadent viscera, and soulful gore in Oscar Wilde's fairy tales” (2015)

Amanda Greer, “Absence in Postmodern Literature” (2014)

Kristen Angierski, Reclaiming the motherland: (Eco)feminism in Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance* and *The End of Spring*” (2014)

Kimberly Ann Brown, "If Nothing Ends': Thinking Power, Antiracism, and Transgender Politics” (2014)

Carl Thompson, "Deep in the wilderness grim': Reading trauma through landscape in the post-civil war works of Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and Winslow Homer” (2014)

Lauren Carmer, “Recycling regicide: Reprinting fabian philipps's *No Man of Blood* and John Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*” (2014)

Malcolm Matthews, “Technically bromantic: The autistic as a "Noble savant" in a homoerotic, post-modern pairing” (2014)

Aaron Lelito, “Narratives of Consumption: Postmodern American Fiction’s Engagement with Consumer Culture” (2007).

Hugo Garcia Manriquez, “The Promised Future: The (Un)Interrupted Dialogue in William Carlos Williams’ *Yes, Mrs. Williams*” (2007).

Bradford Reid, “Body Language: The Material Bodily Lower Stratum in the Poetry of Walt Whitman, Frank O’Hara, and Charles Bukowski” (2007).

Jeanne Skotnicki, “Role Reversal: Female Self-Interest and Male Sacrifice in the Novels of Louisa May Alcott” (2007).

SAMPLE ORIENTATION SCHEDULE

The English Department orientation for incoming graduate students takes place during the two weeks before classes begin.

FOR IN-COMING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY:

M, Aug. 22 16:00-18:00 Immigration & Public Safety Sessions*

*You must first register with the Office of International Education

FOR ALL IN-COMING PHD AND MA STUDENTS (HELD IN 306 AND 436 CLEMENS):

F, Aug. 26 9:00-11:50 Intro. to the PhD Program..... Dir. of Grad Studies
Intro to the MA Program..... Dir. of MA Studies

FOR EVERYBODY—GRAD STUDENTS, SPOUSES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS, CHILDREN

Early in the semester 18:00-21:00 Garden Party (Bring a dish)Place TBA

Recommended Reading for Graduate Study

Gregory Colón Semenza, Graduate Study for the Twenty-First Century: How to Build an Academic Career in the Humanities (Palgrave 2010)

Leonard Cassuto, The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It (Harvard 2015)

Sidonie Ann Smith, Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times (Michigan 2016)