

English Graduate Student Manual

Welcome to the graduate program in English at Austin Peay State University that leads to a Master of Arts (M.A.) in English. Studying English at Austin Peay gives you the opportunity to stand out among the crowd. Our students are the makers, thinkers, and explorers of tomorrow—graduates of English programs go on to become doctors, lawyers, and accountants, writers, publishers, teachers, and scholars.

We prepare students for jobs of the future, encouraging creative problem-solving, attention to detail, and a keen analytical approach that benefits students in ways that serve them for the rest of their lives.

At APSU, we offer a strong generalist program with a broad foundation in British and American literature. Students may also take courses in creative writing, linguistics, professional writing, and non-Western literature. Since we focus only on the terminal masters degree, graduate students here find a place to develop their knowledge, authority, and voices in the classroom. Our small seminars allow for exploration and absorbing discussions. Dedicated faculty cultivate mentoring relationships with our graduate students, and take pride in their students' accomplishments and success. [Admissions requirements may be found here.](#)

APSU has the distinction of hosting the only Center of Excellence for the Creative Arts (CECA) in Tennessee. We are well-funded by the state to provide engaging, unique experiences for students. CECA routinely brings in renowned writers for lectures, discussions, workshops, and masterclasses. Past authors include Dorothy Allison, David Huddle, Louise Erdrich, Joyce Carol Oates, and Margaret Atwood.

Our alumni are well prepared to enter the workforce, to attend further graduate studies, or to teach at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

The following information provides a basic guide to pursuing the M.A. in English at Austin Peay. It does not replace or supplant the official [Graduate Bulletin](#). If you would like further information or an appointment to discuss your plans regarding our M.A. program, please contact:

- Fall and Spring: the English Graduate Coordinator, Dr. Marisa Sikes sikesm@apsu.edu, (931)221-7212, Office: Harned 234.
- Summer: the Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature, Dr. Mercy Cannon, cannonm@apsu.edu, (931)221-7860, Office: Harned 117.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The "Program of Study/Graduate Admission to Candidacy/Graduate Committee Assignment" form must be filed by the end of your first semester of enrollment. It specifies both the courses to be taken within your graduate program and your graduate

committee (three professors) who will approve and oversee your program. The form is available [here](#).

For non-thesis programs of study, this committee insures a rational, broad program has been established. For the thesis option, the committee is more important as it oversees the writing of the thesis and should be chosen with the defined subject area in mind. This committee will approve a brief summary of the thesis topic and sign off on the "Thesis Completion Schedule" form. For concentrations, if thesis hours are supposed to contribute to the concentration, then the committee chair must be affiliated with the concentration.

The department provides a tentative schedule for graduate English classes for a two or three year period. It is often necessary to make a change in the Program of Study because (e.g. course substitution, committee member change, or change the thesis to the non-thesis option). For such changes, complete a "Change of Program of Study/Change of Graduate Committee Assignment" form, available [here](#).

PROGRAM-WIDE REQUIREMENTS

- All Programs of Study require 33 credit hours from course work at the 5000-level or above.
- English 5000 (Bibliography and Methods of Research), which should be taken as early as possible in your graduate career; it is offered each fall.
- All English M.A. candidates are required to pass a Comprehensive Reading Exam taken towards the end of the completion of course work.
 - Reading and key term lists are available [here](#).
 - The exam is generally given late in the spring semester and lasts four hours.
 - Failing candidates may be reexamined after a minimum of three months and before a maximum of twelve months. The result of the second examination is final.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

English M.A. (non-thesis)

- Students selecting non-thesis will use Research Plan I on the Program of Study Form.
- ENGLISH 5000 - Bibliography and Methods of Research (3 credit hours)
- 10 Courses from the Graduate Offerings (30 credit hours)
 - At least five (15 credit hours) of these 10 courses must be literature courses (as opposed to courses in writing, pedagogy, or Linguistics).

English M.A. (thesis)

- Students selecting thesis will use Research Plan III on the Program of Study Form.
- ENGLISH 5000 - Bibliography and Methods of Research (3 credit hours)

- 8 Courses from the Graduate Offerings (24 credit hours)
 - At least five (15 credit hours) of these courses must be literature courses (as opposed to courses in writing, pedagogy, or Linguistics).
- ENGL 5990 Thesis (6 hours)

List of Literature Electives

- ENGL 508B - Special Topics in Criticism and Theory
- ENGL 530A - Seminar in English Drama 1550 to 1780
- ENGL 530B - Special Topics in World Drama
- ENGL 530C - Seminar in Modern Serious Drama
- ENGL 549A - Medieval English Literature
- ENGL 549B - Masterworks of the Middle Ages
- ENGL 549C - Seminar in Chaucer
- ENGL 550A - Seminar in Shakespeare
- ENGL 550B - Renaissance Poets
- ENGL 551A - A Rise of the Novel
- ENGL 551B - Restoration and Eighteenth Century British Literature
- ENGL 551C - Special Topics in Eighteenth Century British Literature
- ENGL 552A - Studies in the British Romantic Period
- ENGL 552B - Special Topics in the British Romantic Period
- ENGL 552C - Victorian Poetry
- ENGL 552D - Victorian Novel
- ENGL 554A - American Renaissance
- ENGL 554B - Nineteenth Century American Fiction
- ENGL 554C - Nineteenth Century American Poets
- ENGL 554D - Early American Literature
- ENGL 556A - Southern Literature
- ENGL 556B - Seminar In Faulkner
- ENGL 556C - Clarksville and South Renaissance
- ENGL 558A - Twentieth Century American Poetry
- ENGL 558B - Major Figures in Twentieth Century American Fiction
- ENGL 558C - Major Figures in Twentieth Century American Poetry
- ENGL 558D - African American Literature
- ENGL 560D - Twentieth Century American and English Poetry
- ENGL 561A - Twentieth Century English Fiction
- ENGL 561B - Twentieth Century English Poetry
- ENGL 561C - Major Figures in Twentieth Century English Fiction
- ENGL 5700 - Literature Across Cultures
- ENGL 5550 - Independent Study (dependent upon topic/content)
- ENGL 5710 - Selected Topics (dependent upon topic/content)

English MA with Creative Writing Concentration (thesis/non-thesis)

- For the thesis creative writing concentration MA, your program of study must include two of the following creative-writing courses: English 541A, English 541B, or English 541C before you register for your creative thesis hours.
 - You will need the permission of the instructor to enroll in these courses.
 - If not familiar with your work, the instructor may require samples of your writing.
 - One of 541A, 541B, and 541C will typically be taught each fall and spring semester.
- ENGLISH 5000 Bibliography and Methods of Research (3 credit hours)
- Five (5) graduate-level literature courses (15 credits total)
- Five (5) graduate-level courses (15 credits total; can include 6 thesis hours; can be literature, linguistics, creative writing, professional/technical writing courses)
 - Of these Fifteen (15) credit hours, Twelve (12) must be credits in graduate-level creative writing courses. The courses listed below qualify as such.
- An approved thesis in creative writing can also count towards the 12 required credits.
- Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher in creative writing courses in order to complete the Creative Writing Concentration.

Creative Writing Courses

- ENGL 541A - Seminar in Creative Writing: Prose Non-Fiction
- ENGL 541B - Seminar in Creative Writing: Fiction
- ENGL 541C - Seminar in Creative Writing: Poetry
- ENGL 5300 - The Art of Review
- ENGL 5460 - Literary Journal Internship
- ENGL 5990 – Thesis, (6 credits); counts towards Creative Writing Concentration only if it is an approved thesis in Creative Writing overseen by a Creative Writing faculty member.

Creative Writing Faculty

- Prof. Barry Kitterman, kittermanb@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7878, Office: Harned 219
- Dr. Andrea Spofford, spofforda@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7869, Office: Harned 222
- Dr. Amy Wright, wrighta@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7714, Office: Harned 215

Linguistics Concentration (may be thesis/non-thesis)

- ENGLISH 5000 - Bibliography and Methods of Research (3 hours)
- Five (5) graduate-level literature courses (15 credits total)
- Five (5) graduate-level courses (15 credits total; can include 6 thesis hours; can be literature, linguistics, creative writing, professional/technical writing courses)

- Of these Fifteen (15) credit hours, Twelve (12) credits in graduate-level Linguistic courses. The courses listed below will count towards the Linguistics.
- An approved thesis in Linguistics can also count towards the 12 required credits.
- Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher in linguistic courses in order to complete the Linguistics Concentration.

Linguistics Courses

- LING 506A - History of English Language
- LING 506B - Structure of Language
- LING 506C - Language, Culture and Identity
- LING 506D - Survey of Early Germanic Languages
- LING 506E - Language Variation and Change
- LING 506F - Discourse Analysis
- LING 506G - Historical Linguistics
- LING 506H - Theory in Second Language Acquisition
- LING 506I - Selected Topics in Linguistics
- ENGL 5990 – Thesis (6 credits) counts towards Linguistics Concentration only if it is an approved thesis in Linguistics overseen by a Linguistics faculty member.

LINGUISTICS FACULTY

- Dr. Neeta Bhasin, bhasinn@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7870, Office: Harned 139.
- Dr. Katherine Honea, honeak@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7117, Office: Harned, 223.
- Dr. Andrew Kostakis, kostakisa@apsu.edu, (931) 221-7339, Office: Harned, 105.

RECOMMENDED COURSES

English 508A and 508B: Criticism and Theory. We encourage you to take one of these "Criticism and Theory" courses during your program of study. These courses either survey important critical approaches to the study of language and literature (508A) or examine in much greater depth one critical approach to the study of language and literature (508B). These courses are particularly important for students who intend to enroll in a doctoral program.

INDEPENDENT STUDIES

The department rarely and in very specific special circumstances approves independent study courses. An independent study must be arranged with a member of the English graduate faculty and be approved by the department chair.

THESIS AND NON-THESIS OPTION

The graduate coordinator and department chair advise each incoming graduate students to select the non-thesis option in their initial program of study. Should a strong area of special interest and a corresponding felicitous relationship with an appropriate committee chair arise over the course of the student's MA career, then a "Change of

Program of Study/Change of Graduate Committee Assignment" form and "Thesis Completion Schedule" form can be completed.

The chair and coordinator encourage selection of the non-thesis option as historically within our MA program, completing the thesis has been a hindrance to degree completion. A thesis is a long-term and largely self-directed research project that demands time, planning, and dedication. While at one time students who moved on to a doctoral program without completing a thesis might have been at a disadvantage in the admissions process, this is no longer the case as many MA programs have shifted to a test-only model.

Choosing the non-thesis option, also provides students with 6 more credit hours of coursework rather than 6 credit hours of English 5990, thesis. Consider carefully that these courses will increase the base of your knowledge in preparation for the Comprehensive Exam, thereby increasing your ability to excel on this exam. Alternatively, opting not to complete the thesis if you have chosen a concentration for the MA program, then you can take the 6 hours of coursework within the chosen concentration field: creative writing or linguistics.

NON-ENGLISH MAJORS ENTERING THE ENGLISH M.A. PROGRAM

It is not unusual for students who have attained a bachelor's degree in another field to pursue a master's degree in English. Our department has awarded MAs to nursing, music, history, and biology undergraduate majors.

When students come to us from undergraduate programs that have included very limited experience in upper-division English classes, we do encourage these students to take a couple of upper-division survey classes in British and American literature to enhance their literary background and to expose them to our expectations for literary essays and research papers. It is also sometimes the case that students enter our M.A. program with an undergraduate English major, but with little or no experience in creative writing. These students may be asked to take one or more undergraduate creative writing classes before they enroll in the graduate writing seminars.

GRADUATE COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- Oral reports are a common assignment.
- The writing expectation for our courses is generally 25-30 pages.
- Reading expectations are greater in graduate courses than they are in undergraduate courses and may include more reading of secondary sources along with primary works of literature. This is the reason graduate students are full-time students at nine hours rather than twelve hours. Because of the demands of graduate courses, you are not encouraged to take more than twelve hours and should not take more than fifteen hours per term.
- Teaching methods will vary. Some of your professors may require extensive

computer involvement; others may expect very little. Some may lecture frequently while others may rely entirely upon collaborative learning. Some will give exams, while others will not. Some may demand numerous references to secondary sources within your graduate papers while others may eschew them.

- Graduate students at APSU are expected to maintain a 3.00 GPA and risk probation and suspension if they are unable to do so (see Bulletin for specific grade requirements). You cannot receive your M.A. degree with a cumulative GPA below 3.00.
 - No credit hours will be given for the grade of D or F, nor will students be allowed to receive a graduate degree with these grades on their record. Students may repeat one course in which a grade of less than B was made. (Permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies is required.)
 - A's are reserved for truly excellent performance and B's are to indicate that you have done well. If you are at risk of receiving a C or below, talk to your professor and use her or his assistance in considering ways to improve your performance before the end of the term.
 - If personal circumstances contribute to poor academic performance, consider withdrawing or petitioning for an Incomplete (Incompletes default to an F after one calendar year if not completed).
- The graduate English faculty do not have a uniform policy on attendance, but missing just one class is equivalent to missing three classes undergraduate class sessions.
 - Make every effort to attend every class session.
 - Seminars and workshops place more responsibility on the graduate students to participate within class sessions. Poor attendance is a lack of performance, which by default becomes poor performance.

TRANSFER CREDIT

The department may approve as many as six graduate hours from another program or university upon review. Consult the Bulletin for transfer credit procedures.

THE THESIS IN LITERARY CRITICISM

The thesis in literary criticism should have three parts:

1. 2-5 page statement of critical principles and influences.
2. polished, 20-30 page critical essay.
3. 5-10 page annotated bibliography of major works that pertain to the subject of the critical essay.

The First Reader or Major Professor on your thesis committee should be a professor with whom you are able to work closely and who is knowledgeable and shares an interest in your subject. The Major Professor will be involved in the planning as well as the actual writing stages of the thesis. The Second and Third Readers will also approve the plan, but they will not necessarily be as involved in revision.

THE CREATIVE THESIS

- A creative thesis can be composed of fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, or a combination of these genres.
- The First Reader should be a professor with whom you have a good working relationship, and who shares your genre interests.
- Second and Third Readers can be literature professors rather than creative writing faculty in the Languages and Literature Department.
- The length of a creative thesis varies.
 - A poetry thesis should contain a minimum of 25-30 pages of poetry (not less than 20 poems).
 - A short fiction thesis or a creative nonfiction thesis should contain a minimum of 50-60 pages of prose (not less than four stories or essays).
 - If the nature of your creative project would be served by a critical introduction, creative writing faculty may request one.

REGISTERING FOR THESIS HOURS

Before you can register for thesis hours, you must complete the following steps:

1. Have a committee of readers in place with a first reader or chair agreeing to oversee your thesis work.
2. For a scholarly thesis, your first reader will ask you to provide the following (which can and should become part of the thesis project):
 - a. A 5-page prospectus outlining your project
 - b. A list of 10 annotated sources

No faculty member is obligated to accept your request to direct a thesis.

COMPLETION OF PROGRAM

To graduate, you must apply to graduate by the deadline specified by the Registrar. There is also a time limitation on earning the graduate degree of six calendar years from your initial admission.

Visit [this link](#) and click the “Apply to Graduate” to be directed to a page that contains the deadlines for graduation application. These are updated periodically, so check the listed dates when you are within a year of graduating.

Thesis deadline: The thesis, as approved by the student's graduate committee, must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review and approval at least three weeks before the end of the semester the student expects to complete degree requirements.

LIFE AFTER THE M.A.

The English M.A. program sharpens your perceptions and deepens your understanding of writing and reading and as such is a preparatory stage for a variety of careers.

- Secondary school teachers who desire greater expertise in their teaching field
- Community College instructors
- English Doctoral students or MFA students
- Writing, editing, proofreading, and technical writing positions
- Publishing industry positions
- Any career that requires careful observation, skilled oral and written communication, and critical thinking

Students may also pursue the MA simply to enrich their lives or provide intellectual fulfillment.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

We offer full and part time graduate teaching assistantships through the English M.A. program, and most of our current graduate students hold such a position.

Our traditional GTA position is 20 or 10 hours a week, and it comes with waivers for tuition and fees, as well as a stipend. These GTAs typically work as lab instructors for 1010 enhanced classes, as research assistants for professors, or as program assistants.

For students who work full time jobs during the day, we have a limited number of “quarter time” graduate assistantships. These GTA positions require five hours of work, generally completed off-campus, and also come with full waivers for tuition and fees.

These positions are renewable up to six semesters, depending on performance in job duties and in graduate classes. GTAs are required to take 6 or 9 graduate credit hours per semester and must maintain a 3.0 GPA. Current GTAs must reapply each year.

For priority consideration, assistantship applications should be completed by April 1 for the Fall semester. Additional graduate assistantships are offered across campus.

Click [here](#) to apply.

SAMPLE TWO-YEAR PLANS

Master of Arts in English

First Semester	SCH
ENG 5000 Bibliography and Method of Research (Required)	3
ENG 558D African American Literature (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 552D Victorian Novel (Literature Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Second Semester	SCH
ENG 508A Seminar in Criticism and Theory (Elective)	3
ENG 530A Seminar in English Drama 1550 to 1780 ((Literature Elective)	3
ENG 554C Nineteenth-Century American Poets (Literature Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Third Semester	SCH
ENG 508C Composition Theory and Pedagogy (Elective)	3
ENG 551A The Rise of the Novel (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 5300 The Art of the Review (Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Fourth Semester	SCH
ENG 558B Twentieth-Century American Fiction (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 5360 Professional Writing and Editing (Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	6
Total Student Credit Hours for Degree	33

Master of Arts in English with Creative Writing Concentration

First Semester	SCH
ENG 5000 Bibliography and Method of Research (Required)	3
ENG 558D African American Literature (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 552D Victorian Novel (Literature Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Second Semester	SCH
ENG 508A Seminar in Criticism and Theory (Elective)	3
ENG 530A Seminar in English Drama 1550 to 1780 (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 541C Seminar in Creative Writing: Poetry (Creative Writing Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Third Semester	SCH
ENG 508C Composition Theory and Pedagogy (Elective)	3
ENG 551A The Rise of the Novel (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 5300 The Art of the Review (Creative Writing Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Fourth Semester	SCH
ENG 558B Twentieth-Century American Fiction (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 541A Seminar in Creative Writing: Prose Non-Fiction (Creative Writing Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	6

Master of Arts in English Linguistics Concentration

First Semester	SCH
ENG 5000 Bibliography and Method of Research (Required)	3
ENG 558D African American Literature (Literature Elective)	3
ENG 552D Victorian Novel (Literature Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Second Semester	SCH
ENG 508A Seminar in Criticism and Theory (Elective)	3
ENG 530A Seminar in English Drama 1550 to 1780 (Literature Elective)	3
LING 506A - History of English Language (Linguistics Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Third Semester	SCH
LING 506B - Structure of Language (Linguistics Elective)	3
ENG 551A The Rise of the Novel (Literature Elective)	3
LING 506C Language, Culture, and Identity (Linguistics Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	9
Fourth Semester	SCH
ENG 558B Twentieth-Century American Fiction (Literature Elective)	3
LING 506G Historical Linguistics (Linguistics Elective)	3
TOTAL SCH	6
Total Student Credit Hours for Degree	33

Note: Graduate students in English are required to take ENGL 5000 and at least five literature courses (15 hours).

All two-year plans derived from APSU Graduate Bulletin 2018-2019.