

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Director of undergraduate studies: Ruth Bernard Yeazell (ruth.yeazell@yale.edu), (ruth.yeazell@yale.edu) [Spring 2023]; Stefanie Markovits (stefanie.markovits@yale.edu), [Fall 2023, Spring 2024] 107 LC, 432-2224; associate director of undergraduate studies: Naomi Levine (naomi.levine@yale.edu), 107 LC, 432-2224; registrar: Erica Sayers (erica.sayers@yale.edu), 106 LC, 432-2226; assistant registrar: Jane Bordiere (jane.bordiere@yale.edu), 107 LC, 432-2224; english.yale.edu/welcome-english-major

The undergraduate program in English cultivates students' powers of argument and analysis while developing their understanding of important works of English, American, and world literatures in English. Courses offered by the department are designed to teach students foundational research and writing skills; to provide historical perspectives from which to read and analyze literary works; and to deepen students' insight into their own experience. For students interested in creative writing, the department offers an array of courses taught by renowned professional writers in all of the major genres, including fiction, poetry, play and film writing, nonfiction prose, and journalism.

The ability to write well remains a rare but prized skill in almost every domain of our world, and English majors go on to careers in many fields of endeavor. The analytic talents and the writing and speaking skills honed in the major can lead graduates to careers in fields such as advocacy, publishing, teaching, the arts, law, venture capital, medicine, and policy making.

COURSES FOR NONMAJORS AND MAJORS

All English courses are open to both majors and nonmajors, although advanced seminars are intended primarily for junior and senior majors.

Introductory courses English courses numbered from ENGL 114–130 are introductory and are open to all students in Yale College. Students planning to elect an introductory course in English should refer to the department website for information about preregistration. Once registered, students must attend the first and all subsequent course meetings for that particular section until the end of the Add/Drop period in order to retain a place. Students who miss a class meeting during this period without informing the instructor beforehand will have their places filled from the waiting list.

Advanced courses Advanced courses are open to upper-level students; the faculty recommends that students both within and outside the major prepare for such work with two terms of introductory English. Sophomores and juniors are encouraged to enroll in lecture courses in order to gain broad perspectives in preparation for more focused study. Seminars offer more intensive treatment of their topics, which are also often more specialized. While both lectures and seminars are frequently offered more than once, students should not expect the same courses to be offered from one year to the next.

Writing courses Besides courses that concentrate on the writing of expository prose (ENGL 114, 115, 120, and ENGL 421), the English department offers a number of creative writing courses. The introductory creative writing course, ENGL 123, is open to any student who has not taken an intermediate or advanced course in the writing of fiction, poetry, or drama. Interested students must preregister for ENGL 123, but they need not submit a writing sample to gain admission. Many of the more advanced creative writing courses require an application in advance, with admission based on the instructor's judgment of the student's work. Application details and forms for these courses are available on the department website. Students with questions about this process should consult the department registrar. Students may in some cases arrange a tutorial in writing (ENGL 487), normally after having taken intermediate and advanced writing courses. All students interested in creative writing courses should also consult the current listing of Residential College Seminars.

FOUNDATIONAL COURSES

It is valuable for students majoring in English to have both a detailed understanding of major poets who have written in English and some acquaintance with the classics of American and world anglophone literature. All majors are accordingly required to take three of the four foundational courses from ENGL 125, 126, 127, 128. Prospective English majors are strongly encouraged to complete these requirements by the end of the sophomore year. Those who have not enrolled in the Directed Studies program should also consider taking both ENGL 129 and 130, foundational courses in the European literary tradition.

If, due to a late change of major or other circumstance, it is impossible to take three foundational courses, students may satisfy the requirements of the major by substituting for one foundational course (1) DRST 001 and 002, (2) ENGL 129 and 130, or (3) two advanced courses that deal substantially and intensively with similar material. All substitutions require permission from the director of undergraduate studies (DUS).

REQUIREMENTS OF THE MAJOR

At least fourteen courses are required for the major, including the senior requirement. Each student, in consultation with a departmental faculty adviser, bears the responsibility for designing a coherent program, which must include the following elements:

Each student must take: (1) three foundational courses chosen from ENGL 125, 126, 127, and 128; (2) at least one course in each of the following four historical periods, as indicated in the course listings: Medieval, Renaissance, 18th/19th century, 20th/21st century; (3) at least one seminar in both the junior and the senior years.

A student whose program meets these requirements may, with permission of the DUS, count as electives toward the major as many as two courses in other departments. One of these courses should normally be a literature course in English translation or in another language, and neither may be counted toward any requirement of the major. Certain Residential College Seminars, with permission of the DUS, may also be substituted for electives in the major.

A student may count up to five introductory courses and up to two creative writing courses toward the English major. ENGL 123 counts towards the introductory rather than towards the creative writing limit.

Library requirement Each English major must meet with Yale's Librarian for Literature in English or another research librarian within the first four weeks of the term during which the student is fulfilling the first of the two-term senior requirement for the major. Workshops will be offered to fulfill this requirement.

Credit/D/Fail Courses taken Credit/D/Fail may be counted toward the requirements of the major, but they may affect whether Distinction in the Major is granted.

THE CREATIVE WRITING CONCENTRATION

The creative writing concentration is an intensive track for English majors who want more sustained work in creative writing. While there are many ways to pursue creative writing at Yale and within the English department, the creative writing concentration provides a structure for creative work and a community of support that many writers find rewarding. The creative writing concentration is not a separate degree or certificate; it is a part of the English major and builds on the wealth of its literary offerings. It aims to give English majors with demonstrated interest and achievement in writing an opportunity to plan the writing courses they take in a coordinated way and to do advanced work in tutorial. The creative writing concentration accepts students with demonstrated commitment to creative writing at the end of the junior year or, occasionally, in the first term of senior year.

Students who enter the creative writing concentration must fulfill the same requirements as all English majors, except that they count four creative writing courses toward the major, including ENGL 489, a tutorial in which students produce a single sustained piece of writing or a portfolio of shorter works. It is expected that senior applicants will have completed by the end of the fall term the following: (1) at least two creative writing courses numbered 451 or higher, with at least one of these courses in the genre in which they plan to complete ENGL 489 (i.e., poetry, fiction, nonfiction, or drama) and (2) one course in another genre, which may include a creative writing course numbered 400 or higher. Creative writing concentrators must complete at least eleven literature courses in addition to their creative writing courses, for a total of fifteen courses. All courses numbered 130 or below count as literature courses. Residential College Seminars are not acceptable for credit toward the creative writing concentration, except by permission of the DUS. The creative writing concentration senior project may be offered in partial fulfillment of the senior requirement. Concentrators should fulfill the senior library requirement in the term in which they do the literature component of their senior requirement.

Proposals for the creative writing concentration should be submitted to the English department office in 107 LC or online as directed on the department website, during the designated sign-up period in the term before enrollment is intended.

SENIOR REQUIREMENTS

Seniors must complete a two-course senior requirement consisting of one of the following combinations: (1) two senior seminars; (2) a senior seminar and a one-term senior essay; (3) a two-term senior essay, with permission of the DUS. For students in the creative writing concentration, the senior requirement is a senior seminar

or one-term senior essay and ENGL 489, the senior project in the creative writing concentration. Each English major must make an appointment to meet with Yale's Librarian for Literature in English or another research librarian within the first four weeks of the term during which the student is fulfilling the first part of the two-term requirement for the major. A junior seminar in which the student, with the permission of the DUS and of the instructor, fulfills the senior requirement may be counted as a senior seminar. At the start of term the student must arrange with the instructor to do any additional work necessary to make the course an appropriate capstone experience.

Senior seminar Senior seminars are designated "Senior Seminar" in the course listings, but they are open to interested juniors, as well. The final essays written for senior seminars are intended to provide an appropriate culmination to the student's work in the major and in Yale College. Such essays should rest on significant independent work and should be of substantial length. In researching and writing the essay, the student should consult regularly with the seminar instructor, and may consult with other faculty members as well. Senior seminars may only be counted toward the requirement beginning in the sixth semester of a student's course of study.

Senior essay The senior essay is an independent literary-critical project on a topic of the student's own design, which is undertaken in regular consultation with a faculty adviser. Writing a senior essay provides a structure for English majors who want the opportunity to explore a research topic in a more sustained and intensive way, as well as a community of support that many majors find rewarding. It should ordinarily be written in an area on which the student has focused in previous studies. It may be written during one or two terms; single-term essays may be converted to two-term essays through application to the DUS. See the course listings for ENGL 490 and 491 for procedures. Students fulfilling the senior requirement through a two-term senior essay or through a senior essay and the senior creative writing concentration project must take a seminar during their senior year, but it need not be a senior seminar.

Prospectuses and applications for senior essays should be submitted to the office of the English department in 107 LC or online as directed on the department website, during the designated sign-up period in the term before enrollment is intended.

ADVISING

Students planning a program of study in English are strongly encouraged to consult a faculty adviser in the English department, the departmental representative in their residential college, or the DUS or Associate DUS for advice about their course choices.

In the fall of the junior year, each English major is formally assigned or chooses a faculty adviser from the English department, and in consultation with that adviser completes a statement outlining progress in the major. Course schedules for all majors should be discussed with and approved by their faculty advisers. The DUS and the Associate DUS can also discuss and approve schedules, if necessary.

For interdepartmental programs that include courses covering English literature, see Comparative Literature; Directed Studies; American Studies; African American Studies; Ethnicity, Race, and Migration; Theater and Performance Studies; and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Graduate school Students considering graduate work in English should be aware that a reading knowledge of certain classical and modern European languages is often required for admission to graduate study, and that a course orienting them to critical theory can be especially helpful preparation.

Combined B.A./M.A. degree program Exceptionally able and well-prepared students may complete a course of study leading to the simultaneous award of the B.A. and M.A. degrees after eight terms of enrollment. See Academic Regulations, section L, Special Academic Arrangements, “Simultaneous Award of the Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.” Interested students should consult the DUS prior to the sixth term of enrollment for specific requirements in English Language and Literature.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Number of courses *Standard major* – 14 courses (incl senior req); *Creative Writing concentration* – 15 courses (incl senior req)

Distribution of courses 3 courses chosen from ENGL 125, 126, 127, and 128; 1 course in each of four historical periods as specified (intro courses do not fulfill this requirement); 1 junior seminar; *Creative Writing concentration* – same, except 4 creative writing courses including at least 2 numbered 451 or higher, one in same genre as ENGL 489; and 1 in another genre, numbered 131 or higher; at least 11 literature courses

Substitutions permitted DRST 001 and 002 or ENGL 129 and 130 or two upper-level courses with overlapping material may substitute for one foundational course; up to 2 relevant upper-level courses in other departments may substitute for electives in the major; Residential College Seminars may substitute for electives in the major; all substitutions require DUS permission

Senior requirement *Standard major* – 2 senior sems, or 1 senior sem and 1 senior essay (ENGL 490), or a two-term senior essay (ENGL 490, 491); *Creative Writing concentration* – senior sem or senior essay, and ENGL 489

All seniors must meet with a research librarian in the first term of their senior requirement.

Even though Yale College has no formal requirement in English, nearly all first-year students choose to take one or more courses in the English department. Whatever majors they later choose, students need to learn to read analytically and write clearly at the college level. The English department offers Yale undergraduates a wide variety of introductory courses that enhance students' skill and confidence as readers and writers. These courses are taught in seminar-sized groups and are open to students of all interests and backgrounds. All first-year courses except ENGL 123, Introduction to Creative Writing, may be applied toward the Yale College distributional requirement in writing. It should be noted that medical schools encourage, and in many cases require, their applicants to have taken one term or more of English.

Introductory English courses (ENGL 114–130) offer a variety of ways for students to develop their skills as insightful readers and writers. ENGL 114 and ENGL 115 are writing seminars designed for the majority of first-year students to introduce them to college-level critical analysis and modes of academic argumentation. ENGL 120–123 offer writing workshops in a range of creative and nonacademic genres. ENGL 125–130 offer wide-ranging introductions to literature and are designed for first-year

students who think they might go on to do advanced work in the humanities at Yale, whether as majors or nonmajors. The foundational courses ENGL 125–128 are especially recommended for students considering a major in English.

ENGLISH 114 AND ENGLISH 115

ENGL 114 and ENGL 115 offer instruction in academic writing, pushing students to develop and expand their skills of critical analysis and argumentation. ENGL 114 offers students the opportunity to practice writing essays about various topics across academic disciplines. ENGL 115 hones students' skills as writers in the context of literary study. Students in both courses emerge as strong writers prepared for the demands of further coursework throughout the university.

- ENGL 114 prepares students to write the kind of well-reasoned analyses and arguments required in college courses. The course stresses the importance of reading, research, and revision as the bases of effective writing, and it gives students the opportunity to enter into academic debates on significant contemporary issues. Each section uses readings from modern nonfiction prose to focus on an interdisciplinary topic, such as the city, childhood, globalization, inequality, food culture, sports, and war.
- ENGL 115 develops students' critical insight and analytical acuity through investigation of important works of literature. Individual seminars focus on topics such as justice, childhood, sex and gender, the supernatural, and the natural world. Special attention is given to the development of college-level writing skills and to the analysis of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction prose.

ENGLISH 120–ENGLISH 123

ENGL 120–123 offer instruction in various creative and nonacademic genres of writing, including the modern essay (ENGL 120), ways of writing in specific fields of endeavor (ENGL 121), and various genres of creative writing, including fiction, poetry, and drama (ENGL 123).

- ENGL 120, *Reading and Writing the Modern Essay*, uses close study of selected works of nonfiction to prepare students to become critical readers and to apply professional strategies to their own writing. Readings are drawn from the works of authors such as Joan Didion, Malcolm Gladwell, Maxine Hong Kingston, N. Scott Momaday, George Orwell, Brent Staples, Jonathan Swift, Henry David Thoreau, Tom Wolfe, and Alice Walker. Written assignments, involving frequent revision, represent such forms of the essay as autobiography, portraiture, nature writing, cultural critique, and formal argument.
- ENGL 121, *Styles of Academic and Professional Prose*, concentrates on different kinds of academic or professional writing and explores their distinctive features. Through written and oral assignments, students both analyze and compose writings in the field. Each section is devoted to one specific kind of writing. Students learn to identify and use evidence, argument, clarity, proper style, and original thought as these are defined in the genre. Sections may focus on such topics as science writing, food writing, legal writing, writing in the social sciences, and writing about the arts. Enrollment in the fall term is not open to first-year students. Enrollment in the spring term is open to first-year students who have completed ENGL 114, 115, 120, or another writing-intensive course at Yale.

- ENGL 123, Introduction to Creative Writing, focuses on the craft of creative writing in the genres of poetry, fiction, and drama.

ENGLISH 125—ENGLISH 130

ENGL 125–130 offer wide-ranging introductions to literature and are designed for first-year students who think they might go on to do advanced work in the humanities at Yale, whether as majors or nonmajors. All courses offer substantial writing instruction and serve as excellent introductions to college-level writing. The foundational courses ENGL 125–128 are especially recommended for students considering a major in English.

- ENGL 125, Readings in English Poetry I, provides an introduction to the English literary tradition through close reading of select poems from the seventh through the seventeenth centuries. Emphasis on developing skills of literary interpretation and critical writing; diverse linguistic and social histories; and the many varieties of identity and authority in early literary cultures. Readings may include *Beowulf*, *The Canterbury Tales*, Middle English lyrics, *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, and poems by Isabella Whitney, Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare, Amelia Lanyer, John Donne, and George Herbert, among others. The density and complexity of poetic language make this literature an ideal starting place for the training of sophisticated readers and effective writers. Through critical analysis, active discussion, and especially written argument, students balance a broad view of literary tradition with close attention to language and form. ENGL 125 is a foundational course for the English major but is open to all students regardless of intended major.
- ENGL 126, Readings in English Poetry II, continues the introduction begun in ENGL 125 to the abiding formal and thematic concerns of anglophone poetic traditions, through close reading of select poems from the eighteenth century through the present. Emphasis on developing skills of literary interpretation and critical writing, diverse genres and social histories, and modernity's multiple canons and traditions. Authors may include Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Gertrude Stein, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Bishop, and Derek Walcott, among others. This course emphasizes continued development of students' critical and analytic writing and argumentation skills. ENGL 126 is a foundational course for the English major but is open to all students regardless of intended major.
- ENGL 127, Readings in American Literature, offers an introduction to the American literary tradition in a variety of poetic and narrative forms and in diverse historical contexts. Emphasis on developing skills of literary interpretation and critical writing; diverse linguistic and social histories; and the place of race, class, gender, and sexuality in American literary culture. Authors may include Phillis Wheatley, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Frederick Douglass, Gertrude Stein, Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, Flannery O'Connor, Alan Ginsberg, Chang-Rae Lee, and Toni Morrison, among others. Ranging across historical periods and literary genres, the course allows for the sustained study of single works while acquainting students with a variety of poetic and narrative forms and with the historical contexts of American writing. Each semester the course studies at least one living writer who visits

campus to meet with students. Recent visitors in this role include Teju Cole, Louise Glück, and Hilton Als. ENGL 127 is a foundational course for the English major but is open to all students regardless of intended major.

- ENGL 128, *Readings in Comparative World English Literatures*, offers an introduction to the literary traditions of the anglophone world in a variety of poetic and narrative forms and historical contexts. Emphasis on developing skills of literary interpretation and critical writing; diverse linguistic, cultural, and racial histories; and on the politics of empire and liberation struggles. Authors may include Daniel Defoe, Mary Prince, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, C. L. R. James, Claude McKay, Jean Rhys, Yvonne Vera, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Wole Sòyinká, J. M. Coetzee, Brian Friel, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Alice Munro, Derek Walcott, and Patrick White, among others. Frequent writing assignments focus on critical analysis, the development of voice and argument, and the use of archival and secondary sources. ENGL 128 is a foundational course for the English major but is open to all students regardless of intended major.
- ENGL 129, *Tragedy in the European Literary Tradition*, provides an intensive introduction to one of the most powerful forms in Western literature. Students explore tragic drama from its origins in ancient Greece and Rome through the European Renaissance to the present day. This course addresses themes of justice, religion, free will, family, gender, race, and dramaturgy, beginning with Homer's *Iliad*, and continuing in plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Shakespeare, Racine, Ibsen, Chekhov, Brecht, Beckett, Sòyinká, and others. Strong emphasis on the development of student writing accompanies study of the texts.
- ENGL 130, *Epic in the European Literary Tradition*, investigates the path of the epic tradition from its foundations in ancient Greece and Rome to its manifestation in the modern novel. Students explore in depth topics such as exile and homecoming; the heroic in times of war and peace; the role of the individual within society; memory and history; and the politics of gender, race, and religion. Works include Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *Inferno*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and at least one additional novel selected by the instructor. Strong emphasis on the development of student writing accompanies study of the texts.

Students who have taken ENGL 120 in the fall may continue with ENGL 121 or with any English literature course numbered ENGL 125–130 in the spring. Students who complete ENGL 114 or ENGL 115 in the fall term with a grade of A or A– should consider moving into ENGL 120–130 in the spring term.

PLACEMENT IN INTRODUCTORY COURSES

There are different ways to determine which English course is right for you. Grades on standardized tests and in high school humanities courses (especially English courses) can offer some guidance. But a better measure can be found in your level of confidence in those courses, and especially in your own sense of confidence as a reader and writer. Students who feel they need to develop skills of college-level reading and writing generally enroll in ENGL 114 or ENGL 115. Students who are more self-assured readers

and writers, and who enjoy writing and want to hone their skills, often enroll in ENGL 120–130.

Also important is consideration of the kinds of reading and writing that are done across the range of introductory courses. In particular, it is useful to distinguish between courses that are literature courses (ENGL 115, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130) and those with a focus on nonliterary materials (ENGL 114, ENGL 121) or creative writing (ENGL 120, 123). While all of the introductory courses offer significant instruction and practice in writing, the literature offerings spend substantial class time analyzing a diverse set of great works of literature. As stated above, students considering the English major, or any major in the humanities, might find these courses especially helpful as points of departure.

Students are invited to consult with the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) or with a departmental officer at the English department advising session during First-Year Orientation.

REGISTERING FOR COURSES

Registration for many fall-term English courses is for a specific section of that course. Details about the registration process will be available on the department website. Section descriptions indicating the different topics to be covered in sections of ENGL 114, ENGL 115, and ENGL 121 will be posted on the department website the week before the preregistration period begins.

If, after consulting the department website, you have questions about English courses, call 432-2226 or send an email to Erica Sayers (erica.sayers@yale.edu).

A NOTE ABOUT CLASS ATTENDANCE

1. Once registered in a section, students must attend the first and all subsequent class meetings for that particular section until the end of the Add/Drop period. Students who miss a class meeting during this period without informing the instructor beforehand will have their places immediately filled from the waiting list.
2. Students may attempt to change their section by requesting instructor permission through YCS. If there are no available seats, the student may be placed on the waiting list for that section.

Students who have not enrolled in an English course in the fall but wish to take one in the spring should visit the department website during the preference selection period and the registration period for instructions.

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Professors Jessica Brantley, Leslie Brisman, David Bromwich, Ardis Butterfield, Jill Campbell, Joe Cleary, Jacqueline Goldsby, Langdon Hammer, Margaret Homans, Cajetan Iheka, Jonathan Kramnick, Stefanie Markovits, Feisal Mohamed, Stephanie Newell, Catherine Nicholson, John Durham Peters, Caryl Phillips, Marc Robinson, Caleb Smith, Katie Trumpener, Shane Vogel, Michael Warner, Ruth Yeazell

Associate Professors Marta Figlerowicz, Ben Glaser, Emily Thornbury, R. John Williams, Sunny Xiang

Assistant Professors Anastasia Eccles, Marcel Elias, Alanna Hickey, Jonathan Howard, Elleza Kelley, Naomi Levine, Ernest Mitchell, Priyasha Mukhopadhyay, Joseph North, Jill Richards

Professors in the Practice Michael Cunningham, Anne Fadiman, Louise Glück, Donald Margulies

Senior Lecturers James Berger, Richard Deming, Meghan O'Rourke, Cynthia Zarin

Lecturers Felisa Baynes-Ross, Steven Brill, Alan Burdick, Lincoln Caplan, Maximillian Chaoulideer, Danielle Chapman, Alison Coleman, Susan Dominus, Andrew Ehrgood, Craig Eklund, Greg Ellermann, Randi Epstein, Amity Gaige, Lindsay Gellman, Rona Johnston Gordon, Derek Greene, Jacob Halpern, Rosemary Jones, Heather Klemann, Verlyn Klinkenborg, Timothy Kreiner, Sarah Mahurin, Pamela Newton, Mark Oppenheimer, Barbara Riley, Timothy Robinson, Karin Roffman, Madeleine Saraceni, Pamela Schirmeister, Adam Sexton, Kim Shirkhani, Emily Skillings, R. Clifton Spargo, Margaret Spillane, Sarah Stillman, James Surowiecki, Rasheed Tazudeen, Aaron Tracy, Ryan Wepler, Christian Wiman

See visual roadmap of the requirements.

English Courses