

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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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.