

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

H A N D B O O K



Department of English
California State University, Long Beach

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THE MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Graduate study leading to the Master of Arts in English at California State University, Long Beach is marked by engaged students, small classes, and a committed faculty. Our program is designed to broaden and deepen students' understanding of the intellectual, cultural, and aesthetic traditions of British literature, American literature, and rhetoric and composition.

Students in our program develop advanced skills in critical reading, writing, and thinking as well as in scholarly research. Students may include courses on English instruction as well as professional writing in their approved programs.

The program meets the needs of students who seek any of the following:

- careers in teaching English, including literature and rhetoric and composition, often at the community college level;
- preparation for further graduate study leading to the PhD in English;
- a broad background of humanistic studies, along with critical reading, writing, and thinking skills, as training for careers in many other professions such as entertainment, law, protective services, social services, business, management, administration, healthcare, transportation, sales, design, etc.; and
- personal satisfaction and depth of learning apart from immediate vocational considerations.

GOALS

The MA program in English is designed to broaden students' knowledge and understanding of the literary and rhetorical traditions of writing in English, as well as to provide the opportunity for intensive study in one or more specialized area(s) of literature or rhetoric and composition. The MA program in English emphasizes close reading and critical analysis by developing students' abilities to situate texts within their larger aesthetic, historical, and professional contexts, conduct independent research, and formulate original arguments in oral presentations and writing.

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OUTCOMES

By the end of their MA program in English, students should be able to

- demonstrate familiarity with a wide range of representative literary and rhetorical texts, including influential criticism of and commentary on those texts;
- examine the theoretical premises underlying the critical analysis of literature, rhetoric, and/or the teaching of reading and writing;
- investigate the functions of texts and their relations with historical, social, and political contexts;
- investigate how purpose, style, and genre function in texts to achieve particular literary, rhetorical, and aesthetic effects;
- locate, evaluate, and synthesize the available resources for researching a significant scholarly topic;
- write papers that construct logical and informed arguments; and
- prepare and deliver effective oral presentations and arguments that are appropriate for the English professions.

BROCHURE

This brochure offers a concise summary of the MA program in English, including both requirements and opportunities. Students considering the pursuit of an MA in English will find that this brochure answers many questions, but it is not a binding contract, nor a complete statement of requirements. To make sure they are up-to-date on changes in requirements and making satisfactory progress towards their degree, students should consult University Catalog regulations concerning graduate study and see an advisor in the English Department at least once a semester.

GETTING INTO THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Baccalaureate Degree and Upper-Division English Units

Applicants to the MA program in English are expected to have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution with 21 units of upper-division English courses. This is usually a matter of course for students whose BA is in English.

Students whose BA is not in English can be admitted to the program as well, but will need to complete prerequisite courses to bring their upper-division English courses to 21 units. These courses will be determined by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee and must be completed in one academic year. Courses used to complete prerequisites (aka make-up courses) are not counted as part of the MA program.

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Applicants are expected to have a 3.3 GPA in upper-division English courses. Students who are admitted to the MA program conditionally, with the requirement to complete prerequisite courses, must maintain a 3.3 GPA in those make-up courses. Applicants whose GPA in upper-division English courses is at least 3.0 may be admitted to the MA program if they take the GRE General Test and achieve a minimum score of 158 in Verbal Reasoning and 5.0 in Analytical Writing.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Application to Pursue Post-Baccalaureate Study

Applicants must submit a graduate application (available online at www.csumentor.edu) to the University's Office of Enrollment Services to pursue post-baccalaureate study. After the Office of Enrollment Services approves the application, the English Department evaluates it and determines whether or not applicants are admitted to the MA program.

Transcripts

Applicants must submit a set of complete and official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended to the Office of Enrollment Services. Applicants do not, however, need to send official transcripts of courses taken at CSULB.

Types of Admission

Applicants who meet the BA, upper-division English course units, and GPA requirements can receive *full admission*. Applicants who are in the process of completing their BA can receive *contingent admission*, which means they are admitted contingent on completing their BA and maintaining their GPA (see

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above). Contingent admission automatically changes to full admission when the paperwork confirming the conferral of the BA is submitted. Applicants whose BA is not in English can receive *conditional admission*, which means they need to complete prerequisite course work (see above).

EXPECTATIONS

Faculty Advisors

All students accepted into the MA program are required to meet with an advisor during their first semester to plan a preliminary course of study. Letter of acceptance will include the name of, and contact information for, the initial advisor. Students can make an appointment through the Graduate Secretary (562-985-4225) or contact their advisors directly.

After the first semester, students are free to choose an advisor other than the one initially assigned; students must choose their particular advisor before advancement to candidacy. The English Department keeps an updated list of faculty available to graduate students as advisors and mentors, and the Graduate Advisor is always available.

Throughout their programs, students are encouraged to seek guidance from advisors on choosing courses and meeting degree requirements. By meeting with their advisor at least once a year, preferably once a semester, students will stay informed about any changes in regulations applying to the MA degree, whether these originate inside or outside the English Department. Students are also welcome to consult with faculty on the intellectual, social, professional, and personal aspects of working on their MA in English.

Research Skills

All MA students are expected to know basic methods of library research, which include using print and online bibliographies to locate books and journal articles. Students should also be familiar with the MLA style of documentation as described in *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (8th edition). Joseph Aubele, our subject librarian in English, can help with questions about research resources and methods; he can be reached at 562-985-5321 or joseph.aubele@csulb.edu. Faculty may also be consulted regarding questions about research methods or documentation rules.

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ADMISSION

International students are admitted to California State University, Long Beach through the CSULB Center for International Education. This Center evaluates foreign transcripts, determines eligibility for post-baccalaureate study, and ultimately admits international students. The international student for whom English is a second language must pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) with a minimum score of 600 (PBT), 250 (CBT), or 100 (iBT) before being admitted to the MA program in English.

If international students break residency any semester they are not enrolled, they must reapply for admission through the Center for International Education. For an explanation of residency requirements and additional information that may apply to international students, the Center for International Education should be contacted directly.

GETTING INTO THE MA PROGRAM: CHECKLIST

PREREQUISITES

For admission to the University as a graduate student:

- Acquire BA from an accredited institution.
- Maintain 2.5 GPA in last 60 units.
- Possess proof of “good standing” at last institution attended.

For full admission to the MA program in English:

- Gain admission to the University as a graduate student.
- Demonstrate 3.3 GPA in all upper-division courses in English.
- Complete 21 upper-division units in English (equivalent to CSULB English BA).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- Submit application for post-baccalaureate study to CSULB Office of Enrollment Services through www.csumentor.edu.
- Send transcripts from all universities attended to CSULB Office of Enrollment Services.

EXPECTATIONS

- Meet with advisor early and often.

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Upper-Division and Graduate Courses

Students must complete a minimum of 30 units of approved upper-division and graduate courses, with at least 24 units in English, to obtain their MA degree.

No courses previously used to satisfy BA requirements may be retaken for graduate credit. Double-numbered courses (400/500) must be taken at the 500 level for MA credit. If students have taken the 400-level component of a double-numbered course as an undergraduate at CSULB, they may not take the 500-level course for credit. Students may take 500- and 600-level courses on the same topic or period, e.g., ENGL 552: Literature of the Renaissance (1500-1603) and ENGL 652: Seminar in the English Renaissance.

Only specified 400-level courses may be counted towards the MA; these courses are listed on page 11 of this Handbook. Students who have taken ENGL 469 or ENGL 479 need to request consent of the instructor if they want to take ENGL 681 on the same author(s).

600-Level Courses

Of the required 30 units, at least 20 must be at the 600 level (this includes ENGL 696 but not ENGL 697 or 698). Students must be fully admitted to the MA program in English before they can enroll in 600-level courses.

ENGL 696

All students must take ENGL 696: Seminar in Theory, Criticism, and Research prior to, or concurrent with, other 600-level courses. Students must be fully admitted to the MA program in order to enroll in ENGL 696. Therefore, students should plan on taking this course as early in their programs as possible.

Seminar in British Literature before 1800

Students must take at least one seminar at the 600 level in British literature before 1800. ENGL 697: Directed Research and ENGL 698: Thesis may not be used to fulfill this requirement. The following seminars are eligible:

<i>Course</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Course Title</i>
ENGL 652	4	Seminar in the English Renaissance
ENGL 653	4	Seminar in the Age of Milton
ENGL 655	4	Seminar in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature
ENGL 681	4	Selected Topics—Seminar in Major Authors (for British authors active before 1800)
ENGL 683	4	Selected Topics—Seminar in English Studies (if topic concerns British literature before 1800)

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

COURSE REQUIREMENTS *(CONTINUED)*

Additional Units

Students must take additional acceptable units to make up a minimum of 30 units. Up to 6 units approved for graduate standing may come from other departments (such as Comparative and World Literature, History, Philosophy, other languages and literatures, etc.), other campuses, or extension programs, if approved by the Graduate Advisor as relevant to the MA program in English. Outside courses, however, may not fulfill the 24-unit requirement of 600- and 500-level courses in English. All upper-division and graduate courses taken as a post-baccalaureate student affect the overall GPA.

ACCEPTABLE COURSES

Graduate Courses at the 600 Level

Not all graduate courses are available every semester. An approximate three-year rotation plan of graduate seminar offerings is available from the Graduate Secretary. Please note that ENGL 605A, 605B, 606A, and 606B are reserved for students enrolled in the MFA program and may not be taken in the MA program in English.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Course Title</i>
652	4	Seminar in the English Renaissance
653	4	Seminar in the Age of Milton
655	4	Seminar in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Literature
656	4	Seminar in Romantic Literature
657	4	Seminar in Victorian Literature
659	4	Seminar in Twentieth-Century English Literature
671	4	Digital Rhetoric
672	4	Seminar in the Nineteenth-Century American Renaissance
673	4	Seminar in American Realism
674	4	Seminar in Twentieth-Century American Literature
681	4	Selected Topics—Seminar in Major Authors
683	4	Selected Topics—Seminar in English Studies
684	4	Seminar in Advanced Literary Theory
685	4	Seminar in Rhetorical History and Theory
696	4	Seminar in Theory, Criticism, and Research
697	1-3	Directed Research
698	1-6	Thesis

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ACCEPTABLE COURSES *(CONTINUED)*

Graduate Courses at the 500 Level

Please note that ENGL 505A, 505B, 506A, and 506B are reserved for students enrolled in the MFA program and may not be taken in the MA program in English.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Course Title</i>
510	3	Theories of Writing and Literacy
511	4	Research Methods in Rhetoric and Composition
523	3	Semantics
526	3	History of the English Language
535	3	Theories and Practices in Composition
537	3	Special Topics for In-Service Teachers
550	4	Old English Language and Literature
551	4	Middle English Language and Literature
552	3	Literature of the Renaissance (1500-1603)
553	3	Literature of the Late Renaissance (1603-1660)
554	3	Medieval Literature of the British Isles
555	3	English Literature of the Enlightenment (1660-1798)
556	3	English Literature of the Romantic Period (1798-1832)
558	3	English Poetry and Prose of the Victorian Age (1832-1900)
559	3	English Literature of the Twentieth Century (1900-Present)
562	3	Chaucer
566	3	Irish Literature in English
567A	3	The English Novel to 1832
567B	3	The English Novel since 1832
568	3	English Drama
572	3	American Literature: 1820-1865
573	3	American Literature: 1865-1918
574	3	Twentieth-Century American Literature
575	3	The American Short Story
576A	3	American Poetry to 1945
576B	3	American Poetry since 1945
577A	3	The American Novel to 1920s
577B	3	The American Novel since 1920s
578	3	American Drama
598	1-3	Directed Studies in Creative Writing

Undergraduate Courses

Higher qualitative and quantitative standards apply to graduate students in undergraduate courses. In double-numbered courses (400/500), the MA program counts only the 500 level. Only the 400-level classes listed below have advance approval for MA credit.

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ACCEPTABLE COURSES (CONTINUED)

Course	Units	Course Title
463	3	Shakespeare II
469	4	Selected Topics—Major English Writers
479	4	Selected Topics—Major American Writers
488	3	Selected Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies
489	4	Selected Topics in Literatures Written in English
497	3	Directed Studies in Composition

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

General Overview

Foreign language proficiency is required as an adjunct to graduate study in English for several reasons. Knowledge of a second language offers a second window of perception on the world. It puts into perspective the logic and illogic of one's first language. It offers acquaintance with another literature not distorted by translation. It also makes possible research into scholarly and critical writing about the English language and its literatures not available in translation.

Foreign Language Requirement

Candidates must complete the foreign language requirement or be enrolled in the final units of the requirement before taking their final comprehensive examinations. The foreign language proficiency requirement may be fulfilled in ONE of the following three ways:

1. Complete college course work in or receive credit for a foreign language equivalent to sophomore proficiency (normally 201B at most universities and community colleges) with a grade of "C" or better.
2. Complete college course work in or receive credit for a foreign language equivalent to freshman proficiency (101B) with a grade of "C" or better AND complete either ENGL 550: Old English or ENGL 551: Middle English with a grade of "B" or better. Either or both of the English courses may be counted towards the minimum 30 units for the degree. (Students should note that ENGL 550 and 551 require consent of instructor for enrollment.)
3. Provide evidence of proficiency equivalent to a 201B foreign language course or demonstrate native proficiency in a foreign language accepted by the Graduate Studies Committee.

Unlike almost all upper-division and graduate courses, lower-division foreign language courses may be taken Credit/No Credit (CR/NC). Lower-division foreign language courses do not count towards either GPA.

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

ADDITIONAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

GPA Maintenance

The University calculates two different GPAs for post-baccalaureate students. The first GPA comprises all upper-division and graduate courses taken after earning the bachelor's degree (overall post-baccalaureate GPA). The second comprises just the courses that make up a student's MA program of study (program GPA).

Students are required to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or better *both* in their MA program of study *and* in all upper-division and graduate courses taken at CSULB as a post-baccalaureate students. Graduate students are subject to dismissal from the University if they fail to raise their overall GPA to 3.0 after two semesters on probation. A student who has been disqualified must reapply to the University. As the Catalog states, "subsequent removal of GPA deficiencies ... does not guarantee readmission to CSULB." The Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the Graduate Studies Committee, will decide whether or not to readmit students who have been on probation or academically disqualified from the MA program in English.

Upper-Division and Graduate Course Grading

Credit/No Credit grading is not available in upper-division or graduate courses, with few specified exceptions such as teacher training. It is acceptable for lower-division courses, such as 100-200-level foreign language classes, which do not affect a graduate student's overall GPA.

Incomplete Course Grades

Graduate students should avoid "I" (Incomplete) grades in any courses in the graduate program. Any Incomplete grades must be finished within one year from the semester when they were awarded. Students who need to extend the time required to complete a course beyond one year may apply for an extension of the Incomplete grade. The application for extension requires approval by the instructor of the course, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. If an Incomplete is not finished within the allotted period, it lapses to an "F" or the grade designated by the instructor. Grades lower than "C" cannot be counted on the MA program of study and subject a student's Advancement to Candidacy to cancellation.

Continuous CSULB Enrollment

Students are required to be continuously enrolled at CSULB to acquire the MA degree. Students who are absent for twelve consecutive months break the continuous enrollment and must apply for readmission. Students previously advanced to candidacy must satisfy any new requirements in effect at the

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

ADDITIONAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS *(CONTINUED)*

time of readmission and may have to petition through the Graduate Advisor for reinstatement in the program by the Dean of Graduate Studies. To avoid such problems, students who know they will have to break enrollment temporarily should submit an Educational Leave Form to the Office of Enrollment Services in advance. Further information is available in the University Catalog in the policies governing “Educational Leave.”

Seven-Year Requirement for Completion of Degree

All students must complete all degree requirements within seven years from the first units earned towards the MA. Courses more than seven years old must be replaced or “revalidated” to count in an MA program. The English Department will revalidate no more than three courses on a student’s program of study and will not revalidate any course for which a student earned a grade lower than a “B.” If more than three courses require revalidation, or if the grade for a course is lower than a “B,” the student will have to retake those courses, if they are requirements for the MA program, or replace them with current courses that complete the student’s program of study. To revalidate a course, students must provide a written demonstration of current competence in the subject matter of the course; the specific work to be performed will be assigned by the faculty member who taught the courses, if he or she is available, or by another faculty member in the same or related area of study. Revalidation requires authorization by the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

General Overview

The procedure known as “Advancement to Candidacy” certifies that the English Department recommends a student to the College of Liberal Arts as a candidate for the MA degree in English. With the aid of an advisor, the student sets up a formal program of study signed by the student, the advisor, the Graduate Advisor, the English Department Chair, and the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. This step determines the University Catalog under which a student will complete the MA program. After advancement, candidates cannot be held to any new requirements for the degree (unless they break enrollment—see above). If students want to change their programs after advancing, however, they may do so by filling out a change of program form, available from the Graduate Secretary.

Note: Students planning to write a thesis must have their thesis prospectus approved before advancing to candidacy.

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ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY (CONTINUED)

Timing

Advancement is possible after completion of six units towards the MA degree. Students must be advanced to candidacy at least one semester before they intend to graduate, before the deadline to request to graduate (aka 'file for graduation') that semester. If students are writing a thesis, they must be advanced before they take any thesis units.

Students who elect to complete the MA program in one year may request to be advanced to candidacy the same semester that they graduate; they should file a Request to Graduate form (see below) when they begin the program. Students who have such plans should consult with the Graduate Advisor upon entering the program.

Requirements for Advancement

The requirements for Advancement to Candidacy are as follows:

1. presentation of a current transcript showing a grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better, *both* in the MA program of study *and* overall in upper-division and graduate courses taken as a post-baccalaureate student;
2. completion of at least six units of course work acceptable for the MA in English at CSULB with a GPA of 3.0 or above;
3. enrollment in regular course work at the time of Advancement to Candidacy; and
4. for students who wish to write a thesis, approval of the thesis proposal through the thesis form (for approval process, see p.20 under "Option Two: The Thesis").

Graduate Studies 700

A candidate who has completed course work, but not the comprehensive examination or the thesis, may satisfy the continuous enrollment requirement with a non-credit course in the College of Continuing and Professional Education (CCPE), Graduate Studies 700. Students must be registered either in a course or in GS 700 for every semester in which they plan to use CSULB facilities or consult members of the faculty. Registration is also required in Winter or Summer Session if that is when the student plans to graduate. Application forms for GS 700 are available in the English Department office. Students should register for GS 700 in the first two weeks of the semester. After two semesters of enrollment in GS 700, students will need the Graduate Advisor's approval for subsequent enrollment in GS 700.

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REQUEST TO GRADUATE FORM

All students must file a Request to Graduate form (aka 'grad check'). Before filing, students must already have an approved Advancement to Candidacy on file in Enrollment Services. The Request to Graduate form is due to the Office of Enrollment Services the semester prior to intended graduation—by March 1 for fall or winter graduation, by October 15 for spring or summer graduation. This form is available only from the website of the Office of Enrollment Services:

http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/assets/pdf/grad_request_masters.pdf

The completed form must be returned to the General Information windows at Brotman Hall after paying appropriate fees to the Cashier's Office. No degree can be granted unless this form is filed. Students planning to graduate in one year should file the form at the time of admission. If students change their semester of intended graduation, they need to fill out a new Request to Graduate form.

OVERLAPPING CREDENTIAL OR CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

Some courses carrying credit in the English MA program may also count towards a teaching credential or a certificate program (e.g., Certificate in Professional Writing). A student interested in combining such programs should consult both the Graduate Advisor and the advisor of the other program involved to determine which courses may overlap. In such situations, students may wish to take the final comprehensive examination in an area of study that takes advantage of the overlap, e.g., IX—Rhetoric, Writing, and Composition (see “The Final Comprehensive Examination” section for more information).

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM: CHECKLIST

MINIMUM COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Complete a minimum of 30 units of upper-division and graduate courses.

1. Take 24 units (of those 30 units) in English.
 - Take 20 units (of those 24 units) at the 600 level.
 - ~ Take ENGL 696* (within those 20 units).
 - ~ Take one seminar in British literature before 1800 (within those 20 units).
 - Take 4 more units in English at the 600, 500, or 400 levels** (beyond the 20 units).
2. Take 6 more units in English at the 600, 500, or 400 levels** or outside English at the 600 or 500 levels (beyond the 24 units).

COURSE	UNITS	GRADE	INSTRUCTOR	SEMESTER
ENGL 696	4			
ENGL 6____ [pre-1800]	4			
ENGL 6____	4			
ENGL 6____	4			
ENGL 6____	4			
ENGL ____				

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Meet the foreign language requirement.

GETTING THROUGH THE MA PROGRAM: CHECKLIST

ADDITIONAL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

- Maintain a 3.0 overall post-baccalaureate GPA (all post-baccalaureate, upper-division, and graduate courses).
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in MA program of study (all classes for MA program in English).
- Resolve any Incompletes.
- Maintain continuous residency. If residency is not maintained, be sure to acquire
 - educational leave and/or
 - reinstatement.
- Complete all work within seven years from first units earned towards MA.

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Advance to candidacy (at least one semester before graduation semester).

REQUEST TO GRADUATE FORM

Submit Request to Graduate form (at least one semester before graduation semester by due date March 1 or October 15).

* ENGL 696 is a prerequisite for other 600-level seminars; it may, however, be taken concurrently with other 600-level seminars. ENGL 697 and 698 may not be applied to the minimum 20 units.

** 400-level courses must be approved for graduate credit. Only 9 units of 400-level course work may be used towards the 30-unit requirement.

FINISHING THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

FINAL DEGREE REQUIREMENT

Culminating Activity

The culminating activity that constitutes the final requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in English is either

- the final comprehensive examination (aka 'exam' or 'comps') or
- the thesis.

OPTION ONE: THE FINAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

General Overview

The final comprehensive examination is a three-hour essay exam that serves as a capstone of the 30-unit program of study. Students must have completed all program requirements or be enrolled in their final courses the semester they take the exam. Because students must be enrolled at the University in the semester the exam is taken, those who have finished their course work should enroll in GS 700 (see p.14). The comps usually take place on the Friday of the penultimate week of classes.

Final Comprehensive Examination Objectives

The exam gives candidates the opportunity to synthesize their learning and to demonstrate their analytical and interpretive skills. More specifically, it requires students to

1. show their ability to write a complete argumentative essay that demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and deep understanding of a particular area of British or American literature or rhetoric and composition;
2. show comprehension of, and familiarity with, a breadth of both primary and secondary materials within their area of study (usually about four primary texts and a larger number of secondary sources), thus providing evidence of their ability to use library resources;
3. show connections and distinctions within their area of study by drawing from the course work that has formed their program of study, but also going beyond that course work; and
4. demonstrate in their essay their analytical ability and writing capabilities.

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Final Comprehensive Examination Areas of Study

The comps test a candidate's mastery of one of the nine following areas, which the candidate selects on the basis of intensive study, including course work at the graduate level. Students should be aware, however, that 600-level seminars are not survey courses, but typically involve in-depth studies in a portion of the subject named in the course title. For that reason, study beyond the primary and secondary material covered in 600-level seminars is necessary for the final comprehensive examination. The areas are:

- Area I Old and Middle English Language and Literature
- Area II English Literature of the Renaissance
- Area III English Literature of the Restoration and 18th Century
- Area IV English Literature of the 19th Century
- Area V English Literature since 1900
- Area VI American Literature before 1900
- Area VII American Literature since 1900
- Area VIII Literary Genre (poetry, fiction, or drama) or Critical Theory*
- Area IX Rhetoric, Writing, and Composition

* Literary genre covers the tradition of a genre in both English and American literature, and critical theory covers various literary and rhetorical theories from classical to contemporary. As in other areas, students will have a choice of questions that allow them to focus on specific authors, theorists, and topics within each area. Students who choose Area VIII must request approval from the Graduate Advisor prior to signing up for the comprehensive exam. To gain approval, students must present a bibliography of primary and secondary materials in critical theory or in the chosen literary genre.

Timeline

- Early in the semester they plan to graduate, candidates must apply to the English Department office to take the final comprehensive examination and specify their area of study (see above).
- About two months prior to the comps, candidates will be supplied with four questions from their area of study and will be told who their three readers will be. Each candidate must choose two of the four questions and reject the other two and communicate that information to the Graduate Secretary.
- Candidates are expected to meet with their readers in a timely manner (i.e., not in the last week before the exam) to discuss their choices of primary and secondary materials, possible arguments for the essay, and any other questions regarding the exam.

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- At the comps, the student will be told which one of the remaining two questions to address in their essay. This essay should demonstrate familiarity with both primary and secondary sources. Students are encouraged, but not required, to write the examination on a computer (PC).

Further Information about Final Comprehensive Examination

Each final comprehensive examination is read by three faculty members. Readers rate the exam as O (Outstanding), P+ (Pass Plus), P (Passing), P- (Pass Minus), or NP (Not Passing); however, final scores consist of only Outstanding, Passing, or Not Passing.

An Outstanding exam must receive two or more O ratings; a Passing exam must receive at least two passing ratings (P-, P, P+, or O); a Not Passing exam is one that receives two or more NP ratings. Students will be notified of the date on which they can call the Graduate Secretary for their overall final score. An official letter with the final score, the scores of the three readers, and any feedback those readers chose to give will be sent out several weeks after the comps examination.

Students assigned a score of NP may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to take the examination a second time. An unsatisfactory performance on the second attempt will result in dismissal from the MA program in English.

Students who sign up for, but later decide to withdraw from, the exam must notify the Graduate Secretary no later than 24 hours before the exam. Failure to report the decision to withdraw from the exam by this time will result in a Not Passing score. Similarly, students who attend the exam and then leave without finishing will receive a Not Passing score. Students may petition the Graduate Studies Committee to be exempted from either of these rules if they can demonstrate that serious unforeseen medical or personal problems prevented them from attending (and notifying the English Department of their inability to attend) or completing the exam.

OPTION TWO: THE THESIS

Students interested in pursuing the thesis option should be aware that writing a thesis is an intensive experience requiring a significant commitment of time (from both student and committee chair) and usually requires at least three semesters to complete. Students should plan ahead accordingly and begin by consulting with a potential thesis committee chair.

Before students can advance to candidacy with the thesis option or begin taking ENGL 698: Thesis units, they must prepare a formal prospectus with a substantial

FINISHING THE MA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

OPTION TWO: THE THESIS *(CONTINUED)*

bibliography for the proposed thesis committee. The prospectus should explain the student's topic, works to be treated, preliminary thesis or central line of argument, and suggested breakdown of chapters. It should also convey a sense of previous scholarship in this field and indicate the methodology and the major theorists or critical traditions that will be employed.

For more expansive and specific guidelines on the prospectus, students should speak directly with their prospective committee and consult the hand-out available from the Graduate Secretary or through the MA program's website at

www.csulb.edu/colleges/cla/departments/english/ma/wp-content/uploads/2009/07/Thesis-Prospectus-Guidelines.pdf

After reviewing the prospectus individually, the three potential committee members will meet with the student to discuss the project. Together, student and committee will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis as set forth in the prospectus and bibliography. Other topics addressed might include a time frame for completing the thesis and the committee's division of labor. The exact division of labor among committee members will depend on the individual committee; however, in all cases the chair of the committee will bear primary responsibility for establishing guidelines and expectations for the student. In particular, the University Catalog dictates that the thesis committee chair will

- be the major contact point with the student and oversee the other committee members' work with the student;
- assure that the editorial and format standards appropriate to the mechanical preparation of the thesis are followed; and
- establish guidelines for the student and timeline to be followed to ensure completion of the thesis in a reasonable time.

The second and third readers serve to provide additional feedback, expertise, and guidance, to offer alternative perspectives, and to ensure that thesis standards are met. In coordinating the other committee members, the chair will work with the student to mediate any contradictory advice or feedback from different committee members, consulting directly with other committee members if necessary. In cases where the chair is unable to bring committee members to a point of agreement, he or she will consult with the Graduate Advisor and the Department Chair. A student may request a change in the composition of the committee by providing justification to the Graduate Advisor and the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

In establishing the timeline for the thesis, the committee chair should allow sufficient time for the student and the committee to produce work that meets the standards

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OPTION TWO: THE THESIS *(CONTINUED)*

for a thesis outlined in the University Catalog. Students should consider that faculty need ample time to provide useful feedback, and that it will take time to integrate that feedback into revisions of the thesis. The committee will then confer and decide whether or not to approve the thesis project as proposed. The committee may decide that more work needs to be done before the prospectus can be approved. If the committee members do approve the project, they will sign the thesis form (which students writing a thesis need to advance to candidacy) at that time.

Other thesis regulations are detailed in the section on Graduate Study in the University Catalog. Essentials include the following:

1. Students must have submitted their Advancement to Candidacy before enrolling in ENGL 698: Thesis units.
2. Students must take all six units of ENGL 698: Thesis—but the distribution of those units is up to the students and their committee chairs. The six units of ENGL 698: Thesis may not be used to satisfy MA requirements for 600-level seminars.
3. A student who takes ENGL 698: Thesis may also use ENGL 697: Directed Research as part of the minimum 30 units of the MA program. However, because University policy states that a maximum of six units shall be allowed for a thesis, ENGL 698 and ENGL 697 cannot be taken for the same project.
4. A minimum grade of B is required for ENGL 698: Thesis.

CHANGE BETWEEN OPTIONS

Students who have started a thesis may still change to the comprehensive exam option. Students who wish to change to the comprehensive exam option after taking ENGL 698: Thesis units must confer with the Graduate Advisor, who will seek approval from the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. In these cases, the preliminary grade(s) the student received for any ENGL 698: Thesis units will remain on the transcript without being changed to a letter grade. Students may not change options after failing either the thesis or the comprehensive examination.

MFA PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

The MFA provides intensive training in creative writing and is a separate degree program from the MA in English. Students interested in applying to the MFA program should consult the current MFA Advisor. The Graduate Secretary can also answer some questions and provide brochures and application forms.

FINISHING

THE MA PROGRAM: CHECKLIST

FINAL DEGREE REQUIREMENT

- Choose the culminating activity/final degree requirement.
-

Final Comprehensive Examination:

- Choose area of study.
 - Sign up for the final comprehensive examination.
 - Choose two questions and eliminate the other two.
 - Meet with three readers.
-

Thesis:

- Assemble the thesis committee.
 - Prepare the thesis prospectus.
 - Meet with the thesis committee to get prospectus and project approved.
 - Sign up for a total of six units of ENGL 698: Thesis.
 - Write the thesis (collecting feedback from the thesis committee and revising along the way).
-

- Complete the final comprehensive examination or thesis.
- Wait for the official letter with feedback on final comprehensive examination.
- Wait for the official conferral of degree (which might take two or three months).
- Receive our congratulations!

NOTES

www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/english/ma

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