

**The M.A. Program
in English and American Literature**

**Office of Graduate Studies
Department of English
205 Roy Cullen Building
University of Houston
Houston, Texas 77204-3013**

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M.A. in English and American Literature Overview of the Program

Building on a record of excellence in the student's undergraduate preparation in literature, the M.A. student should work toward a mastery of the broad and diverse range of literatures in English. Further, the M.A. student should undertake studies in rhetoric and contemporary theoretical approaches to literary texts. The M.A. in literature constitutes solid preparation for expert secondary teaching, leadership in communications for business, education and arts organizations, and entrance into a Ph.D. program in literature.

Minimum requirements for admission

- B.A. in English or 12 upper division hours in English and American literature
- 3.0 g.p.a. in undergraduate studies
- One foreign language (Student can complete this requirement while in residence.)
- GRE general test

Requirements of the degree

- 36 hours of coursework
- Foreign language

Distribution of coursework

- 3 hours of Bibliography and Research Methods
- 3 hours of literary theory or rhetoric
- 30 hours of literature, including (1) at least 9 hours in early British and American literature, (2) at least 9 hours in later British and American literature, and (3) 12 hours of elective courses in literature, linguistics, literary theory, rhetoric, or Master's Essay. Early British literature is defined as British literature before 1800 and early American literature is defined as American literature before 1865. Students must divide the required courses in early and later literature between British and American literature.

General Requirements

The M.A. handbook sets forth the general requirements for M.A. students in the Department of English. Students must also be familiar with the college and university policies and regulations governing graduate study and can find this information at www.uh.edu/grad_catalogue/garr/index.html. After being admitted to the M.A. program students must complete their coursework toward the degree according to the guidelines in this handbook.

Enrollment and Residency

Graduate students must enroll in a minimum of three credit hours in each long semester (spring and fall) until completion of the M.A. program, unless granted a leave of absence. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in dismissal from the program.

Program of Study

M.A. students are required to complete 36 credit hours of graduate coursework according to the requirements of the degree plan set forth on page 8 of the M.A. handbook. Students must complete all requirements for the degree within five years of matriculation.

Foreign Language

Students must demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language in one of the following ways: (1) completing two years of college-level study in one foreign language, (2) receiving a grade of B or higher in an upper-division literature course in a foreign language department, not including literature in translation; (3) receiving a score of 450 on the Graduate School Foreign Language Test, (4) completing ENGL 8390: Studies in Literary Translation, (5) having a native language other than English, or (6) receiving a grade of B or higher in a graduate-level foreign language reading course for non-majors. A graduate-level foreign language reading course for non-majors may not be used to fulfill course requirements for the M.A. curriculum.

Students are encouraged to fulfill the foreign language requirement as early as possible in the graduate program.

Course Load

The University of Houston currently defines full-time graduate study as nine credit hours of graduate coursework in the fall and spring semesters. Six credit hours constitute full-time study in each six-week summer semester. In the long semesters, full-time students must enroll in at least six hours of formal courses. The remaining three hours may be Reading and Research hours (see pages 5 and 6), Master's Essay, or College Teaching of Language and Literature, a course for new teaching assistants.

Course Selection

Course selection is governed by the specific requirements of the M.A., the objective of which is to offer students a mastery of the broad and diverse range of literatures in English as well as foundational studies in rhetoric and contemporary theoretical approaches to literary texts.

Students will meet with the Graduate Advisor each semester to select courses for the subsequent semester. Students must obtain the Graduate Advisor's permission to enroll in graduate courses in the Department of English and other departments at the University of Houston.

Curricular Disciplines

The Department of English offers courses in a variety of disciplines: literature, literary theory, rhetoric and composition, language and linguistics, folklore, literary translation and creative writing. These categories are distinct for purposes of M.A. studies. For example, a seminar in rhetoric may not substitute for a literature seminar and *vice versa*.

Bibliography and Research Methods

All M.A. students are required to take Bibliography and Research Methods and are strongly encouraged to take this course in the first semester of the program. This course not only provides the skills that will facilitate research in all subsequent graduate coursework, but offers a perspective on textual criticism and the profession of literary studies.

Introductory Seminars and Preseminars

Introductory seminars and preseminars offer graduate students reading experience in a specific area of English studies and a survey of the current critical theories and methodologies of the area. M.A. students are strongly encouraged to take the preseminar in a specific area of English studies prior to enrolling in a more advanced seminar in that area. The following is a list of introductory seminars and preseminars in the Department of English:

Introductory	6330: General Linguistics 6360: Old English 7370: History of Rhetoric
Preseminars	7362: Middle English Literature 7363: Renaissance Literature 7364: Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature 7365: Nineteenth-Century British Literature 7366: Modern British Literature 7367: American Literature to the Civil War 7368: American Literature since the Civil War

Introductory seminars and preseminars are offered on a regular basis in each of the areas. One half of the seats in preseminars are reserved for M.A. students and first-year doctoral students.

Seminars

Graduate seminars are designed for students who have substantive academic preparation in a specific area of English studies. Graduate seminars offer students the opportunity to develop intensive knowledge in a specific field, and to do scholarly research and scholarly writing on a specialized topic in that field. In addition to reading and discussing primary and secondary texts, seminar assignments typically include student presentations and a writing requirement of 6,000 to 10,000 words.

Transfer Credit

Students may petition to transfer a maximum of nine credit hours of graduate coursework in English from other institutions to the M.A. program at the University of Houston. A course taken more than five years prior to graduation may not be applied to the M.A.

Postbaccalaureate Credit

Students may petition to apply a maximum of twelve credit hours of graduate coursework taken at the University of Houston to the M.A. A course taken more than five years prior to graduation may not be applied to the M.A. To petition to apply postbaccalaureate courses to the M.A. degree plan, students must submit an Academic Record Course Adjustment form to the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Dean for approval.

Graduate Courses Outside of the Department of English

Students may be permitted to apply a maximum of six credit hours of graduate courses outside of the Department of English to the M.A. program. Students must consult with the Graduate Advisor prior to enrolling in courses outside of the department to determine if such courses will be applied to the M.A.

Including transfer credits taken prior to entrance in the program, no more than nine credit hours taken outside of the English Department, whether at the University of Houston or other institutions, may be applied to the M.A. program.

Individual Study Courses

The heart of graduate studies is independent research. Unlike the undergraduate curriculum in which almost all of a student's work is confined to discrete, three-hour organized classes, the graduate curriculum is built on a complement of organized seminars and independent research. Formal seminars provide an important foundation for subsequent learning and the faculty who conduct them offer students valuable professional models. However, reading, research and writing undertaken outside the organized seminar may be appropriate as students move toward completion of the M.A.

Students have the opportunity for individual study courses under two rubrics: English 7398: Special Problems and English 8198-8698: Reading and Research. Special Problems courses and Reading and Research hours are distinct course categories and are not interchangeable in our course catalog and on the M.A. degree plan. The distinctions are explained below. When a student and professor agree to work together on either of these courses, both should be clear about the kind of course they are planning and about their expectations of each other's involvement. They should also be clear with the Graduate Studies Office about their intention; otherwise, students may be unable to receive the appropriate credit for the course.

Special Problems Courses offer students an opportunity to conduct substantive research in a specialized area of scholarship. Such courses should not overlap with formal seminars or workshops within the graduate curriculum, but provide the means for students to devote time to an exceptional project that complements their previous coursework.

Special Problems Courses are weighted equally with formal classroom courses, and they fulfill degree requirements in a student's program. Depending on their structure, content, and goals, they could potentially satisfy any of the degree requirements for the M.A. Because they are weighted equally with graduate seminars and satisfy degree requirements, Special Problems courses are given letter grades and require an amount of reading and writing commensurate with formal courses. While they don't absolutely require a weekly meeting, they do require a degree of interaction between student and professor that is commensurate with formal courses. The form

required for these courses (available in the Graduate Studies Office) asks the student to provide a detailed course description. The description of a special problems course should include a reading list of literary and critical texts, a statement of the number and focus of writing assignments, the frequency of meetings, and the specific degree requirement that the proposed course fulfills.

M.A. students are allowed to apply one Special Problems course to their degree plan.

Research and Reading Hours offer students the opportunity to pursue, as a part of their minimum course load requirement, an independent study of various areas and topics in literature and language under the guidance of a member of the faculty. Typically, students enroll for Research and Reading hours when they would profit from time and faculty consultation to read additional texts from a prior seminar, or revise an essay for publication. The expectation is that the students will take the initiative in using Research and Reading hours to become familiar with the areas of expertise and scholarly interests of individual faculty members and to identify their own areas of interest.

Unlike Special Problems courses, Research and Reading hours are not weighted equally with formal classroom courses, and they neither fulfill category requirements in a student's program nor count toward the student's academic program. Accordingly, the formal requirements for Research and Reading hours are less than those for Special Programs courses. The student and professor are expected to meet at least three times during the semester of enrollment in Reading and Research hours. Students will receive a grade of (S) Satisfactory or (U) Unsatisfactory for Research and Reading hours.

Because Research and Reading hours do not count toward the student's academic program, they should be used sparingly. They are nonetheless very useful if used to productive ends. When students wish to enroll in Research and Reading hours, they must complete a form (available in the Graduate Studies Office) that identifies the specific project for the Research and Reading hours and the faculty member who will supervise the project.

M.A. students are permitted to enroll in Research and Reading hours only after they have completed 12 hours of graduate coursework in the Department of English, and are allowed to enroll in three hours of Research and Reading once during their program.

Master's Essay

In the final year of study, the M.A. student may elect to write a Master's essay with the objective of producing a substantive, polished critical essay. The Masters essay should resemble an article submitted for journal publication in length, critical framework, and sophistication.

In the penultimate semester of the program, the student will submit a two-page description of the proposed project with the approval of a member of the faculty who will guide the student in writing the Master's essay. Following approval of the graduate studies committee, in the final semester of the Master's program, the student will enroll in English 7399: Master's Essay.

This course will replace three hours of elective credit toward the M.A.

Graduation

M.A. students must meet all department, college and university requirements for the degree prior to graduation. The department requirements are set forth in this handbook and the college and university requirements are found at www.uh.edu/grad_catalogue/garr/index.html.

Students must be enrolled for graduate credit in the semester in which they graduate, and must submit an application for graduation to the Graduate Advisor. The current academic calendar will provide the application deadline.

Progression to the Ph.D.

Exceptionally strong students in the M.A. program may apply for admission to the Ph.D. program in the Department of English after completing 24 credit hours toward the Master's degree. Admission to the doctoral program is not automatic and is competitive. M.A. students who wish to progress to the doctoral program must submit a full application, including new letters of recommendation from faculty with whom they have studied in the M.A. program, a new critical writing sample from their M.A. course work, and a new statement of intent. The Graduate Studies Committee will review this application during the regularly scheduled review of applications for the doctoral program.

Successful applicants to the Ph.D. program would complete the 36 credit hours for the Master's degree at which time they would officially receive the M.A., their degree status would change to Ph.D., and 6 elective hours from the M.A. program would then be applied to the doctoral degree plan. The M.A. that is received *en passant* to the Ph.D. in the Department of English at the University of Houston is effectively a 30 credit hour degree.

M.A. Program Review

The Graduate Studies Committee of the Department of English will regularly review the requirements and policies for the M.A. program. Upon review, if the Graduate Studies Committee determines the need for a revision of requirements or policies as stated in the M.A. Studies Handbook, it will bring its recommendation to the faculty of the Department of English for their approval.

**Degree Plan
M.A. in Literature**

Name _____ **Admission Date** _____

Courses (36 hrs.)

Number	Course	Semester	Professor	Grade
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Bibliography (3 hrs.)

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Literary Theory, Rhetoric (3 hrs.)

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Early Literature (9 hrs. divided between British and American literature)

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Later Literature (9 hrs. divided between British and American literature)

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Electives (12 hrs.)

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Foreign Language _____

Rationale _____

General Requirements Satisfactory Progress Toward the M.A.

All students who are enrolled in the M.A. program in the Department of English are expected to make continuous, satisfactory progress toward the degree as specified by the criteria below. A student who does not meet these criteria may be dismissed from the graduate program.

Grades

1. Students must maintain a minimum g.p.a. of 3.0 for all graduate courses attempted at the University of Houston.
2. Students must receive a grade of B- or higher in each course that is applied to the degree program.
3. Students who receive a grade of C+ or lower in 12 hours of graduate course work at the University of Houston will be ineligible for the M.A.

Rate of Progress

1. Students must successfully complete at least 12 credit hours of seminars or special problems courses in any two-year period.
2. Students must successfully complete 75% of all seminars or special problems courses attempted for graduate credit.
3. Successfully completed courses include only those assigned grades of S or B- or higher.
4. Students must fulfill any conditions of admission within two years of matriculation. Exceptions to this rule must be specified on the letter of acceptance or Graduate Approval/Disapproval form.

Continuous Enrollment

1. Students must enroll in at least three credit hours of graduate coursework each long semester. For an exemption of this requirement, students must apply for a leave of absence from the M.A. program.
2. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment must petition for re-entrance into the M.A. program.

Time Limitation

Students must complete all requirements for the M.A. within five years of matriculation. No course—whether earned at the University of Houston or transferred from another institution—taken more than five years prior to graduation may be applied to the M.A.

Department, College and University Requirements

Students who fail to meet the above requirements and all general requirements of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and the University of Houston may be dismissed from the program. The general requirements for graduate study at the University of Houston are found at www.uh.edu/grad_catalogue/garr/index.html.

CLASS Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students

Graduate students and involved faculty should make every effort to settle their differences amiably and informally. In the event that an informal resolution is not possible, students are required to resolve any grievance according to the grievance procedure established the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. The CLASS Grievance Procedure for Graduate Students is found at www.class.uh.edu/advising_grad_gpolicy.html.