

MFA Student Handbook

Department of English
University of Houston



GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

The MFA Program in Creative Writing

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

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE

Satisfactory Progress Toward the MFA

All students who are enrolled in the MFA program in the Department of English are expected to make continuous, satisfactory progress toward the degree as specified by the criteria below. Students who do not meet these criteria will be referred to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to draw up a plan for improving their progress during a probationary semester, and if problems persist 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 MFA.
4. Students must not receive more than one (1) INC (Incomplete) a year, and may not receive more than (2) two INC's during coursework. Students whose circumstances have necessitated exceeding this limit must consult with the DGS and follow the procedure laid out in Rate of Progress, 5).

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 in the letter of acceptance or Graduate Approval/Disapproval form.
5. Students who experience a significant setback (e.g., health, natural disaster, family-related events, caretaking, etc.) that causes disruption to their progress (incompletes, withdrawal, etc.) may consult with the Director of Graduate Studies to explain their circumstances and draw up a plan to resume progress, which must be approved by the DGS.

Continuous Enrollment

1. Students must enroll in at least three credit hours of graduate coursework each long semester (spring and fall).
2. For an exemption of this requirement, students must apply for a leave of absence from the MFA. The application will be reviewed by the department, college, and graduate school.

Information regarding the college's Leave of Absence policy can be found here: <http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=33&navoid=11946>.

3. Students who fail to maintain continuous enrollment or fail to apply for a leave of absence must petition for re-entrance into the MFA program.

Time Limitations

1. Students must complete all requirements for the MFA within five years of matriculation. No course—from the University of Houston or transferred from another institution—taken more than ten years prior to graduation may be applied to the MFA.
2. Students must complete all Incompletes prior to defending their MFA thesis.
3. Students must have completed the Foreign Language Requirement no later than the beginning of the semester they will graduate.

Conduct

All students must abide by the UH Student Code of Conduct contained at: <http://www.uh.edu/dos/files/student-code-of-conduct-2019-2020.pdf>.

Engaging in prohibited conduct could trigger a complaint directed by any member of the university community to the Dean of Students and cause a Disciplinary Hearing that could potentially expel the student from the University.

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.htm

Department Grievance Procedures for Graduate Students

Graduate students and involved faculty are encouraged to settle any differences amiably and informally. In the event that an informal resolution is not possible, students should contact the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). The DGS will then attempt to mediate a resolution. If this is not possible, the Chair of the English Department will be contacted to work to settle any issues between faculty and students in a satisfactory manner. If these steps still do not resolve the issue, the student is encouraged to file a grievance with the English Department's elected Election, Rules, and Governance (ERG) committee. Once a grievance is filed, ERG will convene to adjudicate the grievance. If it is determined that the grievance can be heard within the scope of ERG's charge, the student and faculty will be contacted if further information is needed for ERG to produce a ruling on the grievance. Once a ruling is determined, both student and faculty are expected to abide by the determination of ERG.

If a student still does not agree with ERG's ruling, they may appeal the judgment at the level of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, as detailed below.

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: <http://www.uh.edu/class/students/graduate/academics-planning/policies-procedures/class-graduate-grievance-policy-procedure-may-2018.pdf>

UH ENGLISH GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Graduate Students have a right to the following:

1. Right to Respect

Graduate students have the right to be considered members of the scholarly and academic community, and to be treated fairly and respectfully by members of both the administration and the faculty.

Graduate students have the right to perform scholarly activities, work, teach, and conduct research in an environment free from exploitation, discrimination, harassment, or unreasonable expectations or conditions.

Graduate students have the right to be free from exploitation from faculty members who see the students' lesser authority as an opportunity for personal advantage.

2. Right to Respect of Time and Effort

Graduate students have the right to refuse to perform tasks that are not related to, or are in conflict with, their academic or professional development, or tasks in excess of their obligations as students and employees.

Graduate students have the right not to be coerced into performing tasks in grievous excess of other students.

Graduate students have the right to ownership and access to their intellectual property and to co-authorship in publications to which they have contributed significant content or research, consistent with the generally accepted standards of their fields of study.

3. Right to Academic Freedom

Graduate students have a right to an intellectually stimulating and diverse academic environment that includes members from historically underrepresented groups.

Graduate students have the right to academic freedom and the university shall not curb graduate students' right to exercise this freedom, or use it as grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the university.

4. Right to Data Access

All access shall be provided in a timely manner and in writing.

- *Grievance policy*

Graduate students have the right to be made aware of all available Department and University avenues for grievances and be given clearly defined channels for the receipt and consideration of graduate student complaints concerning instruction and evaluation.

Graduate students have the right to be given the opportunity for full-faith consultation and mediation before actions are taken against them, should be given

a fair opportunity to correct or remedy deficiencies in their academic performance, and to defend themselves at disciplinary hearings.

- *Degree Requirements*

Graduate students have a right to specific and concrete requirements for achieving an advanced degree. These requirements should be communicated clearly to them upon entrance to the graduate program.

Graduate students have a right to expect that new policies regarding expectations enacted during the course of a graduate student's studies shall not negatively affect those who were admitted prior to the change.

- *Required classes*

Graduate students have the right to take required classes. This means that either required courses be taught with sufficient frequency not to hinder a fair opportunity to achieve the "normative time to degree," alternative courses be offered, or such courses be dropped as a formal requirement.

- *Academic file*

Graduate students have the right to inspect any of their own educational records, except as waived by the graduate student (e.g., confidential letters of recommendation).

Graduate students have a right to provide a written explanation for documents in their files. The explanation shall be included in the graduate student's educational records.

- *Time to degree*

Graduate students have the right to know the "normative time to degree" and the "average time to degree" within a specific graduate program.

- *Attrition rate*

Graduate students have the right to know a program's student attrition rate and, if available, the predominant reasons for lack of program completion.

- *Hiring rate*

Graduate students have the right to access information regarding expectations of job placement and time expectations regarding the availability of careers upon completion of their degree.

Graduate students have a right to know about job placements of department graduates, as that information is available.

- *Knowledge of Financial Support Availability*

Graduate students have a right to an accurate and comprehensive description of available funding opportunities and the likelihood of financial and resource support within their program.

Graduate students have a right to a thorough description of the requirements and qualifications necessary for academic employment, training, and financial support within the Department and the University.

- *Teaching Assignments*

Graduate students have the right to know how their teaching assignments are decided and that these assignments are done in a fair and equitable way.

Graduate students have the right to be informed about all teaching opportunities (including co-teaching, teaching upper level classes, and specialty assignments) and have the right to apply for and participate in these opportunities.

5. Right to Compensation and Support

Graduate students have a right to compensation that meets the standard of a fair and reasonable living wage (as defined by city level wage and cost of living data), and part time (defined as under twenty hour) employment stipends should be proportionate to the standards met for full time appointments. This should be regarded as the baseline for compensation, not as the average or standard wage.

Graduate students have a right to compensation packages that are regularly evaluated to ensure they match the cost-of-living standards.

Graduate students have a right to access affordable and comprehensive health insurance.

Graduate students have a right to adequate resources being supplied to support teaching and research work including adequate graduate student space and individual work stations.

6. Right to Professionalization

Graduate students, of all levels, have a right to substantial professional development as an essential aspect of graduate and professional students' present and future professional lives, and the Department should offer regular training on: submitting articles for publication, how to create and tailor job documents, professional associations and conferences, and effective job searches and interview techniques as the minimum standard.

Graduate students have a right to enroll in classes offered by other UH departments, provided space is available and they meet the prerequisites.

7. Right to Feedback and Guidance

Graduate students have a right to be evaluated by the faculty of their program in accordance with fair procedures, in matters of both employment and academic success, solely on the

basis of the graduate student's professional qualifications and conduct, and previously agreed upon criteria for evaluation.

Graduate students have the right to timely communication between graduate students, faculty, advisors, and program coordinators.

8. Right to Confidentiality

Graduate students have a right to professionalism and reasonable confidentiality in their communications with professors.

Graduate students have a right to expect that a student's performance or behavior should only be discussed for professional purposes and in a collegial manner and should not be discussed with another student without express consent from the student being discussed.

9. Right to be Part of the Department Community

Graduate students have a right to representatives on standing and ad-hoc committees where appropriate, including hiring committees, and be given the opportunity to participate in discussions about university-wide changes that affect their day-to-day lives.

Graduate students have the right to be informed, in a timely manner, of the creation of new committees that will address issues directly related to graduate students and given the opportunity to select or recommend a graduate student representative.

Graduate Students have the following responsibilities:

1. Responsibility to Conduct Themselves Professionally

Graduate students have a responsibility to conduct themselves, in all educational activities, in a manner befitting an academic colleague. Graduate students' behavior should be a credit to themselves, the higher academic unit, and the university.

2. Responsibility to Respect Others

Graduate students have a responsibility to help promote an intellectually stimulating and diverse academic environment and to help foster a professional climate in which all faculty, staff, and students (both graduate and undergraduate) feel safe.

3. Responsibility to Respect Others' Time

Graduate students have a responsibility to be aware of time constraints imposed on other faculty, staff, and fellow students.

4. Responsibility to Communicate Appropriately

Graduate students have a responsibility to communicate regularly with faculty, mentors, and advisors in matters related to research and progress within the graduate program.

Graduate students have a responsibility to use professionalism and reasonable confidentiality in their communications with professors, fellow students, and those they teach.

5. Responsibility to Uphold Ethical Norms in Research and Scholarship

Graduate students have a responsibility to uphold ethical norms of the academy and provide accurate and honest reporting of research results, research methodology, and scholarship.

6. Responsibility to Work to the Best of Their Ability

Graduate students have a responsibility to fulfill their teaching and research obligations to the best of their knowledge, training, and ability; to carry out their job responsibilities in a conscientious and timely manner; and to perform their duties in accordance with all relevant University, state government, and federal government rules and regulations.

Graduate students have a responsibility to focus on their academic career and apply energy toward the advanced degree within normative time, except when special circumstances apply.

Graduate students have a responsibility to increase their own learning, thus increasing their teaching effectiveness and individual scholarship over time.

7. Responsibility to Ask Questions

Graduate students have a responsibility to take the initiative in asking questions that promote their understanding of the academic requirements and the financial particulars of their specific graduate program.

8. Responsibility to Participate in Community

Graduate students have a responsibility to contribute to building a healthy department community, enriching the administration, academic development, and the social environment of the department.

9. Responsibility to Work for Sustainability

Graduate students have a responsibility to demand sustainable policies of the University and to both practice and promote habits that protect the environment and raise environmental consciousness.

10. Responsibility to Revisit Rights and Responsibilities Statement

Graduate students have a responsibility to periodically revisit these rights and responsibilities and update them to best reflect the high standards and expectations of the Department.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE MFA IN ENGLISH

The MFA handbook sets forth the general requirements for MFA students in the Department of English. Students must also be familiar with the college and university policies and regulations governing graduate study. This information can be found at:

www.uh.edu/grad_catalogue/garr/index.html.

After being admitted to the MFA program students must complete their coursework toward the degree according to the guidelines in this handbook.

Minimum requirements for admission

- BA
- 3.0 GPA in undergraduate studies
- One foreign language (Student can complete this requirement while in residence.)

Requirements of the degree

- 36 hours of coursework
- Foreign language competence. Students must demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language.

Distribution of coursework

- 15 hours in creative writing, including 9 hours in the primary genre, 3 hours of Master Workshop, and 3 hours of Poetic Forms and Techniques for poetry students, Fiction Forms and Techniques for fiction students, or Nonfiction Forms and Techniques for nonfiction students. Students are strongly encouraged to take the course in Forms and Techniques early in the MFA program.
- 3 hours of Writers on Literature
- 12 hours in literature. Students should divide their courses between early and later literatures. Early literature is defined as pre-1900 and later literature is defined as post-1900.
- 6 hours of elective courses (literature or other literary studies, workshop in the primary genre, workshop in a crossover genre, Writers on Literature, or coursework in another department that complements the student's program).

Enrollment and Residency

Graduate students must enroll in a minimum of three (3) credit hours in each long semester (spring and fall) until completion of the MFA program, unless granted a leave of absence. Failure to maintain continuous enrollment may result in dismissal from the program.

Program of Study

MFA students are required to complete 36 credit hours of graduate coursework according to the requirements of the degree plan set forth on page 9 of the MFA handbook. Students must complete all requirements for the degree within five years of matriculation.

Transfer Credit

Students may petition to transfer a maximum of nine credit hours of graduate coursework to the MFA. Transfer courses must be taken in a doctoral-granting institution. No course taken more than five years prior to matriculation to the MFA program will be allowed for any kind of transfer credit.

Course Credit: Graduate courses that are in excess of previously awarded degree requirements or required degree credit hours may be transferred in for course credit upon the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. To transfer a course for Course Credit, students must have passed the course with a B- or better and provide a syllabus for the course. If approved, the course will then transfer and give the student course credit toward their degree reducing their degree requirements *and* required courses for the MFA.

Content Credit: Graduate courses that are applied to another graduate degree may be transferred in for Content Credit upon the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. To transfer a course for content credit, students must have passed the course with a B- or better and provide a syllabus for the course. If approved, the course will then transfer and give the student content credit toward their degree requirements. The student will still need to make up the credit hours for the course in the form of an elective.

Postbaccalaureate Credit: Students may petition to apply a maximum of twelve credit hours of graduate coursework taken at the University of Houston to the MFA. A course taken more than five years prior to graduation may not be applied to the MFA. 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.

Foreign language requirement

The study of a language, even if that language is English, serves a valuable purpose as the focus of critical inquiry. The study of language takes the reader outside the medium and exposes its political, ideological, and cultural underpinnings. The objective is that students will learn how writing functions in relation to different languages within a global context. With that in mind, the language requirements are meant to be part of the curriculum of all graduate students.

To fulfill the foreign language requirement, students must either demonstrate a reading knowledge of one foreign language. The avenues available for students to meet these requirements are listed below.

Reading knowledge of **one** foreign language: Students must demonstrate reading knowledge of a foreign language in one of the following ways:

- completing one year of college-level study in one foreign language (See NOTE),
- receiving a score of Intermediate Low or Mid on the ACTFL,
- completing ENGL 8390: Studies in Literary Translation,

- completing ENGL 6360 and 6361: Old English with a grade of B or higher,
- completing a graduate-level foreign language reading course for non-majors with a receiving a grade of B or higher,
- completing three hours of course work in graduate level Linguistics with a grade of B or higher,
- completing six hours of course work learning a foreign language at the freshman or sophomore level in MCL or Hispanic Studies with a grade of B or higher. (See NOTE)

PLEASE NOTE: All graduate level courses taken to fulfill the Foreign Language Requirement can be paid for by the Graduate Tuition Fellowship and will count toward degree plan requirements. Undergraduate courses taken will satisfy the Foreign Language Requirement but **WILL NOT** count toward degree plan requirements and cannot be paid for with Graduate Tuition Fellowship Funds.

Students should attempt to fulfill the foreign language requirement as early as possible.

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS

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), English 6300: College Teaching of Language and Literature, a course for new teaching assistants.

Course Selection and Advising

Course selection is governed by the specific requirements of the MFA, the objective of which is to work toward increased sophistication in his/her creative work and scholarship. 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.

Graduate Courses Outside of the Department of English

Students may be permitted to take a maximum of nine hours of graduate courses outside of the Department of English. 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 MFA.

Graduate Courses at Reciprocal Universities

The University of Houston (UH) has a reciprocal arrangement with selected regional universities that enables enrolled, full-time graduate students to take graduate-level course work at those participating institutions. Institutions participating in this inter-institutional agreement are Baylor College of Medicine, Rice University, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and the University of Texas Medical Branch. The agreement with these institutions provides for special admission arrangements, procedures for registration, and posting of final grades.

To be eligible to utilize this program, a student must meet the following criteria: enrolled full-time (including the proposed inter-institutional course), the course involved must cover a topic not being offered at the UH main campus, and the course must be required for student's degree plan. Students are prohibited from participating in the inter-institutional program during the term in which they intend to graduate. Students are limited to no more than 6 credit hours of inter-institutional work in a single term and no more than 12 credit hours total. Students should initiate this process by completing an Inter-institutional Course Registration Form <https://www.uh.edu/academics/forms/#IICR> and submit it to the Office of the University Registrar in the Welcome Center.

In all cases, the student bears the responsibility for completing all necessary paperwork, obtaining all required signatures, and delivering documents between the institutions. Failure to complete the full registration process may invalidate the credit earned at the partner institution. Students will be enrolled in special course numbers and billed tuition and fees at the UH. Payment for inter-institutional coursework must be made on time according to the university's fee payment calendar along with all other coursework being taken at UH during that term.

Seminars

Graduate seminars are designed for students who have substantive academic preparation in a specific area. 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.

Individual Study Courses

Our curriculum is designed to meet the requirements of the degrees and the needs of our MFA students' individual academic pursuits and interests. MFA students are encouraged to work with their advisors and faculty to understand where they may locate those interests in courses that meet their scheduled availability. Additionally, students may approach a faculty member to request an individual study course, if there is no overlap. However, students are advised that ENGL 7398 courses must be approved by the Graduate Committee with consent of the faculty member and are not guaranteed.

There are two courses for individual study, 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 MFA degree plan. The distinctions are explained below. If 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.

Before enrolling in either of these courses consider the following:

- ***Special Problems Courses:*** These courses offer students an opportunity to conduct substantive research in a specialized area of scholarship with a view to developing a research area. Such courses should not overlap with or replace existing formal seminars or workshops within the graduate curriculum but provide the means for students to devote time to an exceptional project that complements and builds on their previous coursework. For this reason, Special Problems Course should only be considered late in one's coursework, ideally in the final two semesters.

Special Problems Courses are weighted equally with formal classroom courses and consequently require substantial contact time with the faculty member (at least biweekly

during the semester) since 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 in the MFA program. 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. There should be a substantial final project. 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 in literature should include a detailed reading list of literary and critical texts, a statement of the number and focus of writing assignments, the frequency of meetings, the amount of assignments and the specific degree requirement that the proposed course fulfills. The description of a Special Problems Course in creative writing should include a statement of the number and focus of writing assignments; a list of literary and critical texts, where appropriate; the frequency of meetings; and the specific degree requirement that the proposed course fulfills. MFA students are allowed to apply a maximum of one Special Problems Course to their degree plan.

- ***Research and Reading Hours:*** These non-credit bearing hours afford 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, CWP students enroll for Research and Reading hours when they would profit from time and faculty consultation to read additional texts from a prior seminar, complete a creative manuscript or revise an article for publication.

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 before the thesis phase. 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.

Writers on Literature

Writers on Literature, a seminar taught by faculty in creative writing, examines fiction, poetry, nonfiction, or a combination of genres from a writerly perspective, with an eye toward craft and construction that an artist brings to a consideration of the work. The writing component of this seminar often takes both critical and creative forms.

Master Workshop

The Master Workshop is open only to students who have completed all other workshop requirements or in rare cases by permission of instructor. The workshop focuses on the shaping and refinement of the MFA thesis, and it is central to each student's work in the program. The student's body of creative work is closely considered in consultation with the instructor and with a small group of fellow students.

Certificates

The Department of English offers several certificates of graduate study or affiliates with programs who offer certificates, as well. MFA students in English have the possibility of pursuing advanced study in the following areas during their course of study at UH:

- Empire Studies
- Poetics
- Translation
- Women and Gender Studies

These certificates each have their own requirements for course work and are included in Appendices A-D at the end of the handbook.

PREPARATION FOR THE MFA THESIS AND ORAL DEFENSE

MFA Thesis

The MFA thesis is an extended creative work: a novel or a collection of short stories or novellas for fiction writers; a collection of essays or a memoir for nonfiction writers; and a collection or cycle of poems for poets. The thesis should include a substantive, reflective introduction of 10-15 pages that discusses the student's growth as a writer during her or his graduate education, the literary context of the thesis, and other influences on the creative work. The thesis will be submitted to the University of Houston library system, where it will be made publicly available. Students develop the MFA thesis under the guidance of a faculty member in the Creative Writing Program of the Department of English who chairs the thesis defense committee.

Students should adhere to the most recent edition of the MLA Style Manual in writing the thesis and should consult the college and university regulations concerning the format of the MFA thesis before final preparation of the document. This information, available at www.uh.edu/grad_catalogue/garr/index.html, provides instructions for the reproduction of the thesis, deadlines for each semester for submitting the document to the Dean's office, and regulations for graduation.

MFA Thesis Committee

The MFA thesis committee consists of three (3) persons: a member of the faculty of the Creative Writing Program of the Department of English who serves as Director; a second reader who is a member of the faculty of the Department of English; and an outside reader. The outside reader should be: a member of the faculty of the University of Houston outside of the Department of English, a member of the faculty of another university, or an individual whose professional expertise and reputation qualify the individual to assess the MFA thesis in creative writing. For the purpose of this document, members of the faculty of the Department of English are understood to be tenured or tenure-track professors, professors emeriti, and distinguished visiting professors.

Once a student requests a member of the faculty to direct the MFA thesis, the student should select the second reader in consultation with the thesis director. The outside reader is selected in consultation with the thesis director and the Director of Creative Writing. The student must formally request that the Graduate Studies Office appoint the thesis committee and must do so in advance of the first semester in which the student enrolls in ENGL 7399 or 7699: Master's Thesis.

MFA Thesis Defense

The thesis defense is held following the completion of the thesis and prior to the submission of the thesis to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Prior to scheduling the thesis defense, the candidate will ensure that all substantive revisions requested by the thesis director have been made. The thesis should then be submitted to all members of the thesis committee at least two weeks prior to the defense. Public notice of the defense will be posted at least 24 hours

in advance of the meeting, and all members of the department will be invited to attend. The defense will generally last one hour with ample time for a presentation of the project, questions concerning the document, discussion of future plans for the manuscript, and deliberation.

MFA students will enroll in ENGL 7399 or 7699: Master's Thesis while writing the thesis. Students must enroll for six hours of thesis credit the semester of defense and graduation.

Graduation

MFA 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.

MFA Program Review

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

APPENDIX

- A. Requirements for Certificate in Empire Studies
- B. Requirements for Certificate in Poetics
- C. Requirements for Certificate in Translation
- D. Requirements for Certificate in Women and Gender Studies
- E. Degree Plan for MFA in Creative Writing

A. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE IN EMPIRE STUDIES

Overview

This certificate program allows for the symbiotic development of rich, coordinated course offerings in areas (postcolonial literature and theory) that over the past several years have been in high demand across Literature and Creative Writing. It also offers a more integrated approach to the period- and genre-based courses in English or British literature which the department has always offered. Students going through this program should emerge with a much more comprehensive sense of how the experience of empire changed over longer periods of time, and a far more concrete sense of how empire played out in a variety of authors, works, and genres spanning several centuries and across the globe. The certificate program would harness and consolidate energies that over the past several years have emerged organically among faculty and students.

Course Requirements

To qualify for a Certificate in Empire Studies, Ph.D. students in the Department of English will complete twelve (12) hours of coursework in the field of empire and postcolonial studies.

Core Courses – At least six (6) of these hours should be completed within the core course cycle of the specialty:

- ENGL 7369 - Introduction to Postcolonial Studies
- ENGL 8386 - Topics in Postcolonial Studies
- ENGL 7325 - The British Empire

Additional Coursework – The remaining six hours may be completed either within these core courses or in other offerings designated by Empire Studies faculty as fitting within the disciplinary goals of the certificate program.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE IN POETICS

Course Requirements

The Poetry and Poetics Certificate requires a total of three course (9 hours) fulfilled through a combination of 2 core and 1 elective classes.

Core Classes

- ENGL 7380: History of Poetry and Poetics provides a historical overview from the classical era to the present day. This class is offered annually.
- ENGL 7396: Topics in Poetics. This course introduces theoretical perspectives on poetry and poetics. This class is offered annually.

Electives – For those in the Literature PhD and MA the further three hours are fulfilled by existing offerings that a core faculty member designates as meeting the Poetry and Poetics certificate with approval from the Certificate Faculty Director and the Director of Graduate Studies. For example, ENGL 8376: Nineteenth Century American Poetry; ENGL 8383: African American Poetry; ENGL 8361: Victorian Poetry; and ENGL 8382: Contemporary American Poetry to name but a few. The final paper for the course must be in the area of Poetry and Poetics.

Graduate students in the Literature and Creative Writing PhD and MFA also have the option of using an advanced Creative Writing (ENGL 7322) workshop in poetry to fulfill the elective requirement.

For more information contact Dr. Sarah Ehlers (sehlers@uh.edu)

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATE IN TRANSLATION STUDIES

Course Requirements

Graduate Students who complete three graduate courses (9 credit hours) in Translation Studies will be awarded a Certificate in Translation Studies.

Required Course

- ENGL 8390 – Literary Translation

Additional Courses

- ENGL 8388 – Topics in Literary Translation (may take twice if different themes / subject matter)
- ENGL 8389 – Advanced Projects in Translation

Additional Considerations

- Graduate students could petition to substitute an appropriate graduate course from Modern and Classical Languages or Hispanic Studies for one of the three required courses.
- A student seeking the certificate will produce a substantial translation under the direction of a faculty member. In this way, students who receive a certificate in Translation Studies will demonstrate knowledge in the theory and skill in the practice of literary translation.
- Graduate students in the Departments of Hispanic Studies and Modern and Classical Languages would be eligible to work toward a certificate in Translation Studies. These students would fulfill the same requirements as graduate students in the Department of English.
- Courses in translation studies are open to all graduate students, not only those who are working toward the Certificate in Translation Studies.

D. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INTERDISCIPLINARY CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

Overview

The Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies is a nine (9) credit interdisciplinary concentration open to students in all UH graduate and professional degree programs. The Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies adds interdisciplinary breadth to a student's course of study while increasing the depth and coherence of students' work on women and gender within their primary fields. Given the growing importance of women and gender issues in both scholarship and social policy, many students find this formal recognition of their work in Women's Studies to be a valuable credential in both academic and non-academic job markets. Students who have earned or are pursuing the Graduate Certificate also receive first consideration for Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies graduate fellowships and assistantships.

Course Requirements

Three (3) Women's Studies graduate courses (9 credit hours) including:

- WGSS 6301: Feminist Theory & Methodology, the required core course
- Two (2) cross-listed courses, at least one of which must be from outside the student's home department

Possible Course Substitutions

Students may substitute for one of the cross-listed courses one of the following options:

- Taking a graduate course that is not cross-listed but in which they can focus their individual work (e.g. research paper and extra reading) on women, gender, or feminist theory. Such a course must be taught by an affiliated Women's Studies faculty member who will certify that the student's work in the course satisfies women's studies requirements.
- Taking an undergraduate course cross-listed in Women's Studies for graduate credit. Additional requirements will be determined by the instructor in accordance with university policy.

Regularly Offered Courses

The following Women's Studies graduate courses are offered regularly (at least once every two years). Many others are offered on an occasional basis. A complete listing of current courses is available from the WGSS office each semester and available online at <http://www.uh.edu/class/ws/students/courses/>.

- ANTH 6317: Anthropology & Gender
- ART 6394: Women Artists
- COMM 6333: Relational Communication
- ENGL 6314: Feminist Criticism
- ENGL 8364: Women Writers
- HIST 6396: Latin American Women's History

- HLT 6322: Dimensions in Women's Health
- LAW 5361/7397: Women and the Law
- SOC 6390: Sociology of Gender
- SOCW 6304: Women's Issues in Social Work

Individuals interested in the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies can come to the WGSS Office in Agnes Arnold 624 or contact the WGSS Advisors at 713-743-3214 or by email at wgss@uh.edu.

DEGREE PLAN: MFA IN ENGLISH
GRADUATE STUDIES IN ENGLISH | UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Name: _____

Admission Date: _____

Major Genre: _____

MFA in Creative Writing students must complete 36 hours of coursework distributed as follows: Creative Writing (15 hours); Writers on Literature (3 hours); Literature (12 hours); Electives (6 hours). Students receiving Teaching Fellowships will take English 6300: Teaching College Writing during their second year of coursework unless exempted.

Creative Writing (15 hours)

MFA students must take 15 hours in Creative Writing, including 9 hours in the primary genre, 3 hours of Master Workshop, and 3 hours of Poetic Forms and Techniques for poetry students, Fiction Forms and Techniques for fiction students.

Course	Term	Professor	Grade
<i>Major Genre Workshop</i>			
<i>Major Genre Workshop</i>			
<i>Major Genre Workshop</i>			
<i>Forms and Techniques</i>			
<i>Master Workshop</i>			

Writers on Literature (3 hours)

Course	Term	Professor	Grade

Literature (12 Hours)

Literature electives should be divided between early and later literatures. Early literature is defined as pre-1900, and later literature is defined as post-1900.

Course	Term	Professor	Grade

Electives (6 hours)

Electives courses may include courses in literature or other literary studies, workshop in the primary genre, workshop in a crossover genre, Writers on Literature, or coursework in another department that complements the student's program.

Course	Term	Professor	Grade

Notes

Please record any additional notes about coursework here.

2. FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

MFA students must demonstrate reading knowledge of at least one foreign language. MFA students must complete the foreign language requirement no later than the beginning of the semester in which they will graduate

Language	Rationale

3. MFA THESIS

Thesis Hours (6 hours)

MFA students will enroll in ENGL 7399 or 7699: Master's Essay while writing the thesis. Students must enroll for six hours of thesis credit the semester of defense and graduation.

Course	Term	Professor	Grade

Thesis Committee

Chair (Member of the CWP Faculty): _____

Committee Member (CWP/Department of English Faculty): _____

Committee Member (Outside Reader): _____

Thesis Defense

Defense Date: _____

Grade: _____