

English (MA) - Literature Concentration

Degree Requirements

Requirements for Degree

A. A minimum of thirty-six semester hours of credit is required beyond the bachelor's degree with a grade of "A" or "B," to include the following two courses in the first year of course work.

EH 501 Intro to Literary Theory

EH 502 Graduate Writing in English

Two courses from literary periods pre-1800

Two courses from literary periods post-1800

One course from the "diversity, equity, and inclusion" list (which may be in literature or creative writing): EH 548, EH 551, EH 552, or EH 588

No more than 18 hours of dual-listed courses (400 and 500 level listing for the same course) may be counted towards meeting the minimum hours required for a degree.

Graduate students will receive graduate credit only for the 500 level versions of dual-listed courses.

B. Before graduation, English M.A. students in the literature concentration must successfully meet their comprehensive examination requirement by completing either a literature thesis and oral thesis defense or by completing a capstone option.

Literature Thesis: The literature thesis is the preferred option for students who plan to enter a doctoral program in English. Students write a thesis, which may draw on a student's previous written work in courses, but which must also involve substantial further research under the supervision of a thesis director. Students take three to six semester hours of credit toward the graduation requirement, which will be granted upon successful completion and defense of the thesis, leaving a minimum of thirty hours of credit to be accomplished in course work. An oral exam or defense, which will situate the thesis in the comprehensive objectives of the literature concentration, will be required one to two weeks prior to the Thesis First Submission Deadline for the Graduate School.

Literature Capstone: Students produce a capstone project, either the Research Essay or the Digital Humanities Teaching Option, which may draw on a student's previous written work in courses, but which must also involve significant further research, meeting the comprehensive objectives of the literature concentration under the supervision of a capstone mentor. In their last semester of graduate study, students take three semester hours of Directed Study credit toward the capstone requirement, leaving a minimum of thirty-three hours of credit to be accomplished in course work. Each capstone requires an annotated bibliography, a major researched essay or an essay/digital presentation, and a presentation in the department. In order to qualify for graduation, all capstone work must be completed by April 15 (spring) or November 15 (fall) and receive the approval of the capstone mentor and the Graduate Committee. Departmental presentations will be scheduled between the deadline and the end of the semester.

C. Demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language is required.

Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement:

All students pursuing the M.A. in English must demonstrate a reading proficiency in Spanish, French, German, or Latin before registering for the comprehensive exam or for thesis hours. Foreign nationals for whom English is not native may offer their native language. Credit in reading courses in acceptable languages may not count toward the 36 hour credit requirement for the M.A. in English.

Department Information

[Department of English website](#)

<https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/english>

Through its focus on the interpretation, analysis, and production of literary and other texts, the English Department teaches students how those texts shape and are shaped by the world around them. In so doing, the Department helps students acquire the critical skills they need to analyze and participate in these interactions and contribute to the shaping of their worlds. The faculty's teaching and research in literature, creative writing, and composition/rhetoric combine to foster excellence in critical reading, creative thinking, and effective writing.

For all students, the Department provides the composition skills essential for success at the University and offers courses introducing the cultural diversity and historical breadth of British, American, and world literatures. For students majoring or minoring in English, the Department teaches critical strategies needed for intensive study in creative writing, professional writing, and in diverse literatures in English. For students pursuing graduate study in English, the Department provides advanced training in creative writing, literary analysis, rhetoric, methods of scholarly research, and critical theory. In all cases, by asking students to read, discuss, and write about a wide variety of texts, the Department promotes an inclusive and evolving understanding of English Studies.

All first-time freshmen must successfully complete CAS 100, First Year Experience, as a degree requirement. Students must enroll during their first term at USA, except for summer-entry students who must enroll in the fall semester following entry.

Honors In English

To be awarded Departmental Honors in English a student must:

1. Complete all the standard requirements for the major in English.
2. Maintain a 3.5 overall GPA (University requirement) and a 3.5 GPA in all course work in English.
3. Receive permission from the Department Chair and agreement from a Department member to serve as mentor.
4. Complete a Senior Honors Thesis (EH 499), with a grade of "A" or "B" in addition to the standard requirements for the English major. EH 499, Senior Honors Thesis (six semester hours credit), may be counted toward three hours of the 39 hours required for the major and toward three hours of the nine 400-level hours required for the major. Thus, the student receiving honors in English will be required to take a total of 42 hours in English instead of 36. In EH 499 the student will normally take three hours in the Fall semester for research and three in the Spring for writing. A final committee of three or more faculty members, including a representative of the University Honors College, will conduct an oral defense. The thesis must be approved by the director of the University Honors College.

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible to undertake an honors thesis in creative writing, the student must first complete four creative writing courses at the University of South Alabama. This policy on creative writing theses not only applies to students seeking departmental honors but also to students enrolled in the Honors College.

The Accelerated Bachelor's To Master's Program In English (ABM)

See Graduate School Bulletin for rules for all Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's Programs <https://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin/current/colleges-schools/graduate-school/index.html>

Program Description

The USA accelerated bachelor's to master's (ABM) in English provides exceptional undergraduate students the opportunity to earn a bachelor's and master's degree at an accelerated pace in English. While still an undergraduate, ABM students may count up to 6 credit hours of graduate course work towards their graduate degree.

Admission Procedures

Prospective Students must:

- Have completed at least 90 credit hours
- Have completed at least 30 credit hours at USA
- Must have at least a 3.5 GPA in EH 300- and 400-level classes

Admission will be based on the applicant's meeting these criteria and the approval of the graduate program coordinator. Once admitted into the ABM program, students must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA and remain in good standing to progress into the graduate program.

Program Procedures

ABM students may begin taking graduate courses after completing at least 90 hours of undergraduate credit.

Up to 6 hours can count toward both degrees (Bachelor's and Master's) if the courses are completed with grades of at least B. Courses with a grade of C can count toward the undergraduate degree but not the graduate degree. Courses with a grade below C cannot count toward the undergraduate or graduate degree. Upon completing the undergraduate degree, students will apply to the English Master's program. ABM students who are in good standing will be accepted into the English Master's program.

Completion of the English M.A. program requires successful completion of all requirements, including at least 36 graduate credit hours. Graduate credit taken while an undergraduate that is completed with at least the grade of B will be transferred into the Master's program upon acceptance and will apply toward the 36 hours required for the Master of Arts degree.

A student who withdraws or is dismissed from the ABM program may not count graduate coursework towards both degrees. Graduate courses for which an undergraduate student did not earn an "A" or "B" grade, may not be counted towards the graduate degree.

An ABM student must be a full-time student and must complete all degree requirements for the master's within three semesters of the semester in which they were admitted to the Graduate School. An exception for a fourth semester may be granted where an additional semester is required for final revisions to and submission of a defended thesis. Exceptions to the ABM policy are at the discretion of the Dean of the Graduate School.

Graduate Studies

The Master of Arts degree program in English is designed to meet the needs of students pursuing a terminal M.A. and of those planning to work toward the Ph.D. and a career in university teaching. The terminal M.A. serves such career tracks as junior college or secondary-school teaching and writing or editing in the business or corporate community. Creative writers find the degree meaningful in careers both in and out of the academic community since the M.A. provides guidance towards book publication and time to study successful literary texts.

Requirements For Admission

Students are admitted each semester. The following criteria supplement the Graduate School criteria (see Categories of Admission):

1. For the Literature Concentration, applicants normally have an undergraduate major or minor in English or at least 21 semester hours of course work in English beyond the freshman level, at least 12 of these hours in upper-division literature courses. For the Creative Writing Concentration, applicants normally have 15 semester hours of course work in English beyond the freshman level. Students lacking prior coursework can complete additional upper-division courses in English to strengthen their applications.
2. Applicants to graduate programs in Arts and Sciences typically have a minimum GPA of at least a 3.0 on all undergraduate work. In exceptional cases, applicants may be considered with at least a 2.5 GPA on all undergraduate work, or at least a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate work. The English Department normally requires a minimum GPA of 3.0 in junior- and senior-level courses presented in fulfillment of requirement 1.
3. All applicants should submit a personal statement of no more than 500 words, a writing sample of 5-15 pages in the area of concentration (creative writing or literature) and three letters of recommendation.*
4. All applicants for whom English is a second language should submit a TOEFL IBT score of at least 79 or IELTS score of at least 6.5. (Note that ESL applicants must apply through the International Admissions Office at USA.)

*Students must specify their concentration at the time of application and may not thereafter change concentrations without the specific approval of the English Department's Graduate Committee.

Graduate Assistantships

The English Department awards both teaching assistantships and research assistantships. Teaching assistantships involve responsibility for freshman composition classes. Graduate students holding research assistantships are usually assigned tasks involving tutoring, research, editing, or administrative/clerical tasks. Awards are normally made for the academic year; occasionally, assistantships become available for spring semester. Applications are taken continuously; competition for appointments begins in February for the following year. See Graduate Coordinator for information and application. (See also Bulletin section on Graduate School, "Assistantships and Fellowships.")