

Master of Arts

English with a
Concentration in Rhetoric
and Composition (MA)

Ruth Osorio, Graduate Program Director
rosorio@odu.edu

The Master of Arts program in English presents a full array of opportunities in literary studies, technical writing, composition and rhetoric, and the teaching of English. Our faculty, due to their varied areas of expertise, offer unique learning experiences in areas such as gaming, web design, environmental sustainability, Indigenous studies, digital humanities, and ethnic and gender diversity. Faculty take a hands-on approach to teaching with manageable classroom sizes allowing for personalized instruction and a dynamic culture of learning. Whether you are looking for a professional leg up or simply wish to continue your education, a Master's Degree at ODU promises in-depth exploration of critical discourses that harness the force of language, technology, and literature. The program prepares students for further graduate study in English; for technical writing and editing; for teaching in secondary schools and colleges; for further study in such fields as anthropology, law, psychology, and philosophy; for careers in government and industry; and for other professions requiring analytical, literary, linguistic, digital media, or writing skills.

Admission Information

The student must initially meet all general University admission requirements. For regular admission, students must generally have at least 24 undergraduate hours in English, or a closely related field, with a grade point average of 3.0 or better. However, students applying to the technical writing concentration (see technical writing concentration) may have little or no undergraduate course work relating to English, provided that they have an average of 3.0 or better in their undergraduate major. Students applying to all concentrations must also, in addition to other admissions materials, provide a writing sample, preferably of previous professional or academic work, that demonstrates their preparation for graduate-level writing. All students in the English graduate program must demonstrate a high level of skill in written expression.

International students must submit scores from the TOEFL examination, a sample of scholarly writing, and three recommendations, at least one of which evaluates ability in English. For regular admission, students must score 230 on the computer-based TOEFL (the equivalent of 570 in the older, paper-based score scale or 80 on the TOEFL iBT). Students may be admitted provisionally with a TOEFL score of 213 (550 in the paper-based scale), but must attain the scores required for regular admission after 12 hours of graduate work.

Curriculum Requirements

The Master of Arts degree in English requires 30 credit hours and the passing of one of the three examination options below. No more than 12 credit hours on the 500 level may be counted toward a degree. An identifiable unifying principle is required for each student's program.

Rhetoric and Composition Concentration

Designed to prepare students to teach and administer writing in language arts, community college, or university contexts, and to prepare students for doctoral work in composition and/or rhetoric.

ENGL 539	Writing in Digital Spaces	3
ENGL 664	Teaching College Composition	3
ENGL 685	Writing Research	3
Select one of the following:		3
ENGL 686	Introduction to Rhetoric and Writing Studies	

ENGL 760	Classical Rhetoric and Theory Building	
ENGL 765	Modern Rhetoric and Theory Building	
Select one of the following:		3
ENGL 540	General Linguistics	
ENGL 550	American English	
ENGL 577	Language, Gender and Power	
ENGL 595	Topics in English	
ENGL 722	Multilingualism and Writing Instruction	
Select one of the following:		3
ENGL 721	Compositions as Applied Rhetoric	
ENGL 760	Classical Rhetoric and Theory Building	
ENGL 765	Modern Rhetoric and Theory Building	
Select two of the following:		6
ENGL 527	Writing in the Disciplines	
ENGL 586	Media Law and Ethics	
ENGL 595	Topics in English	
ENGL 662	Cybercultures and Digital Writing	
ENGL 665	Teaching Writing with Technology	
ENGL 673	Discourse Analysis	
ENGL 687	Colloquium for Teachers of English	
ENGL 695	Topics	
ENGL 697	Portfolio Preparation	
ENGL 701	Texts and Technologies	
ENGL 706	Visual Rhetoric and Document Design	
ENGL 720	Pedagogy and Instructional Design	
ENGL 721	Compositions as Applied Rhetoric	
ENGL 760	Classical Rhetoric and Theory Building	
ENGL 763	Seminar in Discourse Analysis	
ENGL 765	Modern Rhetoric and Theory Building	
ENGL 766	New Media Theory and Practice I	
ENGL 771	New Media Theory and Practice II	
ENGL 795	Topics	
Six hours of electives		6
Total Credit Hours		30

Additional Requirements

Master of Arts Thesis Option

The opportunity to undertake a long research project or other appropriate project is available to students in the Master of Arts in English. Writing a thesis may be of particular benefit to those who contemplate further graduate work or who have a strong desire to pursue a single topic in great depth. Under the guidance of an advisor (a member of the graduate faculty), the student must earn at least six hours of credit over the course of two semesters (ENGL 698 & ENGL 699) for a completed, approved thesis. The oral defense of the thesis by a student will cover the thesis and its related areas, as well as a comprehensive oral examination of all course work taken during the degree program. Students who fail the oral comprehensive examination may retake the test only once in a different semester. Students who fail a second time will no longer be eligible to receive the Master of Arts in English from Old Dominion University.

Master of Arts Oral Comprehensive Examination Option

During the first three weeks of the semester in which they intend to graduate, students must contact the graduate program director in English to schedule their comprehensive examination. The oral comprehensive examination covers each student's particular program of study; apart from the development or defense of a thesis. Based on the courses taken by the student, the examination tests the student's mastery of materials and concepts, interpretive skills, and ability to make critical distinctions and connections. Students who fail the oral comprehensive examination may retake the test only once in a different semester. Students who fail a second

time will no longer be eligible to receive the Master of Arts in English from Old Dominion University.

Master of Arts Portfolio Project Option

Students may choose to develop a portfolio as the capstone project for the MA in English for the technical writing, rhetoric and composition, or teaching of English concentrations. Students choosing the portfolio will propose the scope of their individual projects to the graduate program director and the committee chair. Portfolios are a collection of individual texts with a meta-narrative that explains the connection between these texts and the portfolio's intellectual underpinnings. The entire portfolio should range between 10,000 and 15,000 words. Portfolios can be, but are not limited to, a collection of extensively revised course work, a collection of teaching materials, or a collection of new media texts. To help prepare the portfolio, students will be encouraged to take an independent study for up to 3 credits (ENGL 697) as one of their electives; the student's committee chair should direct this independent study. As with the oral examination, students must contact the graduate program director during the first three weeks of the semester in which they intend to graduate to schedule the defense of their portfolio project. This defense will cover the portfolio and its related areas as well as a comprehensive oral examination of all course work taken during the semester.