



Guide
to the
**ENGLISH
MAJOR**

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WHY major IN ENGLISH?

Undergraduate Studies in English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst offers the opportunities that come with a large department and a research university along with the small classes and sense of community you might associate with a private liberal arts college. The department faculty includes a host of internationally known professors whose widely published research puts them at the forefront of their fields and whose research and writing enriches what they teach and how they teach it.

But unlike many other universities, and many other departments on campus, the English Department continues to provide small classes, on the principle that students learn best, and especially learn to write and read best, in small classes. While we do offer a handful of lecture courses--taught by lively and popular teachers--most courses in the department have 20 to 35 students

and include plenty of discussion of readings and attention to writing.

Amid the diversity of our offerings is a common commitment to developing the student's ability to analyze literary and cultural texts and contexts, and to write clear, persuasive, and graceful prose. We encourage you to think outside the box – and make language a source of your power in the world. These reading, thinking, and writing skills will enhance your capacity for persuasion, leadership, clarity, and interpersonal effectiveness in whatever career you pursue.

This guide will familiarize you with:

requirements, options, and resources within the English Department. If you do decide to major or minor in English, please hold on to it so that you can consult it as you continue through the program.



Navigating the English Major



Declaring the Major

Students who wish to pursue an English major should understand that it is a writing-intensive degree; our courses require analytical as well as imaginative thinking and they promote thoughtful reflection on expressive culture. Any student may directly enter into the English major but students must complete the following sequence to progress through the major:

1. First, complete College Writing (English Writing 112 or 113). This course is the prerequisite to enrolling in English 200 and is normally taken in a student's Freshman year. (Some students may complete this requirement by receiving an exceptionally high grade on the Writing Placement Examination.)
2. Second, complete English 200: Intensive Literary Studies Seminar for Intended Majors and produce work at the C or better* level as well as attend a Mandatory Advising session where students receive an overview of the department, the major, and programs and services available to them as majors.

First-year students accepted into the English TAP program will simultaneously complete both English 112 and English 200. With few exceptions, transfer students and students who decide to pursue the English major after their sophomore year must complete both of these requirements before progressing through the major.

While enrolled in English 200, students may also take upper-level English courses that are designated for General Education (GE) credit, including American Identities (English 270) and Shakespeare (English 221), which will count toward the major; but they may not register for any other courses restricted to advanced English majors who have completed English 200.

Students who wish to major in English must declare themselves by filling out a change-of-major form in the Undergraduate English Office in Bartlett 252.

Advising

Upon declaring the major, each student is assigned to a faculty member who will act as an advisor and mentor and can give general advice concerning academic and related matters. Students should plan to meet with their advisor each semester during counseling week to discuss their course schedules for the following semester. Advisee assignments are posted on the bulletin board outside the Undergraduate English Office, 252 Bartlett Hall, and are posted on a student's SPIRE record.

Your professors and your advisor hold scheduled office hours and they welcome your visits. If you have trouble finding your advisor, come to the English Undergraduate Office in Bartlett 252 and we will make sure you get the advising you seek. Start by reading the paragraphs below (as well as this handbook). And then make an appointment to meet with an advisor!

In addition, the University offers an Academic Advising Link, located on the Garden Level of the Learning Commons-Du Bois library, which offers assistance with General Education requirements and identifying academic interests, review and interpretation of Degree Progress Reports, class scheduling and SPIRE assistance, and more. For more information, visit their website at www.umass.edu/advising or email advisinglink@acad.umass.edu.

What are the Major Requirements?

To graduate from the university with an English major, all students must complete three requirement areas: University General Education requirements, College of Humanities and Fine Arts requirements, and English Departmental requirements.

English Majors at UMass are required to take eleven courses, including the junior-year writing requirement. There are some courses which can meet more than one requirement; you may count one such course towards two requirements, but will then need an additional upper-level elective to end with a total of **eleven courses**.

Major Requirements	
English 200: Intensive Literary Studies Seminar for Intended Majors and Minors	
One of the following two early British survey courses:	English 201: Early British literature and culture
	English 221: Shakespeare
Two of the following three British/American literature survey courses:	English 202: Later British literature and culture
	English 268: American literature & culture before 1865
	English 269: American literature & culture after 1865
One course in Anglophone or ethnic American literature, culture or rhetorics (any level) <i>If you are unsure what course will fulfill this requirement, please see our “courses by requirements” sheet. You can find this as a PDF at the top of the English undergraduate courses page or pick up a copy at the English undergraduate office (252 Bartlett)</i>	
Junior Year Writing Seminar: English 300 or English 419 <i>NOTE: Students with English as a 2nd major normally satisfy their junior-year writing requirement in their primary major. It then is waived in English.</i>	
Electives:	One elective – 200 level or higher
	Two electives – 300 level or higher
Integrative Experience <i>Please see our “Courses by Requirements” sheet to find out which courses we are offering which fulfill this GenEd requirement.</i>	

Important Notes

1. You must earn a C or better in all courses taken toward the major/minor.
2. You may take English 200 concurrently with any 200 level course.
3. You may not enroll in English 300+ courses until you have completed English 200 and one of the following three English/American period survey courses listed above (English 201, 202, 221, 268 or 269).
4. Two upper-level electives may come from closely related 300- or 400-level courses in other departments with approval from one of the chief advisors in Bartlett 252.
5. If a course meets more than one requirement, a student may count 1 course twice but will then need to take an additional upper level elective for a total of three 300+ elective courses.
6. Second majors in English are not required to complete either junior year writing or the integrative experience.
7. The successful completion of the professional writing and technical communications specialization path fulfills the integrative experience requirement.
8. If there is any doubt about the applicability of a particular course in another department, or from another school, check with the chief undergraduate advisors in Bartlett 252.

What are the Minor Requirements?

We require that students declare the major in order to pursue the minor so that you can take courses open only to English majors. To declare the major, stop by the English undergraduate office located at 252 Bartlett. You formally declare the minor after you have completed the minor requirements or are a graduating senior in the process of doing so.

Minor Requirements	
English 200: Intensive Literary Studies Seminar for Intended Majors and Minors	
Two of the following British literature courses:	English 201: Early British literature and culture
	English 202: Later British literature and culture
	English 221: Shakespeare
One course in Anglophone or ethnic American literature, culture or rhetorics (any level) <i>If you are unsure what course will fulfill this requirement, please see our “courses by requirements” sheet. You can find this as a PDF at the top of the English undergraduate courses page or pick up a copy at the English undergraduate office (252 Bartlett)</i>	
Electives:	One elective – 200 level or higher
	One elective – 300 level or higher

Honors Courses and the English Major

The English Department's Honors courses are open to all majors who seek an intensive seminar experience within the program. At the same time, these courses particularly serve the needs of English majors who are enrolled in Commonwealth Honors College (CHC) and have chosen to pursue the departmental honors track as part of their Commonwealth Honors College degree, as described below.

Each semester, the department designates several courses, and sometimes sections of larger courses, as honors courses. These 20-student courses often involve more difficult material and assignments and are conducted at a level that requires students' full concentration and engagement in the course material. In return, they provide a particularly rich learning experience. Any student desiring this kind of intensive work may enroll in an honors course without making any honors commitment beyond the course.

Honors Tracks

To graduate with honors, students admitted to CHC first complete a General Education component, consisting of 4 or 5 courses, and then an Advanced Scholarship component. For their advanced scholarship, students choose from 2 options: Departmental Honors or Multidisciplinary Honors (formerly "Interdisciplinary Honors" and "General Honors.") Each path includes two additional honors courses plus a capstone thesis of 6 or more credits, usually conducted in the senior year. Departmental Honors is the best option for students who wish to pursue advanced scholarship in their major; graduate studies in their major or related field; or a career related to their major.

Ideally, during spring registration in their sophomore year, CHC English majors should begin deciding which track they would like to pursue. To this end, they should meet with the Honors Program Director to explore which track best serves them. It's best to make this decision in the spring of sophomore year (and particularly important if a student plans to go abroad) so that a student can choose courses that might support the thesis work and can develop relationships with faculty who may become members of the thesis committee. To make an appointment to see the Honors Program Director, come to Bartlett 252 or call 545-0388.



Graduating with Honors

As of May 2009, all students are eligible for Latin honors provided they have taken 54 graded credits at UMass. Latin honors are based on the top GPA percentiles of graduating seniors within a school or college. Every fall, these percentiles and their corresponding Latin honors are posted on the registrar's website (www.umass.edu/registrar/) CHC students who matriculated prior to May 2009 are awarded Latin honors based on either the old or new system, whichever results in the higher Latin honors designation. The old system for CHC students requires 45 graded UMass credits and a 3.2 cumulative GPA for cum laude; 3.5 for magna cum laude; and 3.8 for summa cum laude.

All CHC students are simultaneously eligible for CHC Honors distinctions: CHC Honors; CHC Honors with Distinction; CHC Honors with Great Distinction; and CHC Honors with Greatest Distinction. For the requirements for each level of distinction, students should visit the CHC website at www.honors.umass.edu.

Pursuing Departmental Honors

All students interested in Departmental Honors should make an appointment to speak with the Honors Program Director, ideally after they have completed at least one honors course. For classes of 2013 and beyond, entrance into departmental honors requires a cumulative average of 3.4, and no grades below a B+ in English courses. For students graduating in 2011 or 2012, a 3.2 cumulative GPA is required and no grades below a B in English courses.

The specific requirements for the English Department Honors track are as follows:

- One honors course in the English Department at the 200-level or above
- One honors course in the English Department at the 300-level or above. (*The Department strongly recommends that students take their Junior-Year Writing courses as Honors courses, where possible.*)
- And either of two options:
 - The [two-semester honors thesis](#), worth 6 credits.

Students writing a literary-critical thesis sign up for 499Y (usually in the fall) and 499T (usually in the spring), and students writing a creative thesis sign up for 499Y (fall) and 499P (spring).

Note that students interested in an independent creative project are strongly encouraged to pursue the Creative Writing Specialization to prepare them for an extended project and familiarize potential committee members with their work. The honors thesis counts as 2 of the student's 4 upper-level electives.

- [English 499C/D](#), a two-semester capstone course, worth 6 credits.

English 499C/D counts as 2 of a student's 4 upper-level electives. Topics for 499C/D may vary, as well as the number of offerings for any year, though students interested in a creative project should consider the regularly offered "Foundations and Departures in Creative Writing" as an alternative to an independent project. The course offers an individualized workshop environment that frees students from the difficulties of putting together a committee.



American Studies

The Letter of Specialization in American Studies offers a concentration that enables students to shape an interdisciplinary course of study around unresolved social and intellectual issues in American Culture-e.g., questions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity.

A Letter of Specialization is conferred on students who successfully complete a minimum of six courses with a minimum grade of 'C', of which one must be a thesis, senior seminar, or internship. Student may take only two courses at the 200-level (not including English 279); all others must be at the 300-level or above.

Requirements:

- English 279: Introduction to American Studies
- One or two courses in American literature within the English Department.
- Two or three additional courses in American culture from at least two other departments
- One of the following: a thesis; a senior seminar in American Studies; an internship.

To view a list of pre-approved courses or for more information, contact Professor Randall Knoper, 156 Bartlett Hall, (413) 545-2329, knoper@english.umass.edu.

The Study and Practice of Writing (SPOW)

The letter of specialization in the Study and Practice of Writing (SPOW) prepares students to rhetorically analyze, effectively participate in, and critically reflect on writing experiences across disciplines, professional workplaces, and community and civic environments.

Students in this specialization can expect to: develop rhetorical and writing-related skills and habits of mind that support effective and ethical communication in the twenty-first century; and gain and apply historical knowledge about writing and rhetoric. Students in the program must complete a minimum of five (5) courses, as outlined below, with a minimum grade of a C.

Requirements:

- English 379: Introduction to Professional Writing
- Public/Civic writing: at least one course
- Theories of writing: at least one course
- Writing electives from the A, B, or C categories: at least two
 - An internship in writing or publishing may count toward one of these electives.*
- Technology: at least one of the courses must have a writing technologies designation

For more information, contact one of the specialization advisors:

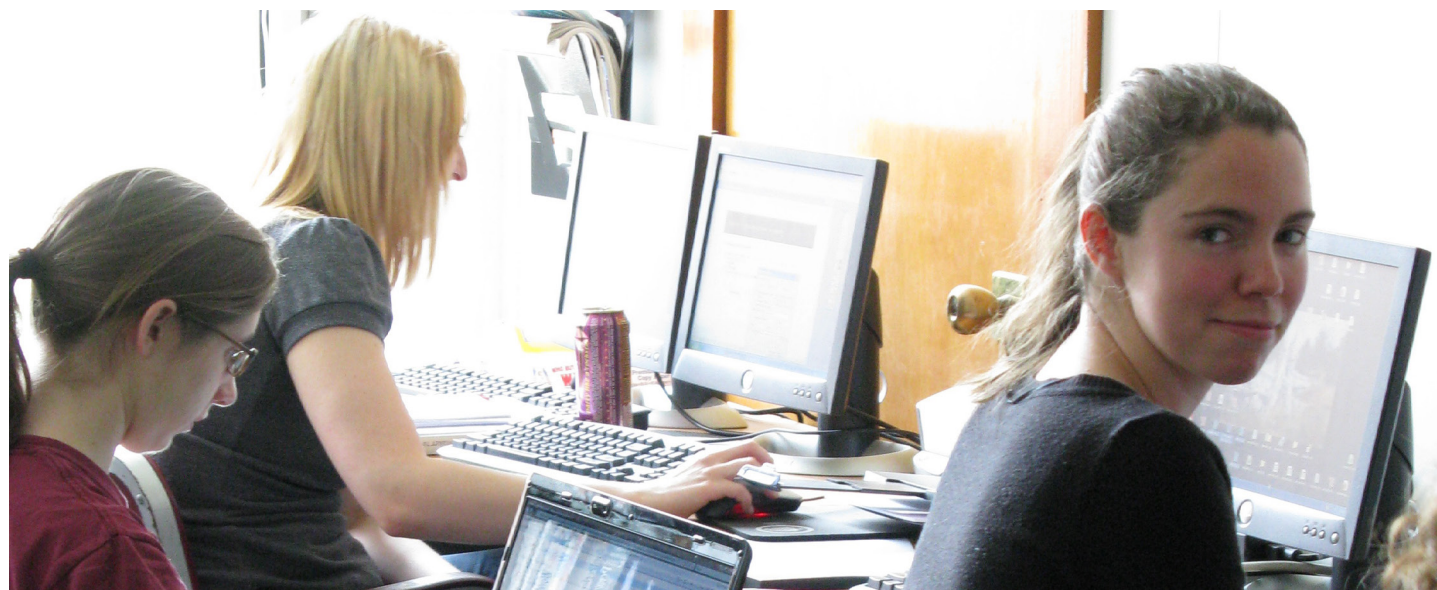
David Toomey, 481 Bartlett Hall, (413) 545-5519, dtoomey@english.umass.edu

Donna LeCourt, 257 Bartlett Hall, (413) 545-6597, donnal@english.umass.edu

Janine Solberg, 210A Bartlett Hall, jlsolberg@english.umass.edu



Department Specializations



Creative Writing

The Department's Creative Writing Specialization aims to provide inspiration and support for committed writers and to offer serious instruction in craft. Classes usually include readings in one or more literary genres and workshop review of students' writing.

A letter of Specialization is conferred on students who successfully complete the following program of courses. Students must complete a minimum of five courses with a minimum grade of "B" in English 354 and a minimum grade of "C" in all others.

If approved, students may substitute appropriate courses at UMass and the four colleges (Smith, Mount Holyoke, Amherst, and Hampshire) for the optional courses listed below. Pre-approval must be given by our faculty advisors, Jenny Adams, jadams@english.umass.edu or Janis Greve, jgreve@english.umass.edu, 252 Bartlett Hall. We recommend that you make an appointment with one of them by calling (413) 545-0388.

Required Courses:

- English 354: Creative Writing: Introduction
- English 355*: Creative Writing: Fiction or English 356*: Creative Writing: Poetry.
- Three writing electives: English 355* or 356*, 254, 297, 350, 352, 391J, 450 (*Students may repeat these courses once with a new professor as a way of fulfilling their five courses.*) OR
- By invitation: two semester Thesis Project (ENGL 496 Ind Study or ENGL 499Y-499P Honors Project)

Please note that to add English 355 or English 356, students must have completed English 354 or 354H with a grade of "B" or better and receive consent from instructors by submitting a portfolio of work. Please contact the English Department for more information.

Optional Courses: one English 297: Experimental Writing Workshop (offered each spring semester through the Writing Program), one Nonfiction Writing course such as English 350 Expository Writing, English 352 Article Writing, English 391J Creative Nonfiction, or English 450 Advanced Expository Writing.

NOTE: Selected students of high promise will be invited to complete their Specialization through a two semester Thesis Project (English 496 Independent Study or the English 499Y-499P Honors Project). These students will work individually with one or two faculty members over the course of a year, intensifying their writing practice and producing a substantial senior thesis.



Professional Writing and Technical Communication (PWTC)

The letter of specialization in professional writing and technical communication provides practice in professional research and editing, grant writing, software and hardware documentation, report writing and business communications; it supplies hands-on training in a range of industry-standard software; and it offers an ongoing forum for the study and critique of theories and practices of information design.

A Letter of Specialization is conferred on students who successfully complete the following courses:



Fall Semester:

- ENGL 379: Technical Writing
- ENGL 380: Intermediate Professional Writing

Spring Semester:

- ENGL 381: Advanced Technical Writing I
- ENGL 382: Advanced Technical Writing II
- ENGL 391C: Advanced Software

Successful completion of this specialization satisfies and therefore waives the [Junior Year Writing](#) requirement for English majors.

Three of these courses count as upper-level electives for the English major; two count as general education graduation credit. The program places a number of its students in "junior-level" writing and editing positions, through internships and co-ops. Students in the program take can take five courses over one academic year, or spread them out over two years.

For further information, contact Professor David Toomey, Bartlett 481; or email dtoomey@english.umass.edu. See also the program website at www.umass.edu/pwtc.

Since 1990, program graduates have enjoyed nearly **100 percent** employment in writing and editing.



Scholarships and Prizes

English Department Opportunity Fund

Thanks to the generous support of donors and alumni, the Department of English awards annual grants supported by the English Department Opportunity Fund.

The purpose of the Fund is to make several small grants to assist a wide range of worthy Department of English undergraduate students meet the cost of their education; including the cost of books, computer supplies, expenses incurred when: studying abroad, doing internships or attending conferences off campus.

The grants will be awarded annually based on a review of applications by the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of English. For information on applying for a grant, please contact Undergraduate Studies.

Past grant recipients:

2014: Nicole Blackwood, Thalia Peña, and Maxwell Heath

2013: Meagan Fleming, Cassandra Duncanson, Gregory Schwartz, Cassandra Duncanson, Aidan Stone

2012: Brenna Gallo, Amanda Lavelle, Carl Mead, Lindsay Ormond

Scholarships

The English Department awards several scholarships each spring to recognize exceptional achievements of English majors; the Cleo Zoukis Ploussious, the Frank Prentice Rand, the William M. Bulger, Mason & Susan Lowance, and the General John A. and Evangeline W. Maginnis. There are also many opportunities for English majors to receive scholarships and awards through the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (CHFA) and the University.

In past semesters, English majors have received such prestigious awards as the 21st Century Leaders Award given in recognition of exemplary achievement and strong leadership qualities, the College of Humanities and Fine Arts Scholarships awarded on the basis of academic merit and extracurricular achievements and the William F. Field Alumni Scholars Program for students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement and unique skills in the areas of art, athletics, research or service to the community, to name a few. To see a complete list of scholarships and for more information, go to www.umass.edu/hfa/scholarships.html.

Essay Prizes

The English Department awards three prizes for best essays each spring; the Charles A. Peters awarded for the best essay on English literature written between 1558 and 1667, the Sanderson Prize awarded for the best essay on any subject, and the Steinbugler Prize awarded for the best essay on any subject by a woman English major. Deadlines are in early April each year and essays should be written during the current or previous two semesters.



Resources and Extracurriculars



Education Abroad

Oxford Summer Seminar



Since its inception in 1966, the Oxford Summer Seminar has offered students from UMass Amherst and other American universities the opportunity to live and study at Oxford University for six weeks in July and August. Students can earn up to eight credits from courses in literature, political science, art history, law, and history. All courses are taught by distinguished British faculty in small groups or individual tutorials.



While at Oxford, students live and dine at Trinity College—founded in 1555 and noted for its magnificent architecture and gardens. In addition to its academic schedule, the Seminar organizes field trips to nearby sites of literary and historical importance such as Blenheim Palace, Stonehenge, and various London museums.

For further information, contact the Oxford Program Director, Professor Anne Broadbridge, at oxford@english.umass.edu; or visit the website at www.umass.edu/oxford.

Alternative Theatres: Edinburgh Fringe Festival

The Department of English offers its annual summer study abroad program at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The course takes advantage of the Edinburgh Fringe Theatre Festival, as well as the International Theatre Festival, from August 5 – 18. Edinburgh hosts the oldest and largest theater festival in the world, set in one of Europe's most beautiful and historic cities. The festival experience is exhilarating and inspiring, with over 2700 shows taking place every day in over 250 venues. The course is designed to help you navigate the Fringe Festival with confidence, exposing you to fresh, inspiring, cutting-edge theater that will change the way you see the world.

Students see approximately 15 shows together with faculty, most in the first few days. Once used to the city, students can follow their own chosen itinerary. The course features small group discussions as well as meetings with artists involved in creating shows at the fringe. All coursework is submitted online, including foundational assignments completed in July and performance journals written in Edinburgh. The small group (approximately 25 students and 5 faculty) makes for a wonderful, personal dynamic. Students live in comfortable, centrally located apartments, and can walk everywhere! Learn more at www.edinburghfestivalcourse.com.



Social Groups

English Society

The UMass English Society is the undergraduate arm of the English Department, and under the direction of the Officers and the Chair, works to create a space for undergraduates to socialize, share their interests, and network.



Each year, the Society hosts and attends events designed to inspire campus-wide engagement with and appreciation for the Humanities, including movie nights, poetry readings, trips to the theater, writing workshops, debates, and more. Its crowning achievement is Jabberwocky, the university's premiere literary journal of undergraduate fiction, criticism, poetry, and visual media that showcases the work of the best and brightest in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Meetings are typically held on Thursday evenings at 7 PM in Bartlett 202.

For more information, please like our Facebook page (UMass English Society) or e-mail the Officers at umassenglishsociety@gmail.com.

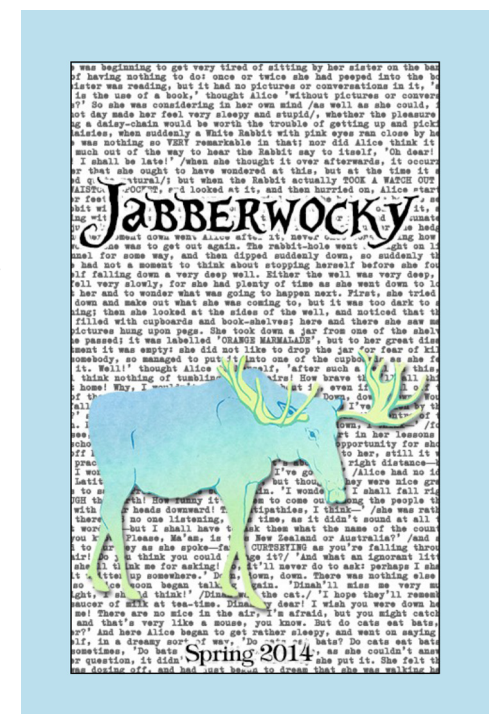
Jabberwocky

Jabberwocky is the official undergraduate literary journal of the English Department. All undergraduates are encouraged to submit their work during the spring semester of each year.

Poetry, fiction, media, and criticism are the main types of work published by Jabberwocky. Criticism and non-fiction can be any original work you've written about literature or the humanities at UMass that you feel would be an important part of a literary journal by undergraduates. Media can be in any form: photography, painting, mixed media, and more. All we need is an image.

The limits for submissions are: 6 poems per person, 6 pieces of media per person, and 3 fiction/criticism per person, no longer than 2,500 words.

If you would like to submit, the submission period for Spring 2015 is January 22-April 12. Submissions and questions can be sent to umassenglishsociety@gmail.com.



Planning Your Career

Careers

The English major affords students the ability to write and speak well, to think analytically and critically, and to solve problems quickly, all of which are required and sought after in today's job market. Knowing this, college graduates with a degree in English can enter into a wide variety of career fields: public affairs, business, politics, education, administration, writing, editing or publishing. Students may continue their education in Ph.D. programs or professional schools. With this flexibility of career fields also comes a broad range of potential employers: English majors can work for newspapers, government agencies, public and private schools, libraries, nonprofit organizations, television stations, publishing companies, magazines, broadcasting companies, and law firms.

So the real question is not “what can you do with an English major?” but “**what will you do with an English major?**”

The English Department is committed to helping its majors choose and prepare for their first careers. To help you decide where to direct your many skills, we hold workshops, encourage internships, and run a Career Seminar. The Department offers a course in “Careers for English Majors” as well as career-related workshops. We also strongly encourage students to visit Campus Career Services (right next door in Goodell 511) in their Sophomore or Junior year. Students majoring in English are offered counseling services, access to a database of internships and co-ops, and other career-related events.

Career Counseling

A career advisor will help you identify personal goals, skills, interests, and preferences. You might choose to take FOCUS online, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) in person in Goodell, or other personal inventories. These can help you determine your strengths and potential, as well as suggest various careers you may not have considered. You can gain assistance in your field experience or job search process, and learn the necessary resume writing, interviewing and networking skills. Email clgould@acad.umass.edu with some times that work or you, or stop by 511 Goodell for 15-minute impromptu walk-in sessions that are available from noon to 4:00 pm.

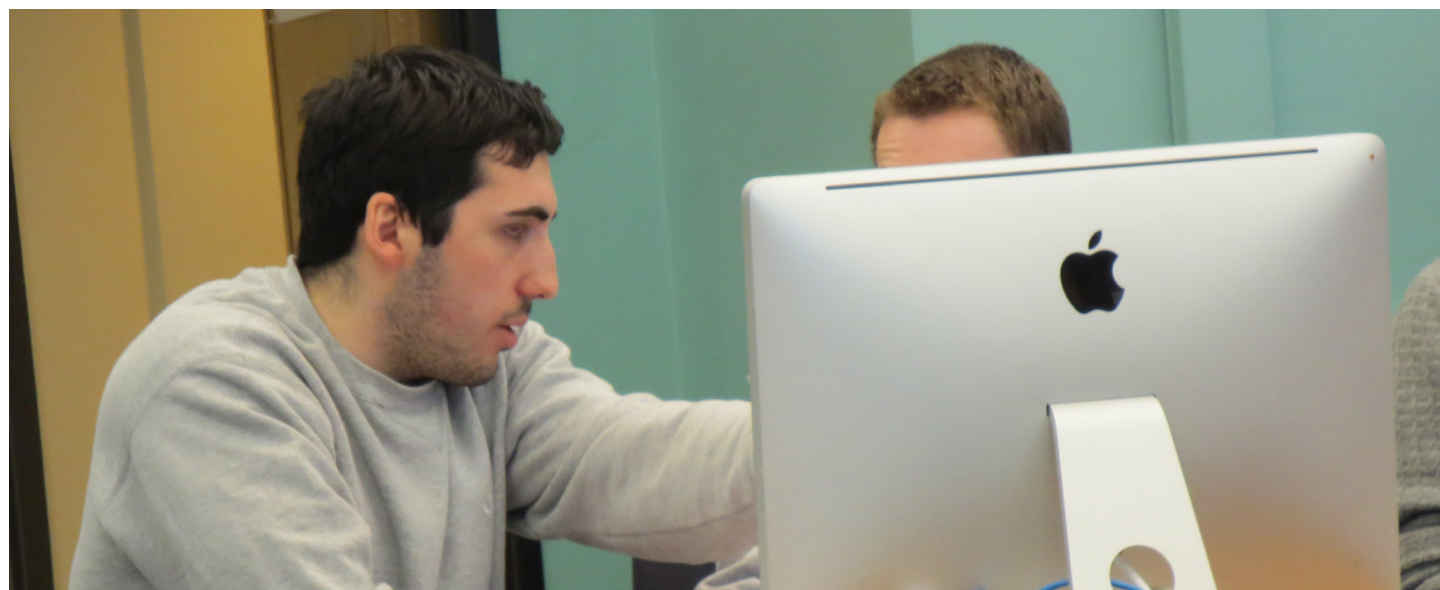
Field Experience

An internship or a co-op is an essential tool for exploring possible occupations and gaining the extra-curricular experience employers look for in a new graduate. In general, internships involve academic credit and co-ops do not, although both have some sort of university oversight and appear on your transcript. Students are required to attend a Career Services “welcome session” before submitting an internship application.

For more information, interested students may attend an Introduction to Internships and Co-ops session offered during the semester every Monday and Thursday at 3:00 pm in 508 Goodell or visit the Career Services website at www.umass.edu/careers.



Beyond the English Major



Field Experience

Internships

Faculty are available to sponsor semester-long or summer internships that will help you in your career planning and allow you to apply your knowledge to the work place. While working as an intern, you will be testing the field as an area in which you might want to work, finding out what further training you will need, getting experience useful in future job hunting, and making valuable contacts.

There are two types of internships available: Engl 298 (ungraded credits) or UMass 298Y (ungraded credits). Here's what to do if you are interested:

1. Make sure you are eligible.
 - A. For Engl 298, you must have junior or first-semester senior standing at the time of the internship, with most required courses in English completed and a GPA of 2.5 or better.
 - B. For UMass 298Y you must have earned at least 45 credits by the time you do your internship and have a GPA of 2.0 or higher.

NOTE: UMass 298Y: Practicum must be graded as a Pass/Fail and will not fulfill any English Departmental requirements, but may count towards general elective credits.
2. See what internships are available and find out the process for registering. You may collect an academic contract from the Field Experience Program in the Career Services building at 511 Goodell, 545-2224, or online at www.umass.edu/careers.
3. Find a sponsor—perhaps your personal advisor in the department—who will agree to work with you.
4. You and your sponsor should agree to the terms of an internship contract, which details the amount of work and the kind of project you will do for the internship and the number of credits you will receive.



Co-op Program

A co-op is a paid, non-credit position that gives you the opportunity to work with professionals in a field of interest. You will experience that workplace first-hand, develop new skills, and explore professional goals.

You need to have a 2.0 GPA overall to do a co-op placement. Placements must normally be completed prior to graduation, although if you are in your fourth year and still have no job experience you may ask your counselor about our Second Chance co-op program.

The process of registering for a co-op is similar to that for an internship: check in with your advisor or a Career Services counselor for further details.

Graduate Studies

After completing the undergraduate degree, there are a number of options available for graduate study in literature and writing. Students who wish to pursue an advanced degree should choose the option that best suits their academic and career interests.

A wide range of professional and graduate schools look favorably on an undergraduate degree in English because of the writing, thinking and speaking skills it cultivates in students. Hence an English degree is an excellent launching pad for law schools and business schools, as well as professional programs in such fields as social work, therapy, and public health.

The Master of Arts (MA) degree is often necessary and always useful for those wishing to teach in secondary schools. It also provides an opportunity for sharpening critical and writing skills. Many colleges and universities offer MA programs, and they can vary considerably in length and requirements (e.g., coursework alone or coursework and a thesis).

Those who decide to pursue creative writing should look into the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree. Typically, these programs include workshops and independent work with a faculty mentor. Some require students to take additional literature courses. Many creative writing faculty in colleges and universities have an MFA degree program, but only a small number of creative writing faculty positions are available nationally.

Students hoping to teach literature at the college or university level and to engage in scholarly research, criticism, and publication need to pursue the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. Admission to doctoral programs is competitive; the programs customarily take four to seven years to complete, and prospects for tenure-track faculty positions in the humanities are not very promising. However, if you have done extremely well in English and are willing to take the risk, a doctoral program could be rewarding.

There are several ways in which undergraduates can prepare themselves for graduate study in English. First, try to develop as broad a range as possible in English and American literature. This usually involves taking a large number of courses that survey multiple authors and study historical periods or genres. This breadth will prove helpful in preparing for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) in English, which, along with a more general test, is required for admission to doctoral programs.

It is also useful to achieve and maintain a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language (typically required for the MA) and, if possible, begin a second language (typically required for the PhD).

If you are thinking about graduate school, you should arrange to speak with one of the chief advisors as early on in your undergraduate career as possible. A selection of graduate program descriptions is available in Bartlett 252; there are informational posters outside the office. For further information about taking the GRE, visit the test website at:

www.gre.org.