THE ENGLISH MASTER’S PROGRAM

The English MA Program at Sam Houston State University offers singular opportunities for graduate study in traditional literary areas, creative and professional writing, linguistics, critical theory, and composition and rhetoric. With some sixty students in various stages of their degrees, the program is large enough for intellectual and creative diversity, small enough for an intimacy between faculty and students that one does not often find at larger research institutions.

The Department of English features an accomplished faculty with expertise and recognition in areas ranging from traditional literary fields and creative writing to linguistics, technical and professional writing, women’s literature, critical theory, and cultural studies. They are scholars, rhetoricians, and creative writers—all of them seasoned teachers devoted to the success of their graduate students.

In training its students both academically and professionally, the English MA program offers opportunities for them to participate in scholarly and creative writing colloquia; to gain experience working with a university press that publishes books of poetry and fiction, as well as two journals; and to teach college writing courses. Students who earn Master’s degrees in English at the University find themselves admirably well-prepared for further graduate study, junior college teaching, and enriched secondary teaching.

The Department of English offers assistantships and scholarships for outstanding graduate students. And in order to provide greater flexibility for commuting students, we teach classes on the main campus in Huntsville and at The Woodlands Center.

For further information, contact Dr. Paul Child, Director of Graduate Studies in English, by phone at 936-294-1412 or by e-mail at eng_pwc@shsu.edu or GraduateEnglish@shsu.edu
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To earn an MA in English, a student completes thirty-six hours of course credit. She or he may pursue one of three plans:

- **Under MA Thesis Plan 1** a student takes thirty hours of graduate English coursework and completes a six-hour **MA thesis**; the student working under Plan 1 may pursue a **creative writing emphasis**.

- **Under MA Non-Thesis Plan 1** a student takes thirty-six hours of graduate English coursework; the student working under Non-Thesis Plan 1 may not write a thesis or pursue a creative writing emphasis.

- **Under MA Non-Thesis Plan 2**, a student takes a twenty-four-hour English major and a twelve-hour “minor” in another graduate field; the secondary field must be a complementary discipline like History, Foreign Languages, Mass Communications, or Education. The student working under Non-Thesis Plan 2 does not have the option of pursuing the creative writing track or writing a thesis.

Requirements for each degree plan follow. Although the student should take **ENGL 5330 (Graduate Research: Methods and Theories)** during the first long term, as it is available, she or he need not take the block courses in sequence.
MASTER OF ARTS THESIS PLAN 1

Literature and Critical-Scholarly Research Emphasis:

- **ENGL 5330** (first long term) ................................................................. 3 hours
- Courses in five blocks ............................................................................. 15 hours
- Electives ................................................................................................... 12 hours
- Thesis (ENGL 6098 + ENGL 6099) ............................................................. 6 hours

- Written Comprehensive Examination
- Oral Defense of Thesis

Creative Writing Emphasis:

- **ENGL 5330** (first long term) ................................................................. 3 hours
- Block I class .................................................................................................. 3 hours
- Block III class ............................................................................................. 3 hours
- Block IV class ............................................................................................. 3 hours
- Block V class .................................................................................................. 3 hours
- Two creative writing workshops (one of which satisfies the Block II requirement) .......................................................... 6 hours
- At least one Texas Review Press internship (ENGL 5333) ...................... 3 hours
- Electives ..................................................................................................... 6 hours
- Creative thesis (ENGL 6098 + ENGL 6099) ..................................................... 6 hours

- Written Comprehensive Examination
- Oral Defense of Thesis
MASTER OF ARTS NON-THESIS PLAN 1

Non-Thesis, Non-Creative Writing Emphasis:

ENGL 5330 (first long term) ................................................................. 3 hours
Courses in five blocks ........................................................................... 15 hours
Electives .................................................................................................. 18 hours

Written Comprehensive Examination
Oral Comprehensive Examination

MASTER OF ARTS NON-THESIS PLAN 2

Graduate English Major:

ENGL 5330 (first long term) ................................................................. 3 hours
Block I class .......................................................................................... 3 hours
Electives (in at least three of the remaining four course blocks) ........... 18 hours

Graduate Secondary Field:

Courses in secondary field ..................................................................... 12 hours

Written Comprehensive Examination
Oral Comprehensive Examination

* For a “minor” in Education, all twelve credits counted toward the degree must come from the same subdiscipline (Reading or Educational Leadership, for example).
THE CREATIVE WRITING EMPHASIS

The creative writing emphasis at Sam Houston State University gives students specialized training in creative writing at the same time that they are establishing a strong, graduate-level foundation in literature and language. The balanced creative, critical, and professional credentials prepare them well for entering a writing or editing profession or pursuing a terminal degree in creative writing and/or literature (MFA or PhD).

A student on the creative track takes two workshops in fiction and/or poetry, serves as an intern on the staff of Texas Review Press, and writes a creative thesis.
CREDIT HOUR DISTRIBUTION FOR THE GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING EMPHASIS:

- **ENGL 5330 (first long term)** ................................................................. 3 hours
- Block I class ........................................................................................................... 3 hours
- Block III class ........................................................................................................ 3 hours
- Block IV class ........................................................................................................ 3 hours
- Block V class ........................................................................................................ 3 hours
- Two creative writing workshops (one of which satisfies the Block II requirement) ........................................ 6 hours
- At least one Texas Review Press internship (ENGL 5333) ........................................ 3 hours
- Electives .................................................................................................................. 6 hours
- Creative thesis (ENGL 6098 + ENGL 6099) .......................................................... 6 hours

Written Comprehensive Examination
Oral Defense of Thesis

GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING FACULTY

Scott Kaukonen, PhD
Fiction Writing and Theory

Nick Lantz, MFA
Poetry Writing and Theory
STEPS IN THE ENGLISH GRADUATE PROGRAM

1. **Admission**: Submit all required materials for admission.

2. Satisfy any conditions attached to your admission: You must fulfill any requirements that made your acceptance into the MA program **probationary** or **conditional**—including reporting your GRE scores—and do so in the time stipulated by the conditions. Any credit hours taken beyond those allowed under the restrictions of conditional or probationary admission will not be counted toward the degree.

3. During your first long term, complete **ENGL 5330, Graduate Research: Methods and Theories**, with a grade of A or B.

4. **Degree Candidacy**: After completing twelve hours of coursework, including **ENGL 5330** and, ideally, a **Block I** course, you establish degree candidacy in the department. Candidacy is required before you may take the comprehensive examination, write a thesis, transfer credits from previous graduate work, and substitute courses.
5. Coursework: Complete all coursework required by your degree plan, including at least one class from each of the five course blocks. Students on the thesis track must complete the following steps:

5a. Begin work on the thesis. Ask a member of the graduate English faculty to serve as thesis director. File an appointment of committee form with the Director of Graduate Studies.

5b. Enroll in ENGL 6098 (Thesis I): To earn credit for this first semester of thesis work, you will submit a prospectus approved by the members of your committee and complete any other thesis steps required for the class. The final draft of the prospectus, with the signed approval sheet, is due about mid-semester, with the understanding that you will make a good start on writing the thesis itself during this first term. See the calendar of submission deadlines for ENGL 6098.

5c. Enroll in ENGL 6099 (Thesis II): In this second semester of thesis work, you will complete the project begun in ENGL 6098. You must continue to enroll in (and pay tuition for) ENGL 6099 every term until you have completed the thesis; if you withdraw for any amount of time after beginning ENGL 6099, you will be required to pay back-tuition upon re-enrolling in the course. You will receive a grade of IP (In Progress) until the completion of the work, at which time you will receive a final grade of CR (Credit) and three credit hours for the course. See the calendar of submission deadlines for ENGL 6099.

6. Written Comprehensive Examination: Submit a comprehensive examination declaration form in the semester before you plan to sit for the exam. Consult the posted reading lists to prepare for each of the three examination areas. Then sit for the exam, which is offered three times annually (February, June, and October). You must be enrolled at the University during the semester in which you take the comps; you must stay enrolled during that semester.

7. Oral Examination: If you are a thesis student, defend your completed thesis orally and submit it through the proper administrative channels. If you are a non-thesis student, take the oral comprehensive exam. You must be enrolled at the University during the semester in which you take the oral examination.

8. File for graduation with the Office of the Registrar. Be sure to fulfill any missing requirements. If you decide not to graduate after having filed, be sure to notify the Registrar.

9. Graduate. Proudly collect your degree, celebrate, and go out to do good works in the world.
ADMISSION

ADMISSION STATUS:

Students are accepted into the English MA degree program in regular, probationary, or conditional admission status, as determined by a holistic review of the required application materials. To earn a degree, the student must eventually achieve regular admission status. A student may also be admitted in post-baccalaureate non-degree-seeking status in order to take graduate English courses at Sam Houston State University.

Definitions of admission statuses follow:
REGULAR STATUS (ADMISSION IN “GOOD STANDING”):

A student in regular status has submitted all of the required application materials and satisfied the standard for admission in good standing, as determined by a holistic review of the application file. To qualify for regular admission, the student must have a minimum score of 153\* on the verbal reasoning portion of the GRE and a minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA.

While admission status is determined by a holistic review of application materials, the average GRE verbal reasoning score for English MA students in Spring 2015 was 157, the average quantitative reasoning score 148. The average score for the analytical writing section was 3.87. The average undergraduate overall GPA was 3.51.

PROBATIONARY STATUS:

A student admitted under probationary status has submitted all of the required application materials but fails to qualify for regular admission (above), as determined by a holistic review of the application file. A probationary student must have at least a 2.8 undergraduate overall GPA, a score of approximately 150 on the GRE verbal reasoning section, and a score of approximately 141 on the GRE quantitative reasoning section.

The student admitted in probationary status takes nine credit hours in this status, preferably during the first long term. To be “translated” into regular admission status, the student must earn at least Bs in all three classes; the student may not earn a C in any class. A probationary student may take no more than nine hours in this status. Any hours beyond these nine cannot be applied to a degree, should the student later apply successfully for admission to the graduate program in regular status.

CONDITIONAL STATUS:

A student admitted under conditional status may be missing a key piece of the required application materials (for example, the GRE score report) and is accepted with the condition that she or he will submit the missing materials by the end of the first long term of enrollment and will satisfy the minimum standards for regular admission. A conditional student must have at least a 3.2 undergraduate overall GPA. The student admitted conditionally is limited to taking six hours before submitting the missing materials.

\* The equivalent of 500 on the scale used before August 1, 2011.
POST-BACCAULAUREATE NON-DEGREE STUDENTS:

An individual who holds a Bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution and wishes to take graduate English courses at Sam Houston State University may apply as a post-baccalaureate non-degree-seeking student. Should the post-baccalaureate student later apply for and be accepted to the English MA Program in regular admission, she or he may apply toward the degree up to nine hours (only) earned in that status.

For admission as a non-degree-seeking post-baccalaureate student, an applicant submits the following materials:

1. The “Apply Texas” Common Application, designating application for non-degree-seeking post-baccalaureate status
2. The graduate application fee ($45.00)
3. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work. The undergraduate transcript must show proof of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.
4. A letter of intent addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies in English. The letter must state briefly the reasons for seeking permission to take graduate English courses.
REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIALS:

For admission to the English Graduate Program, an applicant must submit the following materials:

1. A graduate application form. The Graduate Admissions Office uses the “Apply Texas” Common Application.

2. The graduate application fee ($45.00)

3. Official transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate work. The undergraduate transcript must show proof of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution.

   The applicant should have at least four non-freshman English classes (twelve credit hours), preferably upper-division (junior/senior) courses, with at least a 3.0 GPA in those classes.

   A student admitted under regular admission status must have at least a 3.0 undergraduate overall GPA; a student admitted in probationary status must have at least a 2.8 undergraduate overall GPA; a student admitted under conditional status must have at least a 3.2 undergraduate overall GPA.

   While admission status is determined by a holistic review of the application materials, the average undergraduate overall GPA for English MA students for Spring 2015 is 3.51.

   An applicant with credentials from a foreign university must have the transcript or degree certificate reviewed by a transcript evaluation service, which will translate classwork and grades into United States equivalencies.

4. A score report for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, and analytical writing sections. Scores for the subject test (“Literature in English”) are not required.

   While admission status is determined by a holistic review of application materials, applicants must score at least 153 on the verbal reasoning section for admission in regular status. The average GRE verbal reasoning score for English MA students in Spring 2015 was 157, the average quantitative reasoning score 148. The average score for the analytical writing section was 3.87.

   ▲ The equivalent of 500 on the scoring table in place before Summer 2011.
An applicant who holds a Master’s degree in any discipline from an accredited institution may request a waiver of the GRE requirement; however, the waiver, which is subject to departmental and university approval, is not automatic. All graduate assistants must demonstrate that they meet the GRE minimum standards \footnote{To qualify for a graduate assistantship, the applicant must present scores that translate to a minimum 1,000 combined verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning sections on the scoring table in place before Summer 2011. The minimum combination would be a verbal reasoning score of at least 153 (the equivalent of 500 on the pre-2011 table) and a quantitative reasoning score of at least 144 (the equivalent of 500 on the pre-2011 table).} by presenting either current or previous scores for the exam, even if the GRE requirement for admission has been waived.

5. A critical writing sample of at least ten full typed pages. While we will accept papers from outside disciplines that give evidence of your critical thinking abilities, we prefer samples that demonstrate (1) research and critical writing skills particular to the study of literature and language and (2) your ability to formulate and defend a cogent critical argument in a scholarly idiom appropriate to upper-division English classes. While the writing sample should be a single, sustained piece of work, typical of graduate-level writing, we will accept combinations of shorter pieces in exceptional cases.

A student wishing to pursue a creative writing emphasis may also submit for consideration a portfolio of creative work. The creative writing sample will supplement but not replace the critical writing sample.

6. Letters of recommendation from three referees qualified to assess your general intellectual abilities, academic accomplishments, writing skills, and potential for success in a graduate English program. Letters should be addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies in English; they should bear original signatures from the referees. Please attach the request for letter of recommendation and waiver form.

7. (For admission as a post-baccalaureate, non-degree-seeking student, see above.)

Submit all items to the following address:

Graduate Admissions Office
Sam Houston State University
Box 2478
Huntsville TX 77341-2478
INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS:

The English Graduate Program welcomes qualified international applicants. However, applicants who do not hold American citizenship must be accepted under regular admission status, without conditions.

International students must submit the same admission materials as all other applicants, with the following qualifications:

1. International students must have submitted all application materials at least sixty days before the first class day of the entrance term. This deadline does not account for any extra time required to make arrangements for a student visa; the applicant is responsible for making all such arrangements with the Office of International Programs.

2. The applicants must submit a score report showing a minimum score of 550 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This score translates to 213 under revised scoring for the computerized version of the test. Scores should be sent to the Graduate Admissions Office.

3. An applicant with credentials from a foreign university must have the transcript reviewed by a transcript evaluation service, which will translate classwork and grades into United States equivalencies. The transcript evaluation service should send its report directly to the Graduate Admissions Office.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

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<tr>
<th>ENTRANCE TERM</th>
<th>APPLICATION DEADLINE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>August 1 (May 15 for Graduate Assistant)</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
<td>December 1 (November 1 for Graduate Assistant)</td>
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<td>Summer I</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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<td>Summer II</td>
<td>June 15</td>
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ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST: UNITED STATES CITIZENS

Apply Texas Common Application

Graduate Application Fee

Official Transcripts of All Undergraduate and Graduate Coursework\(^1\)

Official Score Report for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)\(^2\)

Letters of Recommendation (preferably with waiver form):
  - Letter One
  - Letter Two
  - Letter Three

Critical Writing Sample

For Graduate Assistantship: Application for Assistant Instructorship

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\(^1\) Undergraduate transcript must show conferral of Baccalaureate degree.

\(^2\) The GRE subject test in English is not required.
ADMISSIONS CHECKLIST: INTERNATIONAL APPLICANTS

Apply Texas Common Application

Graduate Application Fee

Official Transcripts of All Undergraduate and Graduate Coursework

Transcript Evaluation Report

Official Score Report for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

Official Score Report for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Letters of Recommendation (preferably with waiver form):

Letter One

Letter Two

Letter Three

Critical Writing Sample

For Graduate Assistantship: Application for Assistant Instructorship

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3 Undergraduate transcript must show conferral of Baccalaureate degree.

4 The GRE subject test in English is not required.
MA Thesis Plan I allows students the option of writing an MA thesis to fulfill six of the thirty-six credit hours required for graduation. Students pursuing the creative writing emphasis must write a creative thesis.

WHAT IS A MASTER’S THESIS?

- A well-researched, well-developed, and well-articulated essay of literary scholarship/criticism or a carefully considered and artfully executed body of creative work (for example, a cycle of short fiction or poetry, a novel, or a full-length play)
- Essentially a long essay or cohesive creative work of between eighty and a hundred pages.
- Most are typically divided into four or five well-developed chapters. A creative work may comprise four or five stories or twenty or so carefully considered poems; the creative thesis also features a critical introduction to the work.

WHY WRITE A THESIS?

- To indulge yourself in researching and making a scholarly argument about a particular topic that is dear to you, or to produce a cohesive body of creative work that has long been your great goal
- To demonstrate to yourself and the graduate faculty that in and through the graduate program you have, in fact, become an independent critical thinker or creative writer
- To prepare for future graduate work
- To make a significant contribution to the field of study
STEPS TO WRITING THE MA THESIS IN ENGLISH:

A synopsis of steps in the thesis process follows:

1. You must be an English MA degree candidate to begin thesis work.

2. If you have not already done so, decide upon a scholarly topic or creative project that will sustain your interests and energies for eight to ten months.

3. Ask a member of the English graduate faculty to serve as a thesis director. Presumably, this will be someone who has specific academic training and interests in the field of study or creative pursuit. A student writing a creative thesis must work under the direction of a graduate creative writing faculty member.

4. With your director, decide upon the other two graduate faculty members of the reading committee. In exceptional cases, one of the readers may be a member of another department.

5. Enroll in ENGL 6098 (Thesis I). No later than the first class day of the semester in which you enroll in this course, you must submit to the Director of Graduate Studies an appointment of thesis committee form. On this day you will also submit to your director a “proto-prospectus” (a rough plan for the thesis) of two-three pages and a preliminary bibliography, as appropriate to the nature of the project. (See the calendar of submission deadlines for ENGL 6098.)

6. A student who undertakes a thesis involving human subjects (for example, in interviews for oral histories or surveys for statistical measurements) must also submit paperwork for approval by the Sam Houston State University Office of Research and Special Programs. For further information, see the ORSP web site.

7. To earn credit for ENGL 6098, you must submit the thesis prospectus and any other thesis materials required by your director and committee. The prospectus is a reasonably well-developed plan for the thesis. In this proposal, you will describe the project and your approaches to the topic, lay out your methods for accomplishing it, and provide a bibliography, as appropriate to the nature of the work. (A creative writer, for example, might provide a bibliography of primary works that have influenced the writer and/or works of writing theory that she or he will use in the critical introduction to the thesis.) See the model scholarly and creative thesis prospectuses.
8. By the mid-semester deadline, submit the prospectus to the Director of Graduate Studies with the approval page signed by all members of the reading committee (see the calendar of deadlines). You will receive a final grade of CR (Credit) or NC (No Credit). ENGL 6098 is a three-credit class, but your grade will not be computed mathematically into your overall graduate GPA. You may not take an incomplete in ENGL 6098. If you decide to abandon the thesis after completing and earning credit for ENGL 6098, this course will not count toward your degree; you will have to take the six remaining hours of graduate classwork required for MA Degree Plan 2.

9. Procure a copy of Directions on Form, Preparation, and Submission of the Final Copies of Master’s Theses and Doctoral Dissertations.

10. Enroll in ENGL 6099 (Thesis II). In this second semester of thesis work, you will complete the project begun in ENGL 6098. You must continue to enroll in (and pay tuition for) ENGL 6099 every term until you have completed the thesis; if you withdraw for any amount of time after beginning ENGL 6099, you will be required to pay back-tuition upon re-enrolling in the course. You will receive a grade of IP (In Progress) until the completion of the work, at which time you will receive a final grade of CR (Credit) and three credit hours for the course.

11. Complete the thesis to your readers’ satisfaction and orally defend the work by the stated deadline for the semester during which you plan to graduate. (See the calendar of submission deadlines for ENGL 6099.) It is the responsibility of the candidate and his or her director to establish the thesis date and time and to coordinate the event with the other readers. About a week before the oral defense, send the graduate director the following information for the thesis defense form: (1) the date and time of the defense (2) the official title of the thesis, as you would like it to appear on your graduate transcript (3) the names of the committee members. The graduate director will give the form to your director for the defense.

12. As soon as you have made all revisions to the thesis required by your reading committee, you will generate the electronic route sheet. Once having generated this form, you will not have to worry about it any further; it will be sent automatically to your director and will then automatically accompany the thesis through the various electronic submissions. Follow the calendar of submission deadlines: (a) Submit the abstract of your thesis electronically to the CHSS Dean’s Office for approval. (b) Submit the completed thesis electronically to the library for final review. (c) After making any final revisions required by the library, submit the thesis electronically to the library for binding. The library will forward the completed thesis to the university press for binding and will contact you with instructions regarding costs for printing and binding.
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<th>TERM</th>
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<tr>
<td>SPRING 2016</td>
<td>Wednesday, January 13 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit appointment of committee form to graduate director.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, January 13 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary thesis proposal of two-three pages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday, January 13 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary bibliography, as appropriate to the nature of the thesis.</td>
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<td>Friday, February 26</td>
<td>Present draft of prospectus to all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<td>Friday, March 18</td>
<td>Submit approved prospectus to graduate director with the approval sheet signed by all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<td>Friday, April 29 (final class day)</td>
<td>Submit to all members of the reading committee a completed introduction or first chapter, as agreed-upon with thesis director.</td>
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<td>SUMMER 2016*</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 31 (first class day of Summer I term)</td>
<td>Submit appointment of committee form to graduate director.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tuesday, May 31 (first class day of Summer I term)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary thesis proposal of two-three pages.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuesday, May 31 (first class day of Summer I term)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary bibliography, as appropriate to the nature of the thesis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Monday, June 27 (final day of Summer I term)</td>
<td>Present draft of prospectus to all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<td>Friday, July 8</td>
<td>Submit approved prospectus to graduate director with the approval sheet signed by all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday, August 3 (final class day of Summer II term)</td>
<td>Submit to all members of the reading committee a completed introduction or first chapter, as agreed-upon with thesis director.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FALL 2016</td>
<td>Wednesday, August 24 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit appointment of committee form to graduate director.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, August 24 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary thesis proposal of two-three pages.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wednesday, August 24 (first class day)</td>
<td>Submit to thesis director a preliminary bibliography, as appropriate to the nature of the thesis.</td>
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<td>Friday, September 30</td>
<td>Present draft of prospectus to all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<td>Friday, October 14</td>
<td>Submit approved prospectus to graduate director with the approval sheet signed by all members of the reading committee.</td>
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<td>Friday, December 2 (final class day)</td>
<td>Submit to all members of the reading committee a completed introduction or first chapter, as agreed-upon with thesis director.</td>
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* ENGL 6098 is not offered during the Summer I session; the student will enroll in the course during the Summer II session but will submit preliminary thesis materials at the beginning of the Summer I term.
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<th>TERM</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2016: May</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, February 26</strong></td>
<td>Submit draft of thesis chapter(s) to Library for format and copyright review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, March 11</strong></td>
<td>Present draft of completed thesis to all members of reading committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, March 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral defense of thesis</strong></td>
<td>After making all required revisions to the thesis, generate electronic route sheet; this will be sent automatically to your thesis director and will follow your thesis through the submission process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, April 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit abstract of thesis electronically to the CHSS Dean’s Office: <a href="mailto:chss@shsu.edu">chss@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, April 13</strong> Submit completed and defended thesis electronically to the library for final format review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, April 15</strong></td>
<td><strong>After making any final revisions requested by the library, submit the thesis to the library for printing and binding: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>SUMMER 2016:</strong> <strong>AUGUST Graduation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, May 27</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit draft of thesis chapter(s) to Library for format and copyright review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, June 10</strong> Present draft of completed thesis to all members of reading committee.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, June 24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral defense of thesis</strong></td>
<td><strong>After making all required revisions to the thesis, generate electronic route sheet; this will be sent automatically to your thesis director and will follow your thesis through the submission process.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, June 30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit abstract of thesis electronically to the CHSS Dean’s Office: <a href="mailto:chss@shsu.edu">chss@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, July 15</strong> Submit completed and defended thesis electronically to the library for final format review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, July 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>After making any final revisions requested by the library, submit the thesis to the library for printing and binding: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Fall 2016: December</strong> <strong>Graduation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friday, September 30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit draft of thesis chapter(s) to Library for format and copyright review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, October 14</strong> Present draft of completed thesis to all members of reading committee.</td>
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<td><strong>Friday, October 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral defense of thesis</strong></td>
<td><strong>After making all required revisions to the thesis, generate electronic route sheet; this will be sent automatically to your thesis director and will follow your thesis through the submission process.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, November 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Submit abstract of thesis electronically to the CHSS Dean’s Office: <a href="mailto:chss@shsu.edu">chss@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Wednesday, November 16</strong> Submit completed and defended thesis electronically to the library for final format review: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, November 28</strong></td>
<td><strong>After making any final revisions requested by the library, submit the thesis to the library for printing and binding: <a href="mailto:nglthesis@shsu.edu">nglthesis@shsu.edu</a></strong></td>
<td><strong>Contents</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The graduate faculty expect that any student earning a Master’s degree in English from Sam Houston State University will step out into the polite world soundly prepared for pursuing advanced graduate studies in English and teaching at the university level.

To assure the English faculty and the University that you have, in fact, achieved this level of preparation and expertise, the MA comprehensive examination requires that you demonstrate your broad, graduate-level understanding of literary “periods,” critical approaches, and writing disciplines, in various combinations, and your mastery of specific defining or representative works within those areas.

**EXAMINATION DATES:**

The Department of English offers the written comprehensive exam three times annually, on the third Saturdays of February, June, and October. The dates for the 2016-2017 exams are

- June 18, 2016
- October 15, 2016
- February 18, 2017
- June 17, 2017
- October 21, 2017
EXAMINATION AREAS:

A candidate chooses three general areas from among the following and writes for two hours on each area:

- English Language
- Early and Middle English Literature
- World Literature (one of the following):
  - Emphasis in the Classical Tradition
  - Emphasis in World Literature in English (Postcolonial)
- Theory and Practice of Composition and Rhetoric
- Technical and Professional Writing
- Renaissance and 17th-Century British Literature
- Restoration and 18th-Century British Literature
- American Literature before 1800
- 19th-Century British Literature
- 19th-Century American Literature
- 20th-/21st-Century British Literature
- 20th-/21st-Century American Literature

To assure breadth of reading and understanding, one area must be in British literature, and one must be in American literature. One must be a pre-1800 British or American literature area, and one must be a post-1800 British or American literature area.

Because they are comprehensive, areas typically comprise more than one discrete topic or literary age. So, for example, a student sitting for the English Language exam would be expected to have a graduate-level understanding of English linguistics, grammar, and history of the language; a student sitting for the 19th-century British literature examination would be expected to know both Romantics and Victorians.

Area questions come from banks submitted by area specialists and developed over the years.
STEPS FOR TAKING THE EXAMINATION:

1. You must be an English MA degree candidate to sit for the written comprehensive examination.

2. Submit to the graduate director a comprehensive examination declaration form in the semester prior to the one in which you will sit for the exam. The form asks that you specify the test date and then identify the three areas of study over which you would like to be examined. One must be a British literature area; one must be an American literature area. One must be a pre-1800 British or American literature area; one must be a post-1800 British or American literature area. You may also submit for approval a list of any other works that you would like to use on the exam; this list will supplement but not replace works on the required list.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING THE EXAMINATION DECLARATION FORM:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER OF EXAMINATION</th>
<th>DECLARATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>December 4, 2015 (Last Class Day of Fall Term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>April 29, 2016 (Last Class Day of Spring Term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>June 27, 2016 (Last Class Day of Summer 1 Term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>December 2, 2016 (Last Class Day of Fall Term)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>May 5, 2017 (Last Class Day of Spring Term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>June 27, 2017 (Last Class Day of Summer 1 Term)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Download the reading list for each of the three areas (click on the titles below):

- English Language
- Early and Middle English Literature
- World Literature (one of the following):
  - Emphasis in the Classical Tradition
  - Emphasis in World Literature in English (Postcolonial)
- Theory and Practice of Composition and Rhetoric
- Technical and Professional Writing
- Renaissance and 17th-Century British Literature
- Restoration and 18th-Century British Literature
- American Literature before 1800
- 19th-Century British Literature
- 19th-Century American Literature
- 20th-/21st-Century British Literature
- 20th-/21st-Century American Literature

Established by faculty area experts, these lists include both canonical works and those that represent important new developments and interests in the field. They will change slightly from time to time; you are responsible only for area lists that are current on the date of your declaration form.

4. Prepare for the exam. The list of modest suggestions below may help guide your preparation.

5. Approximately two weeks before the exam, the graduate director will send you a confirmation notice and instruction sheet. Respond immediately to the confirmation notice and read carefully through the instruction sheet.

6. Sit for the examination. Because you will be using University resources (in this case, the human resources who administer and read the examination), you must be enrolled in at least one graduate course in the semester during which you sit for the exam. You must remain enrolled during the entire semester.
PREPARING FOR THE EXAMINATION:

1. Begin preparing early. Download the appropriate reading lists for the areas immediately and make a reasonable plan for studying.

2. For guidance, consult graduate faculty members who specialize in your areas. Usually they will suggest both possible questions and strategies for taking the exam.

3. Learn or review the facts about the age or subject and about the works.

4. Review key questions, problems, themes, and methods under consideration in critical discussions about the area of study. As you review and read anew, consider the qualities—intellectual, aesthetic, and political, for example—and techniques that characterize the areas under question. Imagine the sorts of questions that may arise about these issues, and be able to make cogent critical arguments in response.

5. Look for broad aesthetic and cultural developments over a literary age and important cohesive principles in a writing or pedagogical discipline. But also know specific works well.

6. Do not rely exclusively on class lecture and discussion notes. While a good survey of literature and a creative or professional writing class should give you some sort of comprehensive understanding of a subject, constraints of time—and sometimes the interests and temperament of a particular professor—often determine the scope and depth of studies in a class. The exam requires that you demonstrate your mastery of a study area, not your mastery of a class. So you should plan to do supplementary reading in the field or take more than one course in the area, or both.

7. Although no question will require that you have read secondary works, you should, as demonstration of your graduate-level understanding of the literature and language, be able to situate your argument within the critical contexts. Reading prominent critical works about the field will help you to engage important debates in the field.

8. Have a look at sample exam questions. Write practice responses.

9. Attend one of the biannual exam preparation sessions, typically offered toward the beginning of each long term.
SITTING FOR THE EXAMINATION:

For each area, you will choose one of three questions and respond; you will have two hours to answer each area question. The exam poses questions carefully designed so that candidates can manage them within the allotted time, provided that they prepare well. The questions, drawn from an examination bank, are such that you will be asked not only to demonstrate your broad understanding of developments and issues in the study area but also to demonstrate that you can apply this broad understanding to your close reading of a handful of central texts.

You will be allowed to write your responses by hand or to use a word processor. More specific practical instructions are provided at the time that you apply to take the exam.

Some modest suggestions for managing your response follow:

1. Read through all three area questions carefully and decide upon the one that best suits your strengths, interests, and preparation.

2. Pay careful attention to the language and requirements of the question. Faculty graders, who read across a wide range of areas, will consider first how faithfully you have followed the exam prompt.

3. Be flexible, so that you are able to answer the question that is asked and not some hoped-for or imagined question.

4. Manage your time well.

5. Write an introduction, with a significant thesis and/or clear statement of purpose.

6. “Stay on task”: Keep your focus on the particular question and your argument in response. Do not stray to another question or issue.

7. Make your response significant. Avoid plot summaries and guidebook introductions to the works and issues.

8. Give yourself a few minutes at the end of the two hours to proofread your response. Readers will fail essays that are not written in an idiom befitting graduate-level writing about literature and language.
AFTER YOU HAVE TAKEN THE EXAMINATION:

Each essay will be assigned a code number so that its author will remain anonymous during the evaluation process.

Working independently and anonymously, three readers from among the graduate faculty will evaluate your responses and score each area essay as a pass, high pass, or fail. The majority decision will govern.

Only after all results have been reported by the readers and all disputes settled, the graduate director will formally contact you with the results. Because the reading process typically takes three weeks, please be patient and avoid the temptation to contact the director asking for results; they will come in due time.

Should you fail a particular area question, you will have one opportunity to retake that area question at the next examination date. You will retake the exam in only the area (or areas) that you failed, and you may not change areas. You must submit a new comprehensive examination declaration form, and you must be enrolled in at least three graduate credit hours at the University when you retake the exam.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Consult the booklet *The Graduate Comprehensive Examination in English*, available from the graduate director. This resource supplies all information necessary for applying and preparing to take the exam, sample forms, and sample essay questions and responses.

The graduate director offers biannual prep sessions for the exam. Be on the lookout for announcements.
THE ORAL EXAMINATION

All students taking the MA in English sit for a one-hour oral examination. The thesis student defends his or her thesis orally; the non-thesis student takes a comprehensive oral examination over the same three areas covered in the written comps.

For both thesis and non-thesis students, three members of the graduate faculty examine the candidate, one serving as chair of the examining committee. Students who fail a section of the oral exam have a single opportunity to retake that section.

ORAL EXAMINATION FOR THESIS STUDENTS: THESIS DEFENSE

After passing the written comprehensive examination and completing the scholarly or creative thesis, the candidate must defend that thesis orally. The examination committee comprises the three members of the student’s thesis reading committee.

The defense of a scholarly thesis typically emphasizes the genesis, critical methodologies, and findings of the thesis and the value of those findings.

The defense of a creative thesis typically emphasizes the genesis, rationale, and methods for the project and requires that the candidate explain her or his aesthetic.
ORAL EXAMINATION FOR NON-THESIS STUDENTS: ORAL COMPREHENSIVE

After successfully passing all three areas of the written comprehensive examination, the non-thesis student sits for a one-hour oral examination over the same three areas, usually scheduled for a date shortly after the written comp. The Director of Graduate Studies appoints the three examiners from among faculty area specialists; one serves as committee chair.

As with the written comprehensive examination, the examiners ask that the candidate demonstrate his or her broad understanding of topics in English language, literature, and writing disciplines. Typically, each of the three examiners asks questions for approximately fifteen minutes; this initial round of questions is followed by a fifteen-minute “redirect,” during which the committee members follow up on earlier questions or ask new ones that have arisen during the conversation.

Should you fail an area of the oral examination, you will have one opportunity to retake that area, but you will have to wait until the following term, during which you will have to be enrolled in at least three graduate credit hours. The entire committee will reconvene, but only the examiner or examiners whose area(s) you failed will ask questions.
GRADUATION

Even after you have finished all of your coursework and successfully passed your written and oral examinations, there are still tasks for you to complete before the University bestows upon you the cherished hood and parchment:

As early as possible in the semester during which you plan to graduate, you must file an application for graduation with the Office of the Registrar and pay a graduation fee. The application is available through the Registrar’s information page on the web.

Once you file for graduation, the Registrar will perform a graduation audit, to make sure that you have satisfied all of the requirements for the degree. Common problems that are uncovered during the records check:

- unfulfilled course block requirements
- directed study courses or senior-level classes taken for graduate credit that are not properly identified as such in the records or are unacknowledged because they were never formally approved
- missing notification of examination results
- missing thesis components

Usually these problems are either ones of which the student is already aware or ones that the Director of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the student, can resolve clerically.

The earlier that you file for graduation, the more time is available to fulfill any missing requirements or correct any errors or oversights in the University records.

Remember that the ultimate responsibility for completing all degree requirements lies with you, not with the Department of English or the University. Please monitor your own process and progress through your graduate career, especially as you near graduation.

Be aware also that graduation does entail some financial costs, and be prepared for these by checking with the Office of the Registrar. Costs vary, depending upon the degree plan and upon the nature of the student’s involvement in graduation ceremonies. If you find for some reason that you cannot graduate after filing (if, for example, you are not able to complete your MA thesis by the required date), notify the Registrar immediately. Otherwise, the University will keep the graduation fee that you have already paid and require that you pay again for the date on which you graduate, in fact.
SOME BIG RULES

1. To earn the MA, a student must have been accepted into the English Graduate Program in regular admission status. The student must establish degree candidacy by completing at least twelve of coursework in good academic standing, including ENGL 5330, Graduate Research: Methods and Theories.

2. A student has six years to complete the MA degree from the date of initial enrollment for graduate credit. After the expiration of the time limit, courses from the first term will expire; courses will continue to expire each subsequent term. A student who returns to the program after the expiration date will have to retake the expired classes.

3. In extenuating circumstances, a student may apply, in writing, to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences for a one-semester extension beyond the six-year time limit. The student sends the written appeal first to the Director of Graduate Studies in English, who reviews the petition, attaches an explanatory cover letter, and forwards the appeal to the Chair of the Department of English. The Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences ultimately approves or denies the petition.

4. Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in at least three credit hours during the fall and spring terms from the time of matriculation to graduation. A student who absents himself or herself from the program for more than one calendar year must reapply to the program for readmission. As of Summer 2011, the student must pay a new graduate application fee with the reapplication.

5. A student must maintain good academic standing (3.0 average). For definitions and requirements, see Grades and Academic Standing.
ENROLLMENT STATUS

FULL-TIME STATUS (required for most financial aid and scholarships):

- **Graduate Assistant:** Six hours minimum
- **All Others:** Nine hours minimum

GRADES AND ACADEMIC STANDING

**GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING** 3.0 average

**SECOND GRADE OF C**
Review by the Director of Graduate Studies and Chair of the Department of English

**THIRD GRADE OF C**
Termination from program; reacceptance conditional upon appeal to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**GRADE OF F**
Termination from program; reacceptance conditional upon appeal to the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**INCOMPLETE (X)**
In exceptional circumstances and with the permission of the instructor of record in a course and the Chair of the Department of English, a student may take an incomplete. He or she receives a grade of X for the term. The student must complete the requirements for the course by the end of the next long semester; otherwise, the grade of X will be changed automatically to an F, imperiling the student’s academic status. (Both summer sessions are considered the equivalent of one long semester.) A student in a thesis course (ENGL 6098 or ENGL 6099) may not take an incomplete.
GRADES OF CREDIT (CR) AND NO CREDIT (NC)

A thesis student who successfully completes ENGL 6098 (Thesis I) or ENGL 6099 (Thesis II) receives a grade of CR (Credit) for the course and three credits; the grade does not affect the student’s graduate GPA mathematically. A student who does not complete the requirements for ENGL 6098 receives a grade of NC (No Credit); this grade does not affect the student’s graduate GPA mathematically, but the student may not continue on to ENGL 6099 until she or he passes the Thesis I course.

COURSE IN PROGRESS (IP)

A thesis student who does not complete ENGL 6099 (Thesis II) in a given term receives an IP (In Progress) and continues to enroll in the course until completing the thesis, at which time she or he is awarded a final grade of CR (Credit) and the remaining three credits for the six-hour thesis; this grade does not affect the student’s graduate GPA. A student must enroll continuously in ENGL 6099 every long term until the project is completed. (Both summer sessions are considered the equivalent of one long semester.) A student who drops out and then later resumes the course must pay back-tuition for any missed terms.

CREDITS AND TRANSFER HOURS

CREDIT HOURS

Most English graduate classes carry an award of three credit hours.

CREDIT FOR DIFFERENT COURSES WITH THE SAME NUMBER

A student may occasionally take the same course number twice for new credit. Except in extraordinary cases, however, the student may not take the same course from the same professor.

TRANSFER HOURS

Having been accepted into degree candidacy, a student may transfer up to six hours of previous graduate work from an accredited institution. The student is awarded credit for course equivalency at Sam Houston State University. A grade earned at another university may not be used to replace a deficient grade at our institution.
COURSE BLOCKS

To ensure that students build a sound graduate-level foundation of knowledge with a broad range of interests in literature and language, the English MA Program requires that they take at least one course from each of five blocks, which comprise classes with shared disciplinary interests and methods or with historical kinship.

The student need not complete the block classes in any particular order, but ideally he or she will take a Block I course within the first twelve hours, to establish a foundation in English language.

**BLOCK I (ENGLISH LANGUAGE BLOCK):**

- **ENGL 5377**  
  Studies in Early and Middle English Literature
- **ENGL 5383**  
  Studies in English Linguistics
- **ENGL 5389**  
  History and Development of the English Language
BLOCK II (COURSES THAT DO NOT FIT INTO THE FRAMEWORK OF TRADITIONAL LITERARY HISTORY):

- ENGL 5331 Creative Writing: Fiction
- ENGL 5332 Creative Writing: Poetry
- ENGL 5333 Practicum: Editing and Publishing
- ENGL 5334 Creative Writing: Nonfiction
- ENGL 5335 Workshop in Teaching Writing
- ENGL 5336 Narrative Theory
- ENGL 5337 Poetic Theory and Prosody
- ENGL 5367 Practicum in Teaching College Composition
- ENGL 5368 Literary Criticism and Theory
- ENGL 5384 Studies in Rhetoric and Composition Theory
- ENGL 5390 Studies in Technical and Professional Writing

BLOCK III (EARLY LITERATURE BLOCK):

- ENGL 5372 Early American Literature
- ENGL 5375 Studies in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature
- ENGL 5376 The Classical Tradition
- ENGL 5378 Studies in Renaissance and Seventeenth-Century British Literature

BLOCK IV (19TH-CENTURY LITERATURE BLOCK):

- ENGL 5379 Studies in Romantic Literature
- ENGL 5380 Studies in Victorian Literature
- ENGL 5385 Studies in American Literature, 1800-1860
- ENGL 5386 Studies in American Literature, 1860-1920
BLOCK V (20\textsuperscript{TH}-21\textsuperscript{ST}-CENTURY LITERATURE BLOCK):

ENGL 5371  Studies in Modern World Literature  
ENGL 5381  Studies in British Literature, 1900-Present  
ENGL 5387  Studies in American Literature, 1920-Present  

VARIABLE AND SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

The following courses feature special and variable topics, depending upon professors’ interests and emphases. With the approval of the Chair of the Department of English, a student may substitute up to six hours of special and variable topics classes for block requirements. The block requirement for which a course may be substituted will be announced clearly in the online class listings before registration and in the instructor’s syllabus.

In such cases in which the variable or special topics course does not fit into a block, it may be used only as an elective. This designation will be announced clearly in the online class listings before registration and in the instructor’s syllabus.

Students should understand that the block classes are designed to give them broad, “generalist” preparation for teaching, future graduate work, and comprehensive examinations; variable and special topics courses are obviously narrower. We advise students to avoid class substitutions unless necessary.

ENGL 5369  Studies in the Novel  
ENGL 5370  Studies in Multicultural Literature  
ENGL 5374  Studies in Women’s Literature  
ENGL 5388  The Study of Major Figures in American Poetry  
ENGL 5391  The Study of Major Figures in British Poetry  
ENGL 6330  Special Topics in English  

ENGL 5330:  
Every student takes ENGL 5330, Graduate Research: Methods and Theories, during her or his first long term, as it is available.
GRADUATE ENGLISH COURSE OFFERINGS

The Department of English offers the following English graduate courses in rotation. The course block into which each class fits is designated. Courses are offered either on the Huntsville campus or at The Woodlands Center.

ENGL 5330 GRADUATE RESEARCH: METHODS AND THEORIES. Required of all English majors, this course introduces students to graduate-level research methods in literature and to the study of the book. Offered Fall 2016 (Two Sections). Instructors: Paul Child (Huntsville) and Robert Donahoo (The Woodlands Center)

ENGL 5331 CREATIVE WRITING: FICTION (BLOCK II). A graduate writing workshop, this course emphasizes the writing and revision of fiction and creative nonfiction. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Scott Kaukonen (Huntsville)

ENGL 5332 CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY (BLOCK II). A graduate writing workshop, this course emphasizes the writing and revision of poetry. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Ching-In Chen (The Woodlands Center).

ENGL 5333 PRACTICUM: EDITING AND PUBLISHING (BLOCK II). In this course, students study and apply current scholarship in editing and publishing. They have the opportunity to work both on and off campus as writers and editors in various professions. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Paul Ruffin (Huntsville).
ENGL 5334 CREATIVE WRITING: NONFICTION (BLOCK II). A graduate-level workshop, this course requires students to study the art and craft of creative nonfiction across a range of its broadly defined forms with the purpose of writing original and publishable texts.

ENGL 5335 WORKSHOP IN TEACHING WRITING (BLOCK II). This course is an intensive workshop in writing and the teaching of writing in the secondary schools. It emphasizes applications of current writing theory and research.

ENGL 5336 NARRATIVE THEORY (BLOCK II). This course focuses on primary texts in narrative theory, in addition to the secondary texts that analyze concepts and research in the field. Considerable attention will be paid to ideological contributions to narrative theory, past and present.

ENGL 5337 POETIC THEORY AND PROSODY (BLOCK II). This course focuses on primary texts and readings along with secondary texts that provide analyses of the concepts and research in poetic theory and English prosody. Considerable attention will be paid to ideological contributions to poetic theory from a historical perspective. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Nick Lantz (Huntsville).

ENGL 5339 DIRECTED STUDY OF SELECTED TOPICS IN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE (ELECTIVE). This course, which may be taken only with the approval of the Department Chair, allows a student to engage a specialized topic in literature or language under the direct supervision of a graduate faculty member.

ENGL 5367 PRACTICUM IN TEACHING COLLEGE COMPOSITION (BLOCK II). This course studies modern rhetorical principles and methodologies used in teaching college-level writing. Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Carroll Nardone (Huntsville)

ENGL 5368 LITERARY CRITICISM AND THEORY (BLOCK II). This course studies various theories and theorists of literary interpretation, with application and practice in writing criticism. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Audrey Murfin (Huntsville)

ENGL 5369 STUDIES IN THE NOVEL. This course studies the emergence and development of the novel as a distinct literary genre. It is designed to allow for reading of the novel in various contexts, from various nations and historical ages, and according to various theoretical emphases.
ENGL 5370 STUDIES IN MULTICULTURAL LITERATURE. In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literatures of underrepresented groups, including but not limited to African Americans, Latinos/as, Chicanos/as, Caribbeans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. The class, which will explore multicultural literatures within their historical and cultural contexts, may feature various critical approaches and pursue various thematic and aesthetic emphases.

ENGL 5371 STUDIES IN MODERN WORLD LITERATURE (BLOCK V). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the works, writers, movements, and genres of world literature from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The course is designed to allow for reading both works in translation and Anglophone literatures.

ENGL 5372 EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE (BLOCK III). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of early America.

ENGL 5374 STUDIES IN WOMEN’S LITERATURE. In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of selected women writers from various historical ages, genres, and nationalities. Emphases may vary each semester. Offered Summer I 2016. Instructor: Deborah Phelps (Huntsville)

ENGL 5375 STUDIES IN RESTORATION AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE (BLOCK III). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of Restoration and 18th-century Britain. Offered Summer I 2016. Instructor: Paul Child (Huntsville)

ENGL 5376 THE CLASSICAL TRADITION (BLOCK III). This course studies the Greek and Roman literary heritage and its influence upon subsequent literature. Students read ancient and classical works in translation and study the current literature in the field. Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Kimberly Bell (The Woodlands Center)

ENGL 5377 STUDIES IN EARLY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE (BLOCK I). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of selected works in Old and Middle English literatures. Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Robert Adams (Huntsville)

ENGL 5378 STUDIES IN RENAISSANCE AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE (BLOCK III). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of 16th- and 17th-century Britain. Topics may include studies in Shakespeare, studies in Spenser, and studies in Milton. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Darci Hill (Huntsville)
ENGL 5379 STUDIES IN ROMANTIC LITERATURE (BLOCK IV). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of the British Romantic age. Offered Summer II 2016. Instructor: Michael Demson (Huntsville)

ENGL 5380 STUDIES IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE (BLOCK IV). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of the Victorian age. Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Lee Courtney (Huntsville)

ENGL 5381 STUDIES IN BRITISH LITERATURE, 1900-PRESENT (BLOCK V). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the literature, writers, movements, and genres of 20th- and 21st-century Britain. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Diane Dowdey (Online)

ENGL 5383 STUDIES IN ENGLISH LINGUISTICS (BLOCK I). A thoroughgoing graduate introduction to English linguistics, this course features study in sociolinguistics, dialectology, lexicography, stylistics through linguistic analysis, principles of semantics, and linguistics in relation to the teaching of English.

ENGL 5384 STUDIES IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION THEORY (BLOCK II). This course studies selected topics in historical and contemporary rhetoric, rhetorical criticism, and composition theory. Students will apply current theory and research in rhetoric and composition.

ENGL 5385 STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1800-1860 (BLOCK IV). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the works, writers, movements, and genres of American literature from 1800 to 1860. Offered Summer II 2016. Instructor: Jason Payton (The Woodlands Center)

ENGL 5386 STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1860-1920 (BLOCK IV). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the works, writers, movements, and genres of American literature from 1860-1920. Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Gene Young (The Woodlands Center)

ENGL 5387 STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1920-PRESENT (BLOCK V). In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the works, writers, movements, and genres of American literature from 1920 to the present. Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Gene Young (Huntsville)
ENGL 5388 THE STUDY OF MAJOR FIGURES IN AMERICAN POETRY. In this course, students apply current theory and research to an analysis of the writers and movements contributing to the development of American poetry.

ENGL 5389 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (BLOCK I). This course is a cultural, historical, and philological study of the development of the English language from its Indo-European prototype through Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-French, and Early Modern English to its present form. **Offered Spring 2016 Instructor: Helena Halmari (Huntsville)**

ENGL 5390 STUDIES IN TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING (BLOCK II). This course engages students in in-depth study of current issues in technical and professional communication. Students examine the field and conduct primary research. **Offered Spring 2016. Instructor: Carroll Nardone (The Woodlands Center)**

ENGL 5391 THE STUDY OF MAJOR FIGURES IN BRITISH POETRY. In this course, students apply current theory and research to a focused and sustained analysis of the careers of major poets who made a substantial contribution to the development of British poetry. The contents and approaches to the class materials will vary from term to term. **Offered Fall 2016. Instructor: Michael Demson (Huntsville). This course may be substituted for the Block IV requirement.**

ENGL 6330 SPECIAL TOPICS IN ENGLISH. In this course, students will apply current research to an analysis and understanding of a special topic in English language, literature, theory, and/or a writing discipline. The contents and approaches to the materials will vary from term to term:

**Offered Summer I 2016: “Shakespeare’s Villains, Calumniators, and Tyrants.” Instructor: Douglas Krienke (Huntsville). This course may be substituted for the Block III requirement.**

ENGL 6098 THESIS I. In this first semester of graduate thesis, the student works under close faculty supervision to produce a thesis prospectus approved by all members of the reading committee and submits a draft of the introduction. **(Offered Every Term but Summer I)**

ENGL 6099 THESIS II. In this second semester of graduate thesis, the student works under close faculty supervision to complete the thesis. The student must enroll in this class from term to term until the thesis is completed. **(Offered Every Term)**

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*To accommodate the tight summer schedule, students who wish to take Thesis I during the summer enroll in ENGL 6098 during Summer II but complete some of the requirements for the course during Summer I. See the calendar of submission deadlines for ENGL 6098.*
DIRECTED STUDY COURSE (ENGL 5339)

ENGL 5339, an “independent study,” allows a student to work under the close supervision of a graduate faculty mentor on a topic of academic interest not covered specifically in any classes.

RULES FOR THE DIRECTED STUDY:

The ENGL 5339 option offers a wonderful opportunity for specialized study. But to ensure that a student has both a significant project and serious intent in undertaking the project, the following restrictions apply:

1. The directed study is available only to students who have been admitted into the English graduate program in regular admission status and who have completed ENGL 5330, Graduate Research: Methods and Theories.
2. The directed study is reserved for very carefully considered scholarly or creative work and should not be taken to circumvent regular course requirements or to accommodate the student’s convenience.
3. A student may not take a directed study in a course that is taught in the classroom during her or his time in the graduate program (for example, a literature course or internship that is a regular class in the graduate rotation).
4. The directed study may not be substituted for a block course.
5. A student may not use the directed study course as a thesis or comprehensive examination prep course.
6. A student may take no more than two such classes during her or his graduate career at Sam Houston State University.
ARRANGING A DIRECTED STUDY COURSE:

In order to arrange for a directed study course on a carefully considered topic, follow these steps:

1. Choose as a director for your study a graduate English faculty member who is qualified by academic training or interest to direct the project. A graduate faculty member is allowed to undertake a single ENGL 5339 during a semester, so approach the director early.

2. Prepare a detailed directed study proposal that

   - outlines the rationale and objectives of the course: What critical question are you setting out to investigate/solve? What contribution will the project make to your personal development as a scholar or creative writer? What contribution will the project make to the larger academic or creative community?
   - describes the study in sufficient detail: What are the nature and scope of the proposed project? What methodologies will you use in undertaking the study?
   - describes in detail the course requirements and methods of evaluation.
   - presents a week-by-week schedule of readings, meetings, and assignments for the proposed study.
   - presents a detailed bibliography for the proposed study, to include definitive editions of primary works, as appropriate.

For further guidance, see the model directed study proposal.

3. Submit the course proposal to the supervising graduate faculty member for approval.

4. Submit the proposal to the Director of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline in the previous term. It is easiest to send the proposal as an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word. The graduate director and Chair of the Department of English will review the proposal, considering the following:

   - the significance of the project
   - the thoroughness and carefulness of the proposal
the realistic possibilities for accomplishing the goals of the project
- class enrollments: The University has minimum enrollment numbers required for a graduate class to "make," and we are committed first to ensuring that classes are filled.

Acceptance of the proposal is not pro forma: The graduate director and Chair may reject the proposal or ask for revisions.

If the proposal is approved, you will sign the directed study proposal cover sheet, secure the signature of your faculty supervisor, and submit the final version of the proposal and the cover sheet to the Director of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline. The graduate director and Chair will sign the approval sheet; then the Chair will open up a slot in ENGL 5339 so that you may enroll.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINES:**

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<th>Semester of Directed Study</th>
<th>Proposal Submission Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>April 29, 2016 (Last Class Day of Spring Term)</td>
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<td>Fall 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>June 27, 2017 (Last Class Day of Summer 1 Term)</td>
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TAKING AN UNDERGRADUATE COURSE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT

A student may take a 4300-level (senior) class for graduate credit. As with the directed study, this one-time opportunity is reserved for very special circumstances and should not be taken to circumvent regular course requirements or to accommodate the student’s convenience.

RULES FOR TAKING A SENIOR-LEVEL CLASS FOR GRADUATE CREDIT:

1. As with the directed study, the student must have been admitted into the English MA program in regular admission status.
2. The student may not exercise this option until after he or she has earned credit for ENGL 5330, Graduate Research: Methods and Theories.
3. The student may not substitute an undergraduate class for a course that is taught regularly in the graduate rotation.
4. The student may not retake a senior-level class for which she or he earned undergraduate credit at the University.
5. The student may not substitute a senior-level class for a course block requirement.
ARRANGING TO TAKE THE UNDERGRADUATE CLASS:

1. In the semester before taking the 4300-level class in question, get formal permission to do so from the instructor. The instructor must provide you with a syllabus for the term during which you will take the class; the syllabus must state *explicitly* the extra work that students must do in the class in order to earn graduate credit.

   See the *sample course syllabus* (sections for graduate students are highlighted in yellow).

2. Write up a proposal in which you explain in detail your reasons for taking the class and your projected goals: How will taking this class contribute to your intellectual and professional growth as a graduate student? What work will you do beyond that expected for undergraduates to make this course graduate-level work? Present also a detailed bibliography of sources that you will read during the class, with special attention to the works that you will read beyond those required for the undergraduates in the class.

   See the *model proposal*, which accompanies the sample syllabus above.

3. You yourself must write up the formal proposal, not merely submit the instructor’s syllabus.

4. Submit the course proposal, syllabus, and signed *cover sheet* to the Director of Graduate Studies by the posted deadline in the previous term. (It is easiest to send the proposal and syllabus as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word.) The graduate director and Chair of the Department of English will review and make a decision upon the proposal.

**PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINES:**

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The graduate English faculty at Sam Houston State University are teachers, scholars, and creative writers with a broad range of accomplishments, interests, and training in literature, language, and writing disciplines:

**ROBERT ADAMS** (PhD University of Virginia), Professor, teaches graduate classes in research and bibliography, Early and Middle English literature, the Renaissance, and eighteenth-century British literature. An accomplished textual scholar and editor, Professor Adams has produced electronic variorum editions of William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and a translation of Raymond Lull’s *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*. His publications include a recent book on *Piers Plowman, Langland and the Rokele Family* (Four Courts Press, 2013) and numerous articles on Langland, Chaucer, medieval drama, and Browning. Dr. Adams is former Director of the International Piers Plowman Society. eng_ira@shsu.edu

**KIMBERLY BELL** (PhD Georgia State University), Professor, teaches graduate classes in Early and Middle English languages and literature, history of the English language, and the classical tradition. Her research interests are in epic and romance, genre and game theory, and manuscript study. She has published articles and book chapters on medieval romance, hagiography, and history, and Homeric and Virgilian epic. She has also co-edited two collections of essays, *The Texts and Contexts of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 108: The Shaping of English Vernacular Narrative* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2011) and *Cultural Studies of the Modern Middle Ages* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). She is currently working on a book (*Framed Games: Metaliterary Game Strategies in Middle English Narrative*) and is finishing a new transcription of the *Havelok* fragments. Professor Bell, who is Dean of the Elliott T. Bowers Honors College at Sam Houston State University, is the 2010 recipient of the University’s Excellence in Teaching Award. eng_kkb@shsu.edu
TRACY BILSING (PhD Texas A & M University), Associate Professor, teaches graduate courses in 20th-century British literature and the modern novel. Professor Bilsing, whose scholarly and pedagogical interests include Kipling, Woolf, Bowen, Mansfield, Lawrence, and other World War I-era British authors, is currently researching Mary Butts and the home front culture of England during the War. She has published on a range of topics (literary and visual) with war as a backdrop: the use of WWII airplane nose art as propaganda; the break in the masculine community because of WWI in Lawrence’s short fiction; and Kipling’s deeply fractured sentiments about the Great War, the impassable divide between his jingoistic public propaganda and the private guilt and grief he felt at the loss of his only son in the War. eng_teb@shsu.edu

BRIAN D. BLACKBURNE (PhD University of Central Florida), Assistant Professor, teaches graduate courses in college composition theory and pedagogy as well as in technical and professional writing. As both instructor and professional writer, Dr. Blackburne has worked simultaneously in academia and industry since 2000. His experiences as a professional writer have involved web design, usability studies, process documentation, product development, marketing, and digital-media production. Similarly, Professor Blackburne’s research interests span a broad range, which currently includes pedagogy in traditional and online writing courses, the effects of style on everyday documentation, and issues of professionalization in students’ writings. He presented scholarly work at the 2012 annual meeting of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, where he discussed the issues of professionalization and their implications both in the classroom and within the broader university community. Most recently, he received the award for Departmental Outstanding Online Teaching from the Sam Houston State University College of Humanities and Social Sciences. bdb026@shsu.edu

BILL BRIDGES (PhD Florida State University), Professor. Formerly English Department Head at New Mexico State University, Dr. Bridges served as Chair of English at Sam Houston State University for ten years before returning to full-time teaching in Fall 2009; he serves now as Interim Chair. He teaches the practicum required of all graduate assistants and classes in rhetoric and composition and 19th-century American literature. With his colleague Ronald F. Lunsford (UNC-Charlotte), he is co-author of The Longwood Guide to Writing, now in its fourth edition. eng_cwb@shsu.edu

PAUL CHILD (PhD University of Notre Dame), Professor, teaches graduate classes in Restoration and 18th-century British literature, the early English novel, and research and bibliography. He has published on Jonathan Swift, the Scots physician George Cheyne, and the teaching of medical literature and has presented conference papers on 18th-century literature and the social history of medicine. In 2007, Professor Child was an NEH Fellow at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies. He is Director of Graduate Studies in English at Sam Houston State University. eng_pwc@shsu.edu
LEE COURTNEY (PhD Emory University), Professor, specializes in fiction of the 1880s and 1890s and teaches graduate classes in Victorian and early 20th-century British literature. An authority on the late Victorian/Edwardian novelist and essayist George Gissing, he holds, privately, that all of the past one hundred years were “Post-Edwardian.” Professor Courtney provides a valuable service to the English Graduate Program as the administrator of the written comprehensive examinations. eng_lfc@shsu.edu

MICHAEL DEMSON (PhD The Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York), Assistant Professor, teaches British, European, and transatlantic Romanticism, literary theory and criticism, print and visual culture, and world literature. He is particularly interested in the Shelles and the Godwins, and currently his principal area of research is transatlantic agrarian politics of the 1790s. Dr. Demson has published articles in Romanticism, European Romantic Review, and the Nathaniel Hawthorne Review, as well as in collections of essays, and has published a non-fiction graphic novel, Masks of Anarchy (Verso Publishing, 2013). He is the recipient of a prestigious ACLS Fellowship Award for the 2014-2015 academic year. When not teaching or researching, he likes to walk his infuriating puppy with his wife and daughter. mtd007@shsu.edu

ROBERT DONAHOO (PhD Duke University), Professor, teaches fiction and poetry of the 20th-century American South, the novel, American drama, and research and bibliography. A specialist in the works of Flannery O’Connor, Professor Donahoo served for five years as the president of the Flannery O’Connor Society after editing Cheers! The Newsletter of the Flannery O’Connor Society. In the summer of 2007 he was a Fellow in the NEH Summer Institute, “Reconsidering Flannery O’Connor,” and during the summer of 2014 he co-directed an NEH Summer Institute on O’Connor hosted by Georgia College. Dr. Donahoo has published scholarly articles on O’Connor, Tolstoy, Horton Foote, postmodern American science fiction, and Cyberpunk and has several creative works in print. With Avis Hewitt of Grand Valley State University, he is coeditor of a collection of essays, Flannery O’Connor in the Age of Terrorism: Essays on Violence and Grace (University of Tennessee Press, 2010). Professor Donahoo has contributed some two dozen reviews to academic journals ranging from American Literature to The South Central Review, and he has a long record of service in professional academic organizations, including terms as President of the South Central College English Association and President of the Texas College English Association. He also served for three years as Director of Graduate Studies in English at Sam Houston State University. eng_rxd@shsu.edu

DIANE DOWDEY (PhD University of Wisconsin-Madison), Associate Professor, teaches graduate classes in multicultural literature, 19th-century American literature, and 20th-/21st-century British literature and has a wide array of research interests, including writing center theory and administration, composition pedagogy, American literature about the Civil War, and gender issues. Professor Dowdey has published two freshman composition textbooks and articles about writing across the curriculum and the rhetoric of science in such scholarly publications as the Journal of Technical Writing and has presented dozens of academic papers. She has also published creative work and translation. Dr. Dowdey formerly directed the Freshman English Program at the University and the Sam Houston State University Writing Center. dowdey@shsu.edu
JULIE HALL (PhD University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), Professor, teaches graduate classes in American literature, women’s literature, and the novel. Her fields of teaching and research interest are 19th-century American literature, transatlantic Romanticism, and Sophia and Nathaniel Hawthorne. She currently serves as Assistant Editor of Nathaniel Hawthorne Review. An authority on Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, Professor Hall guest-edited a special issue of Nathaniel Hawthorne Review on Sophia Hawthorne in Fall 2011. She co-edited Reinventing the Peabody Sisters, which appeared in 2006 (University of Iowa Press), and has published articles in Symbiosis: A Journal of Anglo-American Literary Relations, Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers, Nathaniel Hawthorne Review, and other books and collections. eng_jeh@shsu.edu

HELENA HALMARI (PhD University of Southern California), Professor, teaches graduate courses in English linguistics and the history and development of the English language. Professor Halmari, whose research interests include language contact phenomena, discourse analysis, and syntax, is the author of Government and Codeswitching: Explaining American Finnish (1997), the co-editor (with Tuija Virtanen) of Persuasion across Genres: A Linguistic Approach (2005), and the translator (with Scott Kaukonen) of the Finnish novel Pet Shop Girls, by Anja Snellman. She has published some forty articles in journals like Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, and Journal of Pragmatics, as well as in edited volumes. In addition to her PhD, she holds an MA in linguistics, an MA in English composition, a Master’s of Philosophy, and a Master’s of Social Science. Professor Halmari has taught in the linguistics departments at the University of California-San Diego, Rice University, the University of Florida, and Åbo Akademi University, Finland. The editor-in-chief of the Journal of Finnish Studies, she is also an invited member of the Kalevala Society, devoted to researching and disseminating knowledge about the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala, and to preserving Finnish cultural heritage. halmari@shsu.edu

DARCI HILL (PhD Texas Women’s University), Professor, teaches graduate classes in the Renaissance, the classical tradition, and rhetoric. A specialist in the philosophy and history of rhetoric and in 17th-century British literature, with an emphasis in the metaphysical poets, Dr. Hill also has research and teaching interests in medieval literature, the Oxford Inklings, the intersections of faith and reason in literature, and the hero in literature. Her critical book, All Homer’s Children: Ten Authors in the Heroic Tradition, is under contract with Edwin Mellon Press. Aside from presentations at professional academic conferences, Dr. Hill frequently gives invited lectures on her various research interests for community cultural groups and weekend seminars. She has also directed literary tours for students and community members to England and, in the summer of 2009, led a group to Italy to study Dante. Not least among her accomplishments, Dr. Hill has been a finalist for the University Excellence in Teaching Award eight times in her twenty years at Sam Houston State. eng_dnh@shsu.edu
SCOTT KAUKONEN (PhD University of Missouri-Columbia), Associate Professor and Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Sam Houston State University, teaches graduate fiction writing workshops, the novel, narrative theory, and the editing and publishing practicum. His debut collection of short stories, *Ordination*, received the 2004 Ohio State University Prize for Short Fiction and was published by OSU Press in 2005. A short story from that collection, “Punnett’s Squares,” won the 2004 Nelson Algren Prize from the *Chicago Tribune* and was recently republished by the *Tribune* as part of its Printers Row Journal fiction series. His fiction has appeared in the *Cincinnati Review, Pleiades*, the *Normal School, Barrelhouse, Louisiana Literature, Third Coast*, and elsewhere. Dr. Kaukonen recently completed his first novel, *The Martyrdom of Katie Deeds*. With Helena Halmari, he translated from the Finnish Anja Snellman’s novel, *Pet Shop Girls* (Ice Cold Crime, 2013). He is a former AWP/Prague Summer Fellow in Fiction and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in Prose. kaukonen@shsu.edu

DOUGLAS KRIENKE (PhD University of Toledo), Professor, is Associate Chair of the Department of English. A specialist in Tudor/Stuart drama and Shakespeare, he teaches graduate courses in the Renaissance and the classical tradition. Professor Krienke, who is compiling an anthology of Tudor/Stuart drama, has also edited *Man and the State*, a text used by the Ethics in Western Civilization & American Traditions (EWCAT) cohort at the University. Recipient of the Sam Houston State Excellence in Teaching Award in 1990, he was honored with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences College-Wide Teaching Achievement Award in the fall of 2009; the following year, he received the CHSS College-Wide Service Achievement Award. eng_mdk@shsu.edu

NICK LANTZ (MFA University of Wisconsin-Madison), Assistant Professor, teaches graduate poetry workshops, poetic theory and prosody, and the editing and publishing practicum. Professor Lantz is the author of two recent collections of poetry. His first, *We Don’t Know We Don’t Know* (Graywolf Press, 2010), won the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference Bakeless Prize, the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writers Award, and the Larry Levis Reading Prize. His second collection, *The Lightning That Strikes the Neighbors’ House* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), was selected by former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky for the Felix Pollak Prize. His third book, *How to Dance as the Roof Caves In*, was published in March 2014 (Graywolf Press). Professor Lantz has received fellowships from the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing and the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and his work has appeared in *Mid-American Review, Prairie Schooner, Gulf Coast, Indiana Review, Poetry Daily, Blackbird, jubilat*, and *FIELD* and has been featured on the nationally syndicated radio program *The Writer’s Almanac* with Garrison Keillor. He has taught creative writing at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Gettysburg College, Franklin & Marshall College, Tinker Mountain Writers’ Workshop, and Queens University’s Low-Residency MFA Program. nick.lantz@shsu.edu
AUDREY MURFIN (PhD State University of New York at Binghamton), Assistant Professor, researches and teaches in the areas of Victorian literature, the history of the novel, Gothic literature, and 18th-century literature. She is particularly interested in realism and its challengers and the intersections between literary and popular culture. These interests have informed publications and conference papers on Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Charlotte Brontë. Her most recent work is on the Pacific writings of Robert Louis Stevenson. Dr. Murfin was awarded a generous 2014-2015 Enhancement Research Grant for work with Stevenson. adm034@shsu.edu

CARROLL FERGUSON NARDONE (PhD New Mexico State University), Associate Professor, teaches graduate classes in technical/professional writing and rhetoric. Professor Nardone’s ongoing archival project in early American scientific texts uses cultural and critical theories to analyze the means through which texts develop and transmit disciplinary knowledge. She has published in the areas of critical thinking and pedagogy; visual rhetoric; writing assessment across the disciplines; and hybrid writing practices. Dr. Nardone is also co-author of the textbook, *Technical Communication as Problem Solving*, and has presented scholarly work at numerous national and international conferences. Her current collaborative project with Dr. Tracy Bilsing theorizes the differences in physical and digital spaces as sites for the social construction of knowledge. Additionally, she directs the Writing in the Disciplines initiative at Sam Houston State University. cfnardone@shsu.edu

JASON PAYTON (PhD University of Maryland), Assistant Professor, joined the faculty at Sam Houston State University in 2013. His areas of scholarly interest include early American literature to 1865, Atlantic Studies, the history of piracy, and sea-fiction. He is currently at work on a book on the literatures of piracy in the early modern Atlantic world and has had his scholarship published in journals such as the *New England Quarterly* and *Early American Literature*. jmpayton@shsu.edu

DEBORAH PHELPS (PhD University of Delaware), Professor, specializes in 19th-century British writers and women’s literature, along with creative writing. She has published on Elizabeth Barrett Browning, issues of pedagogy and gender in technical writing, hiring and curriculum shifts in the profession, and women in academe. Professor Phelps is also the author of *Deep East*, a collection of poems that won the Small Poetry Press 2001 Select Poets Series chapbook award. A new chapbook, *Rodeo Perfume*, will appear in 2014. Her creative work has appeared in numerous journals and reviews, including *Southern Poetry Review, Gulf Coast, Plainsongs,* and *Louisiana Literature*. Professor Phelps has presented both scholarly papers and creative work at some twenty conferences. eng_dlp@shsu.edu
PAUL RUFFIN (PhD Center for Writers at the University of Southern Mississippi), Distinguished Professor and Sam Houston State University Writer in Residence, teaches fiction and poetry writing and the editing and publishing practicum at SHSU. Professor Ruffin, who founded and edits The Texas Review and directs Texas Review Press, has published over a hundred pieces of fiction, ninety essays, and a thousand poems. He is the author of two novels; four collections of familiar essays, the latest, Travels with George in Search of Ben Hur, released by the University of South Carolina Press in 2011; seven collections of poetry, the latest, Paul Ruffin: New and Selected Poems, released by TCU Press in 2010; and four collections of short fiction, the latest of which, Jésus dans le brouillard, was published by 13E Note Editions in French translation in Paris in 2012. His fifth collection of short stories, Living in a Christ-Haunted Land, was published by Louisiana Literature Press (Southeastern Louisiana University Press) in 2013. Professor Ruffin has also edited several anthologies and co-edited scholarly books on John Steinbeck and William Goyen. He writes a weekly column, “Ruffin-It,” which appears in the Huntsville Item and Conroe Courier Online, and he has done numerous feature stories, such as pieces on Katrina’s impact on the Mississippi Coast and New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward, drug trafficking along the Rio Grande, and high-profile executions. His work has been featured on National Public Radio, and he has read or conducted workshops on over a hundred university and college campuses in this country and in England. A past recipient of the Sam Houston State University Excellence in Research Award, Professor Ruffin was appointed by the State Legislature as Texas State Poet Laureate from 2009-2010. eng_pdr@shsu.edu

REUBEN SÁNCHEZ (PhD Cornell University), Senior Lecturer, has taught graduate courses in Milton, Donne, the metaphysical poets, 17-century poetry, Shakespeare, and children’s literature. He has taught at Fresno State, Texas A&M, New Mexico State, and other universities. His areas of expertise are 17-century literature, Milton, Shakespeare, children’s literature, and Latina/Latino literature. He has published Typology and Ikonography in Donne, Herbert, and Milton: Fashioning the Self after Jeremiah (Palgrave Macmillan), and Persona and Decorum in Milton’s Prose (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press). He has also published essays in Milton Studies, Explorations in Renaissance Culture, Studies in American Humor, Children’s Literature, and other journals. rxs031@shsu.edu

APRIL SHEMAK (PhD University of Maryland), Associate Professor, teaches graduate courses in postcolonial literature, Caribbean literature, and women’s literature. In addition to these areas, her teaching and research interests include U.S. ethnic literatures, feminist theory, and refugee discourses. She has published articles on such writers as Edwidge Danticat, Pauline Melville, and Cristina Garcia in Modern Fiction Studies, Textual Practice, and Postcolonial Text. Professor Shemak was a recipient of a Faculty Research Grant in 2006 and two Enhancement Grants for Professional Development, in 2007 and 2008. Her first book, Asylum Speakers: Caribbean Refugees and Testimonial Discourse, was published in December 2010 by Fordham University Press. This work examines the relationship between refugees and testimonial narratives in Caribbean literature and U.S. public discourse. Dr. Shemak is currently at work on a second book, which examines the cultural discourses surrounding humanitarianism in the Caribbean. Her
essay “Re-membering Hispaniola: Edwidge Danticat’s The Farming of Bones,” originally published in Modern Fiction Studies, was selected for inclusion in the volume Postcolonial Literary Studies: the First Thirty Years (Johns Hopkins University Press). She also recently published an essay in the MLA volume Teaching Anglophone Caribbean Literature. She is currently an associate editor of the forthcoming Blackwell Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies. In addition to her PhD, Dr. Shemak holds a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies. aas004@shsu.edu

KANDI TAYEBI (PhD University of Denver), Professor, teaches graduate classes in literary theory and 19th-century British literature. An authority on the Romantic poet Charlotte Smith, Professor Tayebi has written and published articles on an array of literary and pedagogical topics, including Smith, Margaret Atwood, environmental literature, computers in the classroom, and assessment methods for students with disabilities; she has also published creative non-fiction in The Georgia Review. She has presented some thirty papers at regional, national, and international scholarly conferences and has received over $4,000,000 in federal grants. Professor Tayebi, whose research interests include not only her teaching fields but also women’s and ecological literature, was the feature editor for a volume of the Academic Exchange Quarterly on teaching environmental literature. She formerly directed the Graduate Studies Program in English and was Chair of the Sam Houston State University Faculty Senate. After serving as Associate Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Tayebi served as Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs from Fall 2009 to Summer 2015. eng_kat@shsu.edu

LINDA WEBSTER (PhD Texas A & M University), Professor, teaches graduate courses in women’s, multicultural, and 20th-21st-century American literatures. A specialist in modern Southern women writers, with particular interests in feminist spirituality, Professor Webster has published extensively and presented numerous scholarly papers on the contemporary novelist Lee Smith, with whom she is closely acquainted. Her book on Smith, Dancing in the Flames: Spiritual Journey in the Novels of Lee Smith, was published by McFarland in 2009. Professor Webster has also published articles on Kate Chopin and Mark Twain and has presented conference papers on such writers as Steinbeck, Woolf, and Hurston. Her personal interview with Lee Smith appears in the Fall 2009 issue of The Southern Quarterly, and a chapter on Smith will appear in the forthcoming collection Writers of the Rough South, (University Press of Mississippi). lindawebster@shsu.edu
GENE YOUNG (PhD University of Tennessee), Professor of English, Dean of the Elliott T. Bowers Honors College, teaches graduate courses in early, 19th-century, and 20th-century American literature. He has scholarly and pedagogical interests in literature of the American Southwest and the fiction of Cormac McCarthy. A past editor of the *CEA Critic* and the *CEA Forum*, Professor Young has published scholarly articles on William Faulkner, Cormac McCarthy, American folklore, technical writing, and rhetoric and composition and has presented numerous papers at national, state, and regional academic conferences. Formerly Chair of the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Sam Houston State University and, before that, of the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Philosophy at Morehead State University, Dr. Young has also served as President of the American Studies Association of Texas, President of the Texas Association of Departments of English, and a member of the Board of Directors of the College English Association. For the past several years, he has served on various national and statewide committees and task forces examining testing and curriculum standards in secondary and post-secondary education. eng_eoy@shsu.edu

ABBEY ZINK (PhD Northern Illinois University), Professor of English and Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, teaches graduate classes in late 19th- and early 20th-century American literature. alz007@shsu.edu
# Our Current Graduate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jonathan Antonini</th>
<th>Lindsay Gray</th>
<th>Jennifer Parker</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nadia Arensdorf</td>
<td>Cody Harrison</td>
<td>Deseree Probasco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Austin</td>
<td>Mike Hilbig</td>
<td>Kimberlee Rayl</td>
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<td>Timothy Bardin</td>
<td>Nancy Hill</td>
<td>Brianna Reeves</td>
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<td>Nathan Bitgood</td>
<td>Gary Horton</td>
<td>John Roane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Brackin</td>
<td>Julian Kindred</td>
<td>Stephanie Rodriguez</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Brega</td>
<td>Allyson Korinsky</td>
<td>Bridget Schabron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reina Shay Broussard</td>
<td>Santiago Lopez</td>
<td>Jennifer Seay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kari Lee Bush</td>
<td>Daniel Martinez</td>
<td>Catherine Smith-Cox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Savanna Conner</td>
<td>James Maze</td>
<td>Leah Stevenson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah Dietrich</td>
<td>Vincent Mennella</td>
<td>Klaudie Stone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keely Disman</td>
<td>Shadow Meritt</td>
<td>Brandon Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ericca Douglas</td>
<td>Daniel Millet</td>
<td>Joshua Vance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Evans</td>
<td>Adam Morris</td>
<td>April Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donna Finney</td>
<td>Bradley Nichols</td>
<td>Savannah Woodworth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Devin Gott</td>
<td>Kira Olson</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IMPORTANT CONTACTS

INTERIM CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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Sam Houston State University  
Box 2146  
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Home phone: 281-298-1992
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GraduateEnglish@shsu.edu

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Office phone: 936-294-1404
E-mail address: jrn006@shsu.edu

STAFF ASSOCIATE, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Weston Rose

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E-mail address: wlr001@shsu.edu
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Brittany Johnson
Office phone: 936-294-2201
E-mail address: blj019@shsu.edu

COUNSELOR FOR GRADUATE STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

Pennie Stanley
Office phone: 936-294-1774
E-mail address: fao.stanley@shsu.edu

GRADUATE REGISTRAR

Karen Carr
Office phone: 936-294-1033
E-mail address: reg_kdc@shsu.edu

NEWTON GRESHAM LIBRARY

Circulation Desk 936-294-1618
Interlibrary Loan Office 936-294-1616

COMPUTER SERVICES

Help Desk 936-294-1950
THE WOODLANDS CENTER

GENERAL:

The Woodlands Center (TWC), which opened in Summer 2012, is a state-of-the-art classroom and office building located on Needham Road (Route 242), The Woodlands. The Department of English offers both graduate and upper-division undergraduate courses at this facility. TWC serves especially graduate students who live in The Woodlands-North Houston area, so it is ideal for teachers employed in Harris and Montgomery Counties.

A graduate student should be able to complete the MA degree at TWC. But there are a couple of qualifications: (1) Because faculty resources allow us to offer only two or three classes every semester at TWC, students who take classes exclusively at this facility should expect a longer time to earn the degree. (2) Graduate assistants must still take ENGL 5367 (Practicum in Teaching College Composition), and assistants and interns still perform assigned duties on the Huntsville campus.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO USE THE WOODLANDS CENTER:

1. Be flexible. Keep open the possibility of a course on campus every once in a while.

2. Be willing to travel to use physical resources beyond TWC: the Newton Gresham Library (NGL) and other area university libraries. Apply for a TexShare card, which gives you library privileges in most other state-supported institutions. See the NGL web site for further information.

3. Make use of special library distance learning services that are available to you as a student taking classes at TWC. The NGL Interlibrary Loan service is superb; see the NGL web site for further information.

4. Make use of the expertise of Tyler Manolovitz, Information Resource Specialist at TWC. Because Mr. Manolovitz has been a graduate student in English, he understands your particular information needs better than most resource specialists. You may e-mail him at tyler@shsu.edu

5. Be willing to travel to campus occasionally to use human resources.
FINANCIAL AID PACKAGES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:

Financial aid packages routinely awarded to graduate students at Sam Houston State University by the Financial Aid Office include the Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG), Texas Work-Study (TWS) and/or Federal Work Study (FWS), the Perkins Loan, and the Stafford Loan (GSL). The Financial Aid Office does not award tuition-waivers, grant-in-aid funds, or scholarships, although other funding organizations and the University itself may make such awards. However, the Aid Office does consider any such aid when it makes an award of the kind listed above, in order to determine if it should appropriately reduce the financial aid offer, usually a loan or work-study package, to stay within the student’s need and/or the established estimated Cost of Attendance (COA).
ELIGIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL AID:

To qualify for financial aid of the kind listed above, the student must be accepted in regular admission status in an eligible graduate program leading toward a degree. Most aid packages require that the student be enrolled full time.

FINANCIAL AID FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS:

A graduate assistant may apply for financial aid, like any other graduate student at Sam Houston State University. The graduate assistant is a University employee paid by the Payroll Office, like any other student employee. The assistant’s stipend is considered income.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL AID:

Visit the Financial Aid Office web site.

Or call the Aid Office at 936-294-1774 (Toll Free: 1-866-BEARKAT).

The Counselor for Graduate Student Aid is Pennie Stanley; you may contact her with questions at fao.stanley@shsu.edu
GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES SPECIAL GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP:

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences awards competitive graduate student scholarships based on GRE scores and GPA. A qualified student must submit a scholarship application (available online) and supply all supporting documentation, including transcripts and two letters of recommendation. The student must apply anew every term, by the CHSS deadline.

For application deadlines and a link to the scholarship application form, see the CHSS scholarship web page.

For more information about the CHSS scholarship, contact Ms. Christine Reeder, Administrative Coordinator in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, by either phone (936-294-2206) or e-mail (creeder@shsu.edu).
THE DONALD STALLING SCHOLARSHIP:

This scholarship, named for a former Chair of the Department of English, is reserved for superior English MA graduate students. Because the scholarship fund depends upon private donations, it is available at irregular intervals. Consult the Director of Graduate Studies in English or the Graduate Secretary for further information.

OTHER GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS:

For more information about scholarships available to graduate students in English, see the Financial Aid Office scholarship page.

SCHOLARX APPLICATION:

The ScholarX Program automatically matches students with scholarships for which they qualify. By filling out a single on-line application, the student files for all available scholarships on campus, some of which she or he may not have known about previously. For information about the ScholarX Program and a link to the application form, see the Financial Aid Office scholarship page.
The Department of English offers graduate assistantships for qualified students. The graduate assistant is awarded a $9,800 stipend for an academic year (two long terms) and qualifies for state health benefits. The typical assistantship is renewable for a total of four long terms (although a student may apply for a fifth semester). The graduate assistant usually works twenty hours a week.

A graduate assistant will be assigned to one (or more) of the following positions each semester, depending on need and available openings. The Chair of the Department of English makes all graduate assistant assignments.
TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP:

Teaching assistants typically work their way up the rungs of remedial reading-writing and freshman English courses:

INRW 0301 (INTEGRATED READING AND WRITING):
The teaching assistant remediates incoming undergraduates who have not met the TSI Assessment Test minimums for reading and writing. This course focuses on developing the students’ reading comprehension and analytical skills and their ability to write for particular audiences and rhetorical situations.

ENGL 1301 (COMPOSITION I)
After earning eighteen hours of graduate credit, as required by the University’s accrediting body, the teaching assistant may be assigned to a Composition I class, which concentrates on formulating and developing a single thesis through an essay and on English syntax, diction, and rhetoric.

ENGL 1302 (COMPOSITION II)
Some teaching assistants are given the opportunity to teach Composition II, which picks up with the basic skills mastered in English 1301 but helps the students in the course develop more complex modes or patterns of writing. It also concentrates on research writing across the disciplines.

WRITING CENTER TUTOR:

The Sam Houston State University Writing Center, to which a number of graduate assistants are assigned as tutors, offers help in writing to students, staff, faculty, and members of the community. After training, Writing Center assistants typically work twenty hours a week, usually one-on-one with freshman and sophomore students who need help in planning and writing essays for classes across the disciplines in the core curriculum. But they may also give advice on writing résumés, lab reports, and job and scholarship application letters.

For further information about the Writing Center, contact Dr. Ann Theodori, Writing Center Director: anntheodori@shsu.edu
TEXAS REVIEW PRESS ASSISTANTSHIP:*

Some graduate assistants serve part-time editorial assistantships in the office of Texas Review Press, where they gain valuable professional experience in the day-to-day editing and publishing work of a university press.

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP:

Depending upon need, some qualified graduate assistants serve as research assistants to faculty engaged in scholarly projects.

QUALIFYING FOR THE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP:

The applicant for a graduate assistantship must

- be a student accepted in regular admission status;
- present GRE verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning scores that meet the Department’s standards;* and
- submit the application for assistant instructor form

To avoid duplication of academic credit and employment tasks for students who hold assistantships at Texas Review Press and are simultaneously taking ENGL 5333, the professor assigned to teach ENGL 5333 will submit for review by the Chair of the Department of English and the Director of Graduate Studies in English at least one month in advance a syllabus for the course, with detailed weekly assignments. The syllabus for the internship course must show that class tasks and requirements do not overlap with the salaried tasks that Texas Review Press assistants will be performing during the same semester.

* To qualify for a graduate assistantship, the applicant must present scores that translate to a minimum 1,000 combined verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning sections on the scoring table in place before Summer 2011. The minimum combination would be a verbal reasoning score of at least 153 (the equivalent of 500 on the pre-2011 table) and a quantitative reasoning score of at least 144 (the equivalent of 500 on the pre-2011 table). Although an applicant who holds a Master’s degree in another discipline from an accredited academic institution may appeal for a GRE waiver for purposes of admission, she or he must present GRE scores to qualify for the graduate assistantship, even if those scores are expired, and must meet the 1,000 combined score required for the assistantship.
APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR THE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM OF APPOINTMENT</th>
<th>APPLICATION DEADLINE</th>
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<td>Fall</td>
<td>May 15</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
<td>November 1</td>
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</table>

Submit the application for assistant instructor form to the following address:

Todd Marsh, Graduate Secretary  
Department of English  
Sam Houston State University  
Box 2146  
Huntsville TX 77341-2146

TEACHING PRACTICUM:

All graduate assistants take ENGL 5367 (Practicum in Teaching College Composition) during their first fall term. This course guides students through practical and theoretical issues of English pedagogy.

ENGL 5367 may be taken as either a Block II class or an elective.

A student need not be a graduate assistant to enroll in the class.

♥ Graduate assistantships are not available during the summer.
STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS:

As employees of Sam Houston State University and the State of Texas and as representatives of the Department of English, graduate assistants must comply with the rules of professional conduct and ethical behavior to which all other faculty and staff are bound, including FERPA and Title IX regulations.

While the Chair of the Department of English and the immediate supervisors of graduate assistants try to make reasonable accommodations for GAs, graduate assistants are employees who, like all other English faculty and staff, must comply with assignment schedules.

GROUND FOR DISMISSAL:

Gross violation of University policy, criminal violation of Texas state and United States federal laws, and failure to comply with workload expectations will result in dismissal from the graduate assistantship, either by non-renewal of the assistantship appointment at the end of an academic year, termination at the end of a long semester, or immediate dismissal. Dismissible offenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Clear violations of ethical conduct, including violations of confidentiality
- Excessive absences, which prevent the graduate assistant from fulfilling teaching duties, tutoring obligations, and editorial and research assignments
- Continued failure to make clear distinctions between professional duties and personal concerns/obligations
- Unwillingness and/or failure to respond to supervision or remediation
- Misrepresentation of credentials
- Conviction for academic dishonesty in classwork
- Failure to maintain academic good standing
STUDENT EMPLOYEE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA) OBLIGATIONS:

As employees of Sam Houston State University, English graduate assistants must observe all regulations mandated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. For more information about this act, see the following link: FERPA.

Security and confidentiality are matters of concern to all offices and all persons who have access to office facilities. The Office of the Registrar is the official repository for student academic records, folders, and other files for Sam Houston State University. As a student employer, many offices are able to extend job opportunities and work experience to supplement students’ finances and education. In so doing, the student employee is placed in a unique position of trust since a major responsibility of offices is the security and confidentiality of student records and files. Since conduct either on or off the job could affect or threaten the security and confidentiality of this information, each student employee is expected to adhere to the following:

- No one may make or permit unauthorized use of any information in files maintained, stored, or processed by the office in which they are employed.
- No one is permitted to seek personal benefit or to allow others to benefit personally by knowledge of any confidential information which has come to them by virtue of their work assignment.
- No one is to exhibit or divulge the contents of any record or report to any person except in the conduct of their work assignment and in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- No one may knowingly include, or cause to be included, in any record or report a false, inaccurate, or misleading entry. No one may knowingly expunge, or cause to be expunged, in any record or report a data entry.
- No official record or report, or copy thereof, may be removed from the office where it is maintained except in the performance of a person’s duties.
- No one is to aid, abet, or act in conspiracy with another to violate any part of this code.
- Any knowledge of a violation must be immediately reported to the person’s supervisor.

TITLE IX OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972:

All employees of Sam Houston State University, including graduate assistants (assistant instructors), must comply with Title IX. For more information and fuller definition of this law, see Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972.
The requirements for different kinds of writing assignments in different kinds of graduate classes will vary. But the following general guidelines may help give you some idea of the expectations for researching and writing at the graduate level:
UNDERGRADUATE CRITICAL WRITING VS. GRADUATE CRITICAL WRITING:

A good undergraduate critical essay will satisfy the following criteria:

- It will demonstrate a clear sense of purpose.
- It will define and defend an argument and not merely summarize a text or retell a plot. In writing about literature and language, one demonstrates (rather than merely asserts) the points being made by citing and then drawing significant conclusions about evidence from the text.
- It will have focused, cohesive paragraphs that progressively develop one central focus for the essay that has been made clear to the reader at the outset of the paper.
- It must use mechanically sound sentences and correct expression.
- It must use MLA conventions for citation, bibliography, and manuscript form properly.

Graduate-level critical writing presupposes these same virtues, of course, but it will satisfy professional expectations as well:

- It will make some attempt to situate the argument within relevant criticism on the subject; that is, it should engage the critical debate over the works and ideas.
- It will use authoritative secondary sources to do so.
- It will answer, typically in the introduction or conclusion (or both), the questions, “So what? So why is this argument significant? What does it offer to the critical debate over the subject?”

ENGAGING THE CRITICAL DEBATE:

Discussing literary, linguistic, aesthetic, and pedagogical issues means that you are engaging a debate with others who are also interested in your topic. Some of the people who are carrying on the current critical argument about a work or author or about features of language and creative techniques have been at it a long time; they are, understandably, better-versed in the topic than you. If you are to establish credibility with your reading audience (and without credibility, you can never convince that audience to accept your critical argument), you need to listen carefully at first to what the debaters are saying. You need to demonstrate that you understand the important issues at hand and, importantly, the critical idiom that the debaters use in talking about these issues. Only then should you yourself enter into the critical argument.
A graduate professor does not necessarily expect that you have the expertise of a scholar who has been studying and debating about a work or author for half a century, but she or he certainly expects that you show an intelligent awareness of some of the important issues and arguments informing your topic. Enlightening yourself about the critical debate helps you in refining your own thinking—and provokes you to say more.

Because of the greater expectations for your participation in a critical debate about a work or author, you can expect to spend hours, days, weeks in the library. But certainly you love books and ideas, or you wouldn’t be pursuing an MA in English, would you?

**USING APPROPRIATE SECONDARY SOURCES:**

When you undertake a project requiring research, avoid using “sophomoric” sources intended for...sophomores. Use standard bibliographic tools like the MLA International Bibliography to identify relatively current secondary sources. As a rule, avoid secondary sources on the Internet, except for bibliographic purposes.

Don’t shy away from difficult critical articles and books. When it comes to citing sources and using them to inform your argument for an essay, aim *high*.

Always be meticulous in making your citations and bibliographic information correct.

**INTRODUCTIONS AND THE BIG “SO WHAT?”**

A graduate essay should be able to fulfill a clearly stated purpose: What do you plan to *show* your reader about the text, the author, or the cultural contexts? Be able to say in your introduction what is at stake in your essay—*why* someone should want to read it. A good introduction to an argumentative essay is often crafted last, after the author has written a full draft and finally discovered exactly what she or he wants to argue—not “kind of” or “sort of,” but *exactly*; we usually discover our true thesis in an argument as we write our way into it.

Look at some articles from creditable journals and see how they build their introductions. Very often the author will proceed in this fashion: defining the subject, stating the reigning critical opinion(s) on that subject, and then proposing what will be shown to the reader and how it differs from, or augments, current critical opinion. Not a bad model.
Whether you are working toward the terminal MA at Sam Houston State University or contemplating PhD or MFA work, consider sharing your ideas and writings at any one of hundreds of scholarly or creative writing conferences around the region, country, or world. In so doing, you make a place for yourself in the larger academic and creative communities.

WHAT TYPES OF CONFERENCES ARE OUT THERE?

Conferences, typically hosted by professional scholarly and creative organizations, come in all types. There are huge annual gatherings like those hosted by the Modern Language Association (MLA), the Popular Culture Association (PCA), and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

There are also international, national, and regional conferences held annually by organizations devoted to scholarship in certain academic areas: the American Literature Association (ALA), the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR), and the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS), to name a very few.

There are conferences for rhetoricians and creative writers like those presented by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). Some conferences cater to specific theoretical interests. And there are some conferences exclusively for graduate students.
HOW DO I FIND OUT ABOUT THESE CONFERENCES?

You can find out about the international and national societies, their regional affiliates, and the conferences that they host by several means:

- Ask a graduate faculty member who is an area specialist.
- Go to an Internet site like the Scholarly Societies Project, which tries to keep tabs on all such organizations (an unenviable mission).
- Go to an Internet site that lists academic resources; Jack Lynch at Rutgers has a good one.
- Subscribe to a “Call for Papers [CFP] Mailing List.” The most extensive one is that from the University of Pennsylvania.

THE PAPER PROPOSAL:

You will almost always have to submit a proposal for a conference paper or creative reading. This will be judged against others for the same presentation panel by a moderator or conference board. For papers presented at regional conferences, the deadline for submitting presentation proposals usually falls in the previous season. For big national or international conferences, the proposal deadlines often come a year before the presentations; participation in such conferences is much more competitive.

If you come across an enticing call for paper proposals for a particular session at a particular conference, consider first exactly what the invitation calls for. If you think that you have a paper or an idea that fits the bill, send in a proposal.

A call for papers invites proposals, usually with a word limit (typically between 250 and 500 words). The proposal is an abstract of the paper that succinctly sums up the main points, making clear how the paper suits the panel. In the abstract, you should show the importance of your topic to the interest of the panel specifically and perhaps the conference generally; indicate the methods by which you will approach your topic; and make clear your thesis and, in a general way, your line of development for that thesis. The idea is to sell the proposal—so well that it cannot be turned down.

Here is a model proposal for a paper titled “Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ‘Wild Tales,’” provided by Dr. Julie Hall:
A little less than a year after Nathaniel Hawthorne assumed his post as American Consul to Liverpool, a position bestowed upon him by close personal friend and then-President of the U.S., Franklin Pierce, the celebrated author made the first of three weekend tours into neighboring North Wales. First with his young British friend, Henry Bright, in late July 1854, and then some two months later with his family—wife Sophia, and children Una, Julian and Rose—Hawthorne saw the celebrated sites and landscapes of this ancient home of Druids, Britons, and Celts. Terming the visit with Bright a “delightful . . . little tour,” Hawthorne found the mountain scenery and sea vistas “picturesque,” while medieval castles like Beaumaris “quite [came] up to [his] idea of what an old castle should be.” Later, he would rhapsodize of Conway Castle that “nothing ever can have been so perfect in its own style, and for its own purposes, when it was first built; and now nothing else can be perfect as a picture of ivy-grown, peaceful ruin” (The English Notebooks, 102, 99,121). Indeed, Sophia Hawthorne noted to James Fields, as she edited Hawthorne’s journals for publication, that Nathaniel “was more enchanted with Conway than with any other ruin or place. . . . (CE XXI 737).

In sojourning in Wales, Hawthorne revealed himself alive, as ever, to the intellectual currents of the time, for Wales was increasingly of interest for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travelers and writers alike. Hawthorne’s beloved Samuel Johnson toured Wales in 1774; Thomas Pennant (an author, if not a text, with whom Hawthorne was familiar) published A Tour in Wales (1778-81); George Borrow brought out Wild Wales in 1863; and Thomas Gray, William Sotheby, and William Wordsworth all published works that made prominent literary use of Welsh tours and sites. For some of these writers, Wales—with its lingering vestiges of Celtic culture now vanished from other parts of the kingdom, its colonized status, and its history of fierce rebellion and resistance to imperial England—was both familiar and foreign, a part of, but still separate from the “mother country.” Indeed, as various scholars have pointed out, Wales and the Welsh often came to be, in British writings, the “cultural other”—primitive, alien, and exotic (English Romanticism and the Celtic World).

So it was, at least in part, for Nathaniel Hawthorne, who in his notebook writings characterizes Wales, the Welsh, and the language repeatedly as “wild,” thus transforming the country and its people into the cultural opposite of the civilized world. But Hawthorne also occupied a different relationship to Wales, as an American, than did these Englishmen, albeit he was an American strongly aware of his ancestral English lineage and heritage, drawn to English cultural traditions, and making England, at the time, his temporary home. This paper will examine Hawthorne’s complex cultural interactions with, responses to, and inscription of “wild Wales” in his English Journals (English Romanticism and the Celtic World, ed. Gerard Carruthers, 1).
PRESENTING THE PAPER:

At the risk of putting the caboose before the engine, you will certainly be able to write a better paper if you can anticipate the circumstances under which you’ll read it. Assuming now that your paper proposal has already been accepted, consider some of the following features of the presentation: presentation formats, your audience, and questions and responses.

PRESENTATION FORMATS:

Consider any restrictions imposed by the makeup of the panel and the structure of the session. Guidelines about the length of a paper are usually determined by the number of readers on a panel, typically three or four for an hour-and-a-half session, more rarely five. For the standard three-person panel, each reader has approximately twenty minutes, with another twenty minutes or so for discussion among the panelists or questions from the floor. Make sure that your paper or creative work is manageable within the allotted time—and be respectful of the time allotted for the others on the panel. Most readers find that they have to cut sections of their paper—often, alas, the fun, anecdotal sections—to make the time limit. An eight-ten page, double-spaced paper is usually about right. But you should practice reading it a number of times, with a watch in hand. There are variations on the time allotment. At some conferences, each panelist has ten minutes to summarize her or his research findings. The summaries are followed by forty-five minutes of open discussion among panelists and audience.

The usual format for presentation is to read the paper verbatim, although the better you know your subject and the more you practice reading the paper, the better that you can speak the paper rather than merely reading it woodenly.
THE AUDIENCE:

The reading audience usually comprises reasonably well-educated individuals, most of them scholars and creative writers like yourself, who most likely have some interest, broad or narrow, in the panel topic.

First, while the audience usually have the benefit of a conference program and a responsible panel chair’s introductory remarks, make sure that they know who you are and what you are talking about. Don’t take for granted that they know the subject of your paper or the swirling critical controversy that inspired it as well as you do. Provide useful—but brief—contexts, as necessary. But in doing so, don’t condescend to your audience; these are bright, well-read people, most of them seasoned scholars and teachers. If you rely overmuch on plot summary, for example, you risk being labeled as naive and superficial.

In addressing your audience, the expected personal and verbal skills appropriate to a speaking presentation before one’s peers hold: appropriate dress, good eye contact, absolutely clear enunciation, and rhetorical decorum: Never insult a fellow panelist or member of the audience.

While the usual presentation format is a reading of the paper, knowing the paper very well will allow you to look up every once in a while and engage your audience; perhaps even make an aside or two, so that you’re speaking the paper rather than reading it. Given the sometimes grim circumstances of an academic conference, consider the entertainment value of a good—but appropriate—anecdote or two. The problem is that including such anecdotes is something of a balancing act, since the kinds of asides that might make a paper more entertaining also cut into the precious little time that you usually have for delivering it.

Consider that your audience has a single chance to get your argument. While you do not want to seem simple, keep in mind that the complexity of that argument and the level of language that you use should correspond to the expectations and abilities of your listeners. If you plan to read any quotations—but particularly any that go on for several lines—provide a handout for the audience so that they have something concrete in their hands.
QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES:

Be prepared for questions. Unfortunately, this is the part of the presentation over which you have least control, especially when questioners sometimes have their own agenda in asking the questions; sometimes they are really making statements.

On rare occasions, some audience members challenge with an edge; at a recent conference session, for example, an Englishman in the audience took the American chair of the panel to task for his “barbarous” pronunciation of some English names. Usually, however, audience members ask responsible questions and engage in meaningful discussion, in the spirit of scholarly debate. The best way to prepare for questions from these individuals—the ones who really count—is to know your topic very well, of course, and, as you write, to think through the implications of your subject matter and the thesis, especially as your educated and well-read audience will receive it.

Try to be as polite and succinct in your responses as you can, answering the questions asked and not those hoped for or imagined. And keep in mind the constructive value of good questions and the ensuing discussion, both of which will help you refine your own argument, especially if you are thinking about preparing your paper for publication.
TRAVEL ASSISTANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

To help students defray expenses incurred in participating in professional scholarly and creative conferences and other such activities, the Department of English is sometimes able to offer small travel subsidies.

In asking for assistance with travel to a conference, the student must (1) provide evidence that her or his paper has been accepted at the meeting; (2) submit a formal request for travel assistance to the Chair of the Department of English; (3) observe all University requirements concerning travel, primarily the filing of a travel request form (available from the Graduate Secretary) with the University Travel Office.

N.B.: In order to qualify for travel assistance, the student must apply at least one-and-a-half months in advance and preferably at the beginning of the academic year, when travel funds are allocated.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Department of English demands that graduate students abide by all professional and University standards of academic honesty. Violations of academic honesty include (but are not limited to) plagiarizing, cheating on examinations, falsifying credentials, and misappropriating or misrepresenting resource materials. A student convicted of such academic dishonesty may face failure of a class, dismissal from the English graduate program, and expulsion from the University.

For policies governing academic honesty, see the Student Guidelines; the University’s Academic Policy Statement 810213, “Procedures in Cases of Academic Dishonesty”; and The Texas State University Board of Regents’ Policy Statement, “Academic Honesty.”

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism may seem like a topic that we need not discuss among graduate students, but because of the type of scholarly and critical work that you do in graduate school, the discussion may, in fact, be all the more important.

You must be aware of both the definitions and penalties associated with academic dishonesty at Sam Houston State University. The University policy is available in the Student Guidelines under “Dean of Students’ Policies.”

What, then, is plagiarism?
The word comes from the Latin term for plundering or kidnapping, and plagiarism is any unacknowledged appropriation of another’s ideas or language. It can range from premeditated, calculated academic theft to simple lack of skill in presenting information. And thus the penalties range widely also, from a patient tutorial session and a request that one rewrite the offending passage or paper all the way up to the abrupt and ignominious termination of a graduate career.

The problem for you is that because graduate-level researching and writing demand deep immersion in the secondary sources that contribute to the critical conversation swirling around a work or author, there are more opportunities for inadvertent error and sloppy transcription—and more temptations for downright literary theft.

Be wary, then, of the thorny brakes and brambles of using secondary sources. Here, for example, are five ways that one can plagiarize (and this is not a “how-to”—it’s a “what to avoid”):

- word-for-word continuous copying of a source without quotation marks or mention of the author’s name;
- copying of many words or phrases without reference or quotation marks;
- copying of an occasional key word or phrase without acknowledging the author or using quotations marks;
- paraphrasing without mentioning the author’s name;
- taking an author’s ideas without acknowledging the source.

Unintentional plagiarism—is plagiarism nonetheless. And a bad paraphrase constitutes that very kind of plagiarism: When you a paraphrase while taking notes from a secondary article or book, you must be careful to avoid using the author’s wording inadvertently. Merely changing an occasional word, perhaps with the aid of your trusty thesaurus, or reversing the order of phrases or sentences does not constitute an adequate paraphrase.

Here is an example of an original source, in this case a passage from the famous Lionel Trilling about the famous “flawed” ending of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:

In form and style *Huckleberry Finn* is an almost perfect work. Only one mistake has ever been charged against it, that it concludes with Tom Sawyer’s elaborate, too elaborate game of Jim’s escape. Certainly this episode is too long—in the original draft it was much longer—and certainly it is a falling-off, as almost anything would have to be, from the incidents of the river.

“The Greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*”
Here is a student paraphrase, taken from an undergraduate term paper (and therefore perhaps more obvious for our purposes):

Lionel Trilling says that in structure and style *Huckleberry Finn* is an almost perfect novel. Only one flaw has ever been directed against it, that it ends with Tom Sawyer’s elaborate game of Jim’s escape. This conclusion is too long and is certainly a letdown after the events of the river journey.

Ginger Vitus

We should give the student some credit at the outset: She clearly announces Trilling’s name, so there is apparently no *deliberate* attempt to deceive. But this is obviously a poor paraphrase because it follows both the structure and the wording of the original too closely. This—let’s be charitable and call it lack of skill—constitutes plagiarism.

In order to avoid this kind of bad paraphrase, you may find it a good discipline to follow a time-honored method and paraphrase what you have read without looking at the source. After writing the paraphrase, look back at the original and make a critical comparison, checking for duplication of wording and accuracy in statement of the ideas. If you find that you have used more than two consecutive words from the original (with the exception of articles and prepositions), place them in quotation marks.

The formal way in which you bring sources into a paper may also pose threats of plagiarism, if you do not carefully distinguish between your own ideas and wording and those of the original. Often the problem is simply a mechanical one. If you are not already familiar with methods for citing sources in a paper—and we should not, perhaps, take anything for granted—your *English 5330* course should take you systematically through the process and form prescribed by the *MLA Handbook*. If you do not yet own a copy of the latest edition of this handbook, buy one forthwith:


Gibaldi devotes his entire second chapter to a discussion of plagiarism and academic integrity, in much greater detail and with much clearer and more forceful articulation than we can offer here. Read it carefully.
GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

The graduate faculty are usually happy to write recommendation letters for qualified students who are applying for further schooling, employment, scholarships, and grants. A few guidelines, however:

1. We cannot fairly serve as referees for you without proper acquaintance: Before asking for a recommendation letter, you must have completed a course with the faculty member and have earned a grade of at least a B or have been acquainted with the individual in some other capacity for at least a full semester (for example, as an intern or graduate assistant). (The exception: First-term students who are applying for the CHSS graduate student scholarship are required to have a letter from the Director of Graduate Studies in English; feel free to ask.)

2. Give the professor at least a few weeks and preferably more time to complete the letter. Often faculty are working under pressures of class or professional deadlines, so it is not possible for them to get letters out at the last minute. Plan your applications well in advance.

3. Make the request formally, letting the professor know very clearly what you are applying for (a particular scholarship or a particular field of study at a particular institution). Make the request each time that you need a letter; professors may be annoyed if a link to an on-line recommendation form shows up without warning. Provide the name, title, and address of the contact to whom the faculty member should send the letter. If you are applying for academic programs, supply the recommender with pre-addressed and pre-posted envelopes.

4. If the institution or organization to which you are applying requires a cover sheet, please get that to the recommender in due time. As a matter of form, sign the waiver that insures confidentiality. If the faculty member agrees to write you a letter, it will most likely be a good one, so you need not worry about his or her sabotaging your application with a damaging or less-than-enthusiastic recommendation. However, if you do not sign the confidentiality waiver, those on the receiving end might suspect that the referee has been less than honest.

5. Give your recommender a current curriculum vitae (note the spelling of that document) or, at least, a list of accomplishments and interests, especially those that suit you well for the job, scholarship, or educational program for which you are applying.

6. Acknowledge receipt of the letter: That is, thank the faculty member for the recommendation.
The Sam Houston State University English MA Program proudly celebrates the accomplishments of its recent graduates, who have gone on to doctoral and MFA programs, professorships, law degrees, and corporate management and communications positions. Their scholarly and creative work appears in national and international publications.

We are also proud of our many MA graduates who teach in local two-year colleges and public and private high schools.

Travis Franks (MA 2012)  PhD Student, Arizona State University
Timothy Ponce (MA 2012)  PhD Student, University of North Texas
Tyler Segura (MA 2012)  PhD Student, Drexel University
William Tunningley (MA 2012)  PhD Student, Oklahoma State University
Heather Brown (MA 2011)  PhD Student, Irish Literature, Kent State University
Rachel Bryant (MA 2011)  PhD Student, English, University of New Brunswick
Christopher McCracken (MA 2011)  PhD Student, Rhetoric and Writing, Kent State University
Timothy Regetz (MA 2010)  PhD Student, Medieval Studies, University of North Texas
Allison Sigler (MA 2010)  PhD Student, English as a Foreign Language, The Ohio State University
Brandon Strubberg (MA 2010)  PhD Student, Technical Communication and Rhetoric, Texas Tech University
Robert Uren (MA 2010)  MFA Student, Virginia Polytechnic University
Dana Allen (MA 2009)  Communications Manager, Girls Scouts of Northern California
Valerie Bell (MA 2009)  MA (2011), Speech Pathology and Audiology, South Carolina State University
Regina Bouley (MA 2009)  MLS Student, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis
Brandon Cooper (MA 2009)  PhD Student, Sociolinguistics, University of South Carolina
Bernadette Russo (MA 2009)  PhD Student, English, Texas Tech University
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Josh Bowen (MA 2008)</td>
<td>MFA (2012), Creative Writing-Fiction, New Mexico State University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jose de la Garza (MA 2008)</td>
<td>PhD Student, English, Miami University of Ohio</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Melanie Sweeney-Bowen (MA 2008)</td>
<td>MFA (2012), Creative Writing-Fiction, New Mexico State University</td>
<td>PhD Student, Creative Writing and Literature, University of Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Nelson (MA 2007)</td>
<td>PhD Student, English, Rice University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zach Vande Zande (MA 2007)</td>
<td>PhD Student, Creative Fiction, University of North Texas</td>
<td>Production Editor, <em>American Literary Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine Echols (MA 2006)</td>
<td>PhD Student, English, University of Houston</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances Crawford Fennessy (MA 2006)</td>
<td>PhD Student, Composition and TESOL, Indiana University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>Chair, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Director of ESOL, Odessa College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Urania Fung (MA 2006)  
MFA (2009), Creative Writing, Texas State University at San Marcos  
Assistant Professor, Tarrant County College Northeast  

Publications:  

Kimberly McCullough (MA 2006)  
Quality Improvement Specialist, The Copernicus Group, IRB

Michelle Nichols (MA 2006)  
PhD (2010), Literature and Creative Writing, University of Southern Mississippi  

Selected Publications:  
“The Lament of the Fire Baton Twirler.” *Squid Quarterly* 18 Aug 2009. (Pushcart Prize Nominee)  

Matt Davis (MA 2005)  
PhD Student, American Literature, University of Oklahoma

Melinda Freeman (MA 2005)  
JD (2009), University of Maryland-Baltimore  
Associate, Law Office of Ellen P. Rosenberg PA

Tamara Hill (MA 2005)  
Internal Communications Program Manager, Human Resources Division  
University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
Ryan Hoover (MA 2005) PhD (2009), Technical Communications and Rhetoric, Texas Tech University
Assistant Professor of English Writing and Rhetoric, St. Edward’s University

Publications:

Michelle Martinez (MA 2005) MLS (2007), University of North Texas
Assistant Professor of Library Science, Sam Houston State University

Ritu Raju (MA 2005) PhD (2010), Technical Communication and Rhetoric, Texas Tech University

Nate Roberts (MA 2005) PhD Student, English with Concentration in Religion and Literature, Baylor University

Gary Wilkens (MA 2005) PhD (2010), Literature and Creative Writing, University of Southern Mississippi
Assistant Professor, West Virginia University Institute of Technology

Selected Publication:

Steve Kaminczak (MA 2004) Assistant Director, University Writing Center, Texas A & M University

Will Wright (MA 2004) PhD (2009), Literature and Creative Writing, University of Southern Mississippi
Founding Editor, *Town Creek Poetry*
Coeditor, *The Southern Poetry Anthology*

Selected Publications:
*Dark Orchard* (Huntsville: Texas Review Press, 2006)
Paullett Golden (MA 2002)  
PhD (2005), English, Texas A & M University at Commerce

Tammy Walker (MA 2002)  
PhD (2007), Creative Writing, University of North Texas

David Sutton (MA 2001)  
PhD (2010), Rhetoric, Texas Woman’s University
CONSIDERING FURTHER GRADUATE STUDIES IN ENGLISH?

First, think about your reasons for further education. Naturally, you may wish to continue taking courses for sheer pleasure and self-improvement. If you are a lifelong learner, such classes provide the structure that your extracurricular reading may not have and the professorial expertise and guidance that only a university can.

If you are interested in pursuing a higher degree, however, you may consider applying to either a PhD program or, in the case of creative writers, an MFA or PhD program. These are *professional* programs, which require both great talent and great application. Do not consider them unless you have honestly assessed your abilities, your commitment to the profession, and your realistic chances for finding a position in a highly competitive field.

Your decision about, first, whether to pursue such an enterprise, and, second, what sort of program to apply to if you do must take into account several variables:

- What are your areas of academic or creative interest?
- What are your professional ambitions? Do you aspire, for example, to teach college English?
- In what area of the country (or world) would you like to go to school?
- What financial resources do you have for further education?
WHAT ARE YOUR ACADEMIC OR CREATIVE INTERESTS?

If you’re certain that you want to pursue a terminal degree in this discipline and already have a pretty clear idea of what academic or creative interests you would like to pursue in further graduate schooling, choose a school appropriately. Certain PhD- and MFA-granting institutions are traditionally renowned for various specialties: UC-Berkeley for critical theory, the University of Virginia for 18th-century studies, Duke University for American literature, the University of Wisconsin for 17th-century studies, the University of Iowa and the University of Houston for creative writing. These are but a few examples, and, as you can imagine, all such schools are highly competitive institutions.

How do you find out which graduate programs will suit your academic interests best? You can begin by polling members of the graduate English faculty. Most of them know something not only about the reputation of PhD institutions but also about the academic atmospheres at these schools and can give advice about which ones would be best for your own focuses and temperament.

You might go next to an online or print guide to graduate programs. As a way of beginning to research programs—and to get a better sense of the realities of the profession—have a look, for example, at the site provided by the ever-helpful people at CliffsNotes, “Know What to Expect in Graduate School.”

As you look into various potential schools, consider the following about each:

- What degrees does the institution offer?
- What specific steps does one take toward those degrees?
- What specific sequence of classes must one follow?
- What sorts of exams does the candidate have to take? Generalist? Specialist? Orals?
- What are the expectations for the dissertation?
- How many years does a degree typically take?
- What kinds of funding does the program offer?
- How does the program prepare its graduates for the job search?
WHAT ARE YOUR PROFESSIONAL AMBITIONS?

If you aspire to teach college English—certainly a noble goal—you should know that almost without exception these days, a full-time tenure-track teaching position in a four-year institution requires a PhD in a specialty field. You should also know that the job market for English PhDs has been gloomy for many years and continues to be so: These tenure-track positions are difficult to come by. So if you decide to pursue a PhD or an MFA in English with the intention of applying for academic jobs, here are some modest suggestions:

1. Be realistic: You may spend several more years hard at work and find it difficult to get the sort of academic position that you’ve idealized. So don’t idealize.

2. Be resilient: You may spend several more years hard at work and find it difficult to get the sort of academic position that you’ve idealized. So be prepared to overcome disappointments, assess your situation honestly and realistically, and persist. As Blake says, “If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.”

3. Be honest with yourself: The competition both for getting into a good PhD or MFA program and then for landing a tenure-track position is such that you cannot be mediocre. Assess your own abilities honestly: If you don’t have the intellectual goods, don’t pursue a terminal degree in this discipline.

4. Be disciplined and be self-sacrificing: Pursuing a PhD or MFA requires Mishima-like self-discipline that can come only if you are absolutely, virtually unselfconsciously devoted to the subject and the profession. It requires the self-sacrifice of an anchorite: For several years you will not sleep. You will live in a small boarding house room overlooking a used AMC lot. Your primary diet will be cans of tuna fish, Top Ramen noodles, and frozen bagels thawed in a toaster oven.

5. Be productive: See #4. Most prospective employers expect great scholarly and pedagogical promise in those whom they consider hiring. If you can walk out of graduate school with good publications in hand and evidence that you will sustain your research or creative pursuits through many years, you will make yourself more competitive. Take on hard and ambitious scholarly and creative tasks and accomplish them.
6. Be strategic: Given the keen competition for tenure-track positions, consider which school and what sort of academic specialty will give you the best chances for such employment. While you should certainly pursue an academic specialty that answers your heart’s desires, keep a practical eye on hiring trends for colleges and universities, to see what sorts of specialties may offer the best job opportunities. One way to do so is to subscribe to the Modern Language Association Job Information List (JIL), published four times annually, beginning in October.

Looking through job listings, you may see trends in hiring: What sorts of academic specialties do schools seem to be looking for continually? You may find, for example, that linguists or early American literature specialists are hard to come by; you may find that universities are increasingly looking for scholars and teachers with cross-disciplinary interests like a literature specialty and experience in computer-aided instruction; you may find that colleges are looking for individuals who can serve not only in the classroom but also in administrative positions.

Bearing in mind that hiring trends change over time, consider which academic specialty or specialties may serve you best in a search for a position in three to five years.

Given state budget constraints, consider also making yourself more marketable by picking up a second or third field. If your interests lie in 19th-century American literature, for example, you might pursue such a specialty but perhaps take some courses in secondary teaching methods or other field that seems to provide good job opportunities.

7. Continue to pick up valuable teaching and other professional experience that you can adapt to various potential positions.

8. Be flexible: Be willing to think beyond your horizons. Consider opportunities and future employment in places beyond your expectations, and consider how you can adapt your training and your interests to potential employers’ needs. But be reasonable: Hiring committees get downright angry when they see an application for a medieval literature position from an individual who wrote his dissertation on Don DeLillo.
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO STUDY?

Take any imperatives of place into consideration as you plan further graduate studies. If, for example, you are constrained by family duties or financial resources, you may have to go to a school nearby. The best of these is the University of Texas at Austin. But there are also Texas A&M University, the University of Houston, Texas Tech, and Rice University, all of which offer PhDs in literature, language, and writing disciplines.

For a list of graduate schools by state, see the directory at GradSchools.com. The site also features a map of graduate programs in Creative Writing.

WHAT FINANCIAL RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR FURTHER ACADEMIC STUDY?

As you make your decision, consider what financial resources you have. At an in-state school, of course, your tuition will be cheaper than at an institution in another state or country. But many schools offer graduate assistantships as teachers or research fellows, and you may find a good opportunity for supporting your further education with such an assistantship. Keep in mind that some schools, especially the better-known research institutions, will not offer aid the first year. Again, have a look at the various schools’ web sites for further information.

For more specific advice on funding, see the FinAid site “Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid.”
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGLISH MA\textsc{s}

The English MA Program is not a vocational school, of course, and it does not promise employment in any particular field for its graduates. Nonetheless, employers in all fields are always looking for bright individuals with initiative and superior critical thinking and writing abilities. Those who earn the MA in English from Sam Houston State University demonstrate that they have these skills. More specifically, an MA in English qualifies one for community college teaching; many of our graduates teach in local colleges like Lone Star and Blinn.

There are also possibilities in editing and publishing, especially for those who have had experience in these fields with internships at \textit{Texas Review Press}.

The MA in English helps to enrich those who teach in secondary schools as well. Many of our graduates are teachers in local public and private schools whose teaching vistas have opened up extensively because of their graduate studies.

If you are considering training in a profession like law or medicine, you’ll be pleased to hear that law schools and medical schools are always on the lookout for individuals with degrees in the humanities because such individuals not only can think critically and express themselves articulately but also typically have better interpersonal skills of the kind demanded of the legal and medical professions.

The U.S. Department of Labor publishes online a valuable \textit{Occupational Outlook Handbook}, which provides information about the training and education that certain jobs require, about potential earnings, and about expected employment prospects. This is extremely useful in helping you see how you might adapt the specific skills that you acquire in the Graduate English Program at Sam Houston State University to particular jobs.
FOR OUR GRADUATE ALUMNAE AND ALUMNI

As a way of serving our students best, we appeal to you for some help:

First, please allow us to keep in touch with you by letting us know where you are. Contact the Director of Graduate Studies in English (below) to update your information.

Second, please give us some idea of how the English MA is serving you. Let us know where you are working or going to school and in what ways, directly or indirectly, you are using your graduate education. This information will be invaluable for us as we continue to assess the English Graduate Program and improve it for future generations of students.

Contact the Director of Graduate Studies, Dr. Paul Child, by any of the following means:

Mail:

   Department of English  
   Sam Houston State University  
   Box 2146  
   Huntsville TX 77341

Telephone:

   936-294-1412 (office)  
   281-298-1992 (home)

E-mail:

   GraduateEnglish@shsu.edu  
   eng_pwc@shsu.edu

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REQUEST FOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION AND WAIVER FORM
MASTER’S PROGRAM IN ENGLISH
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT):

Name of Applicant __________________________________________________________

Street Address ____________________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _______ Zip Code _________________________

Telephone Number ___________________________ E-Mail Address __________________________

Confidentiality Statement: Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, an applicant to an academic program may waive the right to inspect individual letters of recommendation. If you sign the waiver below, the attached letter will remain confidential; if you do not sign the waiver, you will retain the right to inspect the letter if you enroll in the English Graduate Program at Sam Houston State University. The University does not require that you sign the waiver for admission.

I hereby waive my right to review this recommendation:

Signature of Applicant ___________________________ Date __________________________

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RECOMMENDER (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT):

Name of Recommender _______________________________________________________

Position ________________________________________________________________

Institution or Organization _________________________________________________

Street Address ____________________________________________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ State _______ Zip Code _________________________

Telephone Number ___________________________ E-Mail Address __________________________

How long have you known the applicant? __________ In what capacity? ________________

On a separate sheet, please evaluate the applicant’s general intellectual abilities, academic accomplishments, writing skills, and potential for success in a graduate English program. Address and post the letter as follows:

Dr. Paul W. Child
Director of Graduate Studies in English
Care of Graduate Admissions Office
Sam Houston State University
Box 2478
Huntsville TX  77341-2478

Thank you for your help in assessing the applicant’s qualifications for admission.

Signature of Recommender ___________________________ Date __________________________
APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANT INSTRUCTORSHIP
(Graduate Assistantship)
Sam Houston State University

APPLICATION FOR POSITION AS ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH,
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

This application and all other required materials should be submitted to the English Department Chair:

Dr. Bill Bridges, Interim Chair
Department of English
Box 2146
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville TX 77341-2146

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Include secondary school and complete records chronologically, beginning with most recent. If work is in progress toward a degree, indicate degree sought and anticipated date of conferral. Mark anticipated date with an asterisk.

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<th>DATES ATTENDED</th>
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School and extracurricular honors received in secondary and undergraduate schools:
**GRE Scores**

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Department of English require that an applicant for a graduate assistantship have a minimum combined verbal and quantitative GRE score of 1,000, with a minimum verbal score of 500 (according to the old scale).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Exam</th>
<th>Verbal Score</th>
<th>Quantitative Score</th>
<th>Combined Score</th>
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</table>

**Memberships**

List memberships in (a) learned societies, (b) professional organizations, (c) technical societies, and (d) student organizations:

**Employment Experience**

List experience chronologically beginning with most recent. Include part-time, as well as full-time, employment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name and Location of Institution or Firm</th>
<th>Title, Rank, Department, or Position</th>
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**References**

List three people from whom you are requesting letters of personal reference. For your graduate assistantship recommendations you may use the same three letters of reference that you used for your application to the English Graduate Program. The referees should make specific mention of your promise as a university writing tutor and classroom instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Telephone and/or E-Mail</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</table>
Department:  **ENGLISH**

The following members of the department listed above are appointed to serve as members of a Thesis Committee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title (Ex. “Thesis Director”)</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THESIS DIRECTOR</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>READER</strong></td>
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<td><strong>READER</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Please notify the Dean’s office if the Thesis/Dissertation Committee changes for any reason by processing another “Appointment of Thesis/Dissertation Committee” form.*

**CANDIDATE:**  ________________________________________________________________

Student ID:  ________________________________________________________________

Proposed Topic:  _____________________________________________________________

Administrative Approval:

_________________________  ______________________
Director, Graduate Studies in English  Date

_________________________  ______________________
Chair, Department of English  Date

_________________________  ______________________
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences  Date
Candidate: _____________________________________________________________

Student ID: ______________________________________________________________________

Department: __________________________ ENGLISH __________________________

Degree: ______________________________ MA ______________________________

Proposed Topic: _____________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Please attach a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus as required by your department. Please see department instructions for preparation of your prospectus.

Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval:

Printed Name                                                   Signature

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Administrative Approval:

___________________________________________________________ Date

Director, Graduate Studies in English

___________________________________________________________ Date

Chair, Department of English

___________________________________________________________ Date

Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

___________________________________________________________ Date
REQUEST FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

To: Dr. Bill Bridges, Interim Chair, Department of English

From:

Date:

Dear Dr. Bridges:

I have had a scholarly paper/creative work accepted for presentation at the

Conference on ________________ in ________________.

(DATE) (LOCATION)

I am applying here for travel assistance. Particulars about the origin of the paper, the presentation, and the estimated expense of attending the conference follow.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Signature

Printed Name

To the Applicant: Please provide the following information for Graduate English Program records. Your responses need not be too extensive; a paragraph or two will certainly suffice. Use additional paper, as necessary.

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPER (OR OTHER PRESENTATION):

1. Give a brief history of the origins and development of the paper or other presentation: Explain, for example, if the presentation began as a class paper, an internship project, independent creative or scholarly work, or thesis chapter. Discuss briefly how the paper or other presentation evolved from its inception, considering any kind of professional review (that of professors or other qualified individuals) and revisions.
2. Briefly discuss how your work on this project has contributed to your intellectual, scholarly, and/or creative development.

**B. THE PRESENTATION:**

1. Explain how you found out about the particular conference (from a call for papers service, a professional journal, a professor’s lead, or other source).

2. How is this conference/session appropriate for your particular presentation?

3. Attach a copy of the call for papers notice, if it is available, and a copy of the abstract or proposal that you submitted for consideration.

**C. BUDGET:**

1. Please estimate and list any expenses involved in your attending the meeting; itemize the anticipated expenses, using additional paper, as necessary.
PROPOSAL FOR DIRECTED STUDY OF SELECTED TOPICS IN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE COURSE (ENGL 5339)

TO THE STUDENT: The purpose of ENGL 5339 is to offer a means of pursuing studies beyond the scope or depth of regular course offerings or of planned thesis work. Keep in mind that ENGL 5339 is not meant solely to accommodate your schedule by substituting for courses not offered in a given semester but ordinarily offered in the regular rotation of graduate courses or to allow you to get an early start on a thesis. Please read carefully the rules for taking a directed study course.

In consultation with the sponsoring faculty member, write a well-considered and precisely worded proposal; submit the proposal with this cover sheet to the Director of Graduate Studies in English for review. If you have a particular study in mind but have not identified a potential supervising professor, consult with the Director of Graduate Studies in English or the Chair of the Department.

TO THE SUPERVISING FACULTY: A faculty member may supervise only one directed study each semester. If you agree to do this study, please help the student to shape the proposed course and to complete this form before approving it. Thank you.

NAME

STUDENT ID#

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL

SEMESTER OF PROPOSED STUDY

SUPERVISING FACULTY

TITLE OF PROPOSED STUDY

On attached sheets, formally and thoughtfully address the following questions about the proposed directed study. Attach this page, with signatures, as a cover sheet to the proposal.

1. Outline the rationale and objectives of the course: What critical question are you setting out to investigate/solve? What contribution will the project make to your personal development as a scholar or creative writer? What contribution will the project make to the larger academic or creative community?

2. Describe the study in sufficient detail: What are the nature and scope of the proposed project? What methodologies will you use in undertaking the study?

3. Describe in detail the course requirements and methods of evaluation.

4. Present a week-by-week schedule of readings, meetings, and assignments for the proposed study.

5. Present a detailed bibliography for the proposed study, to include definitive editions of primary works, as appropriate.

SIGNATURES:

Student __________________________ Date __________

Supervising Faculty __________________________ Date __________

Director of Graduate Studies in English __________________________ Date __________

Chair, Department of English __________________________ Date __________

Cleared________
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Department: ENGLISH

Please give the following student graduate credit for the undergraduate course listed below, to be completed in the ____________ term, 20 ____. The information below details what work in the course the student completed in order to merit earning graduate credit.

Student: ___________________________ Student ID: ___________________________

Course Number and Title: ______________________________________________________

Course requirements to earn graduate credit:

Please see attached.

____________________________
Instructor, Department of English

____________________________
Graduate Director, Department of English

____________________________
Chair, Department of English

____________________________
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Forward to Registrar by Dean’s Office ______________________________
DECLARATION OF INTENT: ENGLISH MA WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION*

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

NAME __________________________ SID # __________________________

MAILING ADDRESS ______________________________________________

__________________________________________ TX ZIP CODE ______________

TELEPHONE __________________________ E-MAIL ADDRESS __________________________

DATE OF THIS DECLARATION: _____/_____/_____

The MA written comprehensive examination tests a student’s knowledge of three broad graduate-level areas of study. One must be a British literature area; one must be an American literature area. One must be an early (pre-1800) British or American literature area; one must be a later (post-1800) British or American literature area. The comprehensive examination not only tests what the candidate may have read in classes offered during coursework but also covers the entire named subject area. (For example, the 19th-century British area examination covers both Romantic and Victorian writing.)

The Department of English offers comprehensive examinations three times each year, on the third Saturdays of February, June, and October. Students have two hours to answer each of the three examination area questions.

Please indicate below your choice of test date and choice of the three subject areas. Submit this signed declaration form (as “hard copy”) to the Director of Graduate Studies in English in the term prior to that in which you sit for the examination. Keep in mind that the earlier you sign up, the more preparation time you will have.

Once having signed up for the exam, download required reading lists for the three areas. Candidates must know all of the required works on each area list. The student may also submit for approval a list of any other primary or secondary works that she or he wishes to use on the exam; this list will supplement but not replace the required list. Please submit the lists of any supplementary works as an attachment to this declaration form.

The graduate faculty recommend that each student consult with area specialists well in advance of the exam date, preferably a full semester, in order to prepare adequately. For the names of area specialists, see the list of graduate faculty.

The Director of Graduate Studies will e-mail specific instructions approximately two weeks before you sit for the examination; please make sure that your e-mail address and telephone number(s) above are current.

* Rev. 20 April 2011
Subject Areas (Select Three)

_____ English Language

_____ Early and Middle English Literature

World Literature:

_____ Emphasis in the Classical Tradition

_____ Emphasis in World Literature in English (Postcolonial)

_____ Theory and Practice of Composition and Rhetoric

_____ Technical and Professional Writing

_____ Renaissance and 17th-Century British Literature

_____ Restoration and 18th-Century British Literature

_____ American Literature Before 1800

_____ 19th-Century British Literature

_____ 19th-Century American Literature

_____ 20th-/21st-Century British Literature

_____ 20th-/21st-Century American Literature

I request the use of a departmental laptop for the examination (this laptop will be disconnected from the Internet, its USB ports deactivated, and its Spell-Check feature disabled.)

__________________________
Printed Name

__________________________
Signature
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

MA CANDIDATES WHO SIT FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAMINATION SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE A COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE, LINGUISTICS, AND GRAMMAR. AREA EXPERTS FROM AMONG THE GRADUATE FACULTY OFFER THE FOLLOWING WORKS FOR STUDENTS TO SELECT FROM IN PREPARING FOR THE EXAM:

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

John Algeo. The Origins and Development of the English Language (4th edition or later) (and Workbook)

Albert Baugh and Thomas Cable. A History of the English Language

N. F. Blake. A History of the English Language

Jenny Cheshire. English around the World

David Crystal. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (2nd edition)

---. English as a Global Language

---. The Stories of English

Richard Hogg, gen. ed. The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volumes 1-6

Dick Leith. A Social History of English

C.M. Millward. A Biography of the English Language (and Workbook)

Laura Wright, ed. The Development of Standard English: 1300-1800

LINGUISTICS:

David Crystal. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (2nd edition)

Edward Finegan. Language: Its Structure and Use (6th edition or earlier)

Edward Finegan and John Rickford, eds. Language in the U.S.A.: Themes for the 21st Century

Rev. 1 August 2014
Thomas W. Steward, Jr., and Nathan Vaillette, eds. *Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics*. (9th edition or later)

**GRAMMAR**

Thomas Klammer, Muriel Schulz, and Angela Della Volpe. *Analyzing English Grammar* (4th edition or later)

Martha Kolln and Robert Funk. *Understanding English Grammar* (6th edition or later)

Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum. *A University Grammar of English*
EARLY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

WORKS IN TRANSLATION FROM THE OLD ENGLISH:

“The Battle of Maldon” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

Beowulf (transl. Roy Liuzza)

“Dream of the Rood” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

“The Ruin” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

“The Seafarer” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

“The Wanderer” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

“The Wife’s Lament” (transl. S.A.J. Bradley)

WORKS IN MIDDLE ENGLISH:

Geoffrey Chaucer. Book of the Duchess; Canterbury Tales; House of Fame; Troilus and Criseyde

Everyman

John Gower. Confessio Amantis

The Harley Lyrics

William Langland. Piers Plowman (B text)

Thomas Malory. Morte D’Arthur

Pearl

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

---------

Rev. 1 August 2014
Sir Orfeo

The Wakefield Master. *The Second Shepherd’s Play; Noah and His Sons*

One Middle English Romance. (Suggested: *King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Athelston,* or *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Ragnell*)

**Works in Translation from the Old French:**

Chretien de Troyes. *Erec and Enide; Lancelot, or The Knight of the Cart; The Story of the Grail; Yvain, or The Knight of the Lion*


*Song of Roland*

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
WORLD LITERATURE: EMPHASIS IN THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

GREEK LITERATURE:

Aeschylus. Oresteian Trilogy, Persians

Archilochus. Selected Poems¹

Aristophanes. One Comedy (Suggested: Lysistrata or Clouds)

Aristotle. Poetics

Euripides. Medea and One Other Play

Hesiod. Theogony

Homer. Iliad, Odyssey

Plato. Euthyphro; Crito; Phaedo; Ion; Republic, Chapter 7 (“The Allegory of the Cave”)

Sappho. Selected Poems

Sophocles. Oedipus Tyrannus, Antigone

LATIN LITERATURE:

Catullus. Selected Poems

Horace. Ars Poetica

Ovid. Metamorphoses, Heroides

Petronius. Satyricon

Plautus. One Play

¹ For selections and excerpts, see a standard anthology like Greek Lyrics (translated by Richmond Lattimore).
Terence. One Play

Virgil. *Aeneid, Eclogues, Georgics*

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
WORLD LITERATURE: EMPHASIS IN WORLD LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (POSTCOLONIAL)

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AT LEAST TWENTY-ONE MAJOR WORKS OR AUTHORS FROM AT LEAST THREE GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS, DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

FICTION

FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING, SELECT AT LEAST EIGHT NOVELS OR STORY COLLECTIONS FROM AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS:

Peter Abrahams. *Mine Boy* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*, *A Man of the People* or * Anthills of the Savannah* (West Africa - Nigeria)
Ama Ata Aidoo. *Our Sister Killjoy* or *No Sweetness Here* (West Africa – Ghana)
Monica Ali. *Brick Lane* (Pakistan/England)
Mulk Raj Anand. *The Village*, *Untouchable*, or *Coolie* (India)
Ayi Kwei Armah. *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* (West Africa – Ghana)
Peter Carey. Any Novel (Australia)
Michelle Cliff. *Abeng* or *No Telephone to Heaven* (West Indies – Jamaica)
Merle Collins. *Angel* or *The Colour of Forgetting* (Grenada)
Tsitsi Dangarembga. *Nervous Conditions* (Southern Africa – Zimbabwe)
Edwidge Danticat. *Breath Eyes Memory*, *Krik? Krak!* or *The Farming of Bones* (West Indies – Haiti)
Anita Desai. *Clear Light of Day* (India)
Alan Duff. *Once Were Warriors* (New Zealand)
Nuruddin Farah. *Maps* (East Africa – Somalia)
Sia Figiel. *Where We Once Belonged* (Western Samoa)
Amitav Ghosh. *The Shadow Lines* or *The Glass Palace* (India)
Nadine Gordimer. *July’s People* or *Burger’s Daughter* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Patricia Grace. *Potiki* (New Zealand)
Jessica Hagedorn. *Dog eaters* or *Dream Jungle* (Philippines)
Wilson Harris. *Palace of the Peacock* (West Indies – Guyana)
Bessie Head. *Maru* or *A Question of Power* (Southern Africa – South Africa/Botswana)
Keri Hulme. *The Bone People* (New Zealand)

Rev. 1 August 2014
Witi Ihimaera. *The Matriarch* (New Zealand)
Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. *Heat and Dust* (India)
Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John, Lucy, or The Autobiography of My Mother* (West Indies – Antigua)
Alex La Guma. *A Walk in the Night* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Jhumpa Lahiri. *The Interpreter of Maladies or The Namesake* (India)
George Lamming. *In the Castle of My Skin or The Emigrants* (West Indies – Barbados)
Earl Lovelace. *The Wine of Astonishment or Dragon Can’t Dance* (West Indies – Trinidad)
Roger Mais. *The Hills Were Joyful Together* (Jamaica)
Katherine Mansfield. Selected Short Stories (New Zealand)
Claude McKay. *Home to Harlem or Banana Bottom* (West Indies – Jamaica)
Pauline Melville. *The Ventriloquist’s Tale* (Guyana)
Rohinton Mistry. *A Fine Balance, Family Matters, or Such a Long Journey* (India)
Bharati Mukherjee. *Jasmine or The Holder of the World* (India)
V.S. Naipaul. *The Mimic Men or A House for Mr. Biswas* (West Indies – Trinidad)
Njabulo Ndebele. *Fools and Other Stories* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Ngugi wa Thiong’o. *Weep Not, Child or The River Between or Matigari* (East Africa – Kenya)
B. Okri. *The Famished Road* (West Africa – Nigeria)
Michael Ondaatje. *The English Patient or Anil’s Ghost* (Canada)
Raja Rao. *Kanthapura* (India)
Arundhati Roy. *The God of Small Things* (India)
Salman Rushdie. *Midnight’s Children, Shame, or The Satanic Verses* (India)
Samuel Selvon. *A Brighter Sun or The Lonely Londoners* (West Indies – Trinidad)
Bapsi Sidhwa. *Cracking India or The Crow Eaters* (Pakistan)
Khuswant Singh. *Train to Pakistan or I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (India)
Yvonne Vera. *Butterfly Burning* (Zimbabwe)
Albert Wendt. *Pouliouli or Sons for the Return Home* (Western Samoa)
Zoe Wicomb. *David’s Story or You Can’t Get Lost in Cape Town* (Southern Africa – South Africa)

**DRAMA**

**FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING, SELECT AT LEAST FIVE PLAYS FROM AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS:**

Ama Ata Aidoo. *Dilemma of a Ghost or Anowa* (West Africa – Ghana)
Athol Fugard. *Master Harold… and the Boys* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Girish Karnad. *Hayavadana* (India)
Earl Lovelace. Any Play (West Indies – Trinidad)
David Malouf. *Blood Relations* (Australia)
Maishe Maponya. Any Play (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Bruce Mason. *The Pohutukawa Tree* (New Zealand)
Zakes Mda. Any Play (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon. *Woza Albert!* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Ngugi wa Thion’o. *I Will Marry When I Want* (East Africa – Kenya)
Caryl Phillips. *Strange Fruit or Where There is Darkness* (West Indies – St. Kitts)
Samuel Selvon. *Highway in the Sun* (West Indies – Trinidad)
Sistren Theatre Collective. *Lionheart Gal* (Jamaica)
Wole Soyinka. *Death and the King’s Horsemen, The Lion and the Jewel, or The Trials of Brother Jero* (West Africa – Nigeria)
Derek Walcott. *Pantomime, Ti-Jean and His Brothers*, or *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (West Indies – St. Lucia)

**POETRY**

**FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING, SELECT AT LEAST FIVE POETS FROM AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS:**

Kofi Anyidoho. Selected Poetry (West Africa – Ghana)
Louise Bennett. Selected Poetry (West Indies – Jamaica)
Okot p’Bitek. *Song of Lawino* (East Africa – Uganda)
Edward Kamau Brathwaite. *The Arrivants* Trilogy or Selected Poetry (West Indies – Barbados)
Merle Collins. *Rotten Pomerack* (Grenada)
Kamala Das. Selected Poetry (India)
Ingrid de Kok. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Amitav Ghosh. *Circle of Reason* (India)
Lorna Goodison. Selected Poetry (West Indies – Jamaica)
A.D. Hope. Selected Poetry (Australia)
Chenjerai Hove. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – Zimbabwe)
Linton Kwesi Johnson. Selected Poetry (West Indies – Jamaica)
Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye. Selected Poetry (East Africa – Kenya)
David Malouf. Selected Poetry (Australia)
Dambudzo Marecha. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – Zimbabwe)
Una Marson. Selected Poetry (West Indies – Jamaica)
Claude McKay. Selected Poetry (West Indies – Jamaica)
Es’kia Mphahlele. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Grace Nichols. *I Is a Long Memoried Woman* (Guyana)
Christopher Okigbo. *Labyrinths* (West Africa – Nigeria)
Michael Ondaatje. Selected Poetry (Canada)
M. Nourbese Philip. Selected Poetry, including “Discourse on the Logic of Language” (Canada/Trinidad)
Olive Senior. Gardening in the Tropics (Jamaica/Canada)
Sipho Sepamla. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Wally Serote. Selected Poetry (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Vikram Seth. Selected Poetry (India)
Wole Soyinka. Selected Poetry (West Africa – Nigeria)
Derek Walcott. Selected Poetry (West Indies – St. Lucia)

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY/NON-FICTION**

**FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING, SELECT AT LEAST THREE WORKS FROM AT LEAST TWO DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS:**

Dionne Brand. *Bread Out of Stone* (Trinidad and Tobago)
Breyten Breytenbach. *True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Franz Fanon. *Black Skins/White Masks or The Wretched of the Earth* (Martinique)
Edouard Glissant. *Caribbean Discourse or Poetics of Relation* (Martinique)
Wilson Harris. *History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean* (West Indies – Guyana)
C.L.R. James. *The Black Jacobins* (West Indies – Trinidad)
Jamaica Kincaid. *A Small Place* (U.S./Antigua)
George Lamming. *The Pleasures of Exile* (West Indies – Barbados)
Esk’ia Mphahlele. *Down Second Avenue* (Southern Africa – South Africa)
Ngugi wa Thiong’o. *Detained or Decolonising the Mind* (East Africa – Kenya)
Doris Pilkington. *Rabbit Proof Fence* (Australia)
Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands* (India)
Edward Said. *Orientalism*, Selected Chapters from *Culture and Imperialism*
Wole Soyinka. *The Man Died* or *Ake: Years of Childhood* (West Africa – Nigeria)
Gayatri Spivak. “Can the Subaltern Speak” (U.S./India)
Derek Walcott. *What the Twilight Says* (West Indies – St. Lucia)

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the lists above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

MA CANDIDATES WHO SIT FOR THE COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC EXAMINATION SHOULD BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE A COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC, HISTORY OF WRITING INSTRUCTION, COMPOSITION THEORY, RHETORICAL THEORY, AND RHETORICAL CRITICISM. AREA EXPERTS FROM AMONG THE GRADUATE FACULTY OFFER THE FOLLOWING WORKS FOR STUDENTS TO READ IN PREPARING FOR THE EXAM:

HISTORY OF RHETORIC:


HISTORY OF WRITING INSTRUCTION (READ ONE):


COMPOSITION THEORY (READ ALL ARTICLES AND AT LEAST ONE BOOK FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST):


Rev. 1 August 2014


**Rhetorical Theory (Read the Works by Burke and at least One Other Book):**


**Rhetorical Criticism (Read Burke and at least One Other Selection):**


TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL WRITING

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

STUDENTS WHO SIT FOR THE AREA EXAMINATION IN NONACADEMIC (TECHNICAL AND WORKPLACE) WRITING SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING WORKS:


______________________________
Rev. 1 August 2014
RENAISSANCE AND 17TH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

PROSE:

Francis Bacon. Selected Essays

Margaret Cavendish. Excerpts from *A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding, and Life*; Excerpts from *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World*

Sir Thomas Elyot. Excerpts from *The Book Named the Governor*

Sir Thomas Hoby. Excerpts from *Book of the Courtier*

Sir Thomas More. Excerpts from *Utopia*

Sir Philip Sidney. *The Defense of Poesy*

POETRY:

John Donne. Selections from *Songs and Sonets*, Selected Elegies and Satires, *Divine Poems*

George Herbert. Selections from *The Temple*

Robert Herrick. Selections from *Hesperides*

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Selected Poems

Ben Jonson. Selections from *The Forrest*, Selections from *Under-Woods*

Aemilia Lanyer. Selected Poems, including “Eve’s Apology in Defense of Women” from *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* and “Description of Cooke-ham”

Andrew Marvell. Selected Poems, including the Four “Mower” Poems, “To His Coy Mistress,” and “Upon Appleton House”


Katherine Philips. Selected Poems

Rev. 1 August 2014
William Shakespeare. Selected Sonnets

Sir Philip Sidney. Selections from *Astrophil and Stella*

Edmund Spenser. Selections from *Amoretti; Epithalamium; The Faerie Queen*, Books I & II or Books III & IV

Sir Thomas Wyatt. Selected Poems

**Drama:**

Ben Jonson. Any Two Comedies

Thomas Kyd. *The Spanish Tragedy*

John Lyly. *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* or *Endymion*

Christopher Marlowe. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* and Any Other One of His Plays

William Shakespeare. Five Tragedies (for example, *Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet*) (The candidate may substitute a comi-tragedy like *Merchant of Venice* for one tragedy.)

---. One Romance (for example, *The Tempest*)

---. Two Comedies (for example, *The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

---. Two English Histories (for example, *Richard II, I Henry IV*)

---. One “Latin” Tragedy (for example, *Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar*)

John Webster. *The Duchess of Malfi*

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
RESTORATION AND 18TH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

PROSE:

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Selections from *The Spectator Papers*

Aphra Behn. *Oroonoko*

James Boswell. Selections from *The Life of Johnson*

Edmund Burke. *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*

Daniel Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe* or *Moll Flanders*

Olaudah Equiano. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Henry Fielding. *Shamela, Joseph Andrews*

David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*: Section X, Parts I-II (“Of Miracles”)

Samuel Johnson. *Rasselas*, Selections from *The Rambler*


Samuel Pepys. Selections from *The Diary*

Ann Radcliffe. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

Samuel Richardson. *Pamela*

Laurence Sterne. *Tristram Shandy*

Jonathan Swift. “A Modest Proposal,” *Gulliver’s Travels*

Horace Walpole. *The Castle of Otranto*

Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: Chapter 2; Chapter 9; Chapter 13, Section 6

Rev. 1 August 2014
VERSE:

Aphra Behn. “The Disappointment”

Samuel Butler. *Hudibras: Book I, Canto I*

John Dryden. “MacFlecknoe,” *Absalom and Achitophel*

Oliver Goldsmith. “The Deserted Village”

Thomas Gray. “Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard”


Bernard Mandeville. “The Grumbling Hive; or, Knaves Turned Honest” (from *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*)


Jonathan Swift, “A Description of the Morning,” “A Description of a City Shower,” “Cassinus and Peter,” “Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift”

John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester. “A Satyr Against Mankind”

DRAMA:


John Gay. *The Beggar’s Opera*

Oliver Goldsmith. *She Stoops to Conquer*

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
AMERICAN LITERATURE BEFORE 1800

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

Abigail Adams. Selections from Travel Diaries and Letters

John Adams. Selections from The Autobiography, Selected Letters

Elizabeth Ashbridge. Selections from Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge

William Bradford. Of Plymouth Plantation

Anne Bradstreet. Selected Poems, to include “The Author to Her Book,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “Upon the Burning of Her House, July 10, 1666”

Charles Brockden Brown. At Least One of the Following Novels: Wieland, Edgar Huntly, Ormond, Arthur Mervyn


Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca. La Relaciòn [The Report]. Familiarity with Other Colonial Latin American Works: The Second Letter of Hernán Cortés; Bartolomé de Las Casas’s Very Brief Relation of the Devastation of the Indies; Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala’s New Chronicle and Good Government; Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s Primer Sueñol First Dream

Samuel Champlain. Voyages. Familiarity with Other Works from New France like The Jesuit Relations

Christopher Columbus. Journal of the First Voyage, “Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage,” “Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage”

J. Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur. Letters from an American Farmer


Olaudah Equiano. The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African

Hannah Webster Foster. The Coquette


Rev. 1 August 2014


Sarah Kemble Knight. The Journal of Madam Knight


Thomas Morton. Excerpts from New English Canaan


Samson Occom. “A Short Narrative of My Life”

Thomas Paine. The Age of Reason, Common Sense

Publius [Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay]. Excerpts from The Federalist Papers

Mary White Rowlandson. Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson.

Susanna Rowson. Charlotte Temple

Samuel Sewall. Excerpts from The Diary of Samuel Sewall

John Smith. Excerpts from The General History of Virginia

Royall Tyler. The Contrast

Phillis Wheatley. Selected Letters and Poems, to include “On Being Brought from Africa to America”

Roger Williams. A Key into the Language of America

A Selection of Native American Oral Narratives, including Handsome Lake’s “How America Was Discovered”

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
19th-Century British Literature
Graduate Comprehensive Examination Reading List
Selected by the Graduate Faculty

The degree candidate is responsible for having read all of the following works:


Jane Austen. Emma or Pride and Prejudice

William Blake. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Songs of Innocence and Experience

Charlotte Bronte. Jane Eyre

Emily Bronte. Wuthering Heights

Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Aurora Leigh: Books 1 and 5; Sonnets from the Portuguese: Sonnets III, XXII, XXIX, and XXLIII

Robert Browning. “Andrea del Sarto,” “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “My Last Duchess”


Charles Dickens. Any Novel

George Eliot. The Mill on the Floss or Middlemarch

Elizabeth Gaskell. North and South

George Gordon, Lord Byron. Selections from Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage and Don Juan

Thomas Hardy. Tess of the D’Urbervilles or Return of the Native, Selected Poetry


Rev. 1 August 2014
George Meredith. *The Egoist, Modern Love*

Ann Radcliffe. *A Sicilian Romance*

Christina Rossetti. “Goblin Market”

George Bernard Shaw. *Arms and the Man*

Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein*

Percy Bysshe Shelley. *Adonais; Defence of Poetry; “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”; “Mont Blanc: Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni”; “Ode to the West Wind”; “To a Skylark”*

Charlotte Smith. *Beachy Head*

Robert Louis Stevenson. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*


William Makepeace Thackeray. *Vanity Fair*

Oscar Wilde. *The Importance of Being Earnest, The Picture of Dorian Gray*


A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE DEGREE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS:

William Apess. “An Indian’s Looking Glass for the White Man,” “Eulogy on King Philip”
Ambrose Bierce. “Chickamauga,” “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”
Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa). School Days of an Indian Girl
William Wells Brown. Clotel or The Escape: A Leap for Freedom
William Cullen Bryant. Selected Poems
The Cherokee Memorials
Charles Chesnutt. The Conjure Woman
Lydia Maria Child. Hobomok
Kate Chopin. The Awakening, Selected Stories
James Fenimore Cooper. Last of the Mohicans
Rebecca Harding Davis. Life in the Iron Mills
Emily Dickinson. Selected Poems
Frederick Douglass. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”
Theodore Dreiser. Sister Carrie
W.E.B. DuBois. The Souls of Black Folks

Rev. 1 August 2014
* Although this work appeared in 1903, many scholars consider it important to a study of the “long nineteenth century.”

Margaret Fuller. “Woman in the Nineteenth Century”

Charlotte Perkins Gilman. “The Yellow Wallpaper”

F.E.W. Harper. Iola Leroy 

Nathaniel Hawthorne. Selected Stories, At Least One Major Novel 

Oliver Wendell Holmes. “The Chambered Nautilus,” “The Deacon’s Masterpiece”


Harriet Jacobs. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl 

Henry James. Selected Stories, At Least One Major Novel 

Sarah Orne Jewett. Selected Stories 

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Selected Poems 

Herman Melville. Moby Dick or both Billy Budd and either “Bartleby, the Scrivener” or Benito Cereno 

Frank Norris. McTeague: A Story of San Francisco 

Edgar Allan Poe. Selected Stories; Selected Poems; “The Philosophy of Composition”; “A Review: Twice-Told Tales by Nathaniel Hawthorne”

Catherine Maria Sedgwick. Hope Leslie 

Harrriet Beecher Stowe. Uncle Tom’s Cabin 

Henry David Thoreau. “Resistance to Civil Government” [“Civil Disobedience”]; Walden 

Mark Twain. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn 

David Walker. Walker’s Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World 

Booker Washington. Up from Slavery* 

* Although this work appeared in 1901, many scholars consider it important to a study of the “long nineteenth century.”
Walt Whitman. Selected Poems, including “Song of Myself” (1882 edition) and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

Harriet Wilson. *Our Nig*

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
20TH-/21ST-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WRITERS AND WORKS FROM LIST A, AT LEAST THREE WRITERS FROM LIST B, AND AT LEAST THREE WRITERS FROM LIST C.

LIST A

POETRY:

W.H. Auden. Selected Poetry


Thomas Hardy, Selected Poetry from Satires of Circumstances

Seamus Heaney. Selected Poetry

Ted Hughes. Selected Poetry

Philip Larkin. Selected Poetry

Dylan Thomas. Selected Poetry


Representative World War I Poets. Suggested: Wilfred Owen, Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves

PROSE:

Kingsley Amis. Lucky Jim

Joseph Conrad. Any One of the Following: Heart of Darkness, Nostromo, The Secret Agent, Under Western Eyes


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Rev. 1 August 2014
E.M. Forster. *Howards End* or *A Passage to India*

James Joyce. *Dubliners* and One of the Following: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or *Ulysses*

D.H. Lawrence. Selected Short Fiction and Any One of the Following: *Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow*, or *Women in Love*

Doris Lessing. *The Golden Notebook* or Any Other Novel

Katherine Mansfield, “At the Bay,” “Prelude,” “Je ne Parle pas Francais,” “The Daughters of the Late Colonel”

Iris Murdoch. Any One Novel

George Orwell. *1984* or *Animal Farm*

Ezra Pound. “The Imagist Manifesto”

Evelyn Waugh. Any One of the Following: *Decline and Fall, A Handful of Dust*, or *Brideshead Revisited*

Virginia Woolf. *Mrs. Dalloway, To the Lighthouse*, Selected Short Fiction to Include “Kew Gardens” and “Mark on the Wall”

**Drama:**

Samuel Beckett. *Endgame, Waiting for Godot*

T.S. Eliot. *Murder in the Cathedral*

George Bernard Shaw. *Man and Superman, Major Barbara*, or Any Other 20th-Century Play

Tom Stoppard. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* or *Arcadia*

John Synge. *The Playboy of the Western World*

**LIST B**

**Prose and Drama (Choose at Least Three from the List That Follows):**

Martin Amis. *The Rachel Papers* or *Time’s Arrow*

Julian Barnes. *Flaubert’s Parrot*

Samuel Beckett. Any Novel

Elizabeth Bowen. Selected Short Fiction or Any Novel

Anthony Burgess. *A Clockwork Orange*
A.S. Byatt. *Possession* or *Angels and Insects*
Roddy Doyle. *The Barrytown Trilogy*
Ford Madox Ford. *The Good Soldier*
John Fowles. *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* or Any Other Novel
John Galsworthy. *The Silver Box* or *Justice*
William Golding. *The Lord of the Flies* or Any Other Novel
Graham Greene. Any Novel
Aldous Huxley. *Point Counterpoint* or *Brave New World*
Kazuo Ishiguro. *Remains of the Day*
Hanif Kureishi. *The Buddha of Suburbia* or *The Black Album*
W. Somerset Maugham. *Of Human Bondage* or Any Other Novel
Ian McEwen. *Atonement*
Edna O’Brien. Any Novel or Selected Short Stories
Sean O’Casey. *Juno and the Paycock* or *The Plough and the Stars*
John Osborne. *Look Back in Anger*
Harold Pinter. *The Dumb Waiter, The Collection, The Care Taker*, or *The Birthday Party*
Jean Rhys. *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Dorothy Richardson. *Pointed Roofs* or Any Other Novel
Alan Sillitoe. *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*
Zadie Smith. *White Teeth*
William Trevor. *Felicia’s Journey* or *The Story of Lucy Gault*
Fay Weldon. *Praxis* or Any Other Novel
H.G. Wells. *Tono-Bungay*
Jeanette Winterson. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Written on the Body*, or Any Other Novel

**LIST C**

**POETRY (CHOOSE AT LEAST THREE FROM THE LIST THAT FOLLOWS):**

Eavan Boland. Selected Poetry
Keith Douglas. Selected Poetry
A.E. Housman. Selected Poetry
Rudyard Kipling. Selected Poetry
D.H. Lawrence. Selected Poetry
Hugh MacDiarmid. Selected Poetry
Louis MacNeice. Selected Poetry
Thom Gunn. Selected Poetry
Geoffrey Hill. Selected Poetry
Paul Muldoon. Selected Poetry
Stevie Smith. Selected Poetry
Stephen Spender. Selected Poetry
Jon Stallworthy. Selected Poetry

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core (“A”) list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
20\textsuperscript{TH}/21\textsuperscript{ST}-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST
SELECTED BY THE GRADUATE FACULTY

THE CANDIDATE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL WRITERS AND WORKS FROM LIST A, AT LEAST THREE WRITERS FROM LIST B, AND AT LEAST THREE WRITERS FROM LIST C.

LIST A

POETRY:

Elizabeth Bishop. Selected Poems

T.S. Eliot. \textit{The Waste Land}, \textit{Four Quartets}

Robert Frost. \textit{North of Boston}, \textit{Mountain Interval}.

Langston Hughes. One of the Following Collections: \textit{The Weary Blues}, \textit{Fine Clothes to the Jew}, \textit{Shakespeare in Harlem}. (Poems in these collections may be pieced together from works in Hughes’ \textit{Collected Poems}.)

Sylvia Plath. Selected Poems

Wallace Stevens. \textit{“Sunday Morning”} and Other Selected Poems

PROSE:

Ralph Ellison. \textit{Invisible Man}

William Faulkner. \textit{As I Lay Dying}; \textit{Light in August} or \textit{The Sound and the Fury}; \textit{“Barn Burning”; “Dry September”; “The Bear”} (version in \textit{Go Down, Moses})

F. Scott Fitzgerald. \textit{The Great Gatsby}

Ernest Hemingway. \textit{A Farewell to Arms}, \textit{In Our Time}

Zora Neale Hurston. \textit{Their Eyes Were Watching God}

Maxine Hong Kingston. \textit{The Woman Warrior}

Toni Morrison. \textit{Beloved} and One of the Following: \textit{Sula} or \textit{The Bluest Eye}

\underline{Rev. 1 August 2014}
Flannery O'Connor. A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories or Everything That Rises Must Converge.

John Steinbeck. The Grapes of Wrath or Of Mice and Men

Eudora Welty. A Curtain of Green

**Drama:**

Susan Glaspell. Trifles

Arthur Miller. Death of a Salesman

Eugene O’Neill. One of the Following: Long Day’s Journey into Night, The Ice Man Cometh, or Moon for the Misbegotten

Tennessee Williams. A Streetcar Named Desire

**List B**

**Prose and Drama (choose at least three from the list that follows):**

Oscar Zeta Acosta. The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo or The Revolt of the Cockroach People
Edward Albee. Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Zoo Story
Julia Alvarez. How the García Girls Lost Their Accents
Rudolfo Anaya. Bless Me, Ultima
Sherwood Anderson. Winesburg, Ohio
Gloria Anzaldúa. Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
Isaac Asimov. I, Robot
James Baldwin. Go Tell It on the Mountain or Going to Meet the Man
Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones). Dutchman or The Slave
John Barth. Lost in the Funhouse
Donald Barthelme. Sixty Stories.
Saul Bellow. Seize the Day or Herzog
Ray Bradbury. The Martian Chronicles
Truman Capote. In Cold Blood
Ana Castillo. So Far from God or The Mixquiahuala Letters
Willa Cather. My Ántonia or Death Comes for the Archbishop
Raymond Chandler. The Big Sleep
Sandra Cisneros. The House on Mango Street, Woman Hollering Creek
Edwidge Danticat. Krik? Krak!
Don DeLillo. White Noise
Junot Diaz. *The Brief Wonderful Life of Oscar Wao*
Philip K. Dick. *The Man in the High Castle, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*
Louise Erdrich. Selected Novel or Stories
Horton Foote. *Orphans’ Home Cycle*
Jonathan Franzen. *The Corrections*
William Gaddis. *The Recognitions*
William Gass. *In the Heart of the Heart Country*
Kaye Gibbons. *Ellen Foster*
Jessica Hagedorn. *Dogeaters*
Dashiell Hammett. *The Maltese Falcon*
Lorraine Hansberry. *Raisin in the Sun*
Robert A. Heinlein. *Stranger in a Strange Land*
Joseph Heller. *Catch-22*
David Henry Hwang. *M. Butterfly* or *The Dance and the Railroad*
Gish Jen. *Mona in the Promised Land*
Ha Jin. *Waiting*
Denis Johnson. *Jesus’ Son*
George S. Kaufmann and Moss Hart. *You Can’t Take It with You, The Man Who Came to Dinner*
Jack Kerouac. *On the Road*
Tony Kushner. *Angels in America I and II*
Chang Rae Lee. *Native Speaker*
Sinclair Lewis. *Main Street* or *Babbitt*
Jack London. One Novel or Selected Stories
Audre Lorde. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*
David Mamet. One Selected Play
David Markson. *Wittgenstein’s Mistress*
Bobbie Ann Mason. *In Country*
Cormac McCarthy. *Blood Meridian* or *Suttree*
Carson McCullers. *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* or *The Ballad of the Sad Café*
N. Scott Momaday. *House Made of Dawn*
Lorrie Moore. *Self-Help*
Cherríe Moraga. *Heroes and Saints*
Vladimir Nabokov. *Lolita* or *Pale Fire*
Tim O’Brien. *The Things They Carried*
Américo Paredes. *George Washington Gómez*
Suzan-Lori Parks. *The American Play* or *Topdog/Underdog*
Sylvia Plath. *The Bell Jar*
Katherine Anne Porter. *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*
Thomas Pynchon. *The Crying of Lot 49* or *Gravity’s Rainbow* or *Mason/Dixon*
Ishmael Reed. *Mumbo Jumbo*
Marilynne Robinson. *Gilead* or *Housekeeping*
Philip Roth. *Goodbye, Columbus* or *Portnoy’s Complaint* or *American Pastoral*
J.D. Salinger. *Catcher in the Rye*
Ntozake Shange. For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf: A Choreopoem
Sam Shepherd. One Selected Play
Leslie Marmon Silko. Ceremony
Anna Deavere Smith. Fires in the Mirror or Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992
Lee Smith. Oral History or Fair and Tender Ladies, or On Agate Hill
Gertrude Stein. Three Lives
William Styron. The Confessions of Nat Turner
Amy Tan. The Joy Luck Club
Piri Thomas. Down These Mean Streets
Anne Tyler. Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant
John Updike. Rabbit Redux or Rabbit, Run or all of the following: “Separating,” “The Happiest I’ve Been,” “A & P,” and “The Lifeguard
Luis Valdez. Zoot Suit
Kurt Vonnegut. Slaughterhouse Five
Alice Walker. The Color Purple
David Foster Wallace. Infinite Jest or Brief Interviews with Hideous Men
Nathanael West. Miss Lonelyhearts or The Day of the Locust
Edith Wharton. The Age of Innocence
August Wilson. Selected Play
Thomas Wolfe. Look Homeward, Angel
Richard Wright. Native Son, Black Boy, or Uncle Tom’s Children

LIST C

POETRY (CHOOSE AT LEAST THREE FROM THE LIST THAT FOLLOWS):

A.R. Ammons. Garbage
Gloria Anzaldua. Selected Poems
John Ashberry. Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror
Gwendolyn Brooks. Selected Poems
Lorna Dee Cervantes. Selected Poems
Judith Ortiz Cofer. Selected Poems
Billy Collins. Selected Poems
Countee Cullen. Selected Poems
e.e. cummings. Selected Poems
Rita Dove. Selected Poems
Mark Doty. My Alexandria
Allen Ginsberg. Selected Poems
Nikki Giovanni. Selected Poems
H.D. Selected Poems
Louise Erdrich. Selected Poems
Jorie Graham. The Dream of a Unified Field
Lyn Heijinian. My Life
Randall Jarrell. Selected Poems
Robinson Jeffers. Selected Poems
James Weldon Johnson. Selected Poems
Yusef Komunyakaa. Neon Vernacular
Denise Levertov. Selected Poems
Philip Levine. Selected Poems
Audre Lorde. Selected Poems
Robert Lowell. Selected Poems
Claude McKay. Selected Poems
James Merrill. Selected Poems 1946-1985
W.S. Merwin. Selected Poems
Marianne Moore. Selected Poems
Pat Mora. Selected Poems
Mary Oliver. Selected Poems
Ezra Pound. Selected Poems
Theodore Roethke. Selected Poems
Anne Sexton. Selected Poems
Charles Simic. Selected Poems
Robert Penn Warren. Selected Poems
Adrienne Rich. Selected Poems, including “I Am in Danger—Sir—,” “Diving into the Wreck,” “Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law,” and “Storm Warnings”
Edwin Arlington Robinson. Selected Poems, including “The Mill,” “Miniver Cheevy,” “Mr. Flood’s Party,” and “Richard Cory”
Carl Sandburg. Selected Poems
Richard Wilbur. Selected Poems
William Carlos Williams. Selected Poems
Charles Wright. Selected Poems
Bernice Zamora. Selected Poems

A candidate may also submit a list of readings to supplement, but not replace, the readings from the core (“A”) list above. The supplementary list should be submitted for approval with the declaration of intent to take the comprehensive examination form.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION SAMPLE QUESTIONS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. Compare and contrast the Present-Day English inflectional system to that of Old English. Make sure your discussion covers the lexical categories of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. How did Present-Day English end up having only eight inflectional morphemes?

2. Describe and discuss the similarities and differences of the following language-teaching methods: The Grammar-Translation Method, The Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method, and Desuggestopedia. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? How would you rank the correspondence of these four methods to the (recently) popular Communicative Language Teaching approach? Explain your ranking.

EARLY AND MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE

1. Define the Anglo-Saxon concept of *comitatus* and then compare and contrast it to the later code of *chivalry* (*courteisye*). Then using at least two exemplary Early English works and two exemplary Middle English works, show how these concepts are delineated within them. Reach significant conclusions about the larger cultural shifts indicated by the specific shifts in the codes of conduct.

2. What are the salient characteristics of “romance” as a medieval mode of writing? Discuss these in relation to Chaucer’s *Knight’s Tale* and at least two other medieval works, suggesting how the works both fit and exceed this label, and then reflect on the value of this term as a literary-historical category.

WORLD LITERATURE: EMPHASIS IN THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

1. Helene Foley argues that

   [c]lassical literature, far more explicitly than much later Western literature until the nineteenth century, virtually begs us to ask questions about gender….Most Greek comedies and tragedies commonly taught put gender conflict at the heart of the plot and allow their female characters to challenge male authority and assumptions: Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Euripides’ *Medea* and *Bacchae*, Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, to name a few.

While you may disagree with Foley’s assertion about the prevalence of gender conflict at the heart of classical (and ancient) works, certainly the works that she cites feature clashes between men and women. Using Foley’s statement as a point of departure and discussing at least three works in some detail, make an argument about how women in the works of ancient and classical writers challenge traditional male roles and status. What do the challenges of women in these works say about the stability or instability of male values? In addressing the question, you may wish to consider whether the works specifically politicize gender conflict or use the collision between male and female characters as symbols of more universalized conflicts. (You may use
titles from among those cited by Foley, but you need not restrict yourself to the drama; there are also rich examples from the epics.)

2. Define and characterize the chorus in a Greek tragedy: How does it function as a character in the drama? What are some of the jobs that it does and/or ideas that it represents? In your response, refer to at least three Greek tragedies (you may use more). The three must be from the works of no fewer than two authors (for example, one tragedy from one author, two from another), or you may select three tragedies from three respective authors. Reach significant conclusions about how various dramatists use the Chorus for their own dramatic and thematic purposes.

**World Literature: Emphasis in World Literature in English (Postcolonial)**

1. Stephen Slemon argues that a characteristic method of postcolonial studies is to “read for resistance.” Physical resistance to colonialism is sometimes literally dramatized, some works practice a cultural resistance to imperial ideology, and some texts resist literary and generic expectations. Begin your response with a careful definition of *resistance*, and then discuss its presence and use in at least three literary works.

2. Discuss issues of colonialism and patriarchy in at least three works of world literature. What is the position of women in traditional or pre-colonial culture, and what is their position under colonialism and post-independence government? To what extent do the literary texts reveal the interests of women to be aligned with the interests of anti-colonial nationalism, and to what extent are those interests at odds with each other?

**Theory and Practice of Composition and Rhetoric**

1. Explain the major tenets of Aristotelian rhetoric and make an argument about how they are still relevant today. Choose a 20th-/21st-century rhetorical theorist and discuss either how his or her work has been specifically influenced by Aristotle and/or how it specifically responds to Aristotle.

2. Offer some reasons why modern composition theory is viewed by most scholars in this field as “fragmented.” Then offer some suggestions of your own that you feel would restore some sense of “cohesion” to the field of composition studies. Ground your discussion in the work of at least three theorists of composition.

**Technical and Professional Writing**

1. Sometimes it is useful to see key issues in a discipline as involving tension between opposites. Write a unified essay in which you define and distinguish the terms in five of the following pairs. Ground your discussion in relevant scholarship.

   - Writer-based vs. reader-based prose
   - Task-oriented vs. system-oriented documentation
   - Writing process vs. written product
   - Quantitative vs. qualitative approach
   - Paper vs. online documentation
   - Verbal vs. nominal style
   - Academic vs. nonacademic writing
   - Persuasive vs. expository writing
2. People often think that theory and practice have nothing to do with each other, especially when they think of studying writing in professional or nonacademic settings. Defend or criticize the claim that theory and practice are totally separate by explaining the relationship between the two and offering examples taken from research, theory, and/or experience to support your argument.

**Renaissance and 17th-Century British Literature**

1. Make an argument about how the writers of Renaissance and 17th-century Britain inherited, borrowed from, adapted, and/or manipulated materials (plots, characters, mythology, and imagery, for example) from the classical past for their own thematic and formal purposes and for their own audiences. In your response, discuss at least three works from at least two genres.

2. Discuss characteristics of Renaissance tragedy by examining a play by Christopher Marlowe, a play by William Shakespeare, and a play by a later Renaissance playwright such as Webster. How does each writer implicitly or explicitly define tragedy as a genre? How does each writer handle features like plot and characterization? Discuss not only differences between the tragic writers but also significant common values and techniques.

**Restoration and 18th-Century British Literature**

1. In the long 18th-century, the lyric poem, celebrated by Renaissance writers and then rehabilitated by the Romantics, tended to recede into the background as poets used verse for rhetorical purposes. Treating in detail at least three representative poems from the age, discuss the use of poetry as rhetoric: How do the poets use their verse for political, social, satirical, and/or philosophical purposes? What cultural values or pressures inform this conception and use of verse? What particular challenges face the poets who use their verse for rhetorical purposes, and how do they negotiate these challenges? Finally, how effectively do they use their poetry as a rhetorical vehicle (try to make an argument here rather than merely speculate)?

2. Consider how literature of the 18th century responds to, reflects, or defines an emerging middle-class ethos. In your discussion, cite at least three works from at least two different genres.

**American Literature Before 1800**

1. Drawing upon the work of at least three early American writers, discuss the influence of European ideas, habits of thought, and, as applicable, literary genres in American literature before 1800. At what point, if one can be located, does a distinctly American literature emerge that reflects a distinctly American identity?

2. Considering at least three early American authors and drawing upon at least two genres of literature, test the following claim made by historian Christopher Hill: Puritanism provoked many radical social and political changes; however, a revolution in gender relations was not one of them. Rather, despite the fact that Puritanism pushed for the individual to have the liberty to worship God as he saw fit, Puritans were still so patriarchal that they could not—and did not—even imagine a world in which women would enjoy greater access to this or any of the other new rights engendered by Puritan thought.
19TH-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

1. Nature is a favorite subject of poets and novelists, although its significance alters over the course of the 19th century in Britain. Considering one poet and one novelist from the Romantic era and one poet and one novelist from the Victorian era, discuss the importance and representation of nature in their works. Make an argument about the shifting attitudes toward and representations of nature.

2. Social criticism was a predominant concern in 19th-century British fiction and poetry. Authors of this time had much to say about the tumultuous changes taking place in their growing society in such areas as industrialization, religion, education, politics, and the domestic sphere. Choose three authors (poets and/or fiction writers) and analyze their views and treatment of at least two prominent social issues common to all three. At least one author should be a Romantic, at least one a Victorian. As you are able, make an argument about the way in which social criticism develops from the Romantics to the Victorians.

19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE

1. American Realism and its later development in Naturalism as literary movements span the approximate years 1860 to 1914. Select three of the following 19th-century American authors writing during this time and discuss them as realists and/or naturalists:

   Charles Chestnutt
   Stephen Crane
   Theodore Dreiser
   Henry James
   Sarah Orne Jewett
   Frank Norris
   Mark Twain

   In what way(s) is their work exemplary of the literary movement(s)? In what way(s) does their work diverge from the tenets of realism/naturalism, seem not to fit the criteria, or represent countercurrents to the movement(s)? Be as specific as possible in your discussion of the texts and the ways in which they exemplify your definition(s) of Realism and/or Naturalism.

2. The greatest watershed in American history, many argue, is the Civil War. Although, oddly, some mid-century writers (such as Hawthorne, who died toward the closing of the war) wrote comparatively little on the war, most were compelled to confront this Behemoth of our national history. Choosing representatively from among at least three 19th-century American writers, discuss both the political and literary aspects of writings about the issues leading up to the Civil War and/or about the war itself. Choose writers from at least two genres.

20TH-/21ST-CENTURY BRITISH LITERATURE

1. Explore and define the unique nature of British Modernism in terms of its most important characteristics: innovative technique, vision of the self, and themes of how personal identity
must struggle to remain coherent/whole under tremendous philosophical, political, cultural, spiritual, and psychological pressures/changes. Use at least three works from at least two different genres to support your argument.

2. Beginning with a brief description of Modernist poetry in Britain, give a broad overview of subsequent movements, tendencies, and groups characterizing “British” poetry of the rest of the 20th century. Your overview should comprise concise chronological discussions, which should be given texture and support through references to specific poets and poems.

20th-21st-Century American Literature

1. American citizens are promised “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In a well-developed essay, show how modern and contemporary American fiction exposes the hypocrisy and/or subverts the meaning of this statement in order to critique the idea of “the American dream.” In your response, discuss at least three representative works of 20th- (and/or 21st-) century fiction.

2. Test the thesis that reading a piece of short fiction by a writer can help us better read a novel by the same author: Select a short story and a novel by a 20th-/21st-century American writer on your reading list who works in both genres and explain how the story can serve as a guide for reading the novel in terms of such things as (though not limited to or necessarily including all of) theme, style, and literary techniques. If time permits, close with a discussion of which genre—the short story or the novel—better serves to present what you see as the essence of the author that you have chosen for discussion. (Suggestions: Faulkner, Hemingway, O’Connor.)
MODEL PROPOSAL FOR ENGL 5339 (DIRECTED STUDY)*

ROBERT UREN

STAND-UP COMEDY: THEORY & TEXT
SUPERVISING FACULTY: DR. ROBERT DONahoo
FALL 2010

RATIONALE FOR DIRECTED STUDY:

The purpose of this directed study is to create a structured, academic space in which I may pursue a familiarity with and participation in current trends in humor scholarship, with a specific focus on theoretical analyses of stand-up comedy texts. Pragmatically, the course will culminate in my producing an academic writing sample that will demonstrate my ability to function at a high level within the arena of graduate and professional-level critical studies; this demonstration is intended to facilitate my admittance into and success within a PhD program in the field of American Studies, Communications, or English. Less pragmatically, though perhaps more importantly, the course is designed to intensify and formalize my efforts to understand and critique intelligently—to read and respond insightfully to—popular comedic texts, an ambition that informs my scholarly, creative, and personal pursuits.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Increase understanding of academic literature concerning humor
- Enhance knowledge of literary criticism
- Develop ability to analyze texts theoretically within critical frameworks
- Produce original academic writings that contribute to the burgeoning field of stand-up comedy research

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The proposed directed study joins literary criticism, humor studies, and existing stand-up scholarship for the purposes of analyzing stand-up comedy as text. Literary theory and criticism are crucial to the critical evaluation and theorization of any text. Humor studies provide theoretical frameworks invaluable to the analysis of comedy. Recent studies of stand-up comedy utilize both literary criticism and humor scholarship to read stand-up comedy as text. The course features not only a comprehensive survey of stand-up comedy scholarship but also introductions to relevant literary criticism and humor studies.

Despite its popularity, stand-up comedy is among the less theorized, less analyzed media that, to some degree, identify, articulate, and assess cultural meaning for popular audiences.

On television, the cable network Comedy Central features stand-up comedy daily, the premium cable channels Showtime and HBO have a long and ongoing history of airing stand-up

* In your proposal, please follow the general format of this model, adapting as necessary to your own topic.
“specials,” and the broadcast networks regularly feature performances. Finally, although we have seen the end of the stand-up “boom” of the eighties and early nineties, comedy clubs across the United States continue to host thousands of hours of stand-up acts each week. A broader conceptualization of what performances qualify as “stand-up” would increase the presence of the form exponentially, as it would comfortably include sketch comedy troupes and their “televisual” and film projects, late night talk show hosts, and even material converted from traditional stand-up acts for situation comedies and films. Stand-up comedy is a cultural phenomenon in need of deep readings and thoughtful discourse. My work for this directed study will be done in the spirit of meeting that need, however partially it is able to accomplish the broader aims.

**Evaluation:**

**Reading Responses Essays (20% Collectively)**

To organize my experience with the readings, I will present Dr. Donahoo weekly with informal one to three-page arguments in response to that week’s books, articles, and/or chapters. These papers will ensure some degree of comprehension and will, in some cases, grow into more substantial portions of the longer, more formal writings. These will not require formal evaluation beyond assessing their completion.

**Preliminary Writings (30% Collectively)**

I will write two five-page essays in preparation for designing the longer, more rigorous final paper. Each preliminary writing assignment will utilize a theoretical apparatus to read a stand-up performance, performer, or performer’s career.

**Final Paper (50%):**

The course readings and discussions will ultimately inform a publishable paper of twenty to twenty-five pages. The project will use critical works and original readings of primary texts to defend a clear thesis designed to enhance the existing theorization of stand-up comedy as a cultural artifact of consequence.

**Semester Grading Rubric:**

Reading Response Papers .............................................................20% Collectively

Preliminary Writings........................................................................30% Collectively

Final Paper ........................................................................................50%
**Weekly Schedule:**

Dr. Donahoo and I will meet weekly to discuss readings and thoughts, according to the following schedule.

**Week 1 – History, Humor & Stand-up:**

Zoglin, Richard. *Comedy at the Edge*.
Knoedelseder, William. *I’m Dying Up Here*.

**Week 2 – Philosophy:**


**Week 3 – Linguistics:**

Morreall, John. “Verbal Humor without Switching Scripts.”

**Weeks 4 – Rhetoric & Discourse:**

Wilson, Nathan Andrew. *Was That Supposed To Be Funny?*
Greenbaum, Andrea. “Stand-Up Comedy as Rhetorical Argument.”
Pearson, Kyra. “Words Should Do the Work of Bombs.”

**Week 5 – Culture & Folklore:**

---. “Stand-up Comedy as Social and Cultural Mediation.”
---. “Jokes and the Discourse on Disaster.”
Dundes, Alan. Selections from *Cracking Jokes*.

**Week 6 – The Postmodern:**

**Preliminary Essay 1 Due**

Auslander, Philip. “Comedy about the Failure of Comedy.”
Jameson, Frederic. “Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.”
Lyotard, Jean-Francois. ”Defining the Postmodern.” Leitch 1612-1615.
Wuster, Tracy. “Comedy Jokes: Steve Martin and the Limits of Stand-Up Comedy.”
WEEK 7 – PARODY, SATIRE, & IRONY:

Colletta, Lisa. “Political Satire and Postmodern Irony.”
Ritchie, David. “Frame-Shifting in Humor and Irony.”
Shugart, Helene A. “Postmodern Irony as Subversive Rhetorical Strategy.”

WEEK 8 – SOCIOLOGY:

Shouse, Eric. “Role of Affect in the Performance.”

WEEK 9 – BLACKNESS:

Preliminary Essay 2 Due
Schulman, Norma. “The House that Black Built”

WEEK 10 – GENDER:

Butler, Judith. From *Gender Trouble*. Leitch 2488-2501.
Auslander, Philip. “Brought to You by Fem-rage.”

WEEK 11 – PSYCHOLOGY:

Freud, Sigmund. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*.

WEEK 12 – PSYCHOLOGY:

---. “The Signification of the Phallus.” Leitch 1302-1310.

WEEK 13 – ABJECTION:

Limon, John. *Stand-up Comedy in Theory, or, Abjection in America*. 
WEEK 14 – OVER-ORTHODOXY:

Final Essay Due
Keller, Florian. *Andy Kaufman: Wrestling with the American Dream*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS:


DISSERTATION:


THESIS:


ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS:


**Selected Stand-up Comedy Performances**
MODEL SYLLABUS: UNDERGRADUATE-FOR-GRADUATE CREDIT COURSE

ENGLISH 480: CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOP
SPACES AND PLACES: WRITING ABOUT THE AMERICAN WEST, WRITING ABOUT HOME

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
SUMMER MINIESTER 2010
MAY 18-JUNE 1, 2010

DR. SCOTT KAUKONEN
KAUKONEN@SHSU.EDU
OFFICE: 936-294-1407

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

There is something about the landscape of the American West. It is vast and spacious, marked by the seemingly limitless sky, the broad expanse of undeveloped lands, the dramatic uplift of rocks millions of years old, the lavender-hued mountains, the salt flats, the way light changes everything. It is a land of desert and red rock, of pine and lush green valleys, of water and no water. It is mythic and modern, a two-lane blacktop road past ruins ancient and contemporary, a million pottery shards, dozens of abandoned motor courts. It is a land with a complex history, the interaction of Native Americans and Spanish conquistadors, Mexican farmers and Anglo settlers, the Old West and the New West, the Atomic West and the West Yet to Come.

In this course, we will go into the American West and we will read authors who have written about the West and their relationship to it, both personally and communally, in fiction, poetry, and essays. We will write about our own experience within landscape—the landscape of the West, but also the landscapes from which we come, whether the Piney Woods of East Texas, the flat corn-fed plains of the Upper Midwest, or the urban environs of a city like Houston or its ever-expanding suburbs. We will think about what it means to live in a particular place at a particular time, and we will study how writers look closely at the landscape (or the cityscape) and how they write about what they find there—nature, the environment, sure, but also history, the interaction of man with those landscapes. We will consider the way man has attempted to shape the land to his own purposes—whether those purposes be physical, emotional, or spiritual, or economic, political, or environmental.

We will discuss what it means to be from someplace and to go to another place. We will discuss the ways writers make the familiar strange and the strange familiar. We will discuss the ethics of travel writing, the politics of representation—who has the right to write about this place and these people? What grants the traveling writer the authority to speak? We will consider our own relationship as Americans to the history and cultures of the American West, and, in like fashion, to our communities. And we will write. We will write what is known as creative nonfiction, a genre that uses the tools we typically associate with the art of fiction—narrative, scene, dialogue, metaphor, plot—to describe, reflect upon, analyze, and re-create our experiences in relationship to our spaces and places.

We will hike. We will camp. We will, in short, immerse ourselves in the American West.

*Extra readings and assignments required for graduate credit are highlighted in yellow below.*
COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the craft of creative nonfiction in its variety of forms, with an emphasis on writing about spaces and places, particularly the American West;
2. To read and analyze various models of writing about spaces and places (including literary journalism, memoir, personal essay, history, and nature writing), so that many students may understand the flexibility of the form and its attendant possibilities;
3. To expand a student’s vision of the world by taking him or her to new communities, new cultures, and new landscapes, and asking him or her to engage critically with those communities, cultures, and landscapes;
4. To shape a student’s understanding of the relationship between texts and contexts, including the writer himself or herself as one particular context;
5. To develop students’ critical thinking and writing skills, both at the macro and the micro level;
6. To engage the student in reflection and writing about his or her own relationship to spaces and places;
7. To produce student works of creative nonfiction from generative exercises to initial ideas to early drafts and on through revision to polished essays.

TENTATIVE ITINERARY:

May 17—Huntsville
May 18—Lamar, Colorado (approximate location)
May 19—Denver/Leadville, Colorado
May 20—Leadville, Colorado
May 21—Ouray, Colorado
May 22, 23—Arches National Park
May 24—Mexican Hat, Utah
May 25—Acoma, New Mexico
May 26—Chaco Canyon, New Mexico
May 27, 28—Santa Fe, New Mexico
May 29—Taos, New Mexico
May 30—Abiquiu, New Mexico
May 31—Balmorhea State Park (or Ft. Davis State Park), Texas
June 1—Huntsville

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All Students:
On the Road, by Jack Kerouac
Desert Solitaire, by Edward Abbey
Ceremony, by Leslie Marmon Silko
River of Traps, by William deBuys

Graduate Students:
The Nonfictionist’s Guide: On Reading and Writing Creative Nonfiction, by Robert Root

GRADUATE STUDENT READING ASSIGNMENTS PACKET:

From The Solace of Open Spaces, by Gretel Ehrlich, “The Solace of Open Spaces” (pp. 1-15).
From A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time, by John Jackson Brickerhoff, “Seeing New Mexico” (pp. 15-25).
From Horizontal Yellow, by Dan Flores, “Inventing the Southwest in Abiquiu” (chapter 6, pp. 201-252).
From *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition*, by Chris Wilson
From *How the Canyon Became Grand*, by Stephen J. Pyne
From *West of Everything*, by Jane Tompkins, “At the Buffalo Bill Museum, June 1988” (pp. 179-203)
From *The Modern West: American Landscapes, 1890-1950*, by Emily Ballew Neff (Prologue).
From *Sand Creek*, by Simon Ortiz
From *Lasso the Wind*, by Timothy Egan, “Plymouth Rock West” (pp. 33-47)
From *Refuge*, by Terry Tempest Williams, “The Clan of One-Breasted Women” (pp. 281-290).
From *Blood and Thunder*, by Hampton Sides (Chapters on Canyon de Chelley and The Long March).

**Grades:**

Attendance and Participation (40 percent): Given the nature of this trip, nearly half of the grade for the class will be based on attendance and participation. This includes not only the specifically academic elements of the course—the readings and the discussions, the lectures and the exercises—but the communal aspects—putting up and breaking down camp; making meals and washing dishes; hiking and touring; being a good citizen and a good companion. It means carrying one’s own weight on the trip—and then some.

Journal, including writing exercises (20 percent): Students will be required to keep a daily journal about their experiences on the trip. This should not just be a log of events, but should include reflection, critical analysis, and opinion. In many respects, the journal should serve as a place where initial thoughts and ideas for the essays begin to take shape and where writing exercises are performed, but it should not be limited to the material that will find its way into the essays. It should be a personal record of this experience as well. Each day the students will be given a writing exercise—perhaps in relationship to the essays to be discussed that day, perhaps in relationship to a specific element of the craft of nonfiction writing, perhaps in relationship to the places we are visiting that day or visited the day before. The purpose of the exercises is to allow the students to focus on a particular element of the craft of writing, just as a basketball coach might spend an entire practice focused on rebounding drills or the way a music teacher might spend an hour on embrochure. The bulk of these exercises will be included in the journal, but on occasion the professor will require students to share with the class relatively polished versions of the exercises.

Two Essays (15 percent each, 30 percent total): Students will be required to write two essays, the final drafts of each which will be due two weeks from the date we arrive back in Huntsville (so they’re due June 18). During the trip itself, students should be reading closely, making notes, participating in the discussions of craft, and writing initial drafts of their essays. (Since we will not be carrying computers along on the trip, you should expect to write your initial drafts the old-fashioned way—which is to say, by long-hand.) Each of the essays should balance personal narrative and critical reflection. See assignment sheet for more detail.

Group Presentation (10 percent): Each student will be placed in a small group that will provide a presentation to the class on a book-length work of fiction or nonfiction, as listed above. The presentations will approach the books not only in terms of content, but in terms of craft, asking not just what does the author say, but how does he or she say it. We will read these books not just for what the authors have to say about the West, but as models for various approaches to writing about a particular place. See assignment sheet for more detail.
**PAPER FORMAT:**

The final essays should be typed double-spaced in a 12-point font with one-inch borders AND STAPLED. No wacky fonts, please. Any assignments longer than two pages must have page numbers. Correct grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling are expected. Work flawed by pervasive mechanical errors will be penalized accordingly. Always be certain to keep a hard copy and a copy on disk. Title all essays. In the upper right-hand corner, type your name, e-mail address, and the essay’s word count.

**TIMELY SUBMISSIONS:**

The journal and the essays are due by 5 p.m., June 11, 2010. Any late work will be penalized one full grade for each day it is late. Failure to submit any of the work will result in a zero for that portion of the work. Extensions will be granted only in cases of emergency.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM:**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person’s work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus).

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus).
The Nature of Creative Nonfiction:

As Robert Root discusses in the opening chapter of *The Nonfictionist’s Guide*, the definition of creative nonfiction remains contested, and the term can be applied to a wide range of forms. It may include “the personal essay, the memoir, narrative reportage, and expressive critical writing and whose borders with other reality-based genres and forms (such as journalism, criticism, history, etc.) are fluid and malleable.” It may adopt the narrative techniques of fiction and the lyricism of poetry; it may be written in linear fashion, or it may be structured to resemble a triptych or a mosaic or a collage. The author may stand at the center of the essay or may stand on the fringe. This provides you, in these assignments, a great deal of latitude, which can be both freeing and terrifying. In this assignment sheet, I will provide for you some basic parameters that should help you focus your essays, but as with all creative work, we will primarily seek a form that allows you to express your ideas and experiences in the most effective manner rather than attempting the reverse—to fit your ideas and experiences into some pre-made form.

Let’s start with the most basic requirements. By June 11, ten days after we return, you will have provided me with two distinct essays, each a minimum of ten double-spaced pages (or roughly 2500 words). Each should fit within the confines of Root’s rather broad definition of creative nonfiction: “the written expression of, reflection upon, and/or interpretation of observed, perceived, or recollected experience.” Both essays should emerge from your experiences on this trip, including your engagement with the readings, lectures, and discussions (both formal and informal), though the essays should not be limited to your experience of this trip. As creative nonfiction, both essays should focus upon your own relationship to the subject matter at hand. This is not third-person, so-called “objective” academic writing. Creative nonfiction recognizes that there is always a first-person, “subjective” author through whose filter (or eyes) we’re being shown some element of the world. In the best creative nonfiction, it is not merely first-person naval-gazing either. It is not just about you, but rather about the subject matter you’ve chosen to write about, including your relationship to that subject matter. Your responsibility is to make the subject matter and your relationship to it vivid and interesting to your audience. It may be vivid and interesting to you, because it is, in part, about you, but that’s not the same thing as making it vivid and interesting to a disinterested audience. As with all creative writing, we will seek to provide some small insight into the human condition, and to do so with originality, and in a form that best expresses those insights.

Essay about Place:

One of the essays should focus upon the experience of place. It may include reflection upon the places where you have lived or worked or gone to school, places we travel through on this trip, and/or the relationship between those places. When we refer to this as the “West Trip,” we are defining the course by place—a geographical region of the United States, in this case, but a place that is also an idea—the American West. It’s a region of sublime landscapes, both awe-inspiring and terrifying (the definition of the sublime), a region with a bloody, complex, and highly contested history (and present). It has long been (mis)represented in movies and books and music. It is a region of myth and battle, preconceived notions and hard realities. It is a region of wealth and poverty, trails and interstates. To write about a place, you must first attempt to understand it.
Your experience of the West on this trip will not take place in isolation; rather, it will be shaped by your past experiences and ideas and desires—in short, by who you are. Some of you may be returning to regions in which you’ve previously lived or visited; some of you may be leaving Texas for the first time, sludging through a snowstorm for the first time. Some of you may have been raised in city landscapes or lost in suburban sprawl; others of you may have been raised in flatland rural farm country. Which means that you will all have something different to say.

**ESSAYS ABOUT A SUBJECT:**

The second essay should engage with a subject or theme that emerges from the trip—perhaps something concerned with environmental history or political history, an element of nature or of man’s construction.

Examples of the latter category might include Jane Tompkins’ essay about her visit to the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming; Timothy Egan’s literary journalism about Acoma Pueblo; or the writings in Edward Abbey’s *Desert Solitaire*. River of Traps, by William deBuys, manages to incorporate both kinds of writing over the course of its pages.

**FORM:**

For both essays, you will have available for you all the tools in a creative nonfiction writer’s toolbox (we will discuss these as we go along)—narrative, dialogue, plot, scene and summary, poetic language, analysis, reflection, research, interviews, the present and the past, etc.

**EXERCISES:**

As we travel, I will provide you with an extensive collection of exercises—the goal is to provide you with a substantial new exercise each day. You should compose these exercises in your writing journal. These are not intended to be polished pieces of writings. They are, I’d like to think, opportunities. Quite often, the most difficult challenge a writer faces is the blank page. You can write anything. You can do anything. And so how do you know where to begin? The various exercises that I will give you will attempt to address that problem. They are intended to get things jump-started. Some you may love; some you may be indifferent to. Some may prove to be incredibly productive for you; some may prove to be incredibly productive for others, but not for you. When I look at your writing journals at the end, I will look these over. They will not be graded for quality, but simply for effort—did you make the attempt? Those who do the exercises will undoubtedly be producing the raw material for the polished essays that will represent your deepest engagement with the trip. One of the most difficult challenges for a writer outside the context of an academic class is to have the discipline to return day after day to the page; I will push you on this trip and in this class to develop that discipline.

For a writer, everything is potential material. The challenge is to turn that raw material—those experience, those observations, those interpretations—into an essay that engages your reader and affects them in some way.
ASSIGNMENT SHEET
GROUP PRESENTATIONS
DRS. KAUKONEN AND CRANE
WEST TRIP 2010

We both believe that your education is your responsibility, and while it is our responsibility to create an environment conducive to that achievement, it is not our responsibility to merely serve as a conduit of knowledge that passes somehow, magically, from us to you. So while we will lecture and lead discussions, we expect our students to take responsibility for the class and for their own education, both individually and as a group. To this end, we require each student to take the lead on one of the books that form the core of the trip’s readings, and to present that work to the class in conjunction with two or three other students. The presentations should reflect a deep engagement with the work, should respond critically to the issues raised by the work, and should be done as professionally as possible (even without the availability of PowerPoint; yes, that is possible).

There will be two aspects to each presentation, reflecting the two classes that together make up the trip. One aspect we might define as the “content” of the book, which will focus on what the book says, while the other we might define as the “art and craft” of the book, which will focus on how the writer says what he or she has to say. For example, a presentation about the “content” of River of Traps might focus upon the Las Trampas Land Grant or the way in which the book illustrates the changes in the economies of northern New Mexican villages over the course of the Twentieth Century or the inter-generational relationship between William deBuys and Jacobo Romero. A presentation on the “art and craft” of River of Traps might focus upon the relationship between the lyrical cantos (the inter-chapters) and the book’s central narrative, or it might examine the way deBuys incorporates archival research, formal and informal interviews, and personal observation and experience in the creation of the book, and the way he weaves these various strands together, or it might focus upon the way deBuys writes about the landscape and the people in it. The latter aspect should be the focus of students enrolled in the creative writing course who are studying River of Traps as a model of a certain kind of creative nonfiction, while the former should be the focus of students enrolled in the history course who might be most interested in what deBuys reveals about the history of El Valle and the surrounding region as it changed over the course of the Twentieth Century.

Each presentation should include the following aspects: (1) Description. Though each course packet will include an excerpt from each book and though a significant number of students will read each book, the presentation should provide a brief overview of the book that’s rooted in summary, but is not mere summary. It should not bother with a blow-by-blow, chapter-by-chapter account, but should efficiently summarize the book’s central concerns (or thesis, if it can be said to have one) and the manner by which the author goes about this task. What, in brief, does the author have to say and how does he or she say it? (2) Analysis. As readers of the book, you are not merely vessels through whom the information flows to be distilled and summarized for your peers. You should actively contextualize, interpret, and critique the work. What is the significance of this work in the context of this course? What connections might you make between this work and others that we read or that you have read? How do these works fit into the larger conversation about the American West? About creative nonfiction? How do they reinforce or challenge prevailing attitudes or ideas? (3) Personal response. This isn’t merely to ask whether or not you like or do not like the book, or whether you agree or disagree in some way, but to acknowledge that our responses to literature are often shaped, even in ways we might not yet be aware of, by who we are, what we (think we) know, and what our prior experiences have been. Though for our purposes we would place the greater focus of the presentations on items 1 and 2, we would not exclude the validity of 3.

Each presentation should incorporate significant contributions from each member and should take approximately 45 minutes, with time for questions from the class to follow.
MODEL PROPOSAL FOR TAKING UNDERGRADUATE COURSE FOR GRADUATE CREDIT*

HEATHER BROWN

ENGLISH 480: CREATIVE NONFICTION WORKSHOP
SPACES AND PLACES: WRITING ABOUT THE AMERICAN WEST, WRITING ABOUT HOME

DR. SCOTT KAUKONEN
MAY 2010

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE:

I consider this course not only a rare opportunity to learn about the culture of America by studying its landscapes but also a chance to discover the country’s literature in a way that cannot be experienced in the classroom. Not having taken very many American literature courses in the past, I hope that this experience will give me a good foundation for exploring the authors that have contributed to our country’s national identity and fill in some gaps in my reading. My studies have rarely led me to read literature beyond the nineteenth century, so I relish the opportunity to be exposed to twentieth-century literature under the guidance of a professor who is a specialist in this period of American fiction. I believe that national identity is partly created by its literature, and I would like to learn how this is the case in more recent American culture. By seeing the landscapes that have inspired the literature that his course focuses on, I can begin to understand both landscapes and texts in a way that would not be possible independently of each other.

In order to understand the regions that inspired texts like Ceremony and Desert Solitaire, I will be able to discover how the authors have either failed or succeeded in accurately translating visual experiences into the written word. Comparing the reality of the Laguna reservation and Arches National Park to their representations in the texts will reveal the craft of writing in a way that goes beyond reading the words on the page alone. As a scholar who is also interested in creative writing, I will be able to learn the discipline of a craft that seems somewhat foreign to me currently. I know that not only will my academic understanding of literature grow during this course and trip, but my creativity will flourish as well by being given the chance to write down my own observations of the American West. There seems no better way to combine the creative with the academic than the way this course weaves them together so seamlessly.

Furthermore, I have recently become interested in the structuralist theory of Claude Levi-Strauss concerning the power of the written word, and I believe that this course will give me a firsthand application of Levi-Strauss’ ideas. I will be granted the opportunity to participate in the same kind of anthropological study that he undertook. Levi-Strauss claims that the written word is so powerful that it can create and shape national identity. The authors covered in this course have recreated the American landscape that inspired them to use the power of words to reshape our idea of these specific places.

* In your proposal, please follow the general format of this model, adapting as necessary to your own topic. Extra readings and assignments required for graduate credit are highlighted in yellow below.
ENG 480 is a chance for me to explore the literature of the country I call home. I hope to discover America on this trip. I hope to understand how the literature of my country can shape its identity. Lastly, I hope to be given the chance to explore my own writing under the direction of a professor who specializes in these interests, along with fellow classmates.

**EXTRA WORK REQUIRED FOR GRADUATE CREDIT:**

In addition to the regular class readings—the four long works and the individual selected essays on the bibliography below—I will be reading works that deal with the craft of creative nonfiction. These readings, listed on pages 2-3 of the course syllabus, include Robert Root’s *The Nonfictionist’s Guide: On Reading and Writing Creative Nonfiction*; selected essays from *The Art of the Personal Essay*, edited by Phillip Lopate; and selected essays from Gretel Ehrlich’s *The Solace of Open Spaces*, beyond those required for undergraduates in the course. Because this is a writing workshop, these supplemental readings deal, appropriately, with specific craft issues in writing creative nonfiction. Similarly, along with the journal writing, group presentation, and two formal essays expected of the rest of the class, I will undertake an extra assignment of planning and delivering a lecture on one of these issues of craft. (See below.) I am interested in pursuing a career in teaching on a university level, so this assignment offers a unique and valuable sort of job training.

**GRADUATE BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Flores, Dan. “Inventing the Southwest in Abiquiu.” *Horizontal Yellow.* 201-252.
Ortiz, Simon. *Sand Creek.*
Pyne, Stephen J. *How the Canyon Became Ground.*
Wilson, Chris. *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition.*
**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**EXPANDED FORMAL ESSAYS**

**ESSAY AND LECTURE ON CRAFT**

To earn graduate credit for this course, a student must expand the length of the two formal essays to between fifteen and twenty pages (compared with the ten-twelve page essays required of undergraduates).

The graduate student must also submit an additional paper of approximately ten pages, which closely examines an element of the craft of creative nonfiction, and then share that paper with the undergraduate students in a teaching environment. The assignment recognizes that our graduate students are preparing themselves not only as writers but also as teachers of creative writing. The process of the assignment should deepen their own understanding of the craft and then provide practical, hands-on experience in teaching that aspect of the craft.

The specifics of the craft lecture should be composed in consultation with the faculty member, but it might include, as examples, a discussion of the role of point of view in creative nonfiction or of the ethics of travel writing or of the use of fragmentation in the structure of an essay. The craft lecture should draw upon the readings within the course, both those assigned to the undergraduates and the additional readings assigned to the graduate student. It should make use of examples that the undergraduate students will be familiar with.

Since the lecture will be delivered while the class is on the road, the student will not be able to depend upon technology such as PowerPoint or web access or even posters. Therefore, it must be written and conducted in such a way as to achieve and maintain student interest. It is its own genre of creative writing and should be written with this in mind. Originality, insight, wit, narrative, voice—all aspects of creative nonfiction—should be a part of the craft lecture as well.

The lecture should be fifteen-twenty minutes in length and should include additional time for student questions and responses.
Candidate: Theresa Neman
SSN/Student ID: 0111-111
Department: ENGLISH
Degree: MA

Please attach a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus as required by your department. Please see department instructions for preparation of your prospectus.

Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval:

Printed Name Signature
Dr. Paul Child, Thesis Director
Dr. Robert Adams
Dr. Audrey Murfin

Administrative Approval:

Director, Graduate Studies in English Date
Chair, Department of English Date
Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Date

Theresa Neman

The Critical Problem:

In the later years of his life, declining in health, his closest friends dead or distanced, Alexander Pope chose William Warburton to act as executor of his estate and editor of his works. This appointment of Warburton has generally been seen as a reward for his public defense of Pope against attacks upon *The Essay on Man*. In 1751, seven years after Pope’s death, Warburton produced an edition of the *Collected Works* laden, in Scriblerian fashion, with elaborate footnotes, extensive commentary, essays-in-brief tracing sources and allusions, and translations of Pope’s Latin and Greek transcriptions. He also included critical arguments about what he thought to be Pope’s intentions in various poems.

Not long after the appearance of Warburton’s edition, readers questioned both the wisdom and the motives of his editing. Samuel Johnson suggested that Warburton could never restrain himself from “saying something when there is nothing to be said” (Evans 174). And in *The Life of Pope*, although acknowledging that Warburton “excelled in critical perspicacity,” Johnson remarks not long after that the editor “has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer’s head” (426, 434). Other contemporaries also remarked incidentally upon the intrusive heavy-handedness of Warburton’s notes and commentary.¹ More pointed critical attention to Warburton’s editorial apparatuses appeared in the nineteenth century. Isaac Disraeli, author of *Quarrels with Authors*, questioned the intent of the commentary and argued that Warburton used his control of Pope’s works as a machine to publish his own opinions. John

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¹ Miss Catherine Talbot wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Talbot, “Our present after-supper author is Mr. Pope in Mr. Warburton’s edition….The notes are worth any body running over; some very wild, some very ingenious, some full of amusing anecdotes, some bitterly but not Wittily satirical, but merely rough, unjust, and angry, and the greatest number, true commentator like, explaining what needs no explanation, and wire-drawing for meanings the author never thought of” (qtd. in Evans 174-77).
Wilson Croker questioned the authenticity of the footnotes that Warburton attributed to Pope, insinuating that the editor had written them himself.\textsuperscript{19} For the most part, these early criticisms of Warburton’s notes and commentary were \textit{ad hominem} attacks questioning his motives. But no one could do more than imply his intent and self-interest: Because Warburton, as executor of Pope’s estate, owned all of his papers, no critics had access to the manuscripts; they could not know if Pope had written notes attributed to him.

Pope’s manuscripts did not survive, so the same obstacle continued to handicap readers in the twentieth century, when suspicions about Warburton’s motives and editorial manipulations grew. His biographer A W. Evans agreed that Warburton had used Pope and his control of Pope’s works to serve his own interests, but he made this assertion with less vitriol than Disraeli and Croker had. More recent scholars, including R.H. Griffin, John Trimble, and Seth Rudy, have also questioned the criticism that Warburton imposed on Pope’s works. Griffin, for example, accused him of altering Pope’s works, but he left open the suggestion that Warburton later reversed course and attempted to restore some of Pope’s works to their original states. Most recently, Howard Erskine-Hill has concluded that critics can neither trust nor ignore Warburton (\textit{Selected Letters}). While one might contend that additional footnotes and other extra-literary devices would not impact the critical understanding of a work, many of Pope’s recent critics have held that both the extensiveness and authoritative tone of Warburton’s additions do lead or mislead readers and, in their intrusiveness, interrupt the poetic rhythms and damage the coherence of the works. Warburton’s pedantries and ponderous prose, they argue, denature Pope’s verse. Such was the influence of Warburton’s editorial work that Pope’s reputation evolved from that of the most celebrated poet of the eighteenth century to that of a prose writer.

\textsuperscript{19} In 1831, Croker himself agreed to undertake an edition of Pope, but he died in 1857 before he was able to complete the work, The first volumes of his edition were published in 1871 (Sherburn, \textit{The Early Career} 19-22).
In 1880, Matthew Arnold remarked famously of Dryden and Pope that they “are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose” (9: 181).

Thesis Objectives and Methodology:

Those recent critics who have raised concerns about Warburton’s editorial “intrusions” have tended to do so incidentally in their discussions of Pope’s work; none has given primary attention to Warburton’s processes, commentaries, and notes on Pope’s complete works. While a comprehensive study of Warburton’s editing of Pope’s collected works is more than can be undertaken in this thesis, I will address both the nature and extent of the notes and commentaries in three important and representative pieces: An Essay on Man (1733-34), The Dunciad Variorum (1729), and The Rape of the Lock (1717) (listed here and addressed in the thesis in order of Warburton’s evolving role as Pope’s editor). Although I will avoid the temptation that other readers have indulged by impugning his motives, it does seem clear that Warburton, having insinuated himself into Pope’s favor, pursued an editorial course determined by his own literary and religious agenda. Operating with Pope’s permission to publish the poems, he included the notes and commentaries but left them, he claimed, “otherwise unchanged.” In fact, he changed wordings, rhymes, and couplets, and he added content within the footnotes that limited or obscured Pope’s original meanings. Some of Warburton’s notes claim that Pope himself “intended” these changes. Without further documentation, however, we cannot know.

Although Pope’s autograph manuscripts are not available, access to both Pope’s works and Warburton’s editions of those same works in the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO) database allows scholars now to compare the versions of both men. So in order to develop the discussion of Warburton’s role as editor, the thesis will reconstruct, as faithfully as

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20 Pope specified in his last will and testament that Warburton could add commentaries and notes without altering the works themselves.
possible from the available documents, a line of transmission from versions of Pope’s works published under his hand to the same poems in Warburton’s 1751 edition of the *Collected Poems*. It will then examine and analyze the editorial devices from the different versions, with an eye toward identifying Warburton’s additions, emendations, notes, and extra-literary commentary. Distinguishing Warburton’s work from Pope’s own is more complicated than it may seem at first because Warburton’s role as editor evolved under Pope’s own guidance. After Warburton, inexplicably and without solicitation, defended *An Essay on Man* in *A Vindication of Mr. Pope’s Essay on Man from the Misrepresentations of Mr. de Crousaz* (1738), Pope befriended his apologist and invited his editorial suggestions. With *An Essay on Man* serving as an introduction of poet and editor, the two jointly produced an edition of the work in 1743, the year before Pope’s death. In the same year, a collaborative edition of *The Dunciad Variorum* appeared. The title page of *An Essay on Man* claims explicitly that Warburton provided “Commentary and Notes.”21 Because both works were produced jointly, however, it is difficult to distinguish the individual author of notes. In his later edition, Warburton appended the letter “P.” to notes that he claimed Pope himself had written. But scholars have contested these attributions, some suggesting that Warburton appropriated the “P.” for some of his own notes to give them authority. Warburton’s editorial role in *The Rape of the Lock* is easier to distinguish from Pope’s because poet and editor did not collaborate on any edition of the work in Pope’s own lifetime. Warburton’s 1751 edition of the mock-epic more clearly show his editorial hand.

Thesis Outline:

The thesis will comprise five chapters, the first an introduction, the next three discussions of Warburton’s editing of the three representative works, and the final one a brief conclusion:

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21 Suggestively, the title page of the 1743 *Dunciad* promises “the Prolegomena of Scriblerus, and Notes Variorum” without mentioning Warburton by name.
Chapter One: Introduction

In this chapter I will lay out the critical problem, addressed earlier in this prospectus, and detail the history of Warburton’s and Pope’s personal and professional relationship. While Pope believed that he was befriending an apologist for his work, Warburton was well aware that he was befriending a poet who had the fortune, or misfortune, of being acknowledged a great writer in his own day. Commentators like Disraeli questioned his motives, especially because he had earlier written contumaciously of Pope in a letter, “Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius!” (qtd. in 244) Under Pope’s favor, Warburton found his own literary fame and was introduced to Ralph Allen, who would settle him in a living, secure a bishopric for him, and even introduce him to his future wife; Allen, who had inherited much of Pope’s library, left his entire library, in turn, to Warburton. Although I cannot draw definitive conclusions about Warburton’s motives for insinuating himself into Pope’s company, this introductory chapter will consider what others have charged. There is Disraeli, for example, who sneered that “the proud and supercilious Warburton [often] crouched and fawned” upon those like Pope who could serve his own interests (242). This chapter will acknowledge such charges.

Chapter Two: An Essay on Man

Around An Essay on Man swirls much of the controversy about the relationship between Warburton and Pope. Before defending the poem against attacks on theological and philosophical grounds, Warburton had dismissed it privately as a mere collection of allusions derived “from the worst passages of the worst authors” (qtd. in Tyers 49). When the Swiss theologian Crousaz attacked Pope’s Leibnizian theory and charged Pope himself with deism in
1738, however, Warburton rushed to the poet’s defense, without ever having met him. Published in 1738, his *Vindication of an Essay on Man* sealed his relationship with Pope.

*An Essay on Man* allows scholars a unique opportunity to examine Warburton’s editorial processes and agenda. Pope’s original work, comprising four “epistles,” contains only four footnotes, each explaining an allusion within the work. Warburton’s *Vindication* is itself an extended gloss upon the work, which demonstrates his impulse toward prose explanation and commentary. In the 1743 edition of *An Essay*, undertaken jointly by Pope and Warburton, the number of notes has swollen extensively from Pope’s original four, and they are intertwined with running commentary. (Because the work is a collaboration, Pope likely maintained control of the poem itself and gave his blessing to Warburton’s additions, but I do want to be careful of presuming this.) In Warburton’s 1751 edition, the work is forty pages longer than the original, and there are forty-five extensive notes, the forty-third of which is a full page long. Interestingly, none of these notes carries the attribution to “P.” that we find in other works edited by Warburton. Warburton has collapsed his own notes with Pope’s.

This chapter will compare the three versions of *An Essay on Man*, from the original 1734 edition to the 1751 edition and look also at Warburton’s *Vindication*. In doing so, it will consider not only the method of Warburton’s editing of the poem but also the religious and philosophical implications of his notes and the way that they lead readers to his own interpretation of Pope’s poem.

Chapter Three: *The Dunciad Variorum*

*The Dunciad Variorum* provides another glimpse into Pope’s and Warburton’s working relationship and into the increasing measure of control that Warburton asserted over the poet’s

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22 Crousaz had read a corrupt French translation of *An Essay on Man*. But his charges greatly upset Pope, who had derived the Leibnizian philosophy underpinning the poem not from his own reading but from conversations with his friend Bolingbroke.
works. The 1729 edition of *The Dunciad* crowns Lewis Theobald, a friend and mentor of Warburton himself, as King of the Dunces; at this time, of course, Warburton had no relationship with Pope, but there are indications that he feared that he himself would become a target of Pope’s ridicule. When he came to know Pope, he encouraged him to rewrite *The Dunciad*. And *The Dunciad Variorum*, produced in 1743 with Warburton’s collaboration, removes Theobald from the throne of Dunces and includes several of Warburton’s own enemies among their number. In an “Advertisement to the Reader” of *The Dunciad Variorum*, Warburton also gives a rationale for adding notes, claiming that he is augmenting the work of the Scriblerians after listening to the author’s own “explanation of several passages in his Works.” By adding notes and commentaries, of course, he is also insinuating himself into the inner circle of Pope’s Scriblerians—”Mr. Cleland, Dr. Arbuthnot, and others”—an insinuation that connects him with the processes by which the poem was conceived and written.

Warburton’s 1751 edition of *The Dunciad Variorum*, argue critics Catherine Ingrassia and Claudia Thomas, is stylistically opposed to the collaborative 1743 edition. The reason, they suggest, is that Warburton, bound by his own pedantry and heavy prosing, has missed the point of Pope’s satire upon pedants and prosifiers. While Pope’s own footnotes in his poems are typically sparse and are reserved for specific literary allusions, in his original version of the *The Dunciad Variorum*, Pope included copious notes as part of the satirical apparatus of the poem: These notes and variations, which overwhelm the content of the poem itself, are the very type of Scriblerian commentary that he is satirizing in writers like Theobald. As Seth Rudy remarks, “The relatively unimportant details and distractions satirized by many of the annotative remarks…sometimes threaten to overwhelm the verse and occasionally drive it almost entirely from the page” (11). In his 1751 of the poem, Warburton, apparently missing the point of these
notes, burdens the work with the very type of explicative commentary that Pope is ridiculing in the poem. He thereby blurs the contrast between Pope’s original satiric apparatus and his own editorial apparatus and thus defuses the satiric function of the poem.

This chapter will examine the three versions of *The Dunciad Variorum*, from the original 1729 edition to the 1751 edition. It will consider especially the way that Warburton insinuated himself into the very process of composition. It will also give a reading of misreading, demonstrating how Warburton’s heavy-handed annotations denatured the satire of Pope’s satire on heavy-handed annotators.

Chapter Four: *The Rape of the Lock*

Although *The Rape of the Lock* is the earliest of the poems under discussion, it was the last of the three that shows the evolving role of Warburton as editor. During Pope’s own lifetime, Warburton never collaborated with the poet in any production of the work, so I can more clearly distinguish between Pope’s own editorial apparatus and Warburton’s processes in the 1751 edition of the *Collected Works*.

For my reference text, I will use the first full version of the poem: Pope began the work in 1712 and added sections in 1714 and again in 1717, in which year he published the complete poem in its final form in *The Works of Mr. Alexander Pope*. I will compare this original full edition with later versions published during the poet’s own lifetime. The analysis of these versions will provide all of Pope’s original notes for the poem; these tend to explain classical Greek and some Hebrew allusions. In the 1751 edition of Pope’s *Collected Works*, Warburton added thirty-eight footnotes, the most influential and problematic being the note declaring Clarissa “The Moral” of this mock epic. It was an investigation of the Clarissa-as-moral footnote.

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23 It appears independently in 1729 and then in various *Miscellanies* and editions of his *Collected Works* throughout the rest of Pope’s life.
in fact, that first brought Warburton’s editorial hand to my attention. The contentious responses to this particular note have shown how problematic Warburton’s editorial intrusions have become. Some readers, like Erskine-Hill, counter that Clarissa’s speech in Canto V, the last addition that Pope added to the poem, in 1717, is not a heavy-handed moral injunction but a pointed discussion of Jacobin political issues (“The Political Poet” 131). Others regard it primarily by its structural function, as providing a symmetrical contrast in ideals and behaviors to those of Belinda and the Baron. Yet others read it as a mock form of a speech from the *Iliad* between two generals, just before their men are defeated in battle. Warburton’s reduction of the speech to monolithic moral obviates more nuanced readings of these sorts.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The body of this thesis is concerned with discussing Warburton’s editorial processes, especially as they changed or redirected meaning in the three poems. But I am also interested in the continuing impact of his notes, commentary, and emendations, as well as it can be defined. To this end, I will examine the poems in the authoritative modern Twickenham edition, published between 1939 and 1969. I am interested especially in how the editors may have collapsed Warburton’s and Pope’s own notes and other editorial devices.

Having examined these features, I will use the brief conclusion to summarize the results of my investigation and make an argument about how we should view Warburton’s editorial work as we read Pope’s poetry.
Preliminary Bibliography


Candidate: Melanie Sweeney

SSN/Student ID: 0222-222

Department: ENGLISH

Degree: MA

Proposed Topic: White on White: Collected Stories

Please attach a copy of the Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus as required by your department. Please see department instructions for preparation of your prospectus.

Thesis/Dissertation Committee Approval:

Printed Name                          Signature

Dr. Paul Ruffin, Thesis Director

Dr. Linda Cook

Dr. Scott Kaukonen

Administrative Approval:

Director, Graduate Studies in English            Date

Chair, Department of English                  Date

Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences Date
Thesis Prospectus: White on White: Collected Stories

Melanie Sweeney

*White on White* is a creative thesis consisting of five to seven short stories (approximately 80 to 120 pages total) and a critical introduction. The collection covers a range of themes, including isolation, loss, mortality, identity, faith, obsession, sexuality, and growing up. In my critical introduction, I will discuss my influences and the themes and subject matter that situate my works within the scope of fiction from post-World War II to today.

The title *White on White* refers to the subtle shades of perception and truth in each of the stories. It also refers to the invisibility of isolated characters in relation to their world, and it suggests single-mindedness to fault for some characters. Finally, the title is shared by a famous collection of abstract paintings by Kasimir Malevich, which he said represented the “supremacy of pure feeling” by denying objective representation (qtd. By Pioch). The single similarity between this abstract visual art and my realism fiction is that both attempt to bring out emotion in the audience. Despite that connection, my selection of the title is unrelated to this popular piece of art. Malevich’s reductive Suprematism art “consists of images that had no reference at all to reality;” my aim is to ground my stories in reality (Pioch).

As a form, the short story is ideal for my project as it offers brief slices of life, following a significant conflict and its resolution and implications for characters. The short story, as opposed to the novel, presents a minimal slice of reality, showing only what is necessary for realizing that conflict and resolution. Whereas the novel may follow several subplots and rises and falls in action, the short story is more direct and compressed. This form allows me to get to the heart of a character’s transformation or shift in understanding with clarity and precision. A collection of stories allows me to explore the wide array of themes and subjects I am interested
in writing about. Part of my experience as a writer is that I observe the world around me and attempt to portray it realistically and with an underlying message of truth about it. This curiosity and process of reflection is best communicated through a series of diverse stories, and I will attempt to tie these varied portrayals of life together through over-arching themes and common social contexts.

The central theme that connects these stories is isolation. Each main character, as well as some minor characters, is isolated either by choice or by circumstance, and dealing with that isolation—whether that means breaking free from it or accepting it—underlies each central conflict. In “Mary Louise’s Life after Len,” a ninety-year-old woman finds herself isolated from her family for most of her life because she could not stop longing for her past. When she has the opportunity to live her lost life, she realizes what she has given up in her choice to isolate herself, and she has to confront that choice and its consequences in order to attempt a connection.

“Waking Up” deals with a character searching for answers after his twin sister dies. He is isolated by his inability to grieve and to believe in anything in a world full of blind faith. “Cal’s Last Call” follows a divorcee’s fall as he struggles to stay sober in order to maintain visitation rights with his kids. In “Back Seat Longing,” a story about teenage girls who long to grow up, Christina and Haley become isolated during a shared sexual experience in which one fails to perform and the other is raped.

In most of the stories, the isolation descends following some loss. Mary Louise spends her entire adult life nostalgic for her youthful accomplishments and possibilities, and then her husband dies. In “Waking Up,” Charlie loses both his sister and his faith. Cal loses his family through divorce, and he loses them further as his wife moves on with another man. “Mary Louise” and “Waking Up” also both deal with mortality through confronting the loss of loved
ones. Mary Louise must also confront her own age and the reality of her remaining short life. Charlie must face his loss of faith and its implications for the afterlife. He carries around a severed foot in an attempt to hold onto something tangible. Haley becomes isolated after her rape, and Christina retreats inwardly after she fails to have sex and to protect her cousin.

Obsession and addiction are prominent themes as well. Mary Louise’s obsession with the life she could have had isolates her from her own family. Charlie’s obsession with finding answers prompts him to keep the severed foot and investigate its origin with desperate single-mindedness. Cal’s addiction to alcohol and his obsession with holding onto his family lead to his fall. Thirteen-year-old Christina’s unwavering pursuit of sexual maturity leads her and Haley to share a sexual experience neither is emotionally prepared to handle.

The theme of growing up is less prominent in the stories dealing with older characters (i.e., “Mary Louise” and “Cal’s Last Call”), but it is central to “Waking Up,” which follows a twenty-year-old boy wrestling with issues of identity, faith, and mortality for the first time, as well as “Back Seat Longing,” a story about four teenage girls who are eager to mature quickly. These girls link sexual experience to maturity, and they become aware of their age when the adult experiences they seek bring heavy consequences. Their single-minded pursuit of maturity separates them from each other and thrusts emotional and physical issues on them that they are unequipped to deal with, ironically forcing them to grow up despite the obvious fact that they are not ready.

These themes are prominent in post-World War II American fiction, which deals heavily with nostalgia and isolation. The social context in my stories reflects the experience of middle-class, white, American families at the turn of the 21st century, which I will discuss further in my critical introduction. Although the obvious oppression and isolation of other groups makes for a
rich context to explore, even less clearly marginalized groups like the middle-class, white American have experienced (and continue to experience) jarring isolation as a result of lost ideals post-World War II. A breakdown of the nuclear family is one such lost ideal, which I explore in “Cal’s Last Call.” In “Mary Louise,” the nuclear family system fails to satisfy the wife and mother who longs for independence. I look at the behavior of young white girls today who are more and more caught up in emulating celebrities, whether as result of those changing family ideals or as a separate phenomenon, in “Back Seat Longing.” Crisis of faith resulting from of disillusionment is another issue of this American middle class that I explore in “Waking Up.” American literature of this period is marked by characters who turn inward to retreat from a fast-changing world they feel out of touch with. Our society as a whole looks for distractions in technology to avoid facing the harsh realities of war, terrorism, an uncertain economy and more, placing them further out of touch. Americans’ narcissistic self-interest has further isolated us from community and our own humanity. The nostalgia of both my characters and myself in these stories is evident in the works of many of my influences. The following writers have shaped my work through their social context, subject matter, themes, and more, and I will discuss them further in my critical introduction: Sylvia Plath, Sandra Cisneros, J.D. Salinger, Jeffrey Eugenides, and nonfiction writers Mary Karr and Alissa Quart.

My clearest influence in both style and theme is Sylvia Plath. Her poetry—most notably from *Ariel*—and *The Bell Jar* deal with isolation, mortality, loss, sexuality, identity, and growing up. Her narration in *The Bell Jar* offers a blend of short and complex sentences as well as an honest voice that presents serious matters of sexuality, identity, mortality, and more with tones alternately serious and lighthearted. Many of my first-person narrators take on a similar voice, offering a realistic balance of seriousness and sarcastic or jovial lightheartedness. I think this
balance is important as it offers relief from intense emotional moments and reflects how many people cope with serious situations by turning to humor.

Sandra Cisneros’s vignettes in *The House on Mango Street* deal with isolation, identity, sexuality, and growing up. They follow Esperanza, who, like the author, wishes to share her own experience where the world offers no reflection of it. These vignettes capture subtle but significant shifts in Esperanza’s world view and maturity level. Cisneros’s influence on my writing is most obvious in *Back Street Longing* as adolescent girls explore their sexuality. Just as Esperanza and her friends are not ready for the shoes that solicit male attention, my girls are equally innocent and grasping for maturity beyond their emotional level.

Mary Karr’s memoirs *The Liars’ Club* and *Cherry* address growing up, following first her adolescence with sexual assault, family disturbance, and uncertain identity, and then her teenage years with drug use, running away from home, and maturing further. These themes are relevant to my stories, and the female narration offers insight into the female experience, which I myself focus on in “Back Seat Longing.”

J.D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*, a coming-of-age story similar to *The Bell Jar*, deals with isolation and the inability to let go of childhood idealism. In my own “Waking Up,” Charlie struggles with a sibling death as does Holden Caulfield, and he too struggles with a new perception of his world as a darker place than the one he knew before. Despite Holden’s youth, he is also nostalgic for the past, which is a major isolating factor for my characters, Cal and Mary Louise.

Jeffrey Eugenides’ *The Virgin Suicides* addresses the loss of neighborhoods in suburban America and the narrator’s struggle to understand the mysterious suicides of a family of sisters in their community. His lifelong process of investigating the events leading up to those suicides
reveals the obsessive human tendency to try to understand the world and our place in it. This obsessive search for meaning is addressed in “Waking Up” as Charlie searches for a tangible belief to fill the void of understanding the world caused by his sister’s death.

Finally, Alissa Quart’s *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers* is a text that analyzes the harmful effects of media and social pressures for young girls and teenagers to perfect their bodies and objectify themselves. Although my main goals as a writer are to reveal truths about the world and its people and to entertain my readers, I also have an interest in expressing my opinion that young girls today are isolated by social and media pressures to objectify themselves and mature too quickly. My concern that television, music, and movies have great influence on this impressionable group of people is expressed in “Back Seat Longing”; however, my interest in this issue is always embedded in a realistic, fully-formed story of literary focus, not simply a statement with the elements of a story forced onto it.

In addition to the above influences, my work shares similarities with many other post-World War II writers who focused on isolation and nostalgia. My emphasis on realism rather than on post-modern experimentation or on presenting mere chaos is central to my presentation of true people and experiences in the world. My voice also has some similarities to that of Lorrie Moore. Other writers whose work I plan to cite in the critical introduction include John Cheever, Raymond Carver, ZZ Packer, and Mary Gaitskill, John Updike, and Joyce Carol Oates.

In addition to my fiction reading list, I will also read various essays on fiction and utilize the Newton Gresham Library and InterLoan Services through Sam Houston State University to develop my critical introduction, which will further explain the above discussion of themes, influences, and aesthetic in *White on White*, and the collection’s connection to other works of fiction.
Bibliography


UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATE AND FEDERAL LAWS

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Sam Houston State University adhere rigorously to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which states that academically qualified students with physical and/or learning disabilities

1) are granted full and equal access to and participation in courses, program, services, activities, and facilities offered through the University;

2) receive reasonable academic and physical accommodations and/or auxiliary aids and services, as supported by documentation;

3) are guaranteed confidentiality in all information related to their disability, except as disclosures are legally required or permitted; and

4) are guaranteed information in an accessible format.

In order to qualify for classroom accommodations, students with physical and/or learning disabilities that adversely affect their classwork must register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in the Lee Drain North Annex.

    Phone Number: 936-294-3512
    E-Mail Address: disability@shsu.edu

Students with disabilities should speak with their professors about classroom accommodations before the term begins and must present the professors with paperwork from the Disabilities Services Office no later than the first class day.

All disclosures of disabilities are strictly confidential.

Information paraphrased from “Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Students with Disabilities,” from the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities web page.
FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

Sam Houston State University upholds the freedom of all individuals to practice the religion of their choice, as defined by Chapter 110 of the Texas Constitution and Statutes.

Section 51.911 (b) of the Texas Education Code requires that “an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose.” A “religious holy day” is defined as a day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 of the Texas State Tax Code.

A student whose absence is excused under this subsection of the Education Code may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the religious holy day excuses her or him, without penalty, provided that the student does so within a reasonable time after the absence.

University policy 86100 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student who wishes to observe a religious holy day that falls on a class day or assignment due date must present the instructor with a written statement concerning the religious holy day at the beginning of the term.
FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, is a federal law which provides that colleges and universities will maintain the confidentiality of student education records. This law also affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.

The law basically says that no one outside the institution shall have access to students’ education records nor will the institution disclose any information from those records without the written consent of the student. There are exceptions, of course, so that certain personnel within the institution may see the records, including persons in an emergency in order to protect the health or safety of students or other persons.

Additionally, under FERPA, students have the right to

- Inspect and review their education records
- Seek to amend their education records
- Have some control over the disclosure of information from their education records (Buckley Amendment)
- File a complaint for an alleged violation of FERPA rights

FERPA law provides that an institution of higher education shall state what information in a student education record is to be considered Directory Information, which may be released without prior student consent. Under FERPA, Sam Houston State University has established the following as directory information:

- Name
- Local/Home/E-mail Addresses
- Major/Minor
- Local/Home Telephone Numbers
- Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and Date of Award
- Honors and Awards
- Classification
- Extracurricular Activities
- Birth Date and Place of Birth
- Names and Addresses of Parents/Legal Guardians
- Weight, Height, and Related Information of Athletic Team Member

The above directory information will be available for release to the general public. However, the Buckley Amendment under FERPA, states that each student has the right to inform Sam Houston State University that any or all of the above information is not to be released. Sam Houston State University will honor the student’s request to restrict the release of “Directory Information” as listed.
A student may restrict the release of directory information by submitting the Buckley Amendment Form (found on this page under the Forms link) to the Registrar’s Office located on the 3rd floor of the Estill Building. Forms must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office prior to the twelfth class day of the fall and spring terms and the fourth class day of the summer term. Additionally, the restriction of information remains on the students’ record until the student takes action to remove it. If the student restricts their information, the university campus staff and faculty will view a confidential message on all student records found in our current Banner student information system and NO information can be released on that student without the written permission of the student. This includes the restriction of the student’s name being listed in the commencement program, the honor’s list, and the Dean’s/President’s list. Release of information contained on a student’s academic transcript without the written consent of the person(s) identified on the document is in violation of Sec. 438 Public Law 90-247 (FERPA). Additional FERPA information regarding our University policies on student rights is available under the Student Guidelines maintained by the Dean of Students. For more information, please visit www.shsu.edu/students/guide/.

**REMINDER TO ALL EMPLOYEES:**

If you see this message when you enter a Student ID into any Banner form, you cannot release any information on that student:

* Additionally, if you see the word, “Confidential” on the top left-hand corner of any Banner form, you cannot release any information on that student. It is a violation of FERPA to discuss a student’s record with any person without a legitimate education interest. This pertains to discussions on and off the job.

- Removing any document from the office for non-business purposes is in violation of FERPA.
- Releasing confidential student information (non-directory) to another student, University organization, or any person who does not have a legitimate educational interest, or parents of a dependent student, without the student’s written authorization is in violation of FERPA.
- Leaving reports or computer screens containing confidential student information in view of others who do not have a legitimate educational interest in the data or leaving your monitor unattended is in violation of FERPA.
- Making personal use of student information is in violation of FERPA.
• Allowing another person to use your computer access code is in violation of FERPA.
• Putting paperwork in trash with a student’s information (i.e., social security or grades) is also in violation of FERPA.

Violation of confidentiality and security may lead to appropriate personnel action.

QUESTIONS?

The FERPA campus official at Sam Houston State University is the Registrar. If you have any questions concerning FERPA or what information can or cannot be released, please contact the Registrar’s Office. If we cannot answer your question, we will consult the Department of Education.

PARENTAL ACCESS TO CHILDREN’S EDUCATION RECORDS:

At the postsecondary level, parents have no inherent rights to inspect a student’s education records. The right to inspect is limited solely to the student.

Records may be released to parents only under the following circumstances: (1) through the written consent of the student, (2) in compliance with a subpoena, or (3) by submission of evidence that the parents declare the student as a dependent on their most recent Federal Income Tax form. An institution is not required to disclose information from the student’s education records to the parents of a dependent student. It may, however, exercise its discretion to do so.
**TITLE IX AND OTHER LAWS PROHIBITING SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION:**

Sam Houston State University complies strictly with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination based on differences in sex and gender identification in all educational programs and activities. Title IX states,

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

The University also complies strictly with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits sex discrimination in employment, the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act, and Texas State University System (TSUS) Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures. Under these laws, sexual misconduct (including sexual violence and sexual harassment) constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX.

The Title IX Coordinator for Sam Houston State University is Jeanine Bias, Associate Dean of Students. To make enquiries and to report suspected cases of sexual discrimination, you may reach Ms. Bias at 936-294-3026 or jbias@shsu.edu

All employees of Sam Houston State University, including graduate assistants (assistant instructors), must comply with Title IX.

Cases of sexual misconduct may also be reported to the Sam Houston State University Police Department (UPD), the Huntsville Police Department, and other local law enforcement authorities. Consult the Title IX Coordinator for information about the best course of action in such cases.

For more information about Title IX, see the pages at the U.S. Department of Education site. For more information about sexual misconduct, see the following:

- The Campus Sexual Violence Elimination (SaVE) Act
- Texas State University System (TSUS) Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures