

ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK **2008**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the Master of Arts in English program. Part I includes information and forms in relation to the requirements of the program. Part II offers some suggestions about student services provided on campus. In Part III we give detailed specifications for proposing and completing Advanced Projects. Part IV will help you make a smooth transition from undergraduate to graduate English study by explaining the materials you'll need and the expectations of teachers in graduate English classes.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The English graduate program aims to provide content and learning experiences that will ensure the following in those who complete the Master of Arts:

1. Working knowledge of, and sophisticated capacity to respond critically to, a broad range of literatures;
2. Deep competence in literary scholarship and theory;
3. Ability to write a piece of scholarship, theory, or creative writing that is at or near publishable quality;
4. Respect for the global community of learners, researchers, and communicators;
5. Demonstrated experience in responding to discourses diverse in gender and culture; and
6. Experience in engaging the larger literary community with its attendant social, political, and ethical concerns.

I. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS/OPTIONS (All courses must be completed with a grade of B or better to count toward the degree.)

A Program Planning Sheet is included below. This sheet lists all of the requirements for the program as well as a tentative schedule of courses for the next few years. Use this to plan your courses and to keep track of fulfilling your requirements. You are encouraged to take a course in literary theory as early as possible in your program. Ordinarily, all courses applied to this degree will be graduate English courses.

A. Choice of Concentration

In consultation with the English Graduate Coordinator and advisor, Dr. Hollis Seamon (seamonh@strose.edu or 518 454-5207), you will choose either the **Literature Concentration** or the **Writing Concentration** when entering the program. You may change this concentration at any time before you complete 12 credits by simply notifying your advisor during the advisement period. After you have completed 12 credits, you will need the permission of the English faculty to change your concentration. If you are entering the program unsure which concentration you want, try to take courses in both literature and writing early on to help you make this decision.

B. Advanced Projects (ENG 591 and 592): General Procedures

1. Students in the literature concentration must complete ENG 591; students in the writing concentration must complete ENG 592.

2. These courses are taken during the last 15 credit hours of the English MA program. Ordinarily, this project is completed in your final semester, but since you cannot complete a project during the summer sessions, you need to plan ahead to make sure that you arrange to complete your project before your projected graduation date. Advanced project topics will always be contingent upon the availability of appropriate English faculty mentors. Consult with your graduate advisor to determine faculty expertise.
3. Faculty mentors will ordinarily undertake no more than 3 Advanced Projects in any one semester, provided those projects all involve similar topics and/or genres of writing; or no more than 2 Advanced Projects if those projects involve different topics and/or genres.
4. Students must make arrangements for their Advanced Project the semester before the course is to be taken. The mentor's signature on the proposal is needed prior to the English Graduate Coordinator signing the registration form for either ENG 591 or ENG 592. Online registration is not available for these two courses.
5. These courses will require substantial independent work on the part of the student; students and faculty mentors ordinarily meet on a monthly basis.
6. These courses represent advanced level graduate work and students will be graded accordingly. If a student receives a failing grade, the course may be repeated once, contingent on the availability of a faculty mentor. A grade of Incomplete may only be given if the faculty mentor is willing to continue the project into the next semester.

C. Thesis

You are not required to write a thesis, but you may do so for three credits, if you choose. Ordinarily, your thesis would be an extension of your advanced project for either ENG 591 or 592. Students who wish to expand their advanced projects into theses must receive a grade of at least A- in ENG 591 or 592. Consult the Graduate Catalogue for full details about procedures for arranging to do a thesis.

D. Projected Schedule of Courses and Program Planning Sheet

Fall 2008

554 Vict Prose & Poetry

589 Lit Theory

565 Comp Theory

564 Fiction Wtg

537 Mod Drama

Spring 2009

566 Lit/Perf/Vis Narr

582 20 Cen Am Lit

539 Irish Lit

559 Wrtg Wkshop

561 Poetry Wtg

Fall 2009

569 Hist Lit Crit

516 Med Lit

564 Fiction Wtg

565 Comp Theory

Spring 2010

522 Shakespeare

584 19 Cen Am Lit

562 Playscript Wtg

563 Nonfiction Wtg

541 Native Am Lit 576 Cont Narr

Fall 2010

Spring 2011

573 African Lit

520 Ren Lit

590 Seminar

553 Early 19 Brit Lit

579 Early Am Lit

532 18 Cen Brit Lit

564 Fiction Wtg

542 Asian Am Lit

559 Wrting Wkshop

561 Poetry Wtg

N.B. Events over which the College has no control may result in changes in course schedules. The most recent information will be available prior to the beginning of each semester. Summer courses will be offered based on student and faculty interest and availability. Consult the graduate coordinator for updates.

PROGRAM PLANNING SHEET FOR MA IN ENGLISH

NAME _____ DATE OF ENTRY _____

LITERATURE OR WRITING CONCENTRATION (Circle one.)

TRANSFER CREDITS _____

LITERATURE CONCENTRATION (Total=36 credits)

6 literature courses	18 credits	_____

2 theory courses	6 credits	_____

3 electives	9 credits	_____
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(May include a mixture of literature, writing, and thesis) _____

ENG 591: Advanced Literary Research Project:	3 credits	_____
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WRITING CONCENTRATION (Total=36 credits)

4 literature courses 12 credits _____

4 writing courses (must include 559) 12 credits _____

1 theory course 3 credits _____

2 electives 6 credits _____

(May include a mixture of literature, writing, and thesis) _____

ENG 592: Advanced Writing Project: 3 credits _____

THESIS:
Topic _____

Director _____

Readers _____

PART II. Student Services on Campus

A. Career Center Services

The Career Center is located in St. Joseph Hall, 985 Madison Avenue. The professionals there offer career counseling and information from a large variety of print and electronic sources to help you to find a career or to redefine your career path. You are also encouraged to open a career file in the Career Center and get recommendations from your professors while you are studying at Saint Rose. The Career Center will send out your credentials to any positions for which you apply. In all, it's a fine service provided to you as a Saint Rose student and one which the English faculty strongly urge you to start benefiting from as soon as possible. Call them at 454-5141 or stop in to start your career file.

B. Writing Center

The Writing Center, part of the Academic Support Center, also located in St. Joseph Hall, is available for collaborative work on the draft of papers as well as help with organizational or grammatical problems. This service, provided by graduate interns, is available by individual appointment. To make an appointment, call 458-5483.

PART III ADVANCED PROJECTS

A. Specifications for *ENG 591 Advanced Literary Research Project*

1. Proposal Preparation:

Write a brief (3-4 page) proposal describing what your project will entail and how it developed from one or more courses you have taken during your graduate study. Explain why you have chosen to continue to research this particular topic and how this project will represent an advanced level of research, theorizing, and criticism on the topic. Briefly explain what the focus of the project will be as you envision it at this point.

Attach two bibliographies to your proposal:

- 1) An annotated bibliography of relevant critical and theoretical sources you have already read.
- 2) A working bibliography of sources you plan to consult for the project.

2. Proposal Approval and Registration for ENG 591

- a. Early in the semester preceding that in which you plan to complete the project, determine the area in which you plan to do your project. In consultation with the English Graduate Coordinator, choose a faculty member with the appropriate expertise, and set up a meeting about the possibility of mentoring the project. Once you have a mentor, ask the mentor for suggestions for a research consultant, another faculty member whose primary role will be to provide additional input in relation to the working bibliography; the research consultant may have a very different area of expertise. A draft of your proposal, with both bibliographies, must be presented to your mentor and research consultant by Advisement Day. The mentor and/or research consultant will suggest revisions, which must be completed before registration dates for that semester. When the mentor finds the proposal ready, she/he will sign it. (N.B. No faculty member is required to mentor a project in a given semester.)
- b. Once the mentor has signed your proposal, bring the signed copy to the English Graduate Coordinator and also submit an electronic copy. This proposal will be kept on file as part of your advanced project. You will need the English Graduate Coordinator's signature on your

registration form for ENG 591. This process must be completed by the end of the semester preceding the project. N.B. Web registration is not available for this course.

3. Project Completion

- a. You will work with your mentor to establish deadlines in relation to the advanced project. The mentor may ask for written reports, such as a review of research, and/or submission of parts of the project as she/he determines such progress reports necessary to your successful completion of the project.
- b. The final project—which will consist of a literary research paper of 20 to 25 pages demonstrating a level of research and sophisticated literary analysis, theorizing, and criticism appropriate for presentation at a literary conference or for publication in a literary journal—will be graded by your mentor. You should submit two copies of the final project, one to your mentor and one to your advisor, as well as an electronic copy to your advisor. The proposal and project are kept on file by the English Department for program assessment purposes.

B. Specifications for *ENG 592 Advanced Writing Project*

1. Creative Writing: Poetry, Fiction, Playwriting, Nonfiction Prose

a. Proposal Preparation

Write a brief (3-4 page) proposal describing your previous, current and proposed work in the genre(s) you have chosen for your Advanced Writing Project. Describe the format of your proposed project, and how it developed from one or more courses you have taken during your graduate study. Explain why you have chosen to continue to work in this particular genre or genres and how this project will represent an advanced level of achievement in the genre(s). Discuss some specific writers whose work has been influential on your writing. Explain what particular kinds of research (e.g., historical) will be needed to prepare to write the project.

In addition, contextualize your work theoretically by explaining how your theoretical, critical and/or aesthetic stance informs your practice in the genre. Discuss some specific literary critics and/or theorists whose ideas have contributed to your thinking about your writing.

Attach two bibliographies to this essay:

- 1) An annotated bibliography listing works that have influenced your writing theory and practice. Note the relevance of each work to your project.
- 2) A working bibliography of sources that you will read as part of your project. List theoretical works and books in your chosen genre, as well as any other research needed to complete the project.

b. Proposal Approval and Registration for ENG 592

1. Early in the semester preceding that in which you plan to complete the project, determine the genre(s) in which you plan to do your project. In consultation with the English Graduate Coordinator, choose a faculty member with the appropriate expertise, and set up a meeting about the possibility of mentoring the project. Once you have a mentor, ask the mentor for suggestions for a research consultant, another faculty member whose primary role will be to provide additional input in relation to the working bibliography; the research consultant may have a very different area of expertise. A draft of your proposal, with both bibliographies, must be presented to your mentor and research consultant by Advisement Day. If necessary, the mentor will suggest revisions, which must be completed before registration dates for that semester. When the mentor finds the proposal ready, she/he will sign it. (N.B. No faculty member is required to mentor a project in a given semester.)

2. Once the mentor has signed your proposal, bring the signed copy to the English Graduate Coordinator and also submit an electronic copy. This proposal will be kept on file as part of your advanced project. You will need the English Graduate Coordinator's signature on your registration form for ENG 592. This process must be completed by the end of the semester preceding the project. N.B. Web registration is not available for this course.

c. Project Completion

1. You will work with your mentor to establish deadlines in relation to your advanced project. The mentor may ask for written reports and/or submission of parts of the project as she/he determines such materials necessary to your successful completion of the project. If your mentor so chooses, you may be required to submit an annotated bibliography of theoretical and research sources at mid-semester.

2. The final project will consist of a chapbook of new poems (16-24 pages), approximately 50 pages of new fiction or nonfiction prose, or a playscript of approximately 100 pages. Along with this creative writing, there will be a 5-page introduction to the creative piece(s) delineating your theoretical framework for the creative writing, with an annotated bibliography of works consulted and cited. The completed project, which will be graded by the mentor, should demonstrate a sophisticated level of writing; the work should be of a quality appropriate for submission to respected literary journals. You should submit two copies of the final project, one to your mentor and one to the English Graduate Coordinator, as well as an electronic copy to the English Graduate Coordinator. The proposal and project are kept on file by the English Department for program assessment purposes.

2. Composition Theory

a. Proposal Preparation

Write a brief (3-4 page) proposal describing your previous, current, and proposed work in composition, briefly explaining what the focus of the project will be as you envision it at this point. Describe the format of your proposed project, and how it developed from one or more courses you have taken during your graduate study. Indicate why you have chosen to continue to work in composition and how this project will represent an advanced level of achievement in the field. Explain, briefly, how your theoretical stance informs your approach to composition. (E.g., with what composition theorists do you align yourself? Which theorists, specifically, have influenced your thinking in this field?)

Attach two bibliographies to this essay:

- 1) An annotated bibliography of pertinent sources you have already read.
- 2) A working bibliography of sources you plan to consult for the project.

b. Proposal Approval and Registration for ENG 592

- 1) Early in the semester preceding that in which you plan to complete the project, determine the area in which you plan to do your project. In consultation with the English Graduate Coordinator, choose a faculty member with the appropriate expertise, and set up a meeting about the possibility of mentoring the project. Once you have a mentor, ask the mentor for suggestions for a research consultant, another faculty member whose primary role will be to provide additional input in relation to the working bibliography; the research consultant may have a very different area of expertise. A draft of your proposal, with both bibliographies, must be presented to your mentor and research consultant by Advisement Day. If necessary, the mentor will suggest revisions, which must be completed before registration dates for that semester. When the mentor finds the proposal ready, she/he will sign it. (N.B. No faculty member is required to mentor a project in a given semester.)

- 2) Once the mentor has signed your proposal, bring the signed copy to the English Graduate Coordinator. This proposal will be kept on file as part of your project. You will need the Graduate Coordinator's signature on your registration form for ENG 592. This process should be completed by the end of the semester preceding the project. N.B. Web registration is not available for this course.

c. Proposal Completion

- 1) You will work with your mentor to establish deadlines in relation to your advanced project. The mentor may ask for written reports, such as a review of research, and/or submission of parts of the project as she/he determines such materials necessary to your successful completion of the project.

- 2) The final project—which will consist of a paper of 20 to 25 pages demonstrating a level of research and sophisticated composition theory appropriate for presentation at a composition conference or for publication in a composition journal—will be graded by the mentor. Submit two copies of the final project, one to your mentor and one to the English Graduate Coordinator, as well as an electronic copy. The proposal and project are kept on file by the English Department for program assessment purposes.

PART IV. SUGGESTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

A. Books/Reference tools

- Current edition of MLA Handbook
- A recent, comprehensive dictionary and thesaurus
- A word processing software program that allows for standard academic format
- A comprehensive dictionary or glossary or handbook of literary terms, such as The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetics, Abrams' Glossary of Literary Terms, or Holman's A Handbook to Literature.

B. Students in graduate classes

- Graduate classes require thorough preparation, consistent attendance, and informed participation.
- Reading assignments are necessarily longer and more demanding than undergraduate assignments.

- The level of discussion requires an approach to the material that goes beyond personal reactions.
- Assignments must be completed on time.

C. Expectations re: research skills

- Advanced library research skills, using both print and electronic sources
- The ability to analyze/utilize/evaluate research
- Critical reading skills
- Familiarity with a variety of primary and secondary materials

D. Expectations re: general knowledge of literary terminology

- Technical understanding of forms/genres
- Knowledge of the terminology of literary criticism/theory.
- Willingness to think about current literary academic issues.

E. Expectations re: creative writing

- Versatile writing skills
- Wide reading in the genre under consideration
- Knowledge of theory regarding the genre
- Willingness and ability to participate in informed, practical criticism of one's own and classmates' work
- Willingness to produce multiple revisions of each piece of writing
- Willingness to imitate models and to experiment with new forms

F. Expectations re: writing papers

1. Short Pointers

- Composition skills: basic organizational mastery of standard English
- Knowledge of basic and more formal expository forms
- Experience with citation and presentation of quoted materials
- A willingness to proofread and edit

2. Longer Description

Most literary research papers include many of the following components:

Introduction to one or more of the following:

- The particular topic
- The time period/social and literary milieu
- The work
- The author

Survey of critical viewpoints: establishes critical consensus (or lack of) about the work/author/topic. This discussion may form part of the introductory section, may follow the introduction as a discrete examination, or may be interwoven with the major points in the body of the paper.

Tightening of focus and statement of thesis: This portion of your paper will probably form part of the introductory material. It may unfold as an ongoing formulation of your stance in introduction and survey sections, but should occur early. Only writers with a great deal of control over their prose and ideas can afford to suspend their thesis statements while working their way to it through a leisurely discussion. Writers often find that they have reached a sort of "cumulative" thesis over the process of their draft, and that their conclusion finally articulates it clearly. When this happens, the writer needs to transport that articulation back to the beginning of the paper.

Support: Explanation of your argument and your reasoning about your argument. This section lays out your major points and then provides examples from the text; discusses particular passages or examples; cites relevant historical information; cites appropriate critical commentary.

Treatment of critical commentary may consist of quotations from critics who support your arguments or whose points you wish to challenge, revise, or extend. Note: many fine analyses are based on developing a particular argument in a more comprehensive or focused way than an earlier critic has. When this is what you are engaged in, be sure to make clear the distinction between the critic's work and your own. For example: "Critic X has accurately demonstrated that the relationship between characters A and B represent the problems of dominance and submission inherent in Victorian class-based society. However, this analysis of power relations is even more significant when one considers the relationship between characters A and C, a consideration which also brings in gender issues that critic X has not addressed."

Also important in dealing with critical commentary: when discussing a critic's points it is often necessary to explain briefly the bases for her/his arguments. Especially when dealing with controversial interpretations or speculations, you must refer to the kind of evidence the critic cites rather than just tossing in "so and so says," and leaving it at that.

Summation: This section should present final conclusions that encompass all your major points and show the ultimate development of the ideas you've been working with. Sometimes people get short-sighted by the end and conclude with a discussion of only the last point they've been treating. The conclusion should be a synthesis.

Transitions throughout: Look for appropriate places to include internal summaries and both "forward" and "reverse" transitions. Although you should avoid redundancy, internal summaries occur at key points where you wish to reiterate, interpret, and clarify what you have said so far, before going on. Forward transitions look forward to connect with the next point; reverse transitions act as brief internal summaries, commenting further on where you have been as a way of leading in to a new, but related, point. All of these transitions can assist you in making the logic of both your argument and your organization clear to the reader.

Research: Should be recent and relevant. Much change has occurred in critical approaches in the last two decades. Depending on your topic, you may find that nothing published earlier than the 1980's is "recent" enough. Some earlier sources, however, are still considered authoritative. It is best if the majority of your sources are from the last decade, with a few earlier ones mixed in, rather than vice versa. Be aware of the critical orientation of your source--is the approach predominantly Marxist, feminist, New Historicist, etc.?