English

The Department of English offers the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy in English and American Literature and Doctor of Philosophy in English and Comparative Literature. Candidates for admission apply to the PhD program; we do not accept students for a terminal AM. The PhD is a six-year program.

During their first two years students take courses (one required and the others elective) with the aim of acquainting themselves with a broad range of literary periods and genres, critical methodologies, research approaches, and pedagogical styles. Students have no teaching responsibilities in their first two years; they receive their AM at the end of their second year, when their course work is completed. The department also requires that all doctoral candidates have a minimum of competency in one foreign language (ancient or modern), though students working in certain historical areas or writing on special dissertation topics may need additional language study. Language classes are usually taken during the summer after year one or two, but in some cases they may also be taken during the academic year.

During their third and fourth years, students begin teaching and read for their oral major field exam. By the end of the fourth year, they will have passed this exam, submitted a dissertation prospectus, and arranged for a dissertation interview, thus completing all the requirements for the PhD except the dissertation itself. In their fifth year, students research and begin to write the dissertation, while teaching one class per semester; in their sixth year, funded by a dissertation fellowship that frees them from teaching responsibilities, they complete and defend the dissertation.

Students who enter the PhD program with a master's in English from another institution initially follow the same program as students entering with a bachelor's. After their third semester, course work from their previous degree will be reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies and, when appropriate, credit will be applied toward their PhD. Students entering the program with a relevant master's degree may be eligible for full funding through year six.

Students who wish to receive the combined PhD degree in English and Comparative Literature may do so by fulfilling that program's requirements for combined degrees. For information, please review Comparative Literature's departmental website.

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Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters
PhD, Cornell University

Wayne Fields
Lynne Cooper Harvey Distinguished Professor of English
PhD, University of Chicago

Vincent Sherry
Howard Nemerov Professor in the Humanities
PhD, University of Toronto

Steven Zwicker
Stanley Elkin Professor in the Humanities
PhD, Brown University

Professors
David Lawton
FAAH, PhD, University of York

Joseph Loewenstein
PhD, Yale University

William Maxwell
PhD, Duke University

Robert Milder
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PhD, Rutgers University  
Naomi Lebowitz  
PhD, Washington University  
Carter C. Revard  
PhD, Yale University  
Daniel Shea  
PhD, Stanford University  
**Degree Requirements**  
The AM/PhD Program in English at Washington University in St. Louis is a six-year course of study leading to a doctorate in English and American literature. Students take a minimum of twelve elective 3-credit courses at the 400 or 500 level, along with two compulsory classes: Introduction to Graduate Study, and the Practicum in the Teaching of Composition. Aside from these two classes, there are no specific course requirements, though students must take at least two courses in historical periods before 1780 (not in the same period) and at least two in historical periods after 1780 (again, not in the same period).

For students entering in the fall semester of 2014 and after, at least six of 12 elective courses must be 500-level, graduate-only seminars (four such 500-level seminars must be taken by students who entered in the fall of 2013 or earlier). Students are encouraged to enroll in courses of special interest in other departments or programs whether or not they are cross-listed with the English department, but at least eight of their 12 electives must be home-based English courses, including (save in exceptional cases) all of their seminars.

It is assumed that all entering graduate students are working toward a PhD; the English department does not admit students aiming for a terminal AM. The AM is awarded during the course of study when a student has completed 36 credit hours, usually at the end of the second year. To satisfy the Graduate School requirement of demonstrated excellence, candidates for the AM may also be asked to submit a graded seminar essay (or the equivalent) for review by the English Graduate Committee.

Students entering the program with an AM degree in hand normally follow the standard first-year curriculum. At the end of their third semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will review their AM work taken elsewhere and determine how many credits (normally a limit of 9-12) may be applied toward the PhD at Washington University. Although students receiving transfer credit may be able to complete the PhD in fewer than six years, it is to their advantage to enter the program as first-year students since this ensures them four full semesters of study without teaching responsibilities. If, after three semesters and the review of transfer credit, the Director of Graduate Studies determines that the student has fulfilled the course requirements for the PhD, the student may elect not to take classes in semester four and to begin work on the Major Field reading instead; his or her 6 credits of Major Field preparation in semester four will complete the requirements for the Washington University AM degree.

Altogether, the Graduate School requires 72 credits beyond the BA for the PhD. During the first seven semesters, up to 57 credits are earned by course work, independent study, and directed reading; more precisely, 13 courses and 39 credits in years one and two; the Practicum in Teaching and 3 research credits in the fall of year three; 6 credits of directed reading in the spring of year three; and 6 credits of directed reading in the fall of year four. The remaining credits are awarded as research credits.