

Program Assessment Plan

Program Name: Graduate Program in English
Department: English
Assessment Year: 2005-2006

Step One: Who are you and how do you do what you do?

I.A. Mission Statement

The Graduate Program in English shares the overall mission of the English Department (see appendix). We aim to provide all our graduate students with a broad understanding of English and American literature, and we therefore offer thorough coverage of literary history, literary theory, critical traditions, composition theory, and the history of the language. We require our students to conduct advanced research projects and to demonstrate familiarity with current developments in the field. Teaching assistants do additional work in postsecondary pedagogy. Our students come to us with a range of intellectual and career objectives: some to earn a master's terminal degree, some to prepare for advanced doctoral work, and some to fulfill the requirements for secondary-education certification. Our program is designed to meet their diverse educational needs.

1.B. Scope of your program

The Graduate Program in English has an average enrollment of 120 students per semester and serves three different degree groups: the Master of Arts (MA), the Master of Science in Teaching (MS), and the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). Approximately half of our matriculated students are in the MA program and half in the secondary teacher certification programs (MS and MAT). We also accommodate non-matriculated students who wish to pursue their own intellectual development in a supportive environment. In conjunction with the Composition Program, we offer approximately 18 teaching assistantships per semester for qualified MA students. All matriculated students are required to take Proseminar, our foundation course for graduate study in English, as well as a course in Shakespeare. Other coursework depends upon the particular degree sought. MAT and MS students must take three additional electives for a total of 15 credits. MA students follow a more structured plan of study comprising 30 credits of coursework (with an additional course, Modern Theories of Writing, required of all teaching assistants). Period coverage for MA students stipulates 3 courses treating periods before 1800 and three courses after 1800. In addition to Proseminar and a course in Shakespeare, all MA students must take a course in the history of the English language and a course in literary criticism. Some students pursue individual interests through Independent Studies, and some MA students undertake more intensive study of a particular topic by writing a master's thesis. In order to complete their degree, all students must pass a 3-hour comprehensive examination consisting of both objective and essay sections; MA students must also demonstrate competence in two specific periods of literary history by passing a second 3-hour essay exam. .

1.C. What activities/ processes contribute to the program?

The Graduate Program in English offers a wide variety of regular seminars and a series of advanced "studies in" courses. Coverage of the main periods in American and English literature is augmented by courses on individual authors and topics of particular interest to the faculty. As well as being professionally active themselves, our faculty actively encourages students to

pursue advanced scholarship through conference presentations and publication. Our Teaching Assistant Program trains students in the teaching of composition and literary analysis. Professional development is further enhanced by the English Department's annual Graduate Symposium and the annual publication of *The Shawangunk Review*. In addition to this annual event, the department sponsors occasional lectures, speakers, and colloquia, such as the Graduate Forum. The Graduate Program also encourages advanced scholarship through the Russell S. Cleverley Memorial Award, which is available to students writing a master's thesis.

Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?

II. A. What are your priority goals for the next five years? (5-8 total)

1. What do you want your graduates to know and be able to do?

Graduates of the MA, MS, and MAT programs should demonstrate

- a. thorough knowledge of American and British literary traditions
- b. proficiency in the critical reading of literary texts
- c. mastery of the conventions of academic discourse
- d. ability to conduct advanced research

2. What goals do you have for your program?

The Graduate Program in English should

- a. offer a comprehensive master's curriculum
- b. enhance the professional development of students
- c. meet the needs of our diverse student population
- d. employ a well-qualified faculty with diverse research interests

II. B. What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?

1. Student learning performances (outcomes)

a. **thorough knowledge of American and British literary tradition**

students should be able to

- identify canonical authors and texts in each literary period
- describe characteristic themes and aesthetic features of each literary period
- explain the development of American and British literary traditions
- frame the study of the primary material within a theoretical methodology where appropriate

b. **proficiency in the critical reading of literary texts**

students should be able to

- interpret the full range of meaning beyond the literal sense of the text
- describe literary form and literary devices (tropes)
- relate literary form and literary devices to meaning

c. **mastery of the conventions of academic discourse**

students should be able to

- formulate an appropriate thesis, provide evidence in support of that thesis, compose a logically developed argument, and create rhetorically effective sentences.
- incorporate secondary sources (especially published criticism) effectively into a critical interpretation with proper citation of sources
- establish a historical/social/cultural context for the primary material where appropriate

d. ability to conduct advanced research

students should be able to

- find and use pertinent secondary materials in print media
- find and use pertinent secondary materials in electronic media and evaluate the credibility of electronic sources
- find and use archival resources where appropriate

2. Program performances

a. offer a comprehensive master's curriculum

the program should offer

- a full range of courses covering all periods of British and American literature
- courses in composition and literary theory
- courses in historical linguistics and the history of the language
- courses in special topics

b. enhance the professional development of students

the program should provide opportunities for students to

- develop extended research projects
- prepare their work for conference presentation and publication
- develop their teaching skills

c. meet the needs of our diverse student population

the program should offer

- a schedule of classes that accommodates both full- and part-time students
- a variety of degree tracks useful for students preparing for advanced doctoral work, a master's terminal degree, or secondary-education certification

d. employ a well-qualified faculty with diverse research interests

the graduate faculty should

- be specialists in specific fields
- be active scholars and/or creative writers
- be innovative teachers who regularly update their courses, develop special topics courses, and/or add new courses to the curriculum

Step Three: Describe your methodology

II. B. 1 and 2 <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	III. A. <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	III. B. <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	III. C. <i>When Assessment B</i>
1. Student Learning a. knowledge of British and American literature	a. identification of authors, texts, characteristic themes, and aesthetic features for any given period; theoretical methodology	1. comprehensive exam rubric 2. research paper rubric	1. Spring 06 2. Fall 05
b. proficiency in critical reading	b. interpretation of literary meaning in relation to form, tropes, allusions etc.	1. comprehensive exam rubric 2. research paper rubric	1. Spring 06 2. Fall 05
c. mastery of academic discourse, oral and written	c. effectiveness of argument; use of secondary sources; sensitivity to context; theoretical methodology where appropriate	1. comprehensive exam rubric 2. research paper rubric	1. Spring 06 2. Fall 05
d. ability to conduct research	d. effective use of print and electronic media; effective use of archival material where appropriate	1. research paper rubric	1. Fall 05
2. Program Performance a. offer comprehensive master's curriculum	a. coverage of all periods of British and American literature, plus composition theory, literary theory, and special topics	1. annually review schedule of classes for English department 2. review syllabi for graduate courses	Spring 06 2. Fall 07
b. enhance professional development of students	b. opportunities for students to create extended research projects and to prepare their work for conference presentation and publication; opportunities for students to develop teaching skills	1. request from students an annual list of professional accomplishments 2. contents of <i>Shawangunk Review</i> 3. number and retention of teaching assistants 4. alumni survey	1. Spring 06 2. Spring 06 3. Spring 07 4. Spring 07

c. meet needs of diverse student population	c. scheduling should accommodate full and part-time students; degree tracks should reflect needs of students	1.schedule of classes 2.Graduate Director's report 3. alumni survey	1.Spring 06 2.Spring 06 3. Spring 07
d. employ a well-qualified faculty	d. faculty should have appropriate specialties, be active scholars, and effective teachers	1. faculty annual reports 2. student Evaluation of Instruction 3. alumni survey	1.Fall 07 2.Fall 07 3. Spring 07

Step Four: What additional resources do you need to complete your plan?

The Graduate Program in English requires

- assistance from a Chair of Assessment, who will have an annual course release and, among other responsibilities to the department, be responsible for designing the assessment rubrics and the alumni survey, and for compiling the graduate program assessment results.
- resources for printing and mailing alumni surveys.

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