
English

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Web site: http://www.jmu.edu/english/grad_welcome.html

Professors

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Assistant Professors

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Admission

Incomplete applications will not be considered; applicants are responsible for assuring that all materials have been received.

To Apply

Prospective applicants should visit The Graduate School Web site for information about the application process: <http://www.jmu.edu/grad>.

Applicants must apply online at: <https://www.applyweb.com/apply/jmug/>.

Follow the instructions on that site for submitting all application materials (GRE scores, transcripts, letters of recommendation, personal statement, writing sample, resume, etc.). Questions about the online application process should be directed to The Graduate School at grad_programs@jmu.edu or by telephone (see Staff page for contact information at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/contact.shtml>).

An online recommendation form is provided, however, the English department strongly encourages applicants to ask references to include a detailed letter in addition to the form. Letters should address the applicant's preparation; motivation; maturity; reading, writing, and analytical skills; and particular areas of strength and weakness. Letters of recommendation may be uploaded to the online application site or, if the recommender prefers, sent directly to the graduate coordinator at the following address.

Dr. Dabney A. Bankert
Coordinator of Graduate Studies
Department of English
211 Keezell Hall, MSC 1801
James Madison University
Harrisonburg, VA 22807

Prospective applicants are welcome to communicate directly with the graduate coordinator of the Department of English. In certain cases, an interview with the graduate coordinator and/or the graduate studies committee may also be requested.

Required Materials

- Transcripts from all undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Graduate Record Examination General Test (GRE). We do not require the GRE subject examination in English.
- At least two letters of recommendation from faculty familiar with the applicant's academic performance and potential for graduate work. Additional letters may be sent if relevant to a candidate's application. If an applicant has been out of school for some time, he or she should contact the graduate coordinator for advice about appropriate recommenders.
- A substantial academic writing sample of at least 6 pages, with 10 pages preferred, showing the applicant's best work.
- A statement of approximately 500 words articulating the applicant's specific research interests, academic training, goals for graduate study, and career aspirations, as well as the applicant's reasons for applying to the JMU Department of English graduate program.

Recommended Materials

- A resume is strongly recommended.
- Any additional materials that offer the committee information about an applicant's suitability and preparation for graduate study.

Evaluation Measures

The graduate committee considers the overall strength of an application rather than focusing on fixed requirements. The committee reads and evaluates all completed applications. We consider all available material to help us judge whether a student is prepared for and capable of successful work on the graduate level and we stress the importance of a solid personal statement that is specific and focused as well as a writing sample that demonstrates strong intellectual and interpretive capabilities, facility with literary research, and excellent writing skills.

In addition to satisfying all admission requirements of the JMU graduate school, applicants must meet the requirements of the English department, which include the following:

- a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 and a minimum GPA of 3.5 in English courses is recommended.

- satisfactory scores on the verbal and writing portions of the Graduate Record Examination General Test (GRE). While we have not established minimum scores, recent applicants and matriculated students have scored between 550-800 (verbal) and 4.5-6.0 (writing).
- at least 15 credit hours in upper-division English courses showing some breadth of study are recommended. The Committee may favorably acknowledge more diverse backgrounds (such as a concentration in creative writing, an English minor, or another major in the humanities), but may specify provisions for admittance (such as additional prerequisite undergraduate courses), to assure that the student is adequately prepared for graduate seminars.
- a writing sample that demonstrates strong intellectual and interpretive capabilities, facility with literary research, and excellent writing skills.
- a personal statement that details the applicant's specific research interests, academic training, goals for graduate study, and career aspirations, as well as the applicant's reasons for applying to the JMU Department of English graduate program. We recommend that applicants seek guidance on how to write effective personal statements from faculty at their home institutions.

Application Deadlines

Admission is offered for fall semester only, however, students may discuss with the graduate coordinator the possibility of taking a seminar in the spring semester as a non-degree candidate. Students may transfer such seminars into the graduate program if they receive a grade of "B" or better in the seminar and are admitted into the program. For the 2008-2009 academic year, complete applications must be received by February 1 to be given full consideration. In order to be considered for a graduate assistantship, all application materials and the assistantship application must be submitted by February 1 as well. The assistantship application is available as part of the online application process. See the Financial Support tab on the English department Web site for more information about allocation of assistantships.

Application Review Procedure and Timetable

The graduate committee begins review of all complete applications on February 2nd. Incomplete applications are read only when they are complete; completion of the application after the deadline will put candidates at a disadvantage for admission and funding, however, the committee does consider such applications in a second, later review. The number of applications and committee members' workload affects the time necessary to review applications, to rank applicants, and to make offers, however, we try to complete our review in a month's time. Candidates are welcome to contact the graduate coordinator for information about where we are in the process after three weeks or at any time if the candidate has received other offers and needs to make an earlier decision.

Note: Students must achieve unconditional status before applying for admission to candidacy. See the *Graduate Catalog* for all matters relating to a change of status.

Mission

The English department emphasizes preparation for Ph.D. work and advanced training both for secondary education teachers and those for whom an M.A. in English would enhance career options. We welcome students who, for whatever reasons, are eager to read literature on an advanced level, who enjoy research and writing, and who appreciate the responsibilities and pleasures of pursuing one's intellectual goals within an academic community.

Goals

- To excite and maintain in students a permanent desire for an expanded knowledge and understanding of the world through the study of diverse authors and genres.
- To help students to discover and appreciate the English language, and to learn how richly language clothes our responses to the world.
- To actively promote, through formal study, both the self-examination and the imaginative understanding that are among the central values of advanced study in the humanities.
- To encourage in post-baccalaureate students a broader, more formal inquiry into specific authors and movements in both western and non-western literatures, and to teach them by example the professional practices of reading and interpretation.
- To cultivate the practical talents gained by the study of literature: the ability to recognize the functions of analysis and synthesis in one's professional life, to construct an argument, to think critically, to write efficiently, clearly, and gracefully, to develop confidence in the validity of one's judgments about many kinds of writing, and to learn to see the interstices as well as the architectural whole in widely different encounters with the written word.
- To stimulate the kind of intellectual self-scrutiny and the passion for reading that will lead to successful work on the doctoral level, and to help students gain admittance into excellent Ph.D. programs throughout the country.
- To provide an opportunity for qualified students who are considering teaching as a career to work with faculty in large sections of sophomore literature classes or to teach their own first-year composition class through the awarding of graduate and teaching assistantships.
- To foster in those who are interested in pursuing careers in writing and editing, politics, business, nonprofit work or other less obviously English-related fields the kinds of attention and analysis that are concomitant with the formal study of vastly different kinds of writing – fiction, poetry and drama, argumentation and analysis, opinion, review essays, and creative nonfiction.
- To both broaden and deepen the needed practical knowledge of the fields of writing, literature and literary history for future English teachers in high schools, business schools and community colleges.
- To offer career teachers of English a place to improve their knowledge of these fields and rejuvenate their commitment to the study and teaching of literature.
- To enhance the professional opportunities of career teachers of English through advanced study.

The JMU graduate faculty in English is committed to the belief that encountering and interacting with literature, thinking critically about texts, learning the skills of scholarly research, and writing about one's ideas effectively provide the kind of education from which the world continues to benefit.

To fulfill these beliefs, we offer students a superior faculty who are recognized for their scholarship, their excellence in teaching and their supportive relationships with graduate students. Most classes are small seminars.

The Department of English offers the Master of Arts degree.

Degree Requirements

The minimum requirement for the Master of Arts degree is 33 hours of graduate credit in English. All students must take ENG 599, Bibliography and Methods of Research, in their first semester. Before beginning a teaching assistantship students must take ENG 501, Professional Seminar in College Composition. Completion of the third year of a college foreign language course or passing a reading examination in a foreign language is required for all students of the Master of Arts degree. Toward the end of their course work, students must pass a formal examination which is based on a portfolio of their academic writing.

While creative writing seminars may be offered occasionally, a creative writing concentration is not available.

All students should plan a program of study with the coordinator of graduate studies in English before registering for graduate courses in English. In addition, each student is required to meet with the graduate coordinator for a mid-semester progress conference during the student's first semester; after the first semester progress conferences are strongly encouraged.

Course Offerings

English

ENG 501. Professional Seminar in College Composition. 3 credits.

Practical examination of the content and methodology of freshman English (*GWRIT* 101, 102) for the training of beginning teaching assistants. (Required for all beginning teaching assistants; open informally on a noncredit basis for new part-time faculty in the department.)

ENG 503. Old English. 3 credits.

Advanced readings and research in Old English poetry and prose.

ENG 505. Middle English. 3 credits.

Middle English language and representative literary works.

ENG 508. History of Literary Criticism. 3 credits.

Advanced readings in the nature, function and development of literary criticism, from the classics to postmodernism.

ENG 509. Contemporary Critical Practices. 3 credits.

Advanced study of major debates in current critical discourse, covering such topics as formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, hermeneutics, reader response criticism, Marxism and new historicism.

ENG 510. Special Authors Seminar. 3 credits.

Advanced, in-depth study of one major author or selected group of authors from Anglo-American or alternative canons. Major research project. (May be repeated for credit when course content changes.)

ENG 512. Special Topics Seminar. 3 credits.

Advanced, in-depth study in a literary school, movement, genre, or other literary or linguistic topic. Major research project. (May be repeated for credit when course content changes.)

ENG 581. Poetics. 3 credits.

Advanced study of poetic forms for writers with emphasis on theory and current practices.

ENG 582. Narrative Form. 3 credits.

Narrative theory and current practices for writers.

ENG 583. Poetry Workshop. 3 credits.

Poetry writing for those with demonstrated skill, with emphasis on perfecting voice and poetic form.

ENG 584. Fiction Workshop. 3 credits.

Fiction writing for those with demonstrated skill, with emphasis on perfecting narrative form and personal style.

ENG 595A. Careers in English. 1 credit.

The graduate-level component of ENG 293. Graduate students will act as assistants to the instructor by leading small group discussions, conducting workshops in resume writing and other job-related skills, reading and evaluating student portfolios, and tutoring. Graduate students will also identify prospective employers and assemble credentials that emphasize writing and research skills. *Prerequisite: Graduate student status.*

ENG 595B. Graduate Internship in English. 1-3 credits.

English graduate student internships. Graduate students identify a prospective employer and work as an intern during the summer, fall or spring semester. Academic work may include reflective essays, bibliographies, resume writing, and meetings or presentations with graduate advisers. *Prerequisite: Graduate student status.*

ENG 599. Bibliography and Methods of Research. 3 credits.

Advanced training in the use of scholarly materials, procedures and techniques, including scholarly writing and computer-based library and research technology, for graduate-level work. (Required for all Master of Arts students in their first semester.)

ENG 602. Growth and Structure of the English Language. 3 credits.

History of the English language with attention to the changing forms of speech in phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics.

ENG 604. Contemporary Approaches to English Linguistics. 3 credits.

Survey of English linguistics and its current applications.

ENG 615. Chaucer. 3 credits.

Major works, with attention to their medieval context as well as traditional and contemporary critical approaches.

ENG 618. Medieval Drama. 3 credits.

Drama from its liturgical foundations through the morality play, with emphasis on historical context and modern critical approaches.

- ENG 620. Shakespeare.** 3 credits.
Selected plays by Shakespeare.
- ENG 625. Studies in 16th-Century Literature.** 3 credits.
Major British nondramatic works of the early Renaissance.
- ENG 628. Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama.** 3 credits.
Drama from the morality plays to 1642.
- ENG 630. Studies in 17th-Century Literature.** 3 credits.
Authors and movements in the literature of the 17th century.
- ENG 634. Studies in Early American Literature.** 3 credits.
Authors from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- ENG 635. Milton.** 3 credits.
Milton's poetry and prose (along with selected works by contemporary writers), with attention to the political, religious and cultural milieu in which Milton and his contemporaries worked.
- ENG 640. Studies in Restoration and 18th-Century Literature.** 3 credits.
Authors of the era studied in the context of the cultural and intellectual currents of the time.
- ENG 645. Studies in 19th-Century British Literature.** 3 credits.
Authors and movements in the literature of the 19th century.
- ENG 651. Studies in American Romanticism.** 3 credits.
Works by authors such as Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, Melville and Whitman.
- ENG 656. Studies in American Realism.** 3 credits.
Works by authors such as Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, Henry James or others.
- ENG 658. Studies in Southern Literature.** 3 credits.
Major works in southern literature; content may be limited either to works before 1945 or to contemporary works. (May be repeated for credit when content changes.)
- ENG 661. Studies in 20th-Century British Literature.** 3 credits.
Works in selected genres.
- ENG 662. Studies in 20th-Century Literature of the United States.** 3 credits.
Works in selected genres.
- ENG 664. Modernist Drama.** 3 credits.
Plays from Ibsen through Pinter.
- ENG 666. Post-Modernist Drama.** 3 credits.
Plays since Pinter.
- ENG 671. Studies in World Literature.** 3 credits.
Non-U.S., non-British literature in English or in translation. Content may be limited by period or by geographical, cultural, political or thematic parameters. (May be repeated for credit when content differs.)
- ENG 672. Studies in African-American Literature.** 3 credits.
African-American authors of the 20th century in the context of the cultural and intellectual currents of their time.
- ENG 673. Studies in Caribbean Literature.** 3 credits.
Advanced study of the literary achievement of novelists, poets and dramatists of the Caribbean, with emphasis on diverse theoretical and historical approaches.
- ENG 674. Studies in Women's Literature.** 3 credits.
Works by, about and relating to women with attention to feminist criticism.
- ENG 675. Reading and Research.** 3 credits.
Supervised reading and research in the literature of the student's major field. (Admission by permission of the director of graduate studies; may not be repeated.)
- ENG 683. Advanced Poetry Writing.** 3 credits.
Individualized projects and workshops for second-year students. (May be repeated once; may be used once for preparation and development of a thesis.) *Prerequisite: ENG 583.*
- ENG 684. Advanced Fiction Writing.** 3 credits.
Individualized projects and workshops for second-year students. (May be repeated once; may be used once for preparation and development of a thesis.) *Prerequisite: ENG 584.*
- ENG 685. Advanced Independent Work in Creative Writing.** 3 credits.
Individualized projects in genres other than poetry or prose fiction for second-year students. (Admission by permission of the instructor; may be repeated once; may be used once for preparation and development of a thesis.)
- ENG 698. Comprehensive Continuance.** 1 credit.
Continued preparation for the comprehensive examinations. (May be repeated as needed.)
- ENG 699. Thesis Continuance.** 2 credits.
Continued study, research and writing for the thesis. (May be repeated as needed.)
- ENG 700. Thesis.** 6 credits.
This course is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U) basis.