



Stony Brook
University

Master of Arts in English Program Handbook

Revised November, 2024

General Information

A master's degree in English requires completion of ten three-credit graduate courses, with a 3.0 overall GPA, competence in one language other than English OR additional study in Language and Rhetoric, and submission of a thesis.

Full Time Enrollment

To maintain full time status (necessary to apply for financial aid) students must enroll for:

- 12 graduate credits if you are G1 status (M.A. students who have completed fewer than 24 graduate credits).
- 9 graduate credits if you are G2 status (M.A. students who have completed 24 graduate credits).

Students must enroll for at least one credit during the semester in which they wish to graduate. If there is a semester in which a student plans not to enroll for classes, s/he must apply to the Graduate School for an official **leave of absence**. If the student fails to do so, enrollment in the M.A. program will lapse. Upon re-application to the program, the student will be subject to a **\$500 re-admission fee**.

Time Limit

Students in the English M.A. program may be full-time or part-time. The time limit for completion of the M.A. degree is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. Extensions may be requested, but we urge students to complete the M.A. in a timely fashion.

Independent Studies

Only one course numbered EGL 599 (Independent Study) will count toward the course requirements for the M.A. EGL 599 may not be taken during the student's first semester and may be taken thereafter only if the student has no Incompletes and a GPA of B+ or above.

The Language Requirement

The Language Requirement has been revised, effective for students matriculating in fall 2014. Students may either fulfill the language requirement through one of the following three options, or they may take a third course in Language and Rhetoric (see Course Requirements in the subsequent section).

Options for fulfilling the language requirement:

- **Option I:** Show evidence of having completed the second year of a language other than English at the undergraduate level with a grade of B or better within the last five years.
- **Option II:** Upon examination, demonstrate ability to translate writings of moderate difficulty in an approved language. Students who do not pass the examination may take it again after a 3-month interval.

- **Option III:** Obtain a grade of B or higher in a 500-level reading/translation course (e.g. FRN 500, GER 500).
- The following languages are automatically accepted for fulfilling the language requirement: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, French, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Other languages relevant to a student's graduate program may be approved upon petition to the Graduate Program Director.

Course Requirements

- **Three Courses in Language and Rhetoric** (or Two Courses for students who have fulfilled the Foreign Language Requirement).
 - EGL 509 Studies in Language and Linguistics (**required**)¹ –or 510 or approved substitute
 - EGL 506 Topics in Theory: Rhetoric or Composition (or approved substitute)
 - EGL 592 Problems in the Teaching of Writing
- **Three Topics Courses** (in at least two different topic areas)
 - 584: Topics in Genre Studies
 - 585: Topics in Cultural Studies
 - 586: Topics in Gender Studies
 - 587: Topics in Race, Ethnic or Diaspora Studies
 - 588: Writing Workshops
- **Three Elective Courses** (or Four Courses, for students who have fulfilled the language requirement)
 - Electives should be 500-level English Courses (600-level English courses and relevant courses from other departments must be approved by the Graduate Director).
- **Period Requirement**
 - At least one of the courses taken to fulfill degree requirements listed above must focus on periods before 1800.
- **Master's Thesis**

After completing at least 15 graduate credits, students may enroll for EGL 598 while writing a master's thesis of 30-40 pages under the guidance of a thesis advisor (chosen by the student with approval of Graduate Director) and an additional faculty member chosen by the student and the advisor. Enrollment requires the completion of the 598 enrollment form, to be signed by the student and the advisor. The final draft of the MA Thesis must be submitted at least two weeks before the last day of classes in the semester that the student intends to graduate. A final draft is a draft revised in response to feedback from the advisor on an earlier version. The student is responsible for arranging for the signatures of the advisor and reader on the final version, prepared according to the Graduate School guidelines.

¹ **Note:** Students who completed EGL 207 or EGL 380 with a grade of B or better need not take EGL 509. However, EGL 380/207 does not count as one of the 10 required **graduate** courses so students will need to take an additional course.

Note:

- Topic courses may be repeated as long as content varies.
- One course cannot be used to satisfy more than one requirement.
- Courses run through the School of Professional Development are not accepted for English MA requirements, except by prior approval of the Graduate Program Director.
- Students must be registered in the semester in which they graduate.

Graduate Certificate Programs

Students wishing to obtain graduate certificates in Women's and Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Writing & Rhetoric, and Philosophy are encouraged to do so. These certificate programs offer additional training in the specified areas. Please contact these departments directly regarding the certificate programs and requirements, as they are distinct from the English M.A.

Appeals and Grievances

Students who wish to address concerns or disputes regarding academic decisions, or other matters related to their graduate studies may submit an appeal or grievance. All such issues are reviewed by the Graduate Appeal and Grievances Committee, which is responsible for ensuring fair and consistent processes are followed. For guidance or to initiate the appeal or grievance process, students should contact the Graduate Program Director or the Department Chair. They can provide further details on the procedures, and necessary documentation required for the appeal or grievance process. The committee will assess the matter thoroughly, taking into account all relevant information and ensuring due process is observed.

Advice about writing your MA Thesis:

1. Think about ideas for your thesis.
2. Think about a possible thesis director. This should be someone who knows you, knows your writing, and is relatively timely and thorough about responding to your papers in his or her class.
3. Make an appointment and speak with that person the semester before you plan to write your thesis. Ask him or her if he or she would be willing to direct your thesis.
4. There is a form you both have to sign before you can register for the thesis course (like an independent study). The Graduate Program Director needs to sign this form, too.
5. You will also need a second reader for your thesis. This person, too, should be someone you know well and is an alert and responsive reader to your papers.
6. You write the thesis (30-40 pages) over the course of the semester, under the direction of your thesis director.
7. Build in time for director's and reader's comments and your subsequent revisions.
8. Because both readers may require revisions, the thesis should be finished well before the end of the semester, so that both readers have time to read it and make suggestions, and so that you will have time to revise it and send it to them for their final approval.
9. Edit carefully, and follow Graduate School guidelines for formatting your completed thesis and submitting it to the Graduate School. A thesis is a public document.

NOTE: This is not simply a regular paper that you hand in at the end of the semester for a grade. It is a "published" document that must be formatted in a particular way and submitted in final form to the Graduate School after both readers have read it and approved it. This takes time and planning for drafts, professor responses, revisions, re-readings, etc.

It is strongly suggested that you have a completed thesis draft a month before the last day of classes. That will give both of your readers time to comment on your draft, and it will give you time to revise your thesis, get it approved by both readers, and then formatted and submitted to the Graduate School by the due date.

Both readers and the grad director must sign off on your thesis—real ink, not a scanned form. That means that this paperwork (see the Graduate Program Coordinator) should be taken care of during the last week of classes, to make sure you can obtain signed papers from your thesis advisor, your second reader, and the Graduate Program Director.

Because the thesis is an involved project involving a number of people, it is also advised that you write it the semester before you plan to graduate. That way, if there are substantial revisions needed (a frequent issue) before your readers can sign off on it, you'll have the following semester to finish your revisions and obtain the necessary approvals.

To summarize:

- Meet with thesis director (and your second reader) the semester before you plan to write your thesis. Get the form signed.
- During the semester you are writing your thesis, start early and meet with your director regularly. Come up with a plan for meetings and due dates. Keep your second reader in the loop and build in time for him or her to read and respond.
- In order to build in response and revising time, plan on having a complete draft a month before classes end. You'll need several weeks to exchange drafts and revisions to both readers.
- Get the paper sign-off sheet signed by everyone and with time to format the thesis according to the Graduate School guidelines.
- Strongly consider writing your thesis the semester before you plan to graduate.