
Plan for the English Major

Name:

Class:

Current Advisor:

Date:

Preference for Major Advisor:

Although you will be filling out the College “Declaration of Major and Comprehensive Academic Plan,” the Department wants you here to focus on your planned choices for fulfilling the English major requirements. In Part I, we ask for information that will help us advise you. In Part II, we set out the Department’s learning goals for all students, but especially for majors, and in Parts III and IV, we take you through the different categories in the major requirements. Part V describes the standard for Honors in the Department.

Part I: Description of your objectives

Please give a brief explanation of your reasons for wishing to declare an English major.

Are you thinking of going to graduate school after graduation? If so, what kind of program?

Do you plan to seek certification in primary or secondary education in addition to your English major? If so, which one?

Do you plan to study off campus before graduating? If so, please indicate when, where, and how long you plan to be off campus, and the courses you expect to study while off campus.

Do you plan to take an interdisciplinary concentration? If so, which one?

Part II: Departmental Learning Goals

The Department of English at Grinnell helps students, through the study of literature, to expand their intellectual curiosity, to strengthen their abilities in critical and creative thinking, and to achieve disciplined independence as readers, thinkers, and writers.

We want our students to be able to

engage in the literary discourse required to analyze the formal and rhetorical features of texts representing varied genres;

acknowledge diversity of perspectives by learning to identify and articulate the assumptions they hold as readers and those implicit in literary texts;

show an articulate awareness of the ways historical events, social forces, and aesthetic conventions help determine the ways texts mean; and

use reasoned argument, supported by textual evidence, to advance and develop a literary interpretation.

We expect English majors to gain more experience in these practices and therefore to achieve the goals more fully than our non-major students. Although all students take up the first and second goals in their introductory course by practicing close reading and detailed explication, both goals are developed and refined at the next two levels. The practices implied by the third goal are also taught most comprehensively at those levels, and work in English courses on the Grinnell-in-London program complements awareness developed by these practices. The 200-level Traditions courses especially consider the evolution of literary forms as they reflect and respond to culture. Theory courses at the two upper levels also contribute to the second and third goals. Our creative writing courses at the 200- and 300-level significantly add to the study of literature by asking students to engage in the process of creation, and we recommend these courses even to students not intending to continue poetry or fiction writing. However, on the grounds that the study of creative writing enriches but should not replace the study of literature, students may count only one creative writing seminar toward the major requirement of three 300-level courses. The fourth goal, reasoned argument, is important at all levels of the English curriculum. We also ask that students become familiar with structural analysis of language, the “material” out of which literature is made, either by taking an advanced language course in a literature other than English or by combining intermediate-level study of a non-native language with a semester of general or historical linguistics.

Part III: Departmental Coursework

In planning your departmental course work, pay special attention to the prerequisites listed in the Grinnell Catalog. For example, you must also complete at least three 300-level English courses, among which only one of the creative writing seminars may count, and your options among 300-level courses will depend on the choices you have made among lower-level courses. In considering the timing of your choices, you should also consult the Grinnell Catalog and the annual Schedule of Courses because almost all 300-level courses are taught every other year, and 200-level courses are not necessarily offered every semester. The Schedule of Courses also gives you more detailed descriptions of the content of 300-level courses. Although the required number of credits for completing an English major is 32, many majors take more than that minimum. Most 300-level courses are seminars focusing on critical themes or questions and organized around an author (Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton), a period (e.g. Studies in English Literature: 1660-1798, The Victorians, Crosscurrents in 20th-Century Literature), a genre (e.g. Studies in American Poetry, Studies in American Prose, The British Novel), a combination of all three (Studies in African American Literature), or a geographic area (Seminar in Postcolonial Literature), although courses in each group actually cross over in multiple ways with other groups. Also at this level are creative writing seminars and a theory course. Each of these kinds of courses is a distinctive sort of study; you should try to make choices that will allow you to work with several kinds.

Course (Sem/Yr)	When Taken (Sem/yr)	OR To Be Taken	
One four-credit Humanities (HUM) course	-----	-----	(1)
English 223/227	-----	-----	(2)
English 224/225/226 (circle one)	-----	-----	(3)
English 227/228/229/ 231/232 (circle one)	-----	-----	(4)
Three 4-credit 300-level courses (write course numbers with Sem/Yr)	-----	-----	(5)
	-----	-----	(6)
	-----	-----	(7)
Other English courses (write course numbers with Sem/Yr; 32 total credits are required in English, so you should fill in at least lines 8 and 9)	-----	-----	(8)
	-----	-----	(9)
	-----	-----	

Part IV: The Language Requirement

The language requirement may be satisfied by

1. four semesters of college course work in one modern language, **or**
2. three semesters of such course work and one semester of linguistics (LIN114 or ENG 230), **or**
3. two semesters of Latin or Ancient Greek, **or**
4. demonstration of equivalent competence by examination.

Note: The number of semesters of course work is satisfied by the completion of the last course in the required sequence. For example, the successful completion of fourth-semester Spanish (Spanish 285) in one's first semester at Grinnell satisfies the requirement of "four semesters of college course work in one modern language." Students with knowledge of or course work in languages not offered at Grinnell may petition the department for credit towards the language requirement.

Which of the four options do you plan to take?

Please indicate below when you plan to take the courses necessary to complete the requirement.

	Course Name	Course Number	When Taken Or To Be Taken
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Part V: Honors in English

To be considered for honors in English, graduating seniors, in addition to meeting the College's general requirements for honors, must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.4, a minimum 3.5 GPA in the major, breadth in 200- and 300-level coursework in the Department of English, and make an outstanding contribution at the 300-level in English as certified by two members of the English faculty.