**Long-Form statement on requirements in English Literature**

**(last updates 07.12.2016)**

The curriculum of the Literature program is organized around four opportunities for scholarly engagement and critical reflection.

1. **Coursework**
2. **Critical Reflection Statement**
3. **Thesis Proposal and Thesis Proposal Defense**
4. **Thesis Research, Writing, and Defense**

These requirements are designed to introduce students to a wide range of scholarship in literary studies, while promoting ongoing, critical reflection on the course of their intellectual development. These requirements build upon each other, moving students toward the successful completion of an original thesis project, even as they are asked to reflect back on the process of their development as scholars.

**Requirement 1: Coursework**

Students working for an MA degree in English Literature must complete ENGL 301A. Other literature courses are listed using one of the course numbers in the range of ENGL 302-315, with an additional letter suffix and course title reflecting the specific themes and readings of that course. Up to two courses with the same number, but with different suffix letters and title reflecting different themes and readings, may be taken for credit.

In addition to ENGL 301A, students must take a minimum of one course in each of the following three categories: Literary History (courses in the range ENGL 302-305), Comparative Literature (courses in the range ENGL 306-309), and Literary and Cultural Studies (courses in the range ENGL 310-13). The remaining three courses may comprise any courses in English Literature, with the additional provision that up to two may be taken in other programs or departments, subject to approval by the Department of English.

**Rationale**

By requiring students in English Literature to explore courses in Literary History, Comparative Literature, and Literary and Cultural Studies, we hope to expose students to a wide-range of literatures, and to promote exploration and intellectual inquiry across multiple linguistic, literary, and cultural traditions.

**Literature Course Descriptions**

**ENGL 301A** **Introduction to Bibliography and Research Methods** **3.0; 3 cr.**

An introduction to bibliography and research methodologies in the study of literature, as well as elements of advanced literary theory. *Annually.*

**Literary History**

**ENGL 302**  **Literatures of the Middle Ages** **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course that covers major works of medieval literature, with attention to both form and cultural context. Some attention may be given to texts’ original languages. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 303**  **Early Modern Literatures**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course that covers major works of Renaissance literature, including theatre, with attention to both form and cultural context. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 304**  **British Literatures**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course that covers major works of British literature, including theatre, from the eighteenth century to the contemporary period. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 305**  **American Literatures**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course that covers major works of American literature, including theatre and film, with some emphasis given to relations among the wide array of American literary traditions. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**Comparative Literature**

**ENGL 306** **Transnational Literatures** **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships among texts, including theatre, film, and other narrative and visual forms, emerging from a range of different locales, with an emphasis on historical contexts of migration, diaspora, and crisis. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 307**  **Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships among texts that circulate between the colonized and formerly colonized world, and sites of imperial and neo-imperial power.Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 308**  **Literatures of the Global South**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships among texts that circulate through networks that link different sites of the colonized and formerly colonized world.Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 309**  **World Literatures**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships among significant texts from different origins, time periods, and genres, as well as their resonance in global contexts via translation, adaptation, and rewriting.Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**Literary and Cultural Studies**

**ENGL 310**  **Literature, Technology, and Media**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships between established (e.g. theatre, print, film, and visual media) and emergent media, and the changing conventions of genre, period, and form.Themes and readings may vary from term to term, and might include interrogations of the histories of cinema, theatrical, and literary culture. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 311**  **Literature and Material Culture**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring relationships between literary culture and the physical manifestations of culture in made objects.Themes and readings may vary from term to term, and might include examinations of capitalism and consumer culture as manifest in the representation of the domestic interior; or relations between the visual arts and literary, theatrical, or cinematic representation. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 312**  **Literature, Gender, and Sexuality**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring literary cultures from the perspectives of gender and sexuality as interpretive frameworks and representational strategies.Themes and readings may vary from term to term, and might include considerations of third world feminisms, gender and performance theory, queer and post-queer theory. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 313**  **Literature and Translation**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course exploring translation as a technology of literary production and meaning making. Works in translation will be considered through the lens of theories of translation and their practical applications.Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**Additional Course Options**

**ENGL 314**  **Special Topics in Literature**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course offered to students on an individual basis. The topic can include any aspect of literary study. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally. May be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits*.

**ENGL 315**  **Graduate Tutorial in Literature**  **3.0; 3 cr.**

**(A, B, C, D, E…)**

A course offered to students on an individual basis. The topic can include any aspect of literary study. Themes and readings may vary from term to term. *Occasionally.*

ENGL 395A/B Comprehensive Exam 0 cr.

*Prerequisite: Consent of advisor.*

**ENGL 399** **MA Thesis** **9 cr.**

**Requirement 2: Critical Reflection**

At the end of their second semester, students will submit a 500-750 word document that offers a critical reflection on the course of their intellectual development during their first year in the graduate program. This document should include a discussion of their expectations coming into the graduate program, a description of how those expectations have been challenged, and how their studies have contributed to their overall intellectual development. This document will be discussed by the faculty of the Department and its Graduate Committee. Based on these conversations, the Director of Graduate Studies will provide feedback to students and direct them to relevant faculty mentors and potential thesis advisers.

**Rationale**

This exercise is one of many through which the Department hopes to promote students’ ongoing reflection on the development of their research and their overall intellectual vision. Academics are routinely called upon to “account” for themselves and their research, its development, and its trajectory; this, in effect, means that academics are asked to tell a story about themselves and their research, where those research projects have come from, and how they have developed over time. It means being able to tell a story by which one positions oneself in relation to a larger field of scholarly engagement, while making an argument about how one contributes to that field.

To find one’s place within a field of scholarly engagement requires researchers to pursue and intellectual genealogy. Usually, as researchers, we are so engaged in the process of building an argument, of researching and writing and editing, that we do not take the time to fully appreciate how much work we have done, and how that work—upon reflection—describes our development as scholars over an extended period of time. The purpose of this exercise is to begin to inculcate the habit of periodic reflection, both for yourself, and in relation to other colleagues and scholars who often participate in such processes through forms of peer review. This helps faculty and students to better engage each other in the process of developing research, thereby enhancing the intellectual life of the Department.

In thinking about how you want to develop your Critical Self-Reflection, you might start by looking back on that Statement of Purpose, to begin to think about how your time in the graduate program has redirected or shaped your thinking, and how that trajectory begins to indicate a direction for the future. You may find that, after two semesters of graduate study, you have a less definite idea of what directions you might want to pursue within your research. This is not irregular or uncommon, but you should be prepared to explain how this is an effect of your studies thus far.

By promoting reflection on the course of your intellectual development, this exercise is meant to contribute to your ability to critically engage with texts. In the *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci famously argued that “[t]he starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.” As Edward Said would later point out, for Gramsci, the starting point of all critical thought was the compilation of such an inventory, the always incomplete attempt at situating oneself in relation to the social milieu of intellectual endeavor. What this means, in short, is that the ongoing process of reflection is part of your methodology, and one of the most important tools that you bring to bear upon the objects of your analysis. Self-reflection is part of the process by which one begins to articulate possible directions for future research.

**Requirement 3: Thesis Proposal and Thesis Proposal Defense**

The thesis proposal and thesis proposal defense requires students to become fully engaged participants in their own intellectual development. While faculty mentorship remains an important part of thesis research, students must be prepared to take responsibility for their ongoing development as scholars.

The thesis proposal and thesis proposal defense consists of five steps.

1. **The selection of a faculty adviser**
2. **The nomination of a thesis committee**
3. **The preparation of the thesis proposal**
4. **The circulation of the proposal to the faculty of the Department**
5. **The thesis proposal defense**

For the comprehensive exam in Literature, students craft an extensive thesis proposal—in consultation with their prospective thesis adviser—that will serve as the basis for their thesis project research. Students will register for ENG395 in the semester they plan to defend their thesis proposal. Students must defend their thesis proposal within one semester of completing course work, and before the deadline for thesis proposal submission set by the Department. In addition, students must continue to submit a two-page proposal to the Graduate Council in order to remain enrolled in the graduate program. The thesis proposal submitted to the department, however, is a different document, with a more developed format:

1. **It should define an object of inquiry, whether that be a specific corpus of literature, or a problem within literary studies**
2. **It should be roughly 4000-6000 words, include a working title, research questions, draft chapter outline, and a substantial bibliography, and be consistent with respect to citation and reference (MLA)**
3. **It should summarize the argument and its significance in relation to a review of the relevant scholarly literature**
4. **It should explain the specific analytic and interpretive strategies and the theoretical framework that will be developed in the thesis**

This proposal should be submitted to the department around the Midterm of each semester (the exact dates will be announced at the beginning of each semester). It will be evaluated by the whole of the faculty in the Literature program, which will provide feedback to each student’s prospective thesis adviser. Students will be examined on this proposal, orally, by their thesis committee during a designated thesis defense period. As per university guidelines for the Comprehensive Exam, the thesis proposal will be evaluated pass/fail. This, however, will be communicated to the student in categories of peer review, as outlined below.

1. **Accept with minor revisions**
2. **Revise and Resubmit**
3. **Reject**

Theses proposals that are graded “accept with minor revisions” will be reported to the registrar as “P”. Thesis proposals that are graded “revise and resubmit” will be reported to the Registrar as “PR”. If the thesis committee grades a proposal “revise and resubmit” students may submit and defend a revised version of the same proposal in the following semester. If a proposal is graded “reject,” students must develop a new proposal, in consultation with their thesis adviser, and submit that to defend in the following semester.

As implied above, students can defend their thesis proposal only once per semester. Based upon the evaluation of the prospective thesis committee, a student who does not pass the thesis proposal defense may submit either a revised version of their thesis proposal, or another, new proposal to be defended in the following semester. Students who are unable to pass the thesis proposal defense twice are dropped from the graduate program.

**Rationale**

This format offers students more opportunity for in depth study of their chosen field of specialization. By promoting greater depth of engagement with a specific field, we hope to facilitate the transition between course work and thesis research. Here, too, it is important to think of this exercise as an ongoing reflection about your work as a scholar, one that emerges in dialogue with faculty mentors—in this case, your prospective thesis adviser and prospective thesis committee members. Also, by submitting your thesis proposal to the department, the faculty of the Department are given an opportunity to learn more about your work, and to engage in your work as peer reviewers.

**Requirement 4: Thesis Research, Writing, and Defense**

The process of thesis research, writing, and defense represents the culmination of a discrete period of intellectual development, as well as the beginning of new intellectual projects, the opening of new avenues of inquiry, new questions and problems. Students’ thesis research, writing, and defense should take place in close consultation with their thesis adviser; the shape and scope of that thesis, its arguments, and its conclusions, should be continually refined in conversation between students, their thesis adviser, and faculty mentors. Thesis projects may take the shape of so-called “traditional” thesis work, or might encompass multiple platforms for research, analysis, and argumentation across different media.

**Rationale**

The process of thesis research, writing, and defense will prepare students to pursue ongoing research in literary studies and its adjacent fields. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop an original, significant piece of scholarly work that might serve either as the basis for an article, or the beginning of future dissertation research. If, however, the thesis represents the end of a student’s academic career, it will have provided them with an opportunity to hone the skills necessary to participate in conversations critical to the ongoing sustenance of our shared knowledge societies, through the application of qualitative modes of inquiry to pressing social and cultural concerns.