Institutional Effectiveness
2020-2021

Program: English MA

College and Department: College of Arts & Sciences – Department of English

Contact: Linda Null

Mission: The English MA curriculum prepares its graduates for success in PhD programs in English by increasing their knowledge of literary history and developing their skills in writing, literary analysis, and research; providing intensive training in writing and literary studies to help students excel as classroom teachers; preparing students for careers that demand advanced analytical and communication skills.

Program Outcomes:

PG 1: The English Department will graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year to be a program in good standing.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy.

SLO 2: Students will be prepared for success in PhD programs in English.

SLO 3: Students will be prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

SLO 4: Students will be prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

SLO 5: Students will be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

PG 1: Graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year.

- Graduation Rate:

  Tracking the graduate rate will aid the Department in determining the effectiveness of course offerings and advisement. The threshold for an MA program in good standing is 5 graduates a year.

SLO 1: Demonstrate broad and integrated knowledge

- Comprehensive Exam:

  Students in the creative writing concentration and students in the professional and technical communication concentration take a comprehensive exam.

Students respond in writing to two questions prepared by their advisory committee. One question is used for this outcome.

For creative writing students, the question will ask the students to relate what they learned in writing the thesis or portfolio to literary movements or critical theories or writers not covered in the thesis or portfolio. If the thesis or portfolio deals with pedagogical issues, students will discuss other theories not included in the research.

For professional and technical communication students, the question will ask students to discuss an ethical choice or dilemma encountered during the client project, including relevant theorists and/or theoretical frames.

Students in the nonthesis literature concentration take a comprehensive exam based on a reading list generated by the student and the student's advisory committee. The exam will be comprised of questions selected by the advisory committee. All possible questions will be shared with the student in advance, but the student will not know ahead of time which specific questions will be selected. The student will have up to six hours to complete the proctored, closed-book exam. Students will then orally defend their exams to their advisory committee, and the advisory committee will evaluate the questions and defense on a pass/fail basis. A "pass" for the exam requires a simple majority of the advisory committee.

Students in the professional and technical communication non-thesis option participate in an internship and take one more three-hour course than thesis-option students. They also submit a portfolio, two digital artifacts, a client project, and a critical reflection.

Students in thesis-option literature concentration are assessed using the thesis rubric.

- Exit Interviews
- Alumni Survey

SLO 2: Prepared for success in PhD programs

- Comprehensive Exam:

Students respond in writing to two questions prepared by their advisory committee. One question is used for this outcome.

For the creative writing students, the question will ask the students to discuss some of the teaching techniques they have used, or to discuss the ways they would present information from the thesis or portfolio in a seminar.

For professional and technical communication students, the question will ask the students to discuss specific skills learned or developed while revising their digital artifacts for the portfolio, including ways those skills would transfer to future projects, clients, or professional situations.

Students in the thesis-option literature concentration will be assessed using the thesis rubric.

Students in the non-thesis option literature concentration will be assessed as described under SLO1.

- Alumni Survey
- Exit Interviews

SLO 3: Prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

- Alumni Survey
- Exit Interviews

SLO 4: Prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

- Alumni Survey
- Exit Interviews

SLO 5: Prepared for careers outside academe

- Alumni Survey
- Exit Interviews

Results:

PG 1: Graduate a minimum of 5 MA students each year

MA Degrees Awarded by Academic Year

Academic Year	New students*	English M.A. degrees
2015-2016	5	3
2016-2017	3	4
2017-2018	5	4
2018-2019	5	4
2019-2020	7	5
2020-2021	3	4
2016-2020 annual average:	4.6	4.2

*Counts students in Fall plus any new entrants from prior Spring

SLO 1: Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge

Comprehensive Exam:

	# attempting	# passing
2017-18	4	4
2018-19	3	3
2019-20	3	3
2020-21	2	2

See Appendix for the Rubric to evaluate theses, comprehensive exams. and portfolios.

SLO 2: Prepared for success in PhD programs

Results of the 2018 Alumni Survey revealed that four respondents held degrees beyond the MA. Three of those degrees were PhDs.

The exit interviews for Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 showed that one Fall 2020 graduate was working as an adjunct in the TTU English Department while she prepared applications for PhD programs.

The 2020 survey showed that one graduate was completing work on a PhD at the University of Florida.

SLO 3: Prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

Results of the 2018 Alumni Survey revealed that 1 respondent had an EdS.

The 2020 alumni survey indicates that 2 graduates were working as academic advisors at TTU, and three were teaching in the English Department as adjuncts.

SLO 4: Prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

Results of the 2020 alumni survey indicate that one graduate is a high school principle. One graduate was working as an advisor at a community college.

SLO 5: Prepared for careers outside academe

The 2020-2021 exit interviews showed that one recent graduate was pursuing publication opportunities and another planned to work as an editor.

The 2020 alumni survey indicates that 7 of the respondents were working outside academia in areas such as software development, document editing, claims adjustor, sales associate, chess consultant, lawyer, and legislative aide.

In summary, evidence from alumni surveys and exit interviews reveals that our MA graduates are prepared for a wide range of jobs both in and out of academia.

Modifications for Improvement

SLOs 1 & 2

In Spring 2021, the department developed a general rubric for evaluating theses, project papers, comprehensive exams, and experiences in ENGL 6000 Introduction to Graduate Studies**.** The rubrics will be used beginning Fall 2021. After we have used the rubrics for a semester, we will develop thresholds. Overtime, the department will evaluate gains from students entering the program in ENGL 6000 to exiting the program via the comprehensive exams.

Appendices

1. English MA Curriculum Map
2. Alumni Survey
3. Survey for Graduating English MA Students
4. Rubric to Evaluate Theses, Portfolios, and Comprehensive Exams

Appendix 1: English MA Curriculum Map

Leaning Outcomes	Required Courses		
	ENGL 6000 Introduction to Graduate Studies	ENGL 6--- American Literature	ENGL 6--- British Literature
Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy	I	R,A	R,A
Succeed in Ph.D. programs in English	I	R, A	R,A
Succeed in other areas of advanced graduate education	I	R,A	R,A
Be prepared for teaching careers in high school and community colleges	I	R,A	R,A
Be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills	I	R, A	R,A

Appendix 2: Alumni Survey

1. Name

2. What is your job title at your current place of employment?

3. What year did you graduate with your MA in English?

4. What was your concentration in the MA program?

5. After graduating with your MA, did you choose to apply to other higher education programs?

6. What degree(s) did you apply for after graduating? Select all that apply.

7. If you chose "Other," please provide the degree(s) you applied for that are not listed above.

8. At what college/university did you earn this degree or degrees?

9. What year did you graduate from that program?

10. How did your experience in TTU's MA program benefit your ability to apply to/obtain a higher degree? Are there ways the program could have better prepared you for a higher degree?

11. Do you teach full-time, or otherwise work in education? If you answer "No," please skip to question 18.

12. If yes, do you teach/have an administrative position at one of these levels?

13. What is your teaching title? What does your current job entail?

14. Overall, do you believe that working as a Teaching Assistant at TTU helped prepare you for a classroom environment or in your education career, be it on the college or high school level?

16. If you were not offered a GTA position, do you feel that you were still provided with the same opportunities?

17. Please explain:

18. Do you work outside academe or the field of education? If you answer "No," please skip to question 22.

19. If yes, please define your current employment.

20. Did your Tennessee Tech MA in English help prepare you for this position?

21. In what ways did TTU's MA program help you succeed in your current employment? Are there ways in which the program could be improved?

22. Do you believe your TTU MA in English helped prepare you for your career?

23. Overall, how would you describe your experience as a graduate student in the TTU English Department? Is there anything not mentioned that you feel needs to be discussed/improved?

24. If a TTU English Department faculty member contacts you in the future with further questions or surveys, would you be willing to respond?

Appendix 3: Survey for Graduating English MA Students

Name:

Email address: (address to be used after you graduate):

Graduation date: ____December ____May ____August _____ (year)

Concentration: ____Literature ____ PTC ____ Creative Writing

Thesis or Non-Thesis Option:

Address after graduation:

Plans immediately following graduation:

1. What factors led you to pursue your MA at TTU?

2. What aspects of the MA program do you consider its strengths?

3. In what areas do you think the MA program might be improved?

4. To what extent did technology used in your MA classes help you engage the material?

5. Are you satisfied with the quality of advisement and other support you received?

6. Has the English MA program helped you clarify your career goals?

7. If you held a TA position, to what extent did that position help prepare you for future career options?

8. If you held a TA position, how comfortable do you feel using technology in your own classrooms or teaching?

9. Review the learning outcomes (below) of the English MA program. Do you feel that your work in the program has enabled you to meet any or all of these outcomes? Please explain.

a. Students will demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy.

b. Students will be prepared for success in Ph.D. programs in English.

c. Students will be prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

d. Students will be prepared for teaching careers in high schools and community colleges.

e. Students will be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills.

Appendix 4: Rubric to Evaluate Theses, Portfolios, and Comprehensive Exams

1. Students will demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of history, theory, and/or pedagogy.					
	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	**At Expectations (3)**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1)**	**N/A**	**Rating**
History	The project is thoroughly grounded in the traditions of the text, genre, or issue. The student has clearly engaged with the ongoing scholarly conversation surrounding the text or issue.	The project shows an awareness of the scholarly conversation surrounding the text, genre, or issue. Cites major critics or secondary sources.	The project lacks awareness of the scholarly conversation surrounding the text, genre, or issue. Few to no secondary sources cited.		
Theory	The project has a clear theoretical framework, and demonstrates mastery of the relevant critical theories. Not only cites theorists, but engages with their ideas and arguments.	The project engages with appropriate critical theory. Cites major figures and concepts in the field or fields.	The project lacks a clear theoretical framework. It either does not integrate theory or rushes through it in a cursory manner. Lacks awareness of major figures and concepts in the field or fields.		
Pedagogy and/or Industry Application (if applicable)	The writer demonstrates they are well-prepared to consider how their work would apply in a classroom or professional setting. They show a mastery of their content that indicates a larger awareness of the requirements and conventions of their chosen field.	The writer demonstrates awareness of the conventions of their respective profession, and that they would be prepared to either teach or apply their work to that profession. They have clearly thought beyond just the specifics of their project and considered its application for teaching or industry.	The writer does not consider the implications of the project beyond its immediate ideas, demonstrating a lack of awareness/preparation for a career in teaching or industry. Regardless of the content of the project, the writer seems unprepared to apply this work to a chosen field.		
Integration	The writer demonstrates mastery by integrating secondary sources or their ideas and concepts into their own writing in a fluid and professional manner.	The writer integrates secondary sources or their ideas and concepts into their own writing.	The writer engages with secondary sources or their ideas and concepts, but in a disjointed way, without establishing why they are necessary for the writer's own project.		
2. Students will be prepared for success in Ph.D. programs in English.					

3. Students will be prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.					
	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	**At Expectations (3)**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1)**	**N/A**	**Rating**
Content (maybe add some language for CW about creativity or innovation)	The author demonstrates advanced analytical skills, original and exciting ideas, rigorous thought, and a clear sense of payoff/importance for the work.	The author demonstrates good analysis, ideas that move beyond just summarizing, independent thought, and gestures towards the larger significance of the project.	The author lacks sufficient analysis, engages in too much summary/rehashing others' ideas, and fails to establish why the project matters.		
Organization	The project is clearly an integrated whole, with connections made across chapters/components/answers. Not only is each individual piece well organized, but these pieces clearly fit together into a larger project.	Individual chapters/components/answers are well-organized and cohesive. Each piece reads/looks holistic, with a clear structure, logic, and progression.	Individual chapters/components/answers lack organization. There may be good content, but it lacks a clear structure, logic, or progression.		
Audience	The project is written/designed with a strong understanding of audience. The tone is that of an advanced academic communicating with peers, difficult concepts are explained at an appropriate level, and the writing anticipates and addresses potential audience questions or concerns.	The project is written/designed with a decent understanding of audience. The tone is suitable for a developing academic communicating to more advanced academics, difficult concepts are explained (though perhaps overexplained), and the writing recognizes potential audience questions.	The project is written/designed without a good awareness of audience. The tone is not suitable for graduate-level writing, concepts are either overexplained or underexplained, and the writing fails to anticipate potential audience questions.		
Genre Conventions	The project demonstrates a strong understanding of the conventions of the genre(s) involved. It not only follows all appropriate formatting and style conventions, but…	The project follows all formatting and style conventions.	The project has numerous errors in terms of formatting and style conventions.		
4. Students will be prepared for teaching careers in high schools and community colleges.					

5. Students will be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills.					
	Significantly Above Expectations (5)	**At Expectations (3)**	**Significantly Below Expectations (1)**	**N/A**	**Rating**
Analysis	The project demonstrates strong analysis of the texts/objects of study, or of the workings of the creative genre and subject matter. The work is intellectually stimulating and demonstrates advanced independent thought, rather than simply reproducing the thoughts/work of others.	The project demonstrates acceptable analysis of the texts/objects of study, or of the workings of the creative genre and subject matter. The work demonstrates an ability to read and think critically.	The project does not show strong analytic skills. It primarily involves summary/reproducing the work of others, mimicing the style/ideas of others, or simply relying on others' thought instead of producing something original.		
Defense	The author displays confidence and poise in answering questions. The author presents as a peer and an authority in the field, not as a subordinate. The author facilitates an engaging dialogue about the topic, instead of just responding to questions.	The author answers questions and responds to comments with clarity and insight. The author is comfortable dealing with critique and supporting their own ideas in a dialogue.	The author struggles to answer questions or challenges. The author seems uncomfortable if pushed off script, hesitates to provide answers, and engages in the conversation as a subordinate, not as an authority.		
Presentation (if applicable)	The author has designed a professional presentation, considering the genre conventions of their chosen field. The author presents with confidence and poise, displaying authority over their subject matter and engaging the audience both during their presentation and during the Q&A.	The author has designed a presentation that has no errors and conveys the content adequately. The author has developed and practiced a clear presentation, with few fumblings or hesitations. The author responds to audience questions with acceptable answers.	The author has not put adequate design or rehearsal into the presentation. The presentation is disjointed and confusing, particularly to audience members unfamiliar with the work. The author struggles to respond to questions from the audience.		