

# **MA English Handbook**

*Fall 2015*

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Welcome to the Queens College English MA program! All of us on the faculty are excited to work with you.

This handbook is designed to help you find your feet at Queens College and plan your progress through the program. It is intended as a summary of important and useful information, not as a replacement for regular conversations with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Caroline Hong; with the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies, Bill Orchard; with your course instructors; and with other members of the English faculty, especially those whose scholarly interests and enthusiasms correspond with your own.

## *Degree Requirements*

The MA in English Literature (<http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-english/>) is a 30-credit program. These credits are distributed as follows:

- 2 foundational courses (English 701 and English 636), typically taken in a 2-semester sequence during a student's first year in the program.

### **English 701: Theory and Practice of Graduate Methodology (3 credits)**

This course will introduce students to the skills they'll need to succeed in graduate-level coursework and research. It begins by examining scholarship in "English" to understand the kinds of questions, methods, and ideas that are engaging the field today. Like most disciplines, English scholarship is divided into many subfields. Some are organized by historical markers, such as Victorian or Medieval literature, and some are organized by approaches, like cultural studies or historicism. One of the goals of this course is to help students navigate their interests within the discipline and begin to carve a place for themselves within a number of scholarly conversations. In order to do this, we will focus on how literary theory, archival work, and close reading (as some examples) are used to generate research questions and intervene in already existing scholarly debates. In part, the work in this course will be technical. We will spend time exploring journals, books, and databases to learn how to read and manage already existing scholarship. Through this work we will also explore the history of English Studies to understand how contemporary conversations have emerged within the discipline. Finally, the course will also devote time to students' own writing to prepare them for producing thesis-driven, research-based, and theoretically grounded papers in their courses and, eventually, for their culminating research project.

### **English 636: History of Literary Criticism (3 credits)**

This course is an introduction to literary criticism and theory. We will consider the ways in which thinkers from diverse disciplines and intellectual traditions have provided answers to the following questions: What is literature? How do we determine the meanings of a text? What is the relationship between an author, a text, a reader, and a context? What role does a text play in representing or even producing our conceptions of reality? We will begin by reading foundational figures like Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel before turning to theoretical perspectives (such as Marxism, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, formalism, new historicism, feminism, queer theory, postcolonialism, and critical race studies) that inform much of contemporary literary criticism. Literary theory allows us to connect literature to larger political and philosophical questions in the world. To that end, we will strive to understand theoretical texts on their own terms and work to think *with* them so that we can ask more compelling questions about the literary works that we analyze.

- **7 electives courses (21 credits)**

An elective is any course of your choosing at the 600 or 700 level, excluding the creative writing workshops and craft classes that are reserved for MFA students. Elective courses are chosen by the student, in consultation with faculty members and the Director of Graduate Studies. Every semester, a range of electives are offered in British, American, and other Anglophone literatures. We encourage you to use your electives both to begin to develop a specialized area or areas of study and to explore a range of subfields, including but not limited to gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial and global studies, African American studies, Asian American studies, Latina/o studies, rhetoric and composition theory, cultural studies, and media studies. Profiles for all full-time English faculty and their areas of specialization may be found on the English Department website at <http://english.qc.cuny.edu/people/>.

- **English 791: Thesis Essay (3 credits)**

In their final semester in the program, students work independently on a culminating thesis essay, of publishable article length (25–30 pages), in close consultation with a faculty advisor and within the context of a 3-credit course: ENGL 791. The thesis essay is usually a revision of a paper or papers written for other courses or (less typically) a new research project, as judged appropriate by the student's faculty advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students also participate in writing workshops throughout the semester and, upon completing their thesis essay, have a conference (often referred to as an oral exam) in which they discuss their project with their advisor and one or two faculty readers.

Thesis essays submitted and approved for the English MA in recent years include

- Affective Laboring in *The Awakening* and *The House of Mirth*
- Blood Suckers, Demon Lovers, and the Transcendentally Queer Child: The Evolution of Vampiric Gender and Sexuality from *Dracula* to *Let the Right One In*
- Conflict Rape: An Ecofeminist Evaluation of the American Portrayal of Rape in African Conflict Regions
- Curious Creatures: The Animal Other in the Menagerie of Elizabeth Bishop
- Forged Letters in Shakespeare's Tragedies
- Ghosts of the Medieval: Race in Contemporary Fantasy Novels
- A Path Denied: Spenser's Treatment of Lesbianism in *The Faerie Queene*
- Sex, Bravado, and Biblical Criticism: Moloch's Role in *Paradise Lost*
- (Un)Happy Mediums: Spiegelman's *Maus I & II* and the Holocaust Photograph
- The Victorian Poetess Unveiled in Rossetti's *Goblin Market*
- Playing with Your Food: Constructing and Performing Identities in Food Memoirs

For more information about writing the thesis essay, please consult the Guide to ENGL 791.

## *Planning Your Schedule*

All MA classes during the fall and spring semesters are offered in two time slots, 4:30–6:20pm and 6:30–8:20pm. There is no required course load for students, who are encouraged to take between 1 and 4 classes a semester depending on their other commitments. The majority of English MA students take 2–3 courses a semester.

A small selection of English MA elective courses is also offered during two summer sessions: Session 1 lasts for 4 weeks in June (4 times a week in the evening), and Session 2 lasts for 6 weeks from early July to mid-August (twice a week in the evening).

### **Preregistration**

Each semester, the Director of Graduate Studies will announce dates for preregistration and help you to register for courses for the upcoming semester. Please look out for these announcements, which will be emailed to you via the program listserv and publicized on the department website and on the graduate bulletin board outside Klapper 604.

## Advising

It is important that you develop strong advising relationships with English faculty members who specialize in the fields of study that most interest you. But for general advisement and for all issues concerning program policies and procedures, it is best to email or make an appointment with the Director or Assistant Director of Graduate Studies. Our contact information is given below.

### **Caroline Hong, Director of Graduate Studies**

Office: Klapper Hall 604

Email: [caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu)

Fall 2015 office hours: Thursdays 4:30-6:30pm, and by appointment

### **Bill Orchard, Assistant Director of Graduate Studies**

Office: Klapper Hall 635

Email: [worchard@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:worchard@qc.cuny.edu)

On leave during Fall 2015 (only available via email)

## *Additional Course Opportunities*

The English Department offers a broad range of seminars every semester. But it's also possible to earn elective credit by organizing an independent course of study and/or by taking graduate-level courses in other departments at Queens College, as well as at other English departments across the CUNY system.

### ▪ **Independent Study (English 795)**

An independent study provides students with the opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty member on a particular topic or interdisciplinary subfield. If you are interested in undertaking an independent study, you should first arrange a preliminary meeting with a full-time faculty member (if they are available and willing) to talk over the aims, scope, and content of your proposed study. An independent study sign-up form (including the title of the study, short course description, preliminary reading list, and work to be assessed) must be submitted to the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies for approval before the end of the first week of classes *at the absolute latest*. A copy of the sign-up form is included at the end of this handbook. The workload for an independent study should be comparable to a regular 3-credit MA elective course.

While students are encouraged to engage in independent work with English faculty, the MA program is designed for a careful balance between independent and classroom experience. For this reason, students may register for no more than 2 independent studies over the course of their degree. Long-distance independent studies (where the student or the faculty member is not able to meet regularly) are not permitted.

▪ **Taking a course at another CUNY institution**

With an e-permit and the permission of both the Director of Graduate Studies and the course instructor, you may take graduate classes at other CUNY campuses, including the Graduate Center. This is a good option if there is a specialized field or emerging subject area that is not typically offered among the department's course offerings, or if there is a professor at another CUNY campus that you especially admire and wish to work with. If you plan to take courses at a university outside of CUNY, you should consult first with the Director of Graduate Studies. Note that ENGL 701 and ENGL 636, the two required classes for the English MA, must be taken in the English Department at Queens College.

E-permit classes are counted as transfer credits. No more than 12 credits may be transferred. Further information about applying to take classes outside of Queens College can be found at

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/perm/Pages/default.aspx>.

## *Beyond the Classroom*

At Queens College, we believe that graduate study should be a collaborative and social endeavor, both in and outside the classroom. And so we urge our students to take full advantage of the dynamic community of writers and scholars in the English Department, on campus, and across the CUNY system. The list of events below is by no means exhaustive, but it gives you some idea of the range of literary and scholarly activities in which we hope you will participate during your time in the MA program.

Our MFA program (<http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/mfa-in-creative-writing/>) hosts a series of lively events every semester, including readings, book launches, and roundtable discussions.

The English Department also runs a monthly lunchtime seminar, in which one member of the faculty leads a rigorous but relatively informal and welcoming discussion about an emerging area of study in our discipline.

Every year, Queens College's Evening Readings series (<http://www.qcreadings.org/>) brings distinguished writers to campus for a public discussion of their work. Writers featured in the upcoming 2015–16 season include Zadie Smith, Emily St. John Mandel, Meg Wolitzer, Mary Gaitskill, Joyce Carol Oates, Nicole Krauss, and Geraldine Brooks. These readings are free with a CUNY student ID (tickets normally \$20).

Given the rich collegial life at Queens College, it may be that you never feel the urge to venture further afield. But it's worth keeping abreast of events happening at the Graduate Center, especially if you're thinking about pursuing a PhD upon completion of your MA. Many of our faculty also teach courses at the Graduate Center and are involved in organizing a number of talks and field-specific colloquia. Your Queens College ID grants admission to all events at the Graduate Center and you're sure to find many familiar faces from Queens College there.

### **MA Graduate Conference**

Our annual one-day, student-organized graduate English conference offers a great opportunity—whether as organizers, presenters, or audience members—to learn about and participate in an important and vital aspect of academic professional life. The conference takes place in April, although planning begins early in the fall. All members of the MA community are invited to take part.

### **Nancy Comley Prize**

Named for the long-standing Chair of the English Department, the Nancy Comley Prize was established in 2011–12 to honor the best essay written by an MA or MS Ed student. The prize is sponsored by the English Department Alumni Fund. Submission guidelines are distributed every April, and the winner is honored in a ceremony in May.

### **Rosenthal Library**

We recommend bookmarking the Queens College Library website (<http://library.qc.cuny.edu/>) and referring to it often. The website serves as a library handbook with policies and services and is a gateway to the online CUNY library catalog, as well as databases and other electronic resources that can be accessed off campus using your QCard. A service called CLICS allows you to request a book from any CUNY library and have it delivered to Queens College. If a book is not available anywhere within CUNY, then ILLiad (Interlibrary Loan) is another way to obtain them.

Nancy Foasberg, Humanities Librarian and Assistant Professor, is affiliated with the English Department and will be happy to help you with any research-related questions. Her email address is [nancy.foasberg@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:nancy.foasberg@qc.cuny.edu).



## *Academic Policies and Procedures*

For more information about the academic policies and procedures listed below, please consult the Handbook of Graduate Studies, which is available at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/academics/gradstudies/documents/Grad-Handbook.pdf>.

### **Academic Calendar**

You can find QC's academic calendar for 2015–16 at the bottom of the Registrar's website at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/Pages/Welcome.aspx>.

### **Transfer Credits**

Upon entry, the MA program allows you to transfer up to 12 credits for graduate-level English courses that you have taken either at another university or at Queens College within the past 8 years and for which you have earned a grade of B- or better. Both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Office of Graduate Admissions must approve all transfer credits that will appear on your graduate transcript without a letter grade. If you wish to transfer credits, please schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies. For credits earned at another university, you will need to bring a copy of your transcript listing the credits you wish to transfer as well as course descriptions or syllabi. Please do so ASAP, as the College will only permit you to transfer credits during your first two semesters as a matriculated student in the MA program.

### **Withdrawals**

It may happen that you need or decide to withdraw from a course once the semester has started. Withdrawing requires no special approval during the first 8 weeks of the semester and can be accomplished via your student record on CUNYfirst (although it's courteous to let your course instructor know that you have decided to withdraw from their class). Beginning in the semester's 9th week, however, you will need to fill out what is known as an Evaluated Withdrawal form, which must be signed both by the class instructor and by the Director of Graduate Studies before being submitted by you to the Registrar. Beginning in the 14th week, the Evaluated Withdrawal form requires the additional approval of the Office of Graduate Studies. It can take some time to gather these various signatures/approvals so be sure to plan accordingly. An unofficial withdrawal (that is, if you simply stop coming to class and do not fill out the paperwork) would be marked on your transcript as a WU. This grade is the equivalent of an F and will have a negative impact on your GPA. You can download the form at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/Documents/Graduate%20Evaluated%20Withdrawal%20Form.pdf>.

## Incompletes

If you are prevented, for “a good and sufficient” reason, from completing a class, then it is possible to request a temporary grade of “incomplete” (INC) from the course instructor. The Office of Graduate Studies requires that all incompletes be resolved by the end of the following two semesters (for example, if you receive a temporary grade of INC in the Fall 2015 semester, you need to complete all outstanding coursework and receive a letter grade by the end of the Fall 2016 semester). The MA program does not permit students who have incompletes outstanding on their record to preregister for classes without scheduling an advising meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies.

## GPA Requirement

Students need to maintain a 3.0 or B average in order to remain in good standing in the program.

## Applying for Reentry

If you decide not to register for classes during a regular fall or spring semester, then your record will become inactive and you will need to file for reentry into the program. Reentry applications must be filed online through the Office of Graduate Admissions: <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/admissions/graduate/applying/Pages/Re-entry.aspx>.

Your application must be filed by July 15 for fall admission; by December 1 for spring admission; and by May 15 for the two summer sessions. Please note that there is a nonrefundable reentry application fee of \$20.

## Time to Degree

The Office of Graduate Studies stipulates that all requirements for the English MA degree be completed within a time limit of 4 years. If you need to request a time extension from the Graduate Studies office in order to complete your degree, you should first schedule a meeting with the Director of Graduate Studies.

## Filing for Graduation

At the start of your final semester in the MA program, you must apply for graduation via your student record on CUNYfirst.

- For fall, the filing deadline is **November 1** for a February 1 degree conferral.
- For spring, the filing deadline is **March 1** for a May degree conferral.
- For summer, the deadline is **July 1** for a September 1 degree conferral.

More information about graduation policies is available on the Registrar’s webpage: <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/graduation/Pages/GraduationPolicies.aspx>.

*NOTE:* CUNY regulations require graduate students to be enrolled/registered during the semester in which their degree is awarded. If you have completed all your coursework for the degree and are not officially registered for any classes during the semester in which you plan to graduate (which typically happens when students are finishing up INCs left on their record from previous semesters), then you must apply for Maintenance of Matriculation (MAM) in order to be eligible to graduate. The Maintenance of Matriculation form and current fees can be found at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/Documents/Maintenance%20of%20Matriculation%20Form.pdf>.

## *Getting Started*

All students enrolled in the English MA program must have:

- **A CUNYfirst account**

Your CUNYfirst account gives you access to the registration system, your finances, and academic records (unofficial transcripts, course history, etc.). To set up your account, go to [https://home.cunyfirst.cuny.edu/oam/Portal\\_Login1.html](https://home.cunyfirst.cuny.edu/oam/Portal_Login1.html) and click on “New User.” Be sure to make careful note of your CUNYfirst username, password, and 8-digit CUNY ID#.

- **A CAMS (College Account Management System) or QC username account**

You will use your CAMS/QC username account to login to computers on campus, access QC Wi-Fi, and create your QC email. To set up your account, go to <https://cams.qc.cuny.edu/>.

- **A Queens College ID card (QCard)**

Your QCard will allow you to enter and check out materials at Rosenthal Library, as well as access CUNY Library Research Databases remotely from your home computer. You can obtain your QCard one business day after the activation of your CAMS account by visiting the QCard office located in the One Stop Service Center in the Dining Hall, Room 128. You must bring two photo IDs as proof of identification (e.g., your old college ID, driver’s license, state-issued non-driver ID, and/or passport). For more information about the QCard, see <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/online/qcard/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **OIT (Office of Information Technology) Help Desk**

For help with all technology-related matters (including setting up your CAMS and CUNYfirst accounts), visit the OIT Help Desk located in the Dining Hall, Room 151, call 718-997-4444, or email [helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:helpdesk@qc.cuny.edu). For Help Desk hours and more information, visit <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Computing/Pages/Default.aspx>.

### **One Stop Service Center**

The One Stop Service Center (OSSC) is staffed with the nicest and most helpful people from the Office of the Registrar, the Bursar, and the Financial Aid Office and is by far the quickest way to get any financial or registration problems resolved and your questions answered. It is located in the Dining Hall, Room 128. For their hours and more information, see

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/onestop/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **English MA Listserv**

Important information about the program, including events and upcoming deadlines, will be announced on the English MA electronic mailing list:

[maenglish@lists.qc.cuny.edu](mailto:maenglish@lists.qc.cuny.edu). Students are automatically subscribed to this list upon entry into the program. To unsubscribe or change your subscription settings, please visit <http://lists.qc.cuny.edu/mailman/listinfo/maenglish>.

If you reply to a message sent to you via the list, it will be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies, not to the entire list. If you wish to send out a message to the list, you must contact the DGS and receive permission first.

### **College Offices**

The English Department

<http://english.qc.cuny.edu/>

Klapper Hall 607

718-997-4600

[english@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:english@qc.cuny.edu)

Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/academics/gradstudies/Pages/default.aspx>

Kiely Hall 139A

718-997-5190

Carol Capalone, Administrative Assistant

[carol.capalone@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:carol.capalone@qc.cuny.edu)

#### The Registrar

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

Jefferson Hall, 1st floor

718-997-4400

[qc.registrar@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:qc.registrar@qc.cuny.edu)

#### The Bursar

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/admissions/bursar/Pages/default.aspx>

Jefferson Hall 200

718-997-4500

#### Graduate Admissions

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/admissions/graduate/Pages/Welcome.aspx>

Jefferson Hall 105

718-997-5200

#### Financial Aid Office

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/admissions/fa/Pages/default.aspx>

Jefferson Hall 202

718-997-5100

[qc.finaid@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:qc.finaid@qc.cuny.edu)

**ENGLISH 795**  
**INDEPENDENT STUDY – SIGN-UP FORM**

**Student Information**

Name:

CUNY ID (8-digit):

Contact email address:

**Independent Study**

Instructor:

Title of course:

Short course description, including reading list and writing assignment(s).

All information should be typed. If needed, attach a separate page.

Instructor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_