

# **English MA Handbook**

## **2019–2020**

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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), Dr. Caroline Hong; with the Assistant DGS, Dr. Bill Orchard; with your professors; and with other members of the English Department faculty, especially those whose scholarly interests and enthusiasms correspond with your own. You can also find more info on our website (<http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-english/>) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/QCMAEnglish/>).

## *Degree Requirements*

The English MA is a 30-credit program (see the English MA Advising Worksheet at the end of this handbook). 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 have engaged and continue to engage the field today. Like most disciplines, literary scholarship is divided into many subfields. Some are organized by historical markers, such as Victorian or early American 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 subfields and their scholarly conversations. In order to do this, the course may 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. Students will spend time exploring journals, books, and databases to learn how to read and manage already existing scholarship. 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 thesis essay project.

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

This course is an introduction to literary criticism and theory. It 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 context? What role does a text play in representing or even producing our conceptions of reality? The course may 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, critical race theory, affect theory, and disability 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 (ENGL 751–763) that are reserved for MFA students. Elective courses are chosen by the student, in consultation with the faculty and/or the Directors 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/x Studies, Rhetoric and Composition Studies, Drama and Performance Studies, Children’s and Young Adult Literature, Comics and Graphic Narratives, and Science Fiction. 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 Course (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 in 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 a second faculty reader.

Sample thesis essays recently submitted and approved for the English MA include

- Affective Laboring in *The Awakening* and *The House of Mirth*
- A Black Narrative Voice: Genre, Authorship, and Authenticity in *The History of Mary Prince*
- Bringing Monsters to Light: *Shigeru Mizuki's Hitler's* Defamiliarizing of Western History through Manga
- 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 man of two minds": Deconstructing Dualities in Nguyen's *The Sympathizer*
- A Path Denied: Spenser's Treatment of Lesbianism in *The Faerie Queene*
- Playing with Your Food: Constructing and Performing Identities in Food Memoirs
- Posthuman Possibilities in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* Trilogy
- (Un)Happy Mediums: Spiegelman's *Maus I & II* and the Holocaust Photograph
- The Victorian Poetess Unveiled in Rossetti's *Goblin Market*
- "When You Finally See Them": The Narrative Deployment of Disabilities in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

For more information about writing the thesis essay, please see <http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-english/ma-thesis/> and consult the Guide to ENGL 791.

## ***Planning Your Schedule***

All MA classes during the fall and spring semesters are offered in two time slots, 4:40–6:30pm and 6:40–8:30pm. 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. You are expected to earn your degree within 4 years.

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 early for courses for the upcoming semester. Please look out for these announcements, which will be emailed to you via the MA listserv (<https://lists.qc.cuny.edu/mailman/listinfo/maenglish>) 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 below.

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

Office: Klapper Hall 637

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

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

Office: Klapper Hall 604

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

## ***Additional Coursework Opportunities***

The English Department offers a broad range of graduate seminars every semester. But it's also possible to earn elective credit by organizing an independent 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)**

Independent studies provide students with the opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty member on a particular topic or interdisciplinary subfield (as long

as the topic or subfield has not been taught recently in our regular course offerings). If you are interested in doing 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 DGS for approval by August 1 for the fall semester and January 1 for the spring. A copy of the sign-up form is included at the end of this handbook and also available online as a Word document at <http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-english/degree-requirements-and-opportunities/>. 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 experiences. For this reason, students may register for no more than 2 independent studies during their time in the program. Long-distance independent studies (where the student and faculty member are 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 total may be transferred from any other programs or campuses. 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. Thus, we encourage 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. QC's MFA program (<http://english.qc.cuny.edu/graduate-programs/mfa-in-creative-writing/>, <http://www.facebook.com/Queens-College-MFA-in-Creative-Writing-and-Translation-151515260379/>) hosts a series of lively events on campus every semester, including readings, book launches, and roundtable discussions. You may also want to check out events happening at the CUNY Graduate Center (<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/All-GC-Events/GC-Presents>), especially if you're thinking about pursuing a PhD. Many of our faculty also teach courses at the GC and are involved in organizing a number of talks and field-specific colloquia. Your Queens College ID grants admission to all events at the GC. We will send announcements via the MA listserv about upcoming events.

### **MA Conference**

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

### **Nancy Comley Prize**

Named for the long-standing Chair of the English Department, the annual Nancy Comley Prize was established in 2011–12 to honor the best essay written by an English MA, post-bacc, MAT, or MS Ed student. The prize is sponsored by the English Department Alumni Fund. Submission guidelines are distributed in 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.

Prof. Nancy Foasberg, the Humanities Librarian, 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 general academic policies and procedures listed below, please consult the QC Handbook for Graduate Students, which is available online at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/GradStudies/Documents/Graduate-Handbook.pdf>.

### **Academic Calendar**

You can find QC's academic calendar at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/pages/calendar.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 contact the Director of Graduate Studies, who will help you submit an Advanced Standing Evaluation form. 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. (Please remember that it's courteous to let your course instructor know if you decide 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 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 Dean of Arts and Humanities. It can take some time to gather these various signatures/approvals so be sure to plan accordingly. You can download the Evaluated Withdrawal form at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/Documents/Graduate%20Evaluated%20Withdrawal%20Form.pdf>. An unofficial withdrawal (that is, if you simply stop coming to class and do not fill out the paperwork) will 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.

## **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. All incompletes must be resolved by the end of the following two semesters (for example, if you receive a temporary grade of INC in the Fall 2019 semester, you need to complete all outstanding coursework and receive a letter grade by the end of the Fall 2020 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 academic standing in the program.

## **Applying for Reentry**

There is no formal process for taking a leave of absence from the program. 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 at the latest by August 15 for fall admission; by January 15 for spring admission; and by May 15 for the two summer sessions. As long as there are no issues on your academic record, you should be accepted automatically. Please note that there is a nonrefundable reentry application fee of \$20.

## **Time to Degree**

All requirements for the English MA must be completed within 4 years. If you need more time to complete your degree, please contact the Director of Graduate Studies, who will request an extension on your time to degree to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## **Graduation**

At the start of your final semester, you must file for graduation via your CUNYfirst.

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

You can find more information about graduation policies on the Registrar’s website: <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/registrar/graduation/Pages/default.aspx>.

It is a good idea to confirm with the Director of Graduate Studies when you think you've met all the requirements for graduation. There will be an announcement via the MA listserv about our departmental graduation ceremony, which happens every spring immediately following the campus-wide commencement ceremony.

### **Maintenance of Matriculation**

CUNY regulations require graduate students to be enrolled 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 from previous semesters), then you must apply for Maintenance of Matriculation (MAM) in order to be eligible to graduate. The MAM 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. To set up your account, go to <https://home.cunyfirst.cuny.edu/> 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 off-campus. You can obtain your QCard one business day after the activation of your CAMS account by visiting the QCard office located in the Dining Hall, Room DH-116A. You must bring two photo IDs (e.g., your old college ID, driver's license, state-issued non-driver ID, and/or passport). For more info, 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 info, visit <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/computing/HelpDesk/Pages/Welcome.aspx>.

## **The QC Hub**

The QC Hub is a centralized location staffed with helpful people from the Registrar, the Bursar, and Financial Aid and is the quickest way to get any financial or registration problems resolved and your questions answered. It is located in the Dining Hall, Room 128, and is open Monday–Thursday from 9am–6pm. For their hours and more info, see <https://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/qchub/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**

### English Department

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

Klapper Hall 607

718-997-4600, [english@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:english@qc.cuny.edu)

### Graduate Admissions

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

Jefferson Hall 105

718-997-5200

### Dean of Graduate Studies

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

Kiely Hall 139

718-997-5190, [gso@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:gso@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

Financial Aid

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

Jefferson Hall, 1st floor

718-997-5102, [financialaid@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:financialaid@qc.cuny.edu)

## Queens College English MA Advising Worksheet

*Directors of Graduate Studies:*

Dr. Caroline Hong ([caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu)) + Dr. Bill Orchard ([worchard@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:worchard@qc.cuny.edu))

<b>Name:</b>	<b>CUNYfirst ID:</b>	
<b>Semester Admitted:</b>	<b>Expected Graduation:</b>	

<b>Course Number and Title</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Grade</b>
ENGL 701: Seminar in Graduate Methodology		
ENGL 636: History of Literary Criticism		
Elective:		
ENGL 791: Thesis Course		
Date of oral exam:		

\* Courses titled “Studies in...” may be repeated for credit as long as the specific course topics are substantially different. For example, ENGL 714, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 726, 727, 729, 736, and 742 may all be repeated for credit.

\*\* ENGL 681 (Special Studies) and 781 (Special Seminars) may also be repeated for credit, as long as the specific course topics are different.

\*\*\* ENGL 636, 638, 701, and 703 cannot be repeated for credit.

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

*Please submit this form via email to the Assistant Director of Graduate Studies.  
All information must be typed.*

**Student Information**

Full Name:

CUNY ID (8-digit):

Email address:

**Independent Study**

Instructor:

Title of course:

Short course description, including reading list and assignments (attach a separate page if needed):

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

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