

English MA Handbook

Spring 2017

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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 DGS, 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/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 race and ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, postcolonial and global 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 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 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*
- 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
- The Matter of the Text: Queerness, Identity, and Proximity in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*
- A Path Denied: Spenser's Treatment of Lesbianism in *The Faerie Queene*
- (Un)Masking Race: Asian American Superheroes in Mainstream and Independent Comics
- 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 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, 4:30–6:20pm 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 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 given below.

Caroline Hong, Director of Graduate Studies

Office: Klapper Hall 604

Email: caroline.hong@qc.cuny.edu

Spring 2017 office hours: Wednesdays 4:30–6:30pm, and by appointment

Bill Orchard, Assistant Director of Graduate Studies

Office: Klapper Hall 635

Email: worchard@qc.cuny.edu

Spring 2017 office hours: Tuesdays 1:30–2:30pm, Thursdays 6:30–7:30pm

Additional Coursework 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 and available online 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. 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. 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. Please see the English Department website for more information on upcoming events: <http://english.qc.cuny.edu/>.

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.

Every year, Queens College's Evening Readings series (<http://www.qcreadings.org/>) brings distinguished writers to campus for a public discussion of their work. 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 (<http://gc.cuny.edu/Public-Programming>), especially if you're thinking about pursuing a PhD. Many of our faculty also teach courses at the Grad 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 Conference

Our annual student-organized graduate English conference offers a great opportunity 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, whether as organizers, presenters, or audience members.

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.

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 2016–2017 on the Registrar's website 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. 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 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. 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. 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 Spring 2017 semester, you need to complete all outstanding coursework and receive a letter grade by the end of the Spring 2018 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. Please note that there is a nonrefundable reentry application fee of \$20.

Time to Degree

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

Graduation

Students no longer need to apply for graduation. 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 on the same day as the campus-wide commencement ceremony.

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 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. 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 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. 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

Graduate Admissions

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

Jefferson Hall 105

718-997-5200

Dean of Arts and Humanities, Dr. William McClure

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Degrees/DAH/Pages/default.aspx>

Queens Hall 210

718-997-5790

qc.dfa@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

The Bursar

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

Jefferson Hall 200

718-997-4500

Financial Aid Office

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

Jefferson Hall 202

718-997-5100

qc.finaid@qc.cuny.edu

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: _____