ENGLISH MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

The Major in English helps students hone their skills as critical writers and explore their potential as creative voices. English courses foster critical thinking about the relationships among literature, culture, and history. Students of English become adept critics of poetry, novels, essays, and plays. They develop knowledge of literary culture and about the evolving genres, forms, and ideologies of literary expression. They study the relation of literary texts to their historical contexts. They refine their craft as creative writers.

Students who pursue the Major in English often have a deep love for literature, language, and the written word. They seek to build upon their strengths in reading, writing, communications, and critical interpretation. They bring an open-minded intellectual curiosity to engage with complex social, cultural, and philosophical issues and ideas.

Studying English at the collegiate level prepares students for various career possibilities, including teaching, creative writing, journalism, publishing, marketing, information science, law, and business. Strong writing and communication skills are valued in nearly every profession and field of advanced study.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Students considering majoring in English should consult the department website (https://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/index.html (https://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/)). Potential majors must take ENGL201: Ways of Reading in their first or second year. Students who have taken the course and received a grade of B- or better will be admitted as majors during the spring term of their sophomore year. Students who take the course during that term will be admitted provisionally, pending receipt of a grade of B- or better. In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the department chair, students who have not taken ENGL201 by the end of the sophomore year may be admitted to the major contingent on completion of ENGL201 in the junior year.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

The English major at Wesleyan consists of requirements and electives totaling 10 distinct, full-credit courses, or the equivalent of partial-credit courses. Students choose one of two pathways to complete the major, Literature or Creative Writing.

All major courses must be sponsored or co-sponsored by English, with the exception of one “related course.” A “related course” 200-level or above that bears on the study of literature but is not sponsored or co-sponsored by English may count as an elective with the approval of the English advisor (more information below). One English-sponsored or co-sponsored FYS may also count as an English major elective.

Remaining credits must be at the 200-level or higher, with at least one 300-level course required for the Literature Pathway and three 300-level creative writing courses required for the Creative Writing Pathway. All but three of the 10 total credits must be taken at Wesleyan. Appropriate credits transferred from other institutions may count toward the 10-credit requirement in consultation with the department’s Transfer of Credit coordinator (https://www.wesleyan.edu/english/contact/dept_contact.html). Students who believe that courses they have taken or will take at other universities should fulfill core course requirements may "petition" (https://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/petitions.html) the Department for an exception. Requests to petition should be submitted to the chair.

The Major Program:

English major requirements consist of the gateway course (ENGL201: Ways of Reading), core requirements, Literature or Creative Writing pathway requirements, and electives.

Core Requirements: In addition to the gateway course, **ENGL201: Ways of Reading,** eight additional core requirements must be fulfilled to complete the major. These courses must be taken within the English department. An individual course may fulfill up to two core requirements. **Thus, core requirements may be completed with as few as four or as many as eight courses**.

- **Literary History**: 3 courses (Literary History 1: to 1660, Literary History 2: 1660-1870, Literary History 3: 1870-present)
- **Literary Geography**: 3 courses (World Literature, British Literature, American Literature)
- **Theory**: 1 course
- **Creative Writing**: 1 course

Paths through the Major (10 total credits required):

- **Literature Pathway:** ENGL201, core requirements (see above), plus electives, with at least one 300-level course.
- **Creative Writing Pathway:**

  Creative Writing Pathway: ENGL201, core requirements (see above), four creative writing courses (at least one of which must be 300-level), plus electives. (Completion of the Creative Writing core requirement can count towards the four).

As noted above, for both the Literature and Creative Writing pathways, a “related course” at the 200-level or above that bears on the study of literature but is not sponsored or co-sponsored by English may count as an elective with the approval of the English advisor. For example, this course may be in literature in translation or in another language. An English-sponsored or co-sponsored FYS may also count as an elective. Remaining electives must be numbered above 201.

GENERAL EDUCATION

English majors do not need to fulfill the GenEd requirements to complete the major or write an English Honors thesis. However, GenEd fulfillment is required to declare more than a combined total of two majors, certificates, and minors and to be eligible for Phi Beta Kappa and University Honors (not English Department Honors).

COURSES FOR NON-MAJORS

The department offers several FYS courses especially designed for first-year students. Non-major students may also be admitted to many other department courses; please check individual listings for details.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Develop skills in reading, interpreting, discussing, and writing about literature. English majors learn to be adept critics of a range of genres, including poetry, novels, essays, plays, and more.
- Experiment with or develop the ability to produce new works of literature.
- Build knowledge of the history of literature and develop critical thinking about the relationships among literature, culture, and history.
- Become conversant with literary theory.

STUDY ABROAD

The English Department encourages its majors to consider the valuable experience of study abroad. Study abroad policies are described in detail on the departmental website. (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/studyabroad.html)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Students with AP scores of 4 or 5 in either English Literature or English Composition, or with scores of 5–7 on an English A1 or English A2 International Baccalaureate exam, will receive one course credit. No extra credit is given for taking more than one exam. This credit does not count toward the major.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

There is no language requirement for the English major.

PRIZES

The Department of English annually gives out an array of academic awards, fellowships, and prizes. Fellowships and writing prizes may require applications and submission of writing samples. Full explanations are available on the department website (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english).

TRANSFER CREDIT

Students may obtain transfer credit in English for courses taken at other universities in the United States in the summer or during a leave of absence. Courses must be approved by the English Department's Transfer of Credit coordinator (https://www.wesleyan.edu/english/contact/dept_contact.html). Students should expect to provide documentation from a course catalog to receive advance permission. In most cases, on completion of courses taken at other universities, students will need to show additional documentation (e.g., syllabi and assignments) demonstrating their coursework to receive transfer credit. No more than two credits may be earned during a summer. More detailed information about transfer credit can be found on the department website (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/credit.html).

HONORS

The bachelor's degree with honors in English is awarded on the basis of an outstanding academic record and an honors thesis written during the senior year. Students are eligible to write a critical thesis if they have an average of 91.7 in the courses counting toward the major (at least six courses by the end of the junior year) and have completed a substantial research paper in a departmental course designated research or research option. Students wishing to write a creative thesis need not fulfill the research requirement, but they must have a 91.7 average in courses counting toward the major and have received an A- or better in at least two creative writing courses that count toward the major, one of which must be an intermediate or advanced workshop taken at Wesleyan. English majors do not need to fulfill the GenEd requirements to write an English Honors thesis. However, GenEd fulfillment is required to declare more than a combined total of two majors, certificates, and minors and to be eligible for Phi Beta Kappa and University Honors (not English Department Honors). A detailed description of the process for earning honors can be found on the department website (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english/students/honors.html).

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

English majors may undertake capstone experiences in several ways. Students who are eligible and who qualify to be candidates for honors may enroll in a two-semester honors tutorial that culminates in the submission of an honors thesis.

Students may also propose a one- or two-semester senior essay project. In addition, in each major pathway, students are required to complete a **300**-level seminar. This seminar may be taken before the senior year.