ENGLISH MAJOR

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Students considering majoring in English should consult the department website (wesleyan.edu/english). 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 the 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 10 full-credit courses at the 200-level or higher, or the equivalent of partial credit courses. All but three of these credits, and all courses taken to meet the literary history, literatures of difference, and theory requirements, must be taken at Wesleyan or in the department’s Sussex Program. With approval of a major advisor, one upper-level course from outside the department that bears on the study of literature may also be counted toward the minimum 10 credits. Appropriate credits transferred from other institutions may also be counted toward the 10-credit requirement.

A major program consists of the gateway course, ENGL201 Ways of Reading, and three overlapping sets of courses: requirements, concentration, and electives.

Required courses. In addition to ENGL201 Ways of Reading, one course of each must be taken in the following areas:

- Literary History I
- Literary History II
- Literatures of Difference
- Theory

Descriptions are available on the department website (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english).

Concentration. Four courses in any one of these specialized areas of study:

- American Literature
- British Literature
- Creative Writing
- Race and Ethnicity
- Theory and Literary Forms

Descriptions are available on the department website (http://www.wesleyan.edu/english).

Electives. Other courses numbered 200 or higher. One FYS in English may be counted as a major elective.

COURSES FOR NON-MAJORS

The department offers several FYS courses especially designed for first-year students. First-year 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 poetry, novels, essays, and plays.
- For many students, 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. Since 1990 the English Department has sponsored a Spring Semester Study Abroad program at the University of Sussex in Brighton, England. The program is limited to a select group of English majors who study with regular Sussex students for two full British terms, earning five Wesleyan credits. Sussex courses may be counted toward major requirements. Students pay Wesleyan tuition and receive Wesleyan financial aid. 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.

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 at 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 Department of English faculty member responsible for transfer of credit. 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 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.
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-semester senior essay project. In addition, in 
each of the major concentrations, students are required to complete a 300-level 
seminar. This seminar may be taken before the senior year.