

NOTRE DAME de NAMUR UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

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Master of Arts in English

Program Handbook
2010-2011

**School of Arts and Humanities
Notre Dame de Namur University
1500 Ralston Avenue
Belmont, CA 94002**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Description	3
Admission Requirements	4
Policies and Procedures; MLA Conventions	5
Course Requirements	6
Research Thesis/Creative Writing Project Option	7
Teaching Assistantship/Apprenticeship	8
Schedule and Format for Completion of the Thesis/Creative Writing Project	9
Templates for Formatting Sections of the Thesis/Project	12

§ PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Master of Arts in English program provides a broad background in writing, literature, and theory. It prepares students for careers in secondary education or community college teaching, as well as careers in journalism, editing, and technical communication. Courses are taught by highly qualified faculty with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints who are committed to excellence in teaching and close mentoring of students.

This program is especially designed for working adults and usually takes two to two and one-half years to complete. The graduate level courses are all scheduled as weekly evening sessions. Undergraduate upper division electives are usually offered during the day.

General Requirements:

- Thirty (30) units total (prerequisites, depending on each individual's undergraduate preparation in English, may be an additional 3-12 units)
- Core courses: 6 units
- Genre courses: 6 units;
- Electives: 12 units
- Final Project (Creative Manuscript or Research Paper) : 6 units

§ ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

An admission packet is available on request from the Graduate Office (650.508.3523 or gradadmit@ndnu.edu).

1. Prerequisites: Applicants are expected to have completed at least two upper division or graduate courses in literature and one lower division course and one upper division or graduate level course in writing. Competency in writing may be demonstrated by evidence of professional experience. Students lacking a foundation in literature and/or writing may enter the program with the understanding that prerequisite coursework will be required.
2. A Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
3. Submission of all official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate work, including a transcript showing that a Bachelor's degree has been granted.
4. A 2.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA). For international students, TOEFL scores of 550 or higher.
5. Two letters of recommendation.
6. A writing sample of 500 to 1000 words describing why you wish to pursue a Master's degree in English, or, alternatively, a manuscript of an original composition.
7. Approval of admission by the Program Director.

§ POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please refer to the section on Graduate Admission, Financial Expenses, and General Regulations in the current NDNU Catalog for information about admission procedures, financial aid opportunities, policies concerning such contingencies as time limits, taking leave-of-absence, challenging a course, transfer of course work from another institution, withdrawal from a course, and so forth.

§ APPLICATION FOR THE GRADUATE DEGREE

Students must file an Application for the Graduate Degree no later than the deadlines announced in the Academic Calendar – this is usually June 1 for December graduates or February 1 for May/August graduates.

§ MLA CONVENTIONS REQUIREMENT

All students in the MAE program—whether new or currently enrolled—are requested to use the MLA (Modern Language Association) format and methodologies in the preparation of final drafts of all expository writing projects. These conventions cover the format and methods used for spacing, pagination, citation, presentation of Works Cited and Bibliography pages, as well as other matters relevant to the word processing of a literary essay or research project. Grades will reflect the accuracy of use of these conventions. The current edition of the MLA Handbook is available in the NDNU Bookstore, may be purchased at any local bookstore, or ordered online at Amazon.com.

§ COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The MA in English program requires a minimum of 30 units equaling 8 courses (24 units) and a final project (6 units). Students may transfer up to six units of graduate work done elsewhere provided this coursework matches the program's requirements. (The necessary form for transfer of courses is available in the Registrar's Office.) Graduate students may take up to three upper division undergraduate courses at NDNU to satisfy the 30 unit requirement. These courses must be taken for graduate credit—that is, they must have an EN 500-level prefix (i.e., EN531). Students have the option of taking a straight literature track or a creative writing emphasis.

Core courses (required of all students)	Units
EN203: Seminar in Literature	3
EN204: Language: Theory and Practice	3

Generally, these courses are taken early in a student's progress toward the degree, preferably before the completion of 15 units.

Genre and Period Courses (any two)

EN213: Narrative	3
EN214: Lyric	3
EN215: Drama	3
EN216: Period Course	3

Electives (12 units required of all students)

Upper division undergraduate courses	3
EN 241: Creative Writing	3
Teaching Assistantships	3
Additional Genre Courses	3

§ ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

After completing 15 units, graduate students maintaining a 3.0 GPA or above advance to candidacy. Students who have entered the program with deficiencies in coursework (see Requirements for Admission, p. 4) must have satisfied any prerequisites by this stage of their programs in order to advance to candidacy.

§ RESEARCH THESIS/CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT OPTION

The thesis/creative writing project entails six units of study with a professor of the student's choice who also acts as the student's mentor on all stages of the thesis project. The thesis or project is generally undertaken after completion of 24 units of study though may be started with some course work remaining.

The thesis presents an original, in depth study in an area of the student's disciplines, whether prose, poetry, or theory. It should use primary sources when available, reflect awareness of the latest developments in the area, and present thorough research. It will follow the MLA format and documentation procedures. There is no set length for the thesis. Most theses, however, average 50-75 pages in length.

The creative writing project will comprise an original composition or compositions in a student's area of interest, whether in narrative, poetry, drama or other realms of imaginative literature. It will average 50-75 pages in length, depending on the project genre. An outside consultant may be employed (at the student's expense) to advise the student on any aspect of the project at any stage in its progress if the student and the project advisor agree that this would be advantageous.

Early in the process, it is important for the student to form a committee of two professors, one who acts as the chair of the committee, the other who serves as a second reader of the thesis/project. The student registers for EN298A/298B in two subsequent semesters under the supervision of the committee chair. If a student does not complete the thesis/project by the end of the second semester, the committee chair will file a grade of In Progress (IP). The student will then have up to one year to complete the thesis/project. If the thesis/project is not completed within the one year period, the student will need to register again for EN298B: Directed Writing.

§ TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS/APPRENTICESHIPS

Graduate students who wish to serve as teaching assistants in the program have a variety of opportunities which allow them to pursue this interest. Students work with a faculty mentor, who will share his or her teaching experiences and skills with the student, plan activities which will be the student's primary responsibility and/or coordinate team teaching sessions. The mentor will provide a verbal or written evaluation of the student's performance and notify the Program Director of the final grade in the course. Students who wish to serve as Teaching Apprentices enroll in EN349T for 3 units of credit. At the end of the semester, they submit to the Program Director one copy of a portfolio containing examples of activities such as notes for lectures, etc.

Graduate teaching assistants enroll in EN549T and confirm in writing to the Program Director the instructor and course they will be assisting in and the number of units (1-3) equivalent to the roles and responsibilities they will be undertaking. Teaching Assistantships are noted on a student's final transcript, but formal units are not awarded or included in the required 30 units for the program. Students, therefore, are not charged tuition for the TA experience.

Student Assistants and Apprentices may fulfill the requirements for these courses in one of three ways:

1. As tutors in the Writing Center where they work one-to-one and in small groups with students.
2. As teaching assistants/apprentices in lower-division or upper-division English courses at NDNU.
3. As teaching assistants/apprentices in a course at a local community college.

The goal of the teaching apprenticeship and assistantship electives is to introduce students to the pragmatic and philosophical bases of classroom instruction in literature, theory and composition.

Literature Track and Creative Writing Emphasis
SCHEDULE AND FORMAT FOR COMPLETION OF THE THESIS/CREATIVE
WRITING PROJECT

Selection of Thesis/Project Committee and Topic

As soon as a master's candidate has completed 24 academic units towards the degree, he or she should make an appointment with the program director to discuss possible topics and approaches and consider which faculty members would be most suitable to serve in the capacity of (1) Thesis/Project Director; and (b) Second Reader. Of course, the student may approach independently any faculty members with whom he or she might like to work and being preliminary exploration of the thesis/project subject, format, and approach prior to meeting with the Director.

Formal Procedure for Initiating the Thesis/Project

When the student is ready to begin researching and writing the thesis or project, he or she will register (in the first semester for EN298A: Directed Research. In the semester in which the thesis/project will be completed and read, the student will register for EN298B: Directed Writing. It is not unusual for students to take a grade of "In Progress [IP]" for up to a year for each of these two phases of the thesis/project. Work on the thesis/project may take place concurrently with enrollment in other courses.

The "Directed Research" Phase of the Thesis/Project Experience

In conjunction with the thesis or project director, the student will set up a mutually agreed upon time frame for investigation of relevant primary and/or secondary sources. In the case of the thesis, the first activity of this phase should be compilation of a working bibliography of resources to be used in the research. As this phase progresses, the student and director will narrow the focus of the thesis/project and define a working hypothesis presented in its substantiation.

The final activity of this phase for the thesis will be the drawing up of a formal thesis "proposal," which will include a statement of the working hypothesis, a summary of supporting evidence, definition and rationale for critical methodologies to be used, a summary of prior scholarship on the subject and a brief explanation of the value of the study in terms of the canon of scholarly work on the topic chosen. A working bibliography should also be submitted at this stage.

For this stage of a creative writing project or other non-research activity, some of these steps may not be necessary. For example, except in unusual circumstances, identification of primary and secondary sources will not be relevant. However, if some research is required into the historical or social (or perhaps even biographical background) of a projected novel or short story, or if the topic (for example, trends in film making,

dramaturgy, psychology, pop culture, theories of pedagogy, etc.), then the student should work with the director to determine which kinds of resources will be most useful and then compile a working bibliography of such works.

The “Directed Writing” Phase of the Thesis/Project Experience

In conjunction with the thesis/project director, the student will now set up a time line for completion of drafts of each section of the work in progress. A working outline is useful at this stage—to be revised as needed. It would be beneficial to the student to meet on a periodic basis with the thesis/project advisor in order to discuss any issues of interpretation or composition that might arise.

At the point that a draft of the complete thesis/project is ready, the second reader may be asked to begin working with the student and the director to help during the final stages of revising and editing. In some cases, an outside consultant may be advantageous—especially, in the final drafting of a creative writing project (such as a screen play, drama, poetry translation, etc.). Fees charged by an outside consultant for this service will be the responsibility of the student.

Length of the Thesis/Project

There is no standard “length” for a master’s thesis or creative writing project, but on the average a research thesis will be between 50-75 pages, including end notes and works cited and bibliography pages. It is not unrealistic to expect that some topics will require greater length, while some might be adequately developed in shorter space.

Format and Documentation Methodology Required for the Thesis

The Department asks that all students follow the format and documentation methodology of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Current editions of this Handbook are available in the NDNU Bookstore and elsewhere.

Sections of the Thesis

The typical thesis has the following sections, bound in the order given (see the sample pages which follow).

- a. Title page
- b. Copyright page
- c. Signature page
- d. Dedication page (optional)
- e. Acknowledgements page (optional)
- f. For a thesis: a 1-2 page Abstract (summary of hypothesis, supporting evidence, conclusion)

For a creative writing project: a 1-2 page reflection on the rationale for the choice of subject(s), the form chosen to represent the subject(s), the approach to the subject, and the writing process

- g. Table of Contents page
- h. List of graphs and/or tables if applicable
- i. List of figures if applicable
- j. Blank page
- k. Begin sections or chapters of the body of the thesis
- l. End Notes pages (if needed)
- m. Works Cited page(s)
- n. Bibliography

Sections a-i are numbered with Roman numerals beginning with page ii—the copyright page; all subsequent pagination is in Arabic, beginning with page 2

NDNU Library Binding Requirements

When the thesis or project is ready to be duplicated and bound, the following requirements must be met:

- (1) Number of copies to be submitted: at least two (one for the Library; one for the English Department office).
- (2) The thesis/project must be reproduced on white, quality bond paper, 20 lb weight.
- (3) A black plastic, flat binding should be used, with a clear plastic front cover, and a black plastic back cover.

Presentation of the Thesis/Project

When both readers are in agreement that the thesis or project meets all standards of acceptance for a master's dissertation, the thesis/project may then be bound and replicated. Two or three copies are then presented to the Director. Both readers will, in turn, sign the signature page. The Program Director will then present the copies to the Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities for her review and signature. A green Form (available in the Registrar's Office) must accompany the final version of the thesis/project to the Dean (with signatures of the student and the Program Director). Once the Dean has reviewed and accepted the thesis/project, it will be presented to the Registrar.

TEMPLATES FOR FORMATTING SECTIONS OF THE THESIS/PROJECT

Title of Thesis [for example]:

Techniques for Teaching Classical Mythology
to ESL Students

A THESIS [CREATIVE WRITING PROJECT]
SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AT NOTRE DAME de NAMUR UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

By

Your Name
Semester, Year

© Copyright Year
by
Your Name

I certify that I have read this thesis [creative writing project] and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

Name + degree (i.e., Ph.D.)
Title (i.e., Professor of English Literature)
Thesis (Creative Writing Project) Director

I certify that I have read this thesis [creative writing project] and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in English.

Name + degree (i.e., Ph.D.)
Title [i.e., Professor English Literature]
Thesis Director

Approved for submission to the School of Arts and Humanities at Notre Dame de Namur University.

Lisa Bjerknes, M.D.
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

[Dedication Page]

[Acknowledgement(s) Page]

Table of Contents

Chapter #: Title [page] #

Chapter I

This page is preceded by a blank page

Last Name [page #]

End Notes [if any]

Last Name [page #]

Works Cited

Last Name [page #]

Bibliography