

PROGRAM PROFILE

At the center of graduate English studies at George Mason University is the study of imaginative literature across time and geography. Whether the object is British, American, Anglophone, or even world literature in translation, the Department of English offers a broad array of graduate courses in literary history and interpretation, the better to deepen students' skills in textual interpretation and written analysis.

Just as the discipline of English has expanded beyond literature to embrace the text provided by film, new media, and folklore, it has also moved to encompass other ways of writing besides criticism, such as ethnography and professional and technical writing. Even within its usual institutional boundaries, English has seen the emergence of new methods and modes of critique, which continue to enrich, even complicate, what it means to study and teach literature and contemporary culture more generally.

Students in the master's program choose to concentrate in one of four areas: literature, cultural studies, teaching of writing and literature, or professional writing and rhetoric. Students in all the concentrations take literature courses, choosing from a curriculum that includes coursework in literary-historical periods, genres, and individual authors; cultural studies, African American literature; women's studies, gender, and sexuality; visual culture, popular culture, new media, and folklore; the history of rhetoric; ethnography; and nonfiction. Whatever the concentration, all graduate students are trained in a variety of research methods and approaches. In addition to these programs, the department also offers a master's concentration in linguistics and a MFA in Creative Writing.

In addition to the four concentrations above, the department also offers a master's degree with a concentration in linguistics and a MFA in creative writing.

CONCENTRATIONS

The master's degree in English at George Mason is a constellation of programs, each of them sharing a dedication to the

textual practices of reading and writing, but offering a distinct academic trajectory.

Cultural Studies

This concentration is specifically designed to prepare students to enter George Mason's renowned interdisciplinary doctoral program in Cultural Studies. It is also available to any student who wishes to combine the study of literature with a strong interest in theoretical approaches to contemporary culture and cultural politics.

Literature

The concentration in literature is designed to provide students with an intense and comprehensive background suitable for pursuing a doctorate in literature, folklore, or film. However, the concentration is equally valuable for students who wish to build on the interests and challenges of an undergraduate education or for educators looking to enhance the range of texts they teach.

Professional Writing and Rhetoric

This concentration, as its name suggests, is oriented to workplace uses of language and to the emerging academic specialty of professional writing. In addition to the pragmatic training it offers in textual and digital practice, the concentration is characterized by a self-reflexive attention to workplaces as institutions and to the rhetorical dimension of every act of writing.

The Teaching of Writing and Literature

This innovative concentration combines course work in literature and composition with seminars in pedagogical methods. It serves well as a gateway to primary or secondary education, community college teaching, or further graduate work in such fields as composition and rhetoric. It is also a valuable degree for K-12 teachers wishing to hone their skills and broaden the range of courses they can teach.

CAREERS IN ENGLISH

Careers in English are as varied as the department's interests. Graduates work as public affairs writers, film and media reviewers, museum program officers, grant writers, web designers, technical writers, editors, workplace managers, advocates

in nonprofit organizations, administrators, freelance authors, K-12 teachers, and university professors. With the advanced skills they garner in close reading, critical interpretation, research methods, and models of authorship across many genres, English graduates prove to be invaluable colleagues in organizations in both the private and public sectors.

FACULTY RESEARCH

The English Department at George Mason is home to productive and wide-ranging scholars, as the following selection of research interests suggests.

- British Romantic poetry and literary celebrity
- Arab feminist novelists in the West
- masculinity and African American literature
- writing across the curriculum
- translation and science in 17th century England
- folkways of Maine loggers
- shopping and suburbia in American culture and literature
- Eminem and the politics of hip-hop
- the career of Shakespeare's sonnets
- digital culture and writing communities
- women's writing in colonial America
- English literature and the beginnings of empire in the 18th century
- the politics of recovered memory
- public rhetoric and the South African Truth Commission
- western culture and transnationalism
- modern women's poetry and its audience
- Sherlock Holmes and social order in the Victorian period
- Native American literary and oral traditions
- the career of the object in 18th century British fiction
- contemporary performance theory
- composition instruction and models of assessment
- the origins of children's literature
- modern medievalisms
- Mexican immigrants and the discourse of community in the United States
- props and perception in the early modern stage
- modernism and nationalism in Ireland and the Caribbean

WHY ENGLISH AT GEORGE MASON?

The interests of the faculty in Mason's English Department are as diverse as yours. The faculty includes poets, philosophers, and literary analysts; cultural theorists, folklorists, and historians; linguists, novelists, and essayists; fieldworkers and archivists; experts in pedagogy and award-winning teachers; and specialists in composition, rhetoric, workplace writing, writing across the curriculum, and digital media. As the list of faculty interests suggests, the department has a strong tradition of interdisciplinary work. Many faculty members participate in the university programs in Cultural Studies, Film and Media Studies, and African American Studies. Because George Mason is a member of the Folger Shakespeare Library's Executive Board, students are eligible to apply to participate in Folger seminars in early modern literature and culture.

The curricular diversity is a complementary source of strength. The department's four different master's concentrations prepare students for the manifold opportunities and challenges of English, broadly defined. The flexible programs and evening classes respond to the needs of part-time students with full-time lives.

Named the #1 national university to watch by *U.S. News & World Report*, George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution with global distinction in a range of academic fields. Located in the heart of Northern Virginia's technology corridor near Washington, D.C., Mason prepares its students to succeed in the work force and meet the needs of the region and the world.

See English.gmu.edu for more information on faculty, courses, and program requirements. See chss.gmu.edu/howtoapply for complete details on the application process.

And so it is that the critic, in a complementary movement, becomes a writer in his turn ... What do we care whether it is more glorious to be a novelist, a poet, an essayist or a chronicler? ... A writer is someone for whom language constitutes a problem, who is aware of the depth of language, not its instrumentality or its beauty.

---Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth* (1996)

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