

2010-2011 Professional Writing and Rhetoric Advising Sheet

Overview

The MA concentration in Professional Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) is oriented to workplace uses of language. In addition to training in pragmatic skills, the concentration is characterized by a self-reflexive attention to workplaces as institutions and sites for rhetorical action. Courses on research and theory in nonfiction writing complement instruction in rhetoric, editing, technical communication, digital publication, and ethnography to prepare you for the role of writer and communicator in the private and public sectors. Instruction in research methodologies meld archival research with the most current technological advances to equip you with valuable research tools and strategies, while courses in literature, media studies, folklore, and linguistics provide insight into language and writing practices across a variety of contexts.

If you enrolled in the professional writing and editing (PWE) concentration before the 2008-2009 school year, you will graduate with the PWE concentration based on the requirements and courses that were in place when you first enrolled. You will be eligible to take some of the new courses if you wish, but you will not be required to do so.

Research in PWR

PWR projects and theses may adopt any of the theoretical, textual, observational, or historical approaches that advance knowledge in Rhetoric, Composition, and Professional and Technical Writing. Approaches include rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, case study, usability studies, historical analysis, and action research. Methods may include—but are not limited to—discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis, content analysis, interview, survey, focus group, observation, participant-observation, user and task analysis, document testing, and usability testing.

Planning Your Course of Study

You must successfully complete 30 credits in graduate English courses. Coursework **must** be distributed according to the areas below. Several courses qualify in more than one area. As with all MA in English programs, you must also demonstrate a foreign language proficiency. Consult the University Catalog for a complete listing of English courses.

- Additional information on this concentration, courses, and graduate student policies is available in the MA in English Student Handbook
- More information on the PWR concentration can also be found at pwr.gmu.edu.

Core Course (3 credit hours required)



ENGL 501: Introduction to Professional Writing and Rhetoric

Research Course (3 credit hours required)



ENGL 502: Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing

Professional Writing and Rhetoric Courses (6 credit hours required)

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- ENGL 503: Theory and Practice of Editing
- ENGL 504: Internship in Writing and Editing
- ENGL 505: Computer-Assisted Publications Writing and Design
- ENGL 508: Digital Rhetoric and Design
- ENGL 611: Studies in Rhetoric
- ENGL 612: Cultures of Professional Writing
- ENGL 613: Technical Communication
- ENGL 697: Composition Theory

Writing Courses (3 credit hours required)

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You may select a course from the nonfiction writing courses below or 3 credits from the professional writing and rhetoric courses above.

- ENGL 506: Research for Narrative Writing
- ENGL 565: Forms of Nonfiction
- ENGL 615: Proseminar in Composition Theory
- ENGL 616: Nonfiction Writing Workshop
- ENGL 619: Special Topics in Writing
- ENGL 695: Writing and Learning
- ENGL 699: Workshop in English

Please note: ENGL 565 is only available to non-MFA students in the spring semester.

Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Studies Courses (9 credit hours required)

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You may take any English graduate courses from the following lists of Literature, Linguistics, or Cultural Studies courses to fulfill the required 9 hours. The department recommends that you take all 9 hours in just one of these areas and the area support your future writing or research interests.

Cultural Studies:

- ENGL 676: Intro to Cultural Studies
- ENGL 670: Visual Culture: Theories and Histories
- ENGL 675: Feminist Theory and Criticism
- ENGL 591: Special Topics in Folklore
- ENGL 604: Internship in Folklore
- ENGL 555: Introduction to Cinema Studies
- LING 581 Psycholinguistics (one course in LING or permission of instructor)

Literary Studies:

ENGL 701: Literary Scholarship
ENGL 705: Literary Theory and Criticism
ENGL 685: Selected Topics, Movements, or Genres of Literature in English
ENGL 625: British Medieval
ENGL 630: Early Modern
ENGL 635: Eighteenth-Century British
ENGL 640: Nineteenth-Century British
ENGL 645: Twentieth-Century British
ENGL 650: Seventeenth-Century American
ENGL 655: Nineteenth-Century American
ENGL 660: Twentieth-Century American
ENGL 661: Advanced Survey in African-American Literature
ENGL 511: Styles and Modes in Literary History
ENGL 512: Issues in Literature and Philosophy
ENGL 513: Advanced Special Topics in English
ENGL 514: Theories in Comparative Literature
ENGL 551: Literary Criticism

Please note: If you plan to take literary studies courses, you should take ENGL 701 before taking any other literature courses.

Linguistics:

LING 520: Descriptive Linguistics
LING 521: Applied Linguistics: TESOL
LING 522: Modern English Grammar
LING 525: Practicum in ESL
LING 582: Second Language Acquisition
LING 650: Introduction to Sociolinguistics
LING 686: Special Topics in Linguistics
LING 691: Theories in Language
LING 785: Semantics and Pragmatics
LING 786: Syntax I

Please note: If you plan to take linguistics courses, you should take LING 520 before taking any other linguistics courses.

Elective Course (3 credit hours required)

You may take any English course from the above areas or a course from another discipline that supports your writing and research interests to fulfill this requirement. Some courses may need special approval from the individual instructors and the department. You should consult your advisers. If you choose to write a thesis, ENGL 799 will serve as your elective.

Capstone Course (3 credit hours required)

ENGL 797: Projects in Professional Writing and Rhetoric

Thesis Option (6 credit hours required)

You may opt out of the elective and capstone courses and write a thesis that contributes new knowledge to the fields of professional writing, rhetoric, or technical communication. If you choose to write a thesis, replace ENGL 797 with ENGL 799.

Language Requirement

Intermediate proficiency in a foreign language

Intermediate proficiency corresponds to Mason's coursework through the 202 or 210 level. Generally speaking, this level represents four consecutive semesters in a given language (e.g. French 101, 102, 201, and 202), although the number of courses varies depending on the university at which they are taken. (Mason students can meet the requirement by taking a three semester series with 6 hours of 110 and 3 hours of 210).

Students may satisfy this requirement in one of the following ways:

- Confirm that your undergraduate (or continuing education) transcript includes courses corresponding to intermediate proficiency. If you completed your undergraduate training at Mason, you have fulfilled the language requirement for the MA.
- Take a proficiency exam administered by the English Department if your language proficiency is German, Russian, French, or Spanish and you cannot confirm study via your transcript. Contact the graduate programs manager to schedule the exam.
- Take a proficiency exam administered in the Modern and Classical Languages Department if your proficiency is in a language other than German, Russian, French, or Spanish. Contact MCL to determine whether appropriate exams are administered.
- Take courses at Mason or elsewhere through the intermediate level. Make sure that the intermediate level elsewhere corresponds to that at Mason.

Please contact the graduate programs manager soon after enrolling to determine how you will meet the language proficiency requirement. The graduate programs manager can be reached at 703-993-1180.

Please note: Even if you complete your foreign language coursework at Mason, you must contact the graduate programs manager to complete necessary paperwork.