

English

The English Department fosters the study of British, American, and Anglophone literature—old and new—in ways that are both intensive and open. We study how English literature works, how we understand and appreciate it, and how we write about it. We offer a wide array of courses in poetry, drama, fiction, creative nonfiction, film, digital media, and theory.

All our courses emphasize the development of student skills in writing, textual analysis, and argument. The department's faculty members are deeply committed to undergraduate teaching and advising. You will find considerable diversity in our critical methods, including cross-disciplinary approaches that relate the study of literature to history, politics, science, as well as to other art forms. We encourage students in our classes likewise to forge their own new ways of understanding literature and culture.

In addition to the standard English concentration, we offer an English concentration track in the practice of Nonfiction Writing. The concentration in English and the English/Nonfiction track follow the same core requirements, and students in the English concentration may elect Nonfiction Writing courses as electives. We invite applications from qualified juniors to the honors programs in both English and Nonfiction.

One of the largest humanities concentrations at Brown, English provides a strong foundation for a liberal education and for employment in many sectors, especially those that centrally involve writing and working with texts (in any form). In addition to authorship, scholarship, and teaching, these include: journalism, publishing, advertising, visual media, consulting, public relations, public service, finance, government, corporate research, and administration. Our English concentrators routinely go on to law, medical, and professional schools as well as to graduate education in literature and the arts.

About the Concentration

We encourage students interested in concentrating in English to visit the department offices at 70 Brown Street and speak with a concentration advisor (<https://english.brown.edu/faculty/>). Students in English courses who are considering an English concentration are welcome to make an appointment to speak with their instructor. Concentration programs must be approved by a concentration advisor.

Concentration Requirements

(10 courses¹):

1. ONE course in "How Literature Matters" (ENGL0100, 0101): 1

Addressing topics about which professors are especially passionate, these introductory courses aim to deepen and refine students' understanding of how literature matters: aesthetically, ethically, historically and politically. Students not only engage with larger questions about literature's significance, exploring the particular kinds of insights and thinking it is especially suited for conveying, they also gain a deeper awareness of the critical methods we use to understand and analyze it, engaging with matters of form, genre and media. Finally, these courses help students develop their skills as close, careful readers of literary form and language.

ENGL 0100A	How To Read A Poem
ENGL 0100C	Altered States
ENGL 0100D	Matters of Romance
ENGL 0100F	Devils, Demons, Do-Gooders
ENGL 0100G	The Literature of Identity
ENGL 0100J	Cultures and Countercultures: The American Novel after World War II
ENGL 0100M	Writing War
ENGL 0100N	City Novels
ENGL 0100P	Love Stories
ENGL 0100Q	How Poems See
ENGL 0100R	American Histories, American Novels

ENGL 0100S	Being Romantic
ENGL 0100T	The Simple Art of Murder
ENGL 0100U	Serial Fictions
ENGL 0100V	Inventing Asian American Literature
ENGL 0100W	Literature Reformatted
ENGL 0100Y	Do the Right Thing
ENGL 0101A	Independence and Modern Literature
ENGL 0101B	Earth Poetics: Literature and Climate Change

2. ONE course in Medieval and Renaissance Literatures (Pre-1700): 1

These courses, which center on Medieval and Renaissance literary works, cast light on periods that can come across to us as both familiar and strange. They focus our attention on how literatures from these periods depict concepts such as aesthetics, romance, gender, sexuality, race, power and politics in ways that are like and unlike how we tend to think of them today—on how pre-modern or early modern works can both defamiliarize the categories of experience and identity we tend to take for granted and also suggest something of their origins. Several courses under this rubric will also engage with recent literary and filmic adaptations of works from these eras, exploring how many such works continue to function as vibrant and at times ambivalent inspirations for the literary imaginings of later periods.

3. ONE course in Literatures of Modernity (Post-1700): 1

These courses explore the many strands of writing in English that have emerged from the eighteenth century through the present, shaping the contemporary world. These literatures reflect on political, economic, and intellectual history, from the idea of the nation and the structures of capital through the rise and dissolution of empire and the emergence of postcolonial states, including the forms of race, gender and sexuality that cut across them. Courses also examine how aesthetic works can shape and critique their moment: they look at genres like the novel and short story, poetry, drama, essays, and new, hybrid forms that have arisen with expanding digital media; they also take up a multitude of literary movements whose influences remain with us today, including Romanticism, realism, naturalism, modernism, and post-modernism.

4. ONE course in Literatures of the Color Line: 1

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois famously proclaimed in "The Souls of Black Folk" that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line,—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." Courses in this category explore the complex ways in which literary texts have addressed American histories of race, ethnicity, and empire. They may do so from the vantage point of ideas about difference and hierarchy that predate the modern conception of race and by engaging with earlier histories of conflict and contact. These courses explore issues of intersectionality as well, highlighting how race operates in relation to other structures of difference such as gender, sexuality and class.

ENGL 0100F	Devils, Demons, Do-Gooders
ENGL 0100N	City Novels
ENGL 0100S	Being Romantic
ENGL 0100V	Inventing Asian American Literature
ENGL 0101A	Independence and Modern Literature
ENGL 0150X	The Claims of Fiction
ENGL 0150Y	Brontës and Brontëism
ENGL 0700E	Postcolonial Literature
ENGL 0500R	Slavery and American Literature
ENGL 0510F	Literature of the American Renaissance
ENGL 0700G	American Fiction and Mass Culture
ENGL 0700U	Modernism and Race

ENGL 0710B	African American Literature and the Legacies of Slavery
ENGL 0710Q	American Literature in the Era of Segregation
ENGL 0710V	Death and Dying in Black Literature
ENGL 0710W	Readings in Black and Queer
ENGL 0710X	Black Poetics
ENGL 0710Y	Literature of US Inequality, 1945-2020
ENGL 1310H	The Origins of American Literature
ENGL 1511A	American Literature and the Civil War
ENGL 1511C	Lincoln, Whitman, and The Civil War
ENGL 1511P	Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism: The American Novel and its Traditions
ENGL 1710I	Harlem Renaissance: The Politics of Culture
ENGL 1710J	Modern African Literature
ENGL 1710K	Literature and the Problem of Poverty
ENGL 1710M	Nationalizing Narratives: Race, Nationalism, and the American Novel
ENGL 1710P	The Literature and Culture of Black Power Reconsidered
ENGL 1711D	Reading New York
ENGL 1711H	Lyric Concepts: The Question of Identity in Modern and Contemporary Poetry
ENGL 1711J	Art for an Undivided Earth / Transnational Approaches to Indigenous Art and Activism
ENGL 1711K	The Politics of Perspective: Post-war British Fiction
ENGL 1711L	Contemporary Black Women's Literature
ENGL 1711N	Monsters in our Midst: The Plantation and the Woods in Trans-American Literature
ENGL 1711O	Radical Pasts, Radical Futures: Literature and the Left
ENGL 1711S	James Baldwin
ENGL 1760U	American Modernism and its Aftermaths
ENGL 1760Y	Toni Morrison
ENGL 1761B	Narratives of Blackness in Latinx and Latin America
ENGL 1761E	Blackness and Being
ENGL 1761F	Toni Morrison
ENGL 1761G	Translational Echoes of the Korean War
ENGL 1761V	The Korean War in Color
ENGL 1762M	Caribbean Literature
ENGL 1900D	Literature and Politics
ENGL 1901J	Fanon and Spillers
ENGL 1950H	The Recent Novel and its Cultural Rivals
5. ONE course in Literary Theory and Cultural Critique:	

1

The late-twentieth century saw a revolution in the field of literary studies in the United States, as critics turned their attention to the contextual and historical nature of our categories of knowledge. This turn to theory was influenced by developments in psychoanalysis, linguistics, philosophy, political theory and sociology and by the emergence of social movements that challenged such structures as patriarchy, homophobia, racism, imperialism, economic inequality, and environmental violence. The avenues of inquiry opened up brought an increased awareness of the implication of literature in the operations of power and ideology; a sense of the potential for literary modes of presentation to challenge and displace such operations; and a new attention to the role of gender, race, empire, class, and sexuality in the formation of the literary work. Courses that satisfy the Literary Theory and Cultural Critique requirement explore some dimension of these issues – either directly, taking as their primary focus a set of theoretical questions or debates, or indirectly, by examining a compelling topical question of social and political significance through works of literature and literary theory.

ENGL 0150W	Literature and the Visual Arts
ENGL 0700E	Postcolonial Literature
ENGL 0710L	Ishiguro, Amongst Others
ENGL 0710R	Poetry and Science
ENGL 0711B	Trans Cultural Production and Trans Studies
ENGL 0710W	Readings in Black and Queer
ENGL 1140A	Intellectual Pleasures: Reading/Writing the Literary Text
ENGL 1190S	Poetics of Narrative
ENGL 1511Y	Emily Dickinson and the Theory of Lyric Form
ENGL 1561D	Writing and the Ruins of Empire
ENGL 1710M	Nationalizing Narratives: Race, Nationalism, and the American Novel
ENGL 1711K	The Politics of Perspective: Post-war British Fiction
ENGL 1711J	Art for an Undivided Earth / Transnational Approaches to Indigenous Art and Activism
ENGL 1760J	Reading <i>Gravity's Rainbow</i>
ENGL 1761D	Hollywood and American Modernism from FDR to JFK
ENGL 1761L	Reading the Black Masses in Literature and Critical Practice
ENGL 1761Q	W. G. Sebald and Some Interlocutors
ENGL 1762D	Kubrick
ENGL 1900D	Literature and Politics
ENGL 1900J	Zoopoetics
ENGL 1900K	Reading Sex
ENGL 1900P	History of Criticism from Plato to Postmodernism
ENGL 1900Y	Medieval Manuscript Studies: Paleography, Codicology, and Interpretation
ENGL 1900Z	Neuroaesthetics and Reading
ENGL 1901H	The Late 60s: Film Countercultures
ENGL 1901L	Cronenberg/Lynch
ENGL 1901J	Fanon and Spillers
ENGL 1901Q	You Better Work: Sexuality, Labor, Blackness
ENGL 1950G	Reading Narrative Theory
ENGL 1950H	The Recent Novel and its Cultural Rivals
ENGL 2360Z	Shakespeare: a Politics of Love

ENGL 2761C	Black Internationalism and Its Discontents
ENGL 2561V	The Pursuit of Happiness: Transatlantic Literary Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century
ENGL 2900N	Ethical Turns in Psychoanalysis and Literature
ENGL 2900X	Postcolonial Theory
ENGL 2901D	War and the Politics of Cultural Memory
ENGL 2901K	Theory, Technics, Religion
ENGL 2901P	Black Feminism: Roots, Routes, Futures
6. FIVE electives ²	
Total Credits	
10	

¹ Each course may fulfill ONE requirement. Five courses must be 1000-level courses. With advisor approval, two of the ten required courses may be taken in departments other than English.

² Only TWO courses dealing primarily with the practice of writing at the 1000-level may be counted as electives. ENGL0900 and ENGL0930 do not count toward the concentration, however they do fulfill prerequisites for upper-level Nonfiction courses. One ENGL0200 may be counted toward the 10-course requirement only as an elective.

All substitutions and/or exceptions must be approved by the concentration advisor in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. A substitution or exception is not approved until specified in writing in the student's concentration file housed in the English Department.

English Concentration -- Nonfiction Writing Track (10 courses)

The English concentration also includes a Nonfiction Writing Track. The requirements are the same as 1 through 6 above, but three of the five electives must be 1000-level Nonfiction Writing courses (only ONE of which may be intermediate: ENGL1030, ENGL1050). Only THREE Nonfiction courses may count toward the track.

Honors in English

The English Honors program is intended for students who have been highly successful in their English concentration coursework and who want the opportunity to pursue a research project in more depth than is possible in an undergraduate seminar. The program is intended for those students with a strong desire to conduct independent research under the supervision of a thesis advisor and culminates in the writing of a thesis during the senior year.

Admission

Students apply to the Honors Program early in the second semester of their junior year. December or mid-year graduates may apply in their 6th semester, but are encouraged to apply during their 5th semester and write their theses alongside May graduates. Interested concentrators should speak to the Honors Advisor early in their junior year to discuss their plans. Specific deadlines for admission are announced annually and are available on the department website. Students who are studying off campus are expected to meet the application submission deadline.

Admission to the English Honors Program depends on evidence of ability and promise in the study of literature. To be eligible for admission, students must have received more As than Bs (and no Cs or below) in concentration courses completed. Students must complete an application; supply a brief writing sample, and request two letters of recommendation from English faculty with whom they have taken courses. If necessary, letters may come from faculty in related departments. Letters from teaching assistants may only serve as supporting recommendations. Candidates must also submit a one-page project proposal signed by the faculty member who has agreed to serve as the thesis advisor.

See procedures and application (<http://brown.edu/academics/english/english-honors-procedures/>) for more details.

December or mid-year graduates who wish to apply to honors have two options, but the first is highly encouraged:

Option 1:

In their 5th semester (Spring), students apply to the honors program along with the other juniors. Accepted students will be incorporated into the regular honors cohort and must meet the same deadlines: i.e. they must complete their theses at the same time as the other honors students (though for mid-years this will be at the end of their 7th semester). They register for ENGL 1991 English Honors Seminar in the Fall, and ENGL 1992 Senior Honors Thesis in the Spring.

Option 2:

In the 7th semester (the Spring of their final year), students take an independent study with their thesis advisor, under whose direction they will begin to research and write their theses. This course must be taken S/NC. In the 8th semester (the Fall of their final year), as they complete their theses, students take ENGL 1992 for a grade. Mid-year graduates should consult with the Honors Director for information about deadlines.

Requirements

The course requirements for the English Honors Program are the same as those for the regular concentration, with the following additions:

As part of regular coursework, and counting toward the concentration requirements, honors candidates must complete at least three upper-level seminars or comparable small courses in which students have the opportunity to do independent research, take significant responsibility for discussion, and do extensive scholarly and critical writing. Students are encouraged to include at least one graduate seminar in their program. (Permission to take a graduate course must be obtained from the instructor.) Honors candidates should discuss their proposed course of study with the Honors Advisor.

During the Fall and Spring of the senior year, honors candidates must complete two additional courses beyond the ten courses required by the regular concentration: ENGL 1991 and ENGL 1992. ENGL 1991 is the Senior Honors Seminar, in which students begin to research and write their theses, as well as meet to discuss their work. This is a mandatory S/NC course. ENGL 1992, the Senior Honors Thesis is an independent research course that must be taken for a grade.

Honors candidates must continue to receive more As than Bs in courses taken as part of the concentration. Courses completed with a grade of C will not count toward an Honors concentration. A student who receives such a grade and wishes to continue in the program must complete a comparable course with a grade higher than C.

The Honors Thesis

The Honors thesis is an extended essay, usually between 50 and 80 pages, written under the supervision of a department faculty advisor and second reader. (Where appropriate, the advisor or the reader, but not both, may be in another department.) The thesis may be an interdisciplinary or creative project, but it is usually an essay on a scholarly or critical problem dealing with works of literature in English. The specific topic and approach of the thesis are worked out between the student and the thesis advisor, with assistance from the student's second reader. This process should begin in the latter part of the student's junior year. A good way to get an idea of what sorts of projects are possible is to visit the Hay Library, which stores theses from previous years, or to meet with the Honors Advisor.

A prospectus describing the project and endorsed by the faculty advisor must be submitted to the Honors Advisor at the beginning of the senior year. At the end of the senior year fall term, a student must submit approximately 25 pages of draft material toward the thesis. Full thesis drafts are due by mid-March; final bound copies of the thesis are due in mid-April. Late theses will not be accepted for honors after the April deadline; students who hand in theses after the deadline but before the end of the term will receive a grade for the thesis course, but they will not be eligible for departmental honors. The completed thesis will be evaluated by the student's advisor and a second reader, each of whom provides written commentary and suggests a grade for ENGL 1992.

Evaluation

The English Department reviews the academic record as well as the thesis evaluations for each senior completing the Honors Program. Following a

successful review, the student will be eligible to graduate with Honors in English.

Honors in Nonfiction Writing

The Nonfiction Writing Honors Program is intended for students who have been highly successful in their English concentration work. Specifically, it allows those who have an expressed and proven interest in nonfiction writing to pursue more completely a single project under the supervision of a first reader. The intention is to help students to complete work worthy of publication. The program culminates in the writing of a thesis during the senior year.

Admission

Students apply to the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program in the second semester of their junior year. December or mid-year graduates may apply in their 6th semester, but are encouraged to apply during their 5th semester and write their theses alongside May graduates. Interested concentrators should have already made contact with at least one member of the Nonfiction Writing faculty and should meet with the Honors Advisor early in their junior year to discuss their plans. Specific deadlines for admission are announced annually and are available on the department website. Students who are studying off campus are expected to meet the application submission deadline.

Admission to the Honors Program in Nonfiction Writing depends upon a student's demonstrated superior ability in nonfiction writing. Students must have taken either one intermediate and one advanced writing course, or two advanced writing courses by the end of their sixth semester and completed each of them with an S. To be eligible for admission, students must have earned more As than Bs (and no Cs or below) in other courses in the concentration plan. Students must submit an application, two letters of recommendation, a writing sample from an advanced writing course, and a project proposal.

See procedures and application (<http://brown.edu/academics/english/nonfiction-honors-procedures/>) for more details.

December or mid-year graduates who wish to apply for nonfiction honors have two options, but the first is highly encouraged:

Option 1:

In their 5th semester (Spring), students can apply to the nonfiction honors program along with the other juniors. Accepted students will be incorporated into the regular nonfiction honors cohort and must meet the same deadlines: i.e. they must complete their theses at the same time as the other honors students (though for mid-years this will be at the end of their 7th semester). They register for ENGL 1993 Nonfiction Honors Seminar in the Fall and ENGL 1994 Senior Honors Thesis in Nonfiction in the Spring.

Option 2:

In their 7th semester (the Spring of their final year) students take ENGL 1200 and in their 8th semester (the Fall of their final year) they take ENGL 1994. (Students choosing this option must consult with the Honors Advisor for information on deadlines.)

Requirements

Students in the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program take two additional courses beyond the ten courses required by the Nonfiction Writing Track -- ENGL 1993 Honors Seminar in Nonfiction Writing (with the Honors Advisor) and ENGL 1994 Senior Honors Thesis in Nonfiction Writing; the Honors track will bring to twelve the total number of required courses. The ENGL 1993 grade option must be S/NC; ENGL 1994 must be taken for a grade. Honors candidates should discuss their proposed course of study with the faculty member they choose to direct their thesis.

Honors candidates must continue to receive more As than Bs in courses taken as part of the concentration. Courses completed with a grade of C will not count toward an Honors concentration. A student who receives a "C" after admission to Nonfiction Honors and wishes to continue in the program must complete an additional course in a comparable subject area, with a grade higher than C.

The Honors Thesis

The Nonfiction Writing Honors thesis is an extended project, usually of between 50 and 80 pages, written under the supervision of one of the

Nonfiction Writing faculty and a second reader (who can be from literature or another department). The specific topic and approach of the thesis are worked out between the student and the first reader, with assistance from the student's second reader. A good way to get an idea of what sorts of projects are possible is to visit the Hay Library, which stores theses from previous years, or to meet with the Honors Advisor. The work typically is in a genre chosen from Nonfiction Writing's spectrum: critical analysis, literary journalism, memoir, lyric essay, or narrative based on travel, science, history, or cultural critique.

Full thesis drafts are due by mid-March; final bound copies of the thesis are due in mid-April. Late theses will not be accepted for honors after the April deadline; students who hand in theses after the deadline and before the end of the term will receive a grade for the thesis course, but they will not be eligible for departmental honors. The completed thesis will be evaluated by its first reader and second reader, each of whom provides written commentary and suggests a grade for ENGL 1994.

Evaluation

The English Department reviews the academic record as well as the thesis evaluations for each senior completing the Nonfiction Writing Honors Program. Following a successful review, the student will be eligible to graduate with Honors in Nonfiction Writing.