

# ENGLISH: TOPICS IN ENGLISH, BALAS

for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Liberal Arts & Sciences Major in English, Topics in English Concentration

In an age when information is everywhere, the real challenge is knowing what questions to ask—and how to evaluate the answers. The English major develops precisely these capacities. Students learn to cultivate imagination, analyze texts and contexts critically, and understand how meaning shifts depending on perspective and framing. They gain facility with language as a creative and analytical tool, strengthening their ability to craft persuasive arguments and communicate with clarity, nuance, and impact.

Coursework spans eight centuries of literature and media, from novels, poems, and films to video games, digital texts, and emerging genres. Students explore topics as varied as Afrofuturism, lexicography, and linguistic change, while engaging interdisciplinary connections to history, philosophy, music, science, art, law, and technology.

Above all, studying English fosters independence of mind and a strong individual voice. Through sustained practice in reading and writing, students develop interpretive insight, creative and critical thinking, self-awareness, and sensitivity to audience. These skills empower graduates to adapt, innovate, and pursue fulfilling careers across a wide range of fields.

## Undergraduate Degree Programs in English

### Majors:

- English, BALAS (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/english-balas/>) with concentrations:
  - English, English Concentration, BALAS (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/english-balas/english/>)
  - English, English Teaching Concentration, BALAS (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/english-balas/english-teaching/>)
  - English, Topics in English Concentration, BALAS (p. 1)
- Creative Writing, BALAS (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/undergraduate/las/creative-writing-balas/>)

for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Liberal Arts & Sciences: Major in English, Topics in English Concentration

Minimum required major and supporting coursework equates to 39 hours of English department courses. Students must complete at least 15 hours of coursework at the 300-level or above (ENGL 301, ENGL 350, and 9 more hours) and 9 of these hours (including the capstone) must be taken in the student's chosen field.

General education: Students must complete the Campus General Education (<https://courses.illinois.edu/gened/DEFAULT/DEFAULT/>) requirements.

Minimum hours required for graduation: 120 hours

For this concentration, students will complete 12 hours of coursework (4 courses) in one of three cluster areas: Literature and Science, Media Cultures, or Race, Indigeneity, Gender, and Sexuality. These 12 hours will be selected from an approved list of courses for this category maintained by the English department. Students can access these lists and a further description of each cluster on the Department of English website (<https://english.illinois.edu/academics/undergraduate-studies/majors-minors/>).

**Departmental Distinction:** Students interested in graduating with distinction or high distinction are encouraged to consult the departmental honors adviser. In addition, students interested in the departmental honors program should contact the English department advising office.

## Topics in English

### Graduation Requirements

Minimum hours required for graduation: 120 hours.

Minimum hours required major and supporting course work: 39 hours of English department courses. Students must complete at least 15 hours of coursework at the 300-level or above (ENGL 301, ENGL 350, and 9 more hours) and 9 of these hours (including the capstone) must be taken in the student's chosen field.

### University Requirements

The university and residency requirements can be found in the Student Code (<https://studentcode.illinois.edu/article3/part8/3-801/>) (§ 3-801) and in the Academic Catalog (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/general-information/degree-general-education-requirements/>).

### General Education Requirements

Follows the campus General Education (Gen Ed) requirements (<https://courses.illinois.edu/gened/DEFAULT/DEFAULT/>). Some Gen Ed requirements may be met by courses required and/or electives in the program.

Code	Title	Hours
	Composition I	4-6
	Advanced Composition	3
	fulfilled by ENGL 350	
	Humanities & the Arts (6 hours)	6
	fulfilled by ENGL 200 and any other course approved as Humanities & the Arts	
	Natural Sciences & Technology (6 hours)	6
	Social & Behavioral Sciences (6 hours)	6
	Cultural Studies: Non-Western Cultures (1 course)	3
	Cultural Studies: US Minority Cultures (1 course)	3
	Cultural Studies: Western/Comparative Cultures (1 course)	3
	Quantitative Reasoning (2 courses, at least one course must be Quantitative Reasoning I)	6-10
	Language Requirement (Completion of the fourth semester or equivalent of a language other than English, or completion of the third semester in two different languages other than English is required)	0-20

**Major Requirements**

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Core Courses</b>		<b>9</b>
ENGL 200	Introduction to the Study of Literature and Culture (prerequisite for other English courses; can be taken at the same time as a course that satisfies the Composition I requirement)	
ENGL 301	Introduction to Critical Theory	
ENGL 350	Writing about Literature, Text, and Culture	
<b>Cluster Courses</b> <sup>1</sup>		<b>12</b>
Four courses in one of the following clusters, selected from approved lists maintained by the English Department:		
Literature and Science		
Media Cultures		
Race, Indigeneity, Gender, and Sexuality		
<b>Capstone Course</b>		<b>3</b>
ENGL 400	Senior Capstone Seminar (guided research in the student's chosen field)	
<b>Elective Coursework</b> <sup>1,2</sup>		<b>15</b>
At least five courses chosen from those controlled by or cross-listed with the Department of English (Business and Technical Writing, Creative Writing, and English)		
One course in Difference and Diaspora. This requirement can be fulfilled by taking an appropriately focused course from among ENGL 350: Writing about Literature, Text, and Culture; the cluster courses; or the elective coursework. <sup>1</sup>		
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>39</b>

<sup>1</sup> Chosen from the list maintained in the Department of English. Note: ENGL 350 can serve as a period course, a cluster course, an elective course, and/or a Difference and Diaspora course only when it is not also being used to fulfill a core requirement. Students who wish to use ENGL 350 in this way must thus take the course a second time (and with a different topic than the first time).

<sup>2</sup> Students may count one Independent Study course (ENGL 290, ENGL 390 or BTW 290) toward the additional coursework requirement.

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**Sample Sequence**

This sample sequence is intended to be used only as a guide for degree completion. All students should work individually with their academic advisors to decide the actual course selection and sequence that works best for them based on their academic preparation and goals. Enrichment programming such as study abroad, minors, internships, and so on may impact the structure of this four-year plan. Course availability is not guaranteed during the semester indicated in the sample sequence.

Students must fulfill their Language Other Than English requirement by successfully completing a fourth level of a language other than English. See the corresponding section on the Degree and General Education Requirements page (<http://catalog.illinois.edu/general-information/degree-general-education-requirements/>).

**First Year**

First Semester	Hours
Free Elective course	1
ENGL 200	3
Language Other Than English (3rd level)	4
Composition I or General Education course	4
Free Elective course	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 15****First Year**

Second Semester	Hours
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	4
General Education course or Composition I	3
Language Other Than English (4th level)	4
Free Elective course	1
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 15****Second Year**

First Semester	Hours
ENGL 301	3
General Education course	3
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	3
Free Elective course	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 15****Second Year**

Second Semester	Hours
ENGL 350	3
Elective coursework	3
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	3
Free Elective course	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 15****Third Year**

First Semester	Hours
Cluster Course	3
Elective coursework	3
General Education course	3
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	3
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 15**

**Third Year**

<b>Second Semester</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Cluster course	3
Elective coursework	3
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	3
Free Elective course	3
	<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Fourth Year**

<b>First Semester</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Cluster Course	3
Elective coursework	3
General Education course	3
ENGL 400	3
Free Elective course	3
	<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Fourth Year**

<b>Second Semester</b>	<b>Hours</b>
Cluster Course	3
Difference and Diaspora course	3
General Education course	3
Free Elective course	3
Free Elective course	3
	<b>15</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>15</b>

**Total Hours 120****Total Hours: 120**

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1. Capacity to understand and interpret multimodal texts by using a variety of methods including close reading, genre theory, and formal and rhetorical analysis.
2. Capacity to understand multimodal texts in a variety of contexts, including cultural, historical, philosophical, and theoretical ones. Ability to understand texts in relation to diachronic processes, including histories of literature, genre, culture, or media.
3. Ability to create clear, focused, rigorous, and well-supported arguments that demonstrate awareness of audience.
4. Ability to develop research questions, to carry out research into primary and secondary sources, and to smoothly integrate these findings into student work, such as presentations and essays.
5. Capacity to understand the ways in which forms of difference (including racial, ethnic, gendered, sexual) inform the production and reception of multimodal texts.

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## Department of English website (<https://www.english.illinois.edu/>)

English Faculty (<https://english.illinois.edu/directory/faculty/>)  
English advising (<https://www.english.illinois.edu/undergraduate/advising/>)

## College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<https://las.illinois.edu>)

overview of college admissions & requirements: Liberal Arts & Sciences  
(<http://catalog.illinois.edu/schools/las/academic-units/>)