

English (MA) Creative Writing

Degree Requirements

Requirements for Degree

A. A minimum of thirty-six semester hours of credit is required beyond the bachelor's degree with a grade of "A" or "B," including the following course in the first year of coursework.

EH 502 Graduate Writing in English

Eighteen hours of courses in literature

Fifteen hours of courses in creative writing

Three creative writing thesis hours

No more than 18 hours of dual-listed courses (400 and 500 level listing for the same course) may be counted towards meeting the minimum hours required for a degree.

Graduate students will receive graduate credit only for the 500 level versions of dual-listed courses.

The required thesis (three hours of thesis credit will be granted on the successful completion and oral defense of the thesis) will serve as the student's exit evaluation along with an oral defense.

B. Students may concentrate on writing fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or other genres.

C. This concentration requires a creative thesis, which is a substantial body of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, or other genres. An oral exam or defense, which will situate the thesis in the comprehensive objectives of the creative writing concentration, will be required one to two weeks prior to the Thesis First Submission Deadline for the Graduate School.

D. Demonstrated proficiency in a foreign language is required.

Foreign Language Proficiency Requirement:

All students pursuing the M.A. in English must demonstrate a reading proficiency in Spanish, French, German, or Latin before registering for the comprehensive exam or for thesis hours. Foreign nationals for whom English is not native may offer their native language. Credit in reading courses in acceptable languages may not count toward the 36 hour credit requirement for the M.A. in English.

Department Information

[Department of English website](https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/english)

<https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/english>

Through its focus on the interpretation, analysis, and production of literary and other texts, the English Department teaches students how those texts shape and are shaped by the world around them. In so doing, the Department helps students acquire the critical skills they need to analyze and participate in these interactions and contribute to the shaping of their worlds. The faculty's teaching and research in literature, creative writing, and composition/rhetoric combine to foster excellence in critical reading, creative thinking, and effective writing.

For all students, the Department provides the composition skills essential for success at the University and offers courses introducing the cultural diversity and historical breadth of British, American, and world literatures. For students majoring or minoring in English, the Department teaches critical strategies needed for intensive study in creative writing, professional writing, and in diverse literatures in English. For students pursuing graduate study in English, the Department provides advanced training in creative writing, literary analysis, rhetoric, methods of scholarly research, and critical theory. In all cases, by asking students

to read, discuss, and write about a wide variety of texts, the Department promotes an inclusive and evolving understanding of English Studies.

All first-time freshmen must successfully complete CAS 100, First Year Experience, as a degree requirement. Students must enroll during their first term at USA, except for summer-entry students who must enroll in the fall semester following entry. EH 300 will fulfill the technology proficiency requirement.

Honors In English

To be awarded Departmental Honors in English a student must:

1. Complete all the standard requirements for the major in English.
2. Maintain a 3.5 overall GPA (University requirement) and a 3.5 GPA in all course work in English.
3. Receive permission from the Department Chair and agreement from a Department member to serve as mentor.
4. Complete a Senior Honors Thesis (EH 499), with a grade of "A" or "B" in addition to the standard requirements for the English major. EH 499, Senior Honors Thesis (six semester hours credit), may be counted toward three hours of the 39 hours required for the major and toward three hours of the nine 400-level hours required for the major. Thus, the student receiving honors in English will be required to take a total of 42 hours in English instead of 36. In EH 499 the student will normally take three hours in the Fall semester for research and three in the Spring for writing. A final committee of three or more faculty members, including a representative of the University Honors College, will conduct an oral defense. The thesis must be approved by the director of the University Honors College.

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible to undertake an honors thesis in creative writing, the student must first complete four creative writing courses at the University of South Alabama. This policy on creative writing theses not only applies to students seeking departmental honors but also to students enrolled in the Honors College.

Graduate Studies

The Master of Arts degree program in English is designed to meet the needs of students pursuing a terminal M.A. and of those planning to work toward the Ph.D. and a career in university teaching. The terminal M.A. serves such career tracks as junior college or secondary-school teaching and writing or editing in the business or corporate community. Creative writers find the degree meaningful in careers both in and out of the academic community since the M.A. provides guidance towards book publication and time to study successful literary texts.

Requirements for admission

Students are admitted each semester. The following criteria supplement the Graduate School criteria (see Categories of Admission):

1. For the Literature Concentration, applicants normally have an undergraduate major or minor in English or at least 21 semester hours of course work in English beyond the freshman level, at least 12 of these hours in upper-division literature courses. For the Creative Writing Concentration, applicants normally have 15 semester hours of course work in English beyond the freshman level. Students lacking prior coursework can complete additional upper-division courses in English to strengthen their applications.
2. Applicants to graduate programs in Arts and Sciences typically have a minimum GPA of at least a 3.0 on all undergraduate work. In exceptional cases, applicants may be considered with at least a 2.5 GPA on all undergraduate work, or at least a 2.75 GPA on the last 60 hours of undergraduate work. The English Department normally requires a minimum GPA of 3.0 in junior- and senior-level courses presented in fulfillment of requirement 1.
3. Applicants normally have a score of at least 153 on the Verbal section of a GRE General Test taken within the past seven years. Admission with a lower Verbal GRE score requires specific approval of the Department's Graduate Committee. In rare cases, applicants may be admitted provisionally without submitting a score, but one must be submitted before the student can progress to the second semester.
4. All applicants should submit a personal statement of no more than 500 words, a writing sample of 5-15 pages in the area of concentration (creative writing or literature) and three letters of recommendation.*
5. All applicants for whom English is a second language should submit a TOEFL IBT score of at least 79 or IELTS score of at least 6.5. (Note that ESL applicants must apply through the International Admissions Office at USA.)

*Students must specify their concentration at the time of application and may not thereafter change concentrations without the specific approval of the English Department's Graduate Committee.

Graduate Assistantships

The English Department awards both teaching assistantships and research assistantships. Teaching assistantships involve responsibility for freshman composition classes. Graduate students holding research assistantships are usually assigned tasks involving tutoring, research, editing, or administrative/clerical tasks. Awards are normally made for the academic year; occasionally, assistantships become available for spring semester. Applications are taken continuously; competition for appointments begins in May for the following year. See Graduate Coordinator for information and application. (See also Bulletin section on Graduate School, "Assistantships and Fellowships.")