

Bowling Green State University

MA in English with a Specialization in Literary and Textual Studies

MA PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2019-2020

Revised and updated Summer 2019

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Literature Program Director
Dr. Stephannie S. Gearhart, Associate Professor
324 East Hall
stephsg@bgsu.edu
419 372 6841

Master of Arts in English with a Specialization in Literary and Textual Studies

The MA in English with a Specialization in Literary and Textual Studies is a flexible, student-focused degree that prepares students for advanced graduate work in numerous fields of study in the humanities, as well as for careers outside of the academy.

Admissions

To be eligible for regular admission to the MA in English with a specialization in Literary and Textual Studies, a candidate is ordinarily expected to have an overall undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.8 or higher and an English GPA of at least 3.2. Students may be accepted on a conditional status with a 2.8 overall GPA and a 3.0 GPA in English. Funding is not available for students entering a program under conditional status. Funded students typically have a 3.5 undergraduate GPA, a score of 159 (80th percentile) or better in the Verbal portion of the GRE (Graduate Record Examination), and a 4.5 or higher in the GRE Written component.

Degree Requirements

33 hours of graduate credit, including 6 hours of required courses, a minimum of 24 hours in English/elective courses, and 3 thesis hours. The 33 hours does not include ENG 6020: Composition Instructor's Workshop, which is required for students teaching in the General Studies Writing program for the first time. Use the check sheets in this handbook to keep track of your progress in your coursework and to ensure you make timely progress on your thesis.

In addition to the MA degree, the English Department offers two certificate programs that can be taken concurrently with the MA in English:

- International Scientific and Technical Communication (ISTC; fully online)
- Teaching of English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL; blended program)

Other departments at BGSU also offer graduate certificates that students can undertake concurrently with the MA in English. These include but are not limited to certificates in Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, and Public History.

Advising

Your primary advisor for the program will be the Literature Program Director. When questions arise, contact the Literature Program Director first, and that person will answer questions or guide you to the appropriate contact. The Graduate Secretary for English is also an excellent and fast resource for day-to-day questions. The Department of English's Graduate Coordinator is responsible for questions having to do with teaching assignments, funding, questions relating to university administration, etc.

Coursework

The MA in English with a specialization in Literary and Textual Studies coursework is designed to both ground students in contemporary English studies (broadly conceived) and to allow a great deal of flexibility in an individual student's path of study.

Once courses are announced for the following semester, but prior to registering for courses, you must meet with the Literature Program Director to pick your courses for the upcoming term. The Literature Program Director serves as your advisor regarding coursework. Once you and the Literature Program Director have agreed upon your classes for the upcoming term, email the Graduate Secretary, Jeanne Berry (jberry@bgsu.edu), who will enroll you in courses.

The following check sheet will help you keep track of courses and your progress toward graduation. In addition, be sure to regularly check your online Degree Audit Report under MyBGSU, which will track your progress toward your degree.

Check Sheet for Courses

MA in English, specialization in Literary and Textual Studies (with MA Thesis)

In the check sheet below, “Lit seminar” refers to courses of the following designations: ENG 5800, 6090, 6750, 6800, 6820, 7010, 7060, 7070, 7790, 7800, and 7810. 24 total credits of elective credits (8 courses, generally speaking) are required for graduation, in addition to ENG 6010 (3 credits), ENG 6070 (3 credits), and ENG 6990 (3 credits total). Up to 12 hours of elective credits (typically 4 courses) may be taken outside the Literature Program. However, all courses must be chosen in consultation with and are subject to approval of the Literature Program Coordinator.

YEAR 1: ALL STUDENTS

FALL Year 1

Number	Title	Cr. Hrs/ Grade earned
ENG 6010	Intro to English Studies	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG 6020	Composition Instructor’s Workshop*	3 / ____

Semester hours toward graduation 6
 Cumulative hours towards graduation 6

SPRING Year 1

Number	Title	Cr. Hrs/ Grade earned
ENG 6070	Theory and Method of Literary Criticism	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____

Semester hours toward graduation 9
 Cumulative hours toward graduation 15

YEAR 2: STANDARD PLAN

FALL Year 2

Number	Title	Cr. Hrs/ Grade earned
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____

Semester hours toward graduation 9
 Cumulative hours toward graduation 24

SPRING Year 2

Number	Title	Cr. Hrs/ Grade earned
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG ____	Lit seminar (elective): _____	3 / ____
ENG 6990	Thesis Hours**	3 / ____

Semester hours toward graduation 9
 Cumulative hours toward graduation 33

* Required course for funded first-year students teaching in General Studies Writing (GSW); credit hours for this course do not count toward graduation. For students not teaching in GSW, take an ENG seminar in an area of interest (elective) in this slot, with credits counting toward graduation.

** Only 3 credits of ENG 6990 count toward graduation. In addition, ENG 6990 is a course that requires “continual enrollment”: once you enroll in ENG 6990, you need to remain enrolled in it in each semester until you graduate, including the summer, but your continual enrollment can be 1 credit hour per semester after the first semester in which you enroll in ENG 6990. On occasion, a student might wish to get a jump on thesis writing and decide to take 2 seminars along with ENG 6990 in fall of year two, and then take 3 seminars in spring of year two. To do this, sign up for 2 seminars in fall of year two along with 2 credit hours of ENG 6990 (total 8 credits for that semester). Then in spring of year two sign up for 3 seminars and 1 credit hour of ENG 6990 (total of 10 credits, for the standard yearly total of 18 credit hours). Please note that every semester you are enrolled in ENG 6990 you will earn a grade of ‘S’ (satisfactory) or ‘U’ (unsatisfactory), which will be assigned to you by your thesis advisor.

The MA Thesis

The Literary and Textual Studies Program typically culminates in a thesis written under the direction of a thesis advisor (first reader) and a second reader.* Please give careful attention to the entire “Thesis & Dissertations” section of the Graduate College website, including the online Thesis/Dissertation Handbook. You can find requirements, that handbook, and other essential information here: <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/thesis-and-dissertations.html>. You are responsible for carefully reviewing that information and using it during the thesis writing process.

The thesis topic should arise out of the student’s personal exploration in a field of study. The thesis may represent a specifically limited piece of research, a critical understanding of a sector of knowledge of literature of considerable dimensions, or a thorough critical analysis of a substantial piece of literature. You and the thesis advisor will choose a length that satisfies the requirements of the topic. Theses in English normally range from 60-80 pages, although the specific length and scope would be decided between the thesis advisor and student. Students should expect to write a minimum of 50 pages and a maximum of 100 pages. Each chapter should be approximately the length of an academic article. Students should to expect to work through multiple drafts of each chapter, as well as more than one revision of the entire thesis.

Alternative formats for the MA Thesis, such as digital humanities projects (digital curation of archival material with a significant critical component), curricular or pedagogical projects, etc., are possible. If you are interested in alternative formats, meet with the Literature Program Director about possible formats, faculty advisors, etc. Regardless of format, any alternative project must illustrate an equivalent level of research, analytical rigor, and argumentative writing as would a traditional thesis.

All theses are accessible in the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation database through BGSU’s University Library website. See “Examples” below for a list of recent sample theses.

** In some cases, students compose a portfolio rather than a thesis. This option (commonly called Plan 2) is chosen only after consultation with the Literature Program Director.*

Deadlines

The deadlines for various steps for completion of a thesis are available on the check sheet on the following pages and at the Graduate College Office located in McFall Center. The Graduate College has a deadline listing for each academic year that provides due dates for approving thesis topics, completing preliminary drafts, conducting oral exams, and depositing library copies. Please familiarize yourself with the Graduate College website: <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate.html>, especially the “Documents and Forms” and “Important Dates & Deadlines” sections. Much of what you will need as a graduate student can be found there.

One especially important deadline that students must remember is the deadline for Application for Graduation. These are *usually* in January for spring semester graduation, in June for summer graduation, and September for fall graduation. But check with the Graduate College website above for specifics.

Selecting a Thesis Committee

In your first year in the program, make the time to meet with graduate faculty who share your areas of interest; whenever possible, take courses with faculty members whose areas of interest overlap with your own.

However, before asking a faculty member to serve on your committee, consult about possible committee members with the Literature Program Director. The Director can help suggest faculty who have

overlapping interests, are potentially available, etc. In the spring semester of the first year, consult with the Literature Program Director to discuss appropriate faculty for your thesis topic. If you have not taken a course with a faculty member who shares areas of interest, visit the faculty member during office hours to discuss your interests and see if the faculty member is willing and able to serve on your committee. There are some faculty members who may not feel comfortable serving as your thesis advisor if they have not had you in a class before. By the second half of the spring semester of your first year, you should be narrowing down your potential thesis topic in consultation with the Literature Program Director.

You will select a two-person committee of professors who know your work and who express an interest in it: a thesis advisor (first reader) and a second reader. First and foremost, your advisor should be someone with subject matter or time period expertise relating to your thesis topic. If you have not had the opportunity to take a class with the faculty member who best fits your topic, it is your responsibility to meet with the faculty member, discuss your potential thesis topic, and ascertain their availability and interest in serving as advisor of your thesis committee. Remember that asking someone to serve on your committee as advisor or second reader is a request that should be undertaken professionally and formally. A student has the freedom to choose which faculty member to approach, but a faculty member might decline based on availability, timeline of the project, areas of expertise, etc.

The first reader for your thesis committee must be a literature faculty member with graduate faculty status. The Literature Program Director can help identify possible readers.

In consultation with your thesis advisor you should identify a second graduate literature faculty member to serve as the second reader for your thesis committee. If your topic requires specific expertise, your second reader can be a graduate faculty member from a different English program or a different department. A third reader is also possible but is *not required*. Should a third reader be included, they may be a graduate faculty member from a different English program or a different department.

Preparing the Thesis

For details on the following steps, see the “Check Sheet for Completion of MA Thesis,” below. Here are the general guidelines for completion of a thesis:

1. Meeting with the Literature Program Director

To begin the process, meet with the Literature Program Director to discuss the thesis topic, potential thesis advisor, and second reader. As you are doing so, please fill out the form found on page 10 of this Handbook. This form must be signed by the Literature Program Director, the thesis advisor, and the second reader. The form guarantees that all parties are aware of the guidelines/instructions in the MA Handbook and also that all parties have been consulted regarding the thesis topic and their role in the thesis process. (Again, keep in mind that your thesis advisor ideally should have expertise in the field and/or historical/literary period under which your topic falls. Your second reader should ideally have expertise in a theoretical and/or methodological approach that you are using.)

2. Formal Petition for approval of Thesis Topic / Prospectus

The formal petition for approval of the thesis topic (known as the thesis prospectus) is a 5-10- page document explaining the purpose and scope of the thesis. The specific length/scope of the prospectus can be decided by the thesis advisor and student. It must clearly set forth the intellectual problem, the intended organization, and the methods of development of the thesis. When the prospectus is approved by the student's committee, the committee signs the Topic Approval – Thesis/Dissertation form (available on the BGSU Graduate College website) and submits that form to the English Department graduate coordinator, who signs the form and submits it to the Graduate College. Follow the steps listed on the check sheet below. Please note, if the makeup of your committee changes at all after you have submitted this form, you must inform the Graduate Coordinator, the Literature Program Director, and the Graduate Secretary via email. You must then provide them with an updated list of your committee members and their roles.

2. Research and Writing

You should expect to spend the summer between year one and two conducting research and reading about your thesis topic and beginning writing, and to spend the fall of year two drafting parts of the thesis. You will undertake this work in consultation with your thesis advisor and second reader. You should expect to submit a preliminary draft of the completed thesis (which addresses the problem stated in the prospectus) to the thesis committee relatively early in the spring semester of your second year. You can then receive feedback and make clarifications, revisions, expansions, and corrections in order to prepare the final draft of the thesis.

The committee members will decide, in consultation with each other and the student, the schedule for completion and how they will organize the process of discussing ideas, addressing questions, and reading drafts of chapters. Different committees will operate on different schedules and plans, but keep in mind the deadlines set by the Graduate College for graduation. It often helps to work backwards and set deadlines that will lead to your planned date of graduation.

3. The MA Thesis Defense

Once the committee agrees that the thesis is nearing completion, schedule a date for the MA Thesis Defense. (Please note, the Graduate College requires a formal defense.) Before the defense, the committee should be given adequate time (a minimum of three weeks) to read and examine a completed final draft of the thesis. Ahead of the exams, ask the committee if they have questions or guidelines for what they hope to discuss. When scheduling the defense, be sure to allow adequate time after the defense for final revisions, formatting, and uploading to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) database before any deadlines for graduation set by BGSU's Graduate College. Deadlines can be found on the Graduate College website under "Important Dates & Deadlines." Follow the steps listed on the check sheet below.

The thesis defense is intended to serve as the capstone experience for the Literary and Textual Studies program. Each student will arrange for a defense (also called the "oral examination") with the thesis committee. The defense should not be thought of as a quiz; rather, it offers you the opportunity to discuss with the committee your thesis and the intellectual challenges, new ideas, and conclusions posed by it.

The committee has the job of approving two separate components at the defense: whether the student has successfully explained and defended the project and its ideas (the oral defense), and whether the manuscript itself is ready for final approval (manuscript approval). A successful defense must meet both qualifications. While a student might successfully pass the oral portion of the defense, faculty may still require final revisions and corrections before they give final approval to the manuscript (often called "signing off" on the manuscript). The committee "signs off" on the project using the Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form. It is your responsibility to download and fill out the form accurately.

5. Approval of Your Thesis and Electronic Submission to OhioLink's Electronic Thesis and Dissertation database (ETD)

Once your committee has signed off on both the oral defense and the manuscript and you have made all final revisions, done all final proofreading, and made all final corrections, you will upload your thesis to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation database (ETD). For full details about how to prepare and submit your thesis, see the Thesis/Dissertation Handbook available on the "Thesis & Dissertations" page of the Graduate College website: <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate.html>.

Please note that the Graduate College has strict deadlines for when a thesis must be completed, approved, and uploaded to the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation database in order that a student

graduate during a certain time (Spring, Summer, or Winter graduation). It is the student's responsibility to meet all such deadlines.

Examples

Recent successful MA Theses from the program can be found on the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) database through OhioLink and BGSU's Library website at <https://etd.ohiolink.edu>. Download a sample and read it to get a sense of a completed thesis project. Some examples (listed by date) include:

- Jennifer Isherwood, "Violence, Narrative, and Community After 9/11: A Reading of Ian McEwan's *Saturday*" (2006).
- Jessica Alexander, "'World Wisdom': Difference And Identity In Gertrude Stein's 'Melanctha'" (2008).
- Scott Caddy, "(Mis)appropriating (Con)text: Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* in Contemporary Literary Criticism and Film" (2009).
- Chris Barnes, "Mediating Terror: Filmic Responses to September 11th, 2001, and the 'War on Terror'" (2012).
- Alex Monea, "Dissemination Rhizome: How to Do (Political) Things With Affect" (2012).
- Anne Rothhaas, "The Specter of Masochistic Mourning in Charlotte Brontë's *Tales of Angria*, *The Professor*, and *Villette*" (2013).
- Lauren Laur, "Deconstruction of American Exceptionalism in the Collaborative Works of John Adams and Peter Sellars" (on contemporary opera) (2013).

Check Sheet for MA Degree Completion and Thesis

This check sheet is designed to help you finish your course work and defend your thesis by the end of the spring semester of your second year. Mark the dates here when you have completed these steps and be sure to have the Literature Program Director initial to indicate completion. Please note that some specific deadlines and the plan for submitting drafts and revisions of the thesis prospectus as well as drafts of chapters of the thesis itself will be worked out between student and committee (i.e., the thesis advisor and second reader). Please be sure to carefully keep track of all “Important Dates & Deadlines” on the BGSU Graduate College website and to review the entire “Thesis & Dissertations” section of the BGSU Graduate College website (including the Thesis/Dissertation Handbook found there).

Year One, Fall Semester:

1. Make appointment with Literature Program Director for advising about coursework, to discuss your interests, and the steps toward the degree. Bring the coursework check sheet and the thesis check sheet to those meetings.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director’s Initials _____

Year One, Spring Semester:

1. Early in semester, confer with the Literature Program Director to discuss a thesis topic and potential thesis advisor.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director’s Initials _____

2. Meet with the various faculty in the program, especially those whose areas of interest might overlap with your own.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director’s Initials _____

3. Consult again with the Literature Program Director about a possible advisor for the Thesis Committee. After receiving a green light from the Literature Program Director, approach a potential advisor. Remember to do so professionally and formally, and remember that it is up to you to decide who you wish to approach as a possible thesis advisor and that you have a right to make that request of a faculty member, but a potential advisor might or might not be available.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director’s Initials _____

4. In consultation with your thesis advisor, identify potential readers for your thesis committee. (A second reader is required for approval of the prospectus. It is possible but *not required* to have a third reader.) You have the option to approach your second reader now or in the fall of year two.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director’s Initials _____

Year One, Summer:

1. In consultation with your thesis advisor, compose a reading list of initial sources and research areas. Begin intensive research on the thesis project over the summer.
2. Begin drafting prospectus (see details above).

***Please note:** You cannot expect that advisors will be available throughout the summer, as most faculty are not on contract, so summer research and writing should be planned out ahead of time (typically during the spring of year one) as much as is possible. The reading, research, and writing will be independent work undertaken in the summer.*

Year Two, Fall Semester:

1. Early in the semester, if you have not done so already, select a second reader in consultation with your thesis advisor. Remember that all requests for a second reader are professional and formal requests, and should be undertaken in that spirit.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

2. Early in the semester, in consultation with your thesis advisor (and with agreement of your second reader), compose a schedule for completion of both the Prospectus and Thesis in accordance with the Graduate College deadlines and this check sheet. Most students work by submitting chapter drafts to the thesis advisor and sometimes second reader, but the specific process can be agreed upon by the student and members of the thesis committee.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

3. Complete the Thesis Prospectus and secure approval of committee members no later than week ten of fall semester.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

4. Download the Topic Approval – Thesis/Dissertation form, found on the Graduate College “Documents & Forms” webpage. Complete the form and have all committee members sign it. This form is generally due by early December for Spring Graduation; see BGSU Grad College website “Important Dates and Deadlines” section for due dates.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

5. Return the form with signatures of all committee members to the Graduate Coordinator of the English Department by late November. The Graduate Coordinator will then forward it to the Graduate College for final approval.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

Year Two, Spring Semester:

1. Apply online through MyBGSU for graduation by deadline set by the Graduate College (usually in first few weeks of spring semester).

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

2. Draft and revise drafts of the thesis in accordance with the calendar you and your committee agreed upon.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

3. Schedule a thesis defense with your committee.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

4. Submit a revised complete, properly formatted draft with revisions incorporated to the committee at least three weeks before the committee's deadline for the thesis defense.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

5. Download the Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form from the Graduate College website "Documents & Forms" page and complete the form.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

6. Meet with thesis committee for final defense of thesis and for its approval. Have all committee members sign the Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form. The defense should occur at least one week before the Graduate College deadline for deposit of approved, error-free copy of master's thesis.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

7. After a successful defense, make any final revisions, corrections, and formatting changes. The University Library's Student Technology Advisory Center (STAC) can help with the formatting process.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

8. Return the Thesis/Dissertation Defense and Manuscript Approval Form with committee signatures to the Graduate Coordinator of the English Department in advance of Graduate College deadline.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

9. Upload your error-free, approved thesis to the OhioLINK ETD database in advance of the Graduate College deadline. The University Library's Student Technology Advisory Center (STAC) can help with the process.

Date Completed _____ Literature Program Director's Initials _____

Form for Approval of Thesis Advisor/Second Reader Selection (please note that this form is different from and in addition to the Topic Approval Form required by the Graduate College, which is described on page 4 under number 2).

I have read the *MA Handbook* and am aware of and will follow the **MA Checklist** for completion of course work and the **MA Thesis** found there on pages 7-9.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Prior to selecting my Thesis Committee, I have done all of the following:

1. Met with Literature Program Director to discuss thesis topic and consult regarding Thesis Advisor and Second Reader.

Literature Program Director's Signature: _____

Date: _____

2. Met and consulted with faculty member whose area of expertise is relevant to the chosen thesis topic and who has agreed to serve as **Thesis Advisor**.

Thesis Advisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

3. Met and consulted with faculty member who has agreed to serve as **Second Reader**.

Second Reader's Signature: _____

Date: _____

4. Met with the Literature Director again to secure his/her final signature. I understand that this form will be kept in my student file in the English Department Office.

Literature Program Director's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____