



MA in English

THE WRITING OPTION

**English and Writing Departments
Western Connecticut State University**

Fall 2009-Spring 2011

CONTENTS

I.	M.A. in English Overview.....	3
II.	Degree Requirements for the Writing Option.....	3
III.	Course Descriptions	4
IV.	Writing Option Thesis Guidelines	6
V.	Deadlines and Time Limits.....	10
Appendix		
	Writing Option Program Sheet.....	12
	Form Required to Sign up for ENG 592	13
	Thesis Completion Form.....	14
	Thesis Title Page	15

I. THE M. A. IN ENGLISH OVERVIEW

Program Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The MA in English offers courses of study that students can apply toward advanced degrees or toward careers as writers, editors or as teachers at the primary and secondary levels. All students graduating with the MA in English are expected to have developed advanced knowledge of authors, literary genres, and literary periods, and advanced ability to analyze texts, contexts, and important literary issues using current critical approaches. Research, critical thinking, and writing skills are integral components of all course work. The Writing Option of this degree gives particular emphasis to honing writing skills and understanding the complexities of the writing process.

Admission Requirements

Applicants for the MA in English must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher education. In general, students who have completed a substantial number of credits in English at the undergraduate level will receive preference for admission to the program. However, the MA program welcomes applicants from diverse educational backgrounds. Applicants with other undergraduate concentrations or majors will be seriously considered. In all cases, a record of strong undergraduate academic achievement will merit preference over any other criterion for admission.

The MA degree in English Literature Option is supervised by the Department of English. The MA degree in English Writing Option is supervised by the Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process.

Prospective students for the Writing Option must include the following in their application:

1. a 500-word statement of purpose explaining why they want to pursue graduate studies in English
2. a writing sample, i.e., a substantial research essay on a literary topic or a creative work such as poems or fiction, a non fiction work in journalism, memoir or other genre. The sample should be approximately 10 typed, double-spaced pages.

All applicants must have an entrance interview with the Graduate Coordinator for the Department of Writing. After the entrance interview, the graduate coordinator recommends whether or not to accept the applicant, or whether to accept the applicant conditionally (i.e., students may be asked to make up academic deficiencies), and forwards this recommendation to the graduate office.

II. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WRITING OPTION

The course work specified on the Writing Option program sheet includes a thesis, which all MA Writing Option students must write. The thesis is a six-credit course taken at the end of coursework. The specific requirements of this degree are as follows:

Master of Arts in English – Writing Option (30 SH)

1. Completion of four English writing courses (12 SH)
2. Completion of the following:
 - a. One course in English Literature
 - b. One course in American Literature
 - c. One course in Topic/Genre Studies

- d. One more course in the MA Program
3. A written thesis (6 SH)

Note: ENG 502, Critical Theory, may count as a literature course; ENG 506, History of the Language & Linguistics, may count as a writing course, and ENG 585 or 586 may count as a literature or a writing course.

Note: Some literature courses such as topics courses may be taken more than once if the subject matter of the second version of the course is substantially different. This will be indicated in the substantially different title placed on the course. See the coordinator for clarification.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENG 502 Critical Theory 3 SH

This course is an in-depth examination of major schools of contemporary critical theory, from Structuralism to Post-Colonialism. The goal of the course is to provide students a varied repertoire of current approaches to texts and to facilitate their understanding of the ideological stances inherent in each scholarly perspective. Students are encouraged to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and to develop their own critical scholarly voice by applying aspects of theories to their own readings of texts

ENG 506 Studies in the History of the Language and Linguistics 3 SH

ENG 509 Medieval Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

This course will be an intensive, in-depth study of medieval literary authors and topics including Chaucer. This literature will be examined in the context of its historical, cultural, philosophic and literary setting, specifically, in the ways in which linguistics and rhetorical traditions have shaped individual authors and works and how scholars and literary critics have sought to explain this body of literature. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is different.

ENG 513 English Renaissance Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

This course will focus on major writers of the English Renaissance, usually emphasizing either the poetry or prose of writers such as Sidney, Bacon, Spencer, Donne, and Browne, and/or the drama of writers such as Marlowe, Jonson, Webster, Chapman, and Middleton. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 518 Topics in Non-fiction Writing 3 SH

This course offers workshops in different kinds of non-fiction writing. Topics might include autobiography, advanced exposition, technical writing, journalism (with various sub-headings). The workshop may be taken multiple semesters.

ENG 519 Topics in Creative Writing 3 SH

This course offers workshops in different genres of creative writing. The specific genre (poetry, fiction, drama, etc.) and the focus of the course will vary semester to semester. The workshop may be taken multiple semesters.

ENG 532 Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of selected authors and/or topics from Restoration and Eighteenth-Century British Literature. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is different.

ENG 534 Nineteenth Century British Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of selected authors and/or topics from Nineteenth Century British Literature such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, the Brontës, Dickens, George Eliot, Carlyle, Mill, Arnold, and Hardy. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is different.

ENG 541 Twentieth Century British and Irish Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive examination of prominent authors of ex-colonies as well a thorough study of Britain and Ireland's most visionary authors. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is different.

ENG 544 Topics in Literature (post-colon) 3 SH

A critical study of topics in literature, e.g., satire, gender roles, representation of "Other(s)," which typically cut across periods, genres, and cultures. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 552 American Literature to 1860 (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of selected authors and/or topics from American Literature prior to 1865, such as Puritanism, Transcendentalism, Sentimentalism, Romanticism, Winthrop, Bradstreet, Taylor, Byrd, Edwards, Mather, Franklin, Irving, Fuller, Melville, Hawthorne, Stowe, Emerson, Thoreau, Southworth and Poe. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 567 American Literature: 1860-1920 (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of the most significant literary movements (realism, naturalism, local color, early modernism, psychological realism, etc.) in appropriate literary, critical and cultural contexts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 568 American Literature: 1920-present (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of the most significant literary developments (modernism, agitprop, Harlem Renaissance, Beat, etc.) in appropriate literary, critical and cultural contexts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 570 Fiction Studies (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of important works of fiction and fiction writers in pertinent literary, critical, and cultural contexts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 572 Drama Studies (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive and in-depth study of important plays and playwrights in pertinent literary, critical, and cultural contexts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG 574 Poetry Studies (post-colon) 3 SH

Intensive, in-depth study of significant poet(s), movements, or genre of poetry in relationship to their literary, critical and cultural contexts. This course may be repeated for credit provided the post-colon subject matter is verifiably different.

ENG/WRT 585 An Apprenticeship in Teaching College Writing 1-3 SH

Restricted to graduate students in English, this course focuses on the theory and practice of teaching freshman composition. Students will be responsible for attending seminars in rhetorical theory with a workshop component in the practicalities of teaching composition, conducting writing and discussion sessions with students in freshman composition, and commenting on and evaluating essays. Written assignments based on the reading for the course will be required. This variable credit course may be taken for up to three credits.

ENG/WRT 586 Practicum in Teaching College Writing **1-3 SH**

Restricted to graduate assistants in English, this course is a workshop for discussion of problems encountered in teaching freshman composition. This course may be taken for one-to-three credits per semester for as long as the student is a graduate assistant. Prerequisite: ENG 585. Students may take a total of three credits towards the degree, three credits in ENG 585 or three credits in ENG 586, or a combination of three credits from the two courses (ENG 585 & ENG 586).

ENG 592 Independent Thesis Research in English **3-6 SH**

Designed for students fulfilling the thesis requirements for the Master of Arts in English. Students must follow the thesis guidelines and work independently on thesis research and writing. Individual conferences with the thesis advisor are scheduled as needed. Credit will be granted upon submission of the approved final draft of the thesis and thesis abstract. Permission of both the thesis advisor and the Graduate Coordinator.

ENG 598 Faculty Developed Course

An experimental course offered by the English department as a means of determining its value to the total department program or in response to a particular request from a group of students.

ENG 599 Student Independent Study **1-3 SH**

A vehicle designed to provide the student with an opportunity to develop his or her own learning experience that lies outside the existing graduate course offerings of the English department. The student will design a project and secure a faculty sponsor who has the pertinent expertise. May be taken for a maximum of three credits toward the degree. Prerequisite: Written permission of the faculty sponsor and the English department. Registration through the Division of Graduate Studies office is required.

IV. WRITING OPTION THESIS GUIDELINES

Overview

A prospectus for the thesis must be approved by the Writing Department Graduate Committee before you are allowed to sign up for ENG 592, the thesis course. Approval for the prospectus should be secured the semester prior to the one in which you write your thesis. Masters theses may be completed in one semester, although the department recommends taking three credits of the thesis course over each of two semesters. Six years is the maximum amount of time allowed by WCSU for completion of a Masters degree. That includes the time allotted for writing the thesis.

Step 1: Selecting an Advisor and Second Reader: Approach a professor in the Writing Department whom you believe qualified to direct the thesis project you have in mind. It is not necessary to write out a formal report for your professor before your first meeting, but you should have a good idea about the direction and focus of your thesis. Be professional. Organize yourself before asking for a meeting and be prepared to articulate your thoughts

about the project at some length. If the professor agrees to become your adviser on the project, she will help you refine your topic and offer advice on how to organize it. He may also suggest a fellow professor who might serve as a second reader on your thesis. This second reader should have working knowledge in the field you have chosen to explore. It is advisable to secure the agreement of a second reader for your project after you have settled on its rough outlines with your thesis advisor.

Step 2: Writing the Prospectus: A prospectus or thesis proposal is a brief but thorough overview of your project. Most prospectuses run between 10 and 15 pages in length, including an outline of the project, sample chapters or selections from the project, bibliographic list reflecting any anticipated background research and a description of the proposed “critical component” (explained below). The four parts of the prospectus are as follows:

A. Opening Summary of the Creative or Nonfiction Project: The key opening statement in the prospectus details your creative or nonfiction writing project, articulating themes you want to explore, the genre you want to work in, the background research you will need to conduct, and a clear statement of what is holding the work together, making it a coherent whole. The summary should be a well-written and evocative presentation of your creative or nonfiction idea.

B. Sample Pages: The prospectus must include polished sample pages such as would appear in the finished thesis.

C. Bibliography and Statement of Background Research: The background research for your project might, for example, involve reading extensively in the genre you would like to employ for your project so as to have a clearer understanding of the parameters of the genre. Or the research it might include books and articles that provide an historical setting for your work. Research is not limited to scholarly texts or means. It may include interviews, observation notebooks, strategies for capturing details about an historical period, or other. Any substantial writing project necessarily involves some research. In this section of the prospectus you identify what that research is.

D. Statement Regarding the Critical Component of the Thesis: Although the core of your thesis will be a substantial creative or creative nonfiction project (a collection of poems or short stories, memoir essays for example), your thesis must also include what we call a “critical component.” This component is a place in the thesis where you step back and provide the reader with some analytical or critical perspective relevant to the project. Whether this component is included before, after, or throughout your creative section is for you to decide, in conjunction with your advisor. However it’s presented, the critical component should contextualize your work in terms of the process which produced it, the history and influences of its genre, aesthetic or critical issues involved, some combination of these, or some other relevant analysis. Don’t lose sight of the fact that the critical component is only a relatively small part of the thesis project, though it’s an important part.

There may be some cases where it takes on a major role, but in most cases it may comprise only a few pages of the final thesis document.

Approval of the Prospectus: Once you have written a draft of your prospectus, you will submit it to your advisor. Quite often, she will make a number of suggestions for improving the document and will return it for revision. This process may be repeated a number of times. Once the prospectus is completed to the satisfaction of you and your thesis advisor, the advisor will submit the prospectus to the Graduate Committee of the Writing Department. The committee may approve it or ask for additional changes. Typically, the Graduate Committee will not reject a thesis idea completely (though it reserves the right to do so). However, the committee will ask for clarification and/or further development of various aspects of your project. In such cases, prospectuses are sometimes awarded a "conditional approval," pending the student's completion of the requested revisions and resubmission of the prospectus to the Graduate Committee for final approval.

Signing up for the Thesis Course, ENG 592: The Writing Department recommends taking the thesis course over two semesters, 3 credits each semester for a total of 6. Students prepared to devote the time for one semester may elect to take all 6 credits at once. Once the thesis is approved by the Writing Department Graduate Committee, you may sign up for the thesis course. To do this, you fill out the faculty workload credit form which can be found at: <http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/forms/student-thesis.pdf>. There is also a copy below. Have your faculty advisor complete out his section of the form. Then take this form along with your approved prospectus to the Dean of Arts and Sciences for her approval. The A & S Dean will sign the form and forward it to the Graduate Office, after which you may register for ENG 592.

Step 3: Writing the Thesis: Work out a schedule of meetings and a consultation procedure with your advisor. Our best advice is to work steadily every week once you get started on the project. You and your advisor will work out the logistics regarding the writing of your thesis, submission of drafts and revisions. The goal is to produce a final draft that satisfies your expectations and those of your advisor. How the final version is produced, however, varies from person to person. Some professors ask that you submit drafts one section at a time. As the advisor reviews your draft, you are asked to continue to work on the next sections. Other advisors may way to break up his review and editorial advice on the project in different ways. In any case, the purpose is to seek timely guidance and feedback from the advisor so that your thesis project progresses satisfactorily. Take the thesis through as many drafts as you and your advisor think necessary to produce a polished product. Be sure you have satisfactorily fulfilled the critical component requirement. Write an abstract of the thesis.

THE ABSTRACT

When your advisor and second reader have signed off approval of the final draft of the thesis, you will need to write an abstract of your work. The abstract should summarize the work in approximately 100-150 words. In form, the abstract is partly a back jacket blurb on a mass market book and partly an academic summary of what the work contains and its prominent features and themes. Avoid expressions as "in this essay, I . . .," "The author concludes...", or "it is shown that" The abstract will be included in your completed thesis. You will need to file five (5) copies of the abstract with the Office of Graduate Studies. For this purpose, the abstract should include the content of the Title Page.

Step 4: Final Approvals:

Advisor approval: You and your advisor will decide when you have brought your major creative or nonfiction project to fruition and in a polished form, and when the Critical Component and appropriate abstract are in place. Once your advisor approves, take the project to the second reader.

Second reader approval: Your second reader may have further changes and suggestions before approving the thesis. Most second readers of the thesis become involved later in the project, when the document is nearing completion and both the main advisor and the writer are satisfied that the text is approaching (or has approached) a final draft stage. The second reader takes a very close look at the entire thesis, reading it for content and accuracy, as well as for surface glitches that may have seeped through the drafting process. Of course, there are some variations and some second readers elect to take a more active role in the drafting process. Once your advisor and second reader approve of the thesis, move to the final stage.

Final Copy: Make a bound copy of the final version of the thesis following the guidelines below and including the formal title page and abstract.

PRINTING AND BINDING

___ Print one copy of the thesis and five (5) copies of the abstract. The paper must be twenty (20) pound weight and at least twenty-five (25) percent rag/cotton content (Black print with a sharp, dark image; 12 or 14 point type; double-space the body of the thesis).

___ Place the final printed copy of the thesis in an officially approved thesis spring binder (which can be purchased in the WestConn Bookstore).

The bound thesis includes the following:

- ___ The signed sign-off form (see below)
- ___ The completed thesis (e.g., title page, abstract, body of thesis, bibliography, critical component)

Approval Form: The signoff form which is placed before the title page of the thesis in the binder requires several signatures approving your thesis. You may download the form entitled "Fulfillment of the requirements for a MASTER'S THESIS at

<http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/forms/thesis.pdf>

Carrying with you your bound copy of the thesis along with five copies of the abstract obtain the signatures indicated on the top of the form. In order, these are:

- Thesis advisor
- Second reader
- Writing Department Program Coordinator
- Writing Department Chair

To receive the final two signatures, take the bound copy, the five abstracts, and the form to the office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences and leave them. After the Dean has read and approved the thesis, she will forward it and the abstracts to the Graduate Office for the final signature. The Graduate Office will then forward the thesis to the Library for archiving.

STEPS IN WRITING THE MASTER'S THESIS: A RECAP

Prior to the semester in which you plan to write the thesis:

- ___ Select a thesis project
- ___ Select a thesis advisor and second reader
- ___ Write the thesis proposal or prospectus
- ___ Submit the thesis proposal for approval
- ___ Complete writing, research and drafting
- ___ Register for ENG 592 Independent Thesis Research in English

During the semester in which you write the thesis:

- ___ Write the thesis including the central creative or nonfiction project and the critical component
- ___ Write the Abstract
- ___ Prepare the final draft of the thesis
- ___ Submit the completed thesis and abstract

Time Limit and Deadlines (adapted from *WCSU Graduate Catalog*)

Time Limit

A student has a maximum of two (2) years to satisfactorily complete and file the necessary copies of the thesis and the abstract with the dean of the School of Arts & Sciences (and the Department of English) so that the student may receive the appropriate approval or credit for the thesis, providing it is completed within the six year time limit for fulfilling degree requirements

Deadlines

The approved thesis and required number of copies of the abstract must be filed with the dean of the School of Arts & Sciences (and the Department of English) by March 1, June 1, or November 1 for graduation in May, August, or January, respectively.

Given the tight deadlines for filing for graduation, you are urged to have had a substantial amount of research and drafting done ***prior to*** the semester in which you register to write the thesis so that much of the work of that semester is revising and preparing the thesis for final submission.

Adopted

APPENDIX

Downloadable Graduate forms may be found at:
<http://www.wcsu.edu/graduate/forms.asp>

**WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT**

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH—WRITING OPTION *

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Email Address: _____ TEL. NO. () _____

COMPLETION OF THE FOLLOWING WRITING COURSES (12 Sem. Hrs.):

ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____

THESIS (6 Sem. Hrs.)

ENG 592: Independent Thesis Research in English 6 S.H. _____

Thesis Topic: _____

Date of Completion: _____

COMPLETION OF THE FOLLOWING COURSES (12 Sem. Hrs.)

One course in English literature (ENG 509, 513, 532, 534, <i>or</i> 541):	
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
One Course in American Literature (ENG 552, 567, <i>or</i> 568):	
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
One Course in Topic/Genre Studies (ENG 544, 570, 572, <i>or</i> 574):	
ENG _____	3 S.H. _____
One more course in the MA program.	
_____	3 S.H. _____

TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS 30

Admission requirements have been explained to me and I understand my obligation to read the graduate catalog and follow the Thesis or Comprehensive Exam Guidelines and other program requirements.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

GRADUATE COORDINATOR'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

* Courses designated as "post-colon" can be taken again if the subject matter is verifiably different, as indicated by course syllabi. For questions about the Writing Option, please contact the Writing Department.

**UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE
STUDENT THESIS AND
FACULTY WORKLOAD CREDIT FORM
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

Name: Last _____ First _____ Student ID # _____

Address _____

Student WCSU Email _____ Telephone# _____

Semester Requested : Fall 20 _____ Spring 20 _____ Intersession 20 _____ Summer 20 _____

(January/March) (Circle: I, II, III or IV)

Course: _____

(Dept) (Course Number) (Thesis Topic)

Topic: _____

Student Semester Hours: _____

TO BE COMPLETED BY FACULTY ADVISOR

Number of Faculty Contact Hours Per Week With Student: _____

Thesis Proposal/Completion Approval: Yes _____ No _____

Request is for (check one):

Faculty Workload Credit(s) _____ Faculty Summer/Intersession Compensation _____

Request is for (check one):

Completion of Thesis Proposal: ☐ Completion of Thesis: ☐

Approval

Faculty Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Dean Signature: _____ Date: _____

***TO BE COMPLETED BY REGISTRAR'S OFFICE OR GRADUATE
OFFICE:***

Received and Processed/Signature: _____ Date: _____

Submit a copy of the thesis proposal or completed thesis with this form. After the required signatures are obtained on this form, file the form with either the Registrar's Office (UG) on 1st floor of Old Main, Suite #102, or the Division of Graduate Studies Office (G) on 2nd floor of Old Main, Suite #206.

01/25/07

Western Connecticut State University**Fulfillment of the requirements for a****MASTERS'S THESIS****THESIS COMPLETION**

Department : _____ Degree Program: _____

Student: _____

Name Student ID # _____

Thesis title: _____

Date Completed: _____

Thesis adviser(s): Sign below upon satisfactory completion of thesis requirement.

1 2_____
3 4**PROGRAM AND DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW (as appropriate)**

I have received a copy of the final version of the thesis as approved by the Department and find it in compliance with the program and University requirements.

Program Coordinator Date_____
Department Chair Date**SCHOOL DEAN**

I have received a copy of the final version of the thesis as approved by the Department and find it in compliance with program and University requirements.

Dean School Date**GRADUATE OFFICE**

A copy of the thesis was submitted to the Graduate Office as evidence that the thesis requirements has been met. The copy was forwarded to the University Library for archiving.

For the Graduate Office Date 06-11-2008

Thesis Title Page:

Title of the Thesis

Author's Name

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of English

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Month Year