

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
M.A. PROGRAM HANDBOOK

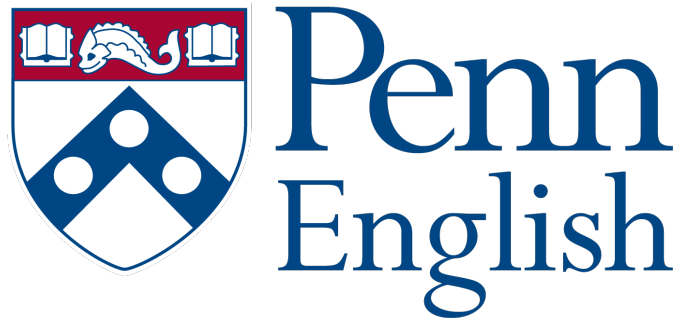


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Program Contacts, Committees, and Helpful Acronyms

Note: Graduate students should direct initial inquiries to the Graduate Office.

English Department Faculty Leadership

Department Chair: Margo Natalie Crawford (margocr@english.upenn.edu)

Associate Chair: Zachary Lesser (zlesser@english.upenn.edu)

Graduate Chair: Paul Saint-Amour (psain@english.upenn.edu)

Undergraduate Chair: Nancy Bentley (nbentley@english.upenn.edu)

English Department Staff

Department Administrator: Loretta Witham Turner

Associate Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS): Chris Chan (chan13@sas.upenn.edu)

Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies (ADUS): Becky Friedman
(beckysf@english.upenn.edu)

Business Coordinator: Elizabeth Lunger (Elizabeth.Lunger@english.upenn.edu)

Assistant to the Chair: Stephanie Palmer (sypalmer@english.upenn.edu)

Fisher-Bennett Hall Offices

Building Manager: James Trumbo (jtrumbo@sas.upenn.edu)

FBH Business Office: (fbh-bas@sas.upenn.edu)

Associate Director of Finance and Administration: Cher Bryant

Senior Business Administrator (payroll): Tim Weal

Financial Administrative Coordinator: Kristina Zagrocki

Business Administrator: Brianna McCoy

Computing (help@english.upenn.edu)

Senior IT Support Specialist: Brian Kirk

IT Specialist Support: Tim Murphy

IT Specialist Support: Christopher Vandergrift

Part-Time IT Support: Tracey Curtis

Emergency Numbers

Penn Public Safety / Penn Police: 215-573-3333 (for all on-campus emergencies)

Emergency Services: 911 (for all off-campus emergencies)

Counseling Office: 215-898-7021

International SOS: 1-215-942-8478 (use for emergencies experienced while abroad)

Additional emergency phone numbers are available here: <https://www.upenn.edu/life-at-penn/safety/emergency-phone-numbers>

English Department Officers and Committees

TOS Director: Nancy Bentley

Job Placement Officers: Chi-ming Yang & Abdulhamit Arvas

Dissertation Proposal Workshop Directors: David Eng & Abdulhamit Arvas

Graduate Executive Committee (GEC): Paul Saint-Amour, Herman Beavers, Jean-Michel Rabaté, Sara Kazmi

Graduate Division

Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Grad Dean): Beth Wenger (grad-dean@sas.upenn.edu)

Definitions and Acronyms

School of Arts and Sciences (SAS): comprises thirty-three departments and programs in the humanities, social sciences, and hard sciences.

Grad Division (GSAS or GAS): office of the School of Arts and Sciences that oversees graduate education, comprised of the Graduate Dean and staff.

Graduate Office: office of the Department of English that oversees graduate education, comprised of the Graduate Chair and the ADGS.

Standing Faculty: comprised of all tenure-track or tenured faculty members (i.e. Assistant, Associate, and full Professors); contingent and retired / emeritus faculty are not considered part of the standing faculty.




Graduate Group: comprised of faculty from across departments in SAS who share scholarly interests and expertise. The English Graduate Group is composed of all standing faculty in English plus faculty members outside the department who have completed the process of joining the graduate group. See the [Affiliated Faculty](#) page on the English Department Website for a full list of English Graduate Group members.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

BUILDING NAME:
FISHER-BENNETT HALL

ADDRESS:
3340 WALNUT STREET

EMERGENCIES: 215-573-3333 (PennComm)
511 from any campus phone

 Building Area of Refuge (BAR):	<small>PRIMARY:</small> Chancellor St., S. of Bennett	<small>SECONDARY:</small> Hill Square
 Building Relocation Site:	<small>PRIMARY:</small> Palestra	<small>SECONDARY:</small> Hollenback Annex
 Building Shelter-in-Place Area:	Rooms: 401 & 419 / 4th Floor Corridor	



Shelter-in-Place (Hazardous Materials)

Purpose: To shelter occupants inside the building in the event of a hazardous/ biological material, severe weather, or other emergency incident outside of the building.

- Go inside the nearest building.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Report to the building's shelter area.

Get Involved!

Join the PennReady team today! Call Fire & Emergency Services to find out how you can help. 215-573-7857

Know two ways out!



Evacuate (Fire)

Purpose: To alert occupants to leave the building in the event of an emergency incident, such as a fire, inside of the building.

- Notify and assist those needing help in the immediate area.
- Close all doors as you exit.
- Activate fire alarm pull station.
- Evacuate the building via nearest exit; report to BAR listed above; and call emergency number.
- Do not use elevators.
- Do not re-enter building until authorized by emergency personnel.

Visit the Public Safety Website to learn more about emergency procedures, including active shooter response:
<https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/pennready/procedures/>



Lockdown (Active Shooter)

RUN (Evacuate)
when an active shooter is in your vicinity.

HIDE (Hide Out)
if evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide.

FIGHT (Take Action)
AS A LAST RESORT, and only if your life is in danger.

POLICE RESPONSE
When law enforcement officers arrive: Keep your EMPTY hands raised and visible. Remain calm and follow instructions.

See something suspicious? Call us 24/7/365
215-573-3333

www.publicsafety.upenn.edu



Spaces and Facilities

Fisher-Bennett Hall

The Department of English is housed in Fisher-Bennett Hall (FBH), located at 3340 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. The main entrance to the building is located at the corner of 34th and Walnut Streets. Classrooms and faculty offices are located on all four floors. The English Main Office (FBH 127), where department staff and faculty leadership have offices, is located to the right of the grand foyer at the main entrance.

English shares FBH with the Cinema Studies & Media Department (CIMS), the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program (GSWS), the Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender Studies Program (FQT), the English Language Program (ELP), The Middle East Center (MEC), and the Music Department (MUSC).

English graduate students have 24/7 access to FBH with their PennCards. All students must tap their PennCard at the entryway card reader, located to the right of the door at all entrances, to unlock the doors. Students may be asked to present their PennCard to a security guard at the building's entrance. This may be the case for other campus buildings as well.

English Faculty Lounge

The English Faculty Lounge (FBH 135) is located on the first floor, behind the grand staircase. The Faculty Lounge serves as a gathering and meeting place for faculty and staff, and as an event space for faculty- and staff-led special events (e.g. receptions for departmental lectures, recruitment activities, dissertation defenses).

The Faculty Lounge is keyed-access only. Faculty and staff are issued keys at the time of their appointment. Graduate students are welcome in the lounge during events to which they have been invited.

English Graduate Lounge

The English Graduate Lounge (FBH 330) is located on the third floor, behind the grand staircase. The Grad Lounge serves as a gathering and meeting place for graduate students, and as an event space for grad student-led events (e.g. working group meetings, GEA meetings). The lounge is equipped with a kitchenette with a microwave, double sink, mini-fridge, and coffee maker, as well as a television screen and attached computer for audio/visual presentations during events.

The Grad Lounge is keyed-access only. Graduate students are issued keys at the time of their appointment. Graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and informing departmental staff of any room issues or broken equipment (see **Facility Maintenance** below).

English Grad Lab

The English Grad Lab (FBH 327) is located on the third floor, at the end of the west hallway. The Grad Lab serves as a workspace for English graduate students. The lab includes tables and seating, six desktop iMac computers, and assigned storage lockers. The desktops can be accessed by all English graduate students (the login is the student's PennKey and password) and they are set up to print to the third-floor copier.

The Grad Lab is keyed-access only. The key that opens the Grad Lounge will also open the Grad Lab. Graduate students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, maintaining the cleanliness of the lab, and informing department staff of any broken equipment (see **Facility Maintenance** below)

Offices

Due to space limitations, office assignments are restricted to Ph.D. students in English. M.A. students are able to access the Grad Lab for printing and copying services (see “Printing” below).

Printing

Graduate students have unlimited printing and copying privileges using the FBH third-floor copier, located in an alcove in the center of the building. The iMac computers in the Grad Lab are automatically set up to print to the third-floor copier, and students may set up their personal devices to print to the copier as well. Students should contact the FBH Computing Team (help@english.upenn.edu) for assistance in setting up printing on their personal devices.

The third-floor copier only prints in black and white.

Graduate students share the third-floor copier with faculty whose offices are on the second and third floors, as well as with other programs and departments housed in FBH. All users are responsible for keeping the copier alcove clean and tidy, and for reporting problems to the computing team promptly.

The first-floor copier, located inside the English Main Office, can be accessed for color printing when the office is open.

Classrooms

The School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) uses a centralized classroom scheduling system. Most classrooms in FBH are managed by Central Pool Classrooms (CPC) and cannot be directly booked by the department. Courses in other disciplines may be held in FBH classrooms, and while many of our English classes will be held in FBH, some will be assigned to other campus buildings.

Mailroom

FBH has its own mailroom, located immediately to the left of the main entrance. All current graduate students have an assigned mailbox and should check it regularly for official mail. Graduate student keys will open the mailroom.

Graduate students may have mail and packages delivered to their FBH mailbox if they so choose. This is a secure place to receive packages, but delivery may take additional days because all mail first goes through Penn’s central mail system.

Graduate students who wish to have mail or packages delivered to their FBH mailbox should use the following address:

[Student name]
Fisher-Bennett Hall, Rm 127
3340 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6203

Restrooms

Restrooms are located on each floor of Fisher-Bennett Hall, at the end of the east hallway. The restrooms on floors one, two, and four are multi-stall, men's and women's. As of 2024, the third floor has a gender-neutral restroom, as well as a multi-stall women's room. All restrooms have accessible stalls.

Accessibility

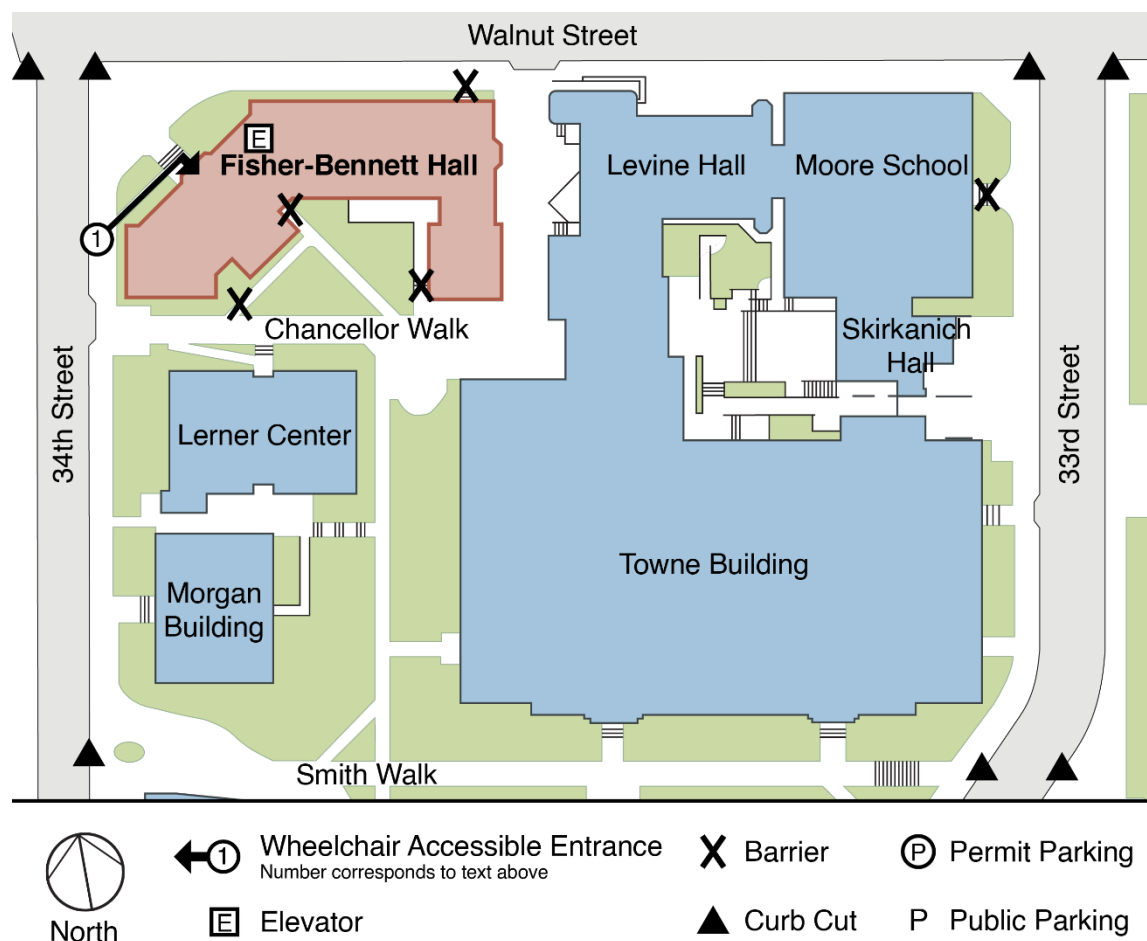
FBH has three stairwells: the grand staircase at the front entrance, a stairwell on the west side of the building across from the English Main Office, and stairwell at the end of the east side of the building. Please note: the grand staircase does not access the fourth floor.

FBH also has an elevator, located to the left of the grand staircase, that goes to all 4 floors and the ground level.

FBH is wheelchair accessible via ramps at the main entrance. The back and east side entrances do not have ramps. Both the main and east side entrances have automatic door openers.

Most classrooms in FBH are flat and fully accessible with moveable tablet arm chairs or seminar tables and loose chairs in the rooms. Lecture room 401 is partially tiered, with two rows of tablet-arm chairs at the flat-floored front of the room.

In the event that one of the building's accessibility features is not properly functioning or available, students should immediately contact the Building Manager, copying the ADGS.



Facility Maintenance

It is the responsibility of all building occupants to report problems with the building and/or equipment as soon as they are noticed. Building issues such as faulty windows or door locks, pests, leaky sinks, out-of-order restrooms, and thermostat issues should be reported immediately to the Building Manager, copying the ADGS.

Broken equipment that belongs to the Department of English (e.g. kitchenette equipment, computers, printers, lounge furniture) should be reported immediately to Stephanie Palmer, copying the ADGS.

Keys

Graduate students are issued a Grad Key that gives them access to the Grad Lounge, Grad Lab, and FBH mailroom. If a student misplaces their key, they should contact the ADGS as soon as possible.

Many doors in FBH lock automatically when closed. Students should keep their keys on their person at all times to avoid being locked out. Students should be cautious about leaving valuables unattended in common areas, even if the door locks automatically.

Libraries

There are nine university libraries located on or near Penn's campus. The largest of these is Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, located at 3420 Walnut Street, a short walk from FBH. The entrance is located on Locust Walk. In addition to housing the university's main collection of books and materials, Van Pelt-Dietrich also houses the Kislak Center for Rare Books and Special Collections (sixth floor), the Furness Shakespeare Library (sixth floor), a graduate student study space (fifth floor), and the Weigel Information Commons (ground level), where students can rent digital equipment and request assistance with digital projects.

To enter Van Pelt-Dietrich, students must scan their PennCard. Guests without a PennCard will need to show a government-issued ID at the security desk and sign in. At certain times and in certain cases, library access may be restricted to PennCard holders only. Please see <https://www.library.upenn.edu/vanpelt/access-and-visitor-information> for more information on hours, access, and policies.

Students may borrow materials by either visiting the library in person or requesting the materials be delivered to their home address using the [Books By Mail](#) service. The library can also provide electronic scans of book chapters or articles not available online via the [Scan and Deliver](#) service. Students may also borrow materials from other participating libraries via the Interlibrary Loan (ILL), E-Zborrow, and BorrowDirect [services](#).

Another major library, the Fisher Fine Arts Library, is located at 220 South 34th Street. Fisher Fine Arts houses collections to support research in art and architecture, the decorative arts, photography, historic preservation, and city planning and urban design. It boasts a materials collection of over seven thousand [material samples](#) and the Common Press, a working [typography studio](#). Fisher Fine Arts also has quiet study space on its first floor.

In addition to Van Pelt-Dietrich and Fisher Fine Arts, the university has the following resource libraries:

- [Biddle Law Library](#) (3501 Sansom Street)
- [Chemistry Library](#) (231 South 34th Street)
- [Holman Biotech Commons](#) (3610 Hamilton Walk)
- [Levy Dental Medicine Library](#) (240 South 40th Street)
- [Library at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies](#) (420 Walnut Street)
- [Math/Physics/Astronomy Library](#) (3N1 David Rittenhouse Library)
- [Penn Museum Library](#) (3260 South Street)
- [Veterinary Medicine: Atwood Library and Information Commons](#) (380 South University Avenue)
- [University Archives & Records Center](#) (4015 Walnut Street)

Additionally, the following libraries have affiliations with Penn and some of their collections may be available for direct borrowing:

- [Architectural Archives](#) (220 South 34th Street)
- [Athenaeum of Philadelphia](#) (219 South 6th Street)
- [Barbara Bates Center for the Study of the History of Nursing](#) (418 Curie Blvd)
- [Demography Library](#) (3718 Locust Walk)
- [Penn Museum Archives](#) (3260 South Street)
- [Pennsylvania Hospital Medical Library](#) (800 Spruce Street)

Campus Research Centers

Penn is home to over 200 research centers, institutes, laboratories, and international initiatives. Please see <https://research.upenn.edu/research-at-penn/centers-institutes/> for the complete list. Below is a short, non-exhaustive list of centers and laboratories that have been most relevant to English graduate student interests:

- [The Center for Research in Feminist, Queer, and Transgender](#) (FQT Center)
- [The Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies](#) (CLALS)
- [The Center for Africana Studies](#)
- [The Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies](#)
- [The Center for the Advanced Study of India](#) (CASI)
- [The James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies](#)
- [The Middle East Center](#) (MEC)
- [The Center for East Asian Studies](#)
- [The McNeil Center for Early American Studies](#) (MCEAS)
- [The Wolf Humanities Center](#)
- [The Center for Experimental Ethnography](#) (CEE)
- [The Price Lab for Digital Humanities](#)

Academic Support and Professional Development Centers

Penn also houses centers dedicated to supporting the intellectual and professional growth of students as they complete their degrees. These include:

- [The Grad Student Center](#) (GSC): a hub for information, programming, resources, and support for graduate and professional students at Penn
- [The Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Innovation](#) (CETLI): a center supporting instructors of all levels of experience with workshops, mini-courses, and individualized feedback
- [Career Services](#): a center offering career planning resources, individualized career advising, and programming tailored specifically to graduate and professional students
- [The Weingarten Center](#): Penn's home for academic support and disability services. The Weingarten Center offers learning consultations, tutoring, and interactive programs to support students as they develop learning strategies to further their academic and professional goals. Disability Services provides comprehensive, professional services and programs for students who self-identify with disabilities to ensure equal academic opportunities and participation in University-sponsored programs.

Wellness and Cultural Resource Centers

Penn has several centers dedicated to supporting student health and wellbeing and for fostering student communities.

- [Wellness at Penn](#)
 - [Student Health](#): a hub for medical care, specialist referrals, immunization compliance, and student health insurance
 - [Counseling](#): a hub for individual and group counseling, and referrals to external providers
- [Pottruck Fitness Center](#): Penn's main fitness center featuring four floors of weight and cardio equipment, an Olympic-size pool, basketball courts, and fitness and Pilates studios. Graduate students who are fully funded have basic access to Pottruck (use of some specialized equipment and classes may incur additional membership fees).

Please note: 2024-2025 renovations may temporarily impact the availability of some Pottruck facilities. See <https://recreation.upenn.edu/sports/2019/9/25/facility-calendar.aspx> for up-to-date scheduling information.

- Office of the Chaplain: Penn's office for spiritual health, providing pastoral support to students of all faiths
- The Penn Women's Center
- The Pan-Asian American Community House (PAACH)
- Makuu (the Black Cultural Center)
- The LGBT Center
- La Casa Latina
- Greenfield Intercultural Center
- The African American Resource Center
- Natives at Penn
- Penn Association for Gender Equity
- Penn Hillel
- Penn First Plus

Program Overview & Benchmarks

Overview

The M.A. in English is a one-year master's degree in literature in English, broadly defined. This is a rigorous research degree program, appropriate for students who seek additional preparation before pursuing an advanced degree at another institution. In consultation with their advisors, M.A. students develop an individualized program within departmental guidelines and participate in the department's intellectual life.

Our M.A. students are well-positioned to apply for Ph.D. programs either while undertaking the degree or after graduation. The Penn English M.A. and Ph.D. programs are not linked; that is, M.A. students may not continue on to the Ph.D. program at the end of their M.A. program.

Program Benchmarks

Coursework:

- ☐ Eight graduate seminars

Examinations

- ☐ One foreign language exam *or* enrollment in, and successful completion of, two intermediate-level language courses at Penn
- ☐ One oral exam

Research Requirements

- ☐ One research report (satisfied by a selected research paper)



Coursework Policies and Procedures

All M.A. students must take a total of **eight graduate-level seminars** to fulfill their coursework requirement for the degree. These courses are defined by level (course number) and host department (English, or another department at Penn), and they are subject to the definitions and policies outlined in the following sections.

For the latest graduate-level course offerings in the Department of English, including full course descriptions and cross-listed courses, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>.

Course Levels

Graduate seminars in the Department of English are rostered at the 5000 level or above; all undergraduate courses are rostered at the 4000 level or below.

5000-level seminars are broad in conception and aimed at coverage of a particular literary period, genre, or author(s). Instructors are encouraged to include assignments that venture away from conventional academic writing (public-facing, creative, creative-critical, multimodal, etc.).

The Department of English uses the **6000 level** only for the Ph.D. Proseminar (ENGL 6000). Enrollment in the Proseminar is possible for M.A. students with advance permission of the instructor and the Graduate Chair.

7000-level seminars are narrower in conception and address more circumscribed problems, themes, objects, or methods. Instructors are encouraged to assign a full-length (20- to 25-page) academic essay as their final assignment. **M.A. students must take at least one 7000-level course among their eight required courses**; for more information, please see the “7000-level Requirement” section below.

8000-level courses are reserved for Ph.D. courses related to pedagogy, exam preparation, and the Dissertation Proposal Workshop. These courses are not open to M.A. students.

9000-level courses are reserved for graduate-level writing courses (coordinated by the Center for Professional and Creative Writing), independent studies, and Dissertation registration.

7000-level Requirement

M.A. students must take **at least one 7000-level course** among their eight required courses. In general, English courses that are at the 6000, 8000, or 9000 levels do not count toward the 7000-level requirement.

Some other departments and programs classify their graduate seminars as either 5000- and 6000-level, in which case 6000-level courses are the highest level offered. 6000-level courses taken in these departments or programs may count toward the 7000-level requirement. In rare cases where the English Department cross-lists a course at the 6000-level (*not* including the ENGL 6000 Proseminar), then that course may count toward the 7000-level requirement.

In the case of any confusion about whether a course applies to the 7000-level requirement, the student should consult the ADGS and the Graduate Chair.

Courses outside of the English Department

M.A. students may take up to one graduate-level course per semester outside of the English Department. The following count as “outside” courses:

- Graduate-level courses taken in other departments at Penn (e.g., Africana Studies (AFRC), Art History (ARTH), Comparative Literature (COML), and so on);
- Most graduate-level creative writing courses at Penn (e.g., ENGL 9000: Fiction Workshop);
- Most Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) courses offered by the School of Liberal and Professional Studies (see “MLA Courses” below).

Courses in other departments at Penn that are **cross-listed** with the English department—that is, courses hosted by another department but rostered with an ENGL course number—can still count as English courses toward the M.A. coursework requirement. In other words, these courses are *not* considered to be “outside” our department.

No more than two “outside” courses may count toward an M.A. student’s required courses.

M.A. students who wish to take more than one outside course in a single semester may request an exception from the Graduate Chair, who will consider the following:

- The relevance of the outside course to the student's intellectual and professional interests;
- Whether a similar course will be offered in English in the same academic year
- Whether the additional outside course will cause the student to exceed the two-course maximum total

Independent Studies and Internships

M.A. students are generally not permitted to take independent studies (ENGL 9999), unless approval has been secured by both the student's proposed instructor(s) and the Graduate Chair. In rare cases, the graduate program may roster the pilot of a course or internship using the Independent Study course number. The course description will specify whether M.A. students are permitted to enroll.

In cases where the Department runs an internship course for credit, M.A. students may count only one internship course toward their coursework requirements.

MLA Courses

Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) courses are masters-level seminars coordinated through the School of Liberal and Professional Studies (LPS). MLA courses covering literature-related topics are typically rostered through the English Department – that is, their courses begin with ENGL – and are occasionally taught by English Department standing faculty, but they are otherwise run entirely through LPS. For a full list of MLA courses, please visit: <https://www.lps.upenn.edu/degree-programs/mla/curriculum/courses>.

M.A. students may count MLA seminars toward their coursework requirements, but they are generally considered to be outside courses and therefore count toward the student's two-course maximum total. M.A. students may request an exception from the Graduate Chair to count an MLA seminar as an English course toward their degree requirement. The Graduate Chair will consider the relevance of the course's topic to literary studies and whether a similar course will be offered in English in the same academic year.

General Registration Requirements

The School of Arts and Sciences requires graduate students to be registered for at least 3 CUs per semester. M.A. students who fail to remain registered for at least 3 CUs per semester will drop below full-time status. Students must be attentive to any holds placed on their account which may delay or prevent registration.

All graduate seminars are graded. M.A. students must maintain a 3.0 (B) average to be considered in good standing. Students who take incompletes will be considered not in good standing until the incomplete is resolved. See the **Academic Good Standing** section below for full details.

Students may register for courses within the designated Course Selection period for each term using Path@Penn, the online registration and information system. Reference guides for Path@Penn can be found here: <https://srfs.upenn.edu/path-at-penn>.

In cases where course enrollment is restricted (e.g., by department, degree type, instructor permission), students will need to request permission to enroll. In these cases, students should write directly to the instructor to request permission to enroll and should also submit a permit request via Path@Penn. Instructions for requesting a permit can be found here:

<https://apps.srfs.upenn.edu:44306/secure/Pennant-Training/Path-Request-Permission-to-Take-a-Class.pdf>

If the course instructor approves the written request, the student should then forward their approval to the ADGS (if the course is rostered in English) or to the department or program's graduate coordinator (if the course is rostered elsewhere) to inform them that the instructor has given permission to enroll. Administrative staff are responsible for approving or denying permit requests.

Residency Requirement

M.A. students are expected to be "in residence," living in or within commuting distance of Philadelphia, for the duration of their degree. All courses in the English department are administered in person, meaning that students must be regularly on campus to complete their coursework requirements.

Advance Registration

For the fall and spring terms, Penn runs an advance registration period in which students submit requests for their preferred courses in Path@Penn. Students are not automatically registered during this period; instead, all course requests are processed at the conclusion of the advance registration period regardless of when the request was submitted. There is no guarantee that students will be enrolled in all of their requested courses, but in many cases, advanced registration enables students to secure seats in their preferred courses.

Permit requests cannot be approved during the Advance Registration period. Students requiring a permit to register should follow the steps above after the Advance Registration period has ended.

All dates for the Advance Registration and regular Course Selection periods can be found here: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/penn-academic-calendar>.

Auditing

M.A. students are permitted to audit a maximum of one course per semester over and above their registered courseload. This may include undergraduate- and graduate-level language courses in other departments. Any student interested in auditing a course should first write to the course instructor to request permission to audit and to determine the level of class participation that will be expected of them as an auditor. The student should then forward the email exchange with the instructor to the ADGS to request that they be registered for the course as an auditor. Requests to audit a course must be made before the Course Selection period for the given term ends.



Exam Policies and Procedures

M.A. students are required to pass the following exams:

- One language requirement, to be fulfilled either by a departmental exam (see below) *or* by successful completion of two language courses at Penn;
- One final exam.

Language Exam

M.A. students are required to fulfill one foreign language requirement as part of their degree. The language requirement is fulfilled either by passing a timed translation exam or by successfully completing two language courses at Penn.

Translation Exams

These two-hour exams are administered virtually twice per year, once in the fall semester and once in the spring, by the Department of English in consultation with faculty with the relevant language expertise. The exams consist of translating two passages of approximately one page each from a language of the student's choosing into clear, readable English. The student will be informed of the outcome of their completed exam within a few weeks.

Students may request an exam in any language besides English, including languages in which they already have fluency.

Students may use dictionaries or online language searches to aid in their translations.

Should a student fail the language exam, they should plan to take the next offered exam.

Language Courses

M.A. students can also fulfill the language requirement by successfully completing two language courses, either at the undergraduate or graduate-level at Penn. Both courses must be in the same language.

Note that undergraduate-level language courses do *not* count toward the M.A. coursework requirement, as these courses are rostered below the 5000 level.

Research Report

Because the M.A. at Penn is a research degree, all M.A. students are required to submit a research report in fulfillment of their research requirement. The English Department accepts a representative seminar paper from a course taken at Penn, selected by the student, in fulfillment of this requirement.

Oral Exam

All M.A. students are required to stand for a general exam. The one-hour oral general exam will take place during the last week of the spring semester and cover the research report, as well as a presentation by the student of key aspects of their M.A. coursework and research, followed by a discussion with the committee. The committee will comprise the M.A. advisor and another faculty member selected by the student.



Graduation and Career Planning

Graduation

The Provost's Graduate Degrees Office oversees the University graduation process for all Ph.D. and Research Master's degrees at the University. See the website for information on applying for graduation, deadlines, and more. The ADGS will work with M.A. students to ensure that they apply for and receive the degree in a timely fashion.

Information about school graduation ceremonies and University commencement can be found at <https://commencement.upenn.edu/>.

Career Planning

All graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of the university's Career Services office, which provides workshops and resources specifically tailored to graduate student career preparation, one-on-one consultations, and access to online career exploration tools. Career Services employs career counselors dedicated to the specific career development needs of M.A. and Ph.D. students.

For more information, please visit the Career Services office at 3935 Walnut St, Suite 300, or view their website at: <https://careerservices.upenn.edu/>.



Academic Good Standing

Incompletes

The following policy regarding incompletes is set by the [Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences](#):

Students who fail to complete a course and do not withdraw or change their status to auditor within the prescribed period will receive, at the instructor's discretion, a grade of I (incomplete) or F (failure). It is expected, in general, that a student will complete the work of a course during the term in which that course is taken. The instructor may permit an extension of time up to one year for the completion of the course. In such cases, any course which is still incomplete after one calendar year from its official ending will become a permanent incomplete on the student's record and shall not be credited toward a degree.

In addition to this policy, the English Graduate Program sets the following rules and requirements for taking incompletes:

All graduate students are permitted to take one **long incomplete** per academic year. Long incompletes are defined as an extension of deadlines for assignments or other work that does not fall within the semester's grading period. In this case, the instructor expects to submit an "I" as the student's grade, which will remain on the student's transcript until the incomplete is satisfied (or becomes a permanent incomplete).

For the purposes of our graduate seminars, **short incompletes** are defined as an extension of deadlines for assignments or other work that falls within the semester's grading period (ex. an

additional week on a final essay). In the case of short incompletes, the instructor expects to submit a letter grade for the student's performance by the time that grades are due (early January for fall, mid-May for spring). Therefore, the extended deadline should allow the instructor time to review and grade the late assignment.

More than one short incomplete may be requested in a single year, provided that the incomplete is resolved in a timely manner. Exceptions may be granted in unusual circumstances, with approval from the student's academic advisor and the Graduate Chair.

Students planning to take an incomplete, short or long, are required to fill out a departmental Incomplete Form, to be signed by the student, the instructor, and the Graduate Chair. The form should be turned in to the Graduate Chair and/or ADGS. This form will not be kept in the student's academic file, but is simply a way to ensure that lines of communication remain open in cases of incompletes and that all parties (student, instructor, and Grad Office) are clear on expectations and timelines. The Incomplete Form is available on request from the ADGS.

In cases where incomplete requests pose a threat to a student's progress – for example, if a student is requesting several short incompletes in a row – the Graduate Chair may request to meet with the student or may request a written plan for satisfying the incomplete(s).

Students with incompletes on their record will be ineligible for departmental travel funding or departmental support for other sources of funding for research and conference travel.

In unusual circumstances, exceptions may be granted with the approval of the student's advisor and of the Graduate Chair.

General Policies and Resources

The links below provide detailed information on policies set by the University Provost's Office and the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences, as well as resources for graduate education and grievance reporting policies and resources.

Policies:

[Academic Rules for Ph.D. Programs](#)

[Academic Rules for Research Master's Programs](#)

[Ph.D. Student Leave of Absence Policy](#)

[Family Friendly Policies for Ph.D. Students](#)

[Code of Academic Integrity](#)

[Code of Student Conduct](#)

[Guidelines for Addressing Academic Issues of Students with Disabilities](#)

[Guidelines for Student Protection in Sponsored Research Projects](#)

[Fairness of Authorship Credit in Collaborative Faculty-Student Publications for Ph.D., AM, and MS Students](#)

[Policy on Secular and Religious Holidays](#)

[Alcohol and Other Drug Policy](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Policy, Resource Offices and Complaint Procedures](#)

[Evaluation and Certification of the English Fluency of Undergraduate Instructional Personnel](#)

[All other policies for Penn students](#)

Resources:

[University Academic Calendar](#)

[Graduate Student Center](#)

[New Student Resources](#)

[Resources for Ph.D. Students](#)

[Resources for Students with Children](#)

[Academic Policies and Support](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[Engagement & Wellness](#)

[Funding & Finances](#)

[Safety and Campus Conduct](#)

[International student resources – ISSS office](#)

[Gender Neutral Restrooms](#)

Grievance Reporting Policies and Resources:

[Sexual Misconduct Policy, Resource Offices and Complaint Procedures](#)

[Policy, Handbooks & Procedures of the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs](#)

[Complaint Resolution, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs](#)

[Policies and Resources of Office of Student Disabilities Services](#)

[Penn Violence Prevention Policies and Resources](#)

Confidential Resources:

[Special Services, Division of Public Safety](#) (215-898-6600), 4040 Chestnut Street

[Penn Women's Center](#) (215-898-8611), 3643 Locust Walk

[Wellness at Penn](#) (215-746-3535), 3535 Market Street
[Counseling](#) (215-746-9355), 3624 Market Street
[Office of the Chaplain](#) (215-898-8456), 240 Houston Hall
[LGBT Center](#) (215-898-5044), 3901 Spruce Street
[African American Resource Center](#) (215-898-0104), 3643 Locust Walk
[Office of Violence Prevention](#) (215-898-6081), 3611 Locust Walk
[Office of the Ombudsman](#) (215-898-8261), 236 S. 34th Street

Funding

M.A. students are self-funded and are responsible for all tuition, fees, health insurance premiums, and living expenses incurred over the course of their degree.

Travel Funding

English M.A. students are eligible to apply to the department's Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel to support their research travel, including travel to academic conferences. Policies and procedures for the fund are below.

All business travel at Penn is governed by **Penn's Travel & Entertainment Policy**:

<http://www.finance.upenn.edu/comptroller/travel/>.

The Department of English defines research travel as travel undertaken for the express purpose of developing an academic project. This may include primary research (e.g. library and archive visits, interviews, fieldwork), the development of ideas and knowledge base (e.g. working meetings with collaborators, summer institutes, training workshops), and presentation of research at academic conferences and workshops. The research activity should advance the student's academic work, whether for a dissertation or another academic project. Creative projects must be connected to the student's academic work and supported by the academic advisor to be eligible for departmental research travel funding.

Personal travel may be tacked on to research travel, but departmental funding may only be used for qualifying expenses related to research travel.

Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel

The Stuart Curran Fund for Graduate Student Travel was established through the generosity of esteemed colleague Stuart Curran, Professor of English from 1974 until his retirement in 2013. The fund honors Professor Curran's deep commitment to stimulating and guiding graduate student research.

Any graduate student (M.A. or Ph.D.) may apply to the Curran Fund to help defray costs of any research travel, up to \$500 per fiscal year (July-June). Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the year.

Eligibility

All graduate students in good standing who have not maxed out their \$500 limit in the current fiscal year (July-June) are eligible to apply. Students who apply for less than the \$500 maximum will have the remainder of their allotment available until the end of the fiscal year. Annual allotments do not roll over from year to year.

Procedures

To apply for the Stuart Curran Fund, please contact the ADGS to receive a copy of the application form. Once the form has been completed and signed by the Graduate Chair and your faculty advisor, please return it to the ADGS and our business coordinator, Elizabeth Lunger (Elizabeth.Lunger@english.upenn.edu), for processing.

Students must complete and submit the online form before the start date of their trip. Approval will be requested from the student's advisor (indicated on the form) and the Graduate Chair. Once approved, the AD of Graduate Studies will send the student an award letter by email and initiate the payment through Penn Marketplace. The process may take up to 2 weeks. There is no need to submit receipts at the end of the trip.

Appendix A: Mentoring Guidelines

The English Department believes that mentoring should not happen only one time, in one way, or with a single advisor and must be conducted according to clear and transparent guidelines, responsibilities, expectations, and record-keeping on each side. Mentoring must address each aspect of the graduate student's academic and professional training and reflect the requirements for each benchmark and changing intellectual goals. For this reason, the Graduate Office, faculty, and students will engage in an ongoing consultative process throughout the degree.

Incoming M.A. and Ph.D. students are assigned a faculty advisor by the Graduate Chair and a peer mentor by the Graduate Student Association. Students also meet individually with the Graduate Chair in the fall to plan for the first year and in the spring to discuss the 50-book exam and upcoming second-year responsibilities. For the field and dissertation committees, students select their own committees, and there is no expectation that committees remain the same from one benchmark to another or as scholarly and/or professional interests change. Peer mentoring continues throughout the degree and is critical at the Work-in-Progress presentation to a relevant Working Group in the fourth year. In addition to serving as a hub of intellectual and scholarly exchange, the Working Groups are mentoring opportunities for professional development in terms of administration, interactions with possible future employers and colleagues, and effective management of collegial collaborations.

The Graduate Office provides orientations for incoming graduate students and workshops for continuing students on academic and professional matters, as well as opportunities for faculty to discuss mentoring and advising.

The English department has two placement officers who work closely together to support students who seek a career in academia, outside of academia, or a combination of both.

Expectations of the advisor

Establish a shared set of expectations with your advisee regarding how frequently you will meet and how to manage communication between formal meetings. Per university policy, you are expected to meet at least once each semester. The advisee has the primary responsibility for scheduling meetings with you. Let your advisee know if your availability changes as a result of frequent travel, leave, administrative duties, or personal leave.

Ensure that your advisee meets with their dissertation committee each year or at time intervals indicated by the dissertation committee once the prospectus has been approved. The primary advisor/dissertation supervisor is expected to attend those meetings. As in the above, scheduling of dissertation committee meetings is the responsibility of the dissertator.

In your meetings, discuss your advisee's plans to achieve programmatic milestones and short- and long-term goals. Help the advisee to establish priorities with regard to programmatic requirements,

independent research, and writing. Students may neither undertake benchmarks (such as exams) nor serve in leadership positions in the GEA or Working Groups while they have incompletes on their records. Please discuss time-management strategies to avoid the need to request incompletes, except in cases of illness or other emergencies.

Although it is not the advisor's responsibility nor within their professional capacity to provide counseling with regard to health and well-being, advisors should make sure that their advisees are well aware of relevant resources available to them at Penn. These are listed in the Graduate Handbook or may be obtained from the Graduate Office.

Support your advisee's efforts to build professional networks and to develop professional skills, including academic writing, public engagement, conference presentation, application to fellowship and grant programs, and participation in working groups. Help the advisee to assess the relative utility, with regard to professionalization, of various activities and forms of publication.

Provide timely feedback on your advisee's research projects and dissertation chapter drafts. This feedback should ideally be expressed in written form and should provide detailed constructive criticism, especially if substantial issues emerge. Committees, where relevant, should decide with the student when or if feedback will be shared with the committee as a whole. In-person meetings are also recommended. If, for some reason, there will be a delay in providing feedback, discuss the timing of your response with your advisee.

As advanced advisees prepare for the job-search process, devote attention in your meetings and communications to the specificities of your discipline(s). Also alert your advisees to the job-placement meetings and resources of the English Department. Provide advice about preparation of letters and other application materials and submit your own letters of recommendation in a timely manner.

The advisor/advisee relationship should be characterized at all times by mutual respect, shared trust, and transparency. In the event that interpersonal issues arise that cannot be resolved between the advisor and advisee, the advisor should speak with the Graduate Chair of the program.

In some instances, a faculty member may decide that working with an advisee is impossible. In that event, the faculty member should notify the Graduate Chair of English and then the student to provide guidance regarding alternatives.

Expectations of the advisee

As an advisee, you should schedule regular individual meetings with your advisor / dissertation supervisor. At a minimum, you should meet once each semester. Use these meetings to discuss your progress towards programmatic milestones, independent research and writing, professional development, dissertation progress, and preparations for the job market. Discuss and establish your priorities and plans to achieve short- and long-term goals. Keep your advisor informed as your plans and projects change. Never be reluctant to ask questions. It is your responsibility to schedule these meetings. Leave your meetings with notes on a shared understanding of what was covered and a plan with dates, if appropriate.

Once your prospectus has been approved, schedule meetings with your dissertation committee annually or at time intervals indicated by the committee. As with the above, it is your responsibility to schedule these meetings.

Establish a timeframe for communications with your advisor, including how long it generally takes you to provide a response to their communications. Let your advisor know how you will ensure they will hear from you within the specified time.

If you encounter roadblocks to your progress or significant complications in your personal life, inform your advisor and/or the Graduate Chair of this delay as early as possible. Efforts will then be made to develop and implement a strategy to address the academic issues. Again, an advisor cannot serve as a counselor but may be a trusted presence who can refer you to relevant university resources. The Graduate Office can also provide referrals.

Occasionally, a student may wish to change their primary advisor. This may happen for any number of reasons. In that event, seek the advice of the Graduate Chair and other trusted faculty members to discuss whether a change is in your best interest. When you identify an alternative advisor, approach them to determine whether they are available and well-matched to help you achieve your educational and scholarly goals. Any change should be preceded by a meeting with the Graduate Chair and respectful communication with the current advisor.

The advisor/advisee relationship should be characterized at all times by mutual respect, shared trust, and transparency. In the event that interpersonal issues arise that cannot be resolved between the advisor and advisee, the advisee should speak with the Graduate Chair of the program.

M.A. Coursework Chart

Required M.A. Coursework to be completed by end of the year.

Requirement	Course	Semester Taken	Completed
Language Exam			
Graduate Course 1			
Graduate Course 2			
Graduate Course 3			
Graduate Course 4			
Graduate Course 5			
Graduate Course 6			
Graduate Course 7			
Graduate Course 8			
Selected M.A. Paper from a Course			
Oral Exam			

The M.A. is a research degree. [As of July 1, 2024](#), M.A. students are required to submit a research report and stand for a general exam. The English Department accepts a representative seminar paper from a course taken at Penn, selected by the student, in fulfilment of the research report requirement. The one-hour oral general exam will take place during the last week of the spring semester and cover the research report, as well as a presentation by the student of key aspects of their M.A. coursework and research, followed by a discussion with the committee. The committee will be comprised of the M.A. advisor and another faculty member selected by the student.

NB:

- 1) The four courses per semester should be a mix of 5000 and 7000-level seminars.
- 2) At least one of the eight seminars must be at the 7000-level.
- 3) Only one course outside department per semester, for which permission from the department or instructor may be required.
- 4) No more than one internship for credit may be counted toward the degree.
- 5) Proseminar 6000 only by permission of instructor.
- 6) Any student registered for four courses in a single term may register as an auditor for one additional course with the permission of the Graduate Dean.

- 7) Avoid incompletes, no more than 1 per semester, which, if taken in spring semester, will delay graduation.
- 8) No Independent Studies
- 9) Must maintain a B average to remain in good standing