The English curriculum is intended to serve the general needs of the liberal arts student and also provide discerning programs for the more specialized needs of students who want to major in English with an emphasis in literature, creative writing, or narrative nonfiction writing. In the last thirty years, English literary studies have changed in response to new theoretical and cultural models as well as greater attention to Anglophone international and non-canonical literature and genres. In our courses and major we approach the study of language and literature as a dynamic, living, and lively pursuit, one that integrates political, social, philosophic, cultural, and aesthetic values. We have designed a program that meets a variety of needs and enables students to pursue a variety of personal and professional goals, whether defined by individual or collaborative intent, subject breadth or depth, instructional model, source engagement, writing development, or other pedagogical features. The faculty in English participate actively in the General Education Program, the Writing Program, Women’s and Gender Studies, Black Studies, Queer Studies, International Studies, Environmental Studies, and service learning opportunities.

All students may enjoy readings and lectures made possible by the endowed Harriet Ewens Beck Fund, which has brought such writers as Susan Orlean, Ted Kooser, Alice Walker, Bill Bryson, Maxine Hong Kingston, Adrienne Rich, Louise Erdrich, and Antonya Nelson for visits or residencies each year. The curriculum in English is also enhanced by a variety of opportunities for students to pursue publishing their works locally in a variety of student-edited journals. ARTICULĀTE (a forum for cultural and literary criticism) and EXILE (a journal of creative writing) are among the publications associated with students in English.

Faculty

Associate Professor James Weaver, Chair

Professors David Baker, Brenda Boyle, Kirk Combe, Linda Krumholz, Margot Singer, Ann Townsend; Associate Professors Peter Grandbois, Diana Mafe, Regina Martin, Lisa J. McDonnell, Fred Porcheddu-Engel, Sandra Runzo, Jack Shuler, James Weaver; Assistant Professor Yen Loh; Visiting Assistant Professors Paul Barickman, Sylvia Brown, Michael Croley, Michael Mayne, Jessica Hendry Nelson, Doug Swift; Academic Administrative Assistant Anneliese Deimel Davis

View faculty profiles and contact information (https://denison.edu/academics/english/contacts)

English Major

Students who major in English must choose an advisor in the English Department to assist them in selecting and sequencing classes to meet their academic and professional goals. All students who major in English must complete a minimum of ten classes in the department, excluding W 101 - First-Year Writing Workshop. The English major and minor each have two options: the literature emphasis and the creative writing emphasis. The two courses of study overlap and complement one another. Both literature and creative writing students should graduate from Denison with a strong knowledge of the history and practice of literary studies.

Each semester, students who want to take classes in English should read the semester’s course descriptions, available online and from the English office, which provide more detailed information about specific classes than what appears below.

Literature Emphasis

Students who major in English with the Literature emphasis must take ten courses. Four courses are chosen from among the five core courses: four of those courses are historical survey courses that cover a variety of periods in English and American literature; the fifth course introduces students to literary theory and critical methods. Critical methods and literary theory are taught in many courses in the major, but ENGL 202 - Literary Theory and Critical Methods provides an overview of literary theoretical debates, familiarity with some primary theoretical texts, and attention to research and critical practices in literary studies. This course is recommended for all students, particularly those who want to take advanced courses in literary theory or plan to pursue graduate studies in English.

All students with the Literature emphasis are strongly urged to begin their coursework with the required “four-of-five” courses that provide useful historical and theoretical contexts for subsequent, more focused study in the seminars. However, because specific 300-level seminars are probably not offered every semester, students are encouraged to take seminars, even before they have completed the required surveys, if they are interested in the topic. ENGL 400 - Senior Seminar is the English capstone course offered every semester on a variety of topics. Students who major in English with the Literature emphasis may choose to do a year-long senior research project in literary studies (ENGL 451 - Senior Research - ENGL 452 - Senior Research) which can replace one 300-level seminar requirement. Students can transfer only two courses to the Major from off-campus.

English majors with the Literature emphasis must take four of the following five core courses:

- ENGL 202 - Literary Theory and Critical Methods
- ENGL 213 - Early British Literature
- ENGL 214 - 18th and 19th-Century British Literature
- ENGL 230 - American Literature Before 1900
- One 200-level 20th-century survey course (either ENGL 219 - 20th-Century Poetry, ENGL 220 - 20th-Century Fiction, ENGL 221 - Literary Nonfiction, ENGL 240 - 20th-Century Drama, or ENGL 250 - Special Topics in 20th-Century Literature)

English majors with the Literature emphasis are also required to take the following:

- Four 300-level English seminar courses (or three with a year-long senior research project)
- One elective at any level
- ENGL 400 - Senior Seminar

Creative Writing Emphasis

Students who major in English with the Creative Writing emphasis must take ten courses. English majors with a Creative Writing emphasis will read and write extensively, learn from practicing published writers, and hone their skills while studying a wide range of literary texts. Students majoring with an emphasis in Creative Writing will choose from a variety of courses divided among workshops and literature courses. The core of the creative writing courses is the workshop. Writing students take a series of increasingly advanced workshops to culminate, in the senior year, in a year-long writing project conducted on campus. The senior capstone is ENGL 453 - Senior Writing Project - ENGL 454 - Senior Writing
English majors with the Creative Writing emphasis must take three of the following five core courses:

- ENGL 202 - Literary Theory and Critical Methods
- ENGL 213 - Early British Literature
- ENGL 214 - 18th and 19th-Century British Literature
- ENGL 230 - American Literature Before 1900
- One 200 level 20th-century survey course (either ENGL 219 - 20th-Century Poetry, ENGL 220 - 20th-Century Fiction, ENGL 221 - Literary Nonfiction, ENGL 240 - 20th-Century Drama, or ENGL 250 - Special Topics in 20th-Century Literature)

English majors with the Creative Writing emphasis must take three 300-level English seminars. ENGL 400 - Senior Seminar can count as one of these advanced seminars.

English majors with the Creative Writing emphasis must take four courses in the series of Creative Writing workshops:

- ENGL 237 - Introduction to Creative Writing
- ENGL 383 - Fiction Writing, ENGL 384 - Creative Nonfiction Writing, or ENGL 385 - Poetry Writing: students choose either Fiction Writing, Nonfiction Writing, or Poetry Writing. (Students may, if their schedules permit, take more than one of these advanced workshops.) Students may not take any of these courses concurrent with the Senior Writing Project.
- ENGL 453 - Senior Writing Project and ENGL 454 - Senior Writing Project

English 453-454 serves as the capstone experience for English majors with the Creative Writing emphasis; this 8-credit course consists of weekly group workshops, individual tutorials, a monthly colloquium and practicum, as well as a series of master classes and workshops with visiting writers. Students must submit a writing sample and show reasonable progress in creative writing courses at the end of their junior year to get permission to take the year-long senior project to complete the major with a Creative Writing emphasis.

English Minor

The English minor consists of six courses:

To minor in English with a Literature emphasis, students must take three of the five required core 200-level courses (see above) and three courses at the 300-level (one may be at the 400 level). A year-long senior research project may replace one 300-level course.

To minor in English with a Creative Writing emphasis, students must take ENGL 237 - Introduction to Creative Writing, one advanced writing workshop (ENGL 383 - Fiction Writing, ENGL 384 - Creative Nonfiction Writing, or ENGL 385 - Poetry Writing), two of the five required core 200-level courses, and two courses at the 300-level. ENGL 400 - Senior Seminar can count as one of these advanced seminars.

Courses

ENGL 199 - Introductory Topics in English (1-4 Credit Hours)
A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

ENGL 200 - Introduction to Literature (4 Credit Hours)
An introduction to literary types, this course will emphasize close interpretive reading of poetry, fiction and drama.

ENGL 201 - Academic Writing (4 Credit Hours)
Theory and practice in essay and other academic writing, allowing students to concentrate on mastering styles appropriate to their own academic or personal needs.

ENGL 202 - Literary Theory and Critical Methods (4 Credit Hours)
This course will teach students skills and materials that are important in literary studies today. It will include methods of reading and writing literary criticism, research methods in literary studies, analytical practices, an overview of literary theoretical debates of the 20th century, and selected readings from contemporary theory. In each section, the teacher will use one or two literary texts to test interpretative and theoretical approaches.

ENGL 210 - Studies in Literature (4 Credit Hours)
An intensive study of selected writers, works, literary genres, or themes. May be taken more than once for credit.

ENGL 213 - Early British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of selected works by men and women writing in the 8th through the 17th centuries. With close attention to various genres and through various critical approaches, this course attends to literary and cultural developments as reflected in a variety of texts and contexts.

ENGL 214 - 18th and 19th-Century British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of selected works by men and women in the 18th and 19th centuries in England. The course pays close attention to various genres - satire, poetry, drama, criticism, and fiction - and is designed to sharpen students' reading, interpretive, critical and writing skills, while attending to literary and cultural developments in eighteenth-century, Romantic, and Victorian texts.

ENGL 215 - Shakespeare (4 Credit Hours)
A study of principal plays, emphasizing the poetic and dramatic aspects of Shakespeare's work, as viewed through a variety of critical perspectives.

ENGL 219 - 20th-Century Poetry (4 Credit Hours)
A survey of 20th-century poetry. Attention to major poets as well as literary schools will be enhanced by attention to the wider history, philosophy and aesthetics of the time.

ENGL 220 - 20th-Century Fiction (4 Credit Hours)
A survey of 20th-century fiction. Attention to major writers will be enhanced by attention to the wider history, philosophy and aesthetics of the time.

ENGL 221 - Literary Nonfiction (4 Credit Hours)
A survey of literary nonfiction writing in the 20th and 21st centuries that will ground students in the history and more recent developments of the genre as well as the ethical dilemmas of the genre.

ENGL 225 - Women in Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Selected poetry and prose by women guide inquiries into writing and gender and into related issues, such as sexuality, history, race, class, identity and power.

Crosslisting: WGST 225.

ENGL 230 - American Literature Before 1900 (4 Credit Hours)
A historical survey of texts and literary movements in America before 1900. With attention to various genres and critical approaches, this course emphasizes literary responses to such issues as progress, national identity, race, gender, and the American landscape.
ENGL 237 - Introduction to Creative Writing (4 Credit Hours)
Offers a basic understanding of and experience in writing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction and teaches students to pay close attention to language and narrative, central elements of all long-form nonfiction writing.

ENGL 240 - 20th-Century Drama (4 Credit Hours)
A survey of 20th-century drama with emphasis on British and American playwrights and an eye to female and minority dramatists disenfranchised from the main stages.

ENGL 245 - Human Diversity Through Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of selected works by and about bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgender people.
Crosslisting: QS 250.

ENGL 250 - Special Topics in 20th-Century Literature (4 Credit Hours)
The survey will explore 20th-century literature in a range of genres and in relation to the historical and cultural movements of the century. Each section will focus on a specific topic or tradition in 20th-century literature, such as British, American, postcolonial Anglophone, Asian American, Jewish American, or African American literature.

ENGL 255 - Ethnic Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of the literature of various ethnic, racial and regional groups of the United States. This course explores cultural heritages, historical struggles, artistic achievements and contemporary relations of groups in American society.

ENGL 260 - Contemporary African Novels in English (4 Credit Hours)
A study of contemporary Anglophone African novels, all of which engage with histories and experiences of European colonialism.

ENGL 291 - Nature and the Literary Imagination (4 Credit Hours)
A study of humanity’s relationship with and shifting conceptions of the nonhuman world. Reading selections vary, but generally include past and contemporary writers who reflect different ethnic and regional outlooks and who work in various modes, including literature, memoir, natural history and science.
Crosslisting: ENVN 291.

ENGL 298 - The Literature of Place (4 Credit Hours)
An exploration of the ways in which literature and locale inform each other, this course focuses on a specific site or community. Through readings of literature “about” that place, the class investigates how cultural, social, historical, and/or institutional realities interrelate—as both cause and effect—with text. An optional trip to the place in question follows the semester.

ENGL 299 - Intermediate Topics in English (1-4 Credit Hours)
A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

ENGL 302 - Studies in Literary Theory (4 Credit Hours)
A study of major literary and cultural theories important to literary studies today. The course will emphasize readings in primary texts by critical theorists as well as applications of those theories to text of various kinds. The teacher may focus on in-depth studies of one or two critical or cultural theories.

ENGL 310 - Studies in Literature (4 Credit Hours)
An intensive study of selected writers, works, literary genres, or themes. May be taken more than once for credit.

ENGL 311 - Studies in Composition and Rhetoric (4 Credit Hours)
An intensive study of selected issues, historical periods, theory and theorists, research, or pedagogy in composition and rhetoric.

ENGL 314 - Studies in the Short Story (4 Credit Hours)
A study of selected works of major and representative writers working in the genre of the short story. This course may focus on a few specific writers (such as Eudora Welty or Raymond Carver), or on selected schools and movements (such as the avant-garde, naturalism, or modernism), or on special topics within the field (such as postcolonial fictions or Southern writing).

ENGL 325 - African-American Women’s Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Historical and contemporary African-American women's literature grounds an inquiry into black women's literary and intellectual traditions within the matrix of race, gender, class and sexual relations in the United States.
Crosslisting: BLST 325, WGST 325.

ENGL 326 - Native American Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of Native American literature that will provoke considerations of Native American cultural and religious traditions, historical and legal struggles, artistic achievements and contributions to contemporary American culture.

ENGL 340 - Contemporary Drama (4 Credit Hours)
Intensive study of drama from 1956 to the present, with an emphasis on British and American playwrights. The course will focus on the issues, problems, techniques, and generic forms particular to contemporary drama, with interest in the emerging drama of minority, female, and gay and lesbian playwrights.
Crosslisting: QS 351.

ENGL 341 - Studies in the English Novel (4 Credit Hours)
This course will explore the English novel by studying special thematic topics, its evolution, and/or developmental influences. The course might include such authors as DeFoe, Fielding, Austen, Bronte, Gaskell, Dickens, Eliot or Hardy.

ENGL 342 - Studies in the Contemporary Novel (4 Credit Hours)
This class studies the movements and traditions within contemporary novels, focusing on such writers as Toni Morrison, Philip Roth, Zadie Smith, and Salman Rushdie.

ENGL 343 - Studies in Contemporary Poetry (4 Credit Hours)
This class studies the schools, movements, traditions and innovations within contemporary poetry, focusing on selected works of such writers as Anne Carson, W.S. Merwin, Carl Phillips, and Charles Wright.

ENGL 346 - The English Language (4 Credit Hours)
A study of the development of the English language and its dynamic presence in the world today. In addition to surveying the history of English from its Indo-European origins to the present time, units within the semester cover general linguistics topics, contemporary literary controversies, and the social implications of dialect variation and changes in usage.

ENGL 348 - Studies in Medieval British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Special topics courses studying the textual forms of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland from 500 to 1500 CE.

ENGL 349 - Studies in European Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Selected works in translation from the Middle Ages through the 21st century. Depending on the topic of the seminar, authors studied may include such diverse figures as Chrétien de Troyes, Dante, Christine de Pisan, Cervantes, Madame de Lafayette, Molière, Goethe, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Calvino and Christa Wolf.
ENGL 355 - The Renaissance (4 Credit Hours)
An analysis of the interrelationship between the cultural phenomenon and the literature of the Renaissance, particularly the way in which the social, economic, and political conditions of the era helped to shape the literary art of the 1920s.

ENGL 356 - The Narrative of Black America (4 Credit Hours)
A study of representative samples of Black literature ranging from slave narratives to contemporary Black fiction.

ENGL 357 - Postcolonial Literature and Criticism (4 Credit Hours)
Readings in literature and criticism from Asia, Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean, in response to the experience of colonialism.

ENGL 361 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)
Offers the student an opportunity to develop, with the help of an interested professor, a special program of study in a given topic for one semester. May be taken more than once. Directed Study credit may be used to count toward an English major, but it may not be used in place of required 300-level courses.

ENGL 362 - Directed Study (1-4 Credit Hours)
Offers the student an opportunity to develop, with the help of an interested professor, a special program of study in a given topic for one semester. May be taken more than once. Directed Study credit may be used to count toward an English major, but it may not be used in place of required 300-level courses.

ENGL 363 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)
Offers the student an opportunity to develop within a semester a wholly individualized program of study, to be supervised by an interested professor. Independent Study credits may be used to count toward an English major, but may not be used in place of required 300-level courses.

ENGL 364 - Independent Study (1-4 Credit Hours)
Offers the student an opportunity to develop within a semester a wholly individualized program of study, to be supervised by an interested professor. Independent Study credit may be used to count toward an English major, but may not be used in place of required 300-level courses.

ENGL 365 - Studies in 16th and Early 17th-Century British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
A study of selected works of poetry, prose and drama from 1500-1660.

ENGL 366 - Studies in Late 17th and 18th-Century British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Special topics courses based in the literary culture of England from roughly 1640-1800.

ENGL 367 - Studies in 19th-Century British Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Selected topics in the literature of 19th-century England. The course may focus on Romantic or Victorian authors or representative writers from both eras.

ENGL 368 - Studies in 19th-Century American Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Selected topics in the literature of 19th-century America.

ENGL 369 - Studies in Early American Literature (4 Credit Hours)
Selected topics in the writings of colonial and early national America.

ENGL 375 - Late 17th and 18th-Century Drama (4 Credit Hours)
Studies in the production, reception and sociopolitical context of British drama from roughly 1660 to 1800.

ENGL 383 - Fiction Writing (4 Credit Hours)
An advanced workshop course in fiction writing. Students will be asked to read a wide selection of short fiction and to complete and revise a significant collection of their original work. Students will attain a working knowledge of fictional forms, techniques and aesthetics.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 237.

ENGL 384 - Creative Nonfiction Writing (4 Credit Hours)
Gives students in-depth experience in narrative writing in a variety of literary nonfiction forms, ranging from the lyric and personal essay to long-form reportage.

ENGL 385 - Poetry Writing (4 Credit Hours)
An advanced workshop in poetry writing. Students will be asked to read a wide selection of poetry and to complete and revise a chapbook collection of their original works. Students will attain a working knowledge of poetic forms, technique and aesthetics.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 237.

ENGL 391 - Nature's Nation (4 Credit Hours)
This course explores how a range of nineteenth-century American authors represented the natural world, examining how those representations of nature are informed by gender, class, and racial identities and how they become implicated in discourses of nationalism and imperialism.

Crosslisting: ENVS 391.

ENGL 399 - Advanced Topics in English (1-4 Credit Hours)
A general category used only in the evaluation of transfer credit.

ENGL 400 - Senior Seminar (4 Credit Hours)
A required course for senior English literature majors that offers students the chance to engage in intensive study of a particular theme or topic. All sections require frequent short reports to the class on research or reading. Each student will write a long paper as the basis for a seminar presentation. While the senior seminar is required for senior English literature majors, all senior English majors and minors (including both literature and creative writing students) may take the course and count it toward their 300-level major requirement. May be taken more than once for credit.

ENGL 451 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)
Senior students may work on an individually designed project for as much as two full semesters.

ENGL 452 - Senior Research (4 Credit Hours)
Senior students may work on an individually designed project for as much as two full semesters.

ENGL 453 - Senior Writing Project (4 Credit Hours)
This year-long project is required for a concentration in creative writing. Conducted under the directorship of a writing professor, each project will include an individual reading program and will result in a significant book-length manuscript of the student’s creative work.

ENGL 454 - Senior Writing Project (4 Credit Hours)
This year-long project is required for a concentration in creative writing. Conducted under the directorship of a writing professor, each project will include an individual reading program and will result in a significant book-length manuscript of the student’s creative work.